HEADTEACHERS' COMMITMENT TO INSTRUCTIONAL SUPERVISION IN THEIR SERVICE PERIODS IN CENTRAL EAST AND CENTRAL WEST EDUCATION DIVISIONS – MALAWI

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By Kenias Damiton Lameck Mchuchu

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Approval of Thesis

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Doctorate of Education (EdD)

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Abstract

HEADTEACHERS' COMMITMENT TO INSTRUCTIONAL SUPERVISION IN THEIR SERVICE PERIODS IN CENTRAL EAST AND CENTRAL WEST EDUCATION DIVISIONS – MALAWI

Unicaf University in Zambia

By Kenias Damiton Lameck Mchuchu

Support towards the provision of more classrooms, adequate teaching-learning resources, and more qualified teachers are the most talked about ways of improving public secondary school students' achievement in the Central East and Central West Education Divisions. The emphasis on increasing inputs has overshadowed the need to focus on school quality, which reflects effective headteachers commitment to instructional supervision. Although headteachers' commitment is crucial to public secondary school quality improvement efforts, there is no clear headteachers' commitment to instructional supervision description. A headteacher's commitment to instructional supervision questionnaire and a content analysis grid were administered to 277 participants selected from seven service period strata of the public secondary school headteachers' sampling frame using the stratified random sampling method to collect quantitative data for the mixed-method approach inquiry. For the interpretive strand of the study, a semi-structured interview schedule was used to collect qualitative data from 30 participants that were selected using a strato-purposeful sampling strategy. The quantitative and qualitative data were analysed using statistical and thematic analyses, respectively. The study showed that headteachers' commitment to instructional supervision varied with headteachers service periods, had inter- and intra-service-period variations, was related with the three-component commitment model, had a practised instructional supervision dimension, and was mediated by headteachers' opinions about headteachership. Significant continuance commitment was noted in the 6 to 10 (*0.012*), 11 to 15 (*0.058*) and 16 to 20 (*0.045*) service periods. Significant normative commitment was noted in the 11 to 15 service period (*0.085)*, while implemented commitment ranged from meets minimum standards to below minimum standards, thus 30% to 0-20% and headteachership developmental stages emerged.

Declaration

I declare that this thesis has been composed solely by myself and that it has not been submitted, in whole or in part, to any previous application for a degree. Except where it states otherwise by reference or acknowledgment, the work presented is entirely my own.

AI Acknowledgments

I acknowledge that I have not used any AI tools to create, proofread or produce any text or ideas related to any draft or final versions of the thesis.

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Dedication

To my mom and dad, your love I will forever cherish.

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I am grateful to all participants in Central East and Central West Education Divisions in Malawi for completing the questionnaire, accepting to take the interview and presenting the instructional supervision records requested for checking. I am indebted to ministry of education authorities at the Ministry of Education Headquarters, Central East Education Division, and Central West Education Division in Malawi for granting the permissions to access public secondary schools for data collection. Namitete Secondary School staff, you created time for me to concentrate on my study, for that I am grateful. Dr. Rachel Monde Kabeta, my supervisor, you encouraged me to keep on running when it seemed no energy was left with me. My family, you were my pillow to fall back on when the going was tough. The list of those that deserve my gratitude is too long to exhaust. To you I say thank you.

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List of Abbreviations

AISE	Acquaintance with Instructional Supervision elements
AISC	Affective Instructional Supervision Commitment
AOC	Affective Organisational Commitment
CDSS	Community Day Secondary School
CFA	Confirmatory Factor Analysis
CISC	Continuance Instructional Supervision Commitment
CISR	Commitment to Instructional Supervision Roles
COC	Continuance Organisational Commitment
CSS	Conventional Secondary School
CUISS	Creation and Utilising of Instructional Supervision Systems
CVI	Content Validity Index
CVR	Content Validity Ration
CWED	Central West Education Division
DMF	Desk Monitoring Frequency
EFA	Exploratory Factor Analysis
EISE	Experimentation with Instructional Supervision Elements
HISC	Headteachers' Instructional Supervision Commitment
HISP	Headteachers' Service Period
NCRSSH	National Committee for Research in Social Science and Humanities
NED	Northern Education Division
NISC	Normative Instructional Supervision Commitment
NOC	Normative Organisational commitment
PD	Participants' Demographics
SP	Service Period

UREC	Unicaf University Research Ethics Committee

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1.0 CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 : Introduction

In Malawi public secondary education institutions are categorised into National Secondary schools (NSS), District Boarding Secondary Schools (DBSS), District Day Secondary Schools (DDSS), and Community Day Secondary Schools (CDSS). These categories inform students' secondary school placement and resource allocation where the NSS get the most in quality and quantity and the CDSS get the least. With categorical allocation of students and resources, intra-categorical students' performance was expected to be the same on the assumption that the level of commitment to the instructional supervision role was the same among all headteachers.

Headteachers' commitment, thus the characterisation of relative psychological and behavioural identification headteachers have with not only their schools but with instructional supervision being the core activity of public secondary schools that reflects their extent of engagement (Tarimo & Lekule, 2024; Titus et al., 2024; Kiilu et al., 2023; Mwakajitu et al., 2022; Meyer & Allen, 1991), is an essential concept in organisational behaviour studies. The importance of headteachers' commitment snowballs due to its contextual implications for public secondary school students' achievement and school competitiveness (Saladaga, 2024; Arif et al., 2023; Ngui, 2023; Mulatya, 2022). Further, the focus on headteachers commitment results from the realisation that employees' commitment surpasses the determination of a talented workforce in ascertaining public secondary school survival and competitiveness.

Although organisational behaviour studies in favour of public secondary schools in the Central East and Central West Education Divisions were rare, focus on public secondary school headteachership and especially headteachers' commitment, matters in defining the quality and consequently performance of students in public secondary schools (Boye, 2023; Kimengich et al., 2020). While the commitment of public secondary school headteachers to their instructional

supervision role is crucial, the clarity of what being committed means relates to the prescriptive description of commitment. According to Arcaro, (2024), Wang et al, (2023), Van Waeyenberg et al. (2022), and Meyer & Allen (1991), employees' commitment to their institutions has three dimensions, thus affective, continuance, and normative which respectively mean positive emotional attachment to an organisation by choice, extension to safeguard beneficial contractual obligations, and attachment by debt or as an obligation, as outlined in the three-component commitment model (TCM) (Parker, 2024). Determination of the commitment dimensions among employees is done through declaration or confession by completing a TCM questionnaire (Mendis, 2024. Azdha, 2023; Mowday et al., 1979).

While declarative or confessed commitment is important, the public desires headteachers' behaviours that deliver on the predetermined educational visions, aims, mission, and objectives. The commitment that delivers in practice is the implemented commitment. This study endeavours to describe the headteachers' commitment in the Central East and Central West Education Divisions, relate the declarative and practiced commitments within the mediation of service periods, and explore the opinions that headteachers have towards their job.

Although the dimensionality of the TCM has its fair share of criticism (Spritzer, 2023; Haque et al., 2021; Somers et al., 2020), with some researchers qualifying the model as outdated and due for retirement, the model still provides the framework for analysing the categorisation of institutional factors that relate to workforce attrition, performance, and effectiveness (Hallett et al., 2024; Dogru et al., 2023; Goldhaber & Theobald, 2022; Shibiti, 2020; Levin et al., 2020) in educational institutions as well. As Al Jabari & Ghazzawi (2019) note, commitment magnitude variance in the instructional supervisory role translates into differentiation in school improvement practices and effectiveness. Conversely, headteachers'

commitment factors pivot public secondary school headteachership on elements that jumpstart the intended headteacher's commitment.

As such, the dimensionality and level of headteachers' commitment in the Central East and Central West Education Divisions are essential for initiating, qualifying, and describing school performance agility (Kirabo & Irechukwu, 2024; Ludviga & Kalvina, 2024; Fako et al., 2018). After all, headteachers' commitment is "critical if schools [are to] produce the best possible outcomes for their learners" (Bush, 2008, p. xi), given that headteachership towers second only to classroom instructional interaction in influencing students' learning in school (Kilag & Sasan, 2023; DeMatthews et al., 2022; Hargreaves, 2021). Such an enormity of expectation from headteachers justifies an interrogation of the headteachers' commitment to the instructional supervision as a significant responsibility of the public secondary school headteacher.

There are several models in the literature that describe instructional supervision. Four of such models perceive headteachers' instructional supervision as prescriptive, explorative, directive, and directive-indirective (Gorman & Furlong, 2023; Glanz, 2021; Garman, 2020; Sebastian et al., 2016). In this study, headteachers' commitment to carrying out instructional supervisory roles is within the exploratory model. The rarity of research activities and literature on secondary school leadership justifies the need to explore the relevance and applicability of constructs in public secondary schools in CEED and CWED. Apart from describing headteachers' commitment in the locale, the study endeavours to identify other aspects for contextual descriptions of commitment that will inform the construction of complementary perspectives to headteachers' commitment with a public secondary school tilt.

Headteachers' commitment to the instructional supervisory role is indispensable (Ossai & Kingsley, 2023; Muasa, 2022; Ivagher, 2021; Ullah et al., 2021; Kituku et al., 2020) to making schools effective learning institutions. Such a vital aspect of headteachership requires

studying for informed attempts at school quality improvement practice. As observes Manaseh (2016, p. 31), "without an effective management of the instructional program in favour of teachers' classroom instruction and students' learning, efforts to that effect are doomed to fail." This implies that an instructional program is the core function of a school and requires all efforts to make it most effective.

Further, empirical evidence suggests that the extent of headteachers' commitment to supporting teaching and learning is crucial in ensuring school effectiveness (Meyer et al., 2023; Eisenschmidt et al., 2021; Day et al., 2020; Ghani et al., 2020; Mwesiga & Malusu, 2020; Tahira & Haider, 2020). Therefore, foreseeing headteachers' professional development and training, leadership style and philosophy, school culture and climate, accountability and evaluation systems, personal characteristics and motivation, that constitute challenges to carrying out the instructional supervisory role is essential for pre-emptive actions to safeguard the justification for school existence (Nsengimana et al., 2024; Omoth, 2023; Chiwamba, 2022; Boakye, 2021). Where a lack of knowledge of such factors prevails, effective headteachership is by chance, and the possibility of its sustenance is doubtful.

Although headteachers' commitment to the instructional supervision is important, the construct has not yet been under scrutiny through research in Central East and Central West Education Divisions in Malawi. In their study on education in Malawi, Wamba & Mgomezulu (2014) reveal a dismal local attention to educational leadership discourse. Instead, there was reliance on the belief that an apprenticeship model for head teachership training was appropriate and adequate. While appreciating the potential of the apprenticeship model's assumption about the availability of "master practitioners" (Pratt & Johnson, 1998) for implementation, the unavailability of the "master headteacher" in CEED and CWED cracks the very foundation of the model's intentions.

Studying public secondary school headteachers' commitment to the tasks of instructional supervision in Central east and Central West Education Divisions breaks the research lull in educational leadership studies. This study augments research attention to multiple commitments (Zhang et al 2021; Saridakis et al., 2020) by extending the list of commitment-related aspects. In that regard, this chapter articulates the problem under investigation, describes the purpose, outlines the objectives, presents the questions that guide the research and posts hypotheses that the study tests.

1.1: Statement of the Problem

Educational institutions' visions, missions, goals, and objectives express the expected commitment from employees (Errida & Lotfi, 2021; Fuertes et al., 2020). In the case of public secondary schools, the expected commitment is meant to translate into high-quality institutions characterised by collegiate interactions among staff, prioritisation of the teacher-learner interaction in the teaching-learning activities, and high students' achievement in order to render education a "key human capital development instrument and an important prerequisite for socio-economic development and industrial growth" (Malawi Government, 2017, p. 60) in the case of Malawi. In that context, the implemented commitment is at par with the expected commitment.

The three-component commitment model (Azdha et al., 2023; Khan et al., 2013; Cheng & Stockdale, 2003; Meyer et al., 1998; Moorman et al., 1992; Meyer & Allen, 1991) informs the conceptualisation of employees confessed psychometric parameters about commitment. In the literature, the model components: affective, continuance, and normative, are presented as static psychometric configuration points at which employees are located within dynamic institutional contexts. Critical to headteachers' commitment to the instructional supervision is their dedication, through practice, to the prescriptive, explorative, directive, and non-directive

supervisory roles (Haberlin & Burns, 2024; Nikolaidis et al., 2024; Ikwuegbu, 2022; Mannie, 2022), because such commitment roles have implications for students' achievement.

In the Central East and Central West Education Divisions, just as is the case in the other four education divisions in Malawi, allocation of students to various public secondary schools, thus national, district conventional boarding, district conventional day, and community day secondary schools, is claimed to be meritocratic with a tint of gender and disability consideration (Kamchedzera, 2010; MacJessie-Mbewe, 2004). According to Kamwendo (2013) and Chakwera et al. (2004), students were and still are selected to start form one in the various public secondary schools depending on their academic abilities shown by their grades at the Primary School Leaving Certificate Examination that students take at the end of their primary school, thus in standard eight. With the argument that a pure meritocratic selection is unattainable due to unequal students' learning starting points and backgrounds (Sathi et al., 2024; Stanczak, et al., 2024; Fernández et al., 2023; Fang & Noe, 2022), the practised selection system in Malawi ought to be called merito-representative selection.

The implications of the merito-representative selection of students described in Voutyras (2024), Mlangeni & Chiotha (2015), Simkonda (2013), and Chakwera et al. (2004) are that public secondary schools that are in the same category enrol students with the same range of academic abilities. Given an equalised school contextual environment, the students in the same public secondary school category would perform the same (Rose, 2003; MacJessie-Mbewe, 2002; Chimombo, 2009; Mkochi, n.d.).

The Junior Certificate of Education Examination (JCE) and the Malawi School Certificate of Education (MSCE) examination results, year in and year out, show intra-categorical differences in students' performance. This is so despite the fact that no intra-public secondary school teacher qualifications, budgetary allocations, and the distribution of consumables for teacher-learner interaction activities are ideally the same. Although such is

the case, the public and education authorities still fault inadequate infrastructure, quality of teachers, students' discipline lapses, lack of consumables for teaching and learning, and inadequacy of budgetary allocations (Kumwenda et al., 2024; Mphahlele et al., 2023; Kafumbu, 2020; Piliyesi, 2020). The factors cited for students' performance differences at a national level better hold at an inter-categorical than at an intra-categorical perception.

However, the problem is that actualisation of national education visions, missions, goals, and objectives still shows intra-public secondary school differences with the public still putting the blame on other factors except headteachers' commitment to instructional supervision. The overlook of headteachers' commitment partly results from lack of descriptive clarity of 'headteachers' commitment'. That lack of descriptive clarity has led to failure in articulating the enormity of influence that headteachers' commitment to instructional supervision has on improving the class teacher-learner interaction. The lack of clarity in the description of headteachers' commitment to the instructional supervision role has been exacerbated by a noticeable lack of primary research attention on commitment in public secondary schools in order to find contextual commitment complementary perspectives.

Without descriptive clarity of headteachers' commitment to the instructional supervision role, efforts to determine its contribution to intra-public secondary school categories students' achievement differentiation will remain a far-fetched dream. The shy-away from researching public secondary school headteachers' commitment in Central East and Central West Education Divisions has not only blurred the specificity of contributions that head teachership makes to school effectiveness but also negated the immerse knowledge that practical instructional supervision in various school contexts emerges for the description of public secondary school headteachers' commitment. The lack of headteachers' commitment descriptions in the Central East and Central West Education Divisions denies the studied education divisions the opportunity to benefit from and contribute to comparative public

secondary school headteachership studies. Shying away from the public secondary school education systems discourse through research is a sure direction to spinning an education system out of relevance.

Therefore, this study endeavoured to interrogate headteachers' psychometrics about their instructional supervision in their head teachership service periods in order to answer the research questions and test the study hypotheses. In addition, knowledge about headteachers' variations, consistency, and opinions about headteachers' commitment in their service periods will be vital for creating complementary commitment perspectives and offer defensible reasons for planning need-based headteachers' continuous human capital investment and identifying headteachers' commitment mediating factors for public secondary school quality improvement.

1. 2: Purpose of the Study, Research Aims, and Objectives

The purpose of this mixed-method approach study in the Central East and Central West Education Divisions in Malawi was to explore headteachers' commitment to the instructional supervision descriptivity through the application of the three-component commitment model (TCM) (Bantilan et al., 2024; Ribeiro et al., 2022; Al-Haroon & Al-Qahtani, 2020; Ampofo, 2020; Haque et al., 2020), and note how practiced commitment and headteachers' opinions about instructional supervision become elements in the description clarification of headteachers' commitment to instructional supervision.

On the quantitative study strand of the mixed-method approach, statistical description of headteachers' commitment to instructional supervision was done through the correlation of quantitative data regarding headteachers' declared commitment to instructional supervision, the frequency of checking and monitoring the updating of key instructional documents to reflect practiced commitment, and the qualitative data regarding opinions that headteachers have about instructional supervision. The multivariate correlations of the quantitative variables

formed the basis for inferences to answer the guiding research questions and test the study hypotheses. On the qualitative strand, the qualitative data were organised for thematic analysis to generate themes to draw conclusions from. Therefore, inferences from statistical and thematic data analysis strategies application on quantitative and qualitative data, respectively, guided construction of complementary perspectives to the three-componential model.

Consequently, the study aimed at understanding headteachers' post-entry confessed commitment (Berryman et al., 2024; Slob et al., 2023; Hermawan et al., 2023), implemented commitment, and their opinions about aspects of their job in the light of their service periods as the basis for assessing the applicability of the TCM and construction of complementary perspectives to headteachers' commitment to instructional supervision commitment.

The objectives of this cross-sectional mixed-method study were to:

1. Find out headteachers' commitment to the supervisory role within their specified service period strata in CEED and CWED.
2. Confirm or reject the applicability of the affective-normative-continuance commitment dimensionality to headteachers' commitment regarding their instruction supervision in CEED and CWED.
3. Correlate headteachers' commitment in different headteachership service periods in CEED and CWED.
4. Describe the variations of CEED and CWED headteachers' attitudes and opinions towards instruction supervisory over their headteachership service period.
5. Construct a complementary perspective to headteachers' commitment.

1. 3: Nature of the Study

The research study constitutes the three major process domains of ontology, epistemology, and methodology (Asmawi & Alam, 2024; Burns et al., 2022; Al-Ababneh,

2020; Ludwig & El-Hani, 2020). While ontology focusses on the nature of reality, epistemology deals with how reality is known, and methodology identifies the instruments used to know reality and how the instruments are used. In this study, the ontological stance portrays a combination of the incompatibility and compatibility theses (Dehalwar & Sharma, 2023; Denzin et al., 2023; Østern et al., 2023; Setiawan & Syamsuddin, 2022) in a philosophically two-strand approach.

The incompatibility thesis argues that reality is bi-polar, thus phenomena are either quantitative or qualitative. The quantitative perspective, underpinned by positivism, postulates reality as objective, universal, and independent of the knower in the light of existing theories (Damschroder et al., 2022; Taherdoost, 2022; Alharahsheh & Pius, 2020; Mohajan, 2020). Since objective reality is measurable using universally prescribed instruments, its attributes are generalisable regardless of contextual novelty. The compatibility thesis, on the other hand, perceives reality as both objective and subjective, with the aim of deriving comprehensive descriptions of phenomena (Johnson & Christensen, 2024; Tavares et al., 2020; Williams, 2020). In the context of social sciences, reality is neither purely quantitative nor qualitative.

The compatibility thesis justifies objective reality within the limitations of available instruments to extend the knower's senses while acknowledging the constructed perspectives beyond the reach of objectivity (Nyimbili & Nyimbili, 2024; Peters & Fàbregues, 2024; Perez et al., 2023). The need for a compatibility approach is nowhere more required than in educational research, including the study of headteachers' commitment in CEED and CWED, as tendencies to apply the bi-polar paradigm would either dehumanise personality phenomena or humanise inhuman phenomena (Pregoner, 2024; Younas et al., 2024; Proudfoot, 2023; Williams, 2020), hence the justification of the transformative paradigm: mixed methods research.

This investigation uses a mixed-methods approach (Ren, & Zhou, 2024; Gebru & Verstegen, 2023; Kimmons, 2022), with a concurrent triangulation design described in Coquilla et al. (2023) and Yohannes et al. (2023). The synchronous use of methodologically incompatible instruments in a single inquiry not only reflects a multi-method strategy but a mixed-method approach. The differences in the philosophical orientation of the tools typifies the study as a third-paradigm approach study (O'Connor et al., 2024; Amadi, 2023; Birgili & Demir, 2022). The tools used were the headteachers' commitment to instructional supervision questionnaire, the content analysis grid for quantitative data collection, and a semi-structured interview schedule (Riffe et al., 2023; So-Oabeb, 2023) for qualitative data collection.

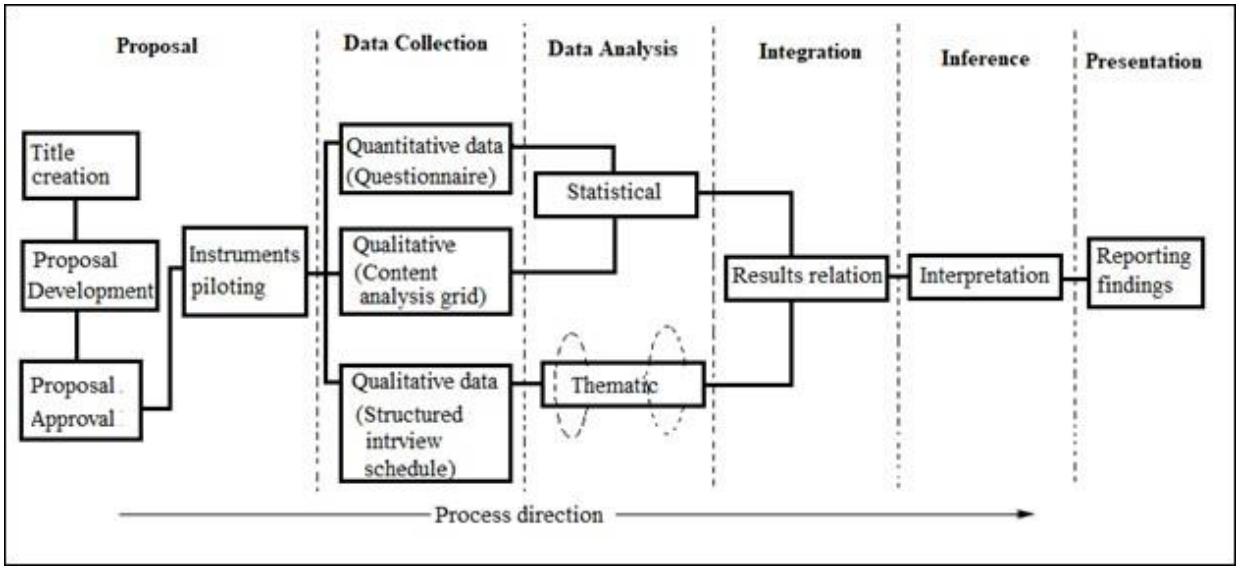
Furthermore, as is distinctive of mixed-method concurrent designs (Taheri & Okumus, 2024; Dawadi et al., 2021; Aultman, 2020; Manzoor, 2020), following the research process presented in Figure 1. In this figure, the mixed-method concurrent triangulation design research process is presented in a simplistic linear form. However, the practical reality was made complex with recursivity in qualitative data collection and analysis, for effectiveness in data assemblage and analysis. The quantitative and qualitative data were solicited from participants on the same data collection visit. The quantitative data were analysed using statistical strategies, while the qualitative data were subjected toa thematic procedure, and the integrated results were material for inference. Consequently, the study benefits from positive and interpretive research approaches and the related epistemological frameworks to strengthen its rigor. In that perspective, the research methods and design are appropriate since the study problem requires paradigmatically polarised but complementary data types (Wambugu & Njoroge, 2022), thus using quantitative and qualitative designs in a single study to solve it.

Further, the study used statistical and thematic data analysis techniques to draw sense out of the respective quantitative and qualitative data for the research. Microsoft Excel Spreadsheet and the IBM Special Package for Social Scientists (SPSS) software enabled

multivariate analysis (Jalolov, 2024; Watkins, 2021; Vu, 2020) of the statistical data whereas thematic inquiry was the technique used for processing qualitative data (Oladipo & Odebode, 2021; Creswell & Báez, 2020). The combination of two paradigmatically different but complementary data analysis techniques in a single study, a "meta-framework for mixed analysis techniques" (Onwuegbuzie & Hitchcock, 2022; Hitchcock & Onwuegbuzie, 2022), is recommended in Poth (2023) and Çelik & Doğan (2022), as appropriate for this dual-philosophically anchored study.

Figure 1-1

Process-steps in the Headteachers' Commitment Study



Note: A perforated circle denotes a recursive process

1.4: Significance of the Study

Public secondary school institutions are unique because they are where education services are offered as a public good to the majority of citizens. The operational model of public secondary education services tends to be more inclusive than the exclusive operational model on which private secondary schools operate (Ajayi, 2024; Halásková et al., 2022; Courtioux & Maury, 2020). The study results will have implications for the educational policy formulators,

school inspectors, education planning officers, head teachership, public secondary schools, and students' achievement improvement.

In the literature, the study of organisational commitment relies on psychometric parameters that employees confess about their relationships with their organisations as a measure. According to the three-component organisational commitment model, confessions reflect static affective, normative, and continuance commitment dimensions (Muthiah, 2020; Allen & Meyer, 1990). However, pressure for quasi-marketisation of public services to answer political economy accountability demands (Allen & Burgess, 2010; Adnett & Davies, 2003) calls on headteachers to demonstrate task-focused commitment in the ever-changing public secondary school contexts. As Mahmood et al. (2024) and Parveen et al. (2024) argue, the effectiveness of a school mirrors the extent of the headteachers' commitment to their instructional supervisory responsibilities. While a confessed commitment is important, a practiced commitment is desirable.

Therefore, the significance of this study manifests in four ways: describing headteachers' commitment using the three-component organisational commitment model; challenging the exclusivity of the three-component organisational commitment model in describing and predicting headteacher effectiveness; assessing headteachers' effectiveness beyond their confessed commitment; interrogating the view that an employee is static at a confessed organisational commitment dimension type at a point in one's service period; identifying new commitment factors for consideration when planning headteachers' in-service training to improve school leadership practice; and creating data that will inform educational policy review and development.

It is imperative to broaden perspectives on headteachers' commitment in public secondary schools, given the nexus of complexities in public secondary educational institutions that result from globalisation influence and the ever-growing need for societal adaptation to

dynamic local environments. Moreover, the study is crucial for not only head teachership in Central East and Central West Education Divisions but to the rest of education divisions in Malawi because the literature on headteachers' commitment on public secondary school headteachers is scarce. This study, therefore, challenges educational researchers to identify new areas in educational leadership for improvement.

1.5: Research Questions and Hypotheses

The study of headteachers' commitment to instructional supervision was given direction by questions and hypotheses that guided the research. The three research questions in the study related to commitment dimensionality (Vicneswary, 2023; Desir, 2020; Moorman et al., 1992) are about headteachers' commitment to instructional supervision from an interpretive perspective, while the three sets of hypotheses were about statistical testing of the assertions about the three-dimensionality of headteachers' commitment in the Central East and Central West Education Divisions. In general, the research questions and hypotheses interrogate aspects of the existing theoretical frameworks that guide research in organisational behaviour applied to public education institutional leadership studies.

Answers to the following questions assisted in resolving the research problem:

1. To what extent does the headteachers' commitment to instructional supervision relate to headteachership service period in Central East and Central West Education?
2. How do headteachers' attitudes towards instructional supervision roles in Central East and Central West Education Divisions vary along the headteachership service period continuum?
3. How does the headteachers' commitment to instructional supervisory roles in Central East and Central West Education Divisions change within headteachership service periods?

Complementing the research questions were sets of assumptions (hypotheses) the study carried for testing, which, according to the questions outlined above, are:

1. H_1: Headteachers' commitment to the instructional supervision role in Central East and Central West Education Divisions reflects the affective-normative-continuance commitment dimensionality.

   H_0: Headteachers' commitment to the instructional supervision role in Central East and Central West East Education Divisions does not reflect the affective-normative-continuance commitment dimensionality.

2. H_1: Headteachers' attitudes toward instruction supervision in Central East and Central West Education Divisions vary along their head teachership service periods.

   H_0: Headteachers' attitudes toward instruction supervisory roles in Central East and Central West Education Divisions are constant throughout their headteachership service periods.

3. H_1: Headteachers' commitment to instructional supervision in Central East and Central West Education Divisions varies along their headteachership service periods.

   H_0: Headteachers' commitment to instructional supervision in Central East and Central West Education Divisions does not vary throughout their headteachership service periods.

2.0 CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1: Introduction

The importance attributed to education is beheld in its ascribed conservative and innovative functions for the development of society (Brighouse, 2024; Sitopu et al., 2024; Ballantine et al., 2021; Syarifuddin, 2021). Educational conservativism and innovativism, though contradictory, are constituted in education policies and provide the energy for dynamism in education theory metamorphosis, and contextualisation of education practice. Interpretation and implementation of the curriculum through the teacher-learner interaction in learning processes are done at the institutional level, and that cannot be realised without effective school leadership personified in the headteacher (Arin et al., 2023; Mphahlele, 2023; Maponya, 2020). That is why head teachership remains an arena of professional dilemma (Andersen & Ottesen, 2024; Mælan et al., 2020), mainly because both conservatism and innovativism in society desire recognition in school functionality.

At school level, including public secondary schools, the conservative and innovative personification of school leadership is the headteacher. Although education's conservative and innovative functions are fundamental, they make educational policy formulation an arena of contestation by many outside interest groups (Mphahlele, 2023; Wendler & Hurrelmann, 2022; Clarke, 2020; Sayed & Moriarty, 2020; Luckett, 2019; Kogan, 2018). Mostly, in the process of education policy formulation, education in-groups like headteachers and teachers suffer relegation to mere educational policy implementers and not participants in the development process (Brighouse, 2024Zittoun et al., 2021; Umbach, 2020; Varone et al., 2020). Although such is the case, headteachers are an important in-group second only to teachers at the implementation pole of the education policy formulation-implementation continuum.

Educational policy formulation that sidelines the participation of stakeholders, as noted in Codd (2023), especially headteachers, reduces school headteachership to school

managerialism that is shy of handling novelty in school contexts but oftentimes sustains the reproduction of inefficiencies, ineffectiveness, and inequalities (Au, 2022; Wagner et al., 2022; Ball, 2021; Ball, 2021; Clarke, 2020). Although headteachers' commitment to instructional supervision is crucial in ensuring effective teaching for quality learning (Kopnina, 2020; General Assembly, 2015), the elusiveness of educational policy formulation to headteachers, exacerbated by a lack of research into public secondary school headteachership in CEED and CWED in Malawi, remains in the favour of the 'authorised' educational policy makers dominated by economists (Luneta, 2022; Morrow & Torres, 2022; Torres et al., 2022; Alam et al., 2020; Clarke, 2020).

Literature about public secondary school headteachers' commitment throughout headteachers' service periods (headteachership tenure) in CEED and CWED is scarce. In the absence of information on such, attempts to improve public secondary school headteachership miss an important factor on which to base efforts to improve school quality. The perception that the plummeting educational quality in Malawi is the sole function of resourcing inadequacies (Galafa, 2018; Wamba, 2015), requires scrutiny by interrogating the commitment of public secondary school headteachers to their instruction supervision as well. This study examines headteachers' commitment as the basis for improving students' achievement through headteachership effectiveness improvement.

2.2: Background

Following the World Declaration on Education for All (1990), many least-developed countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, including Malawi, made efforts to adopt the global agenda to local contexts but 'in haste' (Singh, 2020; Singh and Ehlers, 2020). Implementation of the quality imperative Education for All agenda (UNESCO, 2000a) requires national economic support. Even with the ambiguity in the interpretation of "quality education" (Dustkabilovich & Oktyabrovna, 2021; Wangamati, 2020), education quality remains positively related to the

level of national economic development. Therefore, weak national economies have had challenges in adopting the agenda (Challoumis, 2022; Chankseliani & McCowan, 2021), due to the inextricability of school quality and national economic education financial resourcing.

According to Žalėnienė & Pereira (2021) and Ogawa & Nishimura (2015), efforts to adopt the global education policy in least-developed countries met a lot of challenges owing to weak national economic capacities. In Malawi, strides made towards universal primary education through the phased abolition of user fees were abandoned due to the urgency of the Education for All agenda (Banda, 2024; Kadzamira & Ross, 2001). Just like in many countries, the agency to a hurried adoption of the Education For All was political pressure (Singh, 2020; Nishimura et al., 2009), which led Malawi to fall into the same implementation traps that the phased universal basic education implementation schedule was meant to avoid.

In most Sub-Saharan countries, the practical definition of the Education for All agenda has been expanding the provision of physical spaces and substantially reducing private costs for all within education systems, with an emphasis on basic education (Akinsemolu & Ogunkoya, 2021; Evans & Acosta, 2021; Wangamati, 2020). The basis for the basic education access expansion argument through fee abolition is philanthropic (Mcquade 2022; Crawfurd & Ali 2022). Although the Education for All agenda has both access expansion and quality improvement elements that some countries perceive as access first and then quality, the Dakar Framework for Action (2000) was meant to emphasise that focusing on access without quality was not the touted Education for All.

However, establishing and maintaining school quality at a level where high-quality education provision would be assured requires the intended commitment by all, including headteachers, and adequate resourcing. The relationship between access expansion to education and national education financing capacity (Gruijters et al., 2023; Matashu, 2021; Goczek et al., 2021; Kadzamira et al., 2018) is an important factor in predicting school quality

and consequently the provision of education quality. It is based on this factor that national education qualities are generally seen to show a north-south polarisation (Blicharska et al., 2021; Ruff, 2021; Vadrot, 2020).

The case of Malawi's public education system's focus regarding secondary school education reflects the general Sub-Saharan approach: improving access more than quality, as emphasis has been loosening the tight bottleneck on the learners' transition from the primary school to secondary schools, which stands at 38.4%, according to UNICEF (2019). The effective strategy to increase secondary school access has been the adoption of free secondary school education by fee abolition (Africa Education Watch 2023; Gruijters et al., 2023; Luft & Jones, 2022). While acknowledging the importance of secondary education access improvement attempts in Malawi, those efforts ought not to be entirely at the expense of quality, as it is noteworthy that access without quality turns out to be no access at all.

In situations where resourcing the education enterprise is a challenge, the argument in favour of school quality factors perceives the abolition of school fees as widening the education financing gap (Lewin 2020) and making school quality improvement unattainable. In situations with education system resourcing constraints, school fee abolition has been adopted, like in Malawi, where results on school context, teachers, and classrooms, as Africa Education Watch (2023) and Wangamati (2020) argue, have been low. Low school quality indicators where access is high present a situation of quantity without quality.

The study of headteachers' commitment to instructional supervision is within the school context and an indicator of school quality. Since school leadership is second only to the teacher-learner interaction in the students' learning process in importance to students' achievement (Ramadhani et al., 2022; Gkonou, 2021; Maponya, 2020), and given that headteachership has a direct influence on teachers' performance and professional skills improvement (Bellibaş et al., 2021; Maponya, 2020), the headteacher matters as the personification of school leadership

(Lucas, 2024; Shah et al., 2024; Anwar et al., 2022; Aravena, 2022; Tahira & Haider, 2020). Although headteachers' instructional supervision relates positively with instructional quality (Kunwar et al., 2023; Bellibaş et al., 2021), research attention on headteachership fails to match the magnitude of the centrality of headteachers in pursuit of the ideal school quality in secondary schools in CEED and CWED.

Identification, succession, preparation, and development of headteachers are not only rare in the literature but neglected (Lucas, 2024; Aravena, 2022; Bush, 2020). Underlying the minimal attention given to head teachership is the conservative perception that teachers' qualifications and teaching experience are sufficient prerequisites for headteachership (Anwar et al., 2022; Bellibaş et al., 2021; Bush, 2020) and stagnancy in the thought that leaders are born and not the result of human capitalisation through the obtainment of knowledge and skills (Filho et al., 2023; Nkosi, 2023; Slabbert-Redpath, 2023; Bolden et al., 2023; Santoso et al., 2021). The inertia in classical leadership theory and gaps in research on school leadership delay the unpacking of the educational leadership enterprise nexus for a consensus on what head teachership ought to constitute.

The sustained debate about the importance of institutional leadership on school delivery of high-quality teacher-learner interaction in learning activities demonstrates that consensus on the subject was yet to be had (Fullan, 2023; Kilag & Sasan, 2023). That lack of consensus may be from the "loose coupling" nature of education, contextual differences (Hautala et al., 2024; Shen, 2023; Håkansson & Adolfsson, 2022; Corsi, 2021), and the use of unidimensional theoretical frameworks to guide research about multidimensional phenomena in education. However, instead of giving up, there is a need to look for tools that are appropriately complex to measure the subtle and intricate relationships that exist between various school variables to describe the myriad ways in which students' achievement is affected by school leadership. This study is an attempt in that direction.

This literature review outlines the research theoretical and conceptual frameworks, study background, organisational commitment, conceptions of leadership, factors affecting educational leadership, instructional supervision, the conception of the "service period," and headteacher identification and succession. Several books and journal articles representing 80% of publications from 2018 to date, sourced from Google search engines, are examined to review the key concepts in this study. Details of the most commonly used search engines are provided in Appendix 1.

2.3.0 : Research Frameworks

Frameworks are like sets of brackets within which operations are to occur; “a supporting structure around which something can be built” or “a system of rules, ideas, or beliefs that is used to plan or decide something” (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d.), and such frameworks could either be theoretical or conceptual. Research frameworks are like a rail track through which a study plies to its intended conclusions (McMeekin et al., 2020; Sairinen et al., 2021; Hughes et al., 2019) and act like tools for auditing the coherency of the research (Hart & Annear, 2020) to establish the overall study's well-being. A research study may be guided by either a theoretical or a conceptual framework.

However, as noted in Varpio et al. (2024), both theoretical and conceptual frameworks may be used in a single study, where the nature of issues raised in the research problem would so require. In this study, the research problem is underpinned by two contrasting but complementary philosophical stances. The theoretical and conceptual frameworks used in a single research undertaking are meant to address the philosophical demands of the positive and interpretive strands of the study.

2.3.1.0: **Theoretical Framework.** The term "theoretical framework" is a lexical compound derived from theory, frame, and work. "Theoretical" is an adjectival concept conjugated from the noun theory. A frame, on the other hand, is a rigid parameter surrounding a phenomenon. The phenomenon could constitute a physical item, an activity, or a thought. Further, in the social sciences research context, ‘work’ is the activity of thinking and/or knowing, comprehending, analysing, synthesising, evaluating, and inferring phenomena. According to Kerlinger and Lee (2000, p. 11), a theory is "a set of interrelated constructs (concepts), definitions, and propositions that present a systematic view of phenomena by specifying relations among variables, with the purpose of explaining and predicting the phenomena." From the definition of "theory," three areas of focus emerge: definitions of interrelated concepts, descriptions of phenomena, and propositions about systematic relationships of variables.

Concepts that make up a theory ought to carry clarity in their definitions and should link with each other to clarify the held perspective of phenomena. Concise and clear communicative parameters that isolate the phenomenon addressed in a theory are another requirement of a theory. Finally, in a theory, the conditions upon which variables of specified phenomena relate to or influence one another are clearly set. Worth noting, though, is the exception of the predictive aspect in grounded theory (Dean, 2023; Turner & Astin, 2021; Hartanto, 2020), where applicability is limited to the studied context. On the other hand, a framework constitutes parameters from which a phenomenon is perceived (Lynch et al., 2024; Salawu et al., 2023).

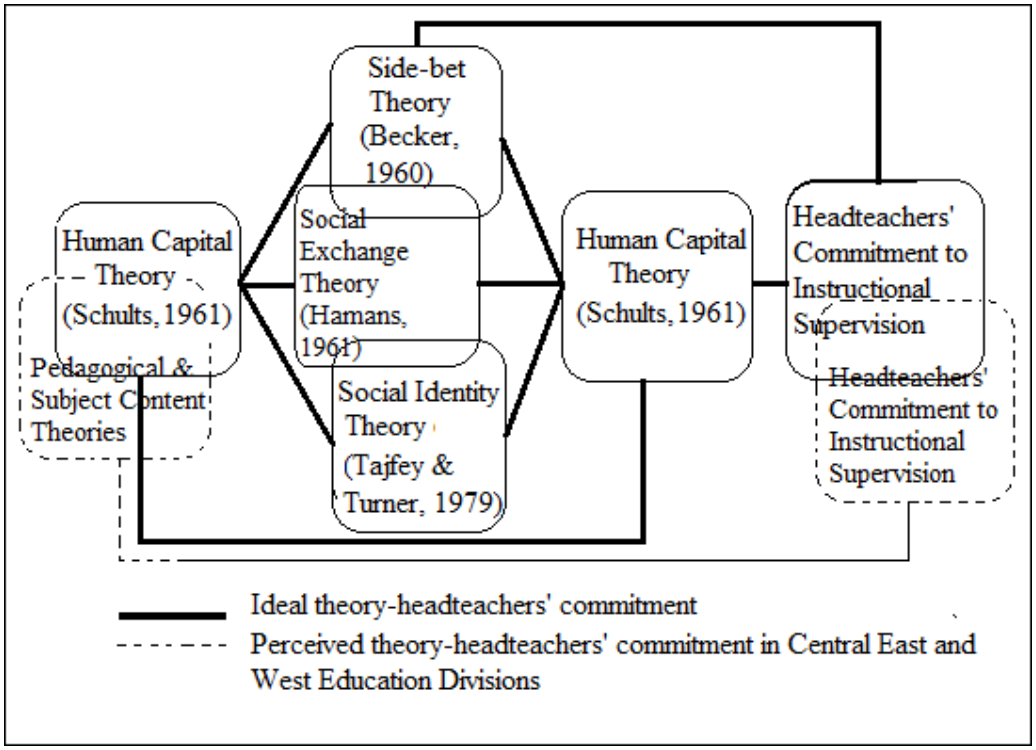
While discussion on the differentiation of theoretical and conceptual frameworks still rages (Partelow, 2023; Shikalepo, 2020 Taylor et al., 2021), and a conclusion is still at arm's length, it is still important for the concept of "theoretical framework" to be defined in this study. Although, there are several definitions of "theoretical framework." Varpio et al. (2020, p. 990)

posit that a theoretical framework is a "logically developed and connected set of concepts and premises—developed from one or more theories—that a researcher creates to scaffold a study," and Crawford (2019, p. 38) asserts that "a theoretical framework is an element of a conceptual framework that situates the relationship explored in the study into the context of developing or testing formal theories."

The definitions of theoretical framework presented above, in this case, inform the meaning of "theoretical framework" as the parameters from a set or sets of interrelated element descriptions that present a systematic view of phenomena to specify relations among variables for guidance in a research undertaking. The stated above definition of theoretical framework applies in this study about headteachers' commitment to instructional supervisory roles in Central East and Central West Education Divisions. As implied in Figure 2.1, headteachers' commitment is a learned behaviour mediated by learned psych-parameters and therefore extrudes from human capital (Schults, 1961). Ind addition, headteachers' commitment to instructional supervision is ideally related to the Side-bet, Social Exchange, and Social Identity theories (Becker, 1960, Hamans, 1961; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Those relationships confirm the thought that instructional supervisors come into being through human capital acquisition and not that they are born thus. The evaluation of Wamba & Mgomezulu (2015) about headteacher preparation by the apprenticeship model in Malawi perceive that the pedagogical and subject theories teachers learn during their pre-service and the teaching experience they acquire are adequate instructional supervision roles. Headteacher preparation has, therefore, avoided the ideal path but cocooned to pedagogical and subject content knowledge and skills as adequate preparation as elucidated in Figure 2.1. Each of the theories in the theoretical framework is related to various variables in the study problem in unique but with interfaces to the other theories.

Figure 2-1

Theoretical Framework for the Study on Headteachers' Commitment



2.3.1.1.0 : Human Capital Theory. The human capital theory posits that the level of assemblage of proficiencies, knowledge, and social and personal ascriptions in a person determines the extent of intrinsic and extrinsic economic benefits to the individual and society (Stone et al., 2024; Goldin, 2024; Mellander & Florida, 2021; Flores et al., 2020). According to Pasban et al. (2016, p. 253), the features of human capital include creativity, innovation, knowledge, skills, value addition, competitive advantage, and increasing satisfaction.

The human capital theory definition given is eclectic in philosophical orientation since the notions of investments it carries are both objective and subjective realities. According to mercantilism, physiocratism, classicism, and neoclassicism (Butkova, 2020), capital is an objective reality; thus, money, wealth, working capital, and fixed capital. However, the subjective perspective of capital in Marxism perceives capital as a social phenomenon: the potential owned by labour (Carpenter et al., 2024; Atzeni, 2022; Khaykin et al., 2020), whose magnitude is objectively determined upon utilisation.

Such potential reality that labour owns is in the form of knowledge, skills, and experience. In that perspective, human capital constitutes intrinsically economic values that employees own and that remain potential until the owners (labour) actualise the values through productivity. The opportunities to actualise the potential (subjective human capital) through productivity are present in social contexts or organisations of engagement, and secondary schools in CEED and CWED are examples. Some of the contextual elements that excite labour to actualise its subjective human capital potential are leadership styles, conditions of service, and organisational task-related skill development.

The conception of human capital is located in the classical economic theories (Goldin, 2024; Armstrong & Taylor, 2023; Avdeeva, 2022; Stoykov & Vasilev, 2021; Schults, 1961), and the fundamental principle of the theory is that the economic benefits that an employee accrues from an organisation are commensurate with the level of human capital investment that an individual has. The theory implies that an employee with high productivity potential (human capital), given the ideal organisational environment, realises high productivity as a contribution to the organisation's return on investment and has high earnings as rewards. Corroborating the human capital-earnings relationship, Kimura et al. (2019, p. 2) observe that "skills obtained through job experience are recognised as human capital because those skills enable workers to achieve higher productivity, thus delivering a positive association with workers' pay-off." Although the theory is classical in conception, it has not outlived its usability in human resource management practice today (Campino et al., 2021; Pereira et al., 2020). In practice, employees with more on-the-job experience and higher educational qualifications have relatively higher earnings and more prospects in an organisation.

Applying the same reasoning to education, the length of the headteacher's tenure is directly related to the propensity of human capital accumulation in a headteacher. Therefore, schools whose headteachers are in the higher service period benefit more from head teachership

experience than those whose headteachers are novices. The headteacher in the higher service period has more knowledge, skills, and self-confidence about educational leadership and teaching, including social interaction skills with local communities, than the headteacher in the low service period category.

Similarly, a headteacher with a higher academic qualification has more human capital investment and higher productivity potential than one with a low academic qualification. Consequently, a headteacher who has a higher academic qualification and long tenure derives potential for high productivity from dual capital investment trajectories, thus on-the-job experience, and, on the other hand, from academic engagement, which raises adaptation capacity. Efficiency and effectiveness in head teachership are, therefore, factors of public secondary school-specific experience and academic engagements. Therefore, it logically follows that remuneration and institutional benefits should positively relate to secondary school-specific experience and academic qualifications.

The headteacher's crucial role is not only to increase teachers' productivity potential but also to ensure that conducive workplace environments prevail where teachers can actualise their potential. The actualisation of teachers' potential is mediated by several factors, such as leadership styles and support through instructional supervision (Jusoh et al., 2024; Raza et al., 2023). The Malawi education system needs to ensure that headteachers have the human capital to ably create a secondary school working environment that will encourage teachers to actualise their potential to the advantage of their institutions.

According to Ashmead (2023), Klemenčič & Hoidn (2020), and Thomson, G. R. (2020), the headteacher's overarching task is to ensure that the ideal school environment is created for effective class teacher-learner interaction. That task includes identifying teachers' professional needs and creating support systems to improve teachers' effectiveness. Of course, the positive chain of relationships discounts the distortion of soldiering—the tendency of

employees to suppress their productivity to the lowest level where wages are flat (Braverman, 2020; Oberoi, 2016). Soldiering may be one of the mediators of commitment among headteachers that could account for the difference between how committed they think they are and the commitment they show through practice. This study applies the human capital theory principle of productivity to investigate head teachers' extent of commitment and examine the variations of such commitment throughout their public secondary school head teachership.

However, the Human Capital Theory has a fair share of criticisms emanating from the immeasurability of some of its variables, simplistic causal capital-productivity-income chain perception, weak human capital investment-income predictability, and a blurry human capital investment-turnover relationship (Shannon, 2023; Elsafty & Oraby, 2022). Previous studies on the relationship between human capital and remuneration show the two variables do not relate in a linearly simplistic, positive manner. The study on the labour-productivity relationship in the various economic sectors in Brazil (Katovich & Maia, 2018) shows that the relationship between the two variables is curvilinear due to modification from a myriad of labour-market factors. The studies on wage distribution (Qu et al., 2019; Bolotnyy & Emanuel, 2018; Lin, 2016) corroborate the curvilinearity observation in that several factors, such as international financial institution policies, national labour laws on minimum wage, and seniority assumptions, distort the valuation of the wage-labour simplistic linear relationship.

2.3.1.1.1 : International Finance Lending Institutions Influence. The civil service wage bill is of interest to international lending institutions like the World Bank and its affiliates. The influence on the national budget, especially the wage bill from the international lending institutions, is justified as assistance towards containing inflation to attract foreign investment, and that adds to the complexity of wage determination.

Such overload on teachers and headteachers is due to the government's non-friendly International Monetary Fund wage bill restrictions (Stubbs et al., 2020; Dembele, 2020).

According to Marphatia et al. (2007), the International Monetary Fund (IFM) set a wage bill ceiling of 7.2% of the GDP in 2007, at a time when teachers were needed most following the surge in secondary school enrolment as a consequence of the free primary education policy. The monetary compensation to teachers and headteachers did not reflect the appropriate value of human capital but rather showed political economy decisions. Therefore, the influence of international monetary institutions distorts human capital-wage relations.

2.3.1.1.2 : National Labour Laws Influence on Labour-Wage Relations. While wage bills in national budgets are a concern to international financial institutions, national labour laws stand to reflect the concerns of jobseekers, trade unions, and gender activists as well under the mediation of national governments to strike a consensus on the extent of labour marketability distortion by setting minimum wages (Bertola, 2023; Caliendo & Wittbrodt, 2022; Neumark et al., 2022; Manning, 2021). The mediation of legal frameworks in determining wages renders the human capital theory lacking in its predictive function about the return on private investment.

There are several justifications for the prescription of minimum wages in labour laws. Two such reasons are to attract investment by making labour reasonably affordable and to protect those who possess labour from exploitation by employers. That perception is echoed in the OECD (2018, p. 9), where it is observed that "minimum wages can help ensure that work is rewarding for everyone," thus protecting the vulnerable, and that "when minimum wages are moderate and well designed, adverse employment effects can be avoided" (OECD 2018, p. 72). Some of the adverse employment effects are retarding investment and retrenchment. The return on investment and promising on-the-job prospects are some of the factors that determine commitment, and headteachers in CEED and CWED are affected as well.

Given that the return on investment is distorted by extraneous factors such as the gender wage gap, teacher pay gap, influence from international financial institutions, and minimum

wage laws, the human capital theory has limited predictive function in the postulate that human capital investment is positively correlated with return on investment. From the post-positivist's point of view, the fact that the predictive function of human capital theory is limited only reflects the absence of instruments to measure complex relationships. However, challenges in the human capital theory to predict comprehensive human capital investment and return on investment do not constitute adequate grounds to relegate the theory to the archives.

Although there are predictive challenges with the human capital theory, the theory is indispensable for its note of human capacity to acquire knowledge, skills, and work competence through education and training (Goldin, 2024; Griffen, 2024; Sodirjonov, 2020), which act as determinants of psychometric parameters in organisational commitment. Such elements of human capital cannot be separated from the workforce. Human capital remains an important productivity and efficiency investment factor for organisational competitiveness and survival. Since that is true for headteachers in public secondary schools as well, it is, therefore, justified that the human capital theory forms part of the multi-faceted theoretical framework for the study of headteachers' commitment to instructional supervisory roles in the Central East and Central West Education Divisions.

2.3.1.4: Seniority-Wages-Productivity Contention. The other contentious issue within the human capital-organisational studies discourse is the seniority-wage-productivity relationship. The crux of the discourse is the justification of higher wages for seniors in organisations (Kim & Lee, 2023; Ma & Cheng, 2023; Whitehouse & Smith, 2020), where the definition of seniority is synonymous with old age. Such seniority-age synonymity introduces challenges with the normal biophysiological productivity distribution. Coincidentally, most of the organisational seniors are at the age when normal productivity distribution is predicted to be on the decline. That presents a challenge in the location of productivity that justifies higher wages for seniors.

In the study of university faculty salaries, Graves & Kapla (2018) note that seniority implies more human capital investment that relates positively with productivity to justify high remuneration and other benefits (Jiang et al., 2023; Deming, 2022; Omelchuk et al., 2020;). The positivity of between seniority and human capital capacity and wage excludes the conception of seniority as synonymous with age. While there are cases where seniority and age positively correlate, some cases where such a relationship is inverse exist. In the public secondary school context of the Central East and the Central West Education Divisions, there are headteachers in secondary schools where older teachers are in the majority. In such cases, seniority denotes a high propensity for organisational human capital and ought to positively relate to wages and other benefits.

However, the relationship between seniority and productivity is observed to be sector-sensitive with the moderation of age (Kang & Kimball, 2023; Seike & Ma, 2021; Bryson et al., 2020). Studies on employee age and productivity indicate that in manufacturing industries, seniority is inversely related to productivity. Such a relationship is based on biopsychological reality, where the physique and cognitive flexibility of a person follow a symmetrical distribution with age (Sidani, 2024; Amelchenko et al., 2023; Harel et al., 2023; Kruczek et al., 2020). On the other hand, in the finance management and core service industries, including educational service provision, seniority positively relates to productivity as the result of high copying flexibility. Since copying flexibility relates positively to the diversity of copying strategy repertoires (Góralska & Basińska, 2019), seniority in the service industry, including teaching services in CEED and CWED secondary schools, is positively related to productivity.

Further, while the human capital theory posits an inverse relationship between human capital investment and employee turnover, studies show mixed results (Wilton, 2019; Boon et al., 2018). For example, the study on pharmacy assistants (Koster et al., 2009) shows that an increase in firm-specific human capital investment in employees relates inversely to their

intentions to quit. In that case, high job satisfaction strengthens the inverse seniority-turnover relationship, while skill marketability exacerbates turnover. On the other hand, in the study on the human capital investment-turnover relationship, Dong & Wang (2015) present contrary results, given that employees boost their marketability with more human capital investment to increase turnover. That positive relationship is certainly true with general capital investment as opposed to organisational task-specific investment, like the experience in Japan (Kimura et al., 2019). The arguments that the Human Capital Theory brings forth in research reveal the complexity that human resource management constructs bring to practice.

Most criticisms of human capital theory lend themselves to differences in philosophical lenses. For instance, disparaging the utility of the human capital theory on account of the immeasurability of some variables of the theory, like the rate of return on invested capital to an employee, and the perception that only measurables are tangible (Faggian et al., 2019; Marginson, 2019; Mutamba, 2016), and the insulation of organisational contexts from critical intervening factors (Ali et al., 2018; Lee, 2018; Pike & Grosse, 2018), is typical of positivism. On the other hand, the claim that the accumulation of income reflects exploitative means (Marx, 1867) is dependent on practical sociopolitical contexts. Exploitation undeniably exists, but to claim that exploitation is the explanation for all capital accumulation tends to be a mere fallacy.

Still further, the claim that "human capital theory is a barrier to the scientific study of income distribution" (Fix, 2019, p. 1) is typical of objective approaches and is in recognition of socioeconomic relationships that currently have subjective descriptions. The lack of appropriate tools for measuring human capital-related entities does not create sufficient grounds to declare the phenomenon inexistent. It is not an overstatement to indicate that human capital, with its knowledge economy, forms the backbone of organisational existence and competitiveness and that the level of its accumulation in citizens determines the development

rate of an organisation and a nation (Musonda et al., 2023; Sobakinova et al., 2020). The foundation of the truth of that observation is truer nowhere else than in education. The study of headteachers' commitment to their instructional supervisory roles holds that the reality of human capital is both objective and subjective.

Although studies that have human capital as the theoretical framework are rare in educational leadership studies (Kennedy & Lee, 2018; Oplatka & Arar, 2017; Mertkan et al., 2016; Hallinger 1995; Hallinger & Bryant 2013a; 20213b; Oplatka, 2004; Walker & Dimmock 2002) in the Central East and the Central West education divisions in Malawi, education remains the prominent means of human capitalisation, and head teachership towers as essential in direct influence on teachers' performance and indirect influence on students' achievement (Pashiardis & Kafa, 2022; Atchia & Chinapah, 2019). This study determines the consistency with which headteachers work to improve teachers' human capital capacity through instructional supervision to positively impact students' achievement.

2.3.1.2.0: Side-bet Theory. The side-bet theory postulates that "commitments come into being when a person... links extraneous interests with a consistent line of activity" (Becker, 1960, p. 32). The concept of "side bet," clarifies Meyer & Allen (1984, p. 373), "refers to anything of value an individual has invested... that would be lost or deemed worthless at some perceived cost to the individual if he or she were to leave the organization." In that case, the broad understanding of "anything of value" categorises side-bets into intrinsic and extrinsic types accumulated from the employer and from being a member of the employee's society.

According to social identity theory, such sidebets manifest in the form of social capital from an in-group that is not available in an out-group (Bahuguna et al., 2023; Li & Ye, 2021; Harwood, 2020). Such social capital, according to Hogg (2018), includes assistance that in-group members access to develop self-esteem and social security. According to the social exchange theory, side-bets are the tangible and intangible, intrinsic and extrinsic rewards that

employees anticipate from colleagues and their current organisation based on the thinking that they deserve such rewards (Golec de Zavala, 2023; Haslam et al., 2020) as members of a group or employees of an organisation.

However, criticisms of the side-bets theory include its presentation of commitment as unidimensional and its failure to explain the basis of the initial commitment that jumpstarts the accumulation of side-bets (Estigoy et al., 2020; Georges, 2020; Ozkan et al., 2020). The one-dimensionality of the theory plays down the contributions of psychological and cultural persuasions to one's choice of organisation before entry into employment. There are pre-entry persuasions (Findeisen et al., 2024; Lee, 2023; Prang, 2020) for a potential employee to choose to apply for employment with a particular organisation. In addition, consistency in engagement with an organisation is to safeguard anticipated favourable returns, which include human capital and especially firm-specific knowledge and skills, which become useless in a different firm (Han et al., 2021; Georges, 2020).

Further, the commitment description in Becker (1960) bears axiological connotations that are not brought to focus in the clarification of the side-bet theory. The employment of a person by an organisation testifies to the complementarity of employee-employer motivational interests. Motivation as “a process by which the internal energies are directed towards various goal objects in [an] environment” (Borah, 2021, p. 550) has implications for institutional leaders and employees as well and manifests in both intrinsic and extrinsic modes (Paais & Pattiruhu, 2020; Locke & Schattke, 2019; Rahaman et al., 2020; Renata et al., 2018). The observation in Cohen (2007) about pre-entry persuasions links up with the initiation phase of motivation, and at the pre-entry phase, there are no side-bets already accumulated.

However, the assumption that employees’ persistency with the organisation is exclusively for extrinsic reasons negates the reality of intrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation is the initiation and persistence of a course of action for its own value and ends. In that regard,

some employees may acquire organisation-specific knowledge and skills for intrinsic values and may register low turnover desire, not because they are protecting extraneous interests but because of the value of just being in the organisation. Such an intrinsically valued persistency in an organisation is not taken on board in the side-bets theory. Therefore, it is simplistic to perceive commitment in terms of sidebets that an employee accumulates while in service with an organisation.

Besides that, side bets alone have the potential to stifle innovation, as employees may perceive their accumulated side bets as the maximum justification for commitment. For example, in the study of top managers in a lean project (Lam & Rahma, 2014), attempts to protect sidebets led to deviation from lean objectives. When the case is applied to public secondary school leadership in CEED and CWED, headteachers may sustain ineffective practices like deliberately maintaining teacher-centred teaching methods to justify identification to attend interactive teaching methods workshops, thus protecting side-bets by maintaining the organisational status quo. Such counter-organisational behaviour is a version of the "misfortune of industry" called "soldiering" in Taylorism (Braverman, 2020; Palla & Billy, 2018). In the case of headteachers, institutional-specific skills include expertise in school-specific skills like the formulation of an examination blueprint (Stronge & Xu, 2021; Bush, 2018; Suaka & Kuranchie, 2018), the preparation of schemes of work, lesson planning, and instructional supervision. Gilbert et al. (2020) assert that the accumulation of such secondary school-specific human capital relates positively to headteachers' commitment and job performance, and the more headteachers' human capital is saturated with such institutional-specific knowledge and skills, the more headteachers will feel less useful outside the secondary school leadership.

While appreciating the intentions that organisations have to improve employees' productivity, it is also important to note that focussing on institutional-specific human capital

reduces turnover intentions. The more human capital investment is limited to organisational specialities, the less valuable the human capital will be outside the field the organisation operates within (Aburumman et al., 2020; Wang & Sun, 2020). The tie-in between human capital organisational-tasks specificity and marketability reinforces low turnover feelings. Given the inquisitive nature of the human mind, organisations ought to ensure that their employees are kept busy with acquisition of organisational-specific human capital as one of the ploys to reduce turnover intentions.

Currently, there is no evidence of studies on secondary school headteachers' commitment in the CEED and CWED in Malawi with the side-bet theory as the guiding theoretical framework. However, the findings that direct relationships exist among human capital, side-bet, and commitment (Cetin, 2020; Joarder & Ashraf, 2020) predict that headteachers in CEED and CWED are bound to raise their productivity with more human capital investment.

2.3.1.3.0: Social Exchange Theory. Social interactional dynamism draws its energy from the conscious or unconscious desire for an advantageous cost-reward net difference. According to Thomas & Gupta (2021), Chernyak-Hai & Rabenu (2018), Blau (1964), and Homans (1961), "social exchange" refers to voluntary social interactions between parties that involve exchanging tangible and intangible phenomena that have a rewarding opportunity value. In that case, the desire for net gains from social interactions fuels the continuity of engagement or disengagement between or among individuals. In simplistic forms, the interactions take place vertically and horizontally, although oblique orientations occur as well.

According to Rockstuhl et al. (2020), Gerlach (2019), Yoshikawa et al. (2018), and Cropanzano et al. (2017), the exchange interaction cycle manifests in three stages: initiation, reciprocation, and formation. The initiation stage of the cost-reward exchange interaction involves an actor offering a stimulus to a target person. In return, the target person reciprocates

with a reward at the reciprocal stage. When the reward from the target person registers a net gain for the actor, that stimulates the intensification of interaction to reach the formation stage. On the other hand, when the reward registers a loss to the actor, interaction disengagement occurs and the formation stage dissipates.

Although social exchange theory guides this study, it has its criticisms too. Some of the areas of concern in the theory are its reductionist perspective on the interaction of people, overlapping constructs, and lack of predictive precision (Stafford & Kuiper, 2021). In the study of pharmacy assistants (Koster et al., 2009), turnover related negatively to increased human capital investment because the employees perceived the training as a reward worth the cost of their commitment. In that case, the increased commitment of the employees was explainable by either human capital theory or social exchange theory. Since the commitment of the employees is explainable by human capital theory as well, social exchange theory lacks uniqueness in precision.

The social exchange theory, in this case, describes some of the experiences associated with instructional supervision that headteachers and teachers go through. For instance, the headteacher arranges with a teacher for a lesson observation engagement, which the teacher accepts. On the part of the headteacher, there is a cost in terms of time to engage the teacher in a conversation in addition to using their communication skills. Acceptance by the teacher is a reward for the headteacher. On the part of the teacher, being identified for a class observation may be perceived as positive recognition and an opportunity to foster a good relationship with the headteacher, thus a reward.

However, one of the challenges with the simplistic presentation of the social exchange theory comes from the contractual nature of the headteacher-teacher relationship: the headteacher has the institutional authority to initiate the instructional supervision interaction on the one hand, while the teacher has to accept it regardless of perceived costs and rewards.

Since the essence of instructional supervision is to improve teachers' productivity for consequential students' achievement enhancement, interaction disengagement does not occur due to negative rewards from teachers, such as refusal to be observed by deliberately not being available for the task. To the contrary, a perceived lack of improvement in a teacher calls for interaction intensification. The applicational complexities notwithstanding, the theory guides the study in describing factors that affect organisational commitment in general (Afshari, 2020) and the commitment of headteachers to their instructional supervisory roles.

2.3.1.4.0 : Social Identity Theory. The Social Identity Theory propounded by Tajfel & Turner (1979) is about the "process of depersonalisations whereby people come to perceive themselves more as interchangeable exemplars of a social category than as unique personalities" (Roccas & Brewer (2002, p. 88). According to Islam (2014, p. 1781) Social Identity Theory is "attempting to explain intergroup conflict as a function of group-based self-definitions," thus efforts to define an individual by the characterization of the group one belongs to. Therefore, according to van den Scott (2023), Mampuru (2022), Harwood (2020), and Hogg (2018), the constructs that characterise the Social Identity Theory (Smith et al., (2022), are social categorization, social comparison, social identification, and self-esteem.

2.3.1.4.1 : Social Categorisation. This being a cognitive tool for classifying society by generalising the understanding of individuals (Golec de Zavala, 2023; Whitaker, 2020), it dualizes society into in-groups and out-groups. In public secondary institutions in CEED and CWED, the commonality in academic qualifications, skills, knowledge, career, institutional name, and so forth typifies the identity of an in-group and generates an exclusive culture that differentiates one group from others. Islam (2014, p. 1781) further notes that such classification of people into groups is "based on arbitrary criteria and showed that even this ‘minimal' group basis led people to form psychological groups, exaggerating the positive qualities of one’s own group while exaggerating the negative qualities of the out-group."

Consequently, the in-group's exclusive culture nurtures a social capital that informs the self-identity of the members of that group of individuals to behave according to the group's culture. According to the Social Identity Theory of Leadership (Davis et al., 2019; Harwood, 2020), such categorization has the potential to set secondary school headteachers on the course of competition rather than cooperation. It is, however, the propensity of the desire to become better than the other public secondary school, which in part ought to energise headteachers' commitment to instruction supervisory roles.

Although critics perceive social categorization as the source of social stereotyping that insulates an organisation from the advantages of group heterogeneity (Abrams et al., 2021), the theory explains the safety that an in-group environment provides for the maturation of the self-identity development of the individual in-group members (Brown, 2020) as the basis for meaningful interaction with out-group members. Therefore, the theory clarifies that the relationship between oneself and others, including organisations, is characterised by the effects of one's in-group human capital investments, side-bets, and social exchange patterns.

2.3.1.4.2 : Social Comparison. Social comparison is the process of defining an in-group by how different it is from its proximate out-group. According to Gerber et al. (2018) and Trepte & Loy (2017), the social comparison process favours the in-group and derogates the out-group, which Burke & Stets (2022) call in-group favouritism and out-group derogation. The descriptive emphasis on the positive aspects of an in-group, whether cosmetic or real, stimulates the pre-entry instrumental propensity in potential employees (Scheepers & Ellemers, 2019; Trepte et al., 2016) and is an effective strategy in the "war for talent" among organizations. Organisations in the same field project themselves as offering better employment prospects in order to attract talented employees and assume a competitive edge.

