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THE SCHOOLING OF ORPHANS AND THEIR LIVES IN MALAWI: A CASE STUDY OF CONTINUED SCHOOLING OF ORPHANS IN SECONDARY EDUCATION

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Abstract

Many studies for schooling of orphans in Africa have focused on the impact of HIV/AIDS epidemic and poverty on the dropout rates of orphans in both primary and secondary education. These studies have frequently been based on statistical analyses, which development partners place great value on. However, it is also important to explore how the orphan's dropout of school is affected by the capacities and skills of the orphans to cope with the challenges arising from the HIV/AIDS epidemic and poverty. This type of exploration usually uses qualitative analyses based on long-term fieldwork, which are not common among development partners.

The present study was conducted in Malawi, one of the poorest countries with high HIV/AIDS prevalence rates. There are around 1.3 million orphans across the country. Although secondary education is not free unlike primary education, many orphans manage to attend secondary school after completion of primary education.

The purpose of this study was to investigate how orphans in secondary schools, especially those in the low-income class in society, manage to continue their education. The study focuses on two aspects: (1) coping skills to prevent dropout of orphans at the individual level (i.e. the level of the orphans themselves) and the household level; and (2) practical efforts to support orphans at the school level.

The fieldwork conducted for this study has uncovered a number of findings. The findings have clearly demonstrated that firstly, the coping skills to prevent dropping out, such as income-generating activities, are based on the orphans' strong will to continue their education. The orphans' will is affected by the life priorities of their family. Therefore, it is required to explore the coping skills to continue education through the understanding orphans' family situation. Secondly, scholarship programs are valuable not only to cover school fees but also to stimulate a desire for self-improvement. Needy orphans, the most vulnerable of all, have a strong desire to emerge from poverty through academic qualification. Therefore, providing scholarship

programs at secondary school would be the first step to cultivate a desire for self-improvement among orphans. Thirdly, there are various good practices implemented by teachers and school administrations to support orphans. This suggests that flexible school administration is beneficial for orphans' schooling, however such "flexibility" is based on the generosity and consideration for needy orphans so that we should not expect too much from it.

Key words: Malawi; vulnerable children; orphans; secondary education

1. Introduction

The number of orphans living in the Sub-Saharan Africa Region (hereinafter referred to as Africa) is approximately 56 million, which accounts for approximately 12% of all children living in Africa (UNICEF, 2014). Most of the studies on the schooling of African orphans were focused on analysis regarding causes of poverty, the HIV/AIDS epidemic, and dropping out of schools (Ainsworth & Filmer, 2006; Campbell et al., 2010). It is necessary, in contrast, to focus on capacities of individuals including orphans, and analyze coping capacities with respect to difficulties/threats as well as causes of dropouts from a micro-perspective. This analysis is necessary because there are orphans who, despite encountering the same difficulties or threats as everyone else, are able to surpass theses hardships and manage to keep attending their schools. Paying attention to orphans' lives and their schooling conditions, as well as deeply discussing coping capacities with respect to difficulties or threats may provide not only new points of view, but also beneficial suggestions regarding post-2015's education goals of what support should be like under the conditions of "equity/fairness" and "inclusive education" (Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform, 2015).

In order to elucidate what efforts are being made by orphans who are continuing to attend school as well as the reality of support being given from people surrounding the orphans (relatives and teachers, etc.), it is necessary to gain more understanding regarding the difficulties and threats that orphans face in their daily lives, through the orphans' perspectives as well as the perspectives of the people involved. For that purpose, a qualitative approach including case study research which is rooted in the site and based on long-term fieldwork is required; however, development partners (international agencies, bilateral donors and aid organizations, etc.) who are focusing on orphan studies are not taking such approaches due to the standpoints of time and efficiency constraints. In reports by development partners, orphans are primarily described from the point of view of support providers as passive beings who require constant support (USAID et al., 2004; Subbarao & Coury, 2004). Because of this, in past research, examinations from the point of view of orphans, their relatives, and teachers have been insufficient, and focus has not been given to the coping capacities that orphans display which allow them to overcome their

difficulties and continue their education.

This study was conducted in the Republic of Malawi (hereinafter referred to as Malawi), which is located in southern Africa. Malawi is one of the poorest countries in the world, and is a country with a high rate of HIV/AIDS infection whose number of casualties from AIDS used to be 48,000 a year; the number of orphans in the country also reached 1,300,000 (UNAIDS, 2013; UNICEF, 2014). The net enrollment rates for primary and secondary educations in Malawi are 97% and 28%, respectively (World Bank, 2012). Of those, the percentage of orphans attending primary education is 11%, and 19% in secondary educations (MOEST, 2013). This study focuses on the fact that many orphans manage to proceed through secondary education after completion of primary education, despite secondary education not applying under the free education policy unlike primary school.

This study was conducted targeting orphans in Malawi's secondary school with the objective to elucidate orphans' lives and their schooling from the point of view of the orphans, their relatives, and their teachers, based on: (1) Undertakings that make it possible for orphans and their relatives to continue with schooling, and (2) case analysis of actual support towards enrollment in secondary school. The first section in this paper will discuss the analytical perspective of trends in past research regarding education of orphans in Africa by examining the conceptual framework of vulnerability. The second section will provide understanding on the current status of orphans in Malawi. In the third section, I will present the research method and its results. In the fourth section, important factors for enabling orphans to overcome difficult situations and to continue with their education will be examined.