However, Malawi's centralised public secondary education system insulates institutions from aggressive competitive stances. The conditions of service for headteachers

and teachers are flat, and the allocation of students to various public secondary schools is controlled through centrally managed selection. That notwithstanding, the positive distinctiveness of a public secondary school, according to self-categorisation in the social identity theory, should positively affect the morale of its constituents, including the commitment of the headteachers.

2.3.1.4.3 : Social Identification. Social identification is the process of locating "that part of an individual's self-concept that derives from the knowledge of one's membership in a social group together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership" (Tajfel 1978, p. 63); it is the creation of a self-image that is typed on the characteristics of a coherent group of people. While accepting that there are groups of people that are negatively characterised, social identification is meant to veil an individual's identity with the positive image of a group. The overshadowing of individual personality or character's weaknesses by group strengths is the very reason why people strive to assume the identity of a group; thus, categorical self rather than individual self has traces of deindividuation (Vestergren & Acar, 2023; Seering et al., 2018).

2.3.1.4.4 : Self-esteem. The "subjective evaluation of [one's] overall worthiness as a person" (Harris & Orth, 2020, p. 1459), thus self-esteem, is the "powerful force within each one of us. [that] encompasses much more than that innate sense of self-worth" (Branden, N. (2021, p. vi), that forms the individual's basis for interactional stances and a lens through which to screen others or an exposure of vulnerability to intrusions from the opinions of others (De Moor et al., 2021; Monsonet et al., 2023). Self-esteem is a nexus of social interactions and social experience (Cameron & Granger, 2019), and ignoring self-esteem cracks the nucleus of group identity. There are criticisms of the social identity theory, some of which are its de-individualisation of personality at the expense of self-esteem, the use of a minimal group

paradigm, and the less realistic polarisation of persons into in-groups and out-groups through group bias (van Bezouw et al., 2021; Scheepers & Ellemers, 2019).

Much as group characteristics deductively influence individual personalities, it is equally accurate to perceive that individual traits inductively result in moulding group identity (Burke & Stets, 2022; Charness & Chen, 2020; Cooper & Olson, 2020; Cameron & Granger, 2019). In that view, the notion of a group being without the contribution of the traits of individuals is neither natural nor realistic (Donnan & Wilson, 2021; Laursen & Veenstra, 2021). Further, the polarisation of people into in-group and out-group groups harnesses biases through distinctiveness, uniqueness, and group superiority complexes that are exclusive.

The capsulation of social individuals into groups based on homogeneity insulates the groups from improvement using the potential of networking. In a secondary school situation, such exclusivity counters the networking role of the headteachers (Ashmead, 2023; Cruz-González et al., 2021), which often results in public secondary schools perceiving each other as competitors rather than in cooperation to deliver on the national education vision. Cooperation for a common good leverages a school's in-group and out-group interactions. Headteachers ought to envisage themselves and the schools they lead as a comprehensive whole unit that is geared to achieve the predetermined goals, just as the ministry of education looks at all the public secondary schools as elements of an education system.

Despite the criticisms, social identity theory is still essential for the provision of an alternative to developing and nurturing the self-identity (Ozyilmaz & Koc, 2024; Latif et al., 2022) of headteachers, teachers, and students. A school is a major in-group from a theoretical social identity perspective, while academic departments and sections are sub-in-groups for a unified, multi-faceted intent. As Hogg (2017) argues, the headteacher's representative prototypicality of all sub-groups (the aggregation of human capital, side-bets, and social exchange factors) defines the ease of exercising school leadership and authority.

The multi-faceted theoretical framework for the study is a combination of human capital theory, side-bet theory, social exchange theory, and social identity theory to inform the three-component organisational commitment model (Castanheira, 2023; Lovat et al., 2023; Rokach, 2021), as shown in Figure 1. The multi-faceted theoretical framework aligns with the complexity of educational leadership in general and Malawi's public secondary school head teachership in particular. The lack of contextual elements stability in not only Malawi public secondary schools but particularly in Central East and Central West Education Divisions and the ever-increasing heterogeneity in educational clientele require an eclectic philosophical approach for an effective and multi-pronged description of public secondary school headteachership.

2.3.2.0: Conceptual Framework. The word "conceptual" is derived from the noun "concept," which has Latin roots to mean thought or purpose. A dictionary definition of the word "concept" is "an expressible abstract idea, thought, imagination, a mental impression, instances, or occurrences." With a focus on research studies, Kivunja (2018, p. 47) posits that a conceptual framework is "the total, logical orientation and associations of anything and everything that forms the underlying thinking, structures, plans, and practices and implementation of your entire research project." In addition, the total orientation and associations are expressed in narrative or visual forms (Bringle et al., 2023; Van der Waldt, 2020). Several researchers have reached a consensus that a conceptual framework is a narrative or visual presentation of the connectedness of study concepts (Varpio et al., 2020). With the definition of framework as a parameter that guides the perception of a phenomenon, a conceptual framework ought to mean an expressible logical abstraction of a thought or an imagination of an undertaking.

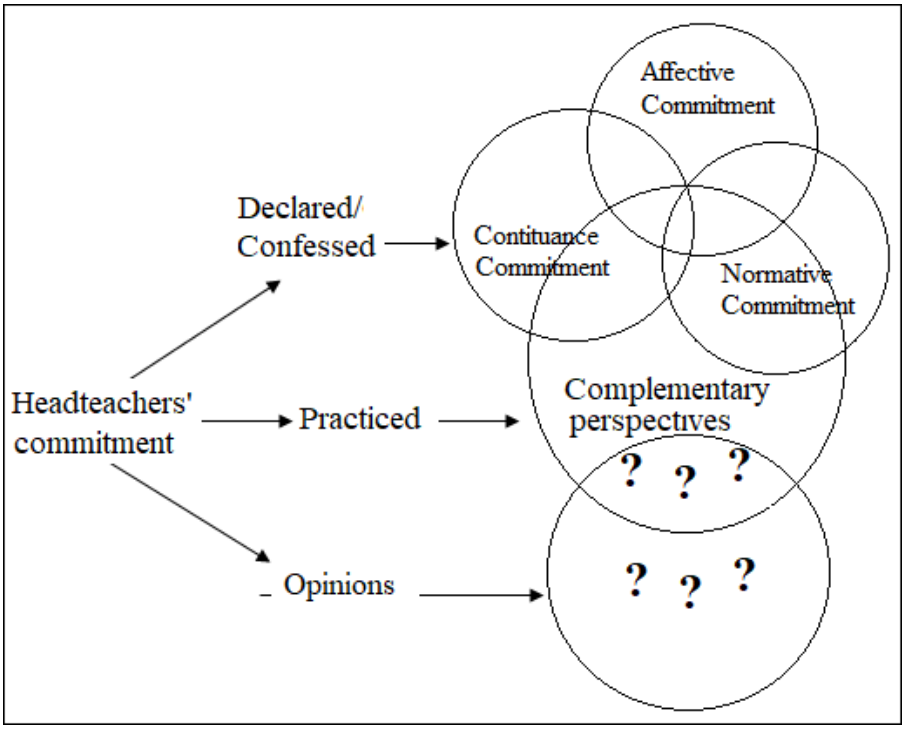
In an application of the meaning of conceptual framework to reflect a research study, Ravitch & Riggan (2017) identify the elements of a conceptual framework as abstractions about

the study topic, research problem, research questions and/or hypotheses, the literature to be reviewed, the parameter(s) of phenomenon description that guide a research undertaking, methodology, methods, instrumentation, data analysis strategies, interpretation of findings, recommendations, and conclusions. Regarding the study of headteachers' commitment to instructional supervisory roles, a conceptual framework is the abstraction of the alignment of the elements of a research study.

The conceptual framework of this study was built around the three-component organisational commitment model that is accompanied with practiced commitment and the associated headteachers' attitudes and opinions as shown in Figure 2.2. Projected in the conceptual framework are the three components of commitment described in Shrestha & Parajuli (2024), Al-Refaei et al. (2023), Nam & Lan (2022), Syakur et al. (2020). Besides perceiving the three components of commitment regarding headteachers' commitment to instructional roles, the determined commitment from participants responses to the questionnaire is viewed as confessed or declared. Imbedded in the conceptual framework is the construct of practiced or implemented commitment. As the commitment coinage suggests, practiced commitment is reflected in what the headteachers actually do as they carry out their day-to-day activities in leading their public secondary education institutions. Further, included in the conceptual framework are the opinions that headteachers had regarding their practiced head teachership as shown in Figure 2.2. It was the practiced commitment and opinions that were sources for complementary constructs for the description of headteachers' commitment to their instructional supervisory roles.

Figure 2-2

Conceptual Framework for the Study of Headteachers' Commitment



Organisational commitment continues to receive researchers' attention worldwide. Such an enormity of attention to organisational commitment is worthwhile since studies (Balamurugan & Dhivya, 2020; Georges, 2020; Shahid, 2020) have shown that organisational survival and competitiveness depend not only on how talented the employees may be but on the employees' level of commitment as well. The commitment of employees to their organisations is a psychological issue that is translated into organisational behaviour, whose manifestation is characterised by organisational commitment dimensions.

However, although organisational commitment is crucial in education as well, little research on organisational commitment in public secondary schools in Malawi in general, and particularly in CEED and CWED, is noticeable in the literature. While the literature review, in this study, highlights the definition of organisational commitment and its antecedents (Becker et al., 2012) this research relates the conceptual perspectives of organisational commitment to public secondary school head teachership in the Central East and the Central West education

divisions. Organisational commitment, with its early perception by Allen & Meyer (1990), has generated discourse from various perspectives (Ayele, 2022; Muda & Fook, 2020). In this literature review, Allen and Meyer's perspectives will be discussed.

2.3.2.1.0 : Three-component Organisational Commitment Model. According to Becker et al. (2012) and Meyer and Allen (1991), organisational commitment, the attitude, and behaviour of employees to achieve an aggregate net performance of an organisation through wilful exertion of effort and desire not to remain in the organisation manifest in affective, continuance, and normative dimensions. Further, Ekhsan et al. (2023) and Islam (2023) corroborate with Mugizi et al. (2015, p. 15) in observing that "the affective dimension of commitment refers to an emotional attachment to and involvement with an organisation," while continuance commitment has side-bet connotations on turnover decisions, and normative commitment is about the attachment to an institution as a moral responsibility. The spine of the many perspectives of organisational commitment constitutes employee psychological attachment to an organisation, which translates into the extent of employee engagement in core values and objectives that determine organisational survival (Eapen & Finkenstadt, 2024; Ulabor & Bosede, 2019).

Further, organisational commitment is the individual's persistence in interactional association with an organisation as an employee and reflects psychological, social, emotional, and contractual levels of antecedental influence (Van Waeyenberg et al 2022; Herrera & De Las Heras-Rosas, 2021; Muda & Fook, 2020). Although hard to define because of its multidimensionality, organisational commitment is about unearthing and describing the bonding cords employees have with their organisations and verifying the strength of such cords (Anttila, 2014). As Wu (2024) and Abebe & Assemie (2023) observe, commitment of employees in educational institution is multi-dimensional and therefore, hard to define as well. However, the complexity of definition has to be tried on. That perception is true with

headteachers commitment. The three dimensions of organisational commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1997) applies principles from several theories to describe commitment. The organisational commitment model dimensions are affective, continuance, and normative (Meyer & Allen, 1997).

2.3.2.1.1 : Affective Commitment. This dimension of organisational commitment is the ideal and most emotional type of employee-organisation bonding. According to Zacharo et al. (2018, p. 91), affective commitment is psychological in nature and aligns with the extent to which "the individual's values and goals comply with those promoted by the organization." Employees with affective commitment feel good about remaining with their organisations even when better employment alternatives exist in other institutions.

However, from the organisation's perspective, the reason for maintaining employees is neither emotional nor psychological, but the employees' productivity (Latham, 2023; Chen et al., 2020). In this case, the organisation has the upper hand in determining the tenure of an employee by using key performance indicators. The indicators are those that determine organisational competitiveness. According to Gerasimov et al. (2018) and Tripathi & Jha (2018), organisational competitiveness results from two aspects: employees' high productivity and low employee maintenance costs by the organisation, which in Marxist presentation could be the extent to which employees are exploited for their labour.

Just like in any public service, society desires public secondary school headteachers with affective commitment because that connotes dedication and low labour maintenance costs (Aboramadan, 2021; Leithwood et al., 2021). Dedicated headteachers would work more than expected at less competitive pay. It is therefore crucial to understand that while society expects headteachers to be positively emotional about their commitment to duty, schools desire headteachers' high performance. Society desires public secondary school heads with affective commitment (Dahleez et al., 2021; Skinner et al., 2021; Stronge & Xu, 2021). Since human

capital propensity relates positively to employee productivity (Papa et al., 2020; Werdhiastutie et al., 2020; Marginson, 2019), there is a need for arrangements to continuously invest headteachers with human capital to enable them to cope with the dynamic secondary school contexts for high productivity.

2.3.2.1.2 : Normative Commitment. According to Inam et al. (2023), Harini et al. (2022), and Becher et al. (2012) normative commitment is the feeling of obligation to an organisation that becomes the main factor in employees' decisions to remain with or quit an organization. According to Wołowska (2014, p. 129), normative commitment is "the sense of moral duty to stay in the organization." The feeling of not leaving an organisation as a moral duty forms from cultural experiences (Fajagutana & Guhao Jr, 2022; Hadi & Tentama, 2020).

The cultural context's influence on normative commitment is fundamental to the extent that "cultures that emphasise the importance of collective values and more extended relations between an employee and an employer will contribute to a stronger development of normative commitment than cultures in which dominating individualistic values give more possibilities of employment" (Wolowska, 2014, p. 131). The finding that "Japanese employees are less inclined to quit in the presence of cultures favouring paternalism/familism, groupism, and frequent supervision [and that] the reverse is in general true about American employees" (Lincon & Doerr 2012) underscores the importance of culture to organisational commitment. The importance of culture to the extent of commitment an employee has relates to the key tenets of the Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979).

There is, however, contestation among theorists about the distinctiveness of the affective dimension from the normative component (Đorđević et al., 2020; Curado & Vieira, 2019; McCormick & Donohue, 2019; Berberoglu, 2018) and that one of the reasons why debate about the credibility of the three-component in the three-component organisational commitment model still rages on. While affective commitment is about a positive emotional

attachment to an organisation that an employee has, which makes the employee remain with the organisation forgoing other opportunities for better employment, normative commitment is the attachment an employee has to an organisation as a moral obligation that aligns with loyalty (Al-Jabari & Ghazzawi, 2019; Mwabi, 2016).

The disjuncture between the affective and normative attachment to an organisation resides in the holder of a point of view, whether by the organisation or the employee (Koul 2016, p. 12). The organisation views normative commitment in an employee as affective, while the employee views his or her normative commitment as affective. In both cases, there is equifinality in upbeat organisational delivery on goals and objectives.

2.3.2.1.3 : Continuance Commitment. The original conception of continuance commitment posits the construct as unidimensional in that the employees' desire was not to leave an organisation because they want to protect and sustain their interests, that are job-specific skills and knowledge, income, status, seniority, loan facilities, opportunities for further training, and social connections (Mabasa, 2018; Becker, 1960; Meyer & Allen, 1984). The conception of employees' investments relates to the side-bet theory, a compound framework element of this study, because the heterogeneity of headteachers in public secondary employees' entails variations in tastes, specificities, and values of side-bets or investments (Anttila, 2014) that would influence quit decisions.

While employees make efforts to achieve long tenure in order to protect their side bets (Mabasa, 2018), organisations desire to maintain workers that help ensure returns on organisational investment. Those employees who do not add value to organisational performance experience involuntary turnover through contract termination. Therefore, voluntary and involuntary turnover (Ulabor et al., 2019) justify the description of continuance commitment as multidimensional. Such a multidimensional perception of turnover corroborates the explanation in Tomic et al. (2018), where an employee leaves an organisation

for better employment opportunities elsewhere and other employees remain in the organisation because they have no alternative employment due to their less marketable knowledge and skills.

The skills and knowledge that an employee accumulates during tenure as the justification for remaining with an organisation align with propositions in the Human Capital Theory (Schults, 1961). The employees' interests that are factors in making quitting decisions relate to the side-bet theory (Tala, 2017; Becker, 1960), and social connections that provide social security to employees and become factors for making quit-decisions reflect the social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Further, the observation in Andrew (2017, p. 2) that "employees have their own requirements and personal wishes that need to be considered" earns continuance commitment its calculative engagement description. Such a perception of continuance commitment mirrors typical key propositions of the Social Exchange Theory (Ahmad et al., 2023; Yamao, 2024; Stafford & Kuiper, 2021).

It is noteworthy that while Meyer & Allen (1990) construe continuance commitment as a unidimensional factor in determining the turnover rate, other studies show the contrary. For example, in their study of continuance commitment, Jaros & Culpepper (2014, p. 79) observe that continuance commitment is multidimensional since "perceived employment alternatives" influence employee turnover as well. In this case, the decision not to leave an organisation may indeed be due to fear of high sacrifices on side-bets or the lack of alternative employment opportunities where the human capital of an employee is organization-specific. For this reason, continuance commitment does not form part of Cohen's four-component commitment model (Cohen, 2007).

Unlike the unidimensional perspective of continuance commitment, recent research on organisational commitment (Azdha et al., 2923; Ishak et al., 2023) presents continuance commitment as multidimensional. As such, the reason for turnover is not only intentional,

where the employee decides whether to quit a job or not, but multidimensional as well, where an organisation terminates a contract because of poor performance. The multidimensionality of commitment underscores the observation in Ulabor et al. (2019, p. 24) that "employees will remain committed to the organisation based mainly on their level of productivity and the organisation's commitment to support them," besides the desire to protect investments.

2.3.2.2: Importance of Organizational Commitment. While the importance of organisational commitment receives emphasis from many scholars (Pratama et al., 2022; Balamurugan & Dhivya, 2020; Purwanto, 2020; Qing et al., 2020), other studies perceive the construct to the contrary. For example, according to Kashefi et al. (2013, p. 501), "the effect of organisational commitment on other prominent variables in management areas such as leaving (quitting) a job, absence, and performance has decreased, and therefore it is useless to examine it." The central premise for the contrary perception is that organisational setup changes that are driven by profit-maximisation intent influence job losses. The organisational responses to contextual and operation changes include minimising operations, merging, and working from the cloud to minimise costs to physical office space locations (Quresh et al., 2019; Andrew, 2017; Radosavljević et al., 2017).

However, the assertion that organisational commitment becomes stale for further study falls apart when organisational commitment is still a factor for in-service training, promotions, retentions, and layoffs in human resource-intensive institutions like schools. Committed employees with appropriate human capital investment are strategic to organisational survival (Al Qershi, 2021), and rational organisations retain such employees. Committed employees are crucial to organisational efficiency because of their high human capital propensity, prototypical organisational culture, ethical side-bets, and social exchange influence.

Further, service organisations are so human capital-intensive that even telework options fail to completely replace talented and committed employees (Nakrošienė et al., 2019; Eckardt et al., 2018; Aliyu & Nyadzayo, 2016). Educational institutions, for example, cannot do without students, teachers, and headteachers since telework or working from the cloud cannot replace such a workforce and clientele. Therefore, it is vital to continuously study organisational commitment to sustain and improve human capital investment services. The importance of organisational commitment to institutional performance, according to Azdha et al. (2023) and Kim & Shin (2019), sustains the fundamentality of the construct in organisational leadership.

2.3.3 : Compound Framework.

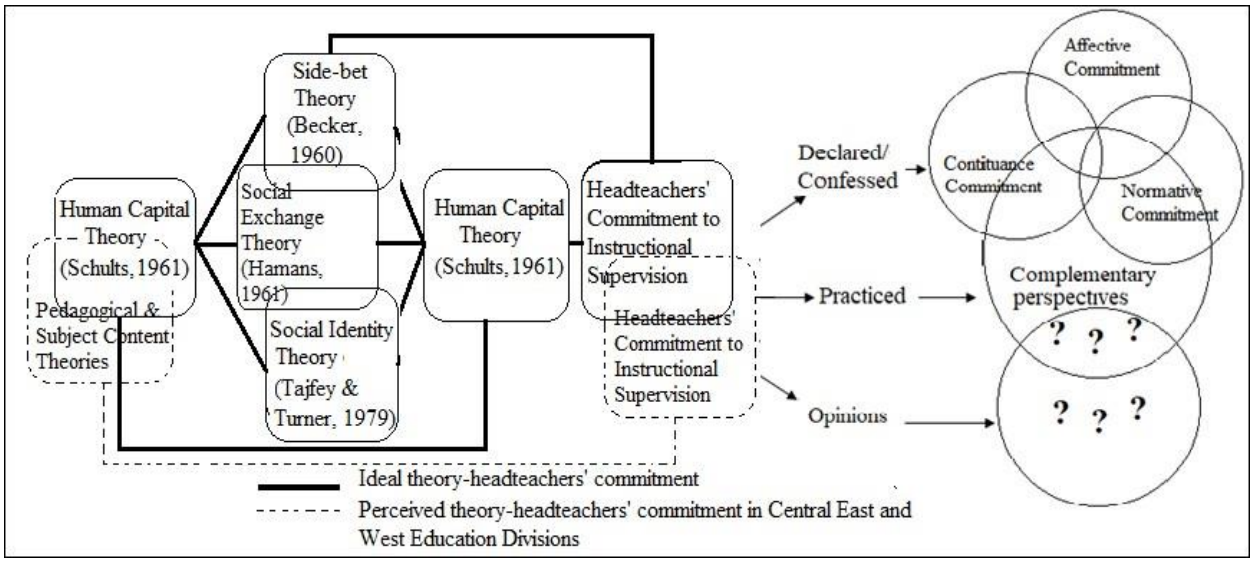
The framework that guides this study is compound is compound as shown in Figure 2-1, because it constitutes a theoretical framework that has four related theories and a conceptual model. The compound framework, created by the researcher, shows how related the constituent theories and the conceptual framework relate. The nesting theory in the compound framework is the human capital theory (Schults, 1961) in which education is perceived as the technology for developing human capital. Nested in the human capital theory are the Side-bet theory (Becker, 1960) which provides an explanation on why employees that have invested in an institution do not quit easily; the Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964; Homans, 1961). The compound framework is appropriate to inform the study's mixed-method approach, which reflects the dual-philosophical orientation of the research problem and the complex nature of headteachers' commitment in public secondary schools in Central East and Central West Education Divisions.

The study of headteachers' commitment to instruction supervision and school head teachership service periods in CEED and CWED draw support from the Human Capital Theory (Schults, 1961), the Side-Bet Theory (Becker, 1960), the Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964;

Homans, 1961), and the Social Identity Theory (Tajfey & Turner, 1979), with the Three-Component Commitment Model (Meyer & Allen, 1991) as the application tool. The relationships among the theories constituting the multiple theoretical frameworks are such that the human capital theory nests the side-bets, social exchange, and social identity theories that contribute to the application of the conceptual framework thus, three-componential organisational commitment model (Scales, 2023; Nguyen et al., 2020; Meyer & Allen, 1991). The nesting and coalescing of the theories within the context of this study is shown in Figure 2-3.

Figure 2-3

Compound Framework for the Study of Headteachers' Commitment



The discussion of the multiple theoretical frameworks guiding this study highlights the meaning, history, and critical principles of the theories constituting the framework. In addition, there is a discussion, in brief, on how each of the theories guides the study on headteachers' commitment to instructional supervision in CEED and CWED in Malawi.

2.3.4 : Conceptual Perspectives of 'Headteacher.'

The term "headteacher" is a social identification concept that, according to Social Identity (Milton et al., 2023; Holmes & Pratt-Adams, 2021; Courtney & McGinity, 2020), derives its descriptive and evaluative characteristics from not only in-group members but from out-groups as well. Consequently, the conceptualisation of "headteacher" has multiple perspectives across educational contexts and emanates from different philosophical standpoints (Beauchamp et al., 2021; Skaalvik, 2020), that go beyond the perimeters of the educational leadership field. The observations in the literature suggest that attributes of the "headteacher" evolve with shifts in societal contexts and technological developments (Dinampo & Balones, 2023; Faris, 2023), which in turn affect head teachership practice. This literature review discusses the headteacher's evolution, complexity, ethics, direct and indirect influence, and leadership conceptions.

2.3.4.1 : Evolution of 'Headteacher' Conceptions. The general perspective of the "headteacher" shifts in the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries' phases through administrative, management, and leadership periods (Ostinelli & Crescentini, 2024; Mitchell et al., 2023). In the 1960s to 1980s, 1980s to 1990s, and 2000s to 2015s, the perception of "headteacher" reflected administrators, managers, and accountable leaders, respectively. Further, in the 2015s, conceptions of headteachers reflected corroborative professionalism (Storey, 2023; Pont, 2020) and leaders of instructional supervision and leaders of learning organisations (Kools et al., 2020).

The conception of the headteacher in the democratic participation period is that of an administrator. The main concern of the headteacher in Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries during this period is administration, thus ensuring that centrally formulated policies, strategies, and plans are adhered to (Abdalla & Ali, 2017). With the emphasis on administration, the expectation is a factory-model unfolding of school

activities. Further, in the 1980s and 1990s, the concept of "headteacher" was a manager. The prominent role of the headteacher was ensuring that teacher-student-teaching resource interactions procedurally and efficiently occurred to reach the predetermined educational goals (Abdalla & Ali, 2017, Pont, 2020), since "educational management entails carrying the responsibility for the proper functioning of a system in an educational institution in which others participate" (Connolly et al., 2019, p. 1). Although the concept of management suffers downplay because of its Weberian connotation of oppression and exploitation described in Lumby (2017) for leadership, it is still in the running of an educational institution.

It is, therefore, essential to know that "how "school leadership" as a term is [conceived and] used reveals how the context has influenced the definition and professional practice of those who lead schools, whether called principals, school administrators, headmasters, or headteachers" (Pont, 2020, p. 157). That contextual influence on secondary school head teachership has never been any more complex in Malawi's Central East and Central West education divisions than with the impact of globalisation.

2.3.4.2 : 'Headteacher' Conception Complexity. The periodical categorisation of the headteachers' conceptional perspective (OECD, 2016) presents a simplistic view of a very complex evolutionary process. The periodical boundaries are not strenuous but soft as one conception fades into the period where another conception slowly emerges. Further, it is not surprising to see headteachers' practices that combine aspects of all the conceptions in a single educational system (Pont, 2020). The practical aspects of all headteachers' conceptions have contexts that best fit developed-developing economies, public-private educational service provision, autocracy-democracy regimes, and centralized-decentralized education system continuums. Educational policies present the general framework for human capital development, while schools under headteachers' leadership adapt and operationalise policy aspects in local environments. Demographic diversities in schools attract sociopolitical

influence (Pont, 2020), which presents dilemmas that headteachers resolve to focus on instructional goals.

The conception of the public secondary school "headteacher" in Malawi best fits the leader-manager. The headteacher is a leader since bureaucracy fails to limit leadership within the organisational structure. However, since Malawi's secondary education system is centralised, policies, strategies, and plans are formulated at the education headquarters level and handed down to school headteachers for implementation. The public secondary school headteacher's primary responsibility is to ensure policy implementation procedures flow as intended. The expectation that the head teacher will do as prescribed perceives the headteacher as a manager. Such a scenario presents dilemmas to headteachers, as contextual diversity requires adaptation of the prescribed procedures in addition to meeting situations that have not been captured in the set procedures. Such novelty requires skills beyond those of a manager.

Headteachers take on crucial responsibilities in resolving dilemmas that schools encounter when engaging students from diverse class teacher-learner interaction backgrounds. According to the Self Identity Theory (Hogg, 2017; Oakes et al., 1991; Tajfel & Turner, 1979), the headteachers' prototypicality (Ch et al., 2018, p. 78) is the basis for resolving institutional dilemmas that affect teaching-learning and the overall school environment to improve students' outcomes (Ahmad & Saefurrohman, 2020; Badrianto & Ekhsan, 2020). Therefore, defining the parameters within which the conception of head teachers develops becomes a challenge since educational contexts are dynamic. That makes the roles that headteachers take on dynamic too.

2.3.4.3 : Ethics-referenced Conception of 'Headteacher'. The concept of "headteacher" implies practice replete with ethical dilemmas that align with human capital, side-bets, social exchange, and social identity theories, besides being antecedents of school organisational commitment. Ethics being the "universal values and standards of conduct that every rational person wants every other to follow," Chowdhury (2018, p. 1) forms the spine of

teaching as a profession (Sims et al., 2018) so much that once one removes ethics from teaching, what remains is something else. The perception of education as "a process of acquisition of desirable behaviour necessary for harmonious existence in society" (Monanda et al., 2020, p. 11), the turning of the "eye" of the human soul from darkness to light (Fluke, 2009), and the social technology for the attainment of the good life with the guide of honesty, temperance, justice, love, truthfulness, and responsibility as the virtues (Monanda et al., 2020; Nussbaum, 1993) make head teachership a social undertaking inseparable from ethics considerations. It is, therefore, challenging to exclude ethics from the concept of the headteacher since the practical ethicality of education manifests in schools.

2.3.4.4 : Moderation of Conception of 'Headteacher' by Professional Ethics. Ethics moderate the conception of "headteacher" in two dimensions: in the headteacher's acquisition of human capital to increase their potential capacity with which to improve teachers' productivity to the favour of the school as a whole and students in particular (Bertrand & Rodela, 2018; Schults, 1963), as the central and intrinsic side-bet (Becker, 1960), for the common good (Landre, 2019; Smit & Scherman, 2016; Blau, 1964; Homans, 1961) on the one hand, and as the factor for influencing the characteristics of the in-group thus the school, which form the basis for interacting with out-groups as the Social Identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979).

The moderation of the "headteacher" conception by ethics is dynamic since the headteachership constantly adapts to emerging contextual changes. According to Connolly et al. (2017, p. 4), "the sense of duty and dedication... typically experienced as a burden and a weight to be carried" defines the dedication and commitment of headteachers in ensuring that schools run. Responsibility, coupled with honesty, temperance, justice, love, and truthfulness, becomes an antecedent to side-bet influence. Instead of wholly focussing on sidebets, headteachers become mindful of the importance of virtuous engagement (Jones et al., 2020).

As a result of their responsibility, headteachers invest in themselves as human capital through continuous self-upgrading in professional knowledge and skills to increase their capacity because it is right to do so. That human capital includes the capacity to interact with teachers, staff, students, the community, and other stakeholders with a human touch as in-group members.

Further, out of responsibility, headteachers work hard to become rational prototypical members of their school societies, as the social identity theory (Hogg et al., 2017; Tajfel & Turner, 1979) posits. Rational prototypicality comes in because the headteacher has to be immovable when insisting that every school activity should focus on school-prescribed goals (Purinton, 2013). According to Ch et al. (2018, p. 78), the headteacher is "an image of the shared participation among the teachers, shareholders, and society." The same need for high prototypicality motivates head teachers to adopt appropriate leadership models that support instructional supervision interactions with teachers and staff. In this case, ethics moderates the conception of "headteacher" by the headteachers themselves and other in-group and out-group members.

The second dimension relates to teachers' needs, which directly influence students' achievement (Burroughs et al., 2019). Through headteacher-teacher and supervisory interaction, the identification of teacher-human capital needs gets known. The teachers' needs are not limited to pedagogy but also to their side-bets, motivational, and social needs. Knowing teachers' pedagogical needs This understanding gets guidance from the social identity and social exchange theories (Blau, 1964; Homans, 1961; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). The headteacher is not discouraged by damaging teaching practices that return from teachers but engages the teachers in developmental instructional supervision (Stark et al., 2017). Hughes et al., 2019) until the teachers' productivity improves.

Although globalisation challenges general ethics and professional ethics (Khan & Afaqi, 2019; Saltsman & Shelton, 2019), ethics still moderate how teachers interact with each other. The responsibility of headteachers persuades them not to limit their focus to teachers' instructional engagement with learners but to the teachers' intellectual stimulation, individual consideration, inspirational motivation, and idealised influence (Francisco, 2019; Reza, 2019; Andriani et al., 2018). In this sense, the concept of human capital investment in head teachers is for the common good.

2.3.4.5 : Direct-Indirect Influence Conception of 'Headteacher'. Headteachers' direct and indirect roles are fundamental in ensuring that schools achieve the intended outcomes. Such roles include instructional supervision, budgeting, networking with other institutions, human resource management, and student management (Mathias, 2020; Ampofo et al., 2019; Maseka & Kabeta, 2019). However, studies on the factors influencing students' educational achievements indicate that the influence of headteachers is indirect.

However, recent studies in OECD member countries and Asia-Pacific (Pont, 2020) show that headteachers, teachers, and learners matter. Given that, among all employees in a school, teachers have the most influence on students' achievement (Burroughs et al., 2019; Callingham et al., 2016; Goldhaber, 2016), headteachers should ensure that teachers have the human capital investment through professional guidance and development (Anderson, 2022; Ampofo et al., 2019; Edo & David, 2019) with which to improve the teaching-learning process.

In this case, the factors that positively influence teachers' productivity and commitment, thus headteachers' human capital, motivating side-bets, and ideal school society prototypicality, require research attention. Unfortunately, literature on head teacher influence on students' performance in CEED and CWED is rare, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa (Bush, 2018). The most direct mention of headteacher quality appears in Wamba (2015), which notes poor preparation of headteachers as the cause. The recent research study by Galafa and Lucas

(2018) echoes the lack of recognition of the importance of head teachership preparation and shows that the most influential factor in students' performance as primary school learners is the lack of teaching and learning resources.

This study identifies a lack of focus on human capital investment in head teachership as a gap reflecting teachers' lower productivity and high turnover. The indirect influence that headteachers have on students' achievement does not, at all, render the direct influence that headteachers have on teachers' performance less critical.

Headteachers' direct and indirect roles are fundamental in ensuring that schools achieve the intended outcomes. Such roles include instructional supervision, budgeting, networking with other institutions, human resource management, and student management (Mathias, 2020; Maseka & Kabeta, 2019). However, studies on the factors influencing students' educational achievements indicate that the influence of head teachers is minor. According to the observation in Hattie (1993), most of the factors of educational achievement are with the learners themselves (50%) and with the teachers (30%), as Figure 3 presents in detail. This finding suggests that what learners and teachers do in the teaching-learning interaction matters most.

However, recent studies (Pont, 2020; Hasbay & Altndag, 2018; Magulod Jr., 2017) show that headteachers, teachers, and learners matter. Given that, among all employees in a school, teachers have the most influence on students' achievement (Burroughs et al., 2019; Callingham et al., 2016; Goldhaber, 2016), headteachers should ensure that teachers have the human capital investment with which to improve the class teacher-learner interaction.

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Wamba (2015), which notes poor preparation of headteachers as the cause of concern. The recent research study by Galafa and Lucas (2018) echoes that and shows the most influential factor in students' performance as primary school learners is the lack of teaching and learning resources. This study identifies a lack of focus on human capital investment in head teachership as a gap reflecting teachers' lower productivity and high turnover. The indirect influence that headteachers have on students' achievement does not, at all, render the direct influence that headteachers have on teachers' performance less critical.

On the other hand, extrinsic factors such as salary, free accommodation, funding for educational advancement, meals, social security, and medical cover reflect teachers' investments since they "would be lost or deemed worthless at some perceived cost to the individual..." on leaving the organisation (Meyer & Allen (1984, p. 373). In addition, the same factors link "extraneous interests with a consistent line of activity" (Becker, 1960, p. 32) with respect to the side-bet theory. Further, the same factors reflect the Social Exchange Theory (Homans, 1961; Blau, 1964). The reflection of many theories on the factors that influence teacher performance underscores the complexity of educational phenomena that require compound theoretical frameworks to comprehend.

Apart from the intrinsic and extrinsic factors, the literature posits that creating an environment conducive to a quality teaching-learning process is second only to the teaching-learning process itself in importance. According to Lovat et al. (2023) and the National Association of Secondary School Principals (2013), the uniqueness of headteachers lies in the diversity of their human capital. Headteachers' minimum knowledge and skills base make them "educational visionaries; instructional and curriculum leaders; assessment experts; disciplinarians; community builders; public relations experts; budget analysts; facility managers; special program administrators; and expert overseers of legal, contractual, and policy mandates and initiatives" (National Association of Secondary School Principals, 2013).

The assemblage of the individual school elements to reach critical mass for effective and efficient teaching-learning processes (Wallace Foundation, 2011) results from the translation of headteachers' human capital into productivity. Although the headteachers' influence on students' learning is indirect, "school effectiveness on the ultimate delivery of education cannot be realised if the leadership function is not performed well" (Mpaata, 2019, p. 2). In this case, the headteacher is a direct-indirect influence agent.

2.3.4.6 : Conception of 'Headteacher' by Leadership. The conceptual understanding of commitment to secondary school leadership and especially to headteachers' commitment is about the extent of persistent engagement in the human capitalisation of teachers with the sole purpose of improving teachers' productivity to the advantage of students' progress. The creation of an inclusive collegiate social environment for instructional supervision interactions, the prevalence of internal client motivation with an emphasis on headteachers and teachers concerning employee-institution reciprocity of costs and rewards, and the moderation of headteachers' focus on side-bets by ethical considerations in favour of students' achievement (Awuor, 2022; Phiri, 2022; Mansor et al., 2021) are factors that influence headteachers' commitment. Therefore, it is essential not to ignore that headteachers require human capitalisation in leadership skills, have side-bets that moderate their commitment level, and that social identity is a crucial factor influencing their interaction with teachers.

In education, the commitment of headteachers is paramount. Since the success of the educational policy, implementation has been at the level of student achievement. Headteachers, on the other hand, have a direct influence on teachers' productivity. Therefore, headteachers must have the human capital to improve their commitment to creating conducive school environments for learning, motivating teachers and students, and creating confidence in the community. In their study about the productivity of secondary school teachers, Etomes &

Molua (2019) note that headteachers play a significant role in improving teachers' skills as a strategy to improve students' achievement. The headteacher, further note Etomes & Molua (2019, p. 110), achieves this by executing "administrative tasks that include directing the teachers and students in an environment conducive to the maximum development of the learners." In this regard, Grissom et al. (2021), Darling-Hammond & Cook-Harvey (2018), Rudasill et al. (2018), and Kor & Opare (2017) corroborate Eston and Molua but refer to such an environment as a "sound climate."

However, the study notes that headteachers lack adequate preparation prior to taking up head teachership, and that adversely affects their productivity. In this case, the capacity of headteachers to acquire the necessary skills is contingent on the perception that education systems hold about head teachership, hence the recommendation in Kanwal et al. (2020), Mpaata & Mpaata (2019), Hallinger (2018), and Al-Husseini (2016) that communities should support headteachers to acquire the human capital they require. Crowning community support should be efforts to motivate headteachers to transform the acquired human capital into productivity. Since the level of teachers' skills in lesson preparation, proper use of teaching-learning resources, lesson delivery, teaching-learning process management, and maintenance of classroom discipline determines teachers' productivity in favour of students' achievement (Kashamba et al., 2023; Mushtaq et al., 2022; Akbar et al., 2018; Bellibas & Liu, 2018; Hallinger et al., 2018; Getange, 2016), head teachers must in turn be committed to their instruction supervisory roles. Therefore, it is crucial to understand the intricacies of headteachers' commitment, including their level of commitment and its variation over the service period, to have an informed perspective of headteacher conception that informs planning for practical continuing professional development activities.

Previous research studies show that support from school leadership, and specifically that from the head teacher, matters as a social identity concept. The leadership that supports

teachers' performance improvement (Bal-Taştan et al., 2018; Kim & Seo, 2018; Lei et al., 2018; Mahler et al., 2018; Earley, 2017) directly influences students' achievement. This cascade influence qualifies as headteachers' indirect influence on students' achievement. The extent of decentralisation or centralisation of responsibilities determines the inclusivity or exclusivity of teachers, students, administrative staff, and the community in school leadership, which, in turn, reflects the headteacher's human capital capacity in superintendency (Lovat et al., 2023; Salas-Vallina, 2021; Kim et al., 2018; Subramony et al., 2018; National Association of Secondary School Principals, 2013) and defines the headteacher's leadership practice. As Earley (2017) notes, there are many typologies and categorisations of leadership from which the headteacher's conception derives.

However, as Pont (2020) notes, the headteacher's perception of leadership varies with the context of the education system. The level of development a country is at, model of state governance, perception of headteachers from the employer's point of view, and demand for public and private trajectories of education service provision (Stronge & Xu, 2021; Arif et al., 2019; Offermann & Coats, 2018) have influence on headteachers' perceptions of educational and school leadership. Malawi's secondary education system is still centralized. Schools implement one curriculum throughout the country, and there are national examinations that students take at important transition nodes in the system. In addition, the recruitment and posting of teachers for and to public education institutions is a function of the central government. In the same vein, students' selection of the limited public secondary school places is the function of the central government.

2.4.0 : Identification and Succession of Headteachers.

Headteachers come into their posts through recruitment and selection. Just like in any other organisation, recruitment and selection of individuals, otherwise known as talent identification, to fill existing vacancies is a recurrent process in education systems since new

school establishments are being created and headteachers retire, resign, get dismissed, and die. Although recruitment and selection are used interchangeably (Lievens & Chapman, 2019), the processes differ in several aspects. The intention for recruitment is to identify the available pool of talent (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2020; Kravariti & Johnston, 2020), from which the best fit for an advertised post could be identified.

Recruitment is the first step an organisation undertakes in the war for talent. The war for talent, according to Kwon & Jang (2022) and Hongal & Kinange (2020), is premised on the knowledge that employees that have the abilities required for organisational competitiveness are an indispensable organisational resource (Vaiman et al., 2021; Son et al., 2020; Schreuder & Noorman, 2019; Maurya & Agarwal, 2018). Paillé (2019) notes that recruitment, as the process of making known an existing vacancy in an organisation, is meant to motivate persons with the specified abilities to show interest through making applications. The process is a non-contractual activity that aims at inviting as many interested people as could apply, on the one hand. The pool of talent may constitute a hybrid of human sources, both internal and external to an organisation, or may exclusively be internal.

According to Abbas et al. (2021), Portillo & Mancera-Valencia (2021), and Paillé (2019), selection is a process that follows recruitment and is meant for isolating candidates from many interested people on account of suitability to the organisational demands for contractual engagements in numbers commensurate with the existing vacancies. Succession planning is a future-focused organisational output-related activity that is meant to ensure organisational competitiveness and sustainability in the face of voluntary or involuntary turnover. Succession planning is not limited to replacing organisational officials (Aravena, 2022; Okwakpam, 2019), but "the process of pinpointing key needs for intellectual talent and leadership throughout the organisation over time and preparing people for present and future work responsibilities" (Sukayri, 2016, p. 4). Succession planning starts with talent

identification for the creation of a pool of employees that can adapt to novelty through training, mentoring, and self-improvement, among other attributes.

Many education systems prefer internal talent sourcing to external sourcing. Apart from being relatively less expensive, internal sourcing has the advantage of learning agility. "The willingness and ability to learn new competencies in order to perform under first-time, tough, or different conditions" (Lombardo & Eichinger, 2000, p. 323), is called learning agility. Learning agility is a selection process that suits the internal sourcing of talent. According to Milani et al. (2024), Nayak & Malik (2024), Smith & Watkins (2024), Boyce & Boyce (2022), Putri, Y., & Suharti, L. (2021), and Tripath et al., (2020), the focus of learning agility is on human behaviour, the level of cognitive processing, and the ability to apply lessons learnt in one context to novel situations. External sourcing is difficult because the potential candidate is far from observation.

Suitability for head teachership talent is acquired through training and experience. Such a view departs from the notion that leaders are born but that leaders are made through the acquisition of human capital (Stone et al., 2024; Brown et al., 2023; Costa et al., 2023). Consequentially, apart from scouting for headteachers from experienced teachers, pre-teaching service training in school leadership helps to motivate teachers to specialise in school leadership later in their career (Dai, 2023; O'Brien et al., 2021; Romanowski et al., 2019).

While teaching experience is essential for a headteacher, some education systems require licensure or unique head teachership qualifications for one to become a headteacher. Just like the National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH) in the wider United Kingdom, the Scotland Qualification for Headship (SQH), and the 'Into Headship' qualification (with the latter being mandatory for novice headteachers in Scotland in 2020 (Reynolds & McKimm, 2021 Zamula, 2019). Such headteacher qualifications are in

recognition of head teachership as a specialised and crucial undertaking different from teaching (Bush, 2020).

Where one becomes a headteacher without formal training in leadership, it results in trial-and-error procedures, which result in inefficiencies to the disadvantage of school quality improvement. As noted in Sepuru & Mohlakwana (2020, p. 1), "in Africa, no formal training is required for a principalship, and teachers are appointed as principals based on their teaching experience only." In many African countries, a teacher training qualification with teaching experience is thought to be an adequate pre-requisite for one to effectively execute school head leadership at the post of head teacher (Logation et al., 2021; Vuorinen et al., 2021; Bush, 2021; Uworwabayeho et al., 2020). That does not, in a sense, belittle the need for teaching experience as part of personal specifications in the head teacher recruitment process, as interpreted in Zamula (2019) of the provision in the National Governance Association (2018).

Headteachers that get into practicing headteachership without formal initial training and subsequent continuous in-service training experience are prone to unnecessary anxiety, frustrations, and ineffectiveness in the face of novelty that is caused by contextual variations, cultural differences, and economic development levels." (Slater et al., 2018, p. 3).

2.5.0 : Recruitment of Public Secondary Headteacher in Malawi.

Teaching qualifications, authority to teach, and teaching experience are the requirements for the selection of a public secondary school head teacher in Malawi (Government of Malawi, 2014), and consequently in CEED and CWED. There are two procedural channels through which a teacher is given public secondary school head teachership: through a promotion to a substantive head teachership grade or by administrative arrangement, which education authorities at ministry headquarters or education division offices do with respect to the delegated powers provided in the Malawi Education Act (2014). Zamula

(2019) refers to the ‘promotion to a substantive head teachership grade’ as formal, while the appointment by administrative arrangement is informal.

According to Chivwati-Gondwe (n.d.), with reference to circular letters PSC/05/2/13 dated June 30, 1997, and PSC/05/11/84 dated July 23, 1984, the formal path to head teachership is initiated upon the existence of head teacher post vacancies. In consequence of the existence of a head teacher post-vacancy, an advertisement is issued by the Teaching Service Commission for those meeting the personal specifications to apply, thus recruiting, according to Abbas et al. (2021) and Paillé (2019). Those who qualify get shortlisted and are called to attend interviews, thus the selection process, according to Gallardo-Gallardo et al. (2020) and Kravariti & Johnston (2020). Following the interview results, those selected are offered the posts. Teachers who become headteachers following the promotion to substantive headteachership posts have their salaries appropriately adjusted upward.

The second method is the appointment of a headteacher from the pool of teachers on an administrative arrangement, which Zamula (2019) refers to as semi-formal. Such an appointment is horizontal in terms of grade since there is no vertical mobility in terms of grade. And there is not any upward salary adjustment, although there is a vertical change in responsibility. The head teachership posts held on administrative appointment are just an additional responsibility to teaching (Ministry of Education, 2022; 2021). Such public secondary school headteachers have teaching loads in their subjects of specialisation besides the leadership roles.

Without any induction or formal leadership training into the new posts, not only novice headteachers but also head teacher-appointees in non-established posts face an exaggerated level of challenges (Chirwa et al., 2022; Banda, 2020; Achana et al., 2019), that adversely affect their effectiveness.

2.6.1 : Headteachers' Commitment.

The conceptual understanding of commitment to secondary school leadership, especially that of headteachers', is about the extent of persistent engagement in the human capitalisation of teachers with the sole purpose of teachers' productivity improvement to the advantage of students' achievement. Expectedly, the creation of an inclusive collegiate social environment for instructional supervision interactions, ensuring the prevalence of public secondary school client motivation mediated by teacher-institution reciprocity of costs and rewards, and the moderation of headteachers' focus on side-bets by ethical considerations in favour of students' achievement (Ampofo et al., 2019; Lee et al., 2018; Szeto & Cheng, 2018; Donohue, 2016), require headteachers' affective commitment.

In education, the commitment of headteachers is important. Since the success of educational policy implementation is determined by the level of student achievement (Fullan, 2023; Hallinger et al., 2018; Tan, 2018) and that headteachership has a direct influence on school quality creation, it is imperative that the commitment of headteachers receive the attention of research. That underscores the need for establishing headteachers' human capital requirements, side-bets, and social identities that moderate their commitment level to the advantage of school quality improvement. Headteachers need to have the human capital to improve their commitment to creating conducive school environments for learning, motivating teachers and students, and creating confidence in the community.

In their study about the productivity of secondary school teachers, Etomes and Molua (2019) note that headteachers play a significant role in improving teachers' skills as a strategy to improve students' achievement. The headteacher, further note Etomes & Molua (2019, p. 110), achieves this by "administrative tasks include directing the teachers and students in an environment conducive to the maximum development of the learners." In this regard, Kor & Opare (2017) corroborate Eston and Molua but refer to such an environment as a sound climate.

It is crucial, therefore, to understand the intricacies of headteachers' commitment variation over time and to have an informed perspective of headteacher conception that informs planning for practical continuing professional development activities.

2.7.0 : Public Secondary Education Institutions.

Education, as a right according to the United Nations, qualifies to be a public good because it is not supposed to be "subject to exclusion and is subject to jointness in its consumption or use" (Ostrom & Ostrom, 2019). Classical perception puts the production and distribution of public goods, using revenue collected from the public in the form of taxes and levies, in the hands of governments. That responsibility given to the government is premised on the expectation that an inclusive distribution of such public goods will be ensured. The political decision-making model that governments use in the provision of education as a public goods, especially in sub-Saharan Africa (Zancajo et al., 2022; Klafke et al., 2020; Huber et al., 2020; Andreoli et al., 2018), has had an impact on the quality of education service provision.

Education quality in public secondary institutions is loathed in many countries, including some in sub-Saharan Africa. The quality of education is low (Baltodano, 2023; Akyeampong et al., 2018) and that low-quality is attributed to management lapses in general and financing inadequacies in particular (Altinyelken & Hoeksma, 2021; Huber et al., 2020; Gunderson & Stephens, 2020). Such a state of secondary education in public institutions, from a classical economics perspective, is caused by the insulation of education service delivery in public institutions from the demand-supply factor (Ostrom & Ostrom, 2019). The demand for quality secondary education has resulted in the economically exclusive provision of education (De Talancé, 2020; Halchin, 2018; Marginson, 2018) using the private education services provision trajectory (De Talancé, 2020; Ostrom & Ostrom, 2019).

2.7.1.0: Classification of Public Secondary Schools in Malawi. Public secondary schools in Malawi are in several categories that inform the allocation of students by ability and

the distribution of resources (Altinyelken & Hoeksma, 2021; Kafumbu, 2020; Government of Malawi, 2019). The ability of students is determined by their performance at the Primary School Leaving Certificate examinations, thus at the end of primary school at standard eight. Students who achieve the highest scores get selected for the National Secondary School (NSS). This category of public secondary schools has relatively good resource allocation in quality and quantity, as well as infrastructural maintenance. Students with high scores are selected for conventional secondary school (CSS). The CSS and the double-shift conventional day secondary schools are better resourced than the District Day Secondary Schools (DSS), where the third-level ability students are selected. The last category of secondary schools in which most of the students are selected is Community Day Secondary Schools (CDSS).

Obviously, the classification of learners into different public secondary school categories, which means exposure to systematic differences in educational resource distribution, as observed in Altinyelken & Hoeksma (2021); Kafumbu (2020); and Mlangeni et al. (2015), has a psychosocial effect on learners, teachers, and parents. Learners in CDSSs develop low self-esteem due to the fact that they are taken as non-performers and exposed not only to insufficient but low-quality resources. For example, while the NSS, CSS, and DSS have "standard" laboratories and qualified teachers, most of the CDSSs do not. While the mandate for construction and maintenance of infrastructure in NSS, CSS, and DSS in with the central government, local communities construct and carry out maintenance of the CDSS infrastructure. Owing to such public secondary school categorisation, teachers in CDSSs feel the students are not smart enough to easily learn from instruction. Coupled with the insufficiency of class teaching-learning interaction consumables, teachers in CDSSs are not as motivated. Still further, parents think that their children need a better school.

Although there are differences in students' abilities by school type, improving the class teaching-learning interaction in every school through instructional supervision is the core

responsibility of the headteacher (Mpaata & Mpaata, 2019; Myran & Sutherland, 2019) and can mitigate the systematic reproduction of inequalities in secondary schools. After all, the World Declaration on Education for All, the Jomtein, Thailand (1990) initiative, and the Dakar Framework for Action (2000) emphasise access to quality education for all world citizens. That call is not only for nations to resource educational undertakings adequately but also to ensure efficient utilisation of the resources for maximum output. The transformation of class teaching-learning interaction consumables into quality education is the core duty to which headteachers' commitment is fundamental, regardless of the classification of students by ability and by public secondary school type.

According to Bush (2020), the quality of class teaching-learning interaction in a school, to a large extent, depends on the head teacher's commitment to instructional supervision. Carrying out instructional supervision is a complex task since education is replete with noticeable reproductions of ambiguities (Matasci et al., 2020) that rely on eclecticism as the theoretical framework for conceptual support. Headteachers consider the many contextual expectations that stakeholders have from the education services delivery system to decide how the teaching-learning process proceeds since education is an arena for contestation about positive and interpretive underpinning perceptions. Adequate supervision of staff and students in such complex organisational settings as a secondary school requires headteachers with appropriate human capital, ethically aligned social identity characteristics, moderated side-bets, and motivation factors.

2.8.1.0 : Conceptions on How Headteachers are Led.

The perspective on how public secondary school headteachers should be motivated to commitment is expressed in educational policies and often influenced by politics. is led by education authorities has not evolved with time to reflect contextual changes as much as leadership in non-education organisations. Headteachership has not been the subject of

academic discourse just as leadership has been (Luedi, 2022; Bush, 2020; Day et al., 2020). As leadership changes in the broader society, educational institutions, as prototype societies, are given the responsibility of preserving what society qualifies as good, discarding what is deemed toxic, and creating solutions to societal novel challenges. Leadership conceptions are typological simplifications of complex practical social realities (Arabi & Rahimi, 2020). The complexity of leadership has resulted in many definitions, with consensus not yet in sight (Wilson, 2023; Evans, 2022; Uhl-Bien, 2021; Hysa, 2018). While several scholars (Sivaruban, 2021; Bastari et al., 2020) posit leadership as the undertaking that influences persons to actualise preset goals through motivation on the sidelines of power and authority, Şirin et al. (2018, p. 2009) perceive leadership as "the process of a person's influencing and directing other people's behaviours and activities through volunteerism in order to determine the specific aims of a person or a group and to realise these aims under specific terms." The two definitions reflect the theoretical divergence about leadership since the former subtracts power and authority while the latter fuses in the notion of directing, which carries power and authority connotations.

However, the need for leadership does not wait for the convergence of its different perspective because society and organisations always require leaders (Alazmi, 2024; Bush et al., 2022; Rachmad, 2022). The current perception of leadership evolves from classical leadership, which underpins leaders' characteristics on personal behavioural traits in the Great Man and Trait theories (Oko-Otu & Chidume, 2021; Ciulla & Ciulla, 2020). While the perception of leadership in the classical theories is that leaders are born, the modern leadership theories, on the contrary, perceive leaders as made through learning and experience. As far as educational leadership is concerned, the overarching perception of leadership in this study is that leaders are made through exposure to knowledge and experience, although personality and behavioural traits may have effects.

In this study, headteachers are in focus because they are team leaders with a direct impact on several institutional affairs, at the centre of which are instructional activities in public secondary schools. The efforts of headteachers to ensure effective schools, as Rufiji et al. (2022) observe, include communicating policy interpretations, receiving feedback from diverse stakeholders and clientele, motivating learners, supporting teachers, and representing their institutions, among other things. While the headteacher ensures establishing and sustaining a school environment where class teacher-learner interaction effectively takes place, there is a need to see to it that the headteacher has the appropriate human capital capacity to perform. The discussion on public secondary school headteachers' commitment in CEED and CWED sustains a bias in favour of headteachership. Part of the appropriate human capital for headteachers is knowledge about headteachership styles as would be learned from the leadership taxonomies, thus transactional, transformational, and situational for adaptation to public secondary school environments.

2.8.1.1 : Transactional Leadership. Transactional headteachership is the cognitive and social exchange theory political model, according to Bush (2020). The headteachership style is underpinned by the process of authoritatively influencing people to attain predefined goals through the use of rewards for positive outcomes and punishments for unsatisfactory results (Berkovich & Eyal, 2021; Wahyuni, N. P. D., Purwandari et al., 2020). The social exchange theory guides the leadership model because the basis of leader-member interaction is the cost-reward relationship. Consequently, according to Şirin et al. (2018), transactional leaders are short-term focused, reactive, and require power and authority to transact.

Transactional leadership has utility in the practice of running educational institutions in general and secondary schools in particular, especially in education systems where education quasi-marketisation is gaining currency. For example, the study on teacher innovative capacity (Supriadi et al., 2020) concludes that "the positive and important implications for teacher

innovation capacity are transactional leadership, which means that the more positive the transactional leadership of teachers is, the greater the individual teacher innovation potential in Islamic schools." A similar conclusion is made about transactional leadership in a non-educational organisation.

However, the applicability of rewards and punishments to influence headteachers' commitment shrinks in centralised education systems because of procedural implementation challenges from strict financial budgets (McGuire et al., 2020). Adaptation of transactional leadership to headteachership could have serious challenges.

2.8.1.2 : Transformational Leadership. While transactional leadership is task-orientated, transformational leadership, according to Sunaengsih et al. (2021), focusses on changing followers to improve them for their own advantage and the survival of their organisation. Transformational leadership characteristics are inspirational motivation, individualised consideration, idealised influence, and intellectual stimulation (Bakker et al., 2023; Musyoki et al., 2021; Lai et al., 2020). Transformational leadership empowers employees to contribute innovatively towards an organisation's survival, provides high leadership prototypically, enables inclusive leadership practice, and fosters positive change in individuals (Kilag et al., 2024; Anderson, 2022; Sayyadi, 2022; Bastari et al., 2020). Given the unpredictability of organisations' contexts today, transformational leadership is widely desirable (Bader et al., 2023; Aboramadan & Kundi, 2020) because of its innovative solution-generation capacity.

However, the transformational leadership model is not spared from criticism that focusses on the practice and leaders implementing such leadership. According to Asbari et al. 2020, and Asbari (2020), the transformational leadership model is eclectic in philosophical orientation and, therefore, too complex to comprehend. Since transformational leadership constitutes charismatic characteristics and stewardship as central components (Lan et al.,

2019), it is centred around a person and therefore has potential for abuse. Further, transformational leaders are otherwise perceived as narcissists, elicits, and anti-democrats (Gad David et al., 2023; Lauritzen et al., 2022; Asbari et al., 2020; O'Reilly & Chatman, 2020). Despite the criticisms, transformational leadership positively correlates with employee affective and normative commitment (Blythe, 2021). The observation by Safdar & Liu (2018, p. 62) that "Leaders of developed countries strictly follow the transformational leadership style, which enhances their employees' commitment and creativity, Nevertheless, in the case of developing countries, it is perceived that, intentionally or unintentionally, leaders do not make an effort for the highly committed and creative workforce."

2.8.1.3 : Situational Leadership. The situational leadership perspective recognises that there is no "one-size-fits-all" leadership model since heterogeneity locates both leaders and followers within interaction environments that are not stable (Deshwal & Ali, 2020; Zhang & Liu, 2020). Further, Tabrizi & Rideout (2019, p. 325) perceive situational leadership as a theory and "a resource to explain why one leader is effective in certain situations but not others." Consequently, leadership studies show that "there is no unsurpassed way to lead, and those leaders, to be effective, must be able to adapt to the situation and transform their leadership style between task-orientated and relationship-orientated" (Khan et al., 2016, p. 2) and that "there is no acceptable leadership style globally at present" (Sivaruban, 2021, p. 62). Since leadership is about influencing followers to achieve important pre-set goals, organisational leaders require human capital and social identity skills (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Schults, 1961) with which to easily identify the followers' abilities and their willingness to undertake an assigned task (Kukenberger & D'Innocenzo, 2020; Ufua, 2020; Uslu, 2019) as the basis for crafting decisions that ensure high organisational performance.

Situational leadership, according to Deshwal & Ali (2020), Bolden et al., (2023), and Lussier & Achua (2022), focusses on both tasks and employees in light of organisational

visions and goals. Situational leaders achieve multi-focus by identifying the important tasks to organisational performance and assessing the abilities or competences of the employees in relation to those tasks. Further, situational leaders ascertain their human capital investment and social identity skills to use in leadership (Dugan, 2024; Bosse et al., 2017). Consequently, situational leadership aligns employees' competence and willingness to take on assigned tasks with leadership styles. As a result, employees with low maturity (M 1), thus those assessed to have low competence and low commitment about a specified task, require directing or telling leadership styles, while employees with high maturity (M4), thus competence and high commitment, require delegating leadership styles. In situational leadership, the leader employs developmental approaches (Lussier & Achua, 2022; Todorović & Todorović, 2020; Glickman et al., 2017; Shonhiwa, 2016) to mature employees to a high level of maturity. Effective leadership depends on the interaction between the situation and the behaviour of the leader, so situational leadership is appropriate.

Situational leadership, as one of the theories developed in the "situational era," continues to evolve in response to the ever-changing workplace environments, diversity of clientele, and advances in technology (Lussier & Achua, 2022; Benmira & Agboola, 2021;)Unlike contingency theory, which holds the leader as fixed from the trait perspective of leadership and suits organisational contexts that align to the traits of the leader (Cheng & Fisk, 2022; Benmira & Agboola, 2021; Deshwal & Mohd., 2020), situational leadership perceives leaders as adapting to the contexts they work in to capacitate subordinates to high productivity (Ghazzawi et al., 2017). In the centralised secondary education system in the Central East and Central West education divisions in Malawi, situational leadership describes what secondary headteachers should prepare for. Once appointed to become a headteacher, authorities allocate him or her to the school where his or her services are required. It is the head teacher who, in this case, will have to adapt to the new school context, assess the competences of the teachers,

categorise them, and practice the appropriate situational leadership styles so that every teacher improves in performance.

However, situational leadership has weaknesses and strengths as well. Despite the wide application of situational leadership, there are some criticisms that persist. Apparently, situational leadership lacks substantiation for its claims. According to Shonhiwa (2016, p. 38), "the lack of a strong body of research on situational leadership raises questions about the theoretical basis of the approach." Partly, the lack of empirical evidence on situational leadership is due to the absorbent nature and eclectic theoretical basis of the model. Many distinct leadership theories, for instance, transformational, trait, and contingency leadership theories, find accommodation in the situational leadership model (Lussier & Achua, 2022). The Ohio State Studies and the Michigan Studies (Deshwal & Mohd, 2020) present some of the characteristic behaviours of effective leaders, namely task-orientation, employee-orientation, and relationship-orientated practices. Such leadership practices reflect several philosophical underpinnings. The human capital and cognitive theories inform the employee abilities issues; the side-bet, social exchange, and social identity theories find descriptive spaces in the supervisor-supervisee relationship-orientated practices (McCrea & Brasseur, 2024; Nguyen-Vasquez, 2021). The postulates of situational leadership reflect propositions in several theories.

Consequently, the empirical justification of the model lies in the justification of its constituent theories. Further, situational leadership is ambiguous in its attempt to link the four competence levels and the subordinates' commitment intensity (Korzynski et al., 2021; Drewniak et al., 2020; Haryono & Sulistyo, 2020). Apart from ambiguity, situational leadership ignores the moderation that maturity, in terms of age, has on employee productivity and the various types of commitment (Dugan, 2024; Karlsen & Berg, 2020) Therefore, empirical evidence for the propositions in situational leadership is available from a deconstructed perspective, while the search for more rages on.

Although there are criticisms of situational leadership, several reasons exist for leaders to opt for this perspective. One of the attractions of the situational leadership perspective is its simplicity and practicality. The leadership styles, thus directing, coaching, supporting, and delegating, that respectively align to maturity levels (not as in age) at 1, 2, 3, and 4 are easy to follow (Bolden et al., 2023; Muizu et al., 2019). The prescriptive nature, emphasis on leader flexibility, and realistic perception of subordinates as heterogeneous (St. Thomas University, 2019; Shonhiwa, 2016) create an adaptable school environment for professional interactions among members of staff. Apart from the strengths listed above, the study by Henkel & Bourdeau (2018) indicates that situational leadership reminds leaders about the need to know as many leadership models as possible to widen their human capital capacity for informed choices about appropriate leadership to use in novel contexts.

While the study on the principal's situational leadership influence on teacher commitment by Gyeltshen (2021) establishes that coaching and directing leadership styles of principals positively relate to teachers' organisational commitment, several studies (Koswara et al., 2021; Ridlwan et al., 2021; Pracahya & Sowiyah, 2021) confirm that the headteachers' situational leadership correlated positively with teachers' commitment to their institutions.

2.8.1.4 : Transformational, Transactional and Situational Leadership Implications to Commitment in Schools. The consequence of transformational, transactional, and situational leadership on school organisational commitments varies with the organisational commitment dimensions. The variations reflect the similarities and complementarities with the theoretical frameworks informing the leadership and organisational commitment dimensions. There are implications that transformational, transactional, and situational leadership have on headteachers' and teachers' commitment in school that are describable using theories in the theoretical frameworks, namely social exchange theory, side-bet theory, and human capital theory.

The social exchange theory Transactional leadership (Homans, 1961; Blau, 1964) underpins transformational leadership, where the conception of organisation-employee interaction is on a cost-reward basis, on the one hand. On the other hand, the continuance commitment dimension has Side-Bet Theory (Becker, 1960), which describes employee turnover intentions. Further, situational leadership, being eclectic in philosophical underpinnings, bears propositions in transformational and transactional leadership models. The use of rewards in transactional leadership to motivate employees towards meeting organisational goals satisfies the employee's desire for side-bets. The complementarity of underpinning theories, side-bets, and social exchange to continuance commitment and transactional leadership, respectively, makes leading by rewards more effective in thwarting employee desire to leave an organisation (Asbari, 2020; Supriadi et al., 2020; Nguni et al., 2006).

Further, the theories guiding transformational leadership are related to human capital and social identity (Collins, 2021; Steffenset al., 2021; Subramony et al., 2018; Hogg et al., 2017). Postulates in human capital and social identity theories can influence people to change their attitudes and behaviours towards an organization. In transformational leadership, idealised influence and inspirational motivation, further posited by Jensen et al. (2019), project a high prototypical disposition of the leader to model followers. Idealised influence and inspirational motivation are the espoused motives in social identity theory. Further, intellectual stimulation is at the heart of the human capital theory in the idea that the acquisition of knowledge and skills is an investment for competitive personal presentation on the job market and a factor determining the increase in benefits in their current employment.

Consequently, as argued in Northhouse (2016), updating employees' knowledge and skills benefits them and accelerates organisational performance beyond expectations. Human capital and social identity theories underlie the direct linkage relationship between

transformative leadership and affective and normative commitment dimensions (McConnell, 2021). Further, the insignificant continuance commitment-transformational leadership correlation reflects their theoretical frameworks' dissonance.

Studies show that the styles of leadership that headteachers exercise have implications for general school improvement and especially on teachers' innovativeness, productivity, and students' achievement (Mydin, 2019; Sehar & Alwi, 2019; Zacharo et al., 2018; Earley, 2017). Society looks up to schools as institutions where the capability for human capital investment resides. The human capital investment society looks for goes beyond the traditional acquisition of reading and writing skills and includes knowledge and skills that help society survive today and prepare to face the future (Atapattu & Ranawake, 2017; Ebrahimi et al., 2017). Since "leadership is about the improvement of an organisation, developing agreed-upon and valuable guidelines for the organisation, and taking the desired step to motivate the individuals to move in the right direction" (Louis et al. 2010), it is essential for headteachers to consciously adopt leadership styles that impact positively on students' achievement.

The literature review on styles of leadership that headteachers practice shows many leadership models, including transformational, transactional, and situational leadership (Ruslan et al., 2020; Seidel et al., 2019). According to Safdar & Liu (2018, p. 62), "Analysis and interpretation of the data collected from the sample indicate that the presence of a transformational leader strongly influences the commitment levels of employees in an organization." Although there is minimal literature on the types of leadership that secondary school headteachers in the Central East and Central West Education Divisions in Malawi practice, this study assumes that transformational leadership prevails.

2.9.1.0 : Factors Affecting Educational Leadership

Educational leadership is generally given a low priority, especially in developing countries, even though the literature indicates that "leadership is one of the key determinants

associated with the success or failure of any organisation" (Al Khajeh, 2018). The importance of educational leadership requires no overemphasis since the extent of students' achievement is as good as school leadership quality (Hardwick-Franco, 2019; Niesche & Gowlett, 2019; OECD, 2016). Further, Portin (2009, p. 1) observes that "research and practice confirm that there is a slim chance of creating and sustaining high-quality learning environments without a skilled and committed leader to help shape teaching and learning." The education that is a human right is that where high-quality teacher-learner interaction in the learning processes take place, and headteachers as instructional leaders are very central to ensuring that.

Therefore, identifying the factors that affect headteachership is a reasonable step towards improving students' achievement. The factors affecting educational leadership reside in human capital, side-bets, social exchange, and social identity theories and address professional development & training, leadership style and philosophy, school culture and climate, accountability and evaluation systems, personal characteristics and motivation (Bush et al., 2022; Bush, 2021, 2020). While some factors exhibit educational policy deficiencies, others focus on school environments and the headteachers. In this review, the discussion concerns the diversity and heterogeneity of teachers as the source pool for public secondary school headteachers, the general leadership of Malawi's public secondary education, and leadership in public secondary schools in Malawi.

2.9.2.1: Diversity of Secondary School Teacher Qualifications. Diversity in secondary school teachers' academic qualifications creates a complex pool for secondary school head teacher identification. Underqualified and non-qualified teachers in secondary schools pose complexities in teacher quality improvements (Government of Malawi, 2019; Robinson & Gray, 2019; Wamba & Mgomezulu, 2014) through human capital investment, besides the limitations in opportunities for upgrading. Furthermore, since headteachers are appointed from the pool of teachers, the variation in headteacher capabilities makes efforts to

improve teachers' productivity difficult, given that there is no preservice training for headteachers in Malawi.

Further, efforts to improve continuing professional development activities for school leadership at the cluster level face challenges. Groups of secondary schools located within a radius of 10 kilometres, called clusters, raise funds to run continuing professional development activities. Since the amount of financial support for an activity positively relates to the quality of the activity, clusters that have adequate financial support conduct higher-quality continuing professional development activities than those struggling to fundraise. The current arrangement for continuing professional development activities exacerbates secondary school head teachership inequalities.

2.9.3.0: Leadership in Malawi's Education System.

Malawi's secondary school administration system is centralised, even though rhetoric in the literature talks about the devolution of powers and authority to local councils (Galafa & Lucas, 2018). Due to the centralised secondary school education system, all teacher recruitment and promotion decisions are subject to geopolitical influence. In such a system of head teacher appointment and promotion, Wamba (2015) noted that there was no corruption or nepotism, although according to Zamula (2019, p. 19), traces of "appointed through such dubious means of nepotism and corruption" were stealthy but noticeable. Such recruitment, promotion, and head teacher identification processes have led to lapses in the qualifying credentials for identifying secondary school teachers and school leadership.

Currently, academic qualifications for secondary school headteachers range from a Diploma in Education to a Master of Education, with secondary school teaching experience ranging from 5 to 20 years. In addition, the headteachers are identified from a pool of teachers with different teaching subject specializations. As a result, secondary school headteachers are either science, humanities, or language-orientated (Ministry of Education Science and

Technology, 2020). Public secondary school headteachers, not only in the Central East and Central West education divisions but in Malawi, are a heterogeneous group of employees in terms of sex, age, academic qualification, training institutions they attended, and experience. Such heterogeneity not only requires a lot of information from research to effectively support it but also knowledgeable and vastly experienced headteachers to mould through instructional supervision and training. That kind of support was very important in transforming novice teachers into professionals to achieve unity of purpose, thus engaging learners in meaningful teaching and learning processes.

2.9.4.0 : Limited Discussion Secondary School Headteachership.

There is a limited local discussion of Malawi secondary school head teachership in the literature due to the scarcity of research activities on the theme. A look at the Google search engine "educational research topics frequently covered in Malawi" and a search in the research repositories of the institutions of higher learning in Malawi show that studies on public secondary school head teachership in the last five years and research articles on secondary school head teachership are rare. The fields that have attracted education research attention in Malawi are educational quality, but without school head teachership as an important aspect; education and gender; girls' education; free primary education; secondary education access expansion; education infrastructure construction, and education resourcing. In addition, the annual statistical reports (Government of Malawi 2016–2024) reflect no attention on public secondary school head teachership quality.

Lack of research in head teachership reflects the low priority accorded to school quality improvement (Bush et al., 2020; Wamba & Mgomezulu, 2014). Comparatively, school infrastructure, teaching-learning resources, and teachers receive a lot of financial attention in the interest of improving access (Ministry of Education Science and Technology, 2020). The secondary school net enrolment ratio (15%) shows that efforts in favour of expanding

secondary school infrastructural capacity, improving textbook-student ratios, and making qualified teacher-student ratios reasonable are worthwhile. However, without quality head teachership, all the resources meant to improve access to secondary school education expire while on the drawing board.

2.9.5.0 : Instructional Supervision.

Societies' desire to protect and sustain their identities while coping with change and preparing for the unexpected has been shown in the creation of social setups dedicated to providing and sharing beliefs, knowledge, and skills. Societies have always identified individuals to lead such setups on behalf of societies. The central activity in such setups has been instruction, and the manner in which the instructor and the instructees interacted has been a factor in the classification of what happens as informal, non-formal, and formal on one hand, and as religion, training or education on the other hand, or even a mix of such. Associated with the activities in the social setups have been oversight roles for assurance that intended were fulfilled which mostly was in the hand of society leaders, thus, according to Glanz (2022), reflecting the traditional inspectional undertone.

The most modern of such social setups is the school characterised by culturally responsive teaching described in Nyaaba et al. (2024), McKoy & Lind (2022), and Gordon & Espinoza (2020), as involving a teacher that interacts with students of diverse backgrounds and learning abilities, a predetermined curriculum, teaching-learning resources, and instructional strategies in a class(room) environment with the belief that every student can learn. In school, instruction is still the central activity and teachers are those directly involved in interacting with learners. The need to ensure that effective instruction took place through improvement of teaching skills at school level by supporting teachers in practice dates back to the John Dewey's times, according to Glanz (2022). At that time, inspection was viewed as mostly undemocratic,

merely, fault-finding and ineffective (Sunaryo, 2020), which often left the inspected school with a demotivating aftertaste that lasted some days or weeks.

The factor that makes education unique among other organisations is the centrality of instruction in school activities. The interaction of teachers and learners in the class learning process towers highest among all activities in influencing students' achievement in education (Chiu, 2024; Grissom et al., 2021; Pettersson, 2021). Those directly involved in the class teaching-learning interaction are the fundamental constituents; thus, learners and teachers. According to Gunawan & Adha (2021), the second to the class teaching-learning interaction was headteachership only; according to Robinson, Hohepa, and Lloyd, quoted in Day et al. (2020, p. 18), when the "leaders focus their influence, their learning, and their relationships with teachers on the core business of teaching and learning, the greater their influence on student outcomes." Owing to the centrality of the class teaching-learning interaction, educational research projects have tilted towards teachers, enrolment, infrastructure, and consumables for class teaching-learning interaction. This is not a misplaced emphasis, but ignoring school leadership, especially headteachers' commitment to instructional supervision, was counterproductive.

However, in order to ensure that such a crucial process unfolds most effectively and efficiently, instructional supervision at the school level is essential (Fusarelli & Fusarelli, 2018; Salvador & Salvador, 2016). The central person in a secondary school setting who ensures quality class teaching-learning interaction takes place is the headteacher. Acknowledgement of the importance of headteachers' roles in translating resources into quality. Apriana et al. (2019, p. 1317) observe that "headteachers must have the competencies required to be able to carry out their responsibilities properly and correctly." That view is corroborated in several academic enquiries (Fitria, 2018; Irmayani et al., 2018; Wieczorek & Manard, 2018). Therefore, a lack

of attention to head teachership would waste the valuable resources channelled to secondary schools.

2.9.5.1 : Definition of Instructional Supervision. The literature is replete with definitions of instructional supervision that, in part, reflect the concept's evolution from autocratic to collegial models through democratic supervision (Glanz, 2018). Instructional supervision, being "the function in schools that draws together all the discrete elements of instructional effectiveness into whole-school action" (Glickman et al., 1998, p. 6), emphasises the improvement of the class teacher-learner interaction (Sunaryo, 2020; Galigao et al., 2019; Malunda et al., 2016). The central thesis of instructional supervision, as noted in Olowoselu & ElSayary (2024), is to improve the class teacher-learner interaction quality in a school, which has led to the argument that headteachers should be called instructional leaders, while others have gone as far as suggesting that headteachers should be called leaders for learning (Pana, 2024; Jabeen & Ali, 2022).

In addition, key issues in instructional supervision have been outlined in Gading, (2024), Latif & Habib (2021), Honig & Rainey (2020) as observing delivery of lessons, observing the learning of students, mentoring, directing, and coaching to match the teacher's professional needs.

The many types of supervision focus on the need to improve instruction with both intrinsic and extrinsic intentions. In agreement with Babalola et al. (2024), Zohriah et al. (2022, p. 436) observe that "supervision is carried out in the context of mentoring, directing, coaching, and giving timely feedback with the absolute aim of improving teacher performance more optimally," to in turn, improve students' achievement.

However, the central issue is ensuring that headteachers know what to do, and that is the product of human capital capacity improvement. That perception is made in the sense that the "headteacher's role is to lead teachers in the process of learning to improve their teaching

while learning alongside them about what works and what doesn't" (Fullan, 2014, p. 55). That being the case then, there is a need to define instructional supervision that has practical utility within the complexities of current secondary school contexts (Deniz & Erdener, 2020). An instructional supervision process, "wherein a supervisor enters a classroom to observe and then writes a report to the teacher highlighting positive aspects observed along with a host of suggested improvements" (Glanz, 2018, p. 11), constitutes aspects from the traditional to the collegiality stages of instructional supervision practice.

Any elements in the instructional supervision process that position the supervisee at the passive receiving end of instructional supervision retrogress supervision to mere inspection. According to Jemal & Tasisa (2024), Pana 2024, Kilag et al. (2023), Leodegario Jr & Guamos (2023), Ashun (2022), and Mwakajitu et al. (2022), adequate instructional supervision offers an opportunity for both the supervisor and supervisee to learn from a constructionist perspective.

How supervisors position themselves concerning the supervisee determines the positivity of the instructional supervision process towards improvement the human capacity of teachers in favour of students' achievement improvement. In this literature review, the instructional supervision definition in Tesfaw & Hofman (2012) aligns with the thought in the study. In this section of the literature review, a discussion of the definition of instructional supervision raises the question of the models of instructional supervision, the class observation framework, and the factors that affect instructional supervision in Malawi.

2.9.5.2 : Headteachership and Instructional Supervision.

Setting a school environment that nests the teacher-learner interaction process to justify instructional supervision is the function of head teachership with transformational leadership tendencies (Kilag et al.,2024; Pratiwi & Amini, 2023; Shafeeu, 2022; Tahira et al., 2021; Saad Alessa, 2021; Rahman et al., 2020). Transformational tendencies create ideal environments for

effective teaching-learning processes that best suit the shared-responsibility perspective of instructional supervision (Leithwood, 2021; Mukhtar, et al., 2020; Navaridas-Nalda et al., 2020). Several nodes of teaching staff, thus heads of departments, sectional leaders, and peers besides the headteacher and deputy headteacher, participate. Although the shared instructional supervision perspective is ideal, headteachers are ultimately responsible for carrying out instructional supervision. Other staff members taking part in instructional supervision do it under delegated authority.

It is, therefore, not surprising to note the further narrowing down of the responsibility of carrying out instructional supervision to the headteacher (Naguit, 2024; Nsengimana et al., 2024; Ubogu, 2024; Arif et al., 2023; Iroegbu & Etudor-Eyo, 2016). Narrowing instructional supervision responsibility to the headteacher, according to Kabuuka et al. (2024), Sumapal & Haramain (2023); Msuya & Mwila (2023), and Chiwamba & Kigobe (2022), perceives instructional supervision as a more directive and managerial process that characterises transactional leadership. Since teachers have different professional and institutional social needs (Okeyo et al., 2024), the one-size-fits-all approach to instructional supervision is neither effective nor appropriate. A directive approach to instructional supervision becomes appropriate, as Toh et al. (2022) and Ngole et al. (2021), note, to a teacher at the novice stage who requires instructions to start the development process to an unconscious and self-directing professional.

On the other hand, the transformational perspective on instructional supervision definition guiding this review puts emphasis on innovation that encompasses teaching practice visions, values, norms and assumptions to improve class teacher-learner interactions (Bellibaş et al., 2021; Shava & Heystek, 2021). The capacity of transformational leadership to thrive in ever-changing and challenging school contexts underpins the instructional supervision-transformational leadership complementarity perspective (Alhawamdeh et al., 2024; Altoe et

al., 2022). Huong (2020, p. 49) perceives supervision-transformational leadership complementarity by emphasising the need for headteachers to effectively communicate the school vision and collaboratively construct the best practices in instructional supervision.

However, limiting the antecedent of adequate instructional supervision to transactional or transformational leadership denies the empirically fortified observation that teachers are at different levels of need (Bowman et al., 2022; Karlberg & Bezzina, 2022; Sancar et al., 2021). Therefore, instructional supervision requires a hybrid school leadership model for effectiveness in the human capitalisation of teachers, moderation of their side-bets with ethical considerations, tapering their social exchange conception towards the teaching professional expectations, and developing their inclusive social identity capacity in favour of students' achievement. Furthermore, developing the hybrid school leadership model requires a conceptualisation of teacher-expertise development beyond the linear perception in teacher developmental models but from an integrative perspective (Raduan & Na, 2020) that focusses on specific teaching skills and the associated iterative teacher development process.

2.9.5.3.0: Models of Instructional Supervision Just as there are cognitive developmental stages from egocentric to altruistic, a teacher goes through stages from novice to unconscious professional (Bush et al., 2022; LeBlanc & Davis, 2022; Diacopoulos & Butler, 2020;). The rate at which a novice teacher matures into an outstanding professional depends on the teacher’s willingness to develop, the extent to which a teacher is exposed to instructional supervision that is "collaborative, nonjudgmental, and supportive of teachers developing reflective practices to improve instruction" (Glanz, 2018, p. 7), and the level of the headteacher’s school leadership competence in instructional leadership. Several conceptual scales depict teacher developmental stages from novice to unconscious professional, which require specific supervisory behaviours that range from directive to non-directive (Burns et al., 2023).

However, the linear undertones of the teacher's developmental stage models oversimplify the teacher's involvement in the teaching and learning processes. At the same time, teachers have a pre-service instrumental propensity that becomes instrumental commitment upon employment as a teacher and later matures into normative or affective commitment (Suleiman et al., 2020). Several factors determine the rate of development from a novice to a professional. Therefore, predetermining the time a teacher develops from the first to the second stage overlooks teachers' personal cognitive and social background differences.

This study focusses on the headteachers' commitment to improving teachers' productivity through instructional supervision. Improving teachers' productivity is done by increasing human capital investment in teachers, and that is within the postulates of the Human Capital Theory (Edeji, 2024), which nests side-bet, social exchange, and social identity theories (Sears & Cianfrone, 2024; Dutt et al., 2023; van den Scott, 2023; Zhao & Detlor, 2023). Of particular interest in this study is determining headteachers' commitment to examining teaching-learning and administrative documents that are key to effective student-teacher formal learning interactions. The emphasis is on examining teachers' teaching documents and observing teachers in the teaching-learning process, not for grading the teachers to avoid the reproduction of traditional bureaucratic inspection tendencies but for observations meant to help teachers develop into self-directed professionals.

2.9.5.4.0 : Factors Affecting Instructional Supervision in East and Central Education Divisions. Factors of instructional supervision include aspects of the internal or external school environment that either accelerate or decelerate teacher productivity and consequently affect students' achievement improvement. The literature indicates that instructional supervision in secondary schools is key to improving students' achievement by enhancing teachers' productivity. While teachers directly influence students' learning

outcomes, headteachers directly influence teachers' performance through leadership styles and need-based in-service training.

The head teacher-teacher-student linkage is crucial to the extent that the lament society makes about the poor curriculum attained by secondary school leavers (Ruff, 2021) is a complaint about headteachers' ineffective instructional supervision practices. Consequently, failure to ensure that the implemented (taught) and the attained (learnt) curricula are as good as the intended curriculum mainly reflects the head teacher's level of leadership competencies in general and the ability to carry out instructional supervision in particular.

2.9.5.4.1 : Pre-service and Continuous Training for Headteachers. Headteachership requires unique skills and knowledge to execute, and as such, there is a need for those taking up that responsibility to have induction into headteachership and continuous in-service training throughout headteachership. The practice in Malawi is that headteachers are identified among teachers through promotions following verbal interviews or otherwise and appointments on administrative arrangements. Once promoted or appointed to the post of head teacher, one takes up the post at a specified school and starts to work. There is no prior orientation activity since it is expected that the new headteacher will learn from other experienced headteachers in an apprenticeship or Germanic training model (Wamba & Mgomezulu, 2014). Such a practice indicates that headteachership is not viewed as a unique undertaking but just an extension of a teacher's responsibilities.

Reliance on the Germanic model of training a new headteacher in Malawi sustains the practice of no induction, no pre-service training, and no in-service training for headteachers (Zamual, 2019; Wamba, 2015). Attempts to formally capacitate headteachers with leadership skills have often been ad hoc, disorganised, and not need-focused (Wamba, 2015). The lack of arrangements to formally capacitate public secondary school headteachers has been viewed as normal, and factors adversely affecting instructional supervision have been other than a lack of

head teachership skills. In the study of double-shift day secondary schools in Lilongwe (Kalonga, 2023), lack of time, inadequate teaching and learning resources, indiscipline among students, absenteeism, and inadequate institutional infrastructure are some of the management challenges observed.

The notable lack of mention in the participants' responses was the need for training. Closest to the need for headteachers' training was the need for "strong management" (p. 81). Management strength is about human capital capacity, or the aggregation of abilities in the team leader, thus the headteacher (Faggian et al., 2019; Macke & Genari, 2019), that results in effective practice. It is on this basis that the study recommends training for management, which is in line with the tenets of human capital theory.

The lack of induction courses, pre-service, and in-service training for school leadership sustains voids of human capital in headteachers that result in less effective instructional supervision. Although there are calls for headteachers to meet and conduct continuing professional development activities, that is not a substitute for formal needs-based, planned, and consistent pre-service and in-service training in school leadership, notes Schleicher (2018). There is a need to recognise head teachership as a specialised educational leadership undertaking (Bush, 2018), which requires special formal theoretical and needs-based training if secondary schools owned by the public are to be justified in their existence.

2.9.5.4.2 : Secondary School Teacher Quality. Improvement of teacher quality is the product of effective school leadership personified in the school headteacher. Scholars agree that the quality of teachers is a strong determinant of the effectiveness of teaching and learning interactions (Olowoselu & ElSayary, 2024; Prang 2020). After all, it is high-quality teachers that can engage students in teaching and learning interactions and offer an education that is right. The "No Child Left Behind" Act of 2001 in the United States of America (Husband & Hunt, 2015; U.S. Department of Education, 2002) has the improvement of teacher quality as

one of the critical concerns (McGee, 2021; Madani, 2019; Adler-Greene, 2019; Ainley & Carstens, 2018). In that regard, Rivkin et al. (1998, p. 32), as quoted in Mayer et al. (2000), conclude that "the most significant [source of achievement students' variation] is... teacher quality variations in secondary schools make adequate instructional supervision very crucial."

According to Baltodano (2023), Brownell et al. (2018), Call (2018), and Stronge (2018), teacher quality is the product of in-service training, experience from interaction with students, and affective commitment following effective instructional supervision implemented, according to Bush (2020), within a collegial school leadership model. The process of teacher improvement becomes optimal when the head teacher has high human capital capacity and is committed to helping teachers realise that improving teaching and learning interaction is central to the improvement of students' achievement.

In Malawi, the quality of secondary school teachers varies. The variations result from three secondary school teachers' recruitment practices: employing unqualified teachers (those with non-teaching university qualifications), re-deploying primary school teachers to secondary schools to meet the colossal teacher shortage, and employing newly qualified teachers from public and private secondary school teachers' training institutions that have variations in training quality (Government of Malawi, 2022; 2021; 2020; 2019). Headteachers, as instructional leaders, have the task of dealing with the complexity of teachers' human capital investment needs for quality teaching and learning processes. The competency differences in teachers on recruitment, if not dealt with, eventually manifest in public secondary school head teachers since in Malawi head teachers are sources from the existing pool of teachers.

2.9.5.4.3 : Headteachers' Instructional Supervision Styles. The headteacher's role in creating school environments that sustain effective teaching-learning processes has attracted the attention of educational researchers (Szempruch et al., 2024; Sarah et al., 2023; Adangabe & Boateng, 2022; Malik & Akram, 2020; Mpaata, 2019; Mpaata & Mpaata, 2018; Esia-

Donkoh & Baffoe, 2018). Creating sustainable school environments that support teaching-learning processes requires collaboration with many stakeholders, including teachers and students. In that regard, the leadership models that inform headteachers' leadership styles are crucial for creating a school setting that supports the implementation of effective instructional supervision. Consequently, the leadership style that a head teacher adopts—transactional, transformational, or situational leadership models—matters in influencing teachers' attitudes towards instructional supervision.

Studies on the effect of headteachers' leadership styles on teachers' attitudes towards teaching and learning processes in school (Boye, 2023; Mathias, 2020; Godwin & Kabeta, 2019; Sehar & Alwi, 2019) confirm that leadership styles indeed matter. The transactional leadership model, being task-orientated, is shown to positively influence employee commitment because of the model's focus on side-bets and social exchange perspectives (Mehboob et al., 2024; Raza & Sikandar, 2018; Ghazzawi et al., 2017). The observed headteacher leadership style effect on teachers' job satisfaction shows the applicability of the side-bets and social identity theories. However, other studies (Maheshwari, 2022; Kenneth et al., 2020; Kimathi, 2018) have shown a trace correlation between headteachers' transactional leadership style and teachers' job satisfaction. This secondary school-specific observation suggests that side-bets in transactional leadership operantly condition teachers and, with tolerance, have the potential to collapse instructional quality when the rewards stop.

The literature further shows that transformational leadership effectively positions institutions at an advantage in dealing with emerging complexities and positively relates to job satisfaction (Dzakpasu et al., 2022; Kenneth et al., 2020; Noraazian & Khalip, 2016). Therefore, headteachers require skills in the various leadership models and learn from the implications such styles have on instructional supervision.

Increasing headteachers' human capital capacity with educational leadership knowledge, skills, and practices is pivotal to ensuring that headteachers become influential and relevant instructional leaders. In Malawi, attempts to improve the quality of secondary school education focus on supply of teaching-learning resources, school infrastructure, and quality teachers (Kalonga, 2023; Government of Malawi, 2022; 2021; Chikhungu et al., 2020; Barnett, 2018). The emphasis of quality in that sense is based on teacher academic qualifications. Indeed, research studies show that focussing on such inputs is worthwhile. However, as Maulidinet al. (2024), Özdemir et al. (2024), Fullan (2023), Darling-Hammond et al. (2022), Bellibaş et al. (2021), and Bush (2018) observe, adequacy in quality teachers, infrastructure, and teaching and learning resources without appropriate headteachership skills results in minimal student achievement.

Therefore, just as teachers require improvement in instructional knowledge and skills, headteachers themselves require appropriate human capital through need-specific continuing professional development arrangements. That will position the headteacher, recommends Manaseh (2016, p. 32), to effectively focus "on the core responsibility, namely teaching and learning, by defining the school vision, mission, and goals, managing the instructional program, and promoting the school climate."

2.9.5.4.4 : Teachers' Attitudes about Supervision. The way teachers respond to their job requirements is part of the vicious cycle that starts with the importance that nations attach to education, which influences the selection of candidates for initial teacher training programs, the quality of teacher training, and employment conditions for teachers (Sok & Heng, 2024; Tillin, 2023; Darling-Hammond et al., 2022; Ullah et al., 2021; Taylor et al., 2019; Ikegbusi et al., 2016). When a low cognitive calibre of students is identified for teacher training, that becomes the wrong start of the journey to the production of effective teachers, and the low quality of teacher training makes it worse.

In addition, the selection of candidates who perceive teaching as a place to wait for their dream career (Amitai & Van Houtte, 2022; Glazer, 2020; Stromquist, 2018), thus those with a low pre-entry instrumental propensity for potential teachers, likely results in low post-entry commitment (Schaefer et al., 2021; Takeuchi et al., 2021). Since headteachers are appointed from among the teachers who may have sustained low pre-entry commitment, they may turn out to be low post-entry commitment head teachers. Effective headteachers are key to breaking the vicious cycle through effective instructional supervision, which is part of the organisational socialisation of teachers.

Headteachers with affective commitment to their job influence positive attitudes towards instructional supervision in teachers (Hoque et al., 2020; Tylor et al., 2019; Daud et al., 2018; Renata et al., 2018). Teachers' negative attitudes towards instructional supervision, Birhan et al. (2021), Kurka & Berhanu (2019) observe, are due to a lack of skills in the supervisors, especially headteachers. One important finding noted from the study of instructional supervision (Gu & Wang, 2021; Balyer & Özcan, 2020; Greenglass et al., 2020; Glickman et al., 2017) is that teachers find the practice of being supervised very stressful, especially when the process tilts towards classical inspection. Noteworthy are the findings in Gholaminejad (2023), Kilag et al. (2023), Glickman & Burns, (2021), and Glickman et al. (2017) that the notion of instructional "supervision" is stressful to teachers where the procedure of supervision and the school environment lean towards the traditional perception of supervision inspection.

In the case of Malawi, the lack of competence of headteachers in carrying out effective instructional supervision stems from a lack of educational leadership training prior to a teacher taking up the post of head teacher (Ansong et al., 2024; Ubogu, 2024; Kubura, 2022; Wamba & Mgomezulu, 2014). Without specialised training in educational leadership, the only difference the secondary school headteacher in Malawi has from the teacher is the authority

and power vested in the headteacher but not the associated headteachers professional knowledge and skills. As a result, headteachers, who may not quickly acquire instructional leadership skills on their own initiative, resort to using power and authority to force teachers into ineffective instructional supervision processes. Consequently, teachers develop negative attitudes towards instructional supervision as a surrogate for negating less effective school leadership practices.

However, there is a teachers' dimension to determining the effectiveness of instructional supervision. The quantitative correlational design study on teachers' perceptions about headteachers' commitment to instructional supervision (Kiral & Suçiçeği, 2019) notes that while headteachers exhibited high commitment levels in determining and sharing school purposes, their attention to teacher support and development was low. Furthermore, the aspect least attended to is teachers' side-bets, workplace costs-rewards reciprocity expectations, and social identification with workmates and the school, which turn out to be of most concern to teachers. Thus, many factors affect teachers' attitudes towards instructional supervision. Therefore, headteachers should be aptly invested with appropriate human capital to improve teachers' productivity through quality instructional supervision (Naguit, 2024; Tuico, & Callo, 202; Hoque et al., 2020; Farhat, 2016).

Just as there are cognitive developmental stages from egocentric to altruistic, a teacher goes through stages from novice to unconscious professional (Arifin et al., 2023; Ngole & Mkulu, 2021; Honig & Rainey, 2020; Glickman et al., 2017). The rate at which a novice teacher matures into an outstanding professional depends on the teacher's willingness to develop, the extent to which a teacher is exposed to instructional supervision that is "collaborative, nonjudgmental, and supportive of teachers developing reflective practices to improve instruction" (Glanz, 2018, p. 7), and the level of the head teacher's school leadership competence in instructional leadership. Several conceptual scales depict teacher developmental

stages from novice to unconscious professional, which require specific supervisory behaviours that range from directive to non-directive (Burns et al., 2020).

The linear undertones of the teacher developmental stages models oversimplify the teachers' involvement in the teaching-learning processes. At the same time, teachers have a pre-service instrumental propensity that becomes instrumental commitment upon employment as a teacher and later matures into normative or affective commitment (Suleiman et al., 2020; Cohen, 2007). Several factors determine the rate of development from a novice to a professional. Therefore, predetermining the time a teacher develops from the first to the second stage (Setyaningsih & Suchyadi, 2021) overlooks teachers' personal cognitive and social background differences.

This study focusses on the headteachers' commitment to improving teachers' productivity through instructional supervision. Improving teachers' productivity is done by increasing human capital investment in teachers, and that is within the postulates of the Human Capital Theory, which nests Side-Bet, Social Exchange, and Social Identity theories. Of particular interest in this study is determining headteachers' commitment to examining teaching-learning and administrative documents that are key to effective student-teacher formal learning interactions. The emphasis is on examining teachers' teaching documents and observing teachers in the teaching-learning process, not for grading the teachers to avoid the reproduction of traditional bureaucratic inspection tendencies but, as Galton & Simon (2023) and Lefstein et al. (2020) recommend, for observations meant to help teachers develop into self-directed professionals.

2.9.6.0 : Class Observation Framework.

According to Halim et al. (2018, p. 163), "classroom observation describes the practice of sitting in another teacher's class to observe, learn, and reflect." The teaching-learning process forms the core of school activities and offers an opportunity for the teacher to offer instruction

and assess learners. The process of instruction helps the teacher reflect on gaps in their human capital investment for self-improvement. There is consensus about the indispensability of class observation in evaluating teaching-learning quality, although convergence in thought and discourse on the standard to use is still a dream (Blell & von Bremen, 2022; Fredriksen, 2021; McKellar et al., 2020; Muzata et al., 2020).

The tools for teaching-learning observation reflect contextual differences, and that does not present any surprise in education. In their study of sixteen education systems, Martinez et al. (2016) note consistencies in stated overall purposes with variations in the definition of good teaching and observation processes. The presence of another person in a class who observes a lesson for the purpose of providing feedback to help improve the teaching-learning process ought to be a yearning for teachers. Unfortunately, observes Zaidi (2017, p. 83), "the mere mention of "formal classroom observation" brings apprehension into the air, and several concerns are bound to follow." The observation of teachers' negative attitude towards being observed is corroborated by the findings of Glickman & Burns, (2021), Teles et al. (2020), and de Lima & Silva (2018) in their study on teacher resistance to classroom observation. The apparent indifference of many teachers to classroom observation requires approaches that will lessen the anxiety. The literature indicates that, among other factors, the leadership styles that headteachers use matter (Jilani et al., 2024; Szempruch et al., 2024; Boye, 2023; Page, 2017). It is therefore crucial for headteachers to guide their efforts to improve teaching and learning through classroom observation with the Human Capital, Side-Bet, Social Exchange, and Social Identity theories in order to lessen the anxiety that surrounds classroom observation.

An effective lesson observation framework or process ought to assure the teacher that the potential to improve from the exercise exists. The components of the process that present an assurance for improving teaching and learning are the pre-observation briefing, suggestions from the briefing, classroom observation, post-review de-briefing, suggestions for the

reviewer, and the final report (Grissom & Bartanen, 2022; Dignath & Veenman, 2021; O'Leary, 2020; Brennan, 2018). A lesson observation process that comprises the steps above in a collegiate working environment has the potential to improve practice.

2.10.0 : Conception of 'Service Period' In the Study

Employee performance measures have quality, quantity, and time dimensions. That is true with headteachers as well. There are several moderating factors affecting headteachers' performance during their time of service. The moderating factors include personal cognitive abilities and overall educational leadership, which determine the extent of head teachership professional freedom in the heteronomy-autonomy continuum within specific time dimensions. The common term available in the literature that depicts the time dimension measure is "tenure." There are several conceptualisations of tenure that reflect contextual and operational usage. In this review, two definitions in Uwannah (2023), Phytanza & Burhaein (2020), Raghavan & Janardhanan (2019), and OECD (2001) are put in focus, not because of their universality in meaning but because of the potential they have in conceptualising "service period," which is crucial in this study.

In their study on performance and tenure, Raghavan & Janardhanan (2019) define tenure as "the number of years of service [employees] have attained at their respective organizations." That perception of tenure ignores the influence that experience in the previous job may have on the employee's adaptation to and performance in another organisation in a similar field. The experience an employee carries into another institution at the same job status requires attention. In that regard, the conceptualisation of tenure (Baum, 2022; Berglund & Furåker, 2016) as the entire time an employee is with an organisation fails to make tenure a synonym of the [head teacher's] service period in this study. The depiction of tenure as the entire period of service within a specified organisation is synonymous with organisational tenure (Liu et al., 2016).

On the other hand, defining tenure as "the length of time a worker has been in their current job..." OECD (2001, p. 93) references the service time dimension to a specific job, for instance, a head teachership. One can be a head teacher at several secondary schools under the same employer. In that case, the conception of tenure is accumulative since the employee has been doing the same job in institutions in the same field: secondary schools. The job-referenced meaning of tenure is close to the conception of "service period."

Although the two definitions converge on the importance of time dimensions, the disjuncture comes in with institutional and task referencing. Of the two definitions cited above, the former is institution-referenced, while the latter has task specificity. In this study, "service period" refers to the time a teacher has been working as a head teacher only. In that regard, the service period is synonymous with job tenure (Baum, 2022; Phytanza & Burhaein, 2020; Liu et al., 2016). Since tenure and service period are concepts of the employment time dimension, they affect and are made exclusive to employee experience, commitment, performance, status, and remuneration, with significant moderation from professional autonomy. Therefore, the service period is both an independent and a dependent variable.

2.10.1 : Headteachership Autonomy and Service Period

The professional autonomy of the head teachership is both a factor and the result of several factors. In practice, head teachership fails in the absence of innovativeness because school environments are replete with novelty. Just as teachers have to be innovative in the classroom, the enormity of the complexity in the school demands that headteachers be even more creative. According to Hewko (2022), Mack, T., & Landau, C. (2020), Worth & Van den Brande (2020), the necessary conditions for innovativeness are competence, autonomy, and relatedness, which reflect human capital and social identity theories' postulates. In this context, "professional autonomy" refers to the extent of professional discretion and organisational culture in carrying out activities to achieve prescribed goals (Buske, 2018; Gilad-Hai &

Somech, 2016). However, the professional freedom that headteachers require is meant to improve performance throughout their service period. Although the headteachers' autonomy is constrained between heteronomy and autonomy (Janík et al., 2024; Pitzalis & Spanò, 2023; Woods, et al., 2020), the availability of autonomy or the lack of it determines the headteacher's service period. When the headteacher's performance is high, the service period gets longer. However, when the headteacher's performance is low, the service period decreases. In this case, the performance-service period relationship answers to the moderation of the headteacher's autonomy when other factors of equally significant influence are not factored into the equation.

It is noteworthy that the homogeneity in secondary school headteachership that Malawi's centralised secondary education system desires has become a constraint that requires heterogeneity to solve. Headteachership heterogeneity requires headteacher autonomy (Lima et al., 2024; Özdemir et al., 2023; Ugarte et al., 2022), which constitutes a self-regulating heteronomy dilemma. The centralised national curriculum, the staff and students' discipline regulations, and the institutional accountability procedures are examples of constraints on head teacher autonomy. Adding weight to the need for professional autonomy that affects headteachers' service periods, Moore & Kameshwara (2021, p. 30) observe that "allowing headteachers within government-funded schools over decision-making... [enables headteachers] to better utilise their knowledge of the context in which they work, offering a chance for a more equitable education system in the years ahead." Although research on headteacher autonomy conceptualisation is rare in the literature, Mentini & Levatino (2024), Prabahar & Jerome (2023), and Polidano (2022) conclude that the level of headteacher autonomy positively relates to innovativeness in handling novelty, which in turn has implications for the head teacher's service period.

Since autonomy is one of the elements that bring forth intrinsic motivation in individuals, including secondary school headteachers (Worth & Van den Brande, 2020), there is a need for education systems to ensure that headteachers as professionals have significant levels of professional autonomy since, without it, their service period would be time for the reproduction of inefficiencies. The discussion of professional autonomy in school leadership highlights the relationship between tenure and innovative behaviour.

2.10.2 : Service Period Relationship with Innovativeness and Experience.

Time invested engaged in an undertaking determines the level of grounded know-how one earns. Results from several studies done on the relationship between tenure and firm-specific human capital (Darouichi et al., 2021; Sun et al., 2020) show that the accumulation of job-specific knowledge and skills relates positively to the service period, besides an increase in job embeddedness, which is characterized by lower job mobility of employees. In addition, the attraction-selection-attrition theory postulates that the length of tenure reflects high job-embeddedness as a sign of high organizational commitment (Liu et al., 2016; Meyer & Allan, 1999). This is why rational organizations sustain the service period of employees with high innovativeness and job-embeddedness to improve organizational performance. Conversely, employees who are not innovative become organizational liabilities, and involuntary turnover is sanctioned for such employees (Darouichi et al., 2021). Although there are several moderating factors for service period, such as employee age, gender, culture, organizational leadership, individual cognitive potential, and family influence, among others (Sperber & Linder, 2018; Deman et al., 2018; Ul Haq et al., 2017), performance and innovativeness stand out as factors for service period.

Similarly, there exists a parallelity between tenure and experience. Knowledge, skills, information, and ideas constitute invaluable human capital that organizations cannot do without. According to Cohen (2007) and Schults (1961), people acquire human capital through

two trajectories. The first is from education and training before employment, which accounts for the pre-entry instrumental commitment propensity, according to Cohen (2007). Education provides general human capital, and training provides job-specific human capital. The second source of human capital is on-the-job experience. The human capital that employees acquire while working in an organization is job- and institution-specific since it is constructed in response to workplace cultural, technological, and social dynamics.

Since human capital accumulation has time dimensions, Schults (1971) and Burdett & Coles (2010) conclude that the service period positively correlates with experience. The positive service period-experience relationship suggests that headteachers with long service periods have higher human capital, more job-embeddedness, and more innovativeness than novice headteachers. This study on the relationship between headteachers' commitment across service periods is an attempt to verify the claimed positive experience-service period relationship.

2.10.3 : Service Period and Commitment.

The relationship between service period and commitment is complex because of the intervening influences of age, dimensions of human capital, employee productivity, conditions of service, and available competing employment opportunities (Baek et al., 2019; Meng et al., 2019; Suryani, 2018; Cohen, 2007). Nevertheless, given that the service period is directly related to experience and the accumulation of human capital, some of which is job- and institution-specific, it is logical to perceive a positive correlation between the service period and commitment.

However, remaining with an organisation may not always be an expression of employee commitment but rather the result of a fear of losing sidebets (Becker, 1964) accumulated with the organization. In addition, remaining with an organisation may result from the absence of competitive employment opportunities because the accumulated human capital

an employee has is not marketable outside the current organisation (Gagliardi et al., 2021). Employees may choose to remain with an organisation because of the strong relationships they have with leaders and peers, according to the Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Still further, remaining with an organisation may result from cultural and family influence.

The influence of culture is easy to note in the Western-Eastern cultural divide. In their study of institutional managers in four states of the United States of America and India, Chordiya et al. (2017) made the observation that public institutions' managers in the latter have a more significant affective commitment than those in the former. By implication, service periods for public institutions are bound to be longer in India than in the four states where the study was done in the United States of America if involuntary turnover is the consequence of low affective commitment. The cross-national difference in affective commitment has implications for job tenure or service periods. The more significant level of affective commitment in India is attributed to the prevalent collectivistic culture and the small size of the economy.

When the economy is small, there are fewer competing employment opportunities, and employees do their best to maintain their jobs, which results in long service periods. Hyatt & Spletzer (2016, p. 1) better illustrate the economy size-service period relationship in their study on job tenure trends in the United States of America by noting that "the tenure distribution should shift towards longer tenure jobs when the inflow of new employees decreases or when experienced workers stay at their jobs longer." This understanding implies that the stronger the economy, the more competing employment opportunities there are, the less organisational commitment there is, and the shorter the service period. In that case, commitment and service period have an inverse relationship. Such complex relationships reflect the influence of social exchange and side-bet theories on the one hand and the marketability of employees' human capital on the other.

The cultural orientation perspective underpins the explanation of the collectivistic cultural influence on job tenure. According to Ma et al. (2017), culture is not static, and the evidence is in the Chinese experience, where cultural orientation shifts are highly observable. Ma et al. (2017) note job tenure-age relations in that the younger generation assumes a vertical individualistic orientation with high employment mobility, which results in short job tenure. On the other hand, the older generation is conservative about horizontal collectivism, which has low job mobility, is more committed, and has a long tenure.

2.10.4 : Service Period and Headteacher Performance.

The manner in which the employees' service period and performance relate is complex because of the existing mediating factors, some of which are task type, age, conditions of service, team cohesion, leadership style in an organisation, and organisational culture (Chang et al., 2022; Saleh et al., 2020; Huang & Hilary, 2018). Organisations focus on factors that affect employees' performance as the basis for making crucial decisions for organisational survival. Employee performance, which comprises task, adaptive, and contextual performance dimensions, is the worker's achievement associated with significant organisational undertakings through personal effort and exertion (Pradhan & Jena, 2017). The translation of accumulated intangible capabilities, thus human capital, into task-orientated behaviours to achieve specified outcomes defines an employee's productivity. Therefore, the employee's productivity is fundamental to organisational returns on investment. Returns on investment consequently determine organisational competitiveness and survival.

In public secondary schools, headteachers' performance plays a crucial role in improving teachers' productivity for accountability concerning students' outcomes. Headteachers' performance is affected by a myriad of factors (Kenny, 2019; Shaikh, 2017; Pradhan & Jena, 2017), including the service period. Research studies that compared employees' service period and performance present mixed results. While Kenny (2019)

observes that "employees who have more on-the-job experience tended to perform better because there is an increase in their skills and competencies." Such a perception suggests a positive-linear relationship between service period and performance (Hurriyati et al., 2020), which corroborates postulates in the Human Capital Theory (Becker, 1964; Schults, 1961). Furthermore, such an observation implies that headteachers' commitment to instructional supervision improves with their service period.

While Gagliardi et al. (2021) concur with observing an existing relationship between service period and performance, they assert that the nature of the relationship is not linear but curvilinear. The curvilinearity results when age, which positively linearly relates to human capital accumulation (Kenny, 2019) and negatively linearly relates to performance in non-routine and complex tasks, is factored in (Gagliardi et al., 2021). The curvilinear perspective of the service period-performance relationship indicates that the performance of headteachers varies at different service periods. Therefore, research needs to empirically describe the relationship between secondary school headteachers' commitment to instructional supervision and their service period.

In this review of relevant literature, "service period" is a concept that develops from tenure and has several influencing factors while also being a factor of other tenure variables. There is a need for secondary school headteachers to require descriptions using the service period variable as well for effective and efficient head teachership improvement program formulation. Headteachers, as employees, have service periods and exhibit commitments to their employers and their job. Although literature on the link between service period and commitment in educational leadership is rare, the findings of the correlation between the two variables in other fields of study provide stepping stones for studying headteachers' commitment.

2.11.0 : Headteacher Empowerment

As a concept, employee empowerment has had noticeable space in organisational studies. According to Dahou & Hacini (2018, p. 52), employee empowerment implies a "process of encouraging employees, including management, to utilise their skills and experience by giving them the power to use more judgement and discretion in their work." As a motivational practice, observe Dahou & Hacini (2018), Zaraket et al. (2018), and Hanaysha (2016). Employee empowerment is about capacitating organisational human resources to handle novelty for the efficient realisation of institutional goals. Since employee empowerment has been observed to positively correlate with employee loyalty, organisational commitment, and job satisfaction (AlKahtani et al., 2021; Marta et al., 2021; Murray & Holmes, 2021; Farrukh et al., 2020; Qing et al., 2020; Sazkaya et al., 2018; Al-Edenat & Alhawamdeh, 2018), employees that are empowered are assets for organisations.

However, studies about headteacher empowerment in the central East and West Education Divisions are rare, yet the headteacher is an employee and require empowerment too. The practice of not scaffolding headteachership issues into the mainstream leadership studies confirms the that the pedagogical and subject content knowledge and skills a teacher acquired at pre-service training and the experience a teacher acquired in some years of practice were adequate for the instructional supervision roles. As such the education system in Central East and Central West Education Divisions uses the lean course of headteacher preparation shown in Figures 2.1 and 2.3.

Although some studies have presented employee empowerment as desirable in organisations, there are some observations about its challenges to institutional leadership. Some of the criticisms of employee empowerment focus on the challenges empowered employees may face with institutional leadership. As observed in Ciulla & Ciulla (2020), empowered employees may use the trust earned from organisational leaders as leverage to

create informal groups that counter institutional authority. Further, as empowered employees may access knowledge about institutional procedures beyond the bounds of their job description, that would undermine organisational controls and ferment anarchy (Baird et al., 2018). According to Arshad et al. (2021), organisational learners may be alluded to by abusive tendencies to assert themselves over suspected empowered employees. However, in the study about leadership and empowerment (Ciulla & Ciulla, 2020), assert that the criticisms levelled at employee empowerment may just be reflections of a lack of authenticity in the employee empowerment processes in organisations.

Employee empowerment in education institutions is very important since effective teaching and learning processes require schools to operate in diverse and complex contexts and yet achieve the same pre-set goal, thus ensuring that students effectively learn. Given that empowered employees. However, unique to loyalty is the ability of an employee to remain with an employer despite organisational hardships and not take advantage of alternative employment opportunities (Jansson & Wiklund, 2019). Such an employee's attitude towards an organisation goes beyond the influence of reciprocity in social exchange (Blau, 1964; Homans, 1961; Murali et al., 2017) and the reference to side-bets (Becker, 1960; Meyer & Allen, 1984). Instead, employees' loyalty wells up from intrinsic motivation that anchors on organisation-specific knowledge and skills (Schults, 1963), which Yin et al. (2019) refer to as "human asset specificity," and on identification with the in-group (Tajfel & Turner, 1979).

Public secondary schools as organisations require empowered employees in order to keep up with the novelty that is characteristic of educational contexts in the fast-changing globalised world. Empowered leaders have confidence in themselves, motivate subordinates with timely feedback, delegate to subordinates with authority and responsibility, develop subordinates' abilities, and encourage innovativeness (Hoang et al., 2022; Khatoon et al., 2022). Headteachers need to exhibit empowering behaviours so that schools sustain effective

functionality in the pursuit of visions guiding education systems despite variation in geographical locations.

It is therefore important that education systems deliberately empower headteachers with increased human capital capacity through induction courses and need-focused formal in-service trainings so that, in turn, headteachers empower their subordinates and, more importantly, teachers. With increased human capital capacity at the onset of public secondary school head teachership, headteachers should claim space in the knowledge-sharing enterprise (Khatoon et al., 2022; Khalil et al., 2021) regarding educational leadership. Since employee empowerment is viewed as risk-taking (Jung et al., 2020; Liu et al., 2020), employee loyalty is viewed as a precondition for scaffolding employees in an empowerment process. Since empowerment implies human capital capacity improvement, it is imperative that headteachers be loyal.

2.11.1 : Employee Loyalty

Organisations desire high-performing employees that are loyal, as that behaviour assures affective and normative commitment and the security of institutional confidentialities. Such loyal employees are perceived to be worthy of human capital investment as part of incentives. The positive relationship between employee loyalty and other desired organisational behaviours justifies the efforts institutions apply to encourage and sustain employee loyalty (Darmawan et al., 2020), which is the reason institutions craft, although there are instances where loyalty does not positively relate to performance.

According to Bilal et al. (2021), Jang & Kandampully (2018), and Jansson & Wiklund (2019), several factors lead to employees' loyalty to an organization. These include competence development, ethical leadership, inclusion, organisational culture, feedback, and intrinsic rewards. Unfortunately, studies on loyalty (Bilal et al., 2021) indicate that employee loyalty is declining due to changes in employee-organisation relationships. Instead, employees

shift their loyalty to their careers, leading to a commitment to multiple organisations; thus, employee-career and employee-organisation commitments.

In education, headteachers' loyalty is crucial, as it indicates the ultimate goal of organisational commitment. After all, in Malawi's centralised secondary education system, all the operation structures in public secondary schools are basically the same. Therefore, the factors of employee loyalty are essential to school leadership as they have implications for teacher commitment and students' achievement.

2.11.2.0 : Definition of Loyalty.

Although clarity in the conceptualisation of employee loyalty is still elusive to researchers, efforts have been put into understanding the concept and studying its applications in organisations. There are many definitions of 'loyalty' that sometimes obscure the clarity of the concept. Susanto (2024, p. 4) defines loyalty in practical terms as "includes behaviours and actions such as using their abilities and expertise, maintaining discipline, being honest at work, creating a peaceful and supportive working environment and being ready to work longer." Other definitions of loyalty (Astuti et al., 2022; Naufalia et al., 2022; Notosudjono et al., 2022; Rifaldo, 2022) emphasise on positive thinking about an organisation, being available, being positive about an organisation while being in or out of the organisation.

2.11.2.1 : Employee Loyalty in Central East and Central West Education Divisions Public Secondary Schools. The understanding of 'loyalty', especially in education, is moderated by contextual factors. In Malawi, the influence of religion has had a recognisable impact. The effects of the quassi-marketisation of education in the fold of globalisation challenge the conception of loyalty from a missionary perspective (Daka, 2020; Nyasulu, 2020). From the Christian missionary perspective, teaching is a calling that overrides the importance of monetary incentives (Ehrhardt & Ensher, 2021; Trentham, 2021). Employers desire employee loyalty that anchors on intrinsic motivation, while employees, on the other

hand, look up to the sustenance of life that is factored in by social exchange, side-bets, and social identity perspectives from employers and organizations. The conception of headteachers' loyalty in Malawi's education ought to take cognisance of the missionary perspective background to avoid reproduction of practices that will suppress the improvement of public secondary school head teachership.

Comparatively, employee loyalty is a concept that has not received as much research attention in the literature as commitment (Susanto, 2024) though loyalty is the most desirable state of being in employees that organisations look for. The note in Notosudjono et al. (2022) that organisations (public secondary schools alike) value loyal employees to manage through tough times, define the real value of loyalty.

2.11.2.2 : Desirability of Employee Loyalty. Organisations desire loyal employees because they are an asset for high organisational performance. The high-performance results from two employee behaviour trajectories: employee productivity and reduction of labour costs. According to Liyanage& Ekanayake (2020), productivity is the rate of excess, in value, of output in comparison to inputs. For an establishment to register high productivity, the cost of inputs, including labour and production ought to be low. Loyal employees assist in lowering labour costs to the favour of increasing productivity. Such a definition of loyalty shows that the desirability of loyalty is actually in high-performance. Application of loyalty as a concept in education in its traditional sense presents a challenge because the isolation of all educational inputs and the enumeration of all the outputs is a very complex matter. However, some form of calibration of output quality provides a sense of measure. Loyal employees have high dedication, which carries them beyond the call of duty. That character in employees makes an organisation achieve more than the expressed outcomes.

The second channel through which organisational performance is raised is by reducing labour costs. The undertakings of loyal employees attract non-structured rewards at the

organisation's discretion. In corroboration with the loyalty definition in Elegido (2013), Karimah et al. (2021, p. 2) illustrate such things as "willingness to work overtime without overtime payment." The acquisition of output from labour without formal organisational commitment to reward is an advantage to an organisation that promotes organisational performance.

Consequently, loyalty creates an inverse loyalty-wage relationship (Masakure, 2016), which enables organisations to widen their profit margins and increase performance. That wage bill suppression emerges as one of the factors that disturbs the productivity-wage relationship to the advantage of organisations and at the expense of employees. Therefore, according to the Human Capital Theory (Schults, 1961), organisations ought to perceive loyal employees as worth human capital investment.

2.11.3: Factors of Employee Loyalty

The literature posits several factors that influence employee loyalty. The factors noted in Marni et al. (2024), Mpate & Sango (2024), Hokororo & Kaijage (2023), relate to the social exchange and social identity theories (Ahmad et al., 2023; van den Scott, 2023). This literature review extends the categorisation to include issues within the Human Capital Theory (Goldin, 2024; Nadezhina & Avduevskaia, 2021). Of course, in their theoretical categorisation, the factors of employee loyalty are congested. Some of the factors filtered from the theoretical categories are job satisfaction, organisational leadership styles, and employee empowerment (Nanjundeswaraswamy, 2023; Alamanda et al., 2022).

According to Afaq et al. (2022) and Suhartanto, et al. (2020), loyalty is mediated by a combination factor that include includes psychological, physiological, and environmental circumstances. Employees' satisfaction derives from the extent to which organisations meet their needs such as salary, relate to social exchange theory, while others, like celebrating the birthdays of colleagues at work, relate to social identity theory. Gyawali et al. (2020) reminds us that age, tenure, salary, and status moderate employee satisfaction. Further, given that job

satisfaction is a factor in turnover (Chavadi et al., 2022; Puhakka et al., 2021), the loyalty aligns with the continuance commitment dimension of organisational commitment because it reflects an instrumentalist or an employee-organisation contractual relationship (Martins et al., 2023; Adhvaryu et al., 2022; Hussain & Khayat, 2021).

According to Carter IV (2021), there is parallelity between leadership styles and the extent of organisational commitment, of which turnover intentions are one of the measures. The leadership style that promotes employees' commitment raises job satisfaction and suppresses employee turnover. By definition, turnover intentions is the rate at which employees voluntarily or involuntarily leave an organisation; "the desire of an employee to quit their current job within a certain time period" (Tolksdorf et al., 2022, p. 2). Organisations loathe excessive turnover because of its implications on recruitment, training, organisational operations, security costs, and organisational reputation (Wang et al., 2024; Gan, E., & Voon, 2021). Consequently, leadership styles being one of the factors that trigger turnover intentions is a practice of interest.

Studies on how leadership styles affect employee commitment and, consequently, turnover present a mixed bag of results (Pattali et al., 2024; Donkor et al., 2022; Romi et al., 2022). Autocratic leadership, according to the study by Asianab, (2023), Moosa et al. (2023), and Sanam (2023), present a positive relationship with turnover but a significantly negative relationship with loyalty. In autocratic leadership, all power and authority reside with the leader, and followers have no opportunity to significantly participate in the development of policies to improve their organization. As a result, employees have no opportunity to look into the ontogenesis of their skills and professional comprehension.

To the contrary, studies by Zanabazar et al. (2023) and Megawati & Umar (2023) observe that transformational and transactional leadership behaviours have a negative relationship with turnover intentions and actual turnover, while the relationship with loyalty is

positively significant. In their study on job satisfaction and loyalty among academicians, Hien (2023) and Hartika et al. (2023), attributed the significant positive linkages between transformational and transactional leadership styles to employee loyalty and that where such a relationship existed, significant negative relationship with turnover was conspicuous (Lenier, 2020).

The factors of loyalty in transformational and transactional leadership fall within the prescriptions of the social exchange and social identity theories (Mofokeng, 2022; Homans, 1961; Blau, 1964). According to Gouda, & Tiwari, (2024), Tawanda & Tsara, (2022), Pantouvakis & Vlachos, (2020) Leadership styles are a key and fundamental factor in actualising employee belongingness to an organisation and employee involvement in organisational leadership. Leadership styles are a fundamental factor in cultivating and nurturing organisational commitment. However, loyalty alone, without the employees' capability for productivity, makes employees mere liabilities.

2.12.0 : Location of Loyalty in Headteachership

The literature informs us that employee loyalty is not born but learned. Employee loyalty stems from job satisfaction and organisational commitment, in addition to employee empowerment through involvement and cultivation of a sense of belongingness among all school clientele (Mpate & Sango, 2024; Sunardi & Nurwanto, 2024). The headteacher's leadership behaviours are influential in the process of loyalty development and nurturing in teachers. There is a need, therefore, for authorities to ensure that headteachers too are loyal by assuring the headteachers' job satisfaction, commitment, involvement in policy formulation, and creation of arrangements for the headteachers as professionals to have a sense of belonging if they are to in turn actualise the same at school level.

Headteachers act as role models, and whatever they do is bound to be imitated by staff and students. In that regard, the leadership styles that headteachers adopt have implications for

the development and nurturing of loyalty in teachers and students. The head teacher ought to be aware that autocratic leadership suppresses the development and sustenance of loyalty in teachers and students. In education, headteachers' loyalty is crucial not only because it indicates the ultimate goal of organisational commitment but also because schools just require loyal employees to function.

2.13.0 : Organizational Citizenship Behaviour

Conceptually, organisational citizenship behaviour encapsulates employee dispositions beyond the expectations of the employer and is reflected in organisational commitment and job satisfaction (Aguiar-Quintana et al., 2020). Thus, the extent of employee commitment and job satisfaction in an organisation describes organisational citizenship behaviour. The behaviours of employees in their efforts to achieve pre-set goals expose gaps in organisational leadership and management, which competitors can easily exploit. It is because of the potential threat to organisational competitiveness and survival that researchers, scholars, and organisational management practitioners have developed an interest in organisational citizenship behaviour (Wood et al., 2024; McKenna, E. (2020). Organisational citizenship behaviour, as a concept, has roots in Greek military culture, where soldiers dedicated themselves to carrying out their duties "beyond the call of duty" (Von Stieglitz, (2023; De Clercq & Belausteguigoitia, 2021), thus going beyond the formal expectation but to the advantage of the organisation just because one is a citizen.

It is from such a background that organisational citizenship behaviour earns the description of "the types of discretionary behaviour and contributions that are not explicitly associated with the specific job requirements" (Podsakoff et al., 2018, p. 7), and Organ (2018) adds "without explicit rewards." The quest of scholars is to identify the factors that influence organisational citizenship behaviour. Several research studies show that there are factors that influence employees to display organisational citizenship behaviour. Some of such factors are

leadership styles, organisational commitment, job attitudes, work-life equilibrium, and job satisfaction (Carr, et al., 2023; Cek & Eyupoglu, 2020; Khan et al., 2020).

The causal linkage between job attitudes and organisational citizenship behaviour remains an area of contestation. While several studies posit that job attitudes and the combination of job satisfaction and organisational commitment fundamentally influence organisational citizenship behaviour (Ali & Anwar, 2021; Ng et al., 2021; Nico, 2020; Yunita, 2020), there are other researchers that hold contrary views. For instance, Ng et al. (2021), Saputra & Riana (2021) and Cek & Eyupoglu (2020) argue that empirical evidence to anchor the assertion that job satisfaction is a factor that influences organisational citizenship behaviour is currently rare in the literature.

The other argument in emptying the job satisfaction-organisational citizenship behaviour causality is from the respective formal-informal dimensions of the concepts. Job satisfaction, which is the function of the difference between what an employee obtains and what should have been obtained from the employee-organisation contractual relationship (Ardi, 2020; Purwanto et al., 2021), does not cause an employee to extend oneself to an undertaking that has rewarding uncertainty. Further, the proponents of the "no causal relationship camp" (de Geus et al., 2020) argue that there are currently no instruments for establishing the claimed causality, and therefore, it is too early to make claims about existing job satisfaction-organisational citizenship behaviour causality. Such views about the manner with which organisational citizenship behaviour and job attitudes link reflect perspectives within the side-bet and social exchange theories, and job attitudes are bound within contrary perspectives.

Still further, claims are made about the way organisational citizenship behaviour is influenced by organisational leadership (Ardi, 2020; Purwanto, 2020). The arguments for the relationship thrive on theoretically logical assumptions that "leaders who apply this type of

transformational leadership will tend to spur their followers to produce work beyond what is expected" (Purwanto et al., 2021, p. 61). Employees that exhibit organisational citizenship behaviour possess human capital that goes beyond organisation-specific capabilities and are willing to use such personal investment to the advantage of their organisations. That, too, logically relates organisational citizenship behaviour with organisational commitment. However, the argument begs the question of empirical evidence from those holding contrary views.

In education, however, organisational citizenship behaviour is crucial since not all that happens in secondary schools is within formal expectations. There are emerging issues that come with clientele and require immediate attention without giving strategic time for consultation. Headteachers take the persuasion to extend themselves beyond the agreed terms of contractual reference when contextual novelty confronts them. In that regard, Purwanto et al. (2020) posits that the headteachers' and teachers' willingness to extend themselves beyond contractual terms of reference to improve students' achievement is contingent on the employees' loyalty to either the organisational leadership or to the organisation, or as a result of cultural influence. It is therefore imperative to ensure that headteachers are systematically and continuously invested with human capital that will enable them to extend themselves with organisational citizen behaviour when the need arises.

Further, headteachers in the Central East and Central West Education Divisions require empowerment through participation in educational policy development. The participation of headteachers in the recursive policy formulation process will improve effectiveness in the feedback loop, which currently has bureaucratic delays. The involvement of headteachers in such a manner will be part of a total incentive scheme that will add to the motivation of headteachers.

The use of incentives in educational leadership ought to motivate headteachers to demonstrate loyalty and school citizenship behaviour. In this case, loyal headteachers will work hard to improve practice and work beyond the confines of school formality. Since secondary school headteachers in the Central East and Central West education divisions are heterogeneous in many aspects, the motivation schemes that can be effective in maintaining headteachers with high human capital investment and attracting talented people to headteachership needed to be diverse (Aryal et al., 2023; Haruna, 2022; Štemberger, 2020). Education leadership needs to participate in the "war for talent" (Yuan & Chai, 2020), since it is talented employees that will make secondary schools stand up to the challenges of society.

2.14.0 : Summary

This literature review shows that the commitment of headteachers is a multi-perspective researchable construct within the compound theoretical framework that constitutes Human and Capital, Side-Bet, Social Exchange, and Social Identity theories (Gabay-Mariani & Dubard-Barbosa, 2024; Griffen, 2024; Yamao, 2024; Rafid, 2023; Guan & So, 2022). The commitment of headteachers denotes instructional leadership, whose effectiveness is contingent on the leadership models that influence the headteachers' leadership styles. The literature review further shows the various conceptions of headteachership, which reflect the headteachers' roles of emphasis. Knowledge of secondary school headteachership and how the factors affect instructional supervision contributes to the description of secondary head teachership and its evolution to address emerging educational leadership needs in Malawi.

However, the literature review highlights the gap in the description of secondary school headteachers' commitment to instructional supervisory roles throughout the headteachers' service period. Establishing the headteachers' commitment to instructional supervisory roles (consistency or lack of it) throughout the headteachers' service period and the correlation between the headteachers' confessed commitment and implemented

commitment throughout their service period provides a knowledge base for planning effective headteachers' in-service training to improve school leadership practice.

3.0 CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODS

3.1: Introduction

The expressions of expected commitment from employees are constituted in organisational visions, missions, goals, and objectives (Kartiko et al., 2023; Lee et al., 022; Hutasuhut et al., 2021; Miruts, 2021). In the case of Malawi, the overarching visions, goals, aims, mission and objectives are those expressed in the national education policies (Government of Malawi, 2016, 2015, 2013). In the Malawi's centralised secondary school education management system, all public secondary schools reference their visions, goals, aims, missions and objectives to the national educational expectations. The ideal headteachers' commitment dimension look for is affective commitment as learned from the three-component commitment model (Ghasemy & Frömbling, 2023; Rodrigues et al., 2022; Afshari et al., 2020; Thuy et al., 2020). Employees that are affectively committed, according to Schwarz et al. (2023), Duarte et al. (2021), and Astuty & Udin (2020), become invaluable assets to their employers. That observation should be in public secondary school headteachers in Central East and Central West education Divisions. Headteachers with affective commitment would be assured possession of positive attitude about their secondary schools, low intention to quit, exertion of additional efforts towards improvement of their public secondary schools. It is in the light of this that the public, as the proprietor of public educational institutions, including public secondary schools in CEED and CWED, and the employer of headteachers, teachers, as well as administrative and support staff, expects headteachers to be affectively committed to instructional supervision in their schools.

In the literature, organisational commitment is determined using an organisational commitment questionnaire. As described in Ahmadian et al. (2023), Vuong et al. (2022), and Bahadori et al. (2021), the questionnaire comprises Likert-scaled items where respondents indicate the psychometric response options that best reflect the respondents' attitudes. When

participants complete the questionnaire, they could be noted as being affectively, continuancely, or normatively committed. Since the responses are declarative through the participants selection of options on the alternatives set under each questionnaire item, the determined commitment level is thus self-declared. The self-declared commitment dimension that employees make when responding to the there-component commitment model TCM questionnaire requires corroboration with a complementary measurement variable. The declarative commitment dimension should not be defensible without evidence of practiced commitment through job performance.

Therefore, a need exists to complement the ascription of the declarative commitment dimension with defensible practical evidence. Although the description of public servants' including that of headteachers' commitment in Malawi is not described by the dimensions of commitment in the TCM described in Prang (2020), Meyer & Allen (1991), and Mowday et al. (1982), thus affective, continuance and normative, it is expected that public service employees should actively be committed. That expectation is true in Malawi's centralised secondary education management system as well. The demands of the national education standards (Ministry of Education, 2015) show the expectation that public secondary school headteachers should be actively committed to the practice of secondary school head teachership especially, to instructional supervision.

Ideally, the expected affective commitment ought to translate to effective teacher-learner interaction in learning activities for high students' achievement to render education "a key human capital development instrument and an important prerequisite for socio-economic development and industrial growth" (Malawi Government, 2017, p. 60) in the case of Malawi. The TCM (Ahmadian et al., 2023; Rameshkumar, 2020) informs the conceptualisation of headteachers'-confessed psychometric parameters about their instructional supervision commitment.

The model components, affective, continuous, and normative, are presented as static psychometric configuration points at which employees locate themselves within dynamic organisational contexts. Unless administered in longitudinal studies, the determined organisational commitment dimension configured after the TCM questionnaire administration reflects the participant's commitment on the day of the questionnaire instrumentation. Critical to headteachers' commitment to instructional supervision is the headteachers' dedication to the prescriptive, explorative, directive, and non-directive supervisory roles (Wichmann-Hansen & Schmidt Nielsen, 2024; Meza et al., 2023), because commitment to such roles has implications for students' achievement.

However, the problem is that declared and implemented headteachers' commitments to their supervisory roles throughout their service period in the Central East and the Central West education divisions have not received noticeable exploratory research attention for description and comparison. Such neglect of headteachers' attributes is despite the fact that the type and level of organisational commitment define the dimension of teachers' commitment and, consequently, students' learning achievement. The lack of research attention to public secondary school headteachership, has blurred the specificity of the contribution that headteachers make to school effectiveness and students' achievement.