2. Discussion on past research on orphans' education in Africa

Orphans are generally defined as "children who have lost their parents" (Hornby, 2005: 1208). However, in the mid-1990s, development partners with the United Nations at the center started using the term in a broader sense, in that children who lost either one of their parents could also be referred to as orphans. Since then, many countries in Africa have also adopted this definition (Grassly & Timaeus, 2003; UNICEF, 2008). The reason for this change was that the number of orphans who lost one or both of their parents from AIDS skyrocketed as a result of increasing deaths due to the HIV infection pandemic in Africa. Furthermore, data collection and support strictly limited to AIDS orphans presented the danger that discrimination and biases against AIDS could be intensified; this led to researchers handling any children who lost one or both of their parents as orphans regardless of the cause (Hunter & Williamson, 2000). Since a broad definition of orphans was stipulated, studies on African orphans became broader to allow for discussion of difficulties and issues of children with a single parent as well.

With respect to orphans' education, enrollment conditions have been actively discussed. The governments of African countries deem orphans to be targets of special care as "vulnerable

children" (Engle, 2008; Kalibala et al., 2012). Vulnerable children refer to children who have poor access to basic needs or to fundamental human rights (Skinner et al., 2006). A basic need with respect to education in African nations is to achieve universal primary education (UPE), as stipulated in the UN Millennium Development Goals. This is why, in research regarding education of orphans, a factorial analysis of dropouts which prevents the universalization of primary education is getting more attention.

As for research on orphans who drop out of school, Ainsworth & Filmer (2006) and Campbell et al. (2010) elucidated that orphans have a tendency to drop out of school in comparison with non-orphans, through quantitative analysis using the Demographic Health Survey of African nations. On the other hand, Kürzinger et al. (2008) discuss that being an orphan does not directly lead to dropping out of schools because there is no significant gap between the enrollment rates and dropout rates of orphans and non-orphans. In response to such discussions, Ainsworth & Filmer (2006) found through analysis using correlations between poverty and enrollment condition of orphans by income strata that the orphans from the relatively bottom tier of the pyramid have difficulty with enrollment. Moreover, with respect to the impacts of HIV/AIDS and the enrollment status of orphans, Bennell (2005) focuses on orphans' economic difficulties after losing their parent, mental and psychological difficulties such as facing biases and stigma from others due to being an orphan who lost his or her parent from AIDS, and discusses dropout factors attributed to the orphans' family lives.

In respect to enrollment of orphans, Case et al. (2004) focuses on mutual assistance, a characteristic of relatives in Africa, and stated that orphans blessed with attentive caretakers have a good record with respect to school attendance. Schenk (2009) emphasizes that orphans tend to receive preferential support as targets of support from international organizations, and that orphans are relatively better off among poverty groups in terms of school enrollment.

Amid various discussions over orphans' education and dropouts, this section will quote analytic frameworks from vulnerability research in order to clarify insufficiencies in discussions. "Vulnerability" used in the term "vulnerable children" refers to a situation in which standards of living plummet due to individuals not having the means to protect themselves or the ability to sufficiently handle or combat difficulties or threats as they arise; it also refers to the possibility of a decline in living standards in the future as well as the status of prevention and recovery (World Bank, 2000; Kurosaki, 2009). In vulnerability research, the necessity for analytic approaches from the two aspects of external and internal factors has been pointed out (Chambers, 2006; Shimada, 2009). In approaches from external factors, factors leading to children dropping out of school are analyzed from the impacts of external threats including poverty, HIV/AIDS diffusion, and social disadvantages. On the other hand, an approach from internal factors analyzes the risk that people who are not equipped with the capability to cope with external threats face. Analytic targets for internal factors include not only defenselessness, which refers to an inability to act when individuals are faced with threats, but also coping abilities with

respect to overcoming threats. When taking a bird's eye view of research trends based on an analytic framework of vulnerability research in past studies regarding orphans' education, the following characteristics became apparent.

Firstly, research on orphans dropping out of school has only conducted external factor analysis based on the dropout rates' relationship with external threats such as poverty and HIV/AIDS proliferation. The actual status of an orphan's schooling and daily life had not been elucidated from the perspective of orphans who continued their schooling despite facing difficulties such as poverty or HIV/AIDS proliferation.

Secondly, voluntary efforts by the orphans themselves have been overlooked. Through mutual assistance between relatives as well as support from development partners, the reality that orphans continue with their education can be deemed as a stage of prevention against external difficulties and threats, as well as a stage of recovery. However, even if there are signs of prevention or recovery against difficulties or threats that orphans face due to support from others, there is still insufficient analysis regarding internal factors which focus on the orphans' own voluntary coping abilities.