Since school effectiveness cannot surpass the quality of its leadership, knowledge about headteachers' commitment variability over their service period is essential for whole-school quality improvement interventions. Lack of headteachers' commitment knowledge has attributed the lowering of public secondary schools' quality in Malawi to factors excluding leadership effectiveness (JICA, 2020; World Bank, 2004b). Failure to include the contribution of public secondary school headteachers in describing the quality of a public secondary school is an exclusion of a very important element in the life of a secondary school. Therefore, there

is a need to ascertain the consistency of headteachers' commitment throughout their service period.

The differentiated plummeting of quality in conventional secondary and community day secondary schools on the one hand and conventional day secondary schools on the other, judged from national Junior Certificate of Education (JCE) and Malawi School Certificate of Education (MSCE) examination results for Central East and Central West Education Divisions (Government of Malawi, 2018-2023), suggests the existence of differences in head teachership's commitment (Boye, 2023; KC, 2022; Rose et al., 2022; Cheruse, 2021; Kimengich et al., 2020). Therefore, knowledge about variations in headteachers' commitment over their service period is vital for improving leadership effectiveness in the secondary schools owned and managed as public institutions.

The purpose of this mixed-methods approach study is to interrogate headteachers' in-role performance within the fold of headteachers' commitment perception (Eisl et al., 2023; Owusu-Addo et al., 2022), through the correlation of data regarding headteachers' declarative commitment to instructional supervisory roles, practiced commitment, and the headteachership service period. The correlations from multivariate data analyses will base inferences on the guiding research questions and test the study hypotheses. Consequently, the inferences will inform the construction of complementary perspectives to the three-component model of organisational commitment. The resultant complementary perspectives will be additional factors to consider in planning continuous professional development interventions (Tangonyire et al., 2024; Jabonillo, 2022) to maintain and improve school leadership. Points of low commitment during the headteachers' service periods will be the new factor the study will construct.

Since knowledge is evaluated on the truthfulness of the rigour in its creation, this chapter unveils the knowledge-creation processes followed to allow for verification of the

study's concluding claims. In that regard, this chapter focusses on the research approach and design, population and study sample, data collection tools and instrumentation, operational definitions of variables, study procedures, ethical assurances, and data assemblage and analysis. The exposure of the knowledge-creation processes in the study of headteachers' commitment to instructional supervisory roles over the headteachers' service period provides opportunities for knowledge creation, refining, replication, and extension. The discussion in this chapter adds weight to the perception that the worthiness of knowledge does not surpass the validity of its creation process.

3.2.0 : Research Approach and Design

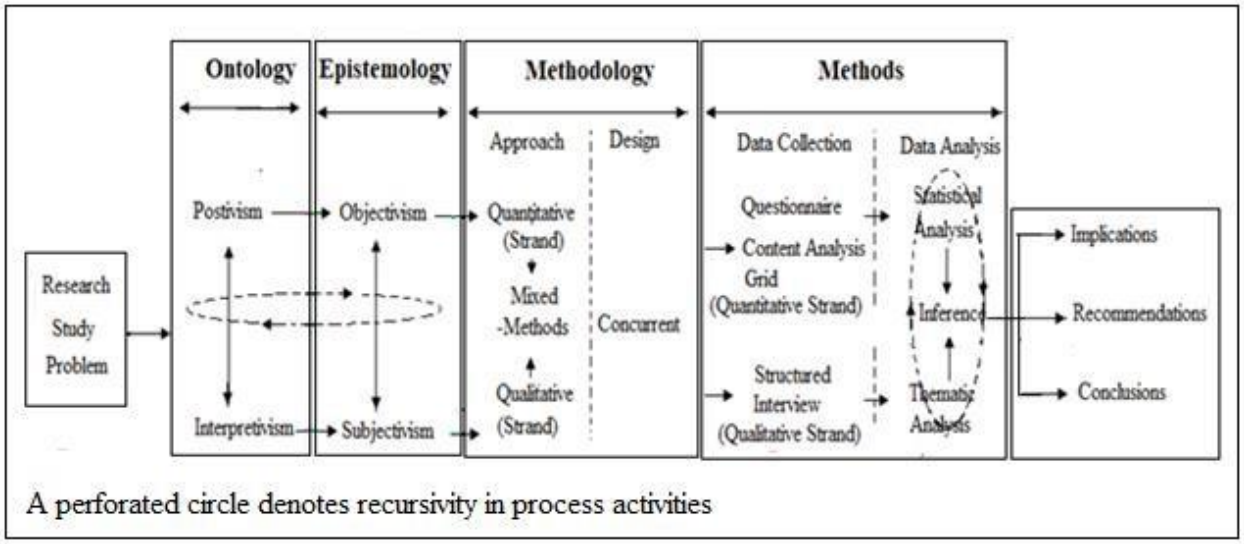
Identifying an appropriate research approach and design involves a recursive process among ontological, epistemological, and methodological issues. Such recursivity among ontological, epistemological, and methodological issues makes it important to come up with the appropriate methods to meaningfully relate theories and data about variables concerning the nature of the problem under study. The ontological underpinnings of any research study and the consequent appropriate epistemological implications regarding the relationship between the "knower," thus the researcher, and the "known," thus the reality under investigation, are crucial in informing the respective research methodology and methods.

The fundamentality of ontology and epistemology to research qualifies the two philosophical concepts as "footings to a house [a research study]: they form the foundations of the whole edifice" (Grix, 2004, p. 59). It is therefore important that the research approach and design clearly reflect the ontological and epistemological stances that inform the study methodology, design, and methods for coherence, as Figure 3.1 shows. The question of which comes first between ontology and epistemology is like the "chicken and egg" discourse. The choice of whether ontology or epistemology comes first varies among researchers and depends on the research problem to be resolved. Some researchers prefer starting from epistemology to

ontology; others start the thought process from epistemology to ontology, while others view both as merely research components that offer worldviews (Trownsell, 2022; Baggs & Chemero, 2021; Al-Ababneh, 2020; Beach, 2020). The ontology-epistemology sequencing justifies the perception that the relationship between the two components in a research process is recursive, as Figure 3.1 shows.

Figure 3-1

Philosophical Underpinnings of the Study Process



Whichever the starting point may be, ontology or epistemology as shown in Figure 3-1, the basic logic remains that when the ontological stance relates to positivism, the corresponding epistemological orientation is objectivism, which flows with objective methodology to justify experimental or quasi-experimental designs and appropriate observation schedules or questionnaires for quantitative data collection methods with statistical data analysis strategies noted in Lerotholi, & Bezuidenhout, (2023), to organise the data for further inference. On the other hand, when the ontological stance renders itself interpretivism, the epistemology reflects subjectivism, while the methodology and design are qualitative, followed by interviews, panel discussions, and ethnography, as data collection methods and data are organised using thematic analysis for further inference.

However, when the ontological underpinning of a research undertaking is dual, in a mixed-methods approach, as is the case in this study elucidated in Figure 3-1, there are two polarised ontological strands in the same research assignment that relate to objective and subjective epistemological perspectives and the respective data collection and analysis methods. One strand tows the positive ontological perspective, while the other threads the interpretive worldview of aspects of the study problem aspects as Figure 3-1 illustrates under methodology. The nature of knowledge that is objective aligns with positive theoretical underpinnings, while knowledge that is subjective or constructive relates to an interpretive theoretical perspective. Consequently, the epistemological and ontological fit informs the research methodology that constitutes the research approach and design (Biesta, 2021; Tummons, 2021; Creswell & Creswell, 2017), as Figure 3-1 further illustrates.

3.2.1 : Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches

According to Puritan research culture, reality is either positive or interpretive, which respectively reflect quantitative and qualitative ways of knowing and assume deductive and inductive persuasions about research methodology and methods. As a result, any combination of quantitative and qualitative aspects, as in abductive persuasion (Janisdewski & van Osselaer, 2022; Al-Ababneh, 2020), as Figure 3-1 shows, reflects a lack of ontological and epistemological purity as in eclecticism. Therefore, the deductive methodology and the quantitative methods of persuasion are typical of studies that view the nature of reality with a positive theoretical underpinning. The process in such studies progresses from theories to data for confirmatory purposes.

In that case, a mono-quantitative research design and quantitative data collection methods that superficially exclude the researcher's influence, such as experiments, questionnaires, and observation with descriptive and inferential statistical data analysis methods, characterise a study to ensure research study coherence (Gannon et al., 2022;

Kumatongo & Muzata, 2021; Takahashi & Araujo, 2020), as Figure 4 presents. In this case, describing ontological purity as superficial acknowledges the need for consistent reflexivity to ensure that a research thought does not become a window through which to express the researcher's personal opinions about the nature of reality (Chilisa & Phatshwane, 2022; Lafrance & Wigginton, 2019).

On the other hand, the qualitative research approach typifies studies in which the perception of reality is interpretive and therefore relates knowledge to the subjective or constructive epistemology (Harasim, 2023; Hyde, 2020), thus providing a methodology and methods with an inductive persuasion. The purpose of a qualitatively approached research study is to develop theories. The coherency of all the components in typical qualitative research studies is based on a subjective or constructive epistemology and an interpretive ontological underpinning.

In that case, the research design ought to exclusively reflect the interpretive ontological lens, thus case study and ethnography, and consequently use interviews, focus-group discussions, observation, and participation as data collection methods, with document analysis, coding, and thematic analysis as data analysis methods to ensure consistency with phenomenology (Al-Ababneh, 2020; Daka et al., 2020).

3.2.3 : Quantitative-Qualitative Approach Polarity or a Continuum.

The paradigmatic polarity between positivism and interpretivism positions quantitative the two research approaches as worldviews in conflict. Reflecting on the perception of Crotty (1998), Al-Ababneh (2020, p. 79) posts that "positive science is based on direct experience, not speculation. Knowledge in this science is grounded firmly and exclusively in something that is posited, and it does not arrive at it speculatively." The statement insinuates that any perception of reality other than positivism merely speculates because of researcher intrusions into the data and the inability to generate theories for generalization (Carminati, 2018;

Žukauskas et al., 2018; Rehman & Alharthi, 2016). Further, positivism not only ignores the existence of social reality but also fails to accept the fact that not all phenomena, such as social reality, are currently not calibrable because technology has not yet developed parameters to make measurability a possibility.

Interpretivism, on the other hand, argues that social reality cannot be reduced to universal laws for generalisation (Alharahsheh & Pius, 2020; Saunders et al., 2012; Scotland, 2012) and promotes the study of social reality using qualitative approaches with an inductive persuasion. While acknowledging the efficacy of positivism's theoretical predictions on stationary and recurrent phenomena, interpretivism notes that the complexity of social phenomena is neither stationary nor static, which makes social reality beyond the capability of positivism to interpret (Papageorgiou et al., 2020; Umar et al., 2020). The arguments from the two epistemological perspectives show no sign of convergence.

However, exclusively quantitative or qualitative perceptions in research studies are not easy to conceive (Kumatongo & Muzata, 2021; Siyaev & Jo, 2021). The perception in Kuhn (1962, p. viii) that there is "…. doubt that practitioners of the natural sciences possess firmer or more permanent answers to [ontological purity] questions than their colleagues in social science" calls for viewing quantitative and qualitative research approaches not as polarized duals but rather as a continuum (Dompere, 2024; 2022; Levitt et al., 2022;) in which perceptions in the seemingly polarized stances complement each other in various ways. The perceived lack of exclusivity in either quantitative or qualitative approaches has created the need for an that would utilise the benefits from the puritan approaches with an abductive methodology and methods persuasions and thus the mixed-methods approach.

3.2.4 : Mixed Methods Approach

The research approach with abductive persuasions, the mixed-methods research approach, also known as the third research paradigm (Waziri & Kyari, 2023; Hitchcock &

Onwuegbuzie, 2022), earns its uniqueness from its complementary thesis of the puritanical philosophies of research perspectives, or the polarity thesis. Though referred to as “the sibling of multimethod research (“Methodenkombination”) in which either solely multiple qualitative approaches or solely multiple quantitative approaches are combined" (Schoonenboom and Johnson, 2017, p. 108), it is unique. According to Harrison & Reilly (2011), quoted in Vivek & Nanthagopan (2021), “The multi method deploys many types of qualitative inquiry or many types of quantitative inquiry, whereas the mixed method will include two types of data.”

A research approach does not qualify as mixed-methods when multiple methods within the same philosophical perspective are used (Mulisa, 2022; Taherdoost, 2022; Yadav et al., 2022). When that is the case in a quantitative paradigm, the design is referred to as a quantitative-multimethod research design. When a qualitative research study employs multiple qualitative methods, that design is a qualitative-multimethod research design. Conversely, a research design using a single method adopts a mono-method design. According to Pregoner (2024), Schoonenboom (2023), and Olaghere (2022), the complementary interface points of the paradigmatically incompatible strands in a mixed-methods approach may occur at the instrumentation or inference stages. Where the design would have instrumentation of tools with polarised philosophical underpinning done at the same time, a concurrent design is said to be adopted. A consequent design is said to have been had when the instrumentation of one tool follows another of a different philosophical orientation.

In this study, the complementary interface occurs at inferences from quantitative and qualitative data analyses characterised by respective deductive and inductive methodologies and methods to confirm existing guiding theories and generate new or existing modified theories from rich data (Kölln & Polk, 2024; Behl et al., 2023; Dehghani et al., 2022). The mixed-methods approach starts with "surprising facts or puzzles," which are elements of a

research problem, with guidance from reflexivity to ensure that no mere opinions of the researcher infested the definitions of reality under study.

While the quantitative approach progresses from theory (general) to data about variables (specific), and the qualitative approach flows from data (specific) to theory (general), the mixed method approach generates theories from the interaction between quantitative and qualitative approaches (Jelena, & Jelena, 2022; Dawadi et al., 2021; Fellows & Liu, 2021; Park et al., 2020). Since the mixed-methods approach is neither limited to post-positivism nor interpretivism ontologies, nor objective nor subjective epistemologies, but requires both to guide research, it best fits research designs that lend to the third-paradigm persuasions.

This research employed the mixed-methods approach to study the headteachers' commitment to carrying out instructional supervision roles across their service periods. The mixed methods approach is appropriate for the study for two reasons. Firstly, head teachership is a very complex undertaking that is rarely static and recurrent. The demographics of headteachers, teachers, administrative staff, students, and parents are diverse, dynamic, and non-recurrent. Such a status of social phenomena justifies the proposition in Dompere, (2024), Waziri & Kyari, (2023), and Hitchcock & Onwuegbuzie (2022) that the third-paradigm underpinned research approach is the most appropriate. Secondly, the body of knowledge about headteachers' commitment in the Central East and Central West Education Divisions is rare, while the literature on headteachers' commitment is available in other education systems.

Therefore, the theoretical frameworks within which headteachers' commitment has been studied guide the structure of this study, while differences in contextual particularities exist. Although public secondary schools vary in status, students' level of abilities, enrolment, and infrastructure, according to Kaiser (2024), Umar (2023), Melosik (2021), and Hill (2020), the third-paradigm according to research approach assists in using logical inferences from qualitative and quantitative approaches to answer the questions guiding the research and

to answer the hypotheses of the study. The third-paradigm approach informs the research design for the systematic collection of relevant data for the development of a complementary perspective on headteachers' commitment.

3.2.5: Research Designs

A research design is a systematic study procedure that assists in answering research questions and testing hypotheses. According to Jafari & Lea-Poul (2022) and Kansteiner & König, (2020) research designs assist in such an endeavour through procedural empirical data collection and analysis, keeping study goals and purpose in focus, directing participant selection, and informing the choices on data collection and analysis strategies. Research designs are broadly categorised as quantitative and qualitative since they highlight the study's ontological and epistemological stances.

Research designs that align with positive ontology are descriptive and correlational in nature. In such designs, quantitative variables are described in measurable characterisations, while qualitative variables are sorted into domains, taxonomies, components, and themes (Gobo, 2023; Rezigalla, 2020; Cooksey, 2020). The characterisation of variables in the quantitative and qualitative research trajectories is complete in functionality and creates the basis for relational descriptions, depending on the research problem. The second category of positivism-orientated designs is experimental and quasi-experimental, which establishes the causal relationship between and among variables (Krishnan, 2024; Meyer & Zierke, 2024; Alzen et al., 2021). A positivism-orientated study, further notes Johnson & Christensen (2024) and Mertler (2024), may involve a single design as a mono-quantitative research study design or several of them as a multi-quantitative study design, as shown in Figure 3-1.

Further, the other category of research designs reflects the interpretive ontology. As Junjie & Yingxin (2022), Pervin & Mokhtar (2022), and Otoo (2020) note, an interpretivism-orientated study fits with qualitative research designs that aim at drawing a rich understanding

of phenomena within specific contexts and parameters. The main types of qualitative research designs are phenomenology, case study, and ethnography (Crabtree & Miller, 2023; Camic, 2021; Hays & McKibben, 2021). Just as in positivism-ontology-orientated studies, an interpretivism-orientated research study may have a single qualitative research design (qualitative-mono research design) or several qualitative designs (qualitative-multi research designs), as Figure 3.1 shows. In a research study where philosophically polarised research methods are used for data assemblage meant for a single study (Leavy, 2022; Oladipo & Odebode, 2021), that design is called a mixed-methods design.

The study approach design used in this study is a mixed-methods concurrent triangulation design (Azhari et al, 2023; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2023; Donkoh & Mensah, 2023) that reflects a multi-methods strategy. The mixed-methods approach is concurrent because instrumentation of the quantitative and qualitative data collection tools was done at the same time during the data collection visits (Hitchcock & Onwuegbuzie, 2022; Liu, 2022; Onwuegbuzie & Johnson, 2021). Furthermore, as is distinctive of mixed-methods designs (Wambugu & Njoroge, 2022; O'Cathain, 2020), the concurrent triangulation design provides efficient data assemblage and analysis pathways. Consequently, the third-worldview approach according to Hitchcock & Onwuegbuzie (2022), Vors & Bourcier (2022), and Maggetti (2020), positions the investigation to benefit from quantitative and qualitative approaches and the related epistemological frameworks to strengthen the study's rigour.

3.3.0 : Population and Sample of the Research Study

A sample being a subset of a population is an important component of a research endeavour (Hossan et al., 2023; Meyer & Mayrhofer, 2022; Tansey, 2007; Schreuder et al., 2001), given that studying every population element, though desirable, is cumbersome and too costly to manage (Casteel & Bridier, 2021; Turner, 2020; Draugalis & Plaza, 2009; Fowler, 2009; Salant & Dillman, 1994), with large population sizes. The representativity of a sample

is based on either statistical strength in deductive studies or on the assurance of obtaining information that aligns with the study purpose in inductive studies, or both in mixed-methods studies (Thomas, 2022; Cresswell & Plano Clark, 2021; Denieffe, 2020). In this study, embedded in the concept of sampling are the connotations of sample representativity, predictive utility, and deep phenomenon description.

The decisions to generalise study results to a larger population or to ground study results to a sample are guided by the epistemological research study problem orientation on the quantitative-qualitative polarity. The factors for determining sample representativity on the quantitative extreme include the desired confidence level and error margin (Hennink & Kaiser, 2022; Maxwell, 2021; Rumsey, 2019; Arieska & Herdiani, 2018; bin Ahmad & binti Halim, 2017; Taherdoost, 2017), while the intention on the qualitative pole (Campbell et al., 2012; Etikan et al., 2016; Palinkas et al., 2015) is for an in-depth description of phenomena.

3.3.2.0 : Sampling Strategies

Broadly, there are two sampling strategies that reflect ontological research polarity: probability and non-probability strategies. Probability sampling, also known as random sampling, philosophically aligns with positivism, while non-probability, also known as purposeful, is aligned with interpretivism. While probability sampling is appropriate for studies meant to produce generalisable results to the represented population, according to Nyimbili & Nyimbili (2024), Campbell et al. (2020), Chaudhuri & Mukerjee (2020), and Gill (2020), non-probability sampling focuses on a deep comprehension of the phenomenon under study.

As is the praxis of the third-paradigm approach, this study employed both probabilistic and purposeful sampling from the strata of public secondary school headteachers' service periods in Central East and Central West Education Divisions for a generalisable description of public secondary school headteachership and a deep understanding of headteachership. The random or probability sampling involved forms of probability selection where, according to

Stratton, (2021, p 373), ‘‘…. there is less risk of bias in the results of the research, and most important, statistical methods such as optimal sample size and sampling error as well as precision of results can be determined. Probability sampling allows for conclusions and inferences about the target population every member of the target population has a known, non-zero probability of being included in the sample." The main strategies of probabilistic sampling (Lye et al., 2021; Bonache & Festing, 2020; Mweshi & Sakyi, 2020) are simple, stratified, clustered, systematic, and multi-stage random. In simple random sampling, every element of the whole population has equal chances of being selected using a lottery or computer-aided method to pick the desired number of elements as the sample. The strategy assumes homogeneity in the population's characteristics. Consequently, the sampling method is insensitive to population heterogeneity. In addition, simple random sampling becomes difficult where the population elements are geographically widely dispersed, as the strategy requires a complete sampling frame, thus a compilation of all the elements of the population to be studied (Yang et al., 2023; Rahman et al., 2022).

The other random sampling strategy is stratified sampling. Stratified random sampling addresses the challenge of overlooking population characteristics and variabilities by perceiving a population by its homogeneous constituent subgroups, commonly known as "strata" (Reddy & Khan, 2023; Firmansyah, 2022; Denieffe, 2020). The strategy requires a complete sampling frame for each stratum. Then each stratum is subjected to simple random sampling to identify its representative portion. The sum of the strata subset samples makes up the larger population representation (; Iliyasu & Etikan, 2021; Berndt, 2020). Despite being appropriate for probabilistic sampling from heterogeneous populations, stratified random sampling yields a larger sample size than simple random sampling, which makes data collection more costly and tedious.

The other random sampling method is systematic sampling. Systematic random sampling involves picking an n^{th} population element in occurrence, time, or situation. Just like in simple rando sampling, systematic random sampling assumes homogeneity in the characteristics of the population elements (Kalton, 2020; Wu & Thompson, 2020). That assumption makes the sampling strategy unsuitable for characteristically heterogeneous populations. Although the strategy may not require a prior listing of the sampling frame, it is cumbersome to apply to a geographically widely dispersed population to avoid the introduction of a systematic error (Zhang, 2024; Fox et al., 2021; Siedlecki, 2020).

Still further, the other random sampling method is cluster sampling. While cluster sampling is meant to solve the geographical variability challenge, it also sustains the homogeneity assumption (Raifman et al., 2022; Casteel & Bridier, 2021). Cluster sampling involves subgrouping population elements in a study area into geographical zones called clusters. The resultant clusters are then subjected to simple random sampling to identify the cluster whose every element should become a study case. That obscures characteristic variations of population elements in the clusters (Rahman et al., 2022; Demır, 2020), which leads to systematic errors that challenge the study's' credibility.

The strengths and weaknesses of the probabilistic sampling strategies suggest that there is no one-size-fits-all approach to random sampling. That justifies the use of several sampling strategies in a single study called multi-stage sampling. The strategy involves the identification of the study population's representative fraction using a combination of the random sampling strategies stated above (Zaagan et al., 2024; Wu et al., 2023; Rahman et al., 2022; Turner, 2020). The necessity for multi-stage sampling occurs when heterogenous elements of the population to be studied are dispersedly located over a wide geographical area and other probability sampling strategies are perceived as not appropriate (Sharma, 2023; Stratton, 2021), and that occurs at varying points in the sampling process. For example, a

researcher may start with cluster random sampling and then apply stratified random sampling to the cluster population.

According to Stratton (2024), non-probability sampling entails the less objective strategy that is used by researchers to select participants to research that are not linked to a population to represent but are thought of by a researcher to be merited sources of the required data for a study. For the reason that participants are selected on the reasoned purpose of the researcher or on the participant's quality as perceived by the researcher, the sampling strategy is also referred to as purposive sampling. In that case, "participant's quality" refers to cases that are reliable sources of relevant information to the problem under study (Thomas, 2022; Berndt, 2020; Denieffe, 2020).

The perceived reliability of the participant in terms of quality has to be verifiable by other viewers and not only claimed by the researcher. There are several non-probabilistic sampling strategies that researchers use, which include representative, accidental, purposive, maximum variation, homogeneous, deviant, or extreme; typical; and expert sampling (Nyimbili & Nyimbili, 2024; Rahman, 2023; Tutz, 2023; Thomas, 2022). The importance of sampling, according to Robinson (2024) and Hossan et al. (2023), does not only lie in the representativeness of the larger population as in probability sampling but in the qualities of the cases as well.

Further, the question that keeps defying exit orders from sampling discourse is about the recommended purposive sample size (Kalton, 2023; Lakens, 2022; Staller, 2021; Mweshi & Sakyi, 2020). While appropriate sample size for studies underpinned by the positive ontology emphasises population representativity in numbers, citing confidence level and error margin (Althubaiti, 2023; Demir, 2022; Kang, 2021), in interpretive ontology-underpinned studies, proponents perceive sample quality as the determinant and a "saturation point" as being the appropriate indicator of sample size (Nyimbili & Nyimbili, 2024; Staller, 2021; Cobern &

Adams, 2020). A saturation point, which is the juncture during data collection when participants' responses start to show narrative or thematic redundancy on a particular issue (Ahmed, 2024; Naeem et al., 2024; Fakhri et al., 2020), indicates the curtailment point of qualitative data collection for a study.

However, both sides of the research ontological divide agree that methods, study problems, availability of resources, and researcher skills mediate the sampling method choices (Ahmed, 2024; Islam & Aldaihani, 2022). For instance, when the study problem's ontology orientation is positivism, the researcher has to choose the appropriate sampling method, and within the choice process, availability of resources and expertise should be factored in. Similarly, when a research problem is interpretive in ontology, the researcher has no choice but to adopt purposive sampling, and within the choice process, availability of resources and expertise should be considered.

3.3.3.0 : Sampling Method for the Study

The sampling method for this study was two-pronged: purposive and random to align with the third paradigm orientation of the problem under investigation, thus describing the public secondary school headteachers' commitment and its variability across head teachership service periods and exploring issues influencing their commitment. Stratified random sampling was used for sensitivity to population variability (Naeem et al., 2024; Nyimbili & Nyimbili, 2024; Denieffe, 2020), while maximum variation non-random sampling was meant for the collection of rich data regarding the research problem. Regarding stratified random sampling, the public secondary school headteachers in the Central East and the Central West education divisions were divided into strata according to their period of service as headteachers. The stratum size, desired confidence level, and error margin of the sample (Noor et al., 2022; Sarker & AL-Muaalemi, 2022; Iliyasu, & Etikan, 2021; Mweshi & Sakyi, 2020), were factors that

assisted in determining the sample size for this study, while the saturation point determined the purposive sample size.

3.3.3.1 : Service Periods. The population of headteachers to participate in the study was stratified into categories of five years of public secondary school headteachership called service periods. The strata were 1–5, 6–10, 11–15, 16–20, 21–25, 26–30, and 30+. The service periods were categories within which headteacher were studied for their commitment to actualise the vision, aims, and objectives that public secondary schools were established for, the of which is instructional supervision.

3.3.3.2 : Stratified Random Sampling for this Study. Study participant sampling was from: 1–5, 6–10, 11–15, 16–20, 21–25, 26–30, and 31 and above service period strata, as shown in Table 2. With a 95% confidence level and a 5% error margin as recommended in the strum sample size (n) Long (2024), Abadie et al. (2023), Almahrouqi, (2023), Amira et al. (2023), Delener & Schweikert (2023), Meteyard & Davies (2020), was calculated using the formula: $n=[z^2*p*(1-p)/e^2]/[1+(z^2*p*(1-p)/(e^2*N)]$ where z = 1.96 for a confidence level of 95%. P = proportion (expressed as a decimal), N = stratum population size, n = the study sample size, and e = margin of error to determine strata sample sizes. As shown in Table 3-1, the strategy yielded an accumulative stratified sample size of 277.

3.3.3.3 : Stratified Random Sampling Process. Public secondary school headteacher sampling frames were sourced from the education divisions where the study was to be conducted, thus the Central East Education and the Central West Education Division offices. Apart from the population and head teachership elements, the characteristics of the public secondary school institutions were factors that were used to select the critical population. Elements of the headteachers' population were stratified according to their service periods; thus, the time (in years) of headteachership tenure was determined regardless of the number of public secondary schools a headteacher worked at.

All the service period stratum elements were assigned numbers, which were written on pieces of paper. Each piece of paper in every service period stratum was squashed into a small ball. The paper balls of each service period stratum were put in a transparent plastic container in turn for random selection. A blindfolded colleague randomly picked a paper ball from the container after shaking the container to mix the balls up until the appropriate number of paper balls that represented the number of participants to engage from each stratum, as shown in Table 3-1, was collected. The process was repeated for every service period stratum. Such a sampling practice resonated with the stratified random sampling strategy (Iliyasu & Etikan, 2021; Nguyen et al., 2021; Wu & Thompson, 2020).

Table 3-1

Stratified Random Sampling Results

Ser. No.	Service Period Strata	The confidence level is 95% and the Error margin is 5%	
		Stratum Sampling Frame	Sample Size
1	1-5	20	20
2	6-10	42	38
3	11-15	58	51
4	16-20	69	59
5	21-25	60	52
6	26-30	35	33
7	31+	25	24
		309	277

The use of both random and non-random sampling strategies in this study, aligned with the mixed-methods approach (Nyimbili & Nyimbili, 2024; Vors & Bourcier, 2022; Wambugu & Njoroge, 2022; Moalus, 2020), created the basis for a comprehensive description of headteachers' commitment, besides creating the parameters for testing theories and creating new theories in one study. The non-random sampling was meant for the collection of rich data

to explore the issues associated with the comprehensive organisational commitment descriptions.

3.3.3.4 : Strato-purposeful Sampling for the Study. Population of headteachers in the Central East and the Central West education divisions was divided into categories according to the head teacher's experience. Apart from the headteachership experience category, the participants were drawn from public secondary schools that had been in existence for at least one year. That was to ensure that the data looked for were available.

The purposively identified sample was according to the strata used for random sampling: 1–5, 6–10, 11–15, 16–20, 21–25, 26–30, and 30+, which were referred to as service periods, thus the time (in years) of headteachership tenure regardless of the number of public secondary schools a headteacher worked at. Initially, those at the highest level of service period strata were identified according to the random sampling strata as 10, 12, 14, 16, 14, 12, and 5 thus adding up to 84 participants. However, the qualitative data collection curtailment was decided when the saturation point was reached. According to Rahimi (2024), Mwita (2022), and Alam (2021), saturation level is the point in qualitative data collection when responses from informants are noted to be redundant. The resultant purposive sample was 4, 7, 6, 5, 3, and 2, respectively, to the random sampling strata 1-5, 6-10, 11-15, 16-20, 21-25, 26-30, and 30 and above, as detailed in Table 3-2.

Further embedded in the purposive sampling was the maximum variation purposive sampling moderation. Participants in the same service period were purposefully examined to determine who would be the sources of the qualitative data. According to Lavee & Itzchakov (2023), Motulsky (2021), and Stenfors et al. (2020) such a criterion for identifying participant was highlighted the quality of participants. In that regard, headteachers' who were the most experienced headteachers in a service period stratum were picked for the semi-structured interview. For example, in the 1–5-year service period stratum, those with five years'

experience in head teachership were interviewed to saturation point to ensure the collection of seasoned opinions.

Table 3-2

Strato-purposeful Sampling Results

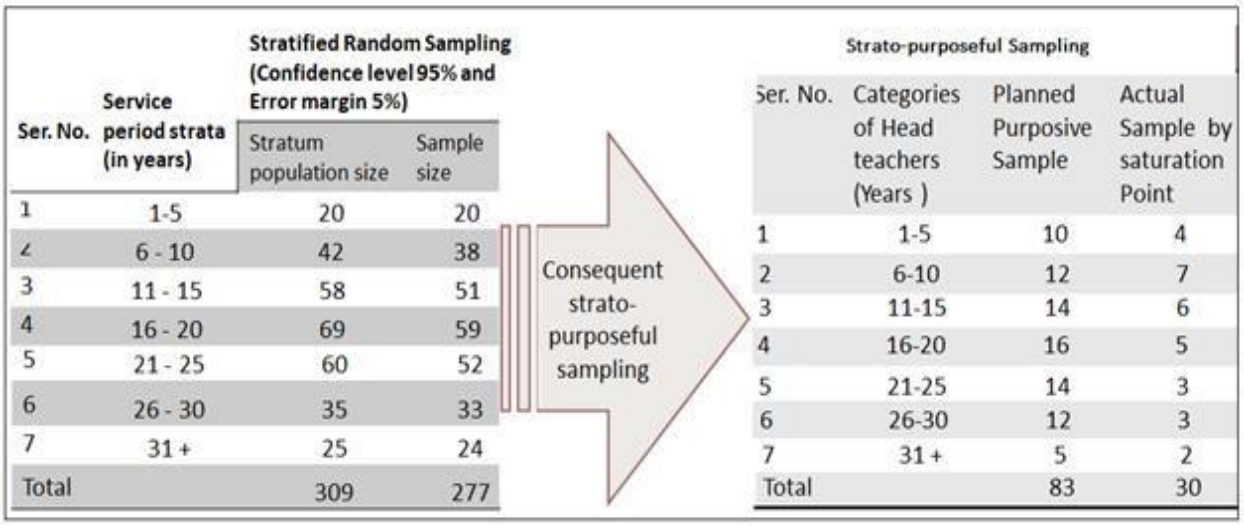
Ser. No.	Categories of Headteachers (Service Periods)	Planned Strato-purposeful Sample	Actual Stro-purposeful Sample by Saturation Point
1	1-5	10	4
2	6-10	12	7
3	11-15	14	6
4	16-20	16	5
5	21-25	14	3
6	26-30	12	3
7	31 +	5	2
Total		83	**30**

3.3.3.5 : A Mixed-sampling Strategy for the Study. Presented in Tables 3-1 and 3-2 are sampling strategies for the quantitative and qualitative study strands, respectively. The combination of sampling strategies with contrary philosophical orientation in a single study as presented in Figures 3-2 read together with Tables 3-1 and 3-2, is the sampling method being referred to as a mixed-sampling strategy which in this case has a consequent design. The design is consequent because the purposeful sampling used the sampling frame stratification initially designed for the stratified random sampling.

The notion of sampling strategy with ‘contrary philosophical orientations is key in the definition of mixed-sampling as shown in Figure 3-2, not just a combination of two sampling methods as put in Cai et al. (2020). That delineation sets apart a mixed-sampling strategy from a muti-sampling strategy where in the latter, more than one strategy of the same philosophical orientation could be used in a single study.

Figure 3-2

Mixed-sampling Method for this Study



3.4.0 : Materials/Instrumentation of Research Tools

Data collection methods are the techniques a researcher uses to solicit parameters regarding the variables or phenomena in a study (Dawadi et al., 2021; Nanthagopan, 2021; Manzoor, 2020). Since the study on headteachers' commitment is underpinned by an eclectic philosophical lens resulting in a mixed-methods approach, there are paradigmatically incompatible but complementary data collection methods. The use of data collection methods that are orientated towards eclecticism sustains coherence with the abductive nature of the study. The data collection methods employed in the study were surveys, administrative records reviews, and semi-structured interviews that were executed using three data collection tools.

The study used a commitment to instructional leadership questionnaire and a content analysis grid to collect data that addressed the quantitative aspect of the study. The commitment to instructional leadership questionnaire shown in Appendix 2 is an adaptation of the organisational commitment questionnaire (Mowday et al., 1967), while the content analysis grid shown in Appendix 2 is an adaptation of the school evaluation tool used by quality assurance officers in Malawi. The qualitative data that addresses the interpretive aspect of the

study is solicited through the use of a structured interview schedule. This section describes the three pen-and-paper data collection instruments and justifies their use in this study.

Further, the observation checklist captures statistical data about headteachers' frequency of checking teaching and learning process tools that teachers update. Studying teachers' work monitoring is fundamental for efficiency in prescriptive, explorative, and supportive teacher engagement (An et al., 2022; Young et al., 2022; Abaci et al., 2021) to improve school effectiveness. The mixed-methods research design, as Vu (2020) notes, informs the methods for data collection and the strategies for data analysis.

Measuring the commitment of employees to their tasks, regardless of the conceptualisation commitment assumes on the attitudinal-behavioural continuum (Oyewobi, 2024; Triguero-Sánchez et al., 2022; Zhenjinget al., 2022), is crucial because the employee's commitment dimensions have implications not only on general organisational performance but on the direction that human capitalisation should take for organisations to effectively cope with the ever-dynamic operational contexts. Determining the commitment of headteachers using credible instruments is therefore crucial.

3.4.1.0 : Data Collection Tools

The quantitative strand of the study, the headteachers' commitment to their instruction and supervisory roles, is multimethod; thus, two quantitative data collection methods were used, while the qualitative strand was mono-method, thus having a single method of data collection (Bragiwa, 2024; Jenkins, 2024; Makian & Nematpour, 2024; Saunders & Darabi, 2024; Nanthagopan, 2021; Vivek & Nanthagopan, 2021). The two quantitative data collection tools were a questionnaire and a content analysis grid and were meant to collect data on public headteachers' confessed commitment to instructional supervision with reference to the three-component organisational commitment model and practiced commitment. The content analysis grid used in this study was an adaptation of the quantitative content analysis grid described in

Riffe et al. (2023) and not the qualitative content analysis grid described in Kleinheksel et al. (2020). Further, the structured interview schedule was meant to collect views that headteachers had concerning their jobs.

The results from the mixed methods approach were meant to be generalisable to situations in the other four divisions of the secondary education system, thus the Northern Education Division (NED), South East Education Division (SEED), Shire Highlands Education Division (SHED), and South West Education Division (SWED) in Malawi. The justification to generalise emanates from the quantitative-qualitative nature of the study's data collection methods, which were QUAN-qual (Hawkey & Kircher, 2022; Zhang, 2020). The rich data collected using the structured interview schedule, according to Hitchcock & Onwuegbuzie (2022), were meant to provide a deep understanding of the study problem.

The tools that were used to collect quantitative data were a headteachers' commitment to instructional leadership questionnaire for the survey method and a content analysis grid to solicit quantitative data, while a structured interview schedule was used to collect qualitative data.

3.4.1.1.0: Commitment to Instructional Supervision Questionnaire. The commitment-to-instructional supervision questionnaire is an adaptation of the organisational commitment questionnaire developed by Porter et al. (1974) as noted in Lei et al., 2022; Phillips (2021) and Suárez-Albanchez et al. 2021). The study comprises three sections: a welcome statement to the participant, which includes the study title; a request for the participant's characteristics; and 15 seven-point Likert-scaled items that reflect affective, continuance, and normative commitment as organisational behaviours (Candelario et al., 2020; Qing et al., 2020; Mathieu et al., 2016), to collect quantitative data about headteachers' commitment as shown in Appendix 2.

The commitment questionnaire has been noted for its appropriateness in measuring employees' commitment psychometrics across diverse cultural orientations (Amtu et al., 2021; Guzeller & Celiker, 2020). The need to measure employee commitment is not any less important in educational leadership and administration in general, and particularly in public secondary school head teachership in the CEED and CWED in Malawi.

The commitment questionnaire as a conceptual measure of employee psychometrics on whether to remain with or leave an organisation has evolved to its current form (Chagadama et al., 2022; Carter, 2021), which has further been adapted in this study. The central question to the questionnaire evolution process has been how many items each commitment dimension should have in the instrument. In that evolution process, that number ranged between 4 and 36 (Aybek & Toraman, 2022; Haque et al., 2021; Murray & Holmes, 2021; Shoaibet al., 2021; Peng et al., 2020). Efforts to construct an instrument that measured not only acceptable but effective employee attitudinal psychometric properties led to the development of the 15-item commitment questionnaire (Krishnan et al., 2024; Aybek & Toraman, 2022; Mowday et al., 1967).

Further, the other argument that raged through the evolution of the commitment questionnaire was the number of Likert scale responses to load each item of the instrument with. While "both reliability and validity are independent of the number of scales, and so by decreasing the number of response choices, reliability and validity would not be decreased" (Matell & Jacoby, 1971), Other research findings report that Likert scale points were directly related to reliability (Bell & Sheridan, 2020; Preston & Colman 2000) and convergent validity, and that reliability was optimised at the 7-point Likert scale with validity at the 9-point scale. Such research findings show that Likert scales that are course or have low scale sensitivity attract satisfying behaviour from participants, thus the tendency for respondents to "choose a

minimally acceptable response as soon as it is found instead of putting effort into finding an optimal response" (Chyung et al., 2017, p. 4).

On the other hand, Likert scales that have very high sensitivity scare respondents and similarly lead to responses that may not reflect the participants' optimal attitudinal self-reflection responses (Hashmi et al., 2023; Suárez-Albanchez et al., 2021). In the 15-item instrument, the seven-point Likert scale was chosen to not only avoid the respondents' satisfying behaviour but to provide a reasonably wide range of responses that capture the respondents' considered and honest self-characterisations.

***3.4.1.1.1: Commitment Questionnaire Validity*.** Instruments used for research studies should be valid for credible findings. Predictive, convergent, and discriminant validities are some of the characteristics that instruments should be tested on. These characteristics of the 15-item, 7-point Likert scale instrument has been of concern to researchers to assure the robustness of the instrument in measuring commitment. Using studies carried out on nine samples (Commeiras & Fournier, 2001; Mowday et al., 1974; Steers, 1977;), the mean commitment ranged from 4.0 to 6.1; internal consistency was 0.82 to 0.93; the configured test-retest reliability (r) over consecutive three months was 0.53, 0.63, and 0.75; convergent validity ranged from 0.63 to 0.74; discriminant validity (r) ranged from 0.30 to 0.56; and the predictive validity on turnover was high. The study results validate the 15-item, 7-point Likert-scaled commitment questionnaire as reliable and valid to measure attitudinal psychometrics in diverse organisations (Babatope et al., 2023; Lin et al., 2022; Murray & Holmes, 2021Mowday et al., 1979).

Apart from the reason that Likert-scaled item instruments assist in efficiently collecting large volumes of data (Robinson, 2024; Jebb et al., 2021), such a validation of the commitment questionnaire in the literature justifies the commitment questionnaire as an instrument to be used for data collection in studies on commitment.

This research study adapts the commitment questionnaire posted by Mowday et al. (1979) and noted in Kelly (2021) and Rudhumbu, (2018), to study the commitment of headteachers to instructional supervision in the Central East and Central West Education Divisions. The development of the commitment to instructional leadership questionnaire by adaptation benefits from commitment questionnaire validity and reliability.

The number of items and Likert scale points in the instrument remain at 15 and 7, respectively. Part B of the questionnaire in Appendix 2 shows changes made to the original commitment questionnaire in Mowday et al. (1979) that are further noted in Prang (2020). The changes are made to the wording of the item stems to appropriately reflect instructional supervision in secondary schools, headteachership, and headteacher succession. Section A of the instrument is meant to capture demographic and headteachership service period characteristics, while Part B is for participants to indicate their optimal responses.

3.4.1.2.0: Content Analysis Grid. The other quantitative data collection instrument researchers use is the textual analysis table or outline, also known as the content analysis table or outline. In this study, the tool is referred to as a "content analysis grid." Textual analysis is "a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) to the contexts of their use" (Krippendorff, 2004, p. 18) and has its history in anthropology, where the study of texts reveals cultural and organisational aspects of society (Gandasari & Dwidienawati, 2020; Bernard & Ryan, 1998). According to Crabtree & Miller, (2023) and Van Zyl et al. (2021), textual analysis is ideal for studying institutional practices.

While content analysis is applicable in research with positive as well as interpretive philosophical perspectives (Riffe et al., 2023; Gandasari & Dwidienawati, 2020), this study's focus is on its applicability in collecting quantitative data in grid form, hence the name "content analysis grid." The data collected using the content analysis grid assists in describing

headteachers' commitment to specific instructional supervisory roles by noting the frequency with which checking of key instructional activities is done.

Consequently, an instrument for collecting data on the frequency of checking key instructional documents by headteachers as an indicator of headteachers' commitment is created, as shown in Attachment 2. The key instructional supervision documents the checklist examines are schemes of work, lesson plans, lesson observation schedules, mark books, and period registers. The documents listed above are key to instruction delivery because teachers use them to prepare the lesson and verify students' attendance. Part A of the tool solicits participants' demographic and professional characteristics, while part B is for collecting numerical data about headteachers' commitment to instruction supervisory roles. Therefore, headteachers' supervisory roles are to ensure that the key documents are updated.

The period within which the documents were examined was the previous school term, which had a duration of 10 weeks (N). In that case, the examinable period of the term was weeks (n). There were, however, 3 weeks that fell out of observation using the content analysis grid. The first week of the term was the period when the attendance of students was mostly low, especially in secondary schools with boarding facilities, because many students failed to report on time because of financial challenges. The observable number was expressed as n = (*N-3*), thus seven weeks.

3.4.1.2.1: Validity and Reliability of Content Analysis Grid. Validity and reliability are crucial properties of measurement instruments. According to Sürücü & Maslakçi (2020, p. 2696), "Validity is determined by the meaningful and appropriate interpretation of the data obtained from the measuring instrument as a result of the analyses." The content analysis grid, shown in Appendix 3, like the questionnaire, starts with welcoming the participant, and part A requests the participant's demographics, while part B is a table to guide the collection of data per the listed variables after key document perusal.

Further, the instrument was adapted from an inspection instrument used by secondary school inspectors in Malawi, which is characterised by 0.75 to 0.89 internal consistency, an average test-retest (r) value of 0.68 and a discriminant validity range of 0.45 to 0.61 (Ministry of Education Science & Technology, 2015). Credibility assurance of the content analysis grid used in this study shown in Appendix 3 is derived from the source instrument in Malawi's Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology (2015).

In addition, the content analysis grid's validity is reflected in the centrality of the studied documents to headteachers' instructional leadership. In addition, the literature indicates conditions that content analysis research instruments ought to satisfy for validity, one of which is consistency with specified theoretical frameworks to answer a research question (Sürücü & Maslakçi, 2020). In that regard, the content analysis grid spotlights headteachers' human capital versatility in monitoring the teaching and learning process.

3.4.1.3.0 : Semi-structured Interview. The use of interviews technique to collect data to answer a research question about specified phenomena has roots in anthropology and sociology (Biggs & Hacker, 2021; Husband, 2020). Knott et al. (2022), Thelwall & Nevill (2021), and Marvasti & Tanner (2020), note that the use of interviews as a research tool for collecting qualitative data has been popular in research. In that regard, Brenner (1981) noted that 90 percent of the data presented in published articles was generated using interviews and questionnaires. That interview popularity of interviews usage in social research is corroborated by Quintela Do Carmo et al. (2024), Natow (2020), and Monday (2020). Engaging participants in a dialogue to collect rich data to answer research questions regarding specified phenomena (Rinaldo & Guhin, 2022; Deterding & Waters, 2021) is one of the methods of collecting qualitative data.

With that notion in mind, Kvale (1996, p. 174) defines an interview as "a conversation whose purpose is to gather descriptions of the [life-world] of the interviewee" that aims at describing phenomena through meanings and interpretations. The questions with which participants are engaged are listed on an interview schedule. The dialogue with participants

takes an open or structured form (Chauhan, 2022). The researcher decides on the approach and form of the interview to best suit the research problem being studied.

3.4.1.3.1 : Approaches to Interviews. The factor that determines an interview approach that best fits a qualitative research design is the epistemological underpinning that aligns with the nature of reality in the phenomenon under study (Al-Ababneh, 2020; Alharahsheh & Pius, 2020). According to Knott et al. (2022), interview approaches are typified by the qualitative research design in which a specified interview approach best serves. For instance, research that takes up phenomenology for its design requires a phenomenological interview in which interviewees say out their life experiences (Balasanyan & Gevorgyan, 2024; Lantz, 2024); hermeneutic interviews require hermeneutic interviews in which the expressions of the researcher and the interviewee are taken on board; and ethnographic interviews are meant to collect data about the ascription of meanings to actions and culture within defined contexts (Barrett-Rodger et al., 2023; Lang et al., 2020). Such interviews unearth new research grounds for knowledge extension and the development of new theories.

3.4.1.3.2 : Forms of Interviews. Further, apart from other approaches, interviews have forms that lie on the unstructured-structured continuum. In that regard, the literature categorises interviews as structured, semi-structured, lightly structured, or in-depth (Thunberg & Arnell, 2022; Tavory, 2020) and employs face-to-face, focus-group discussion with information and communication technology-assisted options (Coleman, 2022; Rutledge & Hogg, 2020) and categorises the interviews as polished surfaces mirroring research a study purpose.

While structured interviews promote standardisation of the questions to be asked of interviewees for consistency, such interviews have the challenge of limiting interviewee response variability and the advantage of reducing response errors. Standardised interviews are, therefore, easy to use since the data processing is less complicated (Morgan, 2022; Rutledge & Hogg, 2020). However, the coarseness that standardisation introduces has the

potential to reproduce interviewers' opinions, heralds less creativity, and fails to develop rapport between the interviewer and the interviewee (Karatsareas, 2022; Köhler et al., 2022).

On the other hand, unstructured interviews provide optimal flexibility for interviewees to express themselves about a research question or phenomenon and allow the interviewer to interject for clarity (Adhabi & Anozie, 2017). As such, unstructured interviews require more time to conclude and allow unlimited response variability and errors (Balasanyan & Gevorgyan, 2024; Lantz, 2024). The literature shows that the advantages of structured interviews outweigh the disadvantages of unstructured interviews, and vice versa (Goyes & Sandberg, 2024; Knott et al., 2022; Roulston & Halpin, 2022).

Therefore, triangulating the two interview forms for use in a single study increases the quality of the interview technique for data collection. Since reducing errors in a high-variability response is the ultimate qualitative goal, the study about headteachers' commitment to instructional supervision uses a semi-structured interview schedule.

3.4.1.6: Validity and Reliability of Interviews. Although interviews are a characteristic of qualitative methods and consequently aligned with interpretive ontology and subjective epistemology, concerns about validity and reliability apply as factors of research credibility. According to Rivard et al. (2024) and Gani et al. (2020), an interviewer's preconceptions, at times, overshadow the opinions expressed by an interviewee and that drains research credibility. However, the meta-analytic validity presented by Hickman et al. (2024) and Highhouse et al. (2017) show unstructured interviews with a higher rating of effectiveness but with a weaker validity coefficient, while the effectiveness rating coefficient for the structured interview was strong.

3.5.1.0 : Semi-structured Interview Schedule

According to Naz et al. (2022) and Ruslin et al. (2022), a semi-structured interview schedule is an outline of phenomenon-focused questions that a researcher uses to collect data

that underlies a theme or themes in a topic under investigation. The advantage of semi-structured interviews, as described in Dunwoodie et al. (2023) and Foroudi & Dennis, (2023), is that they utilise the strengths of structured and unstructured interview forms.

This study uses a semi-structured interview schedule to collect qualitative data about the headteachers' commitment to instruction supervision tasks in the Central East and Central West Education divisions. According to Saglam (2024), Bearman (2019) and Naz et al. (2022), a semi-structured interview schedule is a tool that lists exploratory questions that are within a predetermined thematic parameter for interviewees' extended responses to collect rich data. In this study, the thematic parameter is bound by the commitment to instructional supervision, as shown in Appendix 4.

Part A of the semi-structured interview schedule solicited the participant's demographics and professional characteristics, while Part B is the schedule with three columns. The researcher read a question from the interview schedule and requested participants' responses. In addition, the researcher posed follow-up questions to the participant for clarification, and responses were written down in the appropriate column of the interview schedule outline as fieldnotes. After capturing responses from all participants, concept mapping and coding will be done in preparation for further qualitative analysis techniques.

Primary data for study of headteachers' commitment to instructional supervision with the headteachership period were collected using three instruments thus, a commitment to instructional leadership questionnaire, a content analysis grid, and a semi-structured interview schedule. The three data collection tools captured quantitative and qualitative data to align with the third-paradigm approach with a concurrent design and an eclectic philosophical perspective (Zeithaml et al., 2020).

3.5.1.1 : Instrumentation of the Semi-structured Interviews. A semi-structured interview method of collecting data was used over the unstructured form for its advantages (Saglam, 2024; Dunwoodie et al., 2023; Foroudi & Dennis, 2023; Kobewka et al., 2023; Oomen-Welke et al., 2023; Melnikova et al., 2022). Apart from being different from a structured and unstructured interview, the method was different from the content analysis as well. While the semi-structured interview was underpinned by an interpretive perspective, a content analysis grid was within the positive paradigm. The content analysis grid was an observation tool for collecting data on the frequency with which headteachers checked the key instructional supervision documents. Choice for the semi-structured interview method was for its balance between coarseness and fineness, less complex data for analysis, and higher validity rating than unstructured interviews (De Paoli, 2024; Quintela Do Carmo et al., 2024; Menon et al., 2020; Highhouse et al., 2017). Instrumentation of the semi-structured interview showed variations across sections of service periods.

Following data collection appointments with sampled participants that were done fourteen, seven, and three days consecutively prior to the visit, the participants were engaged in individual interviews. Upon meeting a participant, the researcher made self-introductions and briefly stated the purpose of the visit. The participant was once again given the informed consent form to read. Participants willing to be engaged in the interview completed the informed written consent form to proceed. The researcher read a question from the semi-structured interview schedule to a participant to verbally answer. The narration of the responses was verbatim written in a field notepad by the researcher for further organisation.

However, it was noted that participants in different service periods required varied interview engagement time. For instance, participants in the 1-5 service period required 20 to 25 minutes per engagement. Participants in the 1-5 years' service period had longer narratives

in response to the questions apart from requests for repeating and paraphrasing scheduled questions. On the other end of the continuum, participants in the 31 and above service period were engaged for 12 to 15 minutes because they were familiar with concepts in the interview questions. Therefore, there were minimal instances where repeating or rephrasing questions was requested.

3.6.0 : Operational Definition of Variables

A variable, being a critical measurable aspect of a construct or a phenomenon, has measurement propensities or values that are meaningful within specified study contexts (Ghanad, 2023; Duckett, 2021; Siedlecki, 2020; Aalborg et al., 2019). Variables are important for answering research questions and confirming study hypotheses. The variables in the study of headteachers' commitment to instruction supervisory roles and their service period answer the research questions related to the extent to which headteachers' commitment reflected affective-normative-continuance commitment dimensions; variation of headteachers' attitudes towards instruction supervisory roles along the head teachership service period continuum; and variation of headteachers' commitment to instruction supervisory roles change within their headship service period.

Further, variable values got in a research study assist in confirming or rejecting logical sets of assumptions. In the study on headteachers commitment to instruction supervisory role in their service periods value propensities of the study variables assisted in confirming or rejecting the assumptions about whether headteachers' commitment mirrored the affective-normative-continuance typology; varied along the head teachership service period; or varied within a headteachership service period.

3.5.1 : Constructs and Variables

While a construct is an "unobservable explanatory concept" (Calder et al., 2021, p. 189); an abstraction of a concept (De Boeck et al., 2023), a variable is an aspect of a

phenomenon that can change in response to changes in contextual parameters, “something that can change and/or can have more than one value” (Kaur, 2013, p. 36); “things that can be experimentally manipulated or measured” (Calder et al., 2021, p. 188).

There are several variables in this study of headteachers' commitment to instructional supervision and their service periods. In this study commitment, instructional supervision, participants’ demographics (PD), service period (SP), headteachership service period (HSP), desk monitoring frequency (DMF), gender, age, affective instructional supervision commitment (AISC), continuance instructional supervision commitment (CISC), and normative instructional supervision commitment (NISC) are variables as shown in Table 3-3. Therefore, commitment to instructional supervision, head teachership service period, desk monitoring frequency, and participant particulars require descriptions and operationalisation.

Table 3-3

Study Constructs and Variables

Constructs	Variable types				Data collection tool
	Dependent	Independent	Categorical	Ratio	
CISR	AISC				Questionnaire
	NISC		*		Questionnaire
	CISC		*		Questionnaire
HSP		Service period strata		*	Questionnaire
Key documents desk monitoring frequency	Checking Frequency	Schemes and records of work		*	Content analysis grid
	Checking Frequency	Lesson plans		*	Content analysis grid
	Checking Frequency	Lesson observation reports		*	Content analysis grid
	Checking Frequency	Period registers		*	Content analysis grid
	Checking Frequency	Mark books		*	Content analysis grid

3.5.2 : Commitment to Instructional Supervision

Commitment to instructional leadership is multi-faceted with dependent constructs that complement the organisational commitment, thus affective, continuance, and normative dimensions (Arif et al., 2023; Digale, 2022; Haque et al., 2021; Muthiah et al., 2021; Deniz & Erdener, 2020). As

Hendri (2019) notes, commitment by itself is not desirable until it translates to expected performance in favour of organisational goals. In the context of this study, it is not an overstatement to indicate that headteachers commitment is not until students' achievement improves as the result of teachers' effective interaction with learners in teaching and learning activities. Although there are contrary views about the usefulness of the three commitment dimensions given the organisational operational dynamics due to the effects of globalisation, in public secondary schools, organisational commitment remains important because, apart from resonating with public expectations, it seeks to describe the reasons for which public secondary school teachers and headteachers remain with or leave the public secondary school sector (John, 2024; Alves et al., 2020; Nangoli et al., 2020; Tripathy, 2020).

The headteachers' commitment to instructional supervision goes beyond employees' positive attitudes towards an organization. Instead, it focusses on the observable practices of headteachers in supporting teacher-learner interaction in learning activities through monitoring the teaching and learning process and ensuring staff human capital development (Atasoy, 2020; Osborne, 2020). Commitment to desk monitoring by checking the use and update of instructional documents is one of the headteachership practices that narrows the difference between the expected and the implemented commitment.

As in curriculum discourse, theory, policy, and practice (Alek et al., 2021; Mulawarman, 2021), the ideal or expected implemented curriculum is the planned program, and headteachers who implement the curriculum as planned have the implemented commitment as good as the expected commitment that reflects the expected curriculum. The differentiation of the implemented commitment from the expected commitment determines the extent to which students learn as expected. Therefore, the measures of commitment to instructional supervision could be in three dimensions: affective commitment, normative commitment, and continuance commitment.

Affective commitment to instructional leadership reflects the affective organisational commitment dimension, where headteachers at that level of commitment have a positive emotional attachment (Alqudah et al., 2022; Desir, 2020) to instructional supervision, which translates to effective instructional supervision. Coupled with that is the ceaseless attempts to improve school quality to make institutional performance as close as possible to the intended curriculum prescriptions.

While headteachers at normative commitment to instructional supervision level declare their attachment to instructional supervision as a moral obligation (Khan et al., 2021; Estigoy et al., 2020), continuance commitment to instructional supervision is the decision of a headteacher not to stop carrying instructional supervision due to fear of high sacrifices on side-bets or because of a lack of alternative employment opportunities (Richter-Trummer, 2024; Klein et al., 2021; Mastracci, 2021) since the human capital in the headteacher is public secondary school-specific.

In this study, commitment to instructional supervision is key to answering the first research question: To what extent does the headteachers' commitment reflect the affective-normative-continuance commitment typology? Further, the variable confirms or disproves the hypothesis that headteachers' commitment to supervisory roles reflects the affective-normative-continuance commitment typology.

3.5.3 : Measurement of Instructional Supervision Commitment Dimensions

The measurement of instructional supervision commitment dimensions (affective, continuance, and normative) is adapted from the organisational commitment questionnaire found in Mowday et al., (1979). According to Prang (2020), the commitment dimensions constitute ordinal variables with measurement ranked on a "non-numerical scale that is comprised of a small set of discrete classes or integers" (Vetter, 2017, p. 1). The quantitative datasets collected using the commitment to instructional leadership questionnaire assisted in

answering the research question: To what extent does the headteachers' commitment relate to headteachership service period in Central East and Central West Education Divisions? As a result, the quantitative datasets from the commitment to instructional supervision variables assisted in testing the null hypothesis: Headteachers' commitment affective-continuance-normative commitment dimensionality to supervisory roles does not relate to the headteachership service periods in Central West and Central West Education Divisions (Prang, 2020).

3.5.4 : Affective Commitment to Instructional Supervision

The measurement of affective instructional supervision commitment is through the evaluation of participants' responses to five items shown in Prang (2020):

> *"I am willing to put in a great deal of effort into instructional supervision beyond what is normally expected to help this organisation be successful; I talk up this secondary school to my friends as a great institution to work for; I feel very little loyalty to this secondary school; I would accept almost any type of job assignment to keep working for this secondary school; and I find that my values and the school's values are very similar."*

The five perceptional items are measured on a Likert scale with seven points, which ranges from [A]: I strongly disagree with [G]: I strongly agree (Govuzela, 2023; Prang, 2020; Mowdy et al., 1979). Loadings of the five affective instructional supervision commitments were made to all participants (n = 277). Findings were consistent with observations in previous studies, where the average positive correlation with the total score of the organisational commitment questionnaire ranged from 0.33 to 0.73 and the median was around 0.64 (Mowdy et al., 1979). When the responses from participants are loaded on the head teachership service period strata: 1–5, 6–10, 11–15, 16–20, 21–25, 26–25, and 31+ years, parity with results in previous studies will be established.

3.5.5 : Continuance Commitment to Instructional Supervision

Under the continuance commitment to instructional supervision dimension, the statistical organisation of the participant's responses to the questionnaire items related to continuance commitment to instructional supervision is:

> *"I am proud to tell others that I am part of this secondary school; I could just as well be working for a different secondary school as long as the type of work involved instructional supervision; This secondary school inspires the very best in me in the way of instructional supervision; It would take very little change in my present circumstances to cause me to leave this secondary school; and I am extremely glad that I was posted to this secondary school to work for over other secondary schools I expected to be posted to."*

The accumulative loadings on the participants (n = 277) showed that findings were consistent with previous studies, where the average positive correlation with the total score of the organisational commitment questionnaire ranged from 0.56 to 0.75 (Yousef, 2003; Mowdy et al., 1979). However, loading disaggregation into the head teachership service period strata: 1–5, 6–10, 11–15, 16–20, 21–25, 26–25, and 31+ years will reveal any existing variations.

3.5.6 : Normative Commitment to Instructional Supervision.

Statistical manipulation of the participant's responses to the seven items in the commitment to instructional leadership questionnaire, as outlined in Prang (2020), thus

> *"There's not too much to be gained by sticking with this secondary school indefinitely. I find it difficult to agree with the policies of this secondary school on important matters relating to instructional supervision; I care about the fate of this secondary school; for me, this secondary school is the best of all possible secondary schools for which to be the lead instructional supervisor; and accepting to take up the post of headteacher for this secondary school was a definite mistake on my part."*

Accumulative response loadings on the participants (n = 277) will show the consistency of the findings with previous studies where the average positive correlation with the total score of the organisational commitment questionnaire ranged from 0.72 to 0.79 with outliers of 37 and 51 on the reversed-worded items 7 and 9, respectively (Mowdy et al., 1979).

Further, loadings on disaggregated head teachership service period strata: 1–5, 6–10, 11–15, 16–20, 21–25, 26–25, and 31 and above years will reveal the accumulative response datasets.

3.5.7 : Measurement of the Headteachership Service Period

The headteacher's service period is an independent variable that relates to tenure. In the literature, tenure, or an employee's experience at a job or specified undertaking (Baum, 2022; Raghavan & Janardhanan, 2019), is measured in years. The service period is a concept more related to career stages described in Allen & Meyer (1993) and Cohen (1993) and denotes ranges of years one has served as head teacher in public secondary schools, i.e., 1–5, 6–10, 11–15, 16–20, 21–25, 26–25, and 31+. In this case, service period is an ordinal variable.

According to self-reported job performance dimensions (Limon & Nartgün, 2020; Wang & Goh, 2020), service period is a mediating variable when perceived as an influencing factor on task performance, while the same service period is a predictor variable where the length of service is positively correlated to efficiency (Subramony & Chadwick, 2021). In the meta-analysis study, Cohen (1993) observed a varying turnover-career stage correlation (r_t) that ranged from -.20 to -.35. The results from previous studies (Allen & Meyer, 1993; Meyer & Allen, 1987; 1988; Mowday & McDade, 1980) suggest that affective commitment declines in the first year of employment due to reality shocks. Employees that survive the "reality shock" affectively commit themselves to an organisation after justifying employment reality with their human capital and side bets to continue with an affective commitment-tenure-age positive correlation (Figlio & Schapiro, 2021; Salas-Velasco, 2020).

3.5.8.0 : Measurement of Key Desk Monitoring Documents

Given that an employee’s long service period may not denote affective commitment but may also result from continuance factors, such as fear of loss on investment or lack of marketability of job-specific knowledge and skills (Mendis, 2024; Somaskandan et al., 2022; Sabir et al., 2021;), and that correlation variations exist between age and the commitment

dimensions. Given the variations, the commitment to instructional supervisory roles and service period correlation among headteachers in CEED and CWED ought to be confirmed.

Loadings of the key documents monitoring frequency data from the content analysis grid on the service period categories suggest that variations exist. A comparison of the service period dataset with datasets from the commitment to instructional leadership questionnaire will yield a correlation coefficient factor rating. Therefore, service period as a variable helps in answering the research question: How does the headteachers' commitment to instruction and supervisory roles change within their headship service period? Further, the variable helps to confirm or disprove the third hypothesis: headteachers' commitment to instruction and supervisory roles varies along their headship service period.

The headteachership practised commitment used in the National Education Standards (2015) describes practice as effective practice, exceeds minimum standards, meets minimum standards, and below minimum standards. In this study, the measure is in percentage of times (in weeks) when key instructional supervision documents in a term where effective practice denotes 60% to 100%; exceeds minimum standards denotes 40% to 50%; meets minimum standards denotes 30%; and below minimum standards denotes 0% to 20%. While inspectors use the narrative descriptions from observations made on the day of an inspection visit, the study adapted the descriptions to conclusions after checking a term’s practice in actual frequency in which key instructional supervision documents were checked by the headteacher.

3.5.8.1 : Schemes and Records of Work. There are several important documents that headteachers use for instructional supervision. One of the key documents is the scheme and record of work. In the literature, schemes and records of work are dichotomous documents containing teachers’ weekly work plans that cover a term's work allocation from the syllabus on the one hand and evaluational remarks on the implementation of the plans on the other (Mugala et al., 2023; Guerra et al., 2022; Byusa et al., 2020). The termly plans are approved by headteachers before the beginning of a new term, and the records of work sections are checked at the end of every week. In this study, schemes

and records of work are teacher-prepared and updated teaching-learning planning and evaluation documents that headteachers constantly check to monitor instructional progress in a school.

The measurement of schemes and records of work monitoring is in the number of weeks in a term. Since work planning in the schemes is done weekly, headteachers are expected to check the correctness for approval before a new term starts and verify implementation every week. In a term of ten weeks, checking for monitoring is expected to take ten times as long (Malawi Government, 2015). Therefore, a third of the schemes of work were simply randomly sampled from the humanities, languages, mathematics, and science departments to observe the frequency of the head teacher's monitoring. An average was calculated to come up with a percentage.

3.5.8.2 : Lesson Plans. The other variable for key document desk monitoring is the lesson plan. A lesson plan is a teacher-designed outline of teaching-learning activities regarding a small unit of a topic to guide engagement with learners within a short period of time (Akande, 2024; Farhang et al., 2023; Malawi Government, 2015). Once designed, a teacher presents the outline to peers or the head of department for insights and approval before implementing it with learners. A lesson plan is a key document because its quality assures effective learning (Romiszowski, 2024; Tanak, 2020). In monitoring instruction activities, headteachers are expected to check that lesson plans are prepared and used by teachers. In this study, therefore, the lesson plan is a document by which headteachers' commitment to carrying out instructional supervisory roles can be verified.