What made researchers overlook, in past research, internal factors analysis which includes orphans' independent efforts? A reason for this has been attributed to development partners heading many of the research on orphans' education conducted in Africa, leading the research to be greatly impacted by the intentions of the development partners (Sawamura, 2007). Analyzing the orphans' efforts, which are diverse and can be attributed to internal factors, necessitates detailed understanding of orphans and their individual household conditions, as well as the cultural and social contexts surrounding the orphans. To do so, long-term fieldwork and accumulation of case studies become required. This being said, since time constraints and issues in efficiency were not in line with the development partners' intentions, the investigation method, which failed to be applied enthusiastically to past research, was part of the issue. Moreover, in many development partners' reports, orphans are often described from the perspective of the development partners as passive targets who require continuous support (USAID et al., 2004; Subbarao & Coury, 2004). This resulted in issue proposal-oriented research that emphasizes only the orphans' issues and what they lack, and often results in stressing the validity of support provided by development partners (Sawamura, 2007). Because of this, the perspectives of the parties involved, including orphans, are overlooked, and efforts by the orphans, which are internal factors, receive less attention. As discussed so far, development partners' intentions, which include investigation methods and the investigators' points of view, are considered to significantly impact research tendencies with respect to orphans' education.

3. Circumstances surrounding orphans in Malawi

3.1. Social circumstances

The Government of Malawi defines as orphan as "a child who has lost one or both parents because of death and is under the age of 18 years" (GOM, 2005: 11). The government also stipulates in the National Development Policy (Malawi Growth and Development Strategy: MGDS) that orphans are a group of vulnerable people (GOM, 2012) When examining the types of orphans, paternal (father dead) orphans make up 58.4%, while maternal (mother dead) orphans make up 21.2% of the total. Double (both parents dead) orphans are 20.4% of the total (NSO, 2012a).

Looking at the demographic proportion of orphans by income bracket, the percentage of orphans is the same for both the low-income bracket, which includes the poor, and the high-income bracket (approximately 10%) (Ibid.). Orphans in low-income households make a living by having orphans participate in wage-earning, or by relying on the low wages that their elderly grandparents make (Kadzamira et al., 2001; JICA, 2014). According to the Integrated Household Survey (IHS) in 2011 (NSO, 2012a), the annual average consumption level was approximately 360 dollars, and households who had a consumption level of approximately 244 dollars or less were defined as being in poverty[1]. Households under 360 dollars were deemed to be in the low-income bracket, which includes those in the poverty class (NSO, 2012a).

3.2. Proceeding to secondary education

Malawi's educational system consists of free primary education for 8 years (normally 6 to 14 years old), secondary education that require payments for 4 years (14 to 18 years old), and higher education which includes university education (18 years and older). The free primary education policy was introduced in 1994, and this boosted demand for secondary education. During the final grade year (Standard 8) in primary education, a national examination known as the Primary School Leaving Certificate Examination (PSLCE) is set by the Malawi National Examinations Board (MANEB). To pass the PSLCE is a requirement for entering the secondary school[2]. The government makes selections of students who passed the PSLCE according to their performance. Excellent students are allocated to Government Boarding Secondary Schools with dormitories,

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[1] The annual consumption level per person is 54,568 Malawi Kwacha (MKW), and the poverty line is set at 37,002 MKW. Calculations are based on the average exchange rate (1 US Dollar = 151.64 MKW) between March of 2010 and March of 2011, when this research took place. The exchange rate was obtained through the "Online currency converter."
http://www.freecurrencyrates.com/exchange-rate-history/USD-MWK/2011,
Accessed December 30, 2014.

[2] The average percentage of students who passed the PSLCE in 2014 was 69.9%. Of those, 41.9% of those who scored high marks were allowed to enter secondary education. See "Malawi 24" for more detail.
http://malawi24.com/2015/09/21/jce-abolished/,
Accessed October 20, 2014.

and high achievers are allocated to Government Day Secondary Schools that they will commute to. Students who performed on an average tier go to Community Day Secondary Schools (CDSS)[3], and those that earned low scores are not selected to advance to secondary schools even if they passed the PSLCE (MOEST, 2014). Among those who are selected, students whose households are well off and aspire towards a higher quality of education will enter private secondary schools such as religious schools, which are well equipped with environments that require a high-cost of school fee. Those who want secondary education but are not selected will go to "low-cost" private secondary schools with a relatively low school fee whose educational environment is not well prepared. In such ways, these schools are ranked through the student selection process.

Because proceeding to secondary education will cost sundry expenses, including school fee, for students, national and local governments (the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology and the District/City Assemblies, respectively) as well as various NGOs are conducting support programs for orphans and girls from low-income and poverty-stricken families who are advancing to secondary schools (mainly government secondary schools and CDSSs). For instance, of the six education divisions that are in Malawi, 68 groups in one of these divisions are carrying out scholarship/bursary support programs, and 7,861 students are receiving scholarship funds (SHED, 2014). This is approximately equivalent to approximately 28% (boys: 20% and girls: 38%) of all enrollees of secondary education in the aforementioned education division (Ibid.). Of all scholarship receivers, 36% receive government support and the rest of the 64% receive scholarships from private sectors, including NGOs (Ibid.). The standard content of support provided is fee payment to schools by support organizations, as well as provision of school uniforms, stationery, livingware, and cash, depending on the organization[4].

3.3. Enrollment to education

Orphans' grade repetition rate in secondary education is approximately 18%, which is not very different from the repetition rate of non-orphans, which is approximately 19% (NSO, 2012b). The dropout rate for orphan is about 7%, which is a bit higher than about 4%, which is the dropout rate for non-orphans (Ibid.).