The verification is done by observing the number of times the head teacher checks the availability of used lesson plans per week at the departmental level. Implemented lesson plans are filed away by teachers or are in a booklet of lesson plan outlines that a teacher completes. The number of times headteachers check the lesson plans or the lesson plan booklets shows the level of commitment to instructional supervisory roles. In completing the content analysis grid,

an average of a headteacher's monitoring rate from the randomly sampled lesson plans will be calculated to determine the headteacher's commitment.

3.5.8.3 : Lesson Observation Reports. One of the good practices to improve teachers' effectiveness in lesson delivery is to observe teachers in their teaching-learning engagement with learners (Cerbin & Hutchings, 2023; O'Leary, 2020). Lesson observation takes several forms: peer-teacher, head of department-teacher, deputy head teacher-teacher, and head teacher-teacher. Every lesson's observation is recorded in a report. The reports are compiled at the departmental level and submitted to the deputy head teacher for further forwarding to the headteacher by procedure or demand.

The headteacher makes observations in the reports and gives feedback. The headteacher's signature and remarks are evidence of a check. In this case, therefore, lesson observation reports are documents that show the headteachers' commitment to instructional supervision. The measure of headteachers' commitment level is the frequency with which the headteacher checks the lesson observation reports in weeks per term, which, in this study, is expressed as a percentage.

3.5.8.4 : Period Attendance Registers. Monitoring teachers' attendance at scheduled lessons is just as important as monitoring students' class attendance. A period register, also referred to as a period attendance register (Evans & Acosta, 2023; Khatete, 2020; Mudzanani & Makgato, 2016; Government of Malawi, 2015), is an outline of a class timetable that indicates the schedule of subjects, responsible teachers, students' enrolment, number of students present for a lesson, names of students who are absent from a lesson, and space for the teacher's signature. As observed during the study, schools used different outlines of the period register. However, the outlines emphasised the same details as shown in Figure 3.2.

In effect, the period register, a student-updated document, records the teacher's presence and in what the teacher engaged students in class. The period register is crucial it

assists the headteacher to monitor teachers' availability to students during the scheduled teaching-learning time. The record shows not only the macro-presence of a teacher in the organisation of the school but the teacher's presence in the class as well (micro-presence), where teacher-learner engagement is done in teaching-learning activities. In addition to monitoring teacher availability and engagement with students, the document shows absence of student in every period of each active day. While form teachers, heads of departments, and the deputy head teacher are expected to verify teachers' engagement with learners, headteachers are expected to monitor instructional activities by checking the period registers at least once a week in a ten-month school term.

Figure 3-3

Sample of a Period Register

Class: ..... Date:..../..../..... Day:..... Term:..... Academic Year:.....

Class Enrolment:.....(F..... M.....) Number of Students absent:.....(F:.....M:.....)

Period No.	Time	Subject	Teacher's Name (pseudonyms)	Names of absentees	
1	07:30-08:10	Mathematics	Mrs. K. Banda		
2	0810-08:50	History	Mr. B. Ndevu		
3	0850-09:30	English	Mr. Z, Fwentha		
	09:30-10:00	Break			
4	10:00-10:40	Physics	Mrs. J. Ndili		
5	10:40-11:20	Physics	Mrs. J. Ndili		

Updated by: .....Date:...../...../.....
Class Leader(s)

Verified by:.....Date:...../...../.....
Form Teacher(s)

Monitored by:.....Date:...../...../....
Deputy Headteacher

Checked by:.....Date:..../...../.....
Headteacher

Numerical data on the frequency with which headteachers checked the period registers was indicated in the content analysis grid as the number of weeks checked in the term that lasted ten months. The period register, therefore, is a numerical ratio variable.

3.5.8.5 : Markbooks. Monitoring students' progress is important in monitoring learning effectiveness to improve their achievement. Teachers administer assessments for, of, and in learning to improve the teacher-learner interaction in class activities achievement. Students' improvement is noted in their skills and grade patterns, which are recorded in markbooks shown in Figure 3.6, that by teachers (McDowall et al., 2021; Malawi Government, 2017; Webb, 2017). In literature, a "markbook" is a teaching record where students' progress is recorded (Mostert & Clark-Wilson, 2016). It is in the markbook that evidence on monitoring of learning effectiveness by the administration of assessments by teachers exists apart from the learners' exercise books and test scripts. While the task of monitoring students' progress involves teachers, section leaders, heads of departments, and deputy headteachers, as detailed in Figure 3-4, the headteacher is the ultimate answerable

Figure 3-4

Sample of the Expected Markbook

Outline

Class:..... Subject:..... Number of students registered:..... Year:..... Term:.....

Ser. No.	Students' Names	Sex	Topic:..... Assignments 1	2	3	4	Mean	Remarks
1								
2								
3								
4								
5								

Monitoring:

Section Leader:..... Date: Head of Department:.....Date:.../.../.....

Deputy Headteacher:..... Date: .../...../....

Checking: Headteacher's Remarks .....

Signature:..... Date:.../...../....

officer to proper use and update of the markbook. Without checking the markbooks, headteachers may not determine the scope and sequence of assistance they need to, in turn, improve the class teacher-learner interaction.

In this regard, therefore, a document that reflects the headteacher's commitment to instructional supervision on learners' academic progress is the markbook. The higher the frequency with which markbooks are checked, the more the headteacher will be aware of learners' progress to establish teachers' needs. Procedurally, when teachers submit their schemes and records of work, they are expected to submit their markbooks as well, so the headteacher can verify the claims in the records of work about the effectiveness of lessons.

It is expected that loadings of the data from the content analysis grid on the categorised headteachers' service periods will show that variations exist in how different categories of headteachers supervise instructional activities. That variation has implications for headteachers' commitment to instructional supervision roles. Therefore, key document desk monitoring is a variable that helps to answer the research question: How does the headteachers' commitment to instructional supervisory roles change within their headship service period? Further, the variable assists in confirming the hypothesis: Headteachers' commitment to instructional supervisory roles varies throughout their headship service period.

3.5.9 : Mixed Descriptors of Headteachers' Commitment to Instructional Supervision.

A headteacher's commitment to instructional supervision description could be affective-effective practice, affective-exceeds minimum standards, affective-meets minimum standards, and affective-below minimum standards or continuance-effective practice, continuance-exceeds minimum standards, and continuance-meets minimum standards, and continuance-below minimum standards or normative-effective practice, normative-exceeds minimum standards, normative-meets minimum standards, and normative-below minimum standards. In the description, affective, continuance, and normative denote TCM measurement

while effective practice, exceeds minimum standards, meets minimum standards, and below minimum standards are descriptors of practised commitment.

3.5.10 Participants' Demographics

The participants' demographics in the study include gender and age. Gender is a polytomous categorical variable in the nominal measurement scale comprising female, male, and transgender categories (Culpepper & Balamuta, 2023; Miola & Miot, 2022). While age is a ratio variable since the measurement scale has a "true definition of an absolute zero point and the ratios of the values on the measurement scale must make sense" (Vetter, 2017, p. 3).

While research findings indicate a positive correlation between employee demographics, especially age and gender, in public services delivery employment without the individualistic-collectivist cultural influence (Riccucci, 2021; Qing et al., 2020), the study by Wolowska (2014) records a weak and varied correlation between gender and age with organisational commitment across countries. Lack of correlational clarity between personal demographics and organisational commitment highlights the need to investigate the case among public secondary school headteachers in the Central East and Central West Education Divisions. Participants' demographics in the questionnaire and content analysis grid provide more determinants of the relationship between headteachers' commitment to carrying out instruction supervisory roles and their service period through gender and age mediation.

However, to this study, the gender demographic was meant just to show that the participants were real since there was no research question that required differentiation in commitment among Central East and Central West Education Divisions along gender perspectives. Therefore, there will be very little to write about from the gender stand point.

3.5.11 : School Identity

The public secondary schools where the headteacher-participants work have a location by which they are identified, thus either in the Central East or in the Central West education

divisions. In this case, school identity is a binary or dichotomous categorical variable. The three data collection tools—the commitment to instructional leadership questionnaire, the content analysis grid, and the semi-structured interview schedule—collect data on this variable. Disaggregation of the findings on school identity provides opportunities to identify the influence of school location on headteachers' commitment.

The quantitative constructs and variables in this study are key to process of answering the questions that guided the research and statistically testing the research hypotheses (Kelly, 2021). The appropriateness of the statistical tests is dependent on the parametricity of the variable data (Mishra et al., 2019; Greenland et al., 2016; Curtis et al., 2016). On the other hand, qualitative variables, according to Hurriyati et al. (2020), play emerge themes for the construction of descriptions of reality. The use of both quantitative and qualitative variables in the same study is according to Turner (2015), consistent with the mixed-method approach of the study and the mixed-methods research design.

3.6.0 : Study Procedures and Ethical Assurances

The study on headteachers' commitment to instructional supervision and their school leadership service period in Central East and Central West education divisions followed a replicable procedure from research proposal development to report writing and received regulatory approval from Unicaf University Research Ethics Committee (UREC) and the National Committee on Research in the Social Sciences and Humanities (NCRSH). Additional to the regulatory ethics clearance, were various permissions obtained from gatekeepers as a matter of research practice courtesy and informed written consent from the elected participants.

3.6.1 : Study procedures

The study journey started with the development of a research proposal that went through the approval process. observations by the school of doctoral studies through the supervisor initiated the recursive process of narrowing down the title. After approval, the

instruments were piloted and revised. Instrumentation of the tools involved making appointments by cell phone with participants seven days prior to a data collection visit, which was repeated for confirmation three days prior to the data collection visit. On the appointment date, a participant was presented with evidence of study approvals and permissions from education division offices.

Further, a participant was requested to voluntarily complete an informed written consent form that contained a brief description of the study as was done in Carter (2021). A participant was asked for the key instructional supervision documents. When the documents were made available to the researcher, the participant was given a questionnaire to complete. While the participant completed the questionnaire, the researcher scanned the key instructional supervision records to take note of the frequencies with which the participant checked the instructional documents to record in the content analysis grid. After collecting the quantitative data, a participant who was purposefully selected for an interview was consequently engaged in an interview using the semi-structured interview schedule.

Quantitative data collected using the questionnaire and the content analysis grid were entered into the IBM Statistics and Microsoft Excel spreadsheets in the evening of every instrumentation day. Similarly, narratives from participants' responses to semi-structured interview schedules question formed the field notes that were organised for further analytical procedures as recommended in Delener & Schweikert. (2023) and Vu (20200. Analyses of the data from the quantitative and qualitative strands of the study were done after all the data were collected. Quantitative data were analysed using statistical strategies, while qualitative data were anatomised thematically. The quantitative and qualitative strands of the study were merged at the inferential results analysis stage to draw conclusions.

Finally, conclusions from the study of public secondary school headteachers' commitment to instructional supervision in CEED and CWED were drawn, and the study report

writing as presented was completed. Amidst the process procedures, presentations were made to the doctoral research group for observations and comments to further guide the study, and consultation with the supervisor was the spine of the study.

3.6.2.0 : Ethical Assurances

Concerns about ethical considerations in research have been subject to discussion for a long time, with the initial focus on medical practice now spreading to all fields of study where research involves human participants (Bazzano et al., 2021; Sugarman, 2017; Faden & Beauchamp, 1986). Ethical considerations, according to Petrovic (2017, p. 99), "seek to establish parameters on which [to] base an objective assessment of right and wrong conduct through the ontological differentiation between good and evil" and to remind researchers that "action should not be initiated by its consequence but by a moral obligation to do that which is under the law of the mind and human dignity."

Some of the notable mentions of research ethics—the "Nuremberg Code" and the "Declaration of Helsinki" (Petrovic, 2017; Katz, 1996; Annas, 1992)—have been the springboard for the formation of several bodies whose concerns are compliance with ethical codes in research. According to One & Balli (2020), some of the professional bodies that work to ensure compliance with ethical codes in research are the American Medical Association (2016), the American Psychological Association (APA) (2017), and the American Counselling Association (ACA) (2014). The multiplicity of professional research ethics bodies shows the need for researchers to observe the research code of ethics. As Onen & Balli (2020, p. 119) note, "Conforming to ethical principles is an essential requirement for conducting responsible research in human scientific studies."

3.6.2.1 : Approval from Unicaf University Research Ethics Committee (UREC). The first approval to carry out the study was granted by the UREC on September 2, 2022, as detailed in Appendix 5. The approval from UREC followed an examination of the research proposal for compliance with research ethics requirements. Although the approval was adequate at the Unicaf University level, there were local regulatory requirements to satisfy as well. Consequently, the research proposal was submitted to the National Committee on Research in the Social Sciences and Humanities (NCRSSH) for local approval to carry out the study in Malawi.

3.6.2.2 : Approval from the National Committee on Research in the Social Sciences and Humanities. Consequently, the study was approved by the National Committee for Research in Social Sciences and Humanities (NCRSSH) on November 15, 2022, as evidenced in the approval document Ref No. NCST/RTT/2/6, as shown in Appendix 6. According to the National Commission for Science and Technology (NCST) (2011), it is a requirement that students studying at foreign educational institutions of higher learning who wish to carry out their research studies in Malawi submit their research proposals to the National Commission for Science and Technology for ethics review. The submission was made on the condition that the proposal receive prior approval from the Unicaf University Research Ethics Committee.

3.6.2.3 : Gatekeepers' Permissions. Several permissions were sought from gatekeepers as a matter of research courtesy. The Malawi Ministry of Education headquarters and Central East and Central West education divisions were the gatekeepers that gave further permission to access participants. The sequence of permission requests was from the Malawi Ministry of Education headquarters to carry out research in the selected education divisions, and from the Central East and Central West education divisions, permission was requested to access public secondary school headteachers in the respective education divisions. The response to the request from the Ministry of Education headquarters, shown in Appendix 7,

assisted in legitimately establishing the sampling frame of public secondary school headteachers in the two educational divisions. That enabled sampling frame element categorisation into service periods for the application of strato-random-purposeful sampling.

The other permissions were received from the Central East and Central West education divisions following approval from the National Committee on Research in Social Sciences and Humanities. Details of the education divisions' permission are presented in Appendices 8 A and 8 B. In this case, the gatekeepers' letters of permission conveyed a sense of confidence and safety to the participants, knowing that the researcher had been permitted to engage the selected headteachers as participants in the study.

3.6.2.4 : Participant's Identity Protection. Participants' protection was assured through anonymity and confidentiality in the data collection process (Ledford et al., 2024; Drolet et al., 2023; Walker et al., 2022; Kang et al., 2021; Moriña, 2021; Tullis, 2021; White, 2020), besides the provision of contacts where complaints should be reported. The data collection tools did not require identification of the participant by either name or public secondary school name or type. Further, the collected data was kept safely: hard copies were kept under lock and key, and soft copies were stored on devices with passwords to avoid unauthorised access.

The study report and presentations do not connect the information to any respondent. Instead, where necessary, pseudonyms are used for persons and shall replace the actual names of participants and locations. Assurance of the participant's protection is provided by the anonymity and confidentiality measures stated above. Besides, the data collection instruments did not require information that traced participants' identities. The assigned questionnaire numbers were only used to avoid duplication of data collection.

3.6.2.5 : Participants Reporting Channels of Rights Violations. Channels of communication that participants should use to report grievances about violations of their rights during instrumentation (Mengqlong, 2024; Rees, 2020), were provided in the informed consent form. Therefore, participants were at liberty to report the misconduct of the researcher to the National Committee on Research in the Social Sciences and Humanities, the National Commission for Science, and the Unicaf University Research Ethics Committee. The provision of such communication channels was another source of assurance about participants' protection.

Therefore, the administration of the data collection tools in the study complied with ethical considerations and standards at the institutional, national, and international levels. The Unicaf University Ethics Review Committee, the Malawi National Commission for Science and Technology, and gatekeepers are the agencies (Bennett & Brunner, 2022; Spacey et al., 2021; Brittain et al 2020; Facca et al., 2020) that played their roles to ensure compliance with ethical considerations in the study.

3.6.2.7: Informed Consent. Among the frameworks that guide ethical considerations in research culture is the principle of informed consent (Arellano et al., 2023; Burkhardt et al., 2023; Bazzano et al., 2021; Grant, 2021; Josephson & Smale, 2021), because there are ethical issues in studies that involve human subjects. Research participants require respect for their rights and protection from any form of harm. One of the standard ethical practices in research is to seek participants' informed consent before engaging in research activities. In that regard, the researcher sought the participant's permission in the form of written informed consent, detailed in Appendix 9. Some of the notable provisions in informed consent, according to the Belmont Report (2021) and Kaźmierska (2020), are a concise and comprehensible summary of the research study, an opportunity to ask questions regarding the study, and an offer to the participant to opt-out at any point in the progress of the research activity. participant's freedom to opt out of the study.

The written informed consent requisition process involved the researcher meeting face-to-face with the participant following an appointment made through a cell phone conversation at least a week before the appointment date, with a confirmation three days before the meeting. As recommended in LaDonna et al. (2021), Allan (2020), and Husband (2020), the researcher briefly introduced themselves and presented the permission letter from the respective education division manager to the participant. After an indication of comprehension of the letter from the education division manager, the participant was given the Informed Consent Form to read and make a conscious decision on whether to give consent to participate or not. Upon confirmation of consent by signing, a participant was asked to proceed with the completion of the data collection tools.

3.6.8: Role of the Researcher

The researcher's role in a study, as clarified in McFadden (2022) and Prang (2020), plays an integral part in determining the internal coherence and consistency of a research undertaking. The classical perception of studies polarises research orientations towards either positivism or interpretivism. From the classical perspective, the researcher's role ought to be aligned with the philosophical tilt of the study. Quantitative studies have a positivist orientation, and knowledge of reality is objective. Objective reality is known in quantitative variables and is independent of the knower. In that regard, researchers ought to be independent of the quantitative data through which objective reality is known. In corroboration with Dehalwar & Sharma, (2024), and Luoma & Hietanen, (2024), and Kandel (2020), Yates & Leggett (2016, p. 225) observe, "The role of the researcher in a quantitative study is to remain distant and independent of what is being researched."

While appreciating the independence of objective reality from the knower, it is an honest perception that objective realities were once in the knower as mere conceptions before being dimmed independently. In qualitative research, the investigator becomes part of the

known through reflexivity, and that is one of the challenges in knowledge creation that is attributed to qualitative research (Ahmed, 2024; Dahal, 2023; Olmos-Vega et al., 2023; Shelton & Goodwin, 2022). In this study, the investigator is partially linked to knowledge creation through the instrumentation of the semi-structured interview schedule through follow-up questions to participants' responses.

3.7.0 : Data Collection and Analysis

The study used three tools for data collection: a commitment to instructional leadership questionnaire, a content analysis grid to collect statistical data, making the quantitative strand multimethod, and a semi-structured interview to collect qualitative data (Naz et al., 2022; Adeoye-Olatunde & Olenik, 2021). The use of such methods to collect both quantitative and qualitative data in the same study is informed by the eclectic philosophical perspectives underpinning the study. Philosophically contrary but complementary data collection methods described in Olaghere, (2022), Nanthagopan (2021), and Vebrianto et al. (2020), were used in the same study to sustain the eclectic philosophical orientation of the study and maintain consistency with the mixed-methods research approach (Brickey, 2023). The use of quantitative and qualitative data collection methods aligns with the eclectic philosophical perspective, the abductive approach, and the mixed-methods designs that inform the study. The researcher will meet the participants at their workplaces for the instrumentation of the data collection tools, guided by procedures that respect ethical considerations.

Using the questionnaire detailed in Appendix 2, quantitative data about headteachers' commitment was collected from the sampled participants. The reliability of the collection of quantitative data on the psychometrics of heterogeneous employees using a questionnaire has been confirmed in the literature (Xueyan, 2024; Taherdoost, 2022; Philippa et al., 2021; Nanthagopan, 2021). Further, a content analysis grid detailed in Appendix 3 was used to collect data on key documents used for instructional supervision monitoring. The reliability of using

a content analysis grid to study institutional practices (Jia et al., 2024; Kleinheksel et al., 2020; Singh & Miah, 2020;) is confirmed in the literature. While quantitative data will be collected using the questionnaire and content analysis grid, qualitative data will be solicited using a semi-structured interview schedule detailed in Appendix 4.

3.7.1.0 : Data Analysis

The study used statistical and qualitative data analysis techniques. Microsoft Excel and the IBM Statistics software enabled multivariate analysis (Field, 2024; Kotronoulas et al., 2023; Rahman & Muktadir, 2021; Pallant, 2020) of the statistical data. On the other hand, thematic analysis was the technique for processing qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2024; Squires, 2023; Coker, 2022; Finlay, 2021). In the thematic analysis, themes that emerged from manual coding described in Lungu (2022), Mattimoe et al. (2021), and Lester et al. (2020), were summarised, and respondents' responses were matched with the themes using desire lines, as done in topographical and engineering survey plane tabling (Ali, 2020; Nakileza & Nedala, 2020).

The combination of two paradigmatically different but complementary data analysis techniques in a single study, a "meta-framework for mixed analysis techniques" (Combs & Onwuegbuzie, 2010, p. 2), is recommended in Braun & Clarke (2023) and Humble & Mozelius (2022) as appropriate for this dual-philosophically anchored study.

3.7.1.1.0 : Data Analysis Techniques. Data analysis, being "the categorising, ordering, manipulating, and summarising of data" (Irwin, 2008, p. 153), minimises variable parameters into forms that are easy to comprehend and interpret. While philosophical assumptions, thus ontology, epistemology, and axiology, form the bedrock that anchors a research study approach and design, the nature of the study problem influences choices on the appropriate worldviews for research studies (Dawadi et al., 2021; Peel, 2020; Siedlecki, 2020). The study of headteachers' commitment to instruction supervisory roles in the search for a complementary organisational commitment perspective in the Central East Education Division and Central West Education Division in Malawi is anchored on

an eclectic philosophy with a mixed-methods approach and assumes a concurrent design. Such study's philosophical anchorage, approach, and design justify the collection of quantitative and qualitative data that require contrary but complementary statistical and qualitative data analysis techniques.

3.7.1.1.1 : Quantitative Data Analysis. In this study, quantitative or statistical data analysis techniques used are IBM SPSS, also known as the Special Package for Social Scientists (SPSS) software and Microsoft Excel Spreadsheet (Field, 2024; Jalolov, 2024; Remenyi et al., 2022), to analyse quantitative data collected using the commitment to instructional supervisory roles questionnaire and the content analysis grid. The quantitative data are either exported from a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet or entered from the completed quantitative data collection tools, thus the questionnaire and the content analysis grid. Every item of the commitment to instructional supervisory roles questionnaire was entered into the IBM Statistics spreadsheet as a variable for each active case. For instance, the first respondent is entered as case number one, and the response to each item of the questionnaire the case has made is entered as a variable in the respective column cells, as informed in Tumiran, (2023), Babbie et al. (2022), and Sayre et a. (2021). Similarly, every active case has its own content analysis grid data variable about the frequency of checking the key instructional supervision and administrative documents. Therefore, the total number of cases entered in the IBM Statistics spreadsheet variable view corresponds with the total number of participants involved in the study.

Since the study on headteachers' commitment to instructional supervisory roles is conducted in the natural context of the participants and observations involve collecting data with a significant magnitude of diversity, there was a need for comparable data interfaces through descriptive statistical analysis. Hinton (2024) notes that statistics simply means observations described in the form of numerical data, which enables triangulation among data of otherwise incompatible philosophical orientations and provides the potential for interpretation (George & Mallery, 2024; Steinberg & Price, 2020) through inferential statistics.

3.7.1.1.2 : Descriptive Quantitative Data Analysis. Descriptive data analysis is done within the confines of the available data. In the case of descriptive quantitative analysis, statistical data are the focus. Descriptive statistics are manipulations of numerical characterisations of variables into summaries for easy comprehension and interpretation (Ghanad, 2023; Tumiran, 2023; Cooksey, 2020) and are "specific methods used to calculate, describe, and summarise collected research data in a logical, meaningful, and efficient way" (Vetter, 2017, p. 1). The descriptivity of such statistics in this study is thus the extent to which the observed characteristics of studied phenomena cluster around or disperse towards extremely specified attributes (Taherdoost, 2022; Thrane, 2022), or the summary characterisation of variable data is achieved through graphical presentations, according to Cooksey (2020). The descriptive statistics types of data in this study are measures of central tendency, thus the mean median and mode; measures of frequencies, frequency distribution shapes, percentages, ratios, and proportions; and measures of variability or dispersion, thus the standard deviation and variance (Conwell & Loughran, 2024; Brooke & Rwe, 2023; Abu-Bader, 2021).

While the mean is the mathematically calculated average of a data set that is affected by extreme outliers, the median, on the other hand, is the data set number located in the middle when the distribution is sorted in either a descending or ascending order (Subanji et al., 2021; Mishra et al., 2019). The representativity of the mean, however, is dependent on the normality of the dataset distribution (Mishra et al., 2019; Vetter, 2017) and is calculated using the formula: Median = (n + 1)/2 (Everitt & Howell, 2021). Further, the data set is a discrete number or variable magnitude with a high frequency of occurrence in the distribution, which is the mode. The mode indicates the most likely variable measurement that will be picked if random selection is applied to the sample and, consequently, the represented population. Some datasets are unimodal, while others are multimodal.

The use of several central tendency measures in this study ensures that the challenges of one expression are dampened by the strengths of other measures. In addition, in this study, frequencies, frequency distribution shapes, percentages, ratios, and proportions (Vetter, 2017; Salvatore, 2001) express the nature of variable magnitude occurrences in data sets. The multi-faceted description of variables aligns with the abductive approach and the mixed-methods design of the study.

As central tendency measures focus on how clustered some variable characteristics are, thus showing variable data homogeneity, on the other hand, variability measures, such as variance, standard deviation, standard error, quartile, interquartile range, percentile, range, and coefficient variation (Cooksey, 2020; Mishra et al., 2019; Vetter, 2017; Ali & Bhaskar, 2016), focus on the dispersion of variable characteristics, thus heterogeneity. The objective determination of data distribution normality is done using parametric and non-parametric tests (Orcan, 2020; Li et al., 2022; Sun et al., 2022). Perceiving the study variables from opposite standpoints, homogeneity and heterogeneity increase rigour in describing headteachers' commitment to instruction and supervisory roles during their service period. The quantitative descriptive analysis technique clarifies the characteristics of the study sample and presents grounds for inference from the sample datasets about the represented population.

3.7.2.0 : Qualitative Data Analysis.

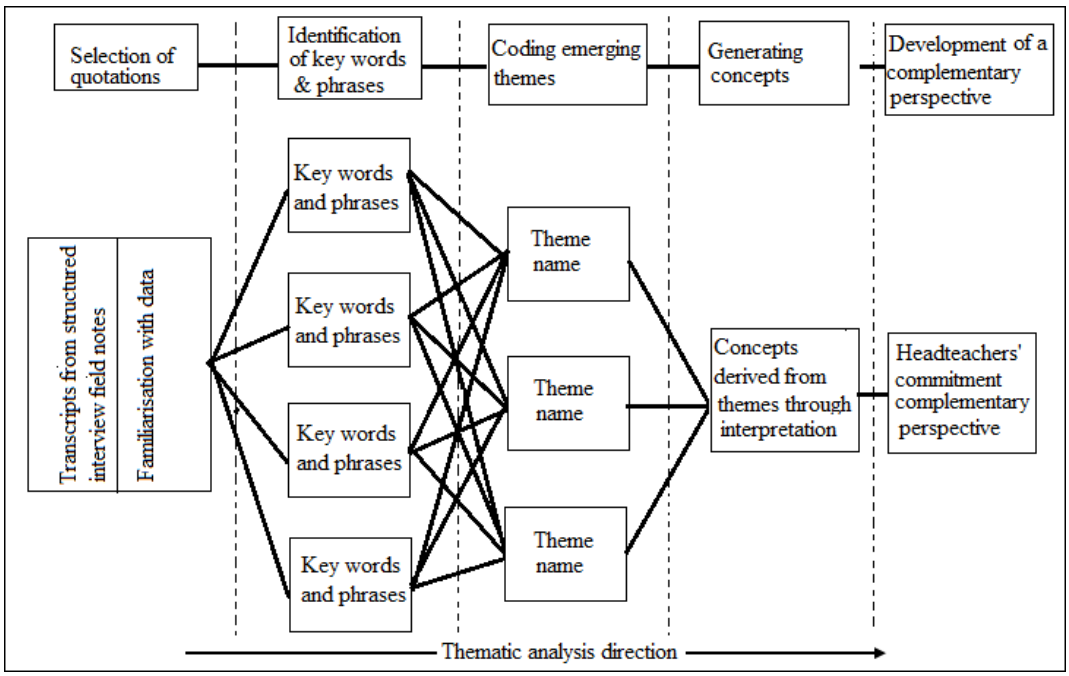
While quantitative analysis organises statistical data in this study, qualitative analysis analyses the textual data collected using the semi-structured interview schedule. Qualitative data analysis, being interpretive and constructive in philosophical persuasions (Asmawi & Alam, 2024; Matta, 2022; Jahja et al 2021), examines the participants' responses from the semi-structured interview schedule. In their responses, participants expressed their opinions regarding the public secondary school head teachership in textual form. The participants' expressions in their responses are the textual data that were qualitatively analysed.

Since the participants were purposively sampled from every service period stratum, the responses were also well analysed in their respective categorical collections. That was deliberately done for easy matching with the summary of the themes that emerged.

3.7.2.1 : Descriptive Qualitative Data Analysis. According to Salmona & Kaczynski (2024), Yenipınar (2021), Mezmir (2020), and Morgan & Nica (2020), descriptive qualitative analysis is guided by the descriptive qualitative analysis framework. Qualitative descriptive analysis does not stifle participants narratives in response to interview schedules with a priori developed codes. With no parameters set around participants' responses, a lot of rich data is captured. The researcher then familiarises with the unfettered responses for a deep understanding to identify key words and phrases from which codes are generated. From the codes, though interpretation, themes are developed in categories that could be broadly understood. The subsequent step is the abstraction of themes that have interfaces to link up with other concepts. Theme refining to reflect participants' narratives is preceded by a recursive process between and among steps as shown in Figure 3-5.

Figure 3-5

Thematic Analysis Process Model

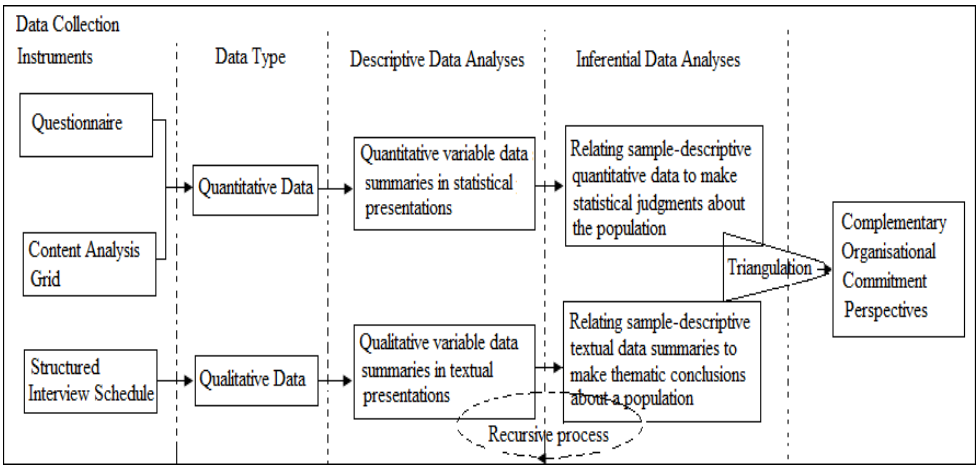


The textual data collected using the interview schedule was coded for organisation into domains, taxonomies, categories, and themes for easy comprehension of the variables. Through open, axial, and selective coding, the textual data were theoretically examined to formulate easy-to-comprehend study themes (Sapountzi & Psannis, 2018; Khan, 2014; Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2008) following the qualitative descriptive analysis framework. The process of formulating descriptive themes was recursive, as codes were continuously refined to come up with themes, as shown in Figure 3-5.

3.7.2.2 : Multi-philosophical Orientation Descriptive Data Analysis. The use of two philosophically different sets of data in the study of head teachers' commitment to their instructional supervisory roles finds justification in the triangulation between quantitative and qualitative datasets. The recurrence of domains, taxonomies, categories, and themes in the textual datasets presented trends that created interfaces between qualitative, as detailed in the qualitative descriptive analysis (Yenipınar (2021; Seixas et al., 2018; West et al., 2017), and quantitative data sets, as shown in Figure 3-6. The interfaces, in turn, were niches to originate complementarity between positive and interpretive philosophical perspectives. The descriptions of the study variables are, therefore, based on multi-philosophical underpinnings.

Figure 3-6

Data Analysis Flow Chart



3.7.3.0 : Inferential data Analysis

Inferential analysis is about manipulating sample descriptive datasets into forms that make a judgement about the represented population logical and easy. According to Sutanapong & Louangrath (2015, p. 31), "The sample is the observation; the estimated population is the inferred value without observation." Although analytical inference is mostly related to quantitative data in the literature (Hamzani et al., 2023; Harley, B., & Cornelissen, 2022; Thiem, 2022; Stapor 2020), textual data are analysed for inference as well.

The rarity of linkage between analytical data inference and textual data is only a matter of prejudice on the positivism-interpretivism continuum. While those at the extreme positivism polar do not see existing linkages between qualitative and quantitative inferences and those at the extreme interpretivism polar perceive linkages between quantitative and qualitative datasets even when such do not exist, the third-paradigm proponents, the compatibility thesists, have justification for linkages between quantitative and qualitative observations.

The reality of inferential textual data analysis exists in several typologies. The study of headteachers' commitment to instructional supervisory roles in their headteachership service period is eclectic in philosophical orientation, with parallel but dominant descriptive statistical data analysis that converges at the inferential analysis stage upon quantification of textual variable data characteristics for further triangulation (Combs, 2010; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009; Onwuegbuzie et al., 2009; Teddlie et al., 2008; Sandelowski, 2000). Just as there are descriptive statistical and textual analyses, inferences are statistical and textual as well.

3.7.3.1 : Inferential Statistical Data Analysis. Although arguments about the difference between and essence of descriptive and inferential statistics still rage in the literature (Amrhein et al., 2019; Crane, 2017; Urdan, 2017; Cox, 1978), in this eclectic-philosophy-orientated study of head teachers' commitment, the two forms of analytical statistics serve two distinct purposes. Descriptive statistical analysis manipulates datasets into easy-to-understand

forms, while inferential statistical analysis draws upon commonalities between sample variable statistical descriptions and population characteristics as the basis for drawing conclusions about the represented population (Stapor 2020; Sutanapong & Louangrath 2015). Inferential statistics link applicable sample dataset descriptions with realities in the represented population.

In that regard, the study on headteachers' commitment to their instructional supervisory roles over their service period uses various dataset characteristics to interrogate the hypotheses and evaluate the extent to which the research objectives are come upon. In testing hypotheses, comparisons are made between observations in the datasets and the expected situation (Amrhein et al., 2019), thus determining the match between the datasets of the independent and dependent variables. According to Urdan (2017) and Heumann et al. (2016), the null hypothesis (H_0) suggests that there exists no correlation between variables or that there is no change to a variable after treatment, while the alternative hypothesis (H_1) suggests the existence of a relationship or change. As Somekh & Lewin (2005) note, study hypotheses are tested by comparing specific dataset characteristics.

3.7.3.2 : Inferential Textual Data Analysis. According to Davoudi (2005, p. 106), "text understanding is constructing a coherent representation of the information in a text." Since a text contains more information than is explicitly expressed, the representation of information in a text is modified by several factors, including audience characteristics (Shapiro & Markoff, 2020). The location of the information within the contextual setting for meaningful comprehension is inference. In the case of a research study, the understanding of qualitative data, that is, communication through textual, audio, video, and sign language into forms that are comprehensible, constitutes textual analysis. Further, when the comprehensible forms are aligned to resolve a research problem meant to be replicable, that defines textual inference.

The inference of sample variable textual data characteristics to the represented population is generated from the descriptive textual analysis. The frequently emerging variable

thematic descriptions are most likely applicable to the population where all other sample parameters apply. It is at the inferential analysis stage that both the sample's statistical and textual datasets exhibit variable interfaces that allow complementarity of quantitative and qualitative perspectives of reality for judgements that logically apply to the represented population.

3.7.4 : Datasets Relationship Tests

The numerical and textual data collected for the study of head teachers' commitment to instruction supervisory roles in their service period using the questionnaire, content analysis grid, and structured interview schedule were stratified into several parallel sets: head teachers' headship experience, organisational commitment, commitment to instruction supervisory roles, and stratified head teachers' qualitative opinions about their roles. The categorisation of the data was at the collection stage since the sample for quantitative data analysis was randomly stratified and the purposive sampling followed a similar pattern.

The quantitative datasets were compared using several statistical relationship tests and correlation coefficients, such as Chi-square tests and correlation coefficients (Pyrczak & Oh, 2018; Wilson, 2014), with sensitivity to commitment of Type I and Type II errors. While the Chi-square test relates to the significance of variable relationships expressed in probability *p-values* based on sample size on the one hand (Ali & Bhaskar, 2016; Heumann et al., 2016; Louangrath, 2015; Salvatore & Reagle, 2002), the correlation coefficient, according to Anderson (2003, p. 115), is "a measure of dependence between two normal variates" where one is independent and the other is dependent (Lamprecht, 2005; Salvatore & Reagle, 2002).

On the other hand, qualitative dataset relationships are largely based on textual construct similarities and their recurrence. The themes that recur within a head teacher's stratum and are characterised by a specified discriminant reveal a factor of commitment peculiar to that category. Such themes are compared when they recur with varied propensities.

3.7.5 : Reflexivity

Reflexivity is the consciousness one has about the influence of positionality on the claims made about reality (Jamieson et al., 2022; Pownall et al., 2021), which Whitaker & Atkinson (2019) posit as the “awareness that the researcher and the object of study exist in a mutual relationship with one another.” The major differentiation determinant in the polarisation of ontological stances, positivism and interpretivism, crystallises at the extent of researchers’ independence from the reality being studied. In positivism, reality is seen as objective and independent of the knower, while in interpretivism, the knower is part of social reality. Yet another perception would hold that the objectivity of reality matures with the extent of development in phenomena' measurability; thus, objectivity develops from subjectivity. Perhaps that is why the "topic of reflexivity is pervasive in the methodological literature of the social sciences” (Whitaker & Atkinson, 2019). Reflexivity is one of the factors that helps determine the rigour of a research study.

In this study, the researcher, a public secondary school headteacher in CWED in Malawi, studied headteachers’ commitment. The researcher’s positionality has the potential for personal experience intrusion that may render the study a mere window for expressing personal opinions (Lafrance & Wigginton, 2019). With that conscientiousness, reflexivity has consistently been a guide for referencing the study process to procedures that have stood the test of time in terms of trustworthiness, as noted in peer-reviewed literature.

3.8.0 : Summary

The study on the commitment of head teachers to their instructional roles is eclectic in philosophical orientation; thus, it constitutes both positive and interpretive ontologies as well as quantitative and subjective epistemologies. The eclectic views on the nature of knowledge ought to be known to justify the mixed-methods approach with its concurrent design (Creswell, 2013; Crotty, 1989; Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999). The eclectic philosophical orientation

informed the sampling methods to provide participants that are representative of the heterogeneity that prevails among head teachers of public secondary education institutions in Central East and Central West Education Divisions in Malawi. Further, the data collection instruments—a questionnaire, a content analysis grid, and a semi-structured interview schedule—consolidate the eclectic nature of the study (Qing et al., 2020; Mathieu et al., 2016). The qualitative and quantitative data the instruments collected justify statistical and qualitative data analysis (Hair et al., 2010; Ho, 2006; Spicer, 2005).

Though the data types are different in philosophical orientation, triangulation assisted in drawing the data types complementarily. The study ensured that procedural ethical commitments (NCST, 2011; Dawson & Kass, 2005) were strictly observed as a show of research integrity and in respect of the study participants.

4.0 CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

4.1: Introduction

The qualitative and quantitative data collected for the study assisted in answering respective research questions that guided the inquiry and testing the hypotheses upon which the research was set. The questions were about finding out the extent to which headteachers' commitment reflected the affective-normative-continuance typology; exploring the factors that affected headteachers' attitudes towards instructional supervision throughout the headteachers' service period; and determining whether head teachers' commitment to instructional supervision changed within the head teacher's service period. Further, the quantitative data were for confirming or disconfirming three alternative hypotheses and the respective null hypotheses, thus: H_1 Head teachers' commitment to supervisory roles reflects the affective-normative-continuance commitment dimensionalities, and H_0 Head teachers' commitment to supervisory roles does not reflect the affective-normative-continuance commitment typology; H_2 Headteachers' attitudes toward instruction supervisory roles vary along their headship service period, and H_0 Headteachers' attitudes toward instruction supervisory roles are constant throughout their headship service period; and H_3 Head teachers' commitment to instruction supervisory roles varies throughout their headship service period, and H_0 Head teachers' commitment to instruction supervisory roles does not vary throughout their headship service period.

As recommended in Zhang & Hughes (2020) and Johnson et al. (2020), the study's data quality was the product of rigorous research processes that included sampling, data collection tool development, instrumentation, and data analysis. According to LaDonna et al. (2021, p. 607), research rigorousness was about research process robustness for the production of transferrable findings through the use of credible, resonant, and rich data. However, Dada et al. (2023) argued that rigour was a concept associated with the quantitative research paradigm,

with validity, reliability, objectivity, and generalisability as its criteria. The equivalent of rigour in the qualitative research paradigm was trustworthiness (Morse, 2015; Guba & Lincon, 1989), with credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability as the criteria. In the study of headteachers' commitment, which was underpinned by a mixed-methods research paradigm, both rigour and trustworthiness were issues that attracted attention.

In this mixed-methods study, the rigour and trustworthiness of quantitative and qualitative data analysis were respectively premised on several attributes, such as sampling strategy and data collection method, that had stood the test of time. The sampling strategies were stratified random sampling for the quantitative path of the study and strato-random-purposeful sampling for the qualitative strand of the investigation. The data collection methods were a headteachers' commitment to instruction and supervisory roles questionnaire and a content analysis grid for the quantitative strand of the study, while a semi-structured interview schedule (Kalpokaite & Radivojevic, 2018; Kallio et al., 2016; Elo et al., 2014) was used to collect qualitative data as detailed in Appendices 2, 3, and 4.

4.2: Public Secondary Schools and Participants' Characteristics

The 277 participants were drawn from 277 public secondary schools, thus conventional and community day secondary schools (Government of Malawi, 2022). The period of existence of the public secondary schools (in years) in which the headteachers participated was one of the inclusion characteristics. A headteacher qualified for inclusion in the study as a participant if the school had been in existence for at least one academic year cycle. In this study, the public secondary schools whose headteachers participated had a period of existence (in years) mean of 24.96, a median of 25.00, a standard deviation of 8.65, a range of 69, a minimum of 3, and a maximum of 72.

4.3.0 : Participants' Demographics

Since the study did not focus on differentiating headteachers' commitment to instructional supervision by gender, the inclusion of gender in the demographics was just to confirm that the population represented by the sampling frame was real. In addition, variation by gender was not included in the stratification of the participants into service periods and consequently the statistical descriptives shown in Table 4-1 did not any gender dimension. The results on participants demographics were as shown in Table 4-1.

Table 4-1

Participants' Age Characteristics

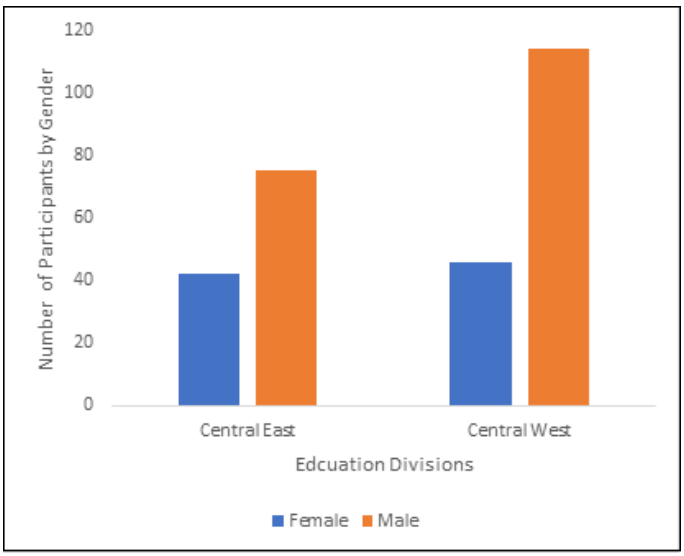
Service Period Category	Mean	N	Std. Dev.
1 to 5	43.15	20	3.44
6 to 10	43.82	38	3.48
11 to 15	51.57	51	3.10
16 to 20	53.73	59	3.69
21 to 25	54.65	52	3.12
26 to 30	56.79	33	2.56
31 +	56.71	24	2.14

4.3.1 : Participants' Gender Distribution

There were female and male headteachers in the study location, thus the Central East and Central West Education Divisions. The population of male headteachers in the Central West Education Division was significantly more than those in the Central East Education Division and that was reflected in the sample size. The female headteachers' population in the two education divisions was not significant as shown in Figure 4-1.

Figure 4-1

Participants' Gender Distribution by Education Division

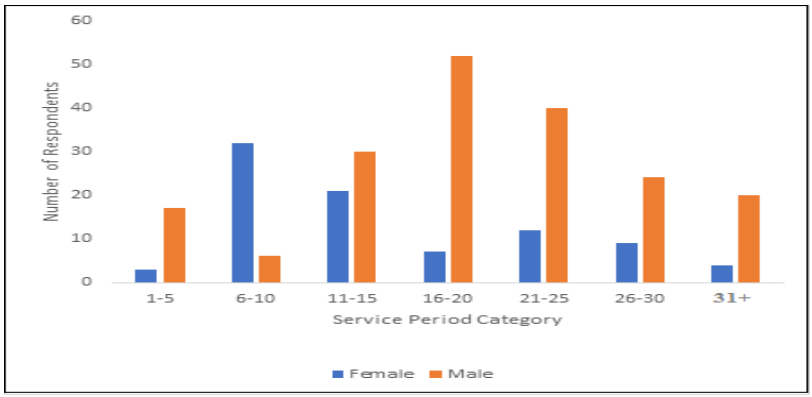


4.3.2 : Participants' Gender Distribution by Service Periods.

Further, participants' gender distribution by service period categories was multimodal as shown in Figure 4-2. The distribution graphic was on aggregated numbers of male headteachers separated from female headteachers in public secondary schools, thus the numbers did not include the education division differentiation Male.

Figure 4-2

Participants' Distribution by Gender and Service Periods



4.4.0 : Qualitative Data Attributes

In this study, the rigour of deconstruction of qualitative data about public secondary education institutions headteachers' commitment to instructional supervision roles was

premised on several attributes, such as sampling strategy and data collection method, that had stood the test of time. The sampling strategy used in this study was strato-purposeful sampling that was nested in a stratified random sampling structure (Nyimbili & Nyimbili, 2024), detailed in Tables 3-1, 3- 2 and Figure 3-1. The data collection tool used to collect the qualitative data on headteachers' opinions on headteachership, was a semi-structured interview schedule (Naz et al., 2022; Ruslin et al., 2022) shown in Appendix 4. Strato-purposeful sampling and a semi-structured interview schedule were philosophically aligned to gather headteachers' opinions and attitudes about headteachership.

Participants engaged in the semi-structured interview were strato-purposefully identified from each service period category, starting with those that had the most experience in the category. Semi-structured interview engagement with participants was curtailed once saturation points or a level of qualitative data sufficiency were noticed in responses. The indicator of saturation point was the point in the engagement with participants when redundancy in the responses was noticed. In that regard, the number of participants actually interviewed from each stratum was less than the planned as detailed in Table 3-2.

Throughout the research project, efforts were made to ensure the trustworthiness of the data by upholding its credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Haq et al., 2023; Adler, 2022; Nguyen, 2021). Although, the literature recommends that qualitative researcher studies should ensure to incorporate at least two of the strategies of achieving trustworthiness (Ahmed, 2024; Enworo, 2023; Coleman, 2022; Cloutier & Ravasi, 2021), this study engaged in more than two.

4.4.1.0 : Trustworthiness of Data

According to Ahmed (2024), Salmona, M., & Kaczynski, D. (2024), Enworo (2023), and Shufutinsky (2020), trustworthiness is the extent of detailed disclosure about how data were come upon to mirror an "audit trail" in accounting. Within the context of qualitative

research, trustworthiness is perceived from one-place, two-place, and three-place trust standpoints (Flanigan, 2022; Iyamu & Mutudi, 2022). Consequently, the contractuality of the three-place trust (Nowell et al., 2021) resonated with trustworthiness in the study of head teachers' commitment in Central East and Central West Education Divisions.

As noted in Nowell et al. (2021), the three-place trust pivoted the research process and resultant data as objects where the obligations of the trustee (researcher) and the expectations of the "trustor" (reader or audience) met. The criteria of trustworthiness, thus credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Foroudi & Dennis, 2023; Lincoln & Guba, 1985), were meant to persuade the readers of the report to see the findings as trustworthy.

4.4.1.1 : Credibility. Credibility of data was basically anchored on representativity alignment (Bang 2024; Lim, 2024; Haq et al., 2023), to study the purpose, and the actual meanings, plausibility, and accuracy of data interpretations (Adler, 2022; Nguyen et al., 2021). The credibility of the data in this study was maintained despite epistemological criticisms about the objectivity of qualitative research (Lemon & Hayes, 2020; Wood et al., 2020).

Although the perceived epistemological lapses in qualitative research sustained doubts about the credibility of qualitative data, as noted in the reluctance of publishers to accept qualitative research work (Lemon & Hayes, 2020), the slap was actually on researchers' skill gaps in research methodology and study report writing, not on the qualitative paradigm as a distinct philosophical perspective (Ahmed, 2024; Lemon & Hayes, 2020). Rather, the perceived lack of qualitative data collection accountability strengthened the quest for ways to improve qualitative research rigour.

4.4.1.2 : Transferability. As a type of external validity measure, transferability in this study was about the extent to which study findings were relevant to other contexts (Stalmeijer et al., 2024; Nasir & Sukmawati, 2023). However, the strato-purposeful sampling of participants for the qualitative part of this study that was nested in the stratified random

sampling detailed in Figure 3.2 understood in the light of Figure 3.3 provided justification for a measure of generalisability of the findings. The strato-purposeful sampling was consequential from stratified random sampling. There were 80 purposively sampled participants to be engaged in the semi-structured interview. Therefore, transferability of the study results in this research was, assured by the random-purposeful sampling strategy that carried wide representativity and participants' exhaustive engagement, thus rendering the results generalisable.

4.4.1.3 : Dependability. Verifiability, consistency, and reliability were data qualities that defined the dependability of study findings (Bingham, 2023; Clarke et al., 2023; Haq et al., 2023). Dependable data, from a qualitative inquiry, related directly to the repeatability of methodology and methods for participants' cohorts that were similar, with the assurance of obtaining symmetrical outcomes. In this study, the same semi-structured interview schedule was used with follow-up questions that provided opportunities for recursivity, corroboration, and verification. Administration of the same semi-structured interview schedule enhanced the verifiability of not only the study process but of the data and the results as well.

4.4.1.4 : Confirmability. While the confirmability of an inquiry process, data, and results displayed credibility, transferability, and dependability (Bingham, 2023; Cloutier & Ravasi, 2021), in this study, confirmability was the provision of an audit trail for readers to critique the researcher's decisions about study processes and findings (Ahmed, 2024; Lim, 2024; Nguyen, 2021). According to Nassaji (2020), confirmability in this study concerned disclosure of the study based on which data interpretations and conclusions were anchored as shown in Figures 3-6 and 3-7.

4.5.0 : Qualitative Data Results

The collected qualitative data were meant to answer the research questions that guided the study, regarding the extent to which headteachers' commitment to instructional supervision

roles reflected the affective-continuance-normative commitment typology in their service periods, how headteachers opinions towards instructional supervision roles varied along the headteachership service period continuum, and how headteachers' commitment to instructional supervisory roles changed within their headteachership service periods. In answering these research questions, the study objectives will be fulfilled. Thematic analysis of the qualitative data brought to light notable expressions in their interview narratives, thematic categories regarding what constituted head teachers core roles, and key instructional supervision documents.

4.5.1.0 : Notable Quotations from Participants' Narratives

The process of familiarising with the data embedded in the participants' semi-structured interview schedule narratives highlighted notable quotations regarding various issues that surfaced. The notable quotations were identified within the participants' responses under the categorised catch-phrases: surprise-scare-eager responses to appointments to the office of public secondary school headteachership, no preparation for the headteachership task, and support requirement to headteachers.

4.5.1.1 : Surprise-scare-eager Responses to Appointments

Responses to the question on how prepared headteachers were for their first appointment revealed mixed attitudes and reactions: surprise, fear, and eagerness. The first appointment to the post of headteacher was a surprise and a scare for many of the participants, for various reasons. One of the respondents, Miss Mtuwa Ntchunga (a pseudonym), said, "It was a surprise when I was told to head a school. At being informed, I froze with fear because I was not prepared. I had not been a deputy headteacher before." Another respondent, Mr. Psyipani (a pseudonym), said, "My appointment as a headteacher was a surprise, and when the appointment news was broken to me, I had fear about how I could meet the expectations of

teachers. When I remembered the unrealistic expectations, I pressed on headteachers when I was a mere teacher and a head of department."

Further, some newly appointed female headteachers were scared at the thought of leading a male-dominated staff. One of such female headteachers was Miss Zioneka, who said, "I was not prepared for the task at all, given that there was no orientation." Being female on a male-dominated staff, I feared almost everything. I had been deputy headteacher for only a year." Though scared, the headteachers kept on working.

While many respondents started public secondary school headteachership with surprise and trepidation, the data revealed that some headteachers expected the responsibility for which they had waited for a long time and were very eager to become headteachers. One of the headteachers who looked forward to being told to head a school was Mr. Zedi (a pseudonym). He said, "My perception is that I was adequately prepared for school headteachership, and the current challenges just motivated me to work hard and consult my colleagues and superiors."

Another respondent, Mrs. Penyeretu (pseudonym), felt that orientation in public secondary school headteachership in Central East Education Division and Central West Education Division would never be adequate since secondary schools operated in dynamic contexts that required creativity to deal with novelty. She further said, "With skills acquired through a Master of Education course, I was not scared to take up the challenge of head teachership with or without orientation."

4.5.1.2 : Required Support to Headteachers

Although participants indicated that they had made progress in improving their headteachership practice, an expression of the need for support was made. “I need frequent training in leadership and management so that I have a knowledge bank for referencing my decisions," said Mr. Suzumulani ((pseudonym). Participants’ responses to the question on the type of support headteachers required revealed that superiors, heads of departments, and

teachers were sources of support. Miss Lidyighanyo (pseudonym) expressed that need by saying, “I need more training to acquire skills that would help me deal with emerging contextual issues. The management meetings that are organised by the division are worthwhile.” Further to that, Mr. Mtichi (pseudonym) felt that he needed frequent training in leadership and management to acquire theoretical knowledge that could help him make better decisions regarding instructional supervision.

While respondents expressed appreciation for the support that heads of departments and teachers rendered by allocating workloads to teachers and engaging in teaching-learning interactions with learners, there were efficiency gaps that could be filled through human capital investment. Many respondents had the perception that improving professionalism among heads of departments and teachers could indirectly offer support to headteachers.

4.5.2.0 : Opinions and Attitudes about Instructional Supervision

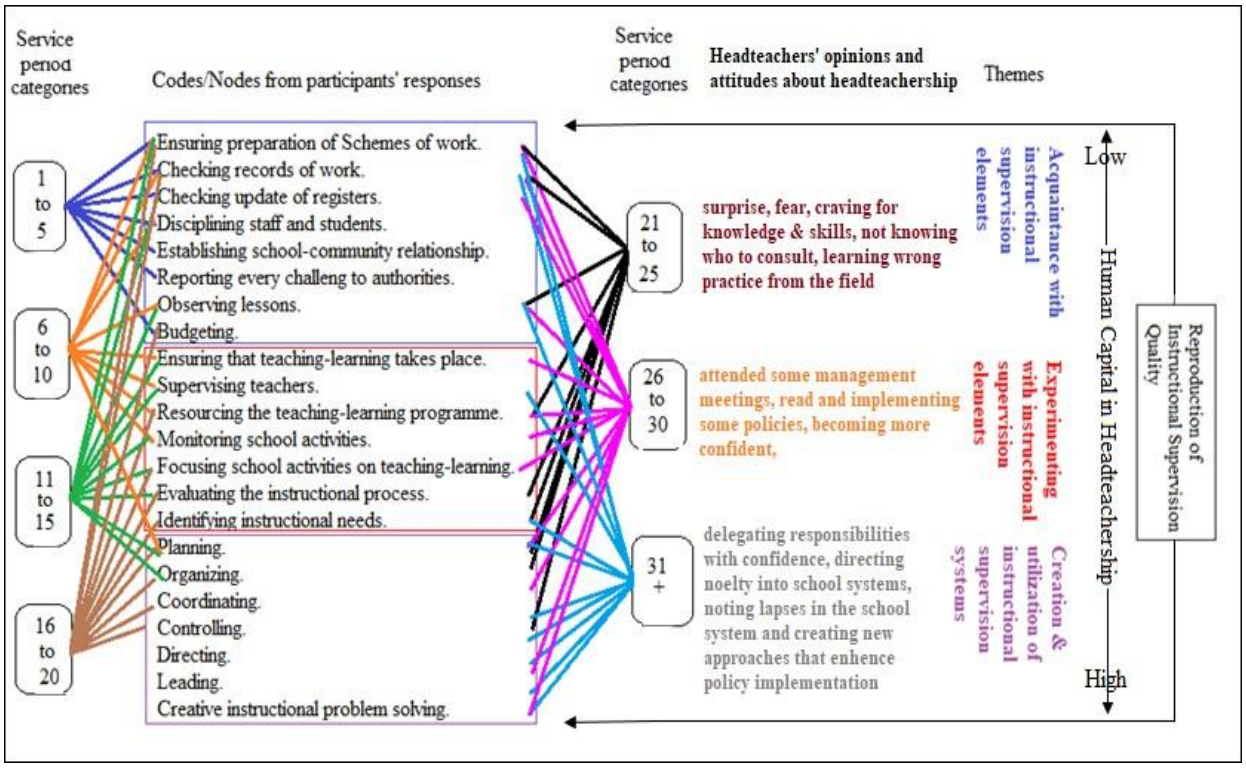
The summaries were categorised to reflect the headteachers’ service periods (in years) (1 to 5, 6 to 10, 11 to 15, 16 to 29, 21 to 25, 26 to 30, and 31 +) for coding and noting emerging issues for further analysis, guided by the thematic analysis framework detailed in Figure 3-5. After familiarising with the data and extracting the codes from participants’ responses in every service period stratum, responses and service periods were matched using desire-lines. From the matching, three broader headteachers’ categories emerged that showed opinions about what constituted headteachers responsibilities. The three emergent categories, thus acquaintance with instructional supervision elements, experimenting with instructional supervision elements, and creation and utilisation of instructional supervision systems as shown in Figure 4-3, suggested maturation of headteachership.

Further, it was important to emphasise that the maturation talked about was a professional one and not by age. Some headteachers were appointed or promoted to a headteachership position when they were close to retirement but they exhibited characteristics

that were in the acquaintance with instructional supervision elements stage. The categories referred to in Figure 4-3 were related to headteachership-specific human capital capacity.

Figure 4-3

Headteachers' Opinions and Attitudes about Headteachership



Further, the headteachers' opinions about responsibilities that constituted headteachership occurred amid human capital development endeavours that spanned a high-low headteachers' capacity in headteachership human capital investment. The status quo on opinions about what constituted headteachers' responsibilities, key instructional supervision documents, and headteachers' notable quotations had the potential to reproduce inefficiencies and appropriate interventions could lead to improving headteachers' commitment to instructional supervision in the Central East and Central West Education Divisions.

4.5.2.1 : Opinions about Key Instructional Supervision Documents. There were 15 documents that headteachers indicated they had been using for instructional supervision, which included schemes and records of work, lesson plans, lesson observation forms, teachers' codes of conduct, national education standards, Malawi Public Service Regulations, store ledgers,

period registers, attendance registers, vouchers, mark books, fee registers, school management handbook, action plan, and timebook, as presented in Table 4-2.

Table 4-2

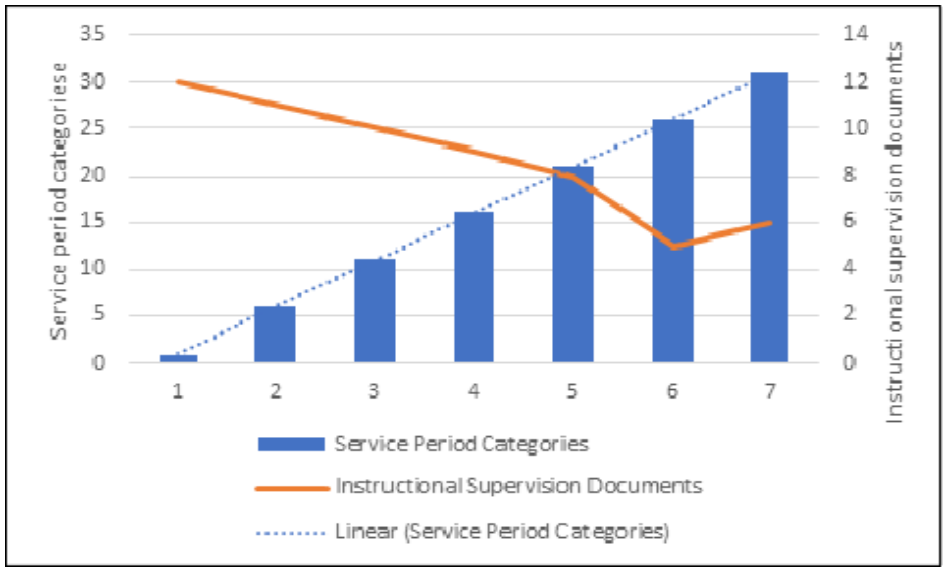
Headteachers' Opinions about Instructional Supervision Documents

Instructional Supervision Documents	Service Period Categories						
	1 to 5	6 to 10	11 to 15	16 to 20	21 to 25	26 to 30	31 +
Schemes and Records of Work	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Lesson plans	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Lesson observation forms	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Teachers Code of Conduct	*	*	*	*			
National Education Standards	*		*	*	*		*
Malawi Public Service Regulations	*	*	*	*	*		
Stores ledger	*						
Period Registers	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Daily Attendance registers	*	*	*	*	*		
Vouchers	*						
Mark books	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Fees registers	*						
School Management Handbook		*	*				
Action plan		*					
Time book		*					
Total per Service period	12	11	10	9	8	5	6

When the headteachers' opinions on key instructional supervision documents were organised in the form of a graph the results were as shown in Figure 4-4. Headteachers that had just been appointed to their positions perceived almost every document in their schools as instructional and those included documents that were essentially administrative. That resulted in headteachers at the acquaintance with instructional supervision elements stage referring to more documents in their instructional supervision than those that been in their positions longer.

Figure 4-4

Noted supervision Documents by Service Periods



4.6.0 : Quantitative Data Quality

The concepts that are used to qualify a study are underpinned by the study's philosophical perspectives. Studies that are underpinned by the interpretive paradigms of trustworthiness qualify their rigour, while those underpinned by a positive philosophy of reliability and validity define their credibility. To a greater extent, the credibility rating of a quantitative study reflects the reliability and validity of the data used in research. Reliability is a measure of an instrument's assurance to yield consistent data on a specified phenomenon regardless of time and the person taking the measurement (Rajput, 2020; Dikko, 2016). According to Vu (2021), the reliability attribute of an instrument lies in the quality of the data produced, not just in the instrument itself.

4.6.1.0 : Reliability and Validity of Data

Reliability is "the faith that one can have in the data obtained from the use of an instrument, that is, the degree to which any measuring tool controls for random error" (Mohajan, 2017, p. 1). The worth of research, as Aung et al. (2021) observe, is in the

applicability of its findings to current contexts, and that is a reflection of the instrument's quality. Validity, on the other hand, tests the accuracy of a measure (Ganesha & Aithal, 2022) to ensure that an instrument stands true to its claim. A data collection instrument qualifies as reliable and valid upon satisfying some conditions. The conditions that should be met to qualify a research instrument as reliable and valid will be looked into before specifically discussing the quantitative data collection tools that were used in this study.

There are several rating scales of reliability coefficients, which are also called coefficients of stability (Ganesha & Aithal, 2022; Barbera et al., 2020; Pang, 2020). Some of the rating scales are coarse, while others are fine. The rating in Ganesha & Aithal (2022) has been chosen for reference in this discussion for the reason that it is thin enough for a comprehensive description of results. The Ganesha & Aithal (2022) rating of coefficients of stability is detailed in Table 4-3.

The presentation in the table is that when test datasets are correlated and the correlation coefficient is rated as 1, the reliability of the datasets is perfect, thus reflecting a perfect research instrument. On the contrary, when the correlation coefficient of datasets is zero, there is no correlation, denoting that the research instrument was not reliable to use. A research data collection instrument that is used to collect datasets whose r-factor is $\geq 0.7 < 0.8$, according to the Ganesha-Aithal coefficients of stability rating, is acceptable.

Table 4-3

Coefficients of Stability Scale

Coefficient of stability Rating	Reliability Description
1	Perfect
= 0.9	Excellent
= 0.8 < 0.9	Good
= 0.7 < 0.8	Acceptable
= 0.6 < 0.7	Questionable
= 0.5 < 0.6	Poor
< 0.5	Unacceptable
0	No reliability

Note: Adapted from Ganesh & Aithal, 2022)

However, the application of ratings has attracted debate. While 1 denotes perfect reliability; ≥ 0.9 denotes excellent reliability; ≥ 0.8 < 0.9 denotes good reliability; ≥ 0.7 < 0.8 denotes acceptable reliability; ≥ 0.6 < 0.7 denotes questionable reliability; ≥ 0.5 < 0.6 denotes poor reliability; < 0.5 denotes unacceptable reliability; and 0 indicates no reliability according to the Ganesha-Aithal rating scale, Straub et al. (2004) recommend a lower rate for an acceptable correlation coefficient rating (r = ≥0.60) for exploratory or pilot studies. Further, Schober et al. (2018) caution against oversimplification of the complex associations that the coefficients of stability make between variables.

4.6.1.1.0 : Tests of Research Instrument Reliability. Although not sufficient on its own without validity to justify the worthiness of an instrument for use in a research study (Sürücü & Maslakci, 2020), the reliability of an instrument was worth establishing. There are several tests that a research data collection instrument has to pass in order to qualify as reliable. According to Ganesha & Aithal (2022), there are several tests that data are subjected to in order to ascertain their reliability ratings. Some of such tests (Pronk et al., 2022; Pang 2020) are the repeated test, concurrent form, inter-rater, administration to a halved participant group, and the test on internal consistency.

4.6.1.1.1 : Test-retest Reliability. Reliable research data collection instruments, according to Chan & Idris (2017, p. 400), have "the consistency of a measure, despite being

repeated several times." That same-result-several-times attribute of datasets was ascertained by using a test-retest reliability test. Thus, in testing, quantitative data collection instruments were administered to the same group of participants with long enough time intervals in between to suppress participants' subsequent responses from memory of earlier administrations as recommended in Kennedy (2022). The sets of data were then subjected to statistical correlation tests such as the Pearson product-moment correlation (Ganesha & Aithal, 2022) to determine the relationship for a reliability rating.

However, there were challenges with systematic and random errors. Systematic errors relate to bias inherent in an instrument that occurs in the data despite consistent administration to the same sample (Kock et al., 2021; Minami & Komatsu, 2020; Siedlecki, 2020). A random error, to the contrary, resides not in the instrument but in administration and instrumentation contexts (Grove & Cipher, 2019). It is the possibility of systematic error existence that makes reliability sufficient without validity to justify the use of an instrument since random errors tend to be easy to correct.

Random errors are challenges that may have confounded the test-retest reliability test and affect the resultant coefficient factor (Ibacache-Pulgar et al., 2023; Ives, 2022; Ahmed & Ishtiaq, 2021). Such challenges may have included the influence from the first administration of the test on the second administration's responses, and participants may have wanted to provide better responses; participants' construct changes that may have occurred over time that underpinned participants' perceptions; and alterations in environmental and social contexts that may have affected the researcher and the participants. The test-retest reliability method alone was not enough to ascertain the reliability of the instruments. There is a need to carry out several stability tests on the data to confirm instrument reliability.

In this study, the test-retest reliability test was embedded in the IBM SPSS statistical analysis strategy for analysing the quantitative data ensembled using the headteachers'

commitment to instructional supervisory roles questionnaire and the content grid analysis. Using the Ganesh-Aithal rating scale, the correlation factors ranged from zero to 80 among the different variables in the questionnaire and the content analysis grid, as presented in the subsequent sections.

4.6.1.1.2 : Parallel-forms Test. The parallel-forms test, also referred to as alternate-forms reliability, "is the degree of relatedness of different forms of the same test" (Abu-Bader, 2021; Kalkbrenner, 2023; Rumrill Jr et al., 2020). The parallel-forms reliability test involved comparing data drawn from a randomly identified sample by two instruments that are deemed equivalent in key characteristics such as content, response processes, and instrumentation (Oermann et al., 2024; Rambachan & Roth, 2023; Ganesha & Aithal, 2022) to the headteachers' questionnaire and the content analysis grid. The datasets from the equivalent research instruments were then associated using several formulas, such as the Pearson product-moment correlation test.

The resultant factor (*r*) was then interpreted using the coefficient of stability rating of choice. The parallel-forms reliability test was an attempt to solve the random errors that had the potential to affect test-retest reliability since, though the wording of the alternate forms differed, the constructs tested were the same. Further, the development of equivalent instruments and ensuring uniformity in the administration of the instruments posed strenuous challenges to establishing coefficients of data stability. According to Oermann et al. (2024) and Conoyer et al. (2022), there was is need for more research on the effectiveness of parallel forms of reliability for predictive purposes, which suggested the existence of lapses in the reliability test.

The analysis of statistical data collected using the headteachers' commitment to instructional supervisory roles questionnaire and the content grid analysis using the IBM SPSS statistical program compared data from service periods 1–5, 6–10, 11–15, 16–20, 21–25, and

26–30 with that of the 31 and above. Concerns about data reliability are presented in the sections that follow.

4.6.1.1.3 : Inter-rater Test. The reliability of data as assured when the instruments used to collect data were proven to be random and error-free. In the inter-rater reliability test, the rater was an observer. The inter-rater reliability test involved several observers using the same instruments to measure the same variable as described in Li et al. (2023) and Kimel & Revicki (2022). The random errors the inter-rater reliability test assured clear in the quantitative instruments were those caused by "sudden changes in experimental conditions, noise, and tiredness in the working person" (Mohajan, 2017, p. 9). In this test, therefore, several observers use the same instrument to measure a variable, and the average is calculated for the reliable score.

The inter-rater test coefficient of stability, recommends (2024), should be calculated using Cohen's Kappa formula, thus $k = (p_o - p_e) / (1 - p_e)$, where p_o = relative observed agreement among raters and p_e = hypothetical agreement by chance. The assurance that datasets had resulted from random, error-free instrumentation that added quality to study results.

However, the inter-rater reliability test acknowledged the random errors that may have been introduced by raters' inherent differences, which may have varied. Such variations were acceptably folded into the reliability factor by averaging the observations from several raters. In addition to accepting inherent differences in the average score, the inter-rater validity test was expensive in terms of time, material, and service costs. Due to the cost factor, the inter-rater validity test was limitedly used in this study.

4.6.1.1.4 : Split-half Test. The other test to establish the reliability of an instrument was the parallel-forms test. One half of an instrument was administered, and the scores were compared with those from the other half from the same participants (Pronk et al., 2022; Steinke & Kopp, 2020). The split-half reliability test, according to Kopp et al. (2021), focussed on

inter-item reliability and the stability of a measure. The correlation coefficients were calculable using several formulas, such as Cronbach's alpha, Kuder-Richardson's, and Spearman-Brown's (Pronk et al., 2022; Kopp et al., 2021; Steinke & Kopp, 2020). The interpretation of the correlation coefficients was referred to the Ganesha-Aithal scale in Table 4-3.

However, there were some issues with the process of splitting into halves that require attention. The description of the two halves of an instrument is somehow problematic (Kusumah et al., 2021). In the case of the headteachers' questionnaire with 15 items where each item had a 7-point scale, determining the half-point was a challenge in addition to the fact that the instrument was made up of items that tested affective, continuance and normative components of commitment. In this case the IBM statistics software determined the point to split the instrument at. Details on the reliability test carried out on the data are presented in the sections that follow.

4.6.1.1.5 : Internal Consistency Test. According to Hajjar (2018, p. 50), "internal consistency reliability evaluates the consistency of results across factors within a test." It expressed the inter-correlation of all factors in a measure with regards to the commitment components, service periods, and frequency in checking the key instructional supervision documents. Internal consistency and reliability presented assurance about the extent to which all factors in the quantitative data collection instruments held together in describing headteachers' commitment to instructional supervision in the Central East and Central West Education Divisions.

Although Cronbach's alpha has enjoyed popularity in research (Forero, 2024, Tarmizi et al., 2023), evidence has surfaced that the assumptions that justify its use are problematic to satisfy with some datasets. Therefore, Cronbach's alpha statistical tests required supplementary tests to comprehensively describe instrument and data reliability. In this study, statistical triangulation was done to harness the strengths of several statistical tests to the advantage of the study.

4.6.1.1.6 : Tests of Research Instrument Validity. Research instrumentality and data reliability, though important for a study, are not sufficient to define the credibility of a study until they are combined with validity (Taherdoost, 2016, p. 33). In other words, for a test to be reliable, it also needed to be valid. The validity of an instrument, according to Rahardia et al. (2023), is the "extent of the determination and accuracy of a measuring instrument in performing its measuring function." It is "the extent to which any of the instrument's measures measure what they are supposed to measure" (Osadebei & Kpolovie, 2019). Validity is the extent to which an instrument stands by its claims about measuring a construct. Though there are many definitions of validity, the commonality is found in the emphasis on the accuracy of measurement.

There are several types of validity. According to Sürücü & Maslakçi (2020), types of validity include predictive, concurrent, content, criterion-related, internal, external, construct, face, systemic, theoretical, jury, consequential, cultural, interpretive, descriptive, evaluative, statistical conclusion, and translation. The multiplicity of validity types may be indicative of an on-going search for exclusive clarity in the definition of validity. With the view that knowledge is still under construction, the notion that “ultimate validity” of a test can never be proven, as posited in Dunn (2020), forecloses the quest for new knowledge regarding validity.

However, many researchers (Ganesha & Aithal, 2022; Peeters & Harpe, 2020) cite face validity, construct validity, content validity, and criterion-referenced validities applicable to most research studies. The types of validity listed above are proven by the claims of their types by some tests.

4.6.1.1.7 : Face Validity Test. The face validity test is not an objective way of proving the validity of these types of claims. It is rather subjective when one can tell that a measure is a questionnaire just because it has the appearance of one (Streiner et al., 2024; Flake & Fried, 2020). According to Oluwatayo (2012), the test for face validity is the personal assessment by

the researcher about the presentation, relevance, and clarity of the instrument. Although subjectively tested, face validity could also be objectively evaluated. The items in the instrument are dichotomously examined as "yes" or "no" regarding whether they reflect what they claim. The scores on the dichotomous key would yield data to be analysed using Cohen's Kappa Index (Kamper, 2019; Chan & Idris, 2017; Taherdoost, 2016). The interpretation of Cohen's Kappa coefficients could be compared to rating scales such as the Ganesha-Aithal scale.

In the study on headteachers' commitment to instructional supervisory roles, the questionnaire passed the face validity test through adaptation of the Mowday-Steers-Porter questionnaire for organisational commitment (Prang, 2020; Mowday et al., 1979). The headteachers' commitment to instructional supervisory roles questionnaire reflected characteristics of the Mowday-Steers-Porter questionnaire, an instrument that has been widely used to measure organisational commitment. Therefore, there was no attempt to re-analyse the instrument items for Cohen's Kappa Index and establish the correlational strength of the instrument.

Similarly, the content analysis grid was adapted from an inspection instrument used by secondary school inspectors in Malawi, which is characterised by 0.75 to 0.89 internal consistency, an average test-retest (r) value of 0.68, and a discriminant validity range of 0.45 to 0.61 (Ministry of Education Science & Technology, 2015). The validity and reliability properties of the source instrument provided credibility assurance for the use of the content analysis grid.

4.6.1.1.8 : Construct Validity Test. Although it seems there are as many definitions of construct validity as there are researchers, one thing stands out, and that is "the extent to which the measurement score reflects the latent construct to be measured" (Sujati & Gunarhadi, 2020, p. 233). In highlighting the same key construct concepts, Tavakol & Wetzel (2020) perceive

construct validity as a way of ensuring that a collection of variables reflect the theoretical latent construct that an instrument claims to measure. In this case, construct validity is the extent to which a claimed measure in an instrument matches a theoretical construct (Ganesha & Aithal, 2022; Sujati & Gunarhadi, 2020).

Further, construct validity manifests in two forms: discriminant and convergent validity. According to Taherdoost (2016, p. 31), "discriminant validity means that a latent variable is able to account for more variance in the observed variables associated with it." Taherdoost (2016) further clarifies that accounting for more variance ought not to result from random errors and a lack of constructural focus within the conceptual framework. Convergent validity, on the other hand, checks the relatedness of related constructs in a research instrument. To ensure that an instrument is construct-valid, researchers' pilot newly developed instruments, and the feedback is correlated with data collected using existing instruments that test the same constructs. In addition to piloting newly constructed instruments, expert observations are solicited and associated with correlation coefficients (McGrath, 2023; Sujati & Gunarhadi, 2020). The correlation coefficients are interpreted using rating scales such as the Ganesha-Aithal rating scale.

Since the questionnaire and content analysis grid used in this study were adaptations of instruments of verified construct validity, such as the Mowday-Steers-Porter organisational commitment questionnaire and an inspection instrument used by the ministry of education inspectors, those construct validity attributes were imported into this study as well.

4.6.1.1.9 : Content Validity Test. Just as there are many definitions of construct validity, the same is true of content validity. Since instrument validity is the extent of measurement accuracy of the intended construct (Rahardia et al., 2023; Osadebei & Kpolovie, 2019; Taherdoost, 2016), it then follows that content validity is the extent to which an instrument contains the concepts it is meant to measure. Sürücü & Maslakçi (2020, p. 2697)

quote Bollen (1989) as having defined content validity as “a qualitative form of validity that evaluates whether the expressions contained in the measuring instrument represent the phenomenon intended to be measured.” In the literature, content validity is a reflection of the extent to which instrument items constitute the definitional adequacy of a specific construct to be measured (Wang & Wang, 2022; Aithal & Aithal, 2020). The validity type is ascertained using many strategies. The definitional adequacy of a construct is perceived in two dimensions: qualitative and quantitative. In this discussion, expert opinion consensus indicated that instrument validation was qualitative, while factor analysis validation was quantitative.

The definitional adequacy of the content of an instrument was judged by experts in the field of the instrument. Experts were presented with the research instrument to be rated. Each expert evaluated the instrument and attached a score in the form of an opinion, thus “approximate," "approximate but should be corrected," or "subtracted" to every item of the instrument (Andrade et al., 2020; Sürücü & Maslakci, 2020). In order to come up with the content validity ratio (CVR), experts’ opinions are factored into the following formula:

$$CVR = \frac{N_e}{\frac{N}{2}} - 1 \quad \text{or} \quad CVR = \frac{N_e - \frac{N}{2}}{\frac{N}{2}}$$

Where:

CVR = Content Validity Ratio

N= Total number of experts evaluating items in the measuring instrument.

Ne = Number of experts evaluating the relevant item as appropriate.

In that regard, the content validity index is, according to Masuwai et al (2024), Vasconceloset al. (2023), and Adenmosun et al. (2021), is a summary of consensus of expert opinions expressed as Content Validity Ratio (Roebianto et al., 2023; Obilor & Miwari, 2022; Sürücü & Maslakçi, 2020).

More than half of the experts rated the instrument items as “appropriate,” with Content Validity Ratio ≥ 50, and consequently the instruments were rated valid. A Content Validity Ratio of less than 50 but greater than zero (<50,> 0,) while if the Content Validity Ration of equal to or less than zero (≤ 0,) could have meant subtracting the item all together.

Further, experts examined every item of the headteachers’ commitment to instructional supervision questionnaire and the content analysis grid to evaluate the measure by which the items mirrored the content expected to be examined on a 4-rating scale, thus "1 = not relevant, 2 = somewhat relevant, 3 = quite relevant, 4 = highly relevant" (Shrotryia & Dhanda, 2019, p. 4). Consequently, all the experts’ content validity indices were correlated using the Cohen-Kappa statistic coefficient formula. The correlation coefficient results were then interpreted using rating scales for correlation coefficients.

The second dimension of content validity evaluation in an instrument was factor analysis, which took a more statistically dominant form. The two main factor analysis strategies were exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) (Prang, 2020). According to Jani et al. (2023), exploratory factor analysis assisted in identifying the items in the instruments that solely constructed the claim that the instruments made about what was intended to be measured, thus the desired content. The use of the exploratory factor analysis strategy to determine the content validity of a research instrument was preceded by recursive experts’ judgements about the suitability of the sample adequacy and suitability data of the instruments following Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) on the one hand and Chi-square significance obtained by the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity (Taherdoost et al., 2022), on the other hand.

The second factor analysis strategy for quantitatively evaluating the content validity of a research instrument was confirmatory factor analysis. Following the confirmation of items that reflected the desired content of an instrument using the EFA strategy, experts populated

the evaluated instruments with as many valid items as possible to ensure reflection of the latent construct in the instrument. According to Tavakol & Wetzel (2020), the confirmatory factor analysis strategy assisted in statistically assessing the 'within-instrument' fitness of the instruments for comparison with another model that represented the same construct (Alavi et al., 2020; Tavakol & Wetzel, 2020) to determine the suitability of the developed instrument.

While instrument content validity evaluation using content validity ratio (CVR) and content validity index (CVI) had noticeable qualitative input through the reliance on expert opinions as part of the data to be factored into the content validity ratio formula, the factor analysis strategies were not totally independent of expert opinions (Boateng et al., 2018; Yeşilyurt & Çapraz, 2018) involvement node as expert opinions form the bulk of the process, factor analysis instrument content validation strategies did not present quantitative nature purity in approaches either (Beavers et al., 2019; Watkins, 2018). The two most commonly used factor analysis approaches, note Sürücü & Maslakçi (2020) and Prang (2020), were exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA).

4.6.1.1.1.10: Criterion-referenced Validity Test. The other test of validity was the criterion-referenced validity test. By definition, validity is a measure of an instrument that is related to a specific outcome (Mirmakhmudova, 2021; Mamba et al., 2020; Taherdoost, 2016); "the extent to which a test measures what it purports to measure" (Dunn, 2020). Such specific outcomes could be predictive and concurrent. It was from these specific outcomes that criterion-referenced validity hatched its sub-types. The focus of the criterion-referenced validity is neither on the content nor on the construct's aptness but rather on its relatedness to outcomes.

4.6.1.1.11 : Concurrent Validity Test. According to Taherdoost (2016, p. 33), a concurrent validity test "refers to the extent to which the results of a particular test, or measurement, corresponded to those of a previously established measurement for the same

construct." The concurrent validity test, in the sense conveyed in the definition of concurrent validity, was like a risk-factor forecaster for the use of predictive validity (Ganesha & Aithal, 2022). A research instrument should first be studied to establish its predictability for effective and efficient utilization. The effective use of the concurrent validity test depends on good data collection on instruments that had already been used for future reference, and that is sometimes a challenge.

In this study, data reliability and validity, being quantitative research paradigm concepts, underpinned the research process. Two instruments were used to collect quantitative data: a head teacher's commitment to instructional and supervisory roles questionnaire, an adaptation of the organisation questionnaire by Mowday et al. (1979), and a content analysis grid. The headteachers' commitment to instructional supervisory roles questionnaire was a bi-polar Likert-scaled. The bipolarity of the questionnaire was reflected in its seven-point response scale, which had "strongly disagree" and "strongly agree" extremes with "neither disagree nor agree" at the mid-point (DeCastellarnau, 2018). In addition, the content analysis grid was unipolar in score scaling, where the observation frequencies with which headteachers checked key instructional supervision documents ranged from zero to ten.

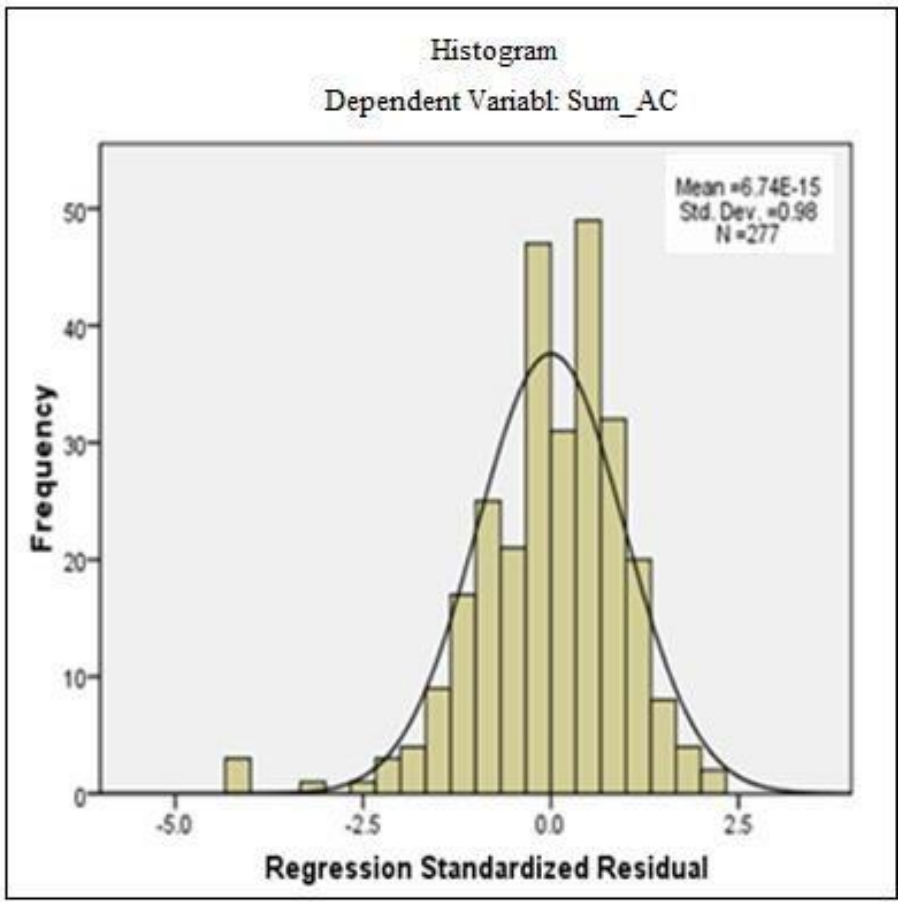
4.6.1.1.12 : Normality Distribution of Data Test. The normality of quantitative data distribution is important for determining the applicable representative of a dataset, whether mean, median, or mode. The normality of the data distribution, as observed by Thevenin (2024) and Mishra et al. (2019), informs the appropriate parametric and non-parametric tests to be run. The study questionnaire responses were subjected to a regression test, as part of the evolution process noted in Kelly, (2021), in their affective commitment (AC), continuance commitment (CC), and normative commitment (NC) categories. The results showed that the accumulative response frequencies, thus the responses to the questionnaire regardless the service periods, were almost normally distributed, as shown in Figures 4-5, 4-6, and 4-7.

Responses to questionnaire items that tested participants' affective commitment were slightly skewed to the left, as presented in the frequency distribution histogram in Figure 4-5. The frequency distribution was asymmetrical, with a skew to the left and therefore non-parametric. On the other hand, the frequency distribution of the data from the questionnaire that tested for normative commitment was, as described in Westfall (2014), mesokurtic, thus almost normally distributed, as shown in Figure 4-5.

The frequency distribution of participants' responses to the questionnaire items that tested for continuance commitment presented a histogram that was almost normally distributed by the best-fit curve that was mesokurtic, as shown in Figure 4-6. Further, a Cronbach's alpha test was done on the 15-item head teachers' commitment to instructional supervisory roles questionnaire response frequencies both in the affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment dimensionalities and as a whole to determine the reliability of the tool. The results from the dimensional tests showed the Cronbach's alpha coefficients were varied (p = 0.7,.5, and 0.5, respectively), while the coefficient

Figure 4-5

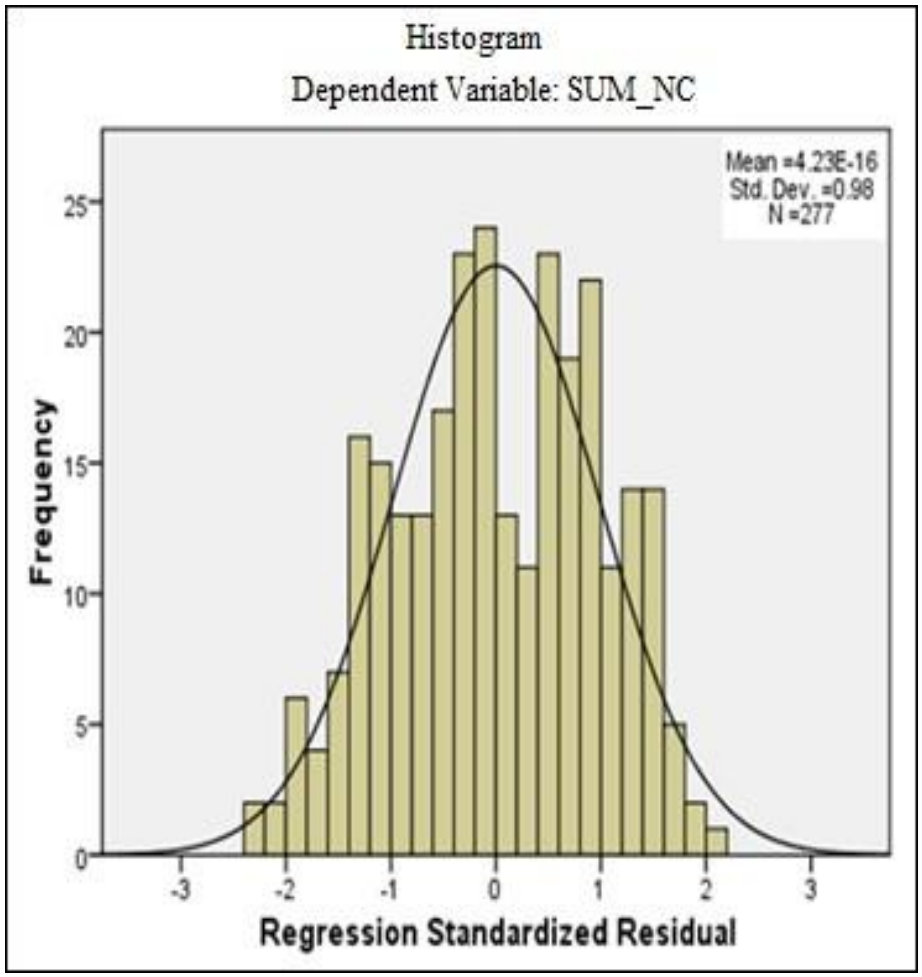
Questionnaire Response Frequency Distribution for Affective Commitment



for the whole (15 items) was different (p = 0.6). Details of the questionnaire response frequency distribution for continuance commitment are shown in Figure 4-6. However, after standardising for 14 questionnaire variables, the test result coefficient was strong (*p = 0.849*). Consequently, the content analysis grid was subjected to Cronbach's alpha test, and the result was > 0.7 (*p* =.889),

Figure 4-6

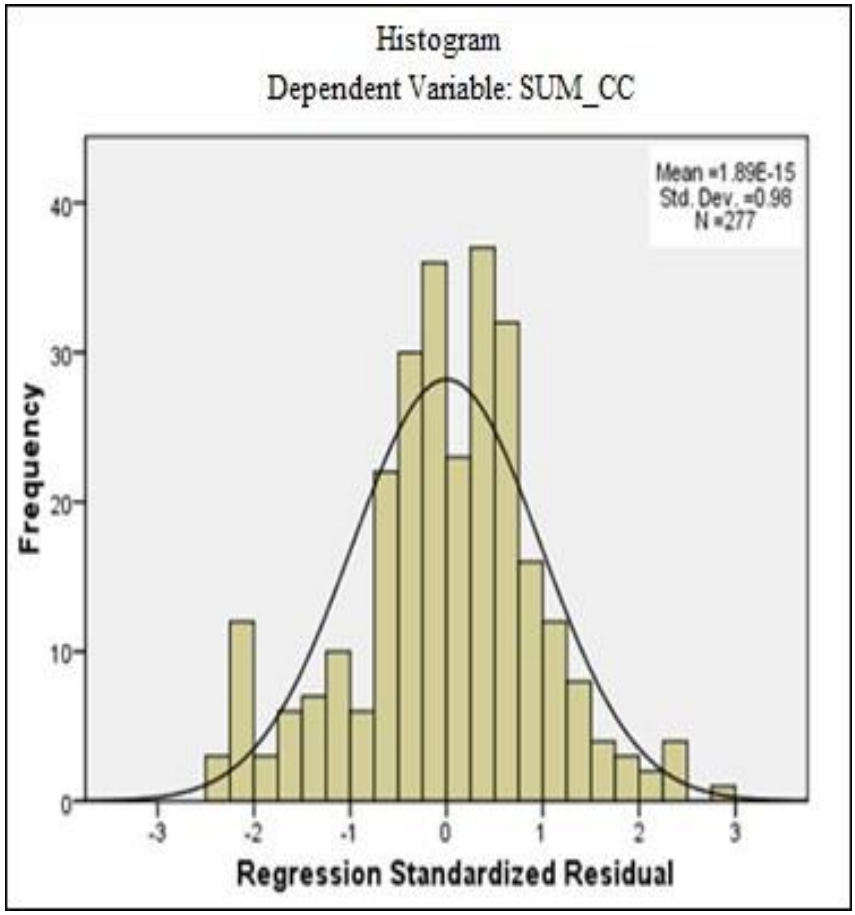
Questionnaire Response Frequency Distribution for Normative Commitment



and when Cronbach's alpha calculation was based on standardised 11 items, the coefficient was even higher ($p = 0.893$), as detailed in Figure 4-7.

Figure 4-7

Questionnaire Response Frequency Distribution for Continuance Commitment



4.7.0: Quantitative Data Results

The quantitative data collected for the study were subjected to descriptive and inferential statistical analyses to answer research questions, describe variables, and test the study hypotheses. The null hypotheses were: headteachers' commitment to supervisory roles does not reflect the affective-continuance-normative commitment typology; headteachers' attitudes towards instruction supervisory roles are constant throughout their headship service period; and headteachers' commitment to instruction supervisory roles does not vary within their headteachership service period.

Together with the results from qualitative data analysis, the study intends to answer three questions: To what extent does the headteachers' commitment relate to headteachership

service period in Central East and Central West Education Divisions. How do headteachers' attitudes towards instruction supervisory roles vary along the headteachership service period continuum? How does the headteachers' commitment to instructional supervisory roles change within their headteachership service period? The process of answering the research questions involved the organisation of data for alignment with the study questions and hypotheses.

The hypotheses guiding the study were: Headteachers' commitment to instructional supervisory roles relate with their headteachership service period; Headteachers' attitudes towards instruction supervisory roles varied along their headship service period; and Headteachers' commitment to instruction supervisory roles varies along their headship service period. To the contrary, the respective null hypotheses were: headteachers' commitment to instruction supervisory roles does not reflect the affective-normative-continuance commitment typology; headteachers' attitudes do not vary with service period; and headteachers' commitment to instruction supervisory roles did not vary along headteachers' service period.

Quantitative data analysis included the generation of graphical presentations of variable characteristics and the calculation of chi-square tests and t-test characterizations. While graphical representation showed data parametricity, the Chi-square test and t-test showed *p-values* and correlation coefficients (Hutcheson & Brown, 2024; Aslam & Smarandache, 2023; Lugo-Armenta et al., 2021; Niftiyev & Namazova, 2020). In this study, the *p-value* was viewed from a continuum perspective for interpretation of results to align with Andrade (2019, p. 212) that "just as the *p-value* lies along a continuum of 0 to 1, our interpretations should also lie along a continuum of differing levels of confidence (or diffidence) in the null hypothesis."

In addition, the *t-test* coefficient significance assumed a parallel universal view to provide for backward-looking interpretations with an expectation for future utility (Francis & Jakicic, 2023; Thukral et al., 2023; Liu & Wang, 2021). As discourse on interpretation of the

t-test coefficient significance pointed out (Francis & Jakicic, 2023; Akpan & Clark, 2023; Müller, 2023), the parallel universal view was shrouded with confounding factor challenges, while the proven future view was prone to time displacement that could introduce influences of learning, history, and development. The variables the statistical data analysis described were participants' demographics and location; service period commitment parity; gender commitment relationship; headteachers' implemented commitment by checking schemes, lesson plans, and lesson observation reports; and headteachers' checking frequency mean (*M*) differences among schemes of work, lesson plans, lesson observation reports, period registers, and mark books.

4.7.1: Characteristics of Public Secondary Schools Participants were Drawn from

The 277 participants were drawn from 277 public secondary schools, thus conventional and community day secondary schools (Government of Malawi, 2022). The period of existence of the public secondary schools (in years) in which the headteachers participated was one of the inclusion characteristics. A headteacher qualified for inclusion in the study as a participant if the school had been in existence for at least one academic year cycle. In this study, the public secondary schools whose headteachers participated had a period of existence (in years) mean of 24.96, a median of 25.00, a standard deviation of 8.65, a range of 69, a minimum of 3, and a maximum of 72.

4.7.2.0: Responses to the Headteachers' Commitment Questionnaire

The accumulative responses to the headteachers' commitment questionnaire showed a 2-tailed significance of p=.000 and varied mean differences. The responses presented as detailed in Table 4-4 are aggregated since the service periods differentiation was not factored in. The responses were related to the study hypotheses in an attempt to find the resolve to the research problem.

4.7.2.1.0 : Research Hypothesis 1 (H_0). The first null hypothesis the study aimed to test was that headteachers' commitment to instructional supervisory roles does not relate with headteachership service periods. The data related to the first research hypothesis were collected using the headteachers' commitment to supervisory roles questionnaire. Details of the results presented in Table 4-2.

Table 4-4

Participants' Responses to the Headteachers' Commitment Questionnaire

					95% Confidence interval	
Variable	**t**	**df**	**Sig. (2-tailed)**	**Mean df**	Lower	Upper
I am willing to put in a …	73.6	276	.000	6.5	6.3	6.7
I talk up this secondary ……	60.3	276	.000	5.996	5.80	6.19
I feel very little loyalty to ….	18.8	276	.000	2.552	2.28	2.82
I would accept almost any ….	48.9	276	.000	5.585	5.36	5.81
I find that my values and the.	48.6	276	.000	5.339	5.12	5.56
I am proud to tell others that.	61.0	267	.000	6.067	5.87	6.26
I could as well be working …	38.9	275	.000	5.170	4.91	5.43
This secondary school really.	42.1	274	.000	5.047	4.81	5.28
It would take very little …….	27.2	276	.000	3.942	3.66	4.23
I am extremely glad that …….	35.2	276	.000	4.913	4.64	5.19
There is not too much ……	21.2	271	.000	2.904	2.63	3.17
I often find it difficult to …….	20.9	272	.000	2.850	2.58	3.12
I really care about the fate …..	46.5	276	.000	5.751	5.51	5.99
For me this secondary school	38.4	274	.000	5.055	4.80	5.31
Accepting to take the post as	19.4	276	.000	2.372	2.13	2.61

The data were subjected to statistical analyses: Cronbach's alpha to determine reliability, a t-test to determine validity, and a Pearson correlation coefficient to associate dependent variable: commitment with the independent variable service periods. Several tests were carried out on the data to ascertain the p-value magnitude.

The Cronbach's alpha test for 14 of the 15 questionnaire items showed a strong result ($p = 0.849$), while a multinomial probit (MNP) model determined the relationship between service period and affective commitment (AC), continuance commitment (CC), and normative

commitment (NC). The specification of the multinomial probit model was as shown in Table 4-3.

Table 4-5

Multinomial Probit Model Results

Variables	AC	CC	NC
1-5	0.115	-0.001	-0.370
	(0.775)	(0.996)	(0.190)
6-10	-0.49	-0.624	-0.155
	(0.876)	(0.012)***	(0.545)
11-15	0.44	-0.449	-0.412
	(0.161)	(0.058)*	(0.085)*
16-20	0.229	-0.464	-0.385
	(0.445)	(0.045)**	(0.101)
21-25	-0.198	-0.367	-0.053
	(0.502)	(0.119)	(0.825)
26-30	0.448	-0.149	-0.139
	(0.194)	(0.559)	(0.588)
NumberofObs	277		
Wald Chi^2	30.1		
Prob>Chi2	0.037**		
Log Likelihood	989.694		

P-values in parentheses: *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, *p<0.1; 31 + service period category was a reference group.

Still further, the results showed a positive relationship between overall public secondary school headteachership and normative commitment. The relationship positivity was 10 percent (p =.087), as shown in Table 4-4.

Table 4-6

Logistic Regression Results on Commitment

Variables (Commitment Components)	Number of years in Public Secondary School Headteachership
Affective	0.028
	(0.642)
Continuance	0.111
	(0.065)*
Normative	0.103
	(0.087)*

P-values in parentheses: *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, *p<0.1

4.7.2.1.1 : Paired t-tests between Age and Affective, Continuance, and Normative Commitment Dimensions. A paired t-test was done to compare age and affective, continuance, and normative commitment dimensions, and the results showed that there were significant relationships between age and the three components of commitment to instruction supervisory roles as presented in Table 4-5.

Table 4-7

Commitment Components t-test Results

Paired Samples Test

		Paired Differences							
		Mean	SD	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	Sig (2-tailed)
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Age - SUM_AC	46.808	5.719	3436	6.132	7.485	36.22	276	.000
Pair 2	Age - SUM_CC	48.214	5.827	3501	7.524	8.903	37.71	276	.000
Pair 3	Age - SUM_NC	46.986	5.836	3507	6.296	7.6769	33.99	276	.000

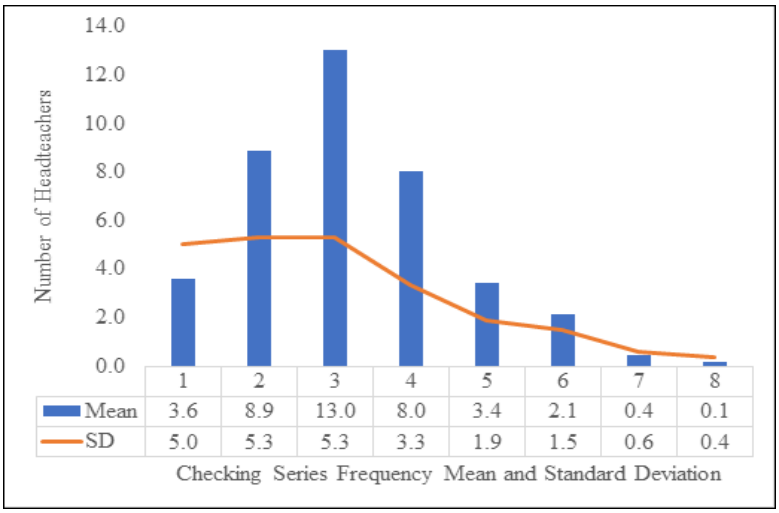
4.7.3.1.0 : Research Hypothesis 2 (H_0). The second null hypothesis to be tested by the data was: Headteachers' attitudes towards instruction supervisory roles were constant throughout their headteachership service periods. In this study, headteachers' implemented instructional supervision commitment (HISC) was reflected by the extent of performance in defined school instruction-related tasks. In the case of public secondary school headteachers in Central East Education Division and Central West Education Division, headteachers' implemented instructional supervision commitment was the extent to which headteachers actually checked the selected key instructional documents, such as schemes and records of work, lesson plans, lesson observation reports, mark books, and period registers, in a school

calendar term that had 10 weeks. The data regarding the frequency of key instructional documents being checked were collected using a content analysis grid.

4.7.3.1.1 : Implemented Commitment by Checking Schemes and Records of Work. Overall results by frequency series, means, and standard deviations presented a data distribution shape that was positively skewed, as shown in Figure 4-8.

Figure 4-8

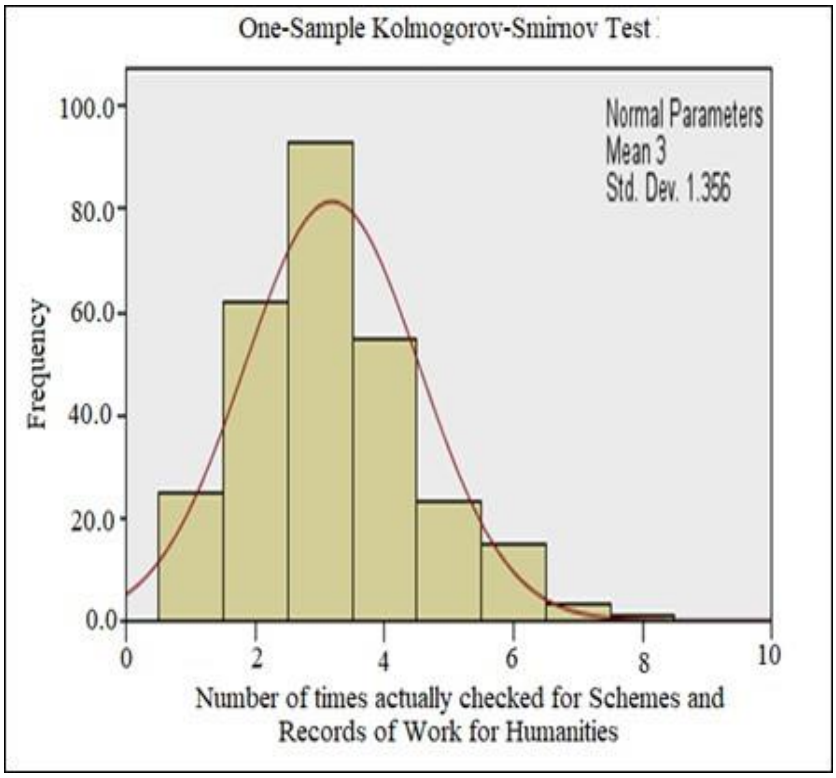
Overall Checking of Schemes and Records of Work



4.7.3.1.2 : Checking of Schemes and Records of Work in Humanities Department. A one-sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was done on the aggregated data that reflected the frequency with which head teachers checked schemes and records of work in the humanities department shown in Figure 4-9.

Figure 4-9

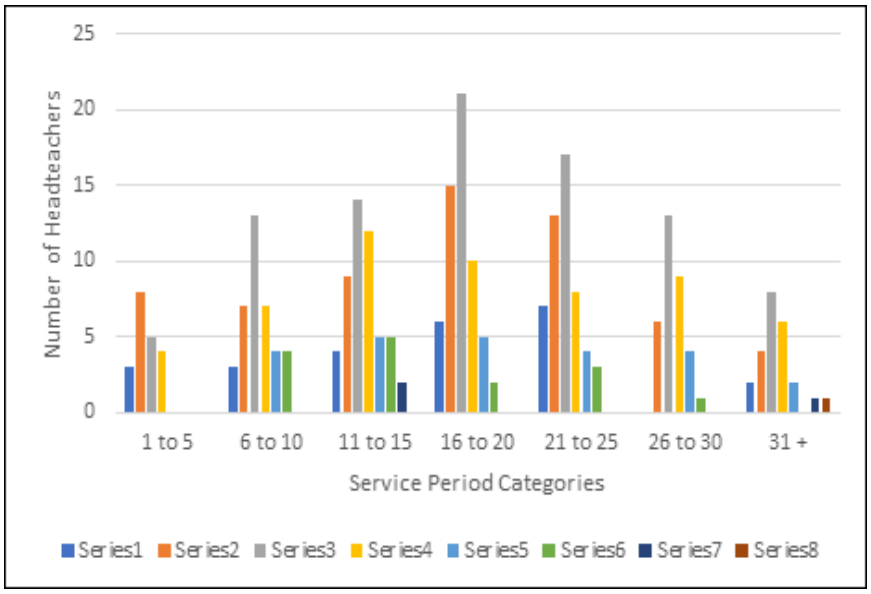
Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test Schemes Checking in Humanities Department



While descriptive analysis showed an overall slightly asymmetrical, the details about the frequency at which scheme and records of work were checked presented in Figure 4-10 showed the departmental picture frequency distribution.

Figure 4-10

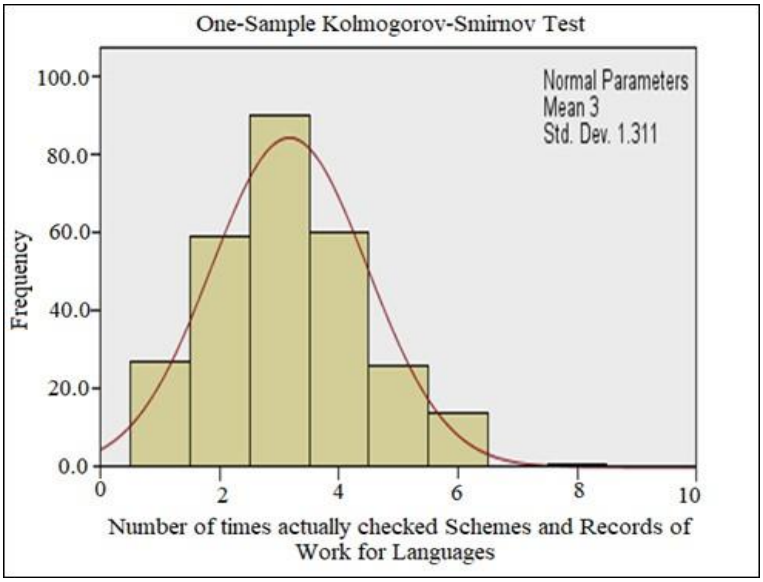
Frequency of Checking Schemes in Humanities Department



4.7.3.1.3 : Checking of Schemes and Records of Work in Languages Department. Further, when the aggregated data on frequency of checking schemes and records of work in the languages department were subjected to One – sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test, the resultant data distribution were skewed to the right with descriptive data characteristics (M = 3, *Std. Dev.* 1.311) and the significance of the test result was too low (p = .000) as shown in Figure 4-11.

Figure 4-11

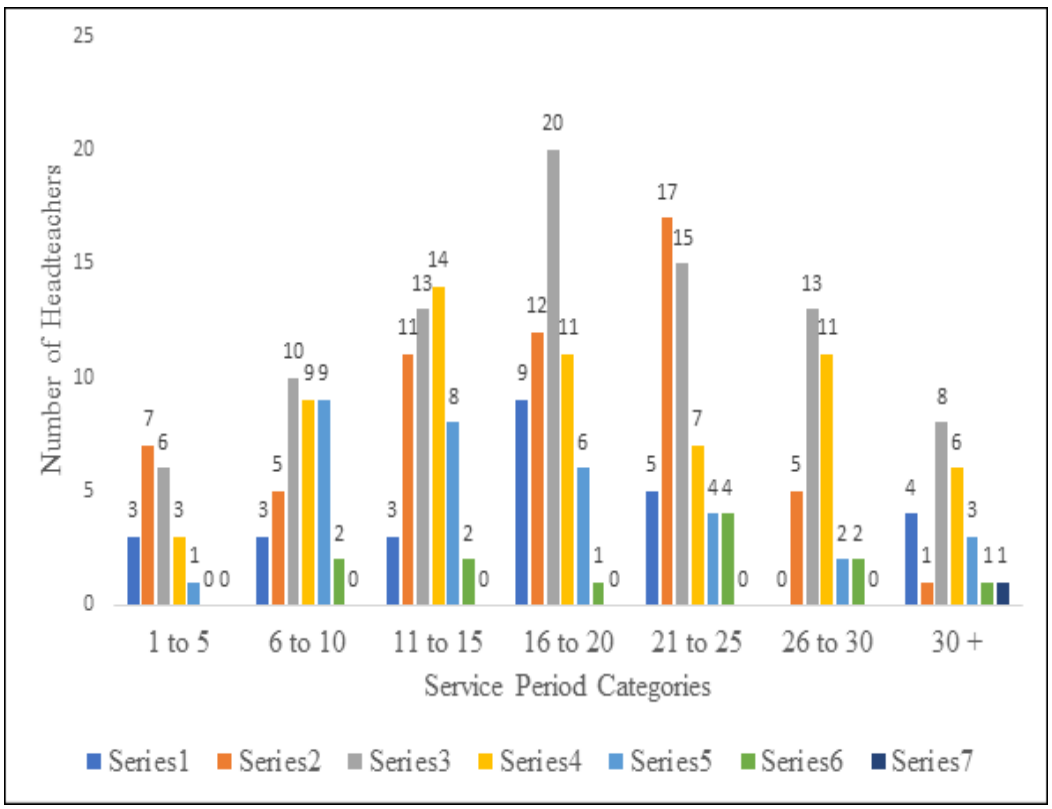
Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test on Schemes Checking in Languages Department



The occurrence of the mode in the different service period categories was inconsistent. The mode in service period 6 to 10 was in series 4; in service period 11 to 15, the mode was in series 2; in service period 16 to 20, the mode was in series 2 and 3; and in service period 26 to 30, the mode was in series 3 and 4, as shown in Figure 4-12. The lowest number of weeks when schemes and records of work were checked was four days in service period 1 to 5, while the highest number of weeks was seven in service periods 6 to 10 and 31 and above

Figure 4-12

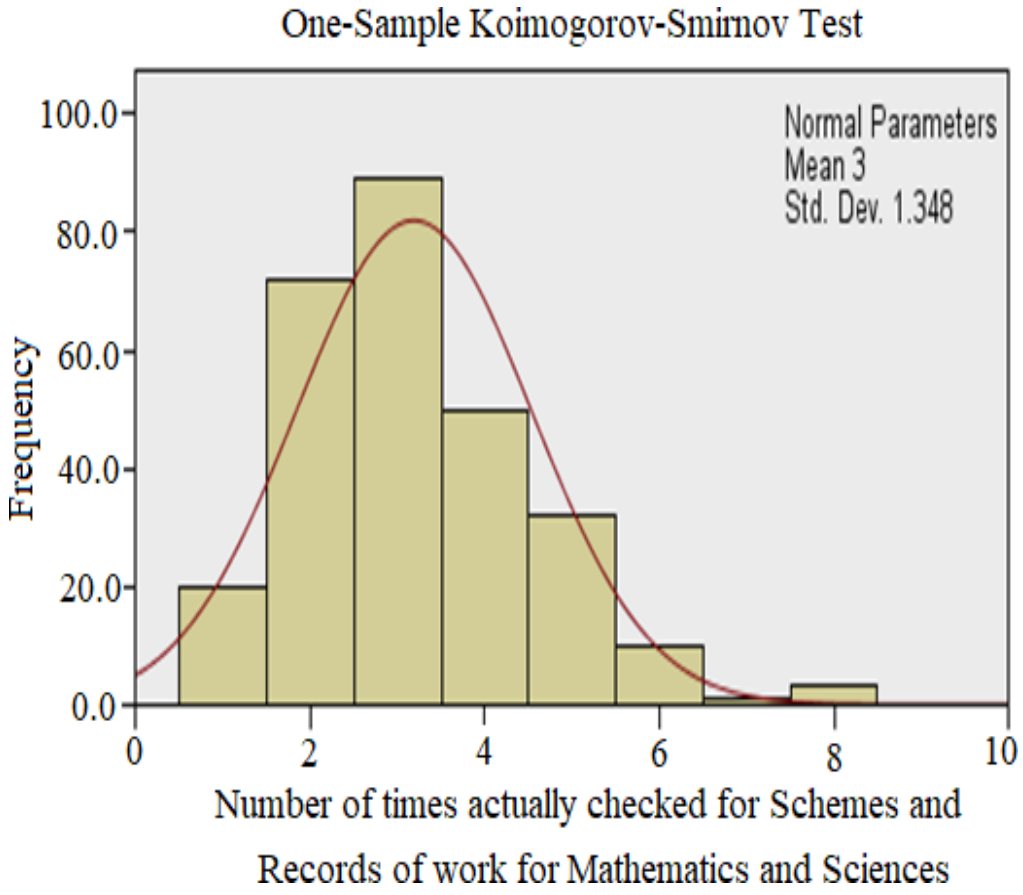
Frequency of Checking Schemes in Languages Department



4.7.3.1.4 : Checking of Schemes and Records of Work in Mathematics and *Sciences Department.* A one-sample Kolmagorov-Smirnov test was done on the aggregated dataset on the frequency with which headteachers checked schemes and records of work and details are presented in Figure 4-13.

Figure 4-13

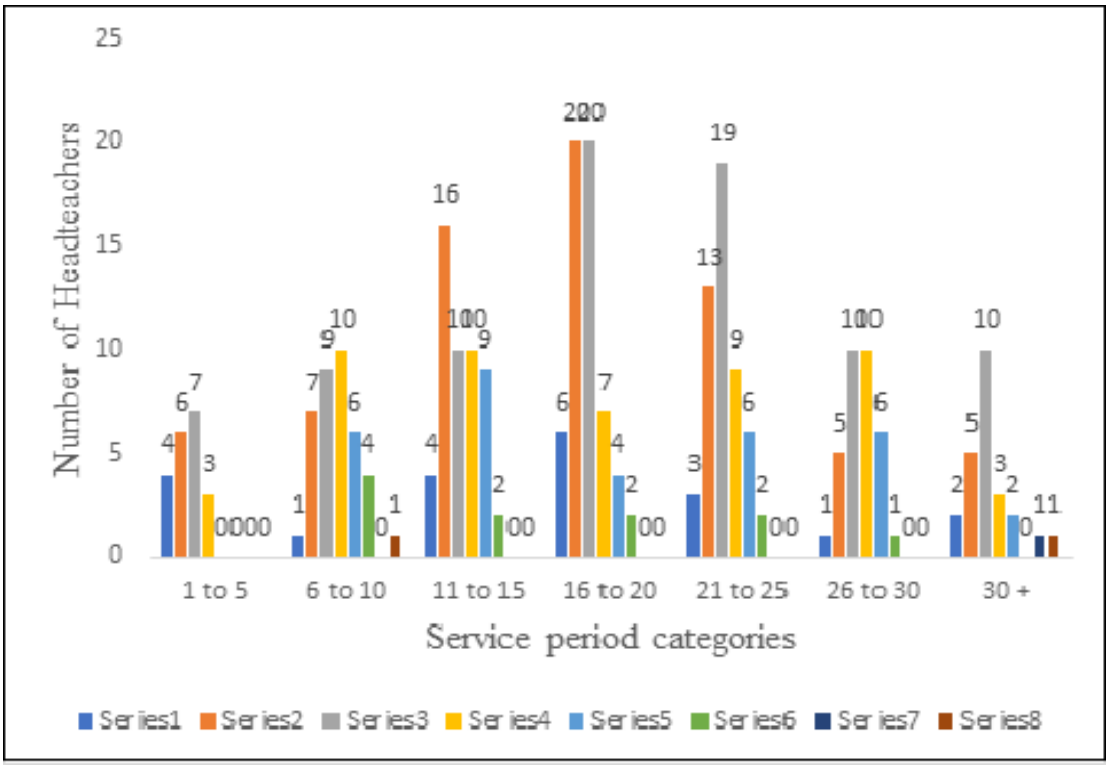
Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test on Schemes in Mathematics and Sciences Department



The frequency with which key instructional supervision documents were checked by public secondary school headteachers varied across departments. However, the general trend in relation to the headteachership service periods was similar regardless of departmental differences.

Figure 4-14

Frequency of Checking Schemes in Mathematics and Sciences Department



The graphical presentation and crosstabulation of descriptive data indicated that there were indeed differences in the frequencies with which headteachers checked schemes and records of work across the service periods.

4.7.3.1.5 : Checking Lesson Plans. Data on how often headteachers checked lesson plans showed frequency distributions that were skewed to the right, though differently as presented in Table 4-6.

Table 4-8

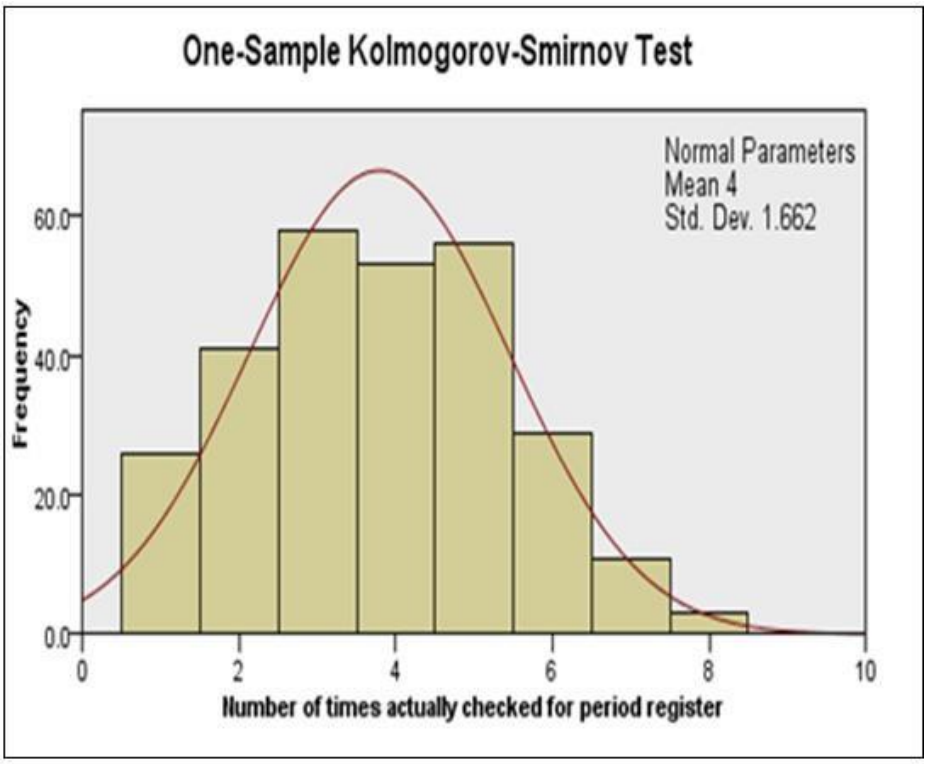
Lesson Plans Checking Frequency Significance

Department	Mean	SD	P - value
Humanities	3	1.378	.000
Languages	3	1.264	.000
Mathematics & Sciences	3	1.425	.000

4.7.3.1.6 : Checking of Lesson Observations Reports, Period Registers and Markbooks. Similarly, data on lesson observation checking frequency was subjected to a one-sample Kolmagorov-Smirnov test for descriptive and inferential analysis. The results about checking frequency distribution patterns on period registers and markbooks were as presented in Figures 4-15 and 4-16.

Figure 4-15

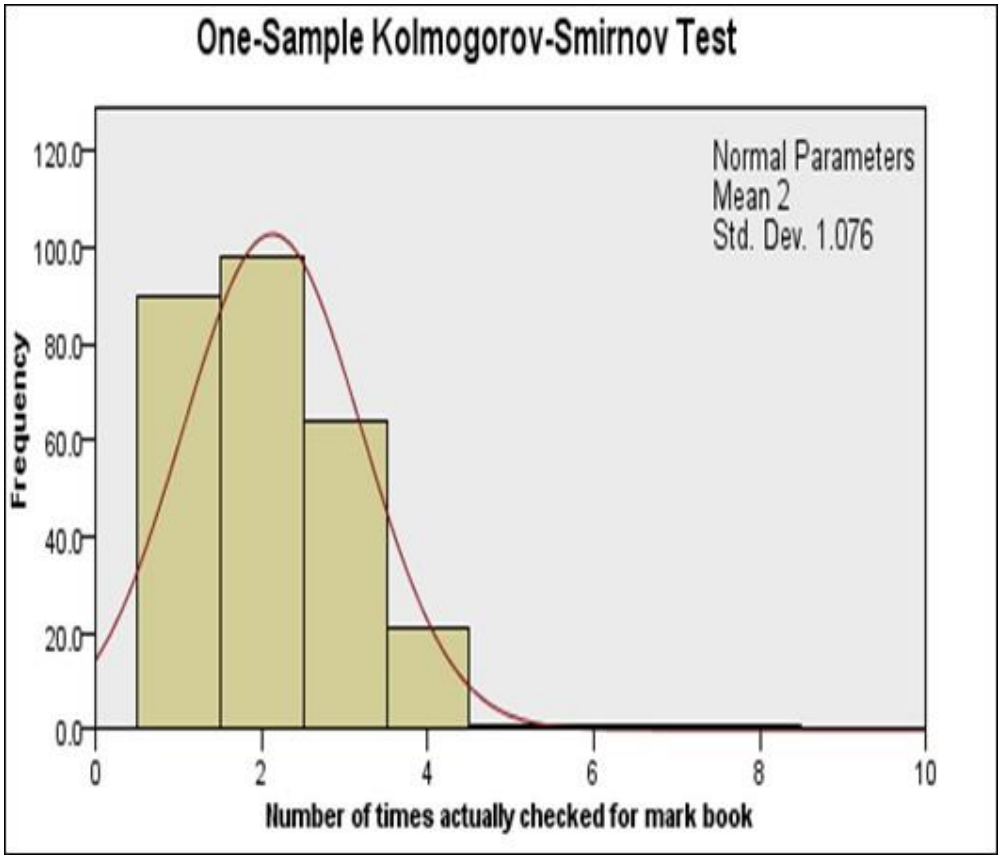
Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test on checking Period Registers



In addition, the distribution of markbook checking frequency presented a long, thin-tailed skew to the right, as shown in Figure 4-16. The skewed distribution had associated statistical attributes (M = 2, SD = 1.076, p =.000). While aggregated data on the frequency with which headteachers checked key instructional supervision documents presented right-skewed distributions, the detailed checking frequency by service category showed variations.

Figure 4-16

Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test on Checking Markbooks



4.7.3.1.7 : Correlation between Confessed and Implemented Commitment. A Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient (*r*) was calculated to establish the relationship between datasets. The datasets were those obtained from participants' responses to the instruction supervisory roles commitment questionnaire and the content analysis grid to determine the relationship between affective commitment (AC), normative commitment (NC), and continuance commitment (CC) on the one hand and the frequency with which head teachers checked the elements of instructional supervision. Consequently, datasets from the questionnaire and the content analysis grid were correlated.

4.7.4.1.0 : Research Hypothesis 3 (H_0). The third hypothesis the investigation was aimed at confirming is that headteachers' commitment to instructional supervisory roles does not vary throughout headteachers' service period**.** The assumption in the null hypothesis was that headteachers' psychological attachment to instructional progress in their schools was constant throughout all service periods. The results presented in Table 4-7 augment the third hypothesis testing in answering the third research question.

Table 4-7

Key Instructional Supervision Documents Checking Frequency

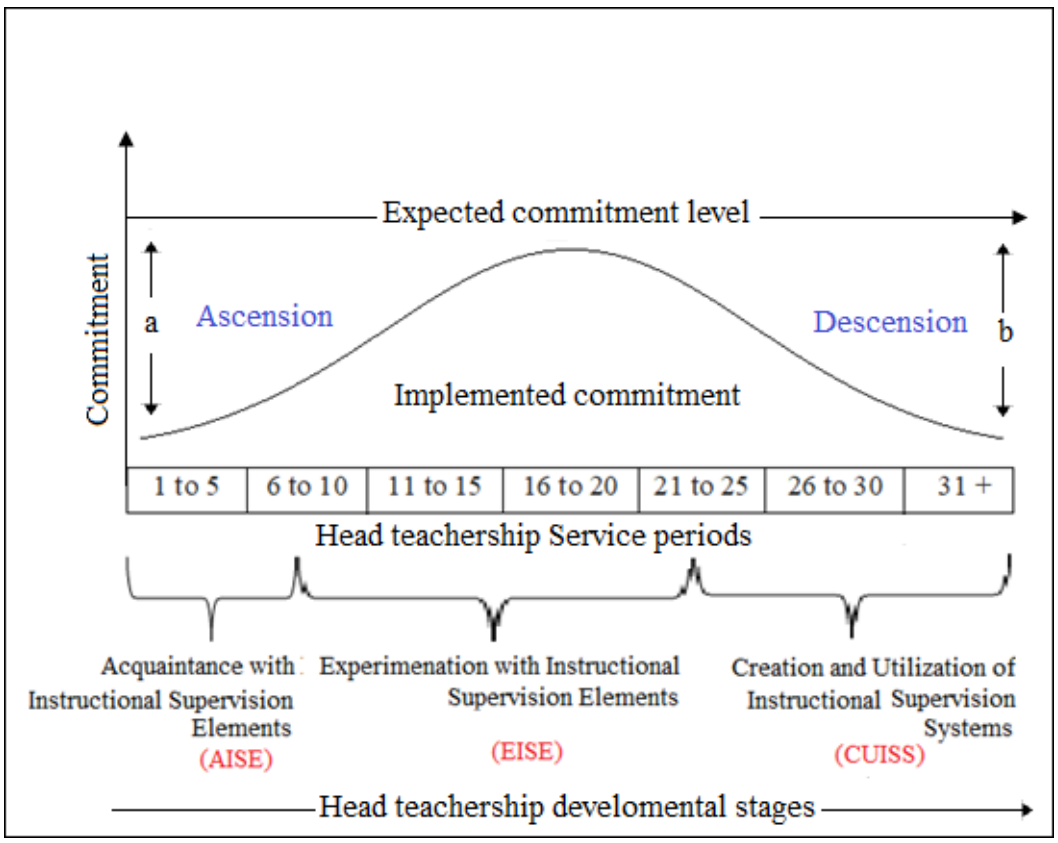
One-Sample Test

	Test Value = 0					
	t	df	Sig.(2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Schemes	2.828	276	.000	9.534	.0960	.9725
Lesson Plan	7.096	276	.000	7.968	5447	8.3903
Sum Lesson Observation	8.578	276	.000	7.134	7696	4976
Period register	7.922	276	.000	3.787	.59	.98
Mark book	2.820	276	.000	2.123	.00	25

4.7.4.1.1 : Service Periods of Noticeable Commitment Changes. Quantitative and qualitative data analysis results indicated periods of implemented commitment changes in the headteachership tenure as presented in Figure 4-17. The service periods of noticeable commitment changes were the headteachership categories when major shifts in commitment were registered.

Figure 4-17

Periods of Instructional Supervision Changes



The results presented tested the three sets of hypotheses of the study and answered the research questions that guided the study of headteachers' commitment to instructional supervision. The data on confessed and practiced commitment were respectively collected using the headteachers' commitment to instructional supervision questionnaire and the content analysis grid while the data on headteachers' opinions about headteachership and instructional supervision documents were collected using a semi-structured interview schedule. The use of instruments that were underpinned by polarised philosophical underpinnings and yet complementary reflected a mixed-method approach with a concurrent design.

5.0 CHAPTER FIVE: EVALUATION OF FINDINGS

5.1: Introduction

As is the case with mixed methods, the evaluation of the findings made reference to qualitative and quantitative data. The qualitative strand of the study explored probable underlying issues related to statistical data attributes. The quantitative strand exposed statistically comprehensible characteristics of the variables for interpretations of public secondary school headteachers' commitment in the Central East and the Central West Education Divisions. Three related research questions guided this study in triangulation with the three hypotheses. The questions were: To what extent does the headteachers' commitment Instructional supervision relate to School Leadership Service Period in Central East and Central West Education Divisions? How do headteachers' attitudes towards instructional supervision vary along the headteachership service period continuum? How does the headteachers' commitment to instructional supervision change within their headteachership service periods?

Further, the null hypotheses that underpinned the research question were: Headteachers' commitment to supervisory roles does not relate to reflect the affective-normative-continuance commitment typology; Headteachers' attitudes about instruction supervisory roles are constant throughout headteachership service periods; and Headteachers' commitment to instruction supervisory roles does not vary throughout their headship service periods. The respective alternative hypotheses were: Headteachers' commitment to supervisory roles reflects the affective-normative-continuance commitment typology; Headteachers' attitudes about instruction supervisory roles vary along their headteachership service period; and Headteachers' commitment to instruction supervisory roles varies within their headteachership service periods.

The evaluation of the findings of this study unfolds based on participant demographics, hypotheses, and research questions triangulation to determine the extent to which the guiding research questions were answered to fulfil the quest in the overall research question.

5.2.0: Public Secondary School Characteristics

The number of years that the Central East Education Division and Central West Education Division public secondary schools existed was an important and exclusive characteristic in the sampling process. Public secondary schools that had been in existence for at least one academic year cycle were an assurance that the data participating headteachers gave about the key instructional supervision documents were from reality. With public secondary school age characteristics (Min = 3, Max = 72, Mean = 24.94 with a standard deviation of 8.653), the collected data reflected practical situations in the study location. Such a public secondary school age variation the schools whose headteachers participated in the study had the capacity to provide the data required in the study.

5.3.1: Participants' Demographics

The secondary school headteachership experience of participants (N = 277) varied from one year to 38 years, and their service period mean (*M*) age range was 13.56 years (43.15 to 56.71), as shown in Table 4-1. Further, the central tendency characteristics of the headteachers' ages presented a distribution that was skewed to the left *(mean* = 52, *median* = 54, *mode* = 55, *SD* = 5.718, *skewness* = -0.707, *kurtosis* = -0.423). The gender distribution of participants was 31.76% females (N = 88) and 68.23% males (N = 189), as shown in Figure 4-1. The distribution of participants by gender in the Central East Education Division was 35.9% (N = 42) females and 64.9 (N = 75) males, while in the Central West Education Division, the participants' gender distribution was 28.8% (N = 46) females and 71.3% (N = 114) males.