According to previous research, many orphans, regardless of gender, drop out of secondary education that requires payments due to the economic difficulties (Kadzamira et al., 2001;

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[3] Though Community Day Secondary Schools (CDSS) are supported by the government, some costs such as building construction of classrooms and teacher houses for CDSSs are also partly supported by surrounding communities.

[4] From interview notes taken by the authors. Hearings were conducted with respect to government scholarships/ bursary with a social welfare officer in charge of the Zomba city council (September 9th 2014), an officer in charge of the South East Education Division (September 18th), and an officer in charge of the Shire Highlands Education Division (September 24th). Hearings were conducted with respect to NGO scholarships with staffs of SAFE (September 11th), Emmanuel International (September 14th), the Millennium villages project (September 16th), and CAMFED (September 16th).

Bennel, 2005). With respect to dropping out due to economic difficulties, family factors such as household poverty is the main topic of discussion; on the other hand, school factors such as a strict school system has also been raised (Kadzamira et al., 2001; Jukes et al., 2014). In the latter case, students drop out because they are unable to prepare the school fee payment and school uniforms.

In past research, analyses on orphans' dropout factors due to economic difficulties have been conducted, while analyses on efforts to cope with such difficulties by orphans or school personnel have been insufficient. This study was conducted on orphans from low-income families facing economic difficulties, and analyzes practical cases on efforts conducted for and by orphans to enable continuous secondary education, in addition to analysis on schooling support for orphans at the school level.

4. Field study in Malawi

4.1. Investigation method

The field study was conducted in south Malawi, in the Zomba district, from September 1st to the 26th of 2014. This district's percentage of orphans from low-income families is higher than the average with respect to the south Malawi area as a whole, where poverty is more serious than the north or middle areas (NSO, 2011). The six target secondary schools with lower fees were selected for the investigation among government schools, CDSSs, and private schools in said district. The targets for the investigation were 33 orphans (male: 14, female: 19) from low-income families including those from the poverty class, who were recognized as such by the schools, and 18 teachers (male: 9, female: 9). Life story interviews were conducted with the orphans, and semi-structured interviews were conducted for the teachers. The details of target individuals and target schools are as shown in Tables 1, 2, and 3.

When looking at the 33 orphan students by type, 13 lost both parents, 17 lost only their fathers, and 3 lost only their mothers (See Table 3). Likewise, when considering orphans by grades,

TABLE 1.   Investigation outline table

School	Type	Location	Target teachers		Target orphans		Yearly school fee[5]
			Male	Female	Boy	Girl	
A	Government (dormitory)	Urban	3	2	4	3	$41*
B	Government (commute)	Rural	1	1	2	1	$19
C	CDSS (Commute)	Urban	1	1	4	4	$36
D	CDSS (Commute)	Rural	2	3	1	7	$19
E	CDSS (Commute)	Rural	1	1	2	2	$26
F	Private (Commute)	Urban	1	1	1	2	$75
	Total		**9**	**9**	**14**	**19**	

Notes: Boarding (dormitory) fee is not included in the amount of yearly school A's fee.
Source: Made by the author based on the interviews to schools.

TABLE 2. Number of orphans & receivers of scholarship at the investigated schools

School	Number of student at the school		Number of orphan students (%)		Number of receivers of scholarship (%)		Scholarship organizations/group (Number of receivers)
	Boy	Girl	Boy	Girl	Boy	Girl	
A	420	335	110 (26%)	89 (27%)	73 (17%)	61 (18%)	Government (28), NGO, etc. (106)
B	186	144	35 (19%)	24 (17%)	23 (12%)	45 (31%)	Government (8), NGO, etc. (60)
C	151	150	30 (20%)	21 (14%)	20 (13%)	14 (9%)	Government (24), NGO, etc. (10)
D	186	118	14 (8%)	35 (30%)	13 (7%)	43 (36%)	Government (9), NGO, etc. (47)
E	256	275	44 (17%)	55 (20%)	22 (9%)	116 (42%)	Government (0), NGO, etc. (138)
F	82	92	22 (27%)	23 (25%)	1 (1%)	1 (1%)	Government (0), NGO, etc. (2)

Source: Made by the author based on the interviews to schools.

5 were in 2nd grade (Form 2), 1 in 3rd grade (Form 3), and 27 in 4th grade (Form 4). The reason that there were more 4th grade (Form 4) students was due to the objectives of this study, which is an analysis of orphans' efforts towards continuing their education. The Form 4 students had experience in continuing their education, and thus they were the majority of this study's targets. As a note, among the orphan students, 12 students over 18 years old, who are not deemed to be orphans due to late entry to primary school or repetition of grades (9 orphans who were 19 years old, 3 who were 20 years old), have been counted. This is because the age when these students became orphans was when they were younger than 19 years old. Additionally, 6 graduates are included as investigation targets; this is also because they were under the age of 18 years when they became orphans, and because they had graduated just weeks before the interviews were conducted.