A descriptive analysis of the participants' demographics revealed that public secondary schools in Central East Education Division and Central West Education Division were led by

an aged population of headteachers. The headteachership experience of the participants was 37 years (1-38 years). The age data characteristics presented a frequency distribution that was skewed to the left (*mean* = 52, *median* = 54, *mode* = 55, *SD* = 5.718, *skewness* = -0.707, *kurtosis* = -0.423), as further shown in Table 4-1 and Figures 4-1. In addition, data on the demographics of the participants showed that the headteachers' population in Central East Education Division and Central West Education Division was dominated by males (31.76% females (N = 88) and 68.23% males (N = 189) detailed in Figure 4-2. The participants' demographic characteristics were important as they reflected the reality of public secondary schools, thus being co-education institutions.

5.4.0 : Qualitative Data Findings Evaluation

Thematic analysis of qualitative study data enabled the categorisation of codes into themes. The themes that emerged from the codes were: acquaintance with instructional supervision elements (AISE), experimentation with instructional supervision elements (EISE), and creation and utilisation of instructional supervision systems (CUISS). The themes were perceived as denotations of stages in the process of headteachers' development as unconscious public secondary school professional leaders in CEED and CWED, as shown in Figure 4-3.

The stages (AISE, EISE, and CUISS) exhibited overlapping boundaries where codes were shared. AISE, thus, in the 1 to 5 service period category, was characterised by a focus on ensuring that teachers prepared and updated not only instructional documents (schemes and records of work, lesson plans, and period registers) but administrative records as well. The AISE stage was characterised by anxiety about what to do since most of the headteachers in the service period category got surprised, scared, and felt they were not skilled adequately for their appointment, as exhibited in the quotations of Hedede, Zioneka, Psyipani, and Mtuwa Ntchunga (pseudonyms).

Timidity on appointment to the post of headteacher, according to qualitative data analysis results, mostly arose from an inadequacy feeling as the newly appointed headteachers perceived a lack of leadership skills in them. Such feelings reflected the human capital theory (Edeji, 2024; Rafid, 2023; Dom & Ahmad, 2020). The effect of surprise, scare, and inadequacies in institution-specific human capital on appointment had a bearing on headteachers' attitudes towards headteachership, especially in service period 1 to 5. From the participants' responses, most of the headteachers started carrying out their responsibilities without any orientation. There had not been an investment in institutional leadership by newly appointed headteachers themselves and by the education system. The headteachers across the services periods expected government to have invested in them the human capital for headteachership until they realised that they had a role to play. That realisation explained why headteachers in service category 1 to 5 concentrated more on checking the preparation and update of instructional supervision documents than on activities in the experimentation with instructional supervision elements and the creation and utilisation of instructional supervision systems stages.

The finding resonated with the assertion made in Wamba & Mgomezulu (2015) that there was no specialised training for headteachers in the Malawi education system and that instead, the expectation was that training of headteachers would be through an apprenticeship model. The central assumption in the apprenticeship model was that there existed "master headteachers" in the field (Musiimenta et al., 2024; Bastian & Drake, 2023) from whom newly appointed headteachers were to learn. However, given that headteachers were appointed from a pool of teachers that were recruited differently and trained at different secondary school teacher training institutions (Government of Malawi, 2019), assurance that the newly appointed headteachers had the required basic headteachership skills was weak. Public secondary schools

whose headteachers were in the 1 to 5 service period category risked not benefiting from the required school leadership.

Further, nonexistence of the assumed "master headteachers" in the field destroyed the very foundation of the apprenticeship model. The "master headteachers," according to the apprenticeship model, were supposed to orient and train novice headteachers in the field. Lack of "master headteachers" resulted in a systematic reproduction of differently skilled or unskilled headteachers to lead public secondary schools in the Central East Education Division and the Central West Education Division. Most of the respondents highlighted the need for orientation for newly appointed headteachers and continuous professional development for all headteachers, including those with long headteachership service. Klein & Schwanenberg (2022) noted the need for ever-updating headteachers with skills to ably handle emerging school needs.

While headteachers in service periods 1 to 5 and 31 and above had extremes in thematic orientation levels, service periods 11 to 15, 16 to 20, and 21 to 25 were the most balanced on all thematic stages' codes. The acquaintance with instructional supervision elements (AISE), experimentation with instructional supervision elements (EISE), and creation and utilisation of instructional supervision systems (CUISS) codes were attended to in the service periods between 1 to 5 and 31 and above. In that regard, service periods 6 to 10 and 20 to 30 were transitional stages from the theoretically least desirable (1 to 5 service periods) to the most desirable (30 and above service period). Apparently, the most vibrant section of public secondary school headteachership in CEED and CWED was in service periods between 11 and 25.

5.4.1 : Service Period and Number of Reference Instructional Documents

The inverse relationship between the service periods and the number of reference instructional documents that qualitative data analysis showed, as detailed in Table 4-4, was of

significance to the study. The inverse relationship between service period and number of felt-to-be instructional reference documents implied that newly appointed headteachers were conscious of more elemental instruction reference documents than headteachers who had longer service periods. Much as the long-serving headteachers were in the creation and utilisation of instructional supervision systems stage of head teachership, they needed just as many reference documents to use in order to base the development of instructional supervision and implementation systems on policy.

On the other hand, newly appointed head teachers required instructional supervision system development skills early in their head teachership to foster consultative school leadership styles (Cahyono et al., 2020; Jabbar et al., 2020) that had a positive impact on employees' organisational commitment.

5.4.2 : Dimensionality in Headteachers' Commitment

Results from the Multinomial Probit Model illustrated in Table 4.5, showed significant relationships between service period categories and affective-normative-continuance commitment in continuance commitment and normative commitment dimensionalities except affective commitment; the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis was confirmed. There were two noteworthy relationships presented by the Multinomial Probit Model results: negative significance and non-significance.

Significant correlation coefficients, according to Table 4-5, were between service period category 6 to 10 and continuance commitment by 62 percent (p =.012); service period category 11–15 years and continuance commitment had a significant correlation coefficient of 45 percent (p =.058); service period category 16 to 20 years and continuance commitment by 46 percent (p =.045); and normative commitment and 11 to 15 years by 41 percent (p =.085). The significant relationships were all negative. All the cited significant relationships were

negative, which denoted an inverse relationship. The lack of significance in the relationship between the 1 to 5 service period category and any of the organisational commitment components was noteworthy. That could have resulted from a small sample size or from qualitative underpinnings.

Qualitative data analysis showed that surprise and timidity were dominant among most headteachers upon appointment to their posts. While headteachers in the rest of the service periods cited surprise and scare as characteristic of their entry experience upon appointment, those participants in service periods 1 to 5 were actually going through that experience during the period data was being collected. The fear and lack of appropriate headteachership skills may have contributed to the responses the headteachers in service periods 1 to 5 made to the questionnaire.

Further, the lack of significance in the results may have been caused by the small sample size in the 1 to 5 service period category (*N*–20) shown in Table 3-1 and Figure 3-2, as has been notified in Kennedy (2022) and Amirrudin et al. (2021) about the need for an appropriate study sample size, a stability width corridor that would keep within a predetermined confidence trajectory. Further to that, the lack of significance may have been due to the perceived lack of distinguishability between affective commitment and continuance commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment (Azdha et al., 2023; Widaman & Revelle, 2023; Balkin & Lenz, 2021), and that normative commitment was redundant.

5.4.3 : Headteachers' Instruction Supervision Attitudes in Service Periods

Thematic analysis of qualitative data depicted headteachers' attitudes towards instructional supervisory roles as dynamic and changing with service period transition. Since organisational commitment was about employees' attitudes towards their institutional work and affected outcomes and efficiency (Stackhouse et al., 2023), an employee's change in commitment typology denoted a change in attitude as well. The thematic progress from

acquaintance with instructional supervision elements to creation and utilisation of instructional supervision systems through experimentation with instructional supervision elements stages depicted headteachers' extent of focus on effectiveness-specific activities from one service period to another.

Further, observations from quantitative data analysis showed that headteachers' commitment to instructional supervisory roles by organisational commitment dimensions was not constant across the service periods. Headteachers implemented instructional supervision commitment data analysis showed that the mode and standard deviations in the frequencies with which headteachers checked instructional supervision documents varied by service period categories and institutional departments as in Figures 23, 25, 27, 29, 21, and 22 (M = 3, SD = 1.356; M = 3, SD = 1.311; M = 3, SD = 1.348; M = 3, SD = 1.378; M = 3, SD = 1.264; M = 3, SD = 1.425; M = 4, SD = 1.662; M = 2, SD = 1.076) for checking schemes and records of work in humanities, languages, mathematics, and sciences departments; checking lesson plans in humanities, languages, and mathematics and sciences departments; checking period registers and mark books, respectively.

Since organisational commitment dimensionalities and frequencies with which headteachers checked instructional supervision documents changed across service period categories, headteachers' attitudes towards defined institutional tasks changed as well. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected, and the alternative hypothesis that head teachers' attitudes towards instruction and supervisory roles vary along their headship service period was confirmed. Consequently, the answer to the second research question was that headteachers' attitudes towards instruction supervisory roles varied along the head teachership service period continuum.

5.4.4 : Commitment to Instruction Supervisory Change

Thematic analysis of the qualitative data showed that headteachers were at different instructional supervision stages. Change conceptualisation in this study was synonymous with development, as noted by Haque et al. (2021) and that denoted a change in commitment. Three headteachership developmental stages emerged from the data codes that were identified in the participants' responses: acquaintance with instructional supervision elements, experimenting with instructional supervision elements, and creation and utilisation of instructional supervision systems. Like was the case in longitudinal profiling and elevation relief analysis of rivers. The acquaintance with instructional supervision elements, experimentation with instructional supervision elements, and creation and utilisation of instructional supervision systems headteachership developmental stages somehow corresponded with the youthful, mature, and old stages of a river profile noted in Hergarten (2021). However, unlike river profiles, the characteristics of headteachership were not static at any particular stage because they are transferable through experience.

Given that the relationships between headteachers' implemented instructional supervision commitment and affective-normative-continuance commitment typology were noted as not constant across the service period categories 1-5, 6-10, 11-15, 16-20, 21-25, and 26-30 thus, affective commitment (p = .775, .876, .161, .445, .502 and .194, respectively); continuance commitment (p = .996, .012, .058, .045, .119 and .*559* respectively); normative commitment (p = .190, .545, .085, .101, .825 and .588 respectively), and that One – sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov test on instructional supervision documents checking frequencies distribution resulted as significant (p = .000) in figures with histograms that differently skewed to the right as shown in Figures 4-9, 4-11, 4-13, 4-215, and 4-16, the null hypothesis that headteachers' commitment to instruction supervisory roles does not vary throughout their head teachership service period was rejected. Instead, the alternative hypothesis that headteachers'

commitment to instruction and supervisory roles varies throughout their headship service period was confirmed. In that regard, head teachers' commitment to instructional supervision changed across service periods.

5.4.5 : Periods of Commitment Changes

An overview of the headteachers' implemented commitment throughout their headteachership presented periods of commitment changes that require unique attention to ensure effective instructional supervision in all secondary schools in the Central East Education Division and Central West Education Division. The evaluation of the periods of commitment changes focused on the expected implementation commitment level, ascension and descension sections in the general outlook of headteachers' implemented commitment, and the participants' opinions about instructional supervisory roles.

The level of expected commitment from secondary school headteachers in Malawi is expressed in the Malawi Vision 2063 (Government of Malawi, 2022) under enablers, thus human capital development and financing. The wish of the Malawi nation is to have "a globally competitive and highly motivated human resource" (Government of Malawi, 2022, p. 36). However, some of the noted challenges to realising the dream were "poor access to quality education at the early childhood, primary, secondary, and tertiary levels" (Government of Malawi, 2022, p. 36). The analyses of qualitative and quantitative data revealed one of the sources of challenges to the provision of quality public secondary school education. This study focused on describing the public secondary school headteachers' commitment in an effort to improve public secondary school headteachership as a way to realise, as wished by the Government of Malawi (2022, p. 36), a "… globally competitive and highly motivated human resource."

The headteachers' commitment challenge was greatest on entry into the profession, as shown in Figure 4-17 by the expected-implemented commitment gap marked (a). The qualitative data analysis in the respondents' narratives and in Figures 4-3 and 4-4 and in Table 4-2 showed that newly appointed headteachers had "entry shocks", such as being surprised by their appointment, being afraid of their responsibility and categorising almost every document in the school as instructional documents. As Miss Mtuwa Ntchunga (a pseudonym) said, "It was a surprise when I was told to head a school." When I was informed, I froze with fear because I was not prepared. "I had not been a deputy headteacher before." ; lack of orientation as observed by Miss Zioneka, who said, "I was not prepared for the task at all, given that there was no orientation." Another piece of evidence about the lack of headteachership skills in the newly appointed headteachers was shown in Figure 4-3, where participants in the 1 to 5 service period showed a lot of knowledge about the instructional documents to use but did not utilise the documents to reflect the experimentation headteachership developmental stage. The negative perceptions of becoming a public secondary school headteacher would negatively affect their implemented commitment.

Further, the quantitative data analysis results showed a low frequency of checking schemes and records of work, lesson plans, lesson observation reports, period registers, and markbooks detailed in Figures 4-15, 4-16 and Table 4-9. An exception, however, was the frequency with which participants in service period 1 to 5 checked markbooks. The frequency was noticeably high. Perhaps that was a carryover characteristic from deputy headteachership, head of department practices and teachers' experience. Otherwise, headteachers' implemented commitment in service period 1 to 5 showed to require attention for fast-tracked ascent to the greatest magnitude at the 16 to 20 service period. The commitment ascension could have been the result of either a shedding of fears and the gathering of knowledge and experience about

headteachership or a shedding of fears due to getting used to wrong practices or aspects of both in varied measures.

The other commitment change section in headteachership, as qualitative and quantitative data analysis results showed, was the commitment descent period. As presented in Figure 3-17, the implemented commitment descent period started from the 16 to 20 service period, where implemented commitment was highest, to the 31 and above service period, where implemented commitment was least at point (b). According to the thematic analysis results, shown in Figure 4-17, headteachers in the 16 to 20 service period were at the experimentation with instructional supervision elements developmental stage of headteachership, the most vibrant of the service periods and therefore where some of the most desired of headteachers' attributes were noted.

However, towards the end of the experimentation with instructional supervision elements developmental stage, the creation and utilisation of instructional supervision systems stage characteristics started to become prominent. Headteachers at this stage started to realise the benefits of delegation while their organisational commitment slid to the continuance dimension, partly in view of the pending termination of employment through retirement and otherwise. Consequently, checking of instructional supervision documents was left to a newly created instructional supervision system, and the gap between the expected and implemented commitment widened at point (b) in Figure 4-17.

Paradoxically, the period of headteachership commitment descent was supposed to be a period of accelerated ascent given that headteachers in the service periods where commitment descent was noted had the most headteachership skills and performance capacity experience according to human capital theory (Deming, 2022). That the reality was the descension of

headteachers' implemented commitment, contrary to expectation, requires attention if the Malawi 2063 development dream is to be achieved.

5.5.0 : Quantitative Data Evaluation

The evaluation of quantitative data results follows the numerical order in which the hypotheses have been presented, thus H_1: Headteachers' commitment to the instructional supervision role in Central East and Central West Education Divisions reflects the affective-normative-continuance commitment dimensionality (H_0: Headteachers' commitment to the instructional supervision role in Central East and Central West East Education Divisions does not reflect the affective-normative-continuance commitment dimensionality); H_2: Headteachers' attitudes toward instruction supervision in Central East and Central West Education Divisions vary along their head teachership service periods. (H_0: Headteachers' attitudes toward instruction supervisory roles in Central East and Central West Education Divisions are constant throughout their headteachership service periods); and H_3: Headteachers' commitment to instructional supervision in Central East and Central West Education Divisions varies along their headteachership service periods (H_0: Headteachers' commitment to instructional supervision in Central East and Central West Education Divisions does not vary throughout their headteachership service periods).

The research questions that guided the study were: To what extent does the headteachers' commitment to instructional supervision relate to the headteachership service period in Central East and Central West Education? How do headteachers' attitudes towards instructional supervision roles in Central East and Central West Education Divisions vary along the head-teachership service period continuum? How does the headteachers' commitment to instructional supervisory roles in Central East and Central West Education Divisions change within headteachership service periods? Triangulation of the hypotheses tests and answers to

the research questions was an evaluation of the study results for a comprehensive description of headteachers' commitment to instructional supervision.

5.5.1 : Research Hypothesis 1 (H_0) Test

The study showed that headteachers' commitment to instructional supervision reflected two of the components in the three-component commitment model in specific service periods. Results of the paired t-test comparing age and the summary of affective, continuance, and normative commitment dimensions presented in Table 4-5 showed that there was no correlation between age and affective, continuance, and normative commitment dimensions in Pair 1, Pair 2, and Pair 3 (t (276) = 36.219, p = .000), (t (276) = 37.705, p = .000), (t (276) = 33.983, p = .000), and (t (276) = 33.983, p = .000)respectively, with respective means for Pair 1 (M = 46.809, SD = 5.71912), Pair 2 (M = 48.21408, SD = 5.837), and Pair 3 (M = 46.987, SD = 5.837). Such a low p-value is an indication that the actual p-value was too small for the software used to capture (Benjamin & Berger, 2019; McShane et al., 2019) and, according to Wasserstein et al. (2019), showed that there was a strong indication against the null hypothesis.

The multinomial probit model (MNP) was used to investigate how explanatory variables, thus affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment were related to service periods: 1 to 5, 6 to 10, 11 to 15, 16 to 20, 21 to 25, and 26 to 30. The results of the overall model indicated that relationship significance was at 3.7% (0.037) and that the reference service period for the model was the 31 and above service period category. The analysis results further showed that there were various relationships between service periods and commitment dimensionalities.

The strength of interrelatedness between affective commitment and the service period categories 1 to 5, 6 to 10, 11 to 15, 16 to 20, 21 to 25, and 26 to 30 shown in Table 4.6 presented

a wide spectrum (*p = .775, .876, .161, .445, .502, and .194,* respectively). The relationship between continuance commitment and service periods was wide (p = .996, .012, .058, .045, .119, and *.559,* respectively). Among the coefficients, p = *p=.012, .058,* and *.045,* respectively, related to service periods 6 to 10, 11 to 15, and 16 to 20 were significant. Similarly, the relationship between headteachers' normative commitment to instructional supervision in all service periods varied (p = .190, .545, .085, .101, .825, and *.588,* respectively), where notable significance (.085) was presented in the service period category 11 to 15.

Further, binary logistic regression analysis of the overall headteachership service period and headteachers' commitment to instruction supervision for a Pearson correlation coefficient showed that service period correlated with affective commitment (r = 0.642), continuance commitment (r = 0.065), and normative commitment (r = 0.087), as detailed in Table 4-5. The outcome of the binary logistic regression presented a significant positivity between overall public secondary school headteachership and continuance commitment of 11% (*p = .065).* Continuance commitment.

The results in Table 4-5 were similar to what was found in other studies (Abun et al., 2024; Ghasemy & Frömbling, 2023; Gaztambide-Fernández et al., 2022; Van der Heijden et al., 2022), where the interpretation was that the relationship between age and commitment showed a positive relationship in academic institutions. Just as found in this study, age was perceived as a significant function of commitment in light of the side-bait theory and the thought that the human capital accumulated was less marketable elsewhere. The results reflected the propositions in human capital theory that human capital is gained through experience, especially task-specific social capital (Oyedeji & Coff, 2024; Ju & Li, 2019), like headteachership. Aged headteachers in the higher service period had more knowledge, skills, and self-confidence about public secondary school headteachership.

5.5.2.0: Research Hypothesis 2 (H_0)

The second null hypothesis (H_0) to be tested by the study was: Headteachers' attitudes toward instruction supervisory roles in Central East and Central West Education Divisions are constant throughout their headteachership service periods. The windows to understanding headteachers' attitudes towards instructional supervision were their confessed and practiced commitments and their opinions about headteachership, beside their perspectives about key instructional supervision documents.

5.5.2.1: Headteachers' attitudes through the Confessed Commitment Window

The dimensions of confessed commitment that resulted from completing the headteachers' commitment to instructional supervision questionnaire showed different attitudes prevailing among the headteachers in their service period strata. The results shown in Table 4-5 seemed to suggest conformity to the second null hypothesis because the significance had the same coefficient ($p = .000$). However, the interpretation of such a data occurrence indicated strong grounds to uphold the alternative hypothesis (Hubbard, 2019; Matthews, 2019). Further, it was noted in the results presented in Table 4.6 that the correlation coefficients shown for continuance and normative commitment components were different, thus *0.12, 0.058,* and *0.045* in service periods 6 to 10, 11 to 15, and 16 to 20, respectively, and the continuance commitment and normative headteachers' commitment to instructional supervision was 0.85 in the 11 to 15 service period. As presented in Table 4-6, the differences in significance of confessed commitment components showed headteachers' commitment differences in attitudes towards instructional supervision.

In addition, according to Đorđević et al. (2020), Curado & Vieira (2019), and McCormick & Donohue (2019), normative commitment was about the attitude of undertaking a task or remaining with an organisation because doing so is taken as an obligation. The regression results presented in Table 4-7 indicated headteachers' continuance commitment

significance (*0.065*) in service and normative commitment (*0.087*). That difference in commitment components among headteachers in Central East and Central West Education Divisions further reflected differences in headteachers' attitudes towards instructional supervision.

5.5.2.2.0 : Headteachers' attitudes through the Practiced Commitment Window

Apart from noting headteachers' attitudes towards instructional supervision from their confessed commitment significance, headteachers' attitudes were noted from how headteachers practically involved themselves in checking on how teachers updated their instructional documents to monitor how effective the teacher-leaner interaction progressed in implementing the curriculum.

5.5.2.2.1 : Checking Schemes and Records of Work. The overall frequency with which headteachers checked schemes and records of work varied in central tendency attributes across all service periods and departments as presented in Figure 4.8, thus 3.6, 8.9, 13.0, 3.4, 2.1, 0.4, and 0.1, respective to service periods 1 to 5, 6 to 10, 11 to 15, 16 to 20, 21 to 25, 26 to 30, and 31 and above, while the standard deviation respectively varied with the service periods, thus 5.0, 5.3, 5.3, 3.3, 1.9, 1.5, 0.6, and 0.4, and the mode was in series three. The mode being in series three meant that most headteachers in their respective service periods checked schemes and records of work for three weeks in a term that had 10 weeks, which translated to 30%. According to the national education standards of the Malawi Government (2015), most of the headteachers were below the minimum standard, thus not satisfactory in their commitment to checking schemes as records of work. The data further suggested that very few headteachers were doing well in checking schemes and records of work.

Further, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test on the frequency with which headteachers checked schemes and records of work checking in the humanities department presented in

Figure 4-9 showed that overall frequency distribution was asymmetrical with a skew to the right (mean=3, SD=1.633, *p=.000*). The schemes and records of work checking the distribution pattern shown by the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test were similar to the overall pattern in Figure 4.8. The results on schemes and records of work checking frequency in the languages department (M = 3, Std. Dev. 1.311, *p* = .000) and mathematics and sciences department (M = 3, SD = 1.348, *p* = .000) presented in Figures 4-11, 4-12, and 4-14 showed similar frequency distribution patterns.

***5.5.2.2.2 : Checking Lesson Plans*.** Headteachers varied in their practice of checking lesson preparation to ensure effective teacher-learner interaction in lessons. The lesson plans checking frequency distribution presented in Table 4-9 showed that the most right-skewed pattern was in the mathematics and sciences department (*M* = 3, *SD* = 1.425, *p* = .000). The next in right skewness to mathematics and sciences in right skewness was the humanities department (*M* = 3, *SD* = 1.378, *p* = .000), and the pattern in the languages department was least skewed (*M* = 3, *SD* = 1.264, *p* = .000). Although all three patterns were right-skewed, the extent of skewness showed variations in the headteachers attitudes about instructional supervision.

5.5.2.2.3 : Checking Lesson Observations Reports, Period Registers and Markbooks. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test descriptive analysis results presented in Figures 4-15, 4-16, and 4-17 showed frequency distributions that were skewed to the right. The most skewed distribution was in the humanities department (*M* = 2, *SD* = 1.217, *p* = .000), followed by frequency in the languages department (*M* = 2, *SD* = 1.156, *p* = .000), and the least skewed was the frequency distribution in the mathematics and sciences department (*M* = 2, *SD* = 1.095, *p* = .000). Although distribution patterns in the frequency with which lesson observation reports, period registers, and markbooks were all right skewed, the extent of skewness varied to show the variation in the headteachers' attitudes towards instructional supervision.

5.5.2.3: Correlation between Confessed Commitment and Implemented Commitment. The results showed that there were affective commitment (AC)-headteachers' implemented commitment (HIC) relationships in the frequency with which head teachers checked schemes and records of work in the humanities, languages, mathematics, and sciences departments. The relationships were the humanities department (r = -0.003, n = 277, p = 0.954), the languages department (r = -0.003, n = 277, p = 0.954), and the mathematics and sciences department (r = 0.003, n = 277, p = 0.956). Further, the AC-HIC relationship regarding headteachers' lesson plan checking frequency was: humanities department (r = 0.063, n = 277, p = .540), languages department (r = -0.069, n = 277, p = .250), and mathematics and sciences department (r = 0.008, n = 277, p = .895). Similarly, the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient (r) was drawn from the normative commitment (NC)–headteachers' implemented commitment (HIC) datasets for lesson plan checking frequency. The results showed that relationships existed in the humanities department (r = 0.021, n = 277, p = .724), the languages department (r = -0.017, n = 277, p = .78), and mathematics and sciences (r = -0.011, n = 277, p = .861). Still further, there were continuance commitment (CC)-headteachers' implemented commitment (HIC) relationships in head teachers' lesson plans checking frequency; thus, humanities department (r = 0.092, n = 277, p = .127), languages department (r = 0.063, n = 277, p = .299), and mathematics and sciences department (r = 0.040, n = 277, p = .512).

The results from bivariate analyses of datasets regarding headteachers' affective commitment (AC) to instruction supervision and headteachers' implemented commitment (HIC) reflected in lesson observation reports checking frequency showed that indeed relationships between the respective datasets existed in the humanities department (*r* = -0.037, *n* = 277, p = .250). There was normative commitment – headteachers' implemented commitment relationships in the humanities department as well (*r* = -0.123, *n* = 277, *p = .042), the* languages department (*r* = -0.119, *n* = 277, *p* = .048), *and* the mathematics and sciences

department (*r* = -0.042, *n* = 277, p = .484). Still further, results on the bivariate analysis showed that there were continuance commitment-headteachers' implemented commitment dataset coefficient (*r*) relationships in the humanities department (*r* = 0.028, *n* = 277, *p = 0.648) and in the* languages department (*r* = -0.076, *n* = 277, *p = .803).*

The differences in the r-factor, confessed commitment components among headteachers in their service periods and among departments, as well as differences in checking frequencies across all the key instructional supervision documents, revealed differences in the headteachers' attitudes towards their instruction supervision commitment. Those results rejected the null hypothesis and instead confirmed the alternative hypothesis that headteachers' attitudes toward instruction supervision in Central East and Central West Education Divisions vary along their headteacher service periods.

5.5.2.3 : Research Hypothesis 3 (H_0). The third null hypothesis the investigation was aimed at confirming is that headteachers' commitment to instructional supervisory roles does not vary throughout headteachers' service period**.** The assumption in the null hypothesis was that headteachers' psychological attachment to instructional progress in their schools was constant throughout all service periods; thus, a headteacher's confessed commitment component recorded at the beginning of one service period remained so to the end of that service period.

The results presented in Table 4-6 showed headteachers' commitment to instructional supervision to have been significant in continuance *(.058*) and normative (.085) confessed commitments. However, analysis of the data about headteachers' declared commitment to instructional supervisory roles and the headteachers' implementation of instructional supervision showed variations in significance across the service periods.

The Cronbach's alpha analysis of the declared headteachers' commitment to instructional supervision showed variations in period categories 1 to 5, 6 to 10, 11 to 15, 16 to 20, 21 to 25, and 26 to 30. The oneness of affective commitment with the service periods was varied thus (*p = .775, .876, .161, .445, .502, and .194*, respectively); the relationship between continuance commitment and the service periods was wide (*p = .996, .012, .058, .045, .119, and* .559, respectively); and the connectedness between normative commitment and the service period categories was no exception (*p = .190, .545, .085, .101, .825, and* .588, respectively).

Further, a one-sample t-test was carried out to compare headteachers' checking frequency means regarding elements of instructional supervision, i.e., schemes of work, lesson plans, lesson observation reports, period registers, and mark books. The results presented in Table 4-10 indicated that there were significant differences in headteachers' checking frequency of schemes and records of work (t (276) = 2.828, p = .000, M = 9.5, 95% Confidence Interval: .0960 to .9725), lesson plans (t (276) = 7.096, p = .000, M = 8.0, 95% Confidence Interval: 5447 to 8.390), lesson observation reports (t (276) = 8.578, p = .000, M = 7.134, 95% Confidence Interval: 770 to 498), period registers (t (276) = 7.922, p = .000, M = 3.787, 95% Confidence Interval: .59 to .98), and mark books (t (276) = 2.820, p = .000, M = 2.123, 95% Confidence Interval: .000 to 25).

Given that, according to Wasserstein et al. (2019), a p-value (p = .000) just indicated that there was a strong indication against the null hypothesis, in this case the alternative hypothesis, but confirmed the alternative hypothesis. Headteachers' commitment to instructional supervision in Central East and Central West Education Divisions varies along their headteachership service periods, which was confirmed. Confirmation of the alternative hypothesis, therefore, provided the answer to the third question: headteachers' commitment to instructional supervision was not static but dynamic.

5.5.2.4 : Periods of Noticeable Commitment Changes. A superimposition of all the results emerged beacons in the headteachers' professional excursion. The quantitative and qualitative data analysis results presented indicated periods of implemented commitment changes in the headteachership tenure that coincided with confessed commitment dimensions and headteachers' opinions. The commitment changes were basically of two types: ascent and descent. The ascent commitment changes occurred from the 1 to 5 service period to the 16 to 20 service period. The descent commitment period, on the other hand, occurred from the 16 to 20 service period to the 31 and above service period, as shown in Figure 4-17.

While descriptive analysis showed an overall symmetrical scheme and records of work frequency distribution, in service periods 1 to 5, the data distribution mode was in series 3, thus most headteachers in their respective service periods checked schemes and records of work for three weeks in a 10-week long term. In the 1–5 service period, the mode was series 2, which meant that most participants in service period 1–5 checked schemes and records of work in the humanities for 2 weeks, as shown in Figure 4-10. Further, in service periods 1 to 5, the overall scheme checking frequency in the humanities department was four weeks, while in service period 31 and above, the greatest number of weeks when schemes and records of work were checked in the humanities department was seven. As shown in Figure 4.10, the greatest number of weeks when schemes and records of work checking was done in the humanities department occurred during service periods 6 to 10, 11 to 15, 16 to 20, and 21 to 25.

5.6: Summary

As is characteristic of the mixed-methods research paradigm, the study on headteachers' commitment to instructional supervision used both quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection. Consequently, the resultant quantitative and qualitative data were subjected to respective statistical and thematic analyses. The statistical descriptive and

inferential analyses organised the data into comparable forms to enable tests for comparison. On the other hand, parsing and anatomisation of participants responses, which is commonly referred to as thematic analysis (Angbashim et al., 2022; Oladipo & Odebode, 2021), was applied to explore underlying issues in the statistical descriptions.

The data organised in thematic, descriptive, and inferential forms created the basis for discussion that was guided by the study questions and hypotheses. The themes that emerged from qualitative data analysis showed that headteachership occurred in developmental stages, while analysis of quantitative data revealed that no headteachers from any service period had affective commitment; headteachers from service periods 6 to 10, 11 to 15, and 16 to 20 had continuance commitment (*p = .012, .058, and* .045, respectively); and headteachers in the 11 to 15 service period had normative commitment.

Further, the study showed that headteachers' commitment generally experienced ascension or descension. The ascension progress was thwarted by educationally systematic procedures in the Central East Education Division and Central West Education Division. Some of the commitment ascension-thwarting elements in the systematic procedures were appointments to headteachership positions that surprised the appointees, a lack of appropriate human capital that scared appointees off from taking up headteachership responsibilities, a lack of orientation for all newly appointed headteachers, and a lack of structured and regular need-based in-service training for all categories of head teachers by service periods.

Still further, the study of headteachers' commitment to instructional supervision roles revealed that headteachers' commitment ascension progressed through service periods when acceleration of the implemented commitment ascension was expected. The decline of teachers' commitment from the 16–20 service period to the 31 and above service period, the study revealed, resulted from lapses in the systematic educational leadership procedures in the

Central East Education Division and Central West Education Division. Some of the elements that suppress acceleration of headteachers' implemented commitment in the service periods where commitment descension occurs, according to the study findings, were lack of regular need-based in-service training for all categories of headteachers by service periods and lack of general support with teaching and learning resources.

The headteachers' commitment ascension thwarting and the commitment ascension acceleration suppressing elements in the public secondary school educational leadership system in the Central East Education Division and Central West Education Division require research attention for comprehensive descriptions for an informed solution. If those challenges remain unaddressed, secondary schools in the divisions will not benefit from effective leadership.

6.0 CHAPTER SIX: IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 : Overview

The study on headteachers' commitment to instructional supervisory roles focused the research on the central issue for which the ministry of education in general and public secondary schools in the Central East Education Division (CEED) and the Central West Education Division (CWED) in particular were established, thus ensuring that quality was high in the teaching-learning process to reflect compliance with the national education standards (Ministry of Education Science and Technology, 2015) and to actualise the expectation that education is the "key human capital development instrument and an important prerequisite for socio-economic development and industrial growth" (Malawi Government, 2017, p. 60). The high quality expected in the teaching and learning process would be realised when head teachers were committed to instructional supervisory roles to ensure that teachers followed effective teaching practices. Assurance of effective teaching practices would be verified, among other methods, through the checking of key instructional documents as part of instructional supervision. Perceiving head teachers as key to improving public secondary schools' development has been rare (Bush, 2018; Wamba & Mgomezulu, 2015). The study of headteachers' commitment to instructional supervisory roles is meant to rekindle the attention of education authorities, head teachers, researchers, and stakeholders to headteachers' commitment description concerns.

In organisational studies, typification of employee commitment is made by declaration or confession by employees through responses to the organisational commitment questionnaire (Khan et al., 2013; Cheng & Stockdale, 2003; Meyer et al., 1998; Moorman et al., 1992; Meyer & Allen, 1991; Allen & Meyer, 1990). The organisational commitment questionnaire is a Likert-scale instrument that has a varied number of response alternatives under each item. In the study of head teachers' commitment to instructional supervisory roles, a 15-item, seven-

point Likert questionnaire was adapted from Mowday et al. (1979). The 15-item, seven-point Likert scale questionnaire was opted for because it was thin enough to represent respondents' psychometrics about their commitment to instructional supervisory roles.

Being a mixed-methods study, participants were identified through stratified random sampling for data collection along the quantitative trajectory, while purposive sampling was used to identify participants on the qualitative strand. The data collected by the head teachers' commitment to instructional supervisory roles questionnaire, which reflected head teachers' confessed commitment, was juxtaposed with data on headteachers' implemented commitment to instructional supervision, which was collected using a content analysis grid. The frequency with which headteachers checked instructional supervision denoted the headteachers' implementation of commitment. The juxtaposition of the two quantitative datasets was meant to test the parity between headteachers' confessed and implemented commitment to instructional supervision.

Using the qualitative strand of the study, semi-structured interviews were conducted with purposively sampled participants to solicit underlying reasons for the magnitudes of confessed and implemented commitment among headteachers. The quantitative data collection instruments, thus the headteachers' commitment to instructional supervisory roles questionnaire and the content analysis grid on the one hand and the semi-structured interview schedule on the other, enabled triangulation recursivity for a deep and comprehensive description of the headteachers' commitment.

Headteachers' commitment in public secondary schools in the Central East Education Division and the Central West Education Division is essential if the objectives the institutions were established for (Government of Malawi, 2019) will be realised. Malawi, being part of the global village, has to meet international goals on education that are expressed at continental and world levels, such as at the African Union and United Nations levels (Government of

Malawi, 2019; Janoušková et al., 2018; Mair et al., 2018; Hingston, 2016; Assembly, 2015). The Central East and Central West education divisions specifically and Malawi as a whole will not positively contribute to such goals if head teachers' commitment is not brought into focus in the interest of effective public secondary school leadership.

The execution of the study was done in adherence to ethical consideration requirements. A proposal for the study was presented to the research ethics committee of the Unicaf University Ethics Review Committee (UREC) for ethics review, and approval was granted on September 2, 2022. Further to that, the approved research proposal was submitted to the National Committee on Research in the Social Sciences and Humanities (NCRSSH) for local ethics review as a legal requirement. Approval from the NCRSSH was granted on November 15, 2022. Even though the approval was authentic at the national level, permissions were obtained from the national education headquarters and from the Central East and Central West education division offices on July 12, 2022, November 16, 2022, and November 30, 2022, respectively. Still further, written consent was sought from every participant prior to the administration of the data collection tools.

In this study, headteachers' declared commitment data was complemented by head teachers' implemented commitment data, thus allowing for a characterisation of the frequency with which headteachers checked key instructional supervision documents. A questionnaire on headteachers' commitment to instructional supervisory roles and a content analysis grid were used to collect declared and implemented commitment quantitative data, respectively. Further, a semi-structured interview schedule was used to collect qualitative data that complemented the confessed and implemented commitment strands of the study.

The quantitative and qualitative data were analysed using respective statistical and thematic methods for philosophical coherence. The quantitative data were statistically analysed using IBM SPSS for descriptive and inferential outcomes. The qualitative data, on the other

hand, were analysed thematically to generate themes for triangulation with the inferences from statistical analysis. The triangulation of the inferential statistical analysis results' interpretation and that of the thematic analysis gave descriptions of the headteachers' confessed and implemented commitment as a construct.

Going by the research questions and hypotheses, the study findings showed that headteachers' confessed commitment to instructional supervisory roles was to an extent describable using the three-dimensional organisational commitment model (Mowday et al., 1979). The data showed that headteachers within 6 to 25 years of head teachership experience had continuance and normative commitment dimensions, while affective commitment dimensions were not registered in all headteachers except when data from female participants were separately analysed for the commitment dimensions.

The observation that female headteachers were affectively committed while male headteachers were not is a significant find. Affective commitment is the most desired in an organisation. The paradox, however, is the low numbers of female headteachers, which is the result of the low numbers of girls making it to university to train as secondary school headteachers (Government of Malawi, 2022). The other factor is a lack of motivation for girls, even at institutions of higher learning where the representation of female lecturers is low (Asante, 2022; Liani et al., 2021). Such a trend has been observed not only in sub-Saharan countries but in many parts of the world (Jacob et al., 2020; Olson-Strom & Rao, 2020; Sommer & Fallon, 2020). The study results imply that female public secondary school headteachers would make a quality contribution to improving school quality through commitment to their job.

The applicability of the three-dimensional organisational commitment model to headteachership was complemented by the rejection of the null hypothesis, which stated that headteachers' commitment did not reflect the three-dimensional commitment model. The

finding implies that it is possible to describe the commitment of public secondary school headteachers in Central East Education Division and Central West Education Division using the three-component organisational commitment model. The description of headteachers' commitment in such terms would make it easier for educational research in Malawi to contribute to the body of knowledge in the field of educational leadership and benefit from experiences in other educational systems.

Further complementing the reflection of the three-dimension commitment in headteachers' commitment to instructional supervisory roles were results from the implemented commitment test. Normative and continuance commitment in headteachers denoted high implemented commitment; thus, headteachers in the 1–5 service period had no defined commitment dimension level or clear implemented commitment description. These results suggested that both confessed and implemented commitments were not static ascriptions of headteachers' commitment; thus, commitment was dynamic. That finding answered the second research question, and the answer was complemented by the rejection of the second hypothesis, which stated that headteachers' attitudes towards instructional supervision were constant throughout head teachership.

The study results described the direction that the change in head teachers' commitment took. The quantitative data from the headteachers' commitment to instructional supervisory roles questionnaire showed that a positive relationship occurred between normative and continuance commitment and service period magnitude. The data on implemented commitment, on the other hand, presented a normal distribution. Thus, the headteachers' implemented commitment increased from 1–5 to 16–20 service periods, after which it started to decline. The results showed that headteachers had a lot of potential to improve their implemented commitment up to their 20^{th}-year head teachership experience.

Perhaps consciousness about sidebets caught up with them, knowing that they would soon be exiting the civil service.

The qualitative data results corroborated the quantitative results by showing that headteachers' commitment was dynamic and that there were several undertones to the dynamism in commitment. The changes reflected the post-entry head teachership developmental stages: acquaintance with instructional supervision elements (AISE), experimentation with instructional supervision elements (EISE), and creation and utilisation of instructional supervision systems (CUISS). Headteachers' commitment to instructional supervisory roles is dynamic in every sense.

The triangulated results from statistical and thematic analyses formed the basis for determining the implications of the findings, significance, recommendations for application, and recommendations for future research, and conclusions. The drawn implications are based on the aims, goals, and objectives of the study that were instrumental in the development of the questions and hypotheses that guided the research.

6.2.0 : Implications of the Findings

Implications that the findings study of headteachers' commitment to instructional supervision carries are about their impact on headteachers' declared and practiced commitment and education authorities' perception about the uniqueness of head teachership that requires formal training. The implications of the findings are examined by the extent to which they affect headteachers' effectiveness in ensuring high-quality teacher-learner class interactions in their public secondary schools, guiding continuous professional development activity planning for headteachers at all levels, and informing school leadership policy formulation.

The study of headteachers' commitment to instructional supervision roles in Central East Education Division and Central West Education Division found that public secondary

school headteachership was in post-entry developmental stages and that headteachers' service period categorisation reflected organisational affective-continuance-normative commitment dimensionality. The study findings have implications for research about headteachers' contributions to public secondary school leadership, participants' demographics, post-entry headteacher developmental stages, reference documents-service period relationships, the dimensionality of headteachers' commitment, headteachers' instructional supervisory roles and attitudes, and periods of commitment changes. It is in the implications of the findings as well that the achievement of the aims, goals, and objectives of the study is noticeable, aside from answering the research questions and confirming the research hypotheses.

6.2.1 : Research on Public Secondary School Leadership

Research and practice ought to be complementary undertakings in the sense that theory determines the effectiveness and efficiency of practice, while practice refines theory through contextualisation. That relationship ought to spin out high-quality education system leadership, especially in Central East Education Division and Central West Education Division public secondary schools in Malawi. Given that the personification of public secondary school leadership is the headteacher, there is a need for a lot of research in public secondary school operations to inform the description of every aspect of secondary school headteachership. The need for theory-practice interaction is not truer in any other field than in educational leadership. The importance of the theory-practice relationship is well articulated in Farley-Ripple et al. (2018, p. 235):

> *"Increasing research in educational decision-making cannot be simplified to an issue of dissemination or of motivating practitioners to access evidence-based research but rather is a bidirectional problem in which characteristics of both the research and practice communities must be understood and addressed in order to strengthen ties between research and practice in education."*

The educational research areas that have attracted researchers' interest in Malawi include curriculum development, educational policy formulation and evaluation, educational financing, education and gender, education access, teaching and learning, and education inclusivity. Research literature on public secondary school leadership in Malawi is rare, which suggests that little effort is made towards understanding the complexity of Malawi's public secondary school leadership. That is why one of the objectives of undertaking this study was to highlight public secondary school head teachership as an area requiring research attention.

The rarity of research in public secondary school leadership could be attributed to four reasons: the thought that research was purely for academic purposes as a partial academic course fulfilment requirement; indifference about research findings as the basis of decision-making concerning the education enterprise; the gap between researchers and practitioners; and headteachers looking at themselves as not researchers (Farley-Ripple et al., 2018; Farley-Ripple et al., 2017; Coburn & Penuel, 2016; Finnigan & Daly, 2014; Oliver et al., 2014). In the mildest sense of research, every headteacher identifies a problem to solve in efforts to improve school quality and especially the teaching and learning process in it, has questions to answer and hypotheses to reject or confirm, decides about the collection of evidence, analyses the evidence, determines implications of results, shares with colleagues at school and shares with other stakeholders, and implements findings. If doing what is narrated above is not carrying out research, then research in the social sciences should be something else too complex to do. Perhaps, until what headteachers do is called research, it will not be documented as research but as head teachership.

There are research findings that, if used to inform practice, solutions to some of the challenges that the Malawi education system is still grappling with would have been found. If functional proximity between educational researchers and headteachers could be deliberately

promoted, practically useful aspects of public secondary school headteachership could have been identified quickly for research attention. There are issues about headteachership experiences that practising headteachers have that have the potential to improve practice but are not shared through the dissemination of research findings.

This regrettable state of affairs was partly due to a lack of research culture among headteachers themselves and the failure of headteachers to access research findings that were located in institutions of higher learning and at the education head offices. The research activity lull in the field of educational leadership and the inaccessible research findings have left educational systems busy with the reproduction of inefficiencies that continually drain public and private resources.

6.2.2 : Participants Demographics

The participant demographics show that public secondary school head teachership in the Central East Education Division and the Central West Education Division is an undertaking for older teachers and predominantly for men. The aged characteristic of the Central East Education Division and Central West Education Division headteachers' populations is not a surprise given that human capital development, even in organisational-specific skills, relates positively with time (Ozyilmaz, 2020; Faggian et al., 2019). The study findings show that headteachers' performance is independent of age but also of experience in the task of head teachership. That finding corroborates the observation in Okoth (2018), where the headteacher's age was noted to be independent from head teachership.

There is a need for an urgent succession plan in the Central East Education Division and the Central West Education Division, given that there is an ageing population of headteachers. A descriptive analysis of the participants' demographics revealed an age

distribution of headteachers that was skewed to the left (mean = 52, median = 54, mode = 55, SD = 5.718, skewness = -0.707, kurtosis = -0.423), thus showing an ageing headteachers' population, as shown in Figure 4-1.

Given the retirement age in the civil service in Malawi is 60 years, the majority of the current headteachers will retire in the next five years. Those retiring will be going away with abilities and skills that may not have been shared. That mass turnover may rock school leadership culture and societal trust in public secondary schools. Some of the shocks may manifest in levels of commitment since older employees, according to Cavanagh et al. (2020) and Eacott & Hodges (2014), tended to be more committed than the younger ones, who instead viewed the teaching job as temporary (Cavanagh et al., 2020; Eacott & Hodges, 2014), and consequently, were always on the hunt for a better

Some of the previous age-commitment relationship studies (Ajayi, 2017; Affum-Osei et al., 2015; Khan et al., 2013) showed a positive relationship between the two variables. In these studies, age was perceived as a significant function of organisational commitment. However, results from other studies on the age-commitment relationship (Akinyemi, 2014; Ogba, 2008; Meyer & Allen, 1984) presented a contrary view. In this study, paired t-tests compared age and the summary of TCM constructs; thus, affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment (Kelly, 2021) showed no correlation in Pair 1, Pair 2, and Pair 3 (t (276) = 36.219, p = .000), (t (276) = 37.705, p = .000), (t (276) = 33.983, p = .000), and (t (276) = 33.983, p = *.000*), respectively, as detailed in Figure 13. It is therefore important for effective succession plans to be put in place in order to turn the exit of the majority of headteachers into an opportunity for implementing school leadership innovations.

The other noteworthy implication of the participants' demographics, though not taken on board in the research questions and study hypotheses, was from a gender perspective:

appointing more females to head public secondary schools would increase headteachers' commitment to instructional supervision. The headteachers' population in Central East Education Division and Central West Education Division is male-dominated (35.9% females and 64.9% males; 28.8% females and 71.3% males, respectively). Although female headteachers were less than their male counterparts as presented in Figure 4-2, the study found that the commitment of female headteachers to instructional supervision was higher than that of male headteachers, where being a female headteacher was related to being 11% more continuancely and 10% more normatively committed to instructional supervision than being a male headteacher. Therefore, the headteachers' commitment will increase with increasing numbers of female headteachers.

6.2.3 : Post-entry Head teachership Developmental Stages

Headteachers' perceptions of and attitudes towards instructional supervision classified head teachership into developmental stages. Headteachership stages of development: acquaintance with instructional supervision elements (AISE), experimentation with instructional supervision elements (EISE), and creation and utilisation of instructional supervision systems (CUISS) introduced a new perspective through which human capitalisation of headteachers could be done. The emerging stages of headteacher development challenge not only the traditional ways in which headteachers in Central East Education Division and Central West Education Division are perceived but also how headteachers' development should be initiated and planned for effectiveness and efficiency.

Further, the stages of head teachership development will assist in shifting the public perception of headteachers from head teachership as only "born with" to as perfected through "making". That shift requires policy direction to support headteachers' needs-based in-service training. Some of such headteachers' instructional supervision needs emerged from differences

in the codes that characterised acquaintance with instructional supervision elements, experimentation with instructional supervision elements, and creation and utilisation of instructional supervision systems. Headteachers with long headteacher service periods tended to rely on the instructional supervision systems they created and consequently reduced the rate of personally checking on how their subordinates complied with the requirements of creating and updating instructional documents. On the other hand, "novices" in headteachership, amid their surprise and scare, used administrative authority to demand compliance.

6.2.4 : Reference Documents-Service Period Relationship

The reference documents-service period relationship results imply that headteachers' sensitivity to education policies wanes with headteachership tenure. Long-serving headteachers create instructional supervision systems with the assumption that system nodes will make reference to the appropriate policy documents.

However, when the qualitative results were triangulated with the content analysis grid results, checking of key instructional supervision documents declined from the 16 to 20 service periods, resulting in an inverse relationship between instructional supervision document checking and service periods. Headteachers in the service periods beyond 20 years of head teachership begin to trust the creation and utilisation of instructional supervision system stage arrangements at the expense of reference to policy documents. Since teaching and learning activities in school were policy-informed, reference to recommended documents was a requirement.

The decline in checking instructional documents noted in head teachership beyond 20 years locates the service periods at which headteachers require in-service training. The headteachers at the creation and utilisation of instructional supervision systems stage require

in-service training that should rejuvenate commitment and performance by ensuring that post-entry headteachership developmental acquaintance with instructional supervision elements stage knowledge and skills are still practised. In the same line of thought, headteachers at the acquaintance with instructional supervision elements post-entry head teachership developmental stage require information and skills about the post-entry head teachership creation and utilisation of instructional supervision systems stage. Further, headteachers in the experimentation with instructional supervision elements stage require support to maintain agility in good headteachership practice for informed maturation to the creation and utilisation of instructional supervision systems stage, which should maintain acquaintance with instructional supervision elements stage practice.

6.2.5 : Commitment Dimensionality of Headteachers

That headteachers' commitment to instruction supervisory roles reflected normative-continuance commitment dimensionality presents a number of implications for headteacher motivation to commitment. The Multinomial Probit (MNP) model results indicated that significant relationships existed between service periods and continuance commitment and normative commitment components: service period 6 to 10 and continuance commitment ($p = .012$), service period 11 to 15 ($p = .058$), service period 16 to 20 ($p = .045$), and 11 to 15 and normative commitment ($p = .085$), as detailed in Figure 10. The significance of continuance commitment, according to Wasti (2002, p. 526), may have resulted from a "lack of alternative job opportunities and side bets". If the only primary antecedent to headteachers' continuance commitment is a lack of alternative job opportunities, that commitment was fragile since, given the chance to leave for another job, headteachers in grades 6 to 10, 11 to 15, and 16 to 20 would easily leave head teachership without regrets.

Further, if side bets were the only antecedent, the likelihood of headteachers remaining in their positions was on waiting for returns on investment, thus salaries, pension plans, seniority, medical aid schemes, housing arrangements, and firm-specific knowledge (Gabay-Mariani & Dubard-Barbosa, 2024; Han et al., 2021 Ulabor et al., 2019). Headteachers' attitudes shift to "passing time" in waiting for the maturation of their social and material returns to investment, which would lead to more non-performance while accumulating more side bets. This implies that if the positive relationship between commitment and satisfaction is not well managed, a negative relationship results, and employees become organisational liabilities.

The multinomial probit (MNP) model negative relationship results imply that headteachers in service periods 6 to 10, 11 to 15, and 16 to 20 focus on protecting personal investments in headteachership at the expense of expected performance. As the headteachers with continuance organisational commitment continue working, they accumulate more side bets, which increase negative feedback on performance. Having such headteachers in the Central East Education Division and the Central West Education Division may lead to public secondary school leadership deterioration.

6.2.6 : Headteachers' Instructional Supervision Attitudes

The diverse significance of the overall continuance and normative commitment among Central East Education Division and Central West Education Division headteachers reflects increased diversity in the perceptions headteachers had of the side-bets and marketability of their human capital. In turn, that perception diversity implies different headteachers' attitudes towards instructional supervisory roles. The study results present the relationship between service period categories and affective-continuance-normative components as negative. The inverse relationship meant that an increase in continuance commitment denoted an increase in side-bet influence but a decrease in service period. The inverse trend in service period

categories and affective-continuance-normative components mirrored the correlation between the number of noted instructional documents and the service period category detailed in Figure 10. Such a relationship requires attention to improve school leadership quality in the Central East Education Division and the Central West Education Division.

Further, headteachers' diverse attitudes towards instructional supervision are a challenge to motivate with one-size-fits-all in-service strategies. Diversity in headteachers' affective-continuance-normative commitment and differences in the frequencies with which headteachers checked key instructional supervision in Central East Education Division and Central West Education Division are manifestations of the attitudinal differentiation and negativity in continuance commitment that secondary head teachers have about their roles in instructional supervision. Therefore, attitudinal diversity towards instructional supervisory roles adds to the factors that make public secondary school leadership in the Central East Education Division and the Central West Education Division complex undertakings.

Although headteachers' componential and instructional supervisory roles' commitment changes are not shown in every service period category with significant intensity, the changes found indicate that headteachers' commitment was neither the same nor static across service periods but changed in components, direction, and intensity. The need to pace in-service training with changes in confessed commitment components and the frequency with which headteachers check key instructional documents adds a new dimension for consideration in planning headteachers' initial and in-service training.

6.3.0 : Significance of the Study Findings to Practice and Theory

The study findings are of theoretical and practical importance to the field of educational leadership in general and to public secondary school headteachership theory and practice in particular. The theoretical part regards the description of public secondary school headteachers and their contribution to the body of knowledge in the field of educational leadership. On the

practical side, the study sheds light on the need for frequent external public secondary school supervision, consistent formal induction of newly appointed headteachers, and the indispensability of continuously training serving headteachers.

Theoretically, the findings add to the perspectives from which headteachership should be understood; thus, the categorisation of headteachers into service periods as description units, implemented commitment, acquaintance with instructional supervision elements, experimentation with instructional supervision elements, and creation and utilisation of instructional supervision systems are categorical developmental stages. Consequently, the theoretical perspective should guide practice in planning need-based in-service training, placement of head teachers according to public secondary school environmental complexity, and planning of external supervision visits. These observations are new in the literature on the description of headteachers' commitment analysis and therefore contribute to the body of knowledge about headteachership analysis units and post-entry headteachers' professional developmental stages.

In that regard, the use of service periods as units for headteachers' descriptions, implemented commitment based on the headteachers' checking and monitoring of key instructional supervision documents, acquaintance with instructional supervision elements, experimentation with instructional supervision elements, and creation and utilisation of instructional supervision systems in headteachership developmental stages are complementary perspectives to the three-component organisational commitment.

Practically, the findings locate headteachers' service period categories when headteachership is most effectively carried out, i.e., 6 to 10, 11 to 15, and 16 to 20. In the 1–5-year service period, headteachers that are newly appointed are just picking up headteachership strands together. At that stage, head teachers are keen to know the procedures for their job, and

that is an opportunity to ensure that they are exposed to the correct information instead of entirely depending on peer learning or the apprentice approach of induction. After 21 years in a secondary head teachership, effectiveness starts to decline. That is the point in head teachership that required the rejuvenation of the headteacher's enthusiasm. Therefore, schools in the Central East Education Division and the Central West Education Division benefit most from headteachers whose service period is between 6 and 20 years, and deliberate support through training could improve and sustain the effectiveness of headteachers beyond the 20-year' service period as well.

Further, triangulation of headteachers' confessed commitment from the organisational with headteachers' implemented commitment provides a comprehensive description of organisational commitment that reflects both attitudinal and practical orientations of headteachers' commitment. Therefore, studying commitment not only from the confessed commitment but also from the implemented commitment and qualitative perspectives has provided a more comprehensive understanding of headteachers' commitment.

6.3.1 : Alignment and Contradictions with Existing Practice and Theory.

While some aspects of the study findings align with traditional perspectives of educational leadership, complementary understandings of public secondary school head teachership in the Central East Education Division and the Central West Education Division stand out as well. On the one hand, among the aspects that align with traditional educational leadership perspectives are the affective-continuance-normative componential commitment, the importance of instructional supervision, and the quest to describe headteachers' commitment.

There is an expectation that headteachers should be dedicated to their duties. That notion has roots in the history of Western education in Malawi, which has Christian missionary influence (Matemba, 2021; Salanjira, 2021). The expectation of commitment to head teachership as to God is ingrained in society, although it is waning with the setting in of global culture. The expectation of dedication to duty by society forms the interface for connecting with the description of head teachership using the organisational commitment perspective.

The organisational commitment components are applicable to the public secondary system in the Central East Education Division and the Central West Education Division. The results showed that the overall commitment dimensions among headteachers were continuance and normative. The observation that female head teachers, exclusive of their male counterparts, confessed affective, continuance, and normative commitment was very unique and required the attention of the headteachers themselves and authorities. Although there are fewer female headteachers than males in the Central East Education Division and the Central West Education Division, the commitment of the minority was more desirable than that of the majority.

On the other hand, the use of the organisational commitment questionnaire and the content analysis grid to describe headteachers' commitment, the categorisation of headteachers into service periods, and the categorisation of headteachership development into AISE-EISE-CUISS stages were notable complementary concepts to theory and practice. In the field of organisational leadership, the commitment of employees has traditionally been tested using the organisational commitment questionnaire (Masood et al., 2016; Sharma & Sinha, 2015; Rafiei, A., and Navid, 2014; Dorgham, 2012; Cohen, 2006; Hackett et al., 1994; Dunham, Grube, & Castenada, 1994; Meyer, Allen, & Gellatly, 1990; Mowday, 1998). The basic concept in the organisational commitment questionnaire is that employees' psychological attachment to their organisations has affective, continuance, and normative components.

The focus of the findings is on the need for in-service training, thus "any type of skill, physical or technical [training], but is commonly used to define the soft skills relating to leadership, motivation, effective communication, management, and administration of resources, among others" (Chepkole et al., 2017, p. 431) for headteachers aligned with educational leadership theory and practice. According to the literature, in-service training remains an important activity for improving institutional wellbeing and performance. (Msamba et al., 2023; Amara, 2020; Chepkole et al., 2017; Junejo et al., 2017). Headteachers require tailored training to fill their skills and knowledge gaps. While a personalised performance improvement programme would be ideal, a headteacher's developmental stage-informed intervention is an efficient approach because a group of headteachers with similar needs would be targeted.

The study's finding that headteachership developed through stages is significant because it provides a framework by which headteachers could be categorised for in-service training. Much as emphasis on the importance of in-service is traditional in educational leadership, the idea of having headteachers be trained according to their developmental stages is complementary to the three-component organisational commitment model in describing headteachership.

However, the study shows that headteachers' performance in checking instructional supervision documents is described by a symmetrical distribution when outliers are removed. That contradicts the notion that from mid-age, "physical [,] cognitive [,] and performance [age-related] changes are marked almost entirely by decline" (Cavanagh et al., 2020, p. 62) because the headteacher population involved in the study is aged. The service periods were based on the length of headteachership in years, so that in the 1 to 5-year service period, for example, headteachers were heterogeneous by age.

The implications of this finding are that the service period for a specific task mattered more than the age of those involved in the task. In that regard, headteachers' instructional supervision performance shows that the AISE-EISE-CUISS developmental stage progression is true for the headteachership task and not just age. Rejuvenation of performance occurred upon appointment to a headteachership position, regardless of age.

6.4.0 : Recommendations for Application

The implications of the study results guide recommendations for application to the ministry of education and education division officers, education policy makers, researchers, academia, and headteachers. The recommendations for application are meant to guide policy makers, generate interest in researching on the secondary school education enterprise, closing the researcher-practitioner gap, improving succession planning, institutionalising public secondary school headteachers' commitment description from the three-component organisational commitment model, service period, and post-entry headteachership developmental stages.

6.4.1 : Institutionalising Headteachership as a Unique in Education Policy

There is a need for education policies to acknowledge headteachership as a unique responsibility that requires formal initial training for newly appointed headteachers and formal need-based continuous professional development for serving headteachers (Abonyi, 2024; Bakokonyane, 2022; Bush, 2021; Mowat, 2020; Mughal et al., 2020). That acknowledgement will form the bedrock of justification for initiating and institutionalising good practices to improve headteachership. That responsibility rests on the shoulders of informed educational policy formulators.

6.4.2 : Creating Researcher-Practitioners among Headteachers

As discourse on the benefits of research-based decision-making in education continues in attempts to close the gap between researchers and practitioners and to entrench research-based policy formulation and decision-making, there is a need to generate interest in researching and utilising research findings among public secondary school headteachers in Malawi, especially in the Central East Education Division and the Central West Education Division. With public secondary school headteachers becoming researcher-practitioners, the lamented gap between researchers and practitioners will be easy to fill, and the utilisation of research findings to make decisions about educational practice will be easier. Narrowing the researcher-practitioner gap could be done through the deliberate creation of researcher-practitioner partnerships.

The idea of a researcher-practitioner partnership is like research-practice partnerships (RPPs). According to Coburn et al. (2013, p. 48), RPPs are ways created by policymakers, research financiers, and researchers to ensure that educational practice problem solutions were research-findings-driven and that research was educational practice-driven by making research findings accessible to practitioners and narrowing the researcher-practitioner gap. The RPPs are a good idea, but the practitioner would still wait for access to research findings. In the proposed researcher-practitioner arrangement, public secondary school headteachers will themselves be researchers as well as users of research findings in favour of educational improvement. In that way, headteachers, as practitioners, would not have to wait for accessibility to research findings to be granted because they (headteachers) would already be accessing the findings as researcher-practitioners.

Probably, conservatists on the importance of maintaining a reasonable researcher-practitioner gap would argue that headteachers would not find time to lead schools if they

engaged in research. Pragmatists would counterargue and say school leadership is research on its own; thus, head teachership is about identifying a problem to solve and reporting in a research study format. That perspective should be rekindled in headteachers, and the literature review that goes with research procedures would force headteachers to read educational research articles, which would keep them informed. In addition, using action research for procedural expediency, head teachers could engage in the traditional research procedure during students' vacation periods. Financing of research and practice could be done through the public secondary school budgets, and research coordinators at the education division offices could facilitate the approval of research proposals.

The creation of researcher-practitioners as a practice in the Central East Education Division and Central West Education Division would spark headteachers' interest in research, encourage the use of research findings for decision-making, narrow the researcher-practitioner gap, and make public secondary schools centres for headteachership knowledge creation and utilisation. With refreshers in how to conduct research as part of continuous professional development and in-service training, many aspects of public secondary school headteachership would be critically looked at to improve school leadership. Since the researcher-practitioners are the headteachers, there is a need for effective succession planning to ensure public secondary schools in the Central East Education Division and Central West Education Division have the headteachers for the deliberate creation of researcher-practitioners' vacancies.

6.4.3 : Succession Planning

One of the ways to ensure the optimal realisation of institutional goals is through the placement of the appropriate workforce talent where it suits best. According to Sukayri (2016, p. 4), succession planning "is the process of pinpointing key needs for intellectual talent and leadership throughout the organisation over time and preparing people for present and future

work responsibilities." Unplanned succession, or succession by chance, takes institutions unaware and leads to unsuccessful transfers of expertise and good institutional culture from predecessors (Ejakpomewhe, 2017). According to Sukayri (2016, p. iii), unplanned succession leads to the "potential loss of institutional memory and interruption of knowledge transfer and business continuity in... leadership positions and other crucial functions." Loss of institutional memory, expertise, and knowledge because of poor succession arrangements for head teachers in public secondary schools in the Central East Education Division and the Central West Education Division ought to be avoided at all costs. Such decisions about workforce placement for optimal utilisation of talent are strategised through succession planning.

The turnover rate among teachers in Malawi is so high that it blurs the prospects of improving access to high-quality teaching and learning services in public secondary schools. According to Kayuni & Tambulasi (2007, p. 90), "The largest number of 360 secondary school teachers who left [teaching] was attributed to resignation, while only 64 were due to retirement." Further, Kafumbu (2019) notes that "in the years 2013 to 2014, the Southern Region of Malawi (which encompasses four education divisions) lost 215 teachers out of a total of 4,323 (5%) and 359 teachers out of 5,943 (6%), respectively." The adverse effect of increasing teacher turnover is that it shrinks the pool of talent from which public secondary school headteachers are drawn. The aged headteacher population and the laments from newly appointed headteachers about being taken by surprise at headteachership are exhibitions of the need for appropriate succession planning practices.

The aged headteacher population (mean = 52, median = 54, and mode = 55) in Central East Education Division and Central West Education Division, where the retirement age is 60 years, poses a management risk that would be mitigated by effective succession planning. Although the adoption and even adaptation of research-generated solutions, including

leadership succession planning, is at a snail's pace in educational organisations (Parfitt, 2017), Effective succession planning avoids random and serendipitous leadership replacements but ensures intentional and strategic leadership replacement that addresses current leadership needs and creates interfaces for the extension of good practices into the future while maintaining organisational competitiveness (Zafar & Akhtar, 2020; Fusarelli et al., 2018; Calareso, 2013).

While there are as many leadership succession models as there are authors, consensus has been reached on some elements of a leadership succession plan (Arrieta et al., 2022; Jackson & Allen, 2022; Griffith et al., 2019) that could avoid a public secondary school leadership succession crisis. The elements of a succession plan are a clear and comprehensive description of organisational vision, mission, and goals; talent identification; talent nurturing; and talent retention. The other element worth including, as Bush (2018) recommends, is the formal training of potential headteachers in educational leadership in general and public secondary school headteachership in particular.

6.4.4 : Public Secondary School Profiles

Succession planning starts with a comprehensive description of an organisation's vision, mission statement, goals, strengths and areas that require improvement. Such documents containing brief institutional key information are known as organisational profiles (Jay-cen, 2020; Sainio et al., 2020). Given that the description of an organisation is expressed through the clarity of its vision, mission statements, and alignment of its goals, it is imperative that those managing the organisation be thoroughly acquainted with them. Knowledge of these organisational characteristics lays the basis for highlighting the key organisational positions and the number of such positions. Coupled with the knowledge of key positions and the required competencies (Arrieta et al., 2022; Tucker, 2020) is the need for forecasting vacancies

that would be created within a specified period as well. The organisational description of its vision, mission, and goals is crucial in succession planning.

Public secondary school profiles are very important, even in a centralised education system where it is assumed that schools in the same category—national secondary school (NSS), conventional district boarding secondary school (CDBSS), conventional district double stream secondary school (CDDSSS), conventional district day secondary school (CDDSS), and community day secondary school (CDSS)—are the same. Every school is unique in several aspects. In this digital era, public secondary school profiles should be put online in a nationwide network. That would assist head teachers posted to a new school to have information about the new school readily available for preparation. The current practice of posting a headteacher without school information only leads to frustration among headteachers, teachers, and students.