4.2. Investigation results

4.2.1. Lives of orphan students

The family environments of orphans who have lost one of their parental figures are complicated. There have been cases where a parent (particularly the mother) prioritized his or her new life with his or her partner (a new spouse or lover), resulting in the child living on his or her own. However, a few years later, when the parent got divorced or separated with his or her partner due to the partner's death, the parent returned with his or her new children to resume life with the original child. An orphan who experienced living alone in the household said that "siblings became closer and helped each other with the eldest brother as the pillar of the family" (male orphan No. 6, from school A) to describe how orphans who were separated from their parents survived by cooperating with their remaining family members.

Even in a children-only household, if these children have been given a place to live and farmland (cultivated land) from their parents, they can survive. If they can harvest the staple crop, maize (corn), and side produce (vegetable) from their fields, a self-sufficient lifestyle is possible. Thus, regardless of whether the orphan is a boy or a girl, working on the farm after school or during spare time in the weekends is a habitual routine for securing food.

TABLE 3. Personal data of orphan students

No	Sex	Age	Year		School	Income-generating activities	Scholarship group	Scholarship coverage	School & teachers' support
			father dead	mother dead					
1	F	18	2012	2010	A	—	Church	School fee only	Commodities
2	F	17	2011	2005	A	—	NGO	School fee, cash, commodities	—
3	M	18	2004	2004	A	Growing vegetables	District Assembly	School fee only	Cash
4	M	20	Unknown	2004	A	Cultivating fields	NGO (UN)	School fee, commodities	Cash
5	M	19	2001	Alive	A	Cultivating fields	Ministry (MOEST)	School fee only	—
6	M	18	Alive	2008	A	Cultivating fields	NGO	School fee only	—
7	F	16	Unknown	Alive	A	Selling items	NGO	School fee, cash, commodities	—
8	M	19	Unknown	2010	B	Cultivating fields	NGO	School fee, school uniform, commodities	—
9	F	17	2009	Alive	B	Laundry	NGO	School fee, school uniform, commodities, stationery	—
10	M	15	Unknown	2002	B	Cultivating fields	NGO	School fee, school uniform, commodities,	—
11	M	17	1997	Alive	C	—	—	—	—
12	F	17	2001	Alive	C	Selling items	—	—	Exemption
13	F	18	2012	Alive	C	Laundry	District Assembly	School fee only	—
14	F	19	2005	2004	C	Selling items	—	—	—
15	M	19	2006	2010	C	Growing vegetables	NGO	School fee only	—
16	M	17	2004	2007	C	Public works	—	—	half-fee waiver
17	M	18	2002	2006	C	Cultivating fields	NGO	School fee only	food (rice)
18	F	16	2013	Alive	C	—	District Assembly	School fee only	—
19	F	19	Alive	2006	D	Selling items	NGO	School fee, cash, commodities	—
20	F	16	2012	Alive	D	Selling items	NGO	School fee, school uniform, commodities, stationery	—
21	F	20	Alive	2003	D	Cultivating fields	NGO	School fee, cash, commodities	—
22	F	20	2006	Alive	D	Making charcoal	NGO	School fee, commodities	—
23	F	17	2006	Alive	D	Cultivating fields	NGO	School fee, school uniform, commodities, stationery	—
24	F	19	2006	Alive	D	Making charcoal	NGO	School fee, school uniform, commodities, stationery	—
25	F	19	2003	Alive	D	—	NGO	School fee, school uniform, commodities, stationery	—
26	M	18	2001	Alive	D	Cultivating fields	NGO	School fee, commodities	—
27	M	19	2000	Alive	E	Growing vegetables	—	—	Exemption
28	F	17	2007	Alive	E	Making charcoal	NGO	School fee, school uniform, commodities, stationery	—
29	M	19	2003	Alive	E	Cultivating fields	—	—	—
30	F	18	Unknown	2006	E	Cultivating fields	—	—	Exemption
31	M	18	2006	Alive	F	Public works	—	—	—
32	F	16	Unknown	2013	F	—	—	—	Exemption
33	F	18	1998	2003	F	Hired help	—	—	—

Source: Made by the author based on the interviews to orphans.

As a typical meal in Malawi, orphans generally eat maize porridge for breakfast, but many orphan students in poverty go to school without eating breakfast. Since the commuters' schools do not provide school lunches, students come back home after class around two o'clock in the afternoon. They eat Nshima, a main dish where paste is made from maize flour and hot water, as well as dried small fish (*usipa*), vegetables, or beans as a side dish. Dinner is generally the same. Poverty-stricken families are not even able to readily buy meats, cooking oils, sugar, or tea.

On the other hand, at School A, which has a dormitory (boarding facility) and provides 3 meals a day, meals are generally comprised of porridge with sugar for breakfast, and Nshima and cooked beans for lunch and dinner. There was an appeal by an orphan student living in the dormitory, "I want better-quality meals. They serve tasteless soup that remained from boiling beans, of which there are very few of" (female orphan No. 2). Last November, students at School A who were complaining about the meals went on a rampage and broke the windows of the school building. The yearly school fee including boarding fee for the school A is 72,000 kwacha (approximately 182 dollars), 56,000 kwacha (approximately 141 dollars) of which is for the dormitory[5]. The number of days for which students stay in the dormitory is 270 days a year. This means that school must provide 3 meals a day, using the limited budget of 207 kwacha (approximately 0.5 dollars) per person. The headmaster of School A repeatedly emphasized that "providing satisfactory meals for students while dealing with tight finances is one of the most difficult issues in school management."

Students are obligated to wear uniforms at school, but orphans have only a pair of shirt and skirt/trousers. The majority of them cannot afford to buy spare uniforms for when they need to wash their current set. If a student tries to commute to school in his or her usual clothes, the student will not be allowed to attend classes. If a student wears a dirty uniform, not only will the student be admonished by a teacher, but also be laughed at by classmates. Therefore, it is a vital activity for students to wash their own uniforms over the weekend. A bar of laundry soap costs 60 kwacha (approximately 15 cents), and "whether or not you are able to buy soap is the boundary between 'very very poor' and 'very poor.' When I can't buy one and therefore can't wash my uniform, I am not sure if I can go to school or not the following week," said an orphan (male orphan No. 10 at School B). This statement tells us that securing laundry soap is very essential to continuing schooling.

Many orphans receive scholarship/bursary support from the government or NGOs. Of the 33 orphans who were targets of this investigation, 23 of them received scholarships (See Table 3). Some received one upon entering secondary school (8 orphans), and some received one a few years after enrollment (15 orphans). On the other hand, the headmaster (male) of School E

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[5] The information regarding local currency for this field study was calculated using the average exchange rate as of August of 2014 (1 US Dollar = 395.95 MKW). The exchange rate information is the same as 1).

described that "there are cases where orphan girls who, after receiving a scholarship with much effort, become pregnant and end up dropping out of school. Perhaps receiving support causes them to become complacent." From this, it is apparent that there are some cases where students with scholarships drop out of school.

4.2.2. Efforts towards orphans' continuous schooling

Many orphans involve themselves in income-generating activities during the school-term holidays (approximately 3 weeks). This income is used to pay for their school fee, as well as to purchase commodities and school supplies (detergent/soap, stationery goods, shoes, bags, shirts, and school uniforms, etc.). Examples of their activities include cultivating other households' land to grow maize, growing vegetables, selling items at markets, cleaning/laundry for other households, making charcoal (gathering firewood), public works (making adobe bricks and constructing buildings), and many others. Their average income per month is 2,000 to 10,000 kwacha (approximately 5 to 25 dollars). Since higher income work activities are physical work activities that require long hours, such as cultivating land for maize field and public works, boys with more physical strength are demanded; however, some girls are also engaging in severe physical labor such as firewood gathering and charcoal making (No. 22, 24, and 28).

In the case of girls, many are engaged in selling items in markets. An orphan girl (No. 20) in School D who borrowed 700 kwacha (approximately 1.8 dollars) from her older sister used it as capital to buy vegetables from a farmer to sell it in the market. As a result, she made 1,700 kwacha (approximately 4.3 dollars) as income. After subtracting the borrowed money from her sister, the net income was 1,000 kwacha (approximately 2.5 dollars). "I was able to borrow funds from my sister this time to sell things, but I don't know whether I'll have another chance," said the girl. In order to work as a vendor, initial capital to purchase the goods to sell is required, which is not always available. Orphan girls are particularly in a disadvantageous position with respect to engaging in income-generating activities.

Some orphans allocate their earnings from these income-generating activities to pay for medical fees for their sick mothers, or to pay school fees for their younger siblings (No. 21, 22, 26, and 31). Their activities are not only for themselves, but also to provide for their families, which include younger siblings, in place of their parents.

Some orphans are a member of child-headed households, who succeed in income-generating activities with their brothers. An orphan boy (No. 3) in School A was unable to engage in hard labor due to an innate deformity in his spine. He relays agricultural knowledge learned from books in the school library to his younger brother, who is in charge of the farm work. They make their living by selling the vegetables that they cultivate. "I had my little brother build a little pond for irrigation. Having water even during the dry season allows us to grow tomatoes. Because our field productivity is higher than the other farmers' and our sales are increasing, we can buy fertilizer. My dream for the future is to be an agricultural engineer."

Many orphans experience instability in aspects of their mental health as well as their daily

lives before and after losing a parent, and become prone to skipping classes and not being able to concentrate to studying during this period of time. This tendency appears during primary education. Some orphans said that they repeated a year out of necessity to catch up with the learning that they have missed in order to proceed to secondary school (No. 3, 4, 8, 21, and 30)[6]. This was observed in free primary education, but not in secondary education where payment is required.

An orphan boy (No. 8) at School B said: "I lost my mother when I was in Standard 8 (the final year) in primary school. I was so depressed that I was constantly skipping classes, but I made a decision to repeat the year after consulting with my aunt who lives nearby. Then, the year after, I passed the PSLCE and was selected for secondary education. I am always so grateful to my aunt for looking after me like her real son." Another boy (No. 3) at School A said: "I lost my sick mother in Standard 1 (1st year of primary school), and my sick father in Standard 2. I was then taken in by my grandmother, but because life was so difficult there, my performance at school wasn't great. My grandmother, who had no interest in education, told me to quit going to school. But because I liked mathematics very much, I repeated a year when I was in Standard 3. Because I was repeating the same studies in the repeated year, my performance improved from then on, and I passed the PSLCE with high scores. I believe that I was able to come here and study in this school for academic advancement with a dormitory thanks to studying hard back then." Here, we can observe the efforts of some orphans who overcame their hardships despite being distressed after losing their parents, by consulting with their close relatives and making decisions for their futures.