6.4.5.0 : Identifying Talent

The next step in succession planning after establishing the key positions to be filled is identifying the suitable people to take up the positions in the vacant posts, commonly known as "talent identification". Talent is a concept that is yet to be defined to clear up the ambiguity it carries (McDonnell et al., 2023; Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2013). For the sake of this discussion, talent is the embodiment of innate, observable, and modifiable qualities of supernatural abilities in people that can be activated and converted to high performance in an organisation. Such a definition of "talent" mirrors a subject-object-potential-fit perspective of the construct (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2013; Coulson-Thomas, 2012; Tansley, 2011; Silzer & Dowell, 2010; Pfeffer & Sutton, 2006; Gagné, 2000). In this case, talent is task-specific.

There are several strategies for talent identification, such as a random and serendipitous traditional advertisement of a job and applying for a job, referrals, organisation-based talent development and appraisal, organisational marketing, competency recruitment, and learning agility (Tucker, 2020; Karimi et al., 2028; De Meuse, 2017; Makram et al., 2017; Calareso, 2013; Lombardo & Eichinger, 2000). Each of the above-listed talent identification strategies has strengths and weaknesses.

While the random and serendipitous strategy is a non-strategy because of its spontaneity, the traditional advertisement-application-shortlist-interview strategy insulates an organisation from the external talent effect and therefore promotes conservatism in organisational culture. Although less costly due to in-sourcing, the maintenance of organisational culture through conservativism may be detrimental to institutional competitiveness given the ever-changing operational demands (Jindal & Shaikh, 2021; Karimi et al., 2018) and generational work-ethic gaps such as traditional-digital era dissonance, which, according to Foung et al. (2019), requires reorientation of organisational values to solve.

Further, talent identification through referrals involves employees of an organisation recommending "talented" persons they know to be considered for recruitment to fill existing vacancies (Srivastava et al., 2016; Philips & Roper, 2009). According to Karimi et al. (2018), the advantage of using the referral strategy of identifying talent for succession planning is that "current members of the organisation are better able to identify the right workers for vacancies and tend to always introduce the best people so that their credibility is not compromised." While appreciating the stated advantage, the strategy may be prone to "halo" effects and corrupt practices and result in recruiting people that would require re-training. In contexts where geopolitics are given space, the referral strategy would initiate the division of an organisational

workforce into informal groupings based on counterproductive characteristics, which would consequently contribute to institutional ruin.

The other talent identification strategy within the fold of succession planning is learning agility. According to Lombardo & Eichinger (2000, p. 323), learning agility is "the willingness and ability to learn new competencies in order to perform under first-time, tough, or different conditions." As further characterised in De Meuse (2017), the focus of learning agility is on human behaviour, the level of cognitive processing, and the ability to apply lessons learnt from one context to novel situations. As a talent identification strategy within succession planning, learning agility constitutes human behaviour, cognitive processing, and application context institutional experience spans through which employees are passed for observation of leadership potential.

There are four dimensions of leadership propensity observed in employees: people, change, results, and mental (De Meuse, 2017; Lombardo & Eichinger, 2000). People agility answers the extent of self-awareness and its use as the basis for effective and humane interaction with others. Change agility tests the level of curiosity, tension for trying new ideas, and the yearn for mastery through persistence; results agility is about an individual’s focus for results in tough, challenging environments while inspiring and giving confidence to others; and mental agility observes the extent of creativity in problem solving, the ease with which complexity and ambiguity are handled, and the ability to articulate one’s ideas to others. From a succession planning point of view, learning agility is not only a talent identification process through observation but a performance appraisal undertaking as well (Lombardo & Eichinger, 2000) that is geared towards leadership potential identification.

Being the product of longitudinal studies about the predictivity of exposure to developmental opportunities, work experiences, and practical intelligence (Sternberg, 1997;

Sternberg et al., 1995; Howard & Bray, 1988; Bray et al., 1974) on employee productivity, learning agility aligns with the overall closed systematic-individualised talent management approach (De Meuse, 2017; Karimi et al., 2018). Learning agility requires the deliberate exposure of employees to as many varied institutional experiences as possible for the collection of data, which, upon analysis, could inform the potential that the observed persons have to take up key leadership posts in the organisation.

Although learning agility, as a talent identification strategy, has been noted to have predictive robustness for leadership performance and leader potential ($\bar{r} = 0.47$ and $\bar{r} = 0.48$, respectively) (De Meuse, 2017), the strategy carries a closed-process identity. Persons observed to have leadership potential are already employees in the organisational system. As such, the likelihood of organisational inefficiencies reproducing and operating within organisation-bound creativity is high since learning agility protects organisational culture from external talent influence. In addition, excessive use of the strategy could provide space for the "halo" effect due to observer-observed familiarity. In such a case, reproduction of inefficiencies, resistance to external innovative influence, and the possibility of identifying the wrong successors create challenges in coping with novelty, such as the effects of globalisation.

6.4.5.1 : Identifying Headteachership Talent. Education authorities at headquarters and divisions should go beyond the traditional way of identifying headteachers. Identification of potential head teachers to fill vacant headteachership posts in CEED and CWED public secondary schools, just as is the practice in Malawi, is through the closed traditional internal advertisement-applied-shortlist-interview-promotion strategy (Karimi et al., 2018; Malawi Government, 2001) and an internal appointment on administrative arrangement. The advertisement limits those who can apply for a headteachership vacancy by experience, academic qualification, and grade. The shortlisted candidates are engaged by an interview

panel for about an hour to answer questions. Through that, employees that could fill vacant headteacher posts are identified. Such a strategy aligns with the systematic-individualised talent identification process (Koh et al., 2024; Jindal & Shaikh, 2021; Prieto-Ayuso et al., 2020).

According to Chivwati-Gondwe (n.d.), with reference to circular letters PSC/05/2/13 dated June 30, 1997, and PSC/05/11/84 dated July 23, 1984, the formal path to headteachership is initiated upon the existence of headteacher post vacancies. In consequence of the existence of a headteacher post-vacancy, an advertisement is issued by the Teaching Service Commission for those meeting the personal specifications to apply, thus recruiting, according to Abbas et al. (2021) and Paillé (2019). Those who qualify get shortlisted and are called to attend interviews; thus, the selection process, according to Gallardo-Gallardo et al. (2020) and Kravariti & Johnston (2020). Following the interview results, those selected are offered the posts. Teachers who become head teachers following the promotion to substantive head teachership posts have their salaries appropriately adjusted upward.

However, there is no empirical study on record that has been done to correlate head teacher selection interview scores with the performance of identified candidates who have filled the advertised posts. Partly, the rarity of correlational studies to determine the predictive validity of the traditional internal advertisement-applied-shortlist-interview-promotion strategy stems from the difficulty in accessing interview results because such data are treated as "confidential". Confirmation of the traditional internal advertisement-applied-shortlist-interview-promotion strategy as a talent identification process or just a traditional procedure for filling vacant posts is yet to be made. The danger of failure to probe into the "confidential" is the possibility of blindly sustaining a practice that perpetuates inefficiencies, which are the

root causes of public secondary school leadership in the Central East Education Division and the Central West Education Division in Malawi being left to chance.

Apart from the formal traditional internal advertisement-applied-shortlist-interview-promotion strategy, some new headteachers are appointed “on administrative arrangement”, thus a teacher, head of department, or a deputy head teacher being appointed as headteacher even when he or she is below the grade of the post. Such appointments use several succession planning strategies except the formal traditional internal advertisement-applied-shortlist-interview-promotion strategy, thus referrals, organisation-based talent development and appraisal, organisational marketing, competency recruitment, and learning agility. Headteachers identified in that manner are said to be appointed *"on administrative arrangement,"* which is like a temporary appointment, although it is not rare to have one permanently holding a headteacher’s post on administrative arrangement. However, the experience one has as a headteacher in administrative arrangements is an advantage during formal promotional interviews.

Currently, there is no study to compare the performance of the formally promoted headteachers with that of those appointed “on administrative arrangement” in the Central East Education Division and the Central West Education Division. In the study by Ali et al. (2019), it was concluded that headteachers who were appointed with less formal identification performed better than those formally promoted. Therefore, it is recommended that the current vacancy-filling strategy be critically examined within the context of talent identification to evaluate the reliability and predictive validity of the traditional internal advertisement-applied-shortlist-interview-promotion strategy for talent identification when appointing or promoting new headteachers in CEED and CWED. That will be an effort towards ensuring high-quality

public secondary school leadership access for students, regardless of the category of secondary school.

6.4.5.2 : Nurturing Talent. Within succession planning lies the importance of nurturing talent. Nurturing is caring for a phenomenon to encourage growth or development. Therefore, talent nurturing is an in-organisationally inclusive construct that implies a deliberate organisational process of creating a flexible but vision-directed culture that allows for the excitement and activation of innate observable and modifiable qualities of extraordinary abilities in employees to the advantage of high performance in assigned tasks (Kaliannan et al., 2023; Jindal & Shaikh, 2021; De Meuse, 2017; Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2013). Whether inclusive or exclusive, talent nurturing is an internal process because it takes place within an organisational context that is defined by a specific vision, mission, and goals. All the employees are exposed to training and varied organisational tasks for experience while being observed. Inclusive talent nurturing is meant to create a pool of talent for an organisation to source candidates for succession purposes.

The subjective-inclusive perception of talent nurturing holds all employees in an organisation as embodiments of extraordinary abilities in favour of high achievement. As a result, organisation-wide nurturing practices apply to all employees in order to create a pool of talent (Jooss, 2021), from which succession needs are sourced when vacancies are created by retirement, resignation, dismissal, and death as sources of turnover. When the objective-exclusive perception of extraordinary abilities in favour of an organisation's competitive edge reigns, the employees identified as embodying the targeted extra-ordinalities are exposed to several activities in the organisation to develop the talent in them. perception of talent nurturing holds,

There are organisational attributes that facilitate the activation and growth of innate extraordinary abilities in employees. Such organisational cultural attributes include organisational openness, clear goals for continuous learning, clear mentoring arrangements, automation of routine tasks, performance reviews, allowing for flexibility, raising the expectation of mastery of job tasks, and preparation for the future (Bridger & Gannaway, 2024; Masenya, 2022). Organisations that yearn to have a competitive edge would ensure that the talent embodied in their employees is encouraged to grow.

6.4.5.3 : Retaining Talented Headteachers. According to Ott et al. (2018), retaining talent is about "all the activities and practices used by an organisation to prevent the departure of [the stock flows of knowledge, expertise, and confidential information]." Since employees are more than factors of production but are in-institutional working talent (Kehinde, 2012), thus "a stock of flows of knowledge available to an organisation" (Mwanzi et al., 2017, p. 2), there is a need for such talent to be retained in an organisation. Departure of such stock flows of knowledge, expertise, and organisational confidentialities is not only a drain on the organisation's factors of production competitiveness but also leads to the creation of stiff organisational competitors. Departure of effective leaders through voluntary-dysfunctional turnover (Alexander, 2020) leaves an organisation with aftershocks.

Turnovers are in two basic categories: voluntary and involuntary, where voluntary turnover is employee-initiated and involuntary turnover is organisation-initiated (Burrows et al., 2922; Sowa, 2021; Thome & Greenwald, 2020). It is further noted that turnovers have both functionality and dysfunctionality for organisations, including secondary schools. The determination of the dysfunctionality of a turnover is shown by its disruptivity (extent of disruptiveness) to organisational functionality. When the departure of an employee enhances

organisational operations, that turnover possesses high functionality. Therefore, turnover disruptivity is inversely related to organisational functionality.

In the context of this study, when a headteacher is dismissed (involuntary turnover) because of incompetency, that turnover is meant to be functional because it is a way of concentrating education system talent by removing non-talent to improve school performance. On the contrary, the resignation of an effective head teacher (voluntary turnover) is dysfunctional when the departed school becomes poorly managed as a result. In this case, the voluntary-dysfunctional turnover is of education system concern because school progress is adversely affected. Unfortunately, it is voluntary turnover that is mostly practised in Malawi's education system, and the talented teachers who depart are the targets of the scramble for talent.

Some of the factors that influence voluntary and dysfunctional turnover are skills-task mismatch, work overload, poor communication, job insecurity, lack of opportunities for talent nurturing, lack of performance-based motivation, partiality in employee treatment, lack of accountability, and low salaries (Tshwane et al., 2023; Lazzari et al., 2022; Alexander, 2020; Skelton et al., 2020). Globalisation has contributed to making organisations, such as schools, complex assemblages of employees. In the case of public secondary schools, the categorisation of secondary schools into several levels – national, conventional district day, conventional district boarding, and community day – adds to the complexities of public secondary schools.

It is therefore recommended that the Central East Education Division, the Central West Education Division, and other authorities responsible for crafting educational policies strive to find solutions to the causes of teacher turnover in order to retain talent that has the capacity to improve headteachers' commitment to instructional supervision. Such solutions should address lapses in skills-task match, workload, communication, job security, availability of

opportunities for talent nurturing, performance-based motivation, employee treatment fairness, accountability, and salaries.

6.4.5.4 : Categorising Headteachers by Headteachership Developmental Stages. Education authorities at headquarters and education division levels should categorise public secondary school head teachers in appropriate headteachership developmental stages to predict human capital needs and encourage head teachers to work hard towards improvement. Qualitative data analysis results categorise headteachers into post-entry developmental stages, thus AISE, EISE, and CUISS. The post-entry head teachership developmental stages are not hard-edged, and each stage covers several service periods. The lack of hard edges suggests fluid boundaries between the stages. Therefore, the post-entry headteachership developmental stages should not be applied as prescriptive or suggestive.

The suggestive nature of the post-entry headteachership stages accommodates variations of the thematic descriptive codes shown in Figure 6 that reflect basic teacher-training backgrounds, given the many secondary school teacher training institutions existing in Malawi. The teachers form a pool of human resources from which headteachers are sourced. The differences in the teachers' training backgrounds imply variations in basic knowledge gaps about public secondary school headteachership, which require complex newly appointed headteachers' orientation strategies.

6.4.5.5 : Orientating Newly Appointed Headteachers. A recommendation is made in this study to the responsible authorities at education headquarters and division levels that newly appointed headteachers must undergo a comprehensive orientation course before taking up their positions in public secondary schools in the Central East Education Division and Central West Education Division. Given the variations in basic knowledge gaps, the orientation should aim at levelling the starting line of head teachership for new appointees. The probable gaps to be addressed should incorporate issues from educational leadership expert knowledge. The

orientation activity should comprise theoretical and practical knowledge about the public secondary school as a rational organisation, theories of leadership and management, the application of leadership theories in practical situations through case studies, instructional supervision, and organisational diagnosis. In addition, the newly appointed headteachers should be introduced to the applicability of the laws governing public secondary education services and the associated educational policies.

Orientation in the areas listed above will assist in removing the fear expressed by newly appointed headteachers about a lack of knowledge about public secondary school leadership skills. The knowledge the newly appointed headteachers will acquire will contribute to their confidence, with which they will start public secondary school headteachership. The orientation should be done upon appointment or promotion to the headteachership grade, thus at the onset of the 1–5 service period.

6.4.5.6 : Planning Headteachers' In-service Training by Service Periods. Further, planning officers at education divisions should ensure that every headteacher's service period includes periodic in-service training. The goal of service-period-targeted in-service training should be to ensure that no headteacher is left out of professional development to improve public secondary school leadership, which in turn ensures that 'no child is left behind' (Gatcho et al., 2024). The objective of the service-period in-service training should be to motivate headteachers to confess affective commitment and improve their implemented commitment to instructional supervisory roles to the highest expected level. The planning of in-service training according to headteachers' service period categories is meant to meet the headteachers' commonalities in professional needs and create forums where headteachers will share experiences in headteachership.

Headteachers' in-service training should be tailored to meet headteachers' professional needs in various service periods. While headteachers' orientation should be done upon

appointment to the post of headteacher in the acquaintance with instructional supervision elements head teachership developmental stage, the introduction of skills in the experimentation with instructional supervision elements stage should be done as well. Such trainings will help to saturate headteachers' acquaintance with instructional supervision elements in the headteachership developmental stage with insights about good school leadership practices and create tension in them for improvement in the experimentation with instructional supervision elements stage of headteachership development.

The desire to improve will facilitate a quick and smooth headteacher's developmental stage transition to experimentation with instructional supervision elements. While head teachers at the experimentation with instructional supervision elements headteachership developmental stage will be saturated with knowledge and skills in that stage, they should be given insights into the creation and utilisation of instructional supervision systems stage for motivation to improve. Further, head teachers at the creation and utilisation of instructional supervision systems stage will be focused on issues of that stage and refreshed on knowledge and skills in all the stages of headteachership development.

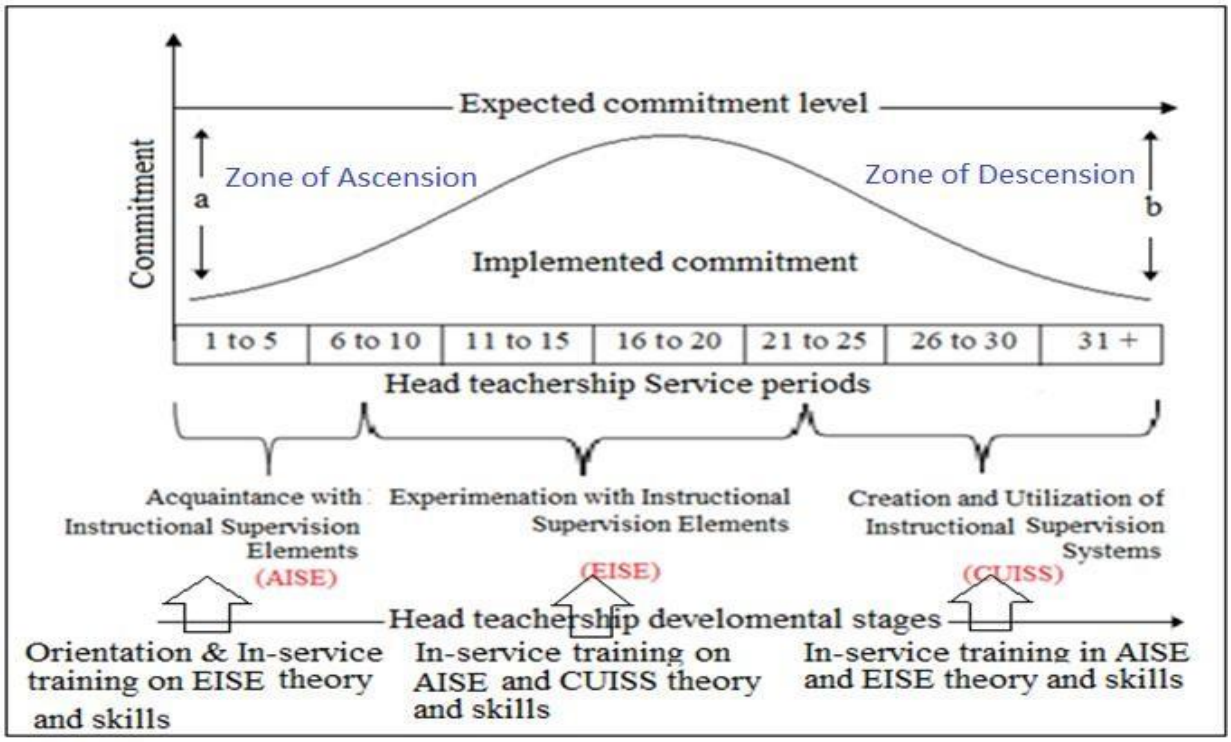
The study recommends that division education planning officers, in corroboration with the department of quality assurance, previously known as the inspectorate, should ensure that service-period-targeted in-service training is coupled with continuous head teachers' performance appraisal and support to motivate the headteachers to sustain their desire to improve in institutional leadership. Where a headteacher's assessment will reveal performance reflecting the acquaintance with instructional supervision elements in the headteachership developmental stage, the headteacher should be informed and motivated to improve for entry into the next stage. When a headteacher displays attributes in the experimentation with instructional supervision elements in the developmental stage, more support would be required

for improvement to transition into the next stage. In addition, the promotion and succession of head teachers should be guided by the stage competencies they display to match the size and type of public secondary schools. With such motivation and support arrangements, head teachers will be encouraged to take in-service training seriously and have the desire to continuously improve.

6.4.5.7 : Noting Periods of Noticeable Commitment Changes for Improvement. The education authorities at headquarters and education divisions should establish zones of noticeable changes in the headteachers and develop personalised support programmes to assist headteachers in developing their knowledge and skills. Periods of noticeable headteachership positive development and decline across the confessed and implemented commitment continuum among headteachers labelled a and b, thus the zones of ascension and zone of descension, respectively, in Figure 6-1, have several implications that should guide application in the effort to keep school leadership ever up. The zones of ascension and descension are not static occurrences but are dynamic throughout public secondary school headteachership. Such confessed and implemented commitment dynamism should be monitored with constant appraisal that is followed up with timely feedback and support.

Further, the application of the headteachers' in-service training based on service periods should be tailored to help identify headteachers for novelty in executing emerging tasks in the education system, as suggested in Figure 6-1. The commitment ascension period is a time when headteachers’ commitment will rise fast since they are newly appointed and have a lot of enthusiasm to be effective. The optimal level of commitment development would be achieved through the orientation of newly appointed headteachers and in-service training.

Figure 6-1 *Suggested In-service Training Planning Guide*



On the other hand, the descension commitment period, labelled *b* in Figure 6-1, would require a lot of in-service training to bring back enthusiasm in the long-serving headteachers. Further, the headteachers at the peak of their commitment require sustenance of their commitment level with in-service training that would remind them of their acquaintance with

instructional supervision elements, head teachership developmental stage theories and skills, and encourage them to create and utilise instructional supervision systems.

6.4.5.8 : Rejuvenating Headteachers' Commitment in the Zone of Descension. The study further recommends to the officers at the education headquarters and education divisions that headteachers with a service period beyond 21 years, the period of change when headteachers' commitment starts to decline, either be assigned tasks on vertical or horizontal mobility other than headteachership to rejuvenate their organisational commitment, or they should be targeted with a lot of in-service training to rekindle their enthusiasm for their undertakings.

This recommendation is informed by the results, which suggest that upon being given a new task, an employee is fired up to learn about the new task. Further, the results show that more human capital investment in an employee positively relates to improvement in performance, in corroboration with several studies (Goldin, 2024; Anwar & Abdullah, 2021; Dachner et al., 2021; Liao et al., 2021). As this study has shown, headteachers' implemented commitment starts to decline after 20 years of headteachership. Retaining headteachers beyond 20 years of headteachership becomes an involuntary-dysfunctional talent management activity since side-bet diminishing returns could make them think that improvement in commitment and performance may not add anything to the investments already made (Ozyilmaz, 2020; Haryono et al., 2020); therefore, sluggishness starts to manifest.

6.5.0 : Recommendation for Future Research

There is a need to break the public secondary school head teachership research lull noted in Central East Education Division, Central West Education Division, and Malawi. The recommendations for future research given in this report are related to the study of headteachers' commitment to instructional supervision. The recommendation for the extension

of research about public secondary school head teachership facets is premised on the assurance that the study findings presented in this report are unique and contribute to the body of knowledge in the field of organisational studies and educational leadership in general and to public secondary school leadership in particular.

Following the verification of the uniqueness of the findings, recommendations for their application in future research are made. The unique findings of the study, thus post-entry head teachership developmental stages, implemented commitment, confessed organisational commitment, and critical points in the headteachers' service period for in-service training, create interfaces from which extensions of new knowledge on public secondary school headteachers' commitment to instructional supervision could be created to better understand head teachership through comparative and correlational studies.

6.5.1 : Uniqueness of the Study Findings

A Google search for studies on complementary concepts to organisational commitment, headteachership developmental stages, how headteachers develop, headteacher career development, implemented organisational commitment, and the use of service periods to guide stratified random sampling presented in Appendices 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 showed no studies already undertaken on a topic that mirrored the concepts listed above. The rarity of literature on the listed topics indicated the need for research in the area of public secondary school head teachership in the Central East Education Division and Central West Education Division.

However, a search on headteachers' career development resulted in the closest study to the current findings on headteachership stages. The study is on English female headteachers (McKillop & Moorosi, 2017), where English female headteachers' motivation to become headteachers is traced to pre-entry and post-entry experiences. In the study by McKillop & Moorosi (2017), English female headteachers are noted to have gone through three stages:

formation, accession, and incumbency: spin from pre-entry to post-entry. The study on English female headteachers shows that headteachers could be made through motivation, from which human capital investment picks up. That is the starting point for talent identification.

Therefore, the finding that public secondary school headteachers' confessed commitment reflects the three-component organisational commitment typology is an indication that the construct is researchable. This study should be replicated in the other four education divisions, namely the Northern Education Division (NED), South East Education Division (SEED), Shire Highlands Education Division (SHED), and South West Education Division (SWED), for informed conclusions about headteachers' commitment to instructional supervision in Malawi public secondary schools.

6.5.2 : Public and Private Headteachership Comparative Studies

Post-entry head teachership developmental stages are generally an employee categorisation concept that emerges from the qualitative strand of the study. Given that the secondary education system in Malawi is inclusive of private secondary schools, it is worthwhile to interrogate private secondary school headteachers' commitments for comparative descriptions. Such studies could be done at district, division, and national levels and could assume mono- or dual-philosophical underpinnings. That could create opportunities for a national education secondary head teachership policy that could guide both public and private secondary schools towards fulfilling the national vision about education.

6.5.3 : Longitudinal Studies of Headteachers' Commitments

This study is a cross-sectional study where data from different participants in different working environments was collected at a set time and used to draw conclusions about the studied phenomenon. While such an inquiry design is inexpensive and quick for results and easy for hypotheses development, among other advantages, conclusions are only associational

and not causal and can let in bias (van Berkel & Kostakos, 2021; Wang & Cheng, 2020; Hallinger et al., 2020); on the other hand, longitudinal studies, observations of specific participants over a long time, though expensive, establish causal relationships between the observed phenomena and confounding factors (Veldhorst et al., 2023; Salmela-Aro et al., 2021). Longitudinally studying headteachers' commitment would add to the causal relationship between head teachership and school contexts.

6.5.4 : Measures of Implemented Commitment

There is a need for more research on implemented commitment as a construct newly introduced in the public secondary school headteachership literature. Implemented commitment focusses on what an employee actually does to actualise the organisational vision. Key organisational performance areas should be identified, and performance scales should be decided. The participants should then be assessed based on their practical performance in the key organisational areas.

6.5.5 : Confessed Organisational Commitment Dimensions

There is a need for more research on confessed commitment in public secondary school headteachership in the other education divisions in Malawi, namely the Northern Education Division, South East Education Division, Shire Highlands Education Division, and South West Education Division. Public headteachers' confessed commitment is a construct that requires further research attention to ascertain the extent to which the confessed commitment dimension reflects consistency in behaviours that enhance school quality improvement using a quasi-experimental approach. In this study, the commitment determined from the results of the organisational commitment questionnaire instrumentation is qualified as confessed because participants declare their commitment dimensionality by merely responding to the questionnaire items by picking responses on the Likert scale. The assumption is that when participants confess affective commitment, they will not leave the organisation, and their

performance will be profitable to the organisation (Suharto et al., 2019). That assumption is reflected in Meyer et al. (1989, p. 152): thus, "it is the nature of the commitment that counts."

However, Angle & Lawson (1994, p. 1539) posit that "the link between organisational commitment and performance may depend on the extent to which motivation rather than ability underlies performance." This post suggests that ability in employees is unlocked for actualisation by motivation. That ability-motivation relationship reflects the effect of the side-bet theory on the human capital theory. Public secondary school headteachers in the Central East Education Division and the Central West Education Division may have all the knowledge and skills required to lead their schools, but if they are not motivated, their human capital will assume intrinsic value or deliberately engage in soldiering (Merkle, 2023; Braverman, 2020) because of the diminishing side-bet effect on commitment.

It will take motivation imbedded in skills-task match, workload, communication, job security, availability of opportunities for talent nurturing, performance-based motivation, employee treatment fairness, accountability, and salaries (Thusi & Chauke, 2023; Ahmad, 2022) to unlock headteachers' human capital to its extrinsic value that advantages public secondary schools in Central East Education Division and Central West Education Division.

6.5.6 : Correlations between Headteachers' Commitment and Students' Achievements

This study recommends that research should be focused on correlating headteachers' commitment to instructional supervision with students' achievement as well. The ideal or expected commitment of headteachers' is expressed in education policy documents like the curriculum. With the ideal commitment, governments expect the learnt and implemented curriculum to be as good as the ideal curriculum; thus, headteachers, deputy headteachers, heads of departments, and students will do as expected, resulting in 'no learner being left behind' (VanTassel-Baska, 2018).

However, there are lapses between the ideal curriculum, on the one hand, and the implemented and learnt curriculum, on the other. In respect of head teachers' commitment, there are lapses in the ascension and descension zones, as detailed in Figure 6-1. The extent of the correlation between the two variables will reveal the areas where there is a need to improve school quality. Mixed-method research would not only establish the correlation between headteachers' commitment and students' achievement but also bring to light the likely related attitudes and opinions.

6.5.7 : Headteachers' Commitment and Education Division Managers' Leadership Styles

Literature on the effect of education division managers' leadership styles on headteachers confessed and implemented commitment in Central East Education Division and Central West Education Division specifically and in Malawi in general is not available yet. A research study on the two variables would go a long way towards not only understanding the relationship between education division managers and headteachers but also highlighting practical and theoretical aspects that affect students' achievement.

6.6.0 : Challenges and Solutions to the Recommendations for Practical Application and Future Research

There are foreseen challenges with the implementation of the recommendations for practical application and future research. Some of the challenges include the rarity of research on uniqueness of head teachership, human capital investment in educational policy, a lack of research skills in headteachers, and a lack of a forum dedicated to head teachership research, among others.

6.6.1 : Conservativity to Systemic Practices

The main barrier to the recommended practical applications lends itself to systemic conservatism in the Malawi secondary education system, in which public secondary school headteachers in the Central East and Central West Education Divisions operate. In several

ways, conservativity insulates public secondary school headteachers from human capital investment innovations meant to improve school quality as demanded by the contextual dynamism that has come with globalisation, which education systems need to adjust to (Edwards Jr., 2021; Rust & Jacob, 2021; Zajda, 2020).

Much as conservativism in education may result from the material phenomenon of globalisation, thus educational financing (Zajda, 2020), the political dimension of globalisation is the basis, as it reflects attitudes that are noted in the "actions and positions taken by states, which consists of a range of institutions that share the essential characteristics of authority and collectivity" (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010, p. 4). In that case, the main barrier to the application of the recommendations in this study is the attitude of indifference to innovation in the public secondary school system, reflected in educational policies and observed in practice.

Institutionalising headteachership as a specialised occupation and not just the extension of experience, the creation of researcher-practitioners, effective succession planning, the description of headteachers' commitment using the organisational commitment constructs, identifying, nurturing, and retaining headteachership talent, categorising headteachers by developmental stages and service periods, noting periods of noticeable headteachership changes, and rejuvenating headteachers' commitment to instructional supervision tasks may not require additional funding to implement but a positive attitude towards improving public secondary school quality. The way to break this barrier is to engage in a system-wide attitude change drive to thaw the system and open it up for the changes suggested in this study.

6.6.2 : Lack of Educational Policy to Ground Headteachership Uniqueness

The overarching challenge about the recommendations for future research is the absence of education policy that sees headteachership as a unique undertaking, "a specialist occupation," as Bush (2008, p. 3) coined it, that requires specialised training. The perception that teaching skills are adequate for headteachership is not exclusive to Malawi but many

countries in Africa and beyond (Álvarez-Álvarez, 2020; Koskei et al., 2020;). With such a perception, educational policies do not include attention to headteachership as a specialist occupation requiring adequate financing. Consequently, attempts to prepare headteachers through training and improve human capital for those already in service through continuous professional development activities are weak and ineffective (Barnett & Okilwa, 2020; Moorosi & Bush, 2019).

Educational policies should highlight the specialist occupation nature of headteachership to legitimise programs in favour of headteachership preparation and in-service training. In the absence of enabling educational policies, the private sector may not see the need to improve headteachership as a priority to support, and the desire to improve school quality will remain a dream. Therefore, the solution to the lack of headteachership-supporting education policies is to review the existing education policies in order to provide grounds for emphasis on appropriate headteachership preparation and continuous professional development.

6.6.3 : Need for Research Skills in Public Secondary School Headteachers

The rarity of research in headteachership is glaring in the Central East and Central West Education Divisions. This scenario exists, partly because headteachers' interrogation of their instructional supervision occupation to find, describe, and analyse problems does not meet procedural research requirements for publication. Consequently, the education system perceives educational research as exclusive to officials at the education headquarters and 'researchers' that are in the institutions of higher learning. That perception denies the education system the opportunity to benefit from headteachers. That perpetuates the culture of reproducing inefficiencies that characterise low school quality. It is the reliance on education headquarters and researchers from institutions of higher learning that has partly left yawning

public secondary school headteachership research rarity in Central East and Central West Education Divisions.

Further, there is a need to emphasise action research in public secondary school headteachership. When action research is talked about in education, it is often understood to apply to teachers in the teaching-learning interaction (Altinyelken & Hoeksma, 2021; Chua et al., 2020; Goos et al., 2020; Kafumbu, 2020; Korpershoek et al., 2020; Tamah et al., 2020; Manfra, 2019). The emphasis on teachers and learners and teaching-learning activities in action research is not misplaced since the importance of school leadership is second to teaching and learning activities in improving students' achievement (Leithwood et al., 2020; Suratman et al., 2020; Tobón et al., 2020).

However, being second only to teaching and learning activities does not suggest that headteachership should be ignored in research. Public secondary school headteachership requires action research attention as well for improvement. Reliance on classical research the approach would keep many headteachers at the fringes of research practice, and their occupation would remain unheard and unattended to. Public secondary school headteachers should invest in research skills.

6.6.4 : Barriers to Channels for Head teachership Research Dissemination

Research dissemination is a "planned process that involves consideration of target audiences, consideration of the settings in which research findings are to be received, and communicating and interacting with wider audiences in ways that will facilitate research uptake and understanding" (Ross-Hellauer et al., 2020, p. 1). Research findings dissemination channels are the communication arrangements where new knowledge from researchers (the source) and consumers (the audience) interface. According to Ashcraft et al. (2020), dissemination of research and the consequent findings that address identified knowledge gaps are informed by several theoretical frameworks, such as Diffusion of Innovation Theory (Wang

et al., 2023; Lee, 2021; Vargo et al., 2020). Social Marketing Theory (Hübscher, 2022), Mathematical Theory of Communication (Weaver & Shannon, 1963; Shannon, 1948), and the Matrix of Persuasive Communication (Dontcheva-Navratilova et al., 2020), among others.

Access to research dissemination channels motivates both researchers and the audience. Currently, there are both traditional and online formats of research dissemination channels in Malawi through which the government communicates with the public, including head teachers. The dissemination channels are characterised by bureaucratic procedures that make it difficult for head teachers to disseminate research findings. Such barriers make the research dissemination channels less user-friendly (Huberman, 2021; Ashcraft et al., 2020; Ross-Hellauer et al., 2020; Heng et al., 2020). Perhaps authorities have noted the challenge, and that is why it is recommended that innovations at the school level be disseminated at the school, cluster, and district chapters within the Malawi Secondary School Headteachers' Association establishment.

As a solution option, this study recommends that the Malawi Secondary School Head Teachers' Association strengthen its administrative structures at cluster, district, division, and national levels to create user-friendly channels through which head teachership innovations should be disseminated. That will motivate headteachers to engage in research to improve head teachership and increase access to published articles on head teachership by public secondary school headteachers in the Central East and Central West Education Divisions.

7.0: CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this mixed-method approach study in the Central East and Central West Education Divisions in Malawi was to explore headteachers' commitment to the instructional supervision descriptivity through application of the three-component commitment model (TCM) and note how practiced commitment and headteachers' opinions about instructional supervision become elements in the description of headteachers' commitment to instructional supervision. The study was footed on a compound framework comprising two frameworks, thus theoretical and conceptual. Participants for the study were selected using stratified random and strato-purposeful sampling strategies to align with respective positive and interpretive nature of the research problem that justified the mixed-method approach.

The instruments used to collect data were underpinned by polarised philosophical perspectives: positive and interpretive worldviews with respective objective and subjective epistemological stances. A headteachers' commitment to instructional supervision questionnaire and a content analysis grid were used to collect quantitative data while a semi-structured interview schedule was used to collect qualitative data that were respectively analysed statistically and thematically. The results formed the basis for testing the study hypotheses and answering the research questions.

An evaluation of the results showed that headteachers' commitment to instructional supervision, though complex a construct, was researchable and required a philosophical duality in perspective for theoretical and practical descriptions. The qualitative strand and the practised string of the study quantitative showed complementary perspectives from which headteachers' commitment to instructional supervision should more comprehensively be described. That complementarity of descriptions indicates that confessed commitment alone is not adequate but with practical evidence.

Further, the qualitative strand of the study has shown that headteachers' commitment to instructional supervision is not a one-stop, static acquisition of skills but develops over time. The observation aligns with the perception that public secondary headteachership is learnt, which is contrary to the notion that leaders are born. The findings highlight the need for headteachers in the Central East Education Division and the Central West Education Division to strive for perfection through learning to become better public secondary school leaders.

Still further, the results emerged the construct of post-entry headteachership developmental stages. The developmental stage transition starts with the acquaintance with instructional supervision elements, followed by experimentation with instructional supervision elements, and culminate at the creation and utilisation of instructional supervision systems stage. The head teachership developmental stages have been created from qualitative data and thematic analysis. An analytical iterative process resulted in categorising the identified codes into themes that yielded the post-entry head teachership developmental stages. The headteachership developmental stages perspective adds to the complementary description of headteachers' commitment to instructional supervision. Therefore, a headteacher's commitment could be described as affective-below minimum standards at acquaintance with instructional supervision elements stage. That description indicates the psychological parameters, the practical enthusiasm, and the professional needs the headteacher has with regards to instructional supervision.

The first null hypothesis that headteachers' commitment to instructional supervisory roles does not relate with headteachership service periods; the second null hypothesis that headteachers' attitudes towards instruction supervisory roles were constant throughout their headteachership service periods; and the third hypothesis that headteachers' commitment to instructional supervisory roles does not vary throughout headteachers' service period, have been rejected. Instead, the alternative hypothesis have been confirmed, thus Headteachers'

commitment to the instructional supervision role in Central East and Central West Education Divisions reflects the affective-normative-continuance commitment dimensionality; Headteachers' attitudes toward instruction supervision in Central East and Central West Education Divisions vary along their head teachership service periods; and Headteachers' commitment to instructional supervision in Central East and Central West Education Divisions varies along their headteachership service periods.

In addition, the study has answered the research question that guided the research. The questions were: To what extent does the headteachers' commitment to instructional supervision to headteachership service period in Central East and Central West Education; How do headteachers' attitudes towards instructional supervision in Central East and Central West Education Divisions vary along the head-teachership service period continuum; and How does the headteachers' commitment to instructional supervision in Central East and Central West Education Divisions change within head teachership service periods? Consequently, the purpose and objectives of the study were actualised.

Therefore, the study posts that headteachers' commitment to instructional supervision relates to the three-component commitment model, is dynamic, and has inter- and intra-service period variation with significance in service periods 6 to 10 (continuance commitment, 0.012), 11 to 15 (continuance commitment, 0.058 and normative, 0.085), 16 to 20 (continuance commitment, 0.045); and an aggregated 0.065 continuance and 0.045 normative commitments with a 'meeting minimum standards' practical commitment and within the experimenting with instructional supervision elements stage of headteacher development. Further, the study shows that almost all headteachers in all service periods practiced the implemented commitment. Perhaps lack of institutionalised headteachers' induction on appointment resulted in knowledge and skills gaps and the scare with-which novice headteachers received the appointment news. That indicates the need for need-based in-service training in instructional supervision as part

of human capital in headteachership. Still further, the study shows that categorising headteachers into service periods is a strategy for studying headteachers' commitment to instructional supervision with implemented commitment and the post-entry headteachership developmental stages (AISE, EISE, and CUISS) as complementary perspectives to the implemented instructional supervision commitment.

Since unlearning wrong practice tends to be more difficult than learning the right way at the beginning (Zhao et al., 2024), reliance on following the apprenticeship model (Wamba and Mgomezulu, 2015) may lead to the reproduction of wrong headteachership practices. The inverse relationship between the number of documents referred to when carrying out instructional supervision and the headteachers' service period, promotes dependence on the apprenticeship model of training newly appointed headteachers. The acquaintance with instructional supervision elements stage of headteachership is a missed opportunity to orient headteachers on good headteachership practice. Newly appointed headteachers are keen to learn about policies and good headteachership practices, but authorities expect the newly appointed headteachers to learn from those already in service.

Using the headteachership developmental stage, the skills of a headteacher and the associated challenges the headteacher would likely be facing could be predicted. It is like,

> *'Show me the developmental stage a head teacher is in; I will show you the human capital needs that headteacher has. Present to me the service period of a headteacher is in, I will show you the development stage the headteacher is in and the significant confessed commitment component the headteacher has and the likely instructional supervision the headteacher would be implementing.'*

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9.0: APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Google search engines

	Topic	Google search engine
1	Contestation in education policy formulation	https://scholar.google.com/scholar?q=contestation+in+education+policy+formulation&hl=en&as_sdt=2007&as_ylo=2018&as_yhi=2023
2	Criticisms of Human Capital Theories	https://scholar.google.com/scholar?hl=en&as_sdt=2007&as_ylo=2018&as_yhi=2023&q=criticisms+of+human+capital+theory&oq=Criticisms+of+Human
3	Dilemma in educational policy implementation	https://scholar.google.com/scholar?q=Dilemma+in+educational+policy+implementation&hl=en&as_sdt=2007&as_ylo=2018&as_yhi=2023
4	Education quality in the Sub-Saharan Region	https://scholar.google.com/scholar?q=Education+quality+in+sub-Sahara+Region&hl=en&as_sdt=2007&as_ylo=2018&as_yhi=2023
5	Educational knowledge and skills head teachers must have	https://scholar.google.com/scholar?q=Educational+knowledge+and+skills+head+teachers+must+have+&hl=en&as_sdt=2007&as_ylo=2018&as_yhi=2023
6	Femininity of the teaching professio	https://scholar.google.com/scholar?q=femininity+of+the+teaching+profession&hl=en&as_sdt=2007&as_ylo=2018&as_yhi=2023
7	Human capital investment vs turnover	https://scholar.google.com/scholar?q=Human+capital+investment+vs+turnover&hl=en&as_sdt=2007&as_ylo=2018&as_yhi=2023
8	Human capital theory	https://scholar.google.com/scholar?q=human+capital+theory&hl=en&as_sdt=2007&as_ylo=2018&as_yhi=2023
9	IMF influence on wages in developing countries	https://scholar.google.com/scholar?start=20&q=IMF+influence+on+wages+in+developing+countries&hl=en&as_sdt=2007&as_ylo=2018&as_yhi=2023
10	Impact of national labour laws on wages	https://scholar.google.com/scholar?start=20&q=Impact+of+national+labour+laws+on+wages&hl=en&as_sdt=2007&as_ylo=2018&as_yhi=2023
11	Importance of instructional supervision in education	https://scholar.google.com/scholar?q=importance+of+instructional+supervision+in+education&hl=en&as_sdt=2007&as_ylo=2018&as_yhi=2023
12	Inferential textual analysis	https://scholar.google.com/scholar?q=inferential+textual+analysis&hl=en&as_sdt=2007&as_ylo=2018&as_yhi=2023

13	Influence of headteachers job performance	https://scholar.google.com/scholar?q=influence+of+headteachers+job+performance&hl=en&as_sdt=2007&as_ylo=2018&as_yhi=2023
14	Leaders are made not born	https://scholar.google.com/scholar?q=leaders+are+made+not+born&hl=en&as_sdt=2007&as_ylo=2018&as_yhi=2023
15	North-south divide of education quality	https://scholar.google.com/scholar?q=North-south+divide+of+of+education+quality+&hl=en&as_sdt=2007&as_ylo=2018&as_yhi=2023
16	Organization-specific human capitalization vs turnover	https://scholar.google.com/scholar?q=Organization-specific+human+capitalization+vs+turnover&hl=en&as_sdt=2007&as_ylo=2018&as_yhi=2023
17	Public versus private education	https://scholar.google.com/scholar?q=public+vs+private+education&hl=en&as_sdt=2007&as_ylo=2018&as_yhi=2022
18	Seniority vs wages	https://scholar.google.com/scholar?q=seniority+vs+wage&hl=en&as_sdt=2007&as_ylo=2018&as_yhi=2023
19	Social identity	https://scholar.google.com/scholar?start=20&q=Social+identity+theory&hl=en&as_sdt=2007&as_ylo=2018&as_yhi=2023
20	Social Identity Theory	https://scholar.google.com/scholar?start=20&q=Social+identity+theory&hl=en&as_sdt=2007&as_ylo=2018&as_yhi=2023
21	Teacher quality and implementation of No child left behind implementation	https://scholar.google.com/scholar?hl=en&as_sdt=2007&as_ylo=2018&as_yhi=2023&q=Teacher+quality+and+implementation+of+No+child+left+behind+implementation&btnG=
22	War for talent	https://scholar.google.com/scholar?q=War+on+talent&hl=en&as_sdt=2007&as_ylo=2018&as_yhi=2023
23	What is motivation	https://scholar.google.com/scholar?start=20&q=What+is+motivation&hl=en&as_sdt=2007&as_ylo=2018&as_yhi=2023
24	What is motivation in the workplace	https://scholar.google.com/scholar?hl=en&as_sdt=2007&as_ylo=2018&as_yhi=2023&q=what+is+motivation+in+the+workplace&oq=What+is+motivation
25		http://repository.mzuni.ac.mw:8080/handle/123456789/10/recent-submissions
26		https://www.unima.ac.mw/research/publications/School+of+Education

Appendix 2: Commitment to Instructional Leadership Roles Questionnaire

Title: Head teachers' Commitment to Carrying out Instructional Supervision Roles and their School Leadership Service Period: A Mixed Method Study in Central West and Central East Education Divisions – Malawi.

You are invited to complete the following questionnaire which aims at examining the relationship between head teachers' commitment to carrying out instructional supervision roles and their school leadership service period. The questionnaire has 15 items and should only take 12 minutes to complete. Your responses are anonymous and will not be identified with you in any way.

By participating in this survey, you are indicating that you understand that your responses are anonymous and will not be identified with you in any way. You may skip any items that you find intrusive or offensive, but it will help me if you respond to as many items as you feel comfortable with.

You have the right to withdraw at any stage (prior or post the completion) of the research without any consequences and without providing any explanation. In this case, the data collected will be deleted.

Please complete all questions and make sure you follow the instructions for each item.

Division:

[A]. Central East

[B]. Central West

Part A: Participant's Characteristics

Instructions: Please write the number of years in the provided box in responses to questions 1,2 and 4 while for question 3, tick (√) the letter [A], [B], [C], [D], [E], [F] or [G] that represents the participant's correct characteristic.

1. Number of years in public secondary school headship

2. Number of years the public secondary school has been in existence

3. Gender

   [A]. Female

   [B]. Male

   [C]. Other

   [D]. Prefer not to say

4. Age (in years)

Part B: Items on the commitment to Instructional Leadership Roles

Instructions: Listed below are comments about how people may feel about their instruction supervisory roles. Using the seven-point scale provided, please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with each comment by ticking (√) on the letter [A], [B], [C], [D], [E], [F], or [G] that best corresponds with your opinion using the pencil provided.

1. I am willing to put in a great deal of effort to instructional supervision beyond that normally expected in order to help this organization be successful.
   - [A]. Strongly disagree
   - [B]. Moderately disagree
   - [C]. Slightly disagree
   - [D]. Neither disagree nor agree
   - [E]. Slightly agree
   - [F]. Moderately agree
   - [G]. Strongly agree
2. I talk up this secondary school to my friends as a great institution to work for.
   - [A]. Strongly disagree
   - [B]. Moderately disagree
   - [C]. Slightly disagree
   - [D]. Neither disagree nor agree
   - [E]. Slightly agree
   - [F]. Moderately agree
   - [G]. Strongly agree
3. I feel very little loyalty to this secondary school.
   - [A]. Strongly disagree
   - [B]. Moderately disagree
   - [C]. Slightly disagree
   - [D]. Neither disagree nor agree
   - [E]. Slightly agree
   - [F]. Moderately agree
   - [G]. Strongly agree
4. I would accept almost any type of job assignment in order to keep working for this secondary school.
   - [A]. Strongly disagree
   - [B]. Moderately disagree

[C]. Slightly disagree

[D]. Neither disagree nor agree

[E]. Slightly agree

[F]. Moderately agree

[G]. Strongly agree

5. I find that my values and the school's values are very similar.

[A]. Strongly disagree

[B]. Moderately disagree

[C]. Slightly disagree

[D]. Neither disagree nor agree

[E]. Slightly agree

[F]. Moderately agree

[G]. Strongly agree

6. I am proud to tell others that I am part of this secondary school.

[A]. Strongly disagree

[B]. Moderately disagree

[C]. Slightly disagree

[D]. Neither disagree nor agree

[E]. Slightly agree

[F]. Moderately agree

[G]. Strongly agree

7. I could just as well be working for a different secondary school as long as the type of work involved instructional supervision.

[A]. Strongly disagree

[B]. Moderately disagree

[C]. Slightly disagree

[D]. Neither disagree nor agree

[E]. Slightly agree

[F]. Moderately agree

[G]. Strongly agree

8. This secondary school really inspires the very best in me in the way of instructional supervision.

[A]. Strongly disagree

[B]. Moderately disagree

[C]. Slightly disagree

[D]. Neither disagree nor agree

[E]. Slightly agree

[F]. Moderately agree

[G]. Strongly agree

9. It would take very little change in my present circumstances to cause me to leave this secondary school.

[A]. Strongly disagree

[B]. Moderately disagree

[C]. Slightly disagree

[D]. Neither disagree nor agree

[E]. Slightly agree

[F]. Moderately agree

[G]. Strongly agree

10. I am extremely glad that I was posted to this secondary school to work for over other secondary schools I expected to be posted to.

[A]. Strongly disagree

[B]. Moderately disagree

[C]. Slightly disagree

[D]. Neither disagree nor agree

[E]. Slightly agree

[F]. Moderately agree

[G]. Strongly agree

11. There's not too much to be gained by sticking with this secondary school indefinitely.

[A]. Strongly disagree

[B]. Moderately disagree

[C]. Slightly disagree

[D]. Neither disagree nor agree

[E]. Slightly agree

[F]. Moderately agree

[G]. Strongly agree

12. I, often, find it difficult to agree with the policies of this secondary school on important matters relating to instructional supervision.

[A]. Strongly disagree

[B]. Moderately disagree

[C]. Slightly disagree

[D]. Neither disagree nor agree

[E]. Slightly agree

[F]. Moderately agree

[G]. Strongly agree

13. I really care about the fate of this secondary school.

[A]. Strongly disagree

[B]. Moderately disagree

[C]. Slightly disagree

[D]. Neither disagree nor agree

[E]. Slightly agree

[F]. Moderately agree

[G]. Strongly agree

14. For me this secondary school is the best of all possible secondary schools for which to be the lead instructional supervisor.

[A]. Strongly disagree

[B]. Moderately disagree

[C]. Slightly disagree

[D]. Neither disagree nor agree

[E]. Slightly agree

[F]. Moderately agree

[G]. Strongly agree

15. Accepting to take up the post as of head teacher for this secondary school was a definite mistake on my part.

[A]. Strongly disagree

[B]. Moderately disagree

[C]. Slightly disagree

[D]. Neither disagree nor agree

[E]. Slightly agree

[F]. Moderately agree

[G]. Strongly agree

Appendix 3: Content Analysis Grid

Instructional leadership roles practice (To be completed by the researcher)

Division:

[A]. Central East

[B]. Central West

Part A: Participant's Characteristics

Instructions: Please write the number of years in the provided box in responses to questions 1,2 and 4 while for question 3, tick (√) the letter [A], [B], [C], [D], [E], [F] or [G] that represents the participant's correct characteristic.

1. Number of years in public secondary school headship

2. Number of years the public secondary school has been in existence

3. Gender

[A]. Female

[B]. Male

[C]. Other

[D]. Prefer not to say

4. Age (in years)

Part B

Instructions: Randomly select a third of the records as stated below and complete the table.

Ser. No.	Item/Activity	Department	Number of times expected to check	Number of times actually checked
1	Schemes and Records of Work	Humanities		
		Languages		
		Mathematics & Sciences		
2	Lesson plans	Humanities		
		Languages		
		Mathematics & Sciences		
3	Lesson Observation	Humanities		
		Languages		
		Mathematics & Sciences		
4	Period Registers			
5	Mark book			

Appendix 4: Semi-structured Interview Schedule

Title: Headteachers' Commitment to Carrying out Instructional Supervision Roles and their School Leadership Service Period: A Mixed Method Study in Central West and Central East Education Divisions – Malawi.

You are invited to a semi-structured interview which aims at noting your opinions about your head teachership. The interview should take 30 minutes should there be no need for clarifications. Your responses are anonymous and will not be identified with you in any way.

By participating in this interview, you are indicating that you understand that your responses are anonymous and will not be identified with you in any way. You may skip any questions that you find intrusive or offensive, but it will help me if you respond to as many questions as you feel comfortable with.

You have the right to withdraw at any stage (prior or post the completion) of the interview without any consequences and without providing any explanation. In this case, the data collected will be deleted.

Division:

[A]. Central East
[B]. Central West

Part A: Participant's Characteristics

Instructions: Please write the number of years in the provided box in responses to questions 1,2 and 4 while for question 3, tick (√) the letter [A], [B], [C], [D], [E], [F] or [G] that represents the participant's correct characteristic.

1. Number of years in public secondary school headship

   [ ]

2. Number of years the public secondary school has been in existence

   [ ]

3. Gender
   [A]. Female
   [B]. Male
   [C]. Other
   [D]. Prefer not to say
4. Age (in years)

   [ ]

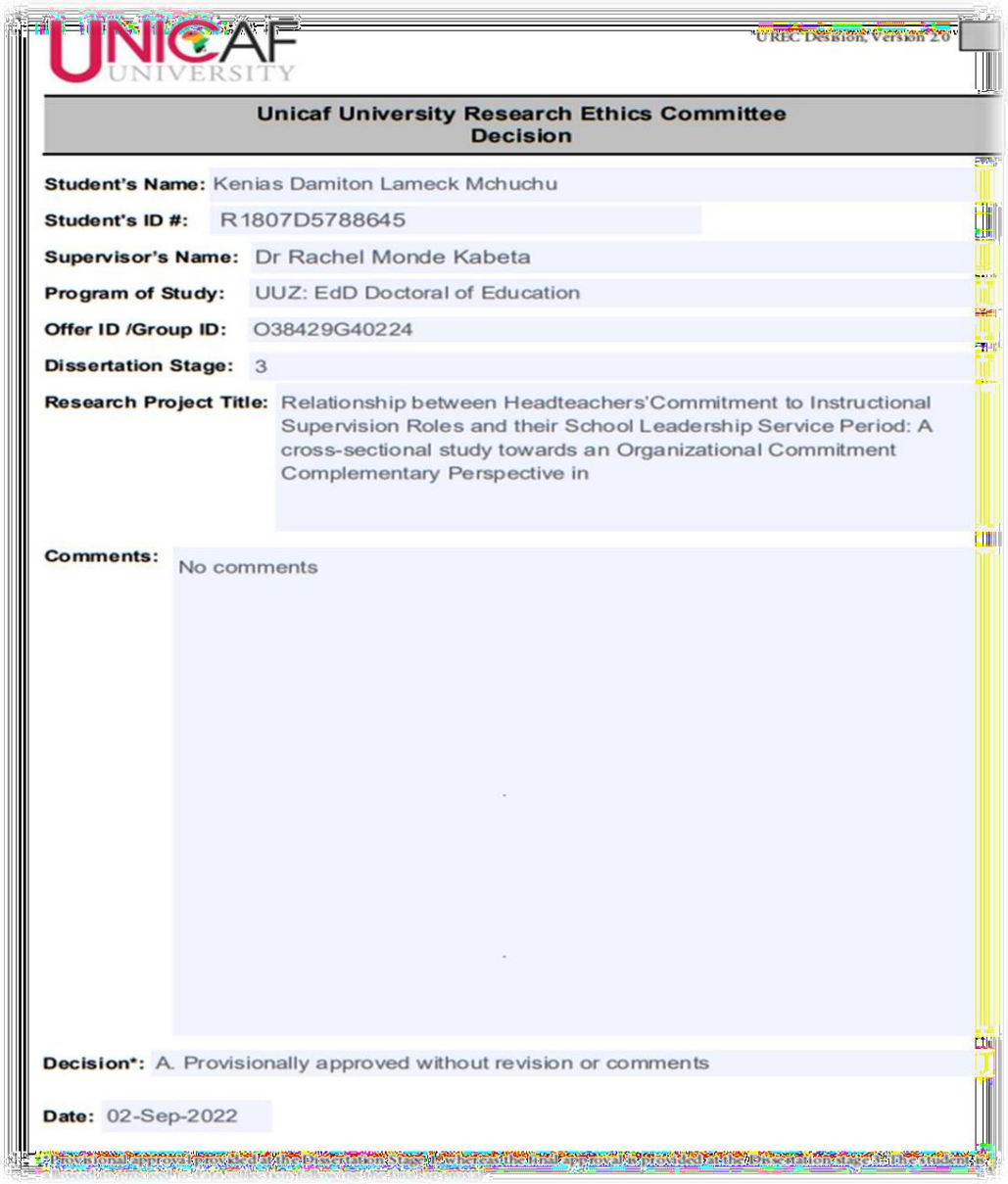
Part B

Semi-structured interview schedule

	Schedule	Researcher's note taking space
1	Thank you so much for accepting to participate in this interview. There are a few questions which concern your job as the head teacher of this school.	
2	What are your responsibilities as an instructional leader?	
3	What documents do you use to carry out instructional supervision in your school?	

4	Thinking back to when you started head teachership, how were you prepared for your post as head teacher?	
5	Given the current instructional challenges in your job, how adequate was your preparation for the head teacher post?	
6	How supportive are your superiors towards your performance improvement?	
7	When you look back to the time you started working as head teacher and now, how have you progressed?	
8	What type of support do you think you need to improve on instructional leadership skills?	
9	How supportive are heads of departments towards instructional supervision roles?	
10	How supportive are teachers towards instructional supervision roles?	
11	Anything else you would like to add?	
12	Thanks for sparing you time for this interview.	

Appendix 5: UREC Approval



UNICAF UNIVERSITY

UREC Decision, Version 2.0

Unicaf University Research Ethics Committee Decision

Student's Name: Kenias Damiton Lameck Mchuchu

Student's ID #: R1807D5788645

Supervisor's Name: Dr Rachel Monde Kabeta

Program of Study: UUZ: EdD Doctoral of Education

Offer ID /Group ID: O38429G40224

Dissertation Stage: 3

Research Project Title: Relationship between Headteachers'Commitment to Instructional Supervision Roles and their School Leadership Service Period: A cross-sectional study towards an Organizational Commitment Complementary Perspective in

Comments: No comments

Decision*: A. Provisionally approved without revision or comments

Date: 02-Sep-2022

Appendix 6: NCRSSH Research Protocol Approval

NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY
Lingadzi House
Robert Mugabe Crescent
P/Bag B303
City Centre
Lilongwe
Tel: +265 1 771 550
+265 1 774 189
+265 1 774 869
Fax: +265 1772 431
Email:directorgeneral@ncst.mw
Website:http://www.ncst.mw

NATIONAL COMMITTEE ON RESEARCH IN THE SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES

Ref No: NCST/RTT/2/6 **15th November 2022**

Mr Kenias Mchuchu,
Principal Investigator,
Namitete Secondary School,
Private Bag 3,
Namitete.

Email: keniasmchuchu@gmail.com

Dear Mr Mchuchu,

RESEARCH ETHICS AND REGULATORY APPROVAL AND PERMIT FOR PROTOCOL NO. P.10/22/689: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HEAD TEACHERS COMMITMENT TO CARRYING OUT INSTRUCTIONAL SUPERVISION ROLES AND THEIR SCHOOL LEADERSHIP SERVICE PERIOD: A CROSS-SECTIONAL STUDY TOWARDS AN ORGANISATIONAL COMMITMENT COMPLEMENTARY PERSPECTIVE IN CENTRAL WEST AND CENTRAL EAST EDUCATION DIVISIONS IN MALAWI

Having satisfied all the relevant ethical and regulatory requirements, I am pleased to inform you that the above referred research protocol has officially been approved. You are now permitted to proceed with its implementation. Should there be any amendments to the approved protocol in the course of implementing it, you shall be required to seek approval of such amendments before implementation of the same.

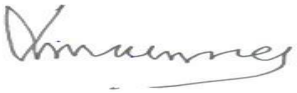
Committee Address:

Secretariat, National Committee on Research in the Social Sciences and Humanities, National Commission for Science and Technology, Lingadzi House, City Centre, P/Bag B303, Capital City, Lilongwe3, Malawi. Telephone Nos: +265 771 550/774 869; E-mail address: ncrsh@ncst.mw

This approval is valid for one year from the date of issuance of this approval. If the study goes beyond one year, an annual approval for continuation shall be required to be sought from the National Committee on Research in the Social Sciences and Humanities (NCRSH) in a format that is available at the Secretariat. Once the study is finalised, you are required to furnish the Committee and the Commission with a final report of the study. The committee reserves the right to carry out compliance inspection of this approved protocol at any time as may be deemed by it. As such, you are expected to properly maintain all study documents including consent forms.

Wishing you a successful implementation of your study.

Yours Sincerely,



Yalonda .I. Mwanza

NCRSH ADMINISTRATOR
HEALTH, SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES DIVISION
For: CHAIRPERSON OF NCRSH

Committee Address:

Secretariat, National Committee on Research in the Social Sciences and Humanities, National Commission for Science and Technology, Lingadzi House, City Centre, P/Bag B303, Capital City, Lilongwe3, Malawi. Telephone Nos: +265 771 550/774 869; E-mail address: ncrsh@ncst.mw

Appendix 7: Permission from Ministry of Education Headquarters

Telegrams: MINED LILONGWE
Telephone: +265 1 789422/01788961
Fax: +265 1 788064/164

In reply please quote No.....

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
PRIVATE BAG 328
CAPITAL CITY
LILONGWE 3
MALAWI

Ref. No. **C31/1/1**

12th July, 2022

UNICAF UNIVERSITY
Att: School of Doctoral Studies

RE: CLEARANCE TO RECRUIT RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

Reference is made to your request on the above subject.

I am pleased to inform you that the Ministry has approved Kenias Mchuchu's request to recruit Research Participants in order to study the relationship between headteacher's commitment to carrying out instructional supervision roles and their school leadership service period. The participants will be Headteachers from two hundred and seventy-seven (277) schools in Central West and Central East Education Divisions.

It is our sincere hope that our officer will be assisted accordingly.

Alexis F. Bwanali
For: **SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION**

SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY
12 JUL 2022
P/BAG 328
LILONGWE 3

Appendix 8A: Permission from Central East Education Division

Telephone: (265) 01 757 051/01
Fax: (265) 01 753 135

All Communications should be addressed to:
The Division Manager

EDUCATION DIVISION MANAGER (CWED)
P.O. BOX 98
LILONGWE
MALAWI

16th November, 2022

TO: ALL PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS

CENTRAL WEST EDUCATION DIVISION

PERMISSION TO COLLECT RESEARCH DATA

This is to bring to your attention that permission has been given to Mr. Kenias D. L. Mchuchu to collect data from public secondary schools in Central West Education Division.

The study being carried out is on the title: '**The relationship between head teachers' commitment to carrying out instructional supervision roles and their school leadership service period: A cross-sectional study towards an organizational commitment complementary perspective in Central West and Central East Education Divisions.**

May you ensure that informed consent is sought prior to collection of the requested data.

Your usual assistance shall be highly appreciated.

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION CENTRAL WEST EDUCATION DIVISION P.O. BOX 98 LILONGWE 16 NOV 2022

B K Nkhono

For: **EDUCATION DIVISION MANAGER (CWED)**

Appendix 8 B: Permission from Central East Education Division

30th November, 2022

From: The Education Division Manager
Central East Education Division (CEED)
Private Bag 233
KASUNGU

To: Mr Mchuchu
Namitete Secondary School
Private Bag 3
NAMITETE

cc: Concerned Headteachers in Public Secondary Schools in CEED

Dear Sir,

RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

Please refer to your request on the above.

I am pleased to inform you that permission has been granted for you to undertake a research study in Central East Education Division on the topic: **The relationship between headteacher's commitment to their instruction supervisory role and their service period: A cross-sectional study of public secondary school headteachers in Central East Education Division in Malawi.**

By copy of this letter, headteachers in public secondary schools in CEED are requested to accord you opportunity to conduct the study without hinderance.

Wishing you a successful research study.

DIVISION
CENTRAL EAST

ASSAN ERTIMAS BALAKIYA
For: **EDUCATION DIVISION MANAGER**

Appendix 9 Informed Consent

Research Project Title **:** Headteachers' Commitment to Carrying out Instructional Supervision Roles and their School Leadership Service Period: A Mixed Method Study in Central West and Central East Education Divisions – Malawi.
Date **:…….**

Research project summary

The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship existing between the head teacher's commitment to instructional supervision with the length, in time, of public secondary school head teachership. Further, the study aims at collecting data about head teachers' commitment, their instructional supervision practices and the numbers of years the head teachers have served as public secondary school instructional leaders. The study will contribute to the body of knowledge about public secondary school leadership to improve practice.

You have been identified to participate in the study because you are a head teacher of a public secondary school in Central East/Central West Education Division. More importantly, you have been identified on the experience you have which is crucial to draw insights from.

The above-named student is committed in ensuring participant's voluntarily participation in the research project and guaranteeing there are no potential risks and/or harms to the participants.

Participants have the right to withdraw at any stage (prior or post the completion) of the research without any consequences and without providing any explanation. In these cases, data collected will be deleted.

All data and information collected will be coded and will not be accessible to anyone outside this research. Data described and included in dissemination activities will only refer to coded information ensuring beyond the bounds of possibility participant identification.

I, Kenias Damiton Lameck Mchuchu ensure that all information stated above is true and all conditions stated above have been met.

Student's signature: ……

Student's name	**:**	Kenias Damiton Lameck Mchuchu
Student's E-mail Address	:	keniasmchuchu@gmail.com
Student ID #	**:**	R1807D5788645
Supervisor's Name	:	Dr.Rachel Monde Kabeta
University Campus	:	Unicaf University Zambia
Program of Study	:	EdD (Doctoral of Education)

Committee address: Secretariat, National Committee on Research in the Social Sciences and Humanities, National Commission for Science and Technology, Lingadzi House, City Centre, P/Bag B303,

Capital City, Lilongwe3, Malawi. Telephone Nos: +265 771 550/774 869; E-mail address: ncrsh@ncst.mw

Part 2:

Certificate of Consent

This section is mandatory and should be signed by participant(s).

I have read the foregoing information about this study, or it has been read to me. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and discuss about it. I have received satisfactory answers to all my questions and I have received enough information about this study. I understand that I am free to withdraw from this study at any time without giving a reason for withdrawing and without negative consequences. I consent to the use of multimedia (e.g., Audio recordings, video recordings) for the purposes of my participation to this study. I understand that my data will remain anonymous and confidential, unless stated otherwise. I consent voluntarily to be a participant in this study.

Participant's Print name : …….

Participant's Signature : …….

Date : …….