4.2.3. Schooling support at secondary schools

The government and NGOs are providing various scholarship programs for the purpose of giving schooling support in secondary schools to girls and orphans in poverty. As a whole, more students receive support from NGOs than the government. NGOs voluntarily select female students, including female orphans, as targets for support from the standpoint of promoting girls' education[7]. Because NGOs are particularly expecting to create future role models on a community level, they tend to give priority to girls who have displayed excellence. An orphan girl states that "because I was top of my class in primary school, I wanted to go to a secondary school by all means. The reason I participated in community activities by NGOs was for self-promotional reasons so that I could obtain a scholarship. But now, I am proud to be a youth leader in the community women's group" (female orphan at School A, No. 7).

Schools which are entrusted to select qualified students for scholarships from the government select students so as not to award scholarships to students who have received funds from NGO

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[6] The number of those who repeated a year in primary schools due to other reasons (low academic achievement as judged by teachers, sickness, domestic violence, moving, labor, etc.) was 12 out of 33 targets.

[7] Excerpt from author's interview notes. See 4) with respect to hearings regarding NGO scholarships.

scholarships, and also adjust the balance between males and females[8]. Consequently, an allotment has begun to form in which girls are supported by NGO scholarships and boys by the government scholarships. Scholarship support from the government places priority on orphans from child-headed households as well as from households in the poorest tier of society (MOST, 2008). The selection committee consists of a headmaster, a deputy headmaster, 4 form teachers (1 for each grade), bursar, a PTA representative, a school councilor, and a female and male representative from the students. Selections are conducted based on the guideline. The headmaster of School C said: "teachers are always exchanging information in conversations in the staff room or through staff meetings concerning students' family circumstances, including students' siblings and parents whose students are falling behind in school fee payment."

Since secondary schools in Malawi adopt the trimester system, students must make school fee payments in three installments and the payment process must be completed within 2 weeks after the new trimester begins. Any student who fails to make a payment during this period is suspended from classes by the school. However, through consultation or negotiation with the student/orphan or their relatives at the headmaster's discretion, such families in need are granted flexibility by being given a grace period, setting sub-installments, receiving a half-fee waiver (half remission), exemption, etc. The headmaster of Private School F said, "because operation of private schools, including teachers' salaries, rely on school fee from students, our fee payments are strictly enforced; however, we sometimes accept waivers of half of the school fee upon consultation with parents of students living in poverty. With that said, if these families earn enough for their school fee, we ask them to make payments carried over from the previous year." An orphan girl (No. 32) in School F was granted an exemption for outstanding fee payments last year.

An orphan girl (No. 12) in School C said: "though my mother makes a bit of income as a vender at markets, she didn't make enough income last year so we were given cash for school fee payments from someone else (a man). I don't want to talk about him now. But we were glad that school exempted our outstanding fee payment for the previous trimester." While she was talking, the orphan girl was facing downwards and sounded extremely melancholy. Some orphan girls were forced to choose options that they did not want for themselves in order to continue their education.

As an educational support approach conducted voluntarily at the teachers' level, there is a community chest (common fund) created by school headmasters, as well as voluntary community support by teachers on top of individual support provided by teachers. Some teachers provide support to students, including orphans from families in need, according to the level of their need. When teachers come to understand the students' situations, as a standard of judgement of how

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[8] Excerpt from author's interview notes. For government scholarship/bursary selections, hearings were conducted from the headmaster of School D (September 16th, 2014), the headmaster of School B (September 17th), the headmaster of School C (September 19th), and the headmaster of School A (September 21st).

much they are in need, teachers pay special attention to whether or not the family possesses a mobile phone (checking expenses with respect to valuables), cleanliness of the students' school uniform (whether or not they can spare money to buy laundry soap) and how much their shoes or bags are damaged. Examples of support aside from temporary school fee support are provision of national examination fees and laundry soap for school uniforms, and emergency provision of cash such as for costs of transportation when attending a relative's funeral. An orphan girl (No. 1) at School A said that: "when I was bullied and crying because of my old dirty school uniform, a female teacher watching the situation gave me soap and told me that I didn't have to feel ashamed or deplore my circumstances, and that if I study harder than anyone in order to enrich my life and live happily, my future will open up for me. I will never forget her encouraging words or the bar of soap that she gave me." There are a number of orphans who were saved through provision of personal items as well as the mental support given by individual teachers.

5. Base that supports orphans' lives and education

5.1. Coping skills and continuation of education

The lives of orphans, who continue with secondary education requiring payment while being face-to-face with the deaths of their parents along with economic difficulties, are always exposed to hardship. Though the study by Kadzamira et al (2001) has indicated investigation results which show that orphans manage to pay their school fee by themselves, actual efforts made by orphans themselves were not specifically examined.

This investigation elucidated that orphans acquire coping skills through income-generating activities that they engage in during the holidays, and that this allows them to manage continuing with their education even despite falling into economic difficulties after their parents' deaths. At the root of this achievement was the orphans' strong will and desire to continue with their education based on "paving their own possibilities towards their path to the future."

There were some cases wherein orphans were required to provide for their families in place of their parents by taking the income that they made through income-generating activities to make payments for their own school fee, pay expenses for a sick mother, or pay for school fees for their younger siblings. Keeping in mind the orphans' priorities with respect to their family life as well as the importance they place in continuing their education, it is necessary to more comprehensively analyze the factors that contribute to orphans continuing their education.

In some cases, orphan girls continued their education by raising money for school fee in way that they did not want, or by engaging in rigorous physical labor. In order to analyze orphans' coping capabilities, it is crucial to understand the relationship between coping capabilities and continuance of education while keeping in mind that a strong will towards schooling exists at the core of the orphans' minds.

5.2. Scholarship support that backs up the continuance of education

There is a tendency for orphans to be prioritized when selections are made for scholarship reception, much like HIV patients are more likely to be supported[9]. Because of this, if orphans receive scholarships, they are put under relatively favorable educational conditions even if they live in poverty.

In Malawi, only 20% or so of the low-income population, including those in poverty, are able to go to secondary school compared to the high-income population (NSO, 2012a). Orphans' experiences in surviving economic difficulties after losing their parents strengthen their aspirations to improve their direction in life by acquiring scholarships to go to secondary school and gaining academic credentials. That is why support through scholarships, which enables them to go to school without worrying about school fee, is very effective.

Many providers of scholarship support coexisting at schools, and a differentiation in support can be seen in trends where NGOs primarily provide support for girls and the government primarily provides support for boys after selection by the school. NGO scholarship opportunities are nearly twice the amount of governmental opportunities. Among the targets for this investigation at Schools B, D, and E, scholarship earners were predominantly girls compared to boys (See Table 2). Furthermore, some NGOs occasionally give additional support in the form of daily commodities or cash (See Table 3). Some boy orphans have expressed deep dissatisfaction with regard to the discrepancy in support.

Scholarships play an important role as educational support for vulnerable children, including orphans. However, discrepancies within the provided support have bred inequality between orphans. When providing support, it is necessary to consider securing fairness/equity and accountability, and also for supporting organizations to make breakdowns of scholarship details uniform, harmonizing selection standards, etc.

5.3. Schools' efforts towards continuous education

While some orphans benefit from scholarships that provide school fee support, some vulnerable orphans who were not granted the chance to receive support were subject to half-fee waivers or intentional exemptions of outstanding payments as part of undertakings on the school level. Additionally, personal support was also provided by teachers such as support for school fee, emergency transportation fees, etc.

In past research, insufficient attention was given to school-level efforts, though analysis was conducted on support such as scholarships from development partners and mutual assistance between relatives as examples of activities that support orphans' education. School-level efforts can also be understood as an expression of "thoughtfulness" or "consideration" by school officials with respect to vulnerable children including orphans, since they also support continuous

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[9] Excerpt from author's interview notes. See 4) and 8) regarding hearings.

education for orphans.

This being said, schools are repeatedly instructed by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MOEST) to prevent outstanding payments and to secure payments[10]. School officials are caught in a bind in which they support continuous education for vulnerable children including orphans in consideration of the life that these children lead, while also receiving orders from educational administrations. Since school efforts and teachers' support for orphans' continuous education are conducted voluntarily and are fluid in many cases, it is necessary to acknowledge that there is a limit to the consistency of these examples of support despite their effectiveness in certain levels of emergency situations.

6. Conclusions

This study was conducted on orphans in Malawi's secondary schools, aiming to elucidate the actual lives of orphans as well as the orphans' education based on case analyses of efforts made by orphans and their relatives to enable continuous education, as well as case analyses on educational support practices at secondary schools.

In situations of hardship such as a parent's death or lifestyle difficulties, for orphans who attend secondary education requiring payment after completing the primary education, even not owning a bar of soap can impact their ability to continue with their education. This is why many orphans engage in income-generating activities during the holidays between trimesters for the purpose of raising money for school fee and to maintain their lives. Income-generating activities are one of the important factors in an orphan's ability to continue with education. In this investigation, the reality of the orphans' lives with respect to continuous education thanks to the orphans' interactions with their living environment and their connections with people, such as support from close relatives and trustworthy teachers and officials, support through governmental and NGO scholarships, and schools' flexible responses conducted through the headmasters' discretion as well as orphans' voluntary efforts in income-generating activities was revealed.

However, there is a limit to merely focusing on the aspect of continuous education for deepening discussion on orphans' voluntary efforts. It is necessary to conduct, through further field investigations, comprehensive analyses of relationships between the micro-level, which consists of values based on priorities in each family and the responses created by school officials for vulnerable children facing hardships, and the macro-level, which consists of courses of policy actions by the government for orphans.

In the future, it is necessary to elucidate a comprehensive picture from the micro to the macro levels of environment surrounding orphans, by comprehending each orphan's mindsets toward life and schooling. With this in mind, sustainable support for orphans in consideration of the

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[10] The reference of Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MOEST), "Ref.No.C31/1/1 (as of June 16th, 2014)"

current state of Africa, as well as what sort of educational policy should be made when considering the reality of vulnerable children including orphans should be the future issue to tackle.

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