

**Analysis of the implementation of Outcomes Based Education curriculum, using
Learner-Centred Education methods.**

BY

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Student Declaration

I, **Joseph Jophat William Sandamira** declare that the Master thesis entitled **Analysis of the implementation of Outcomes Based Education curriculum using Learner-Centred Education methods** contains no material that has been submitted previously, in whole or in part, for the award of any other academic degree or diploma. Except where otherwise indicated, this thesis remains my own effort.

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Abstract

Curriculum implementation is a process of making use of the curriculum. Currently, Malawi is using Outcomes Based Education (OBE) in the primary schools, by using Learner Centred Education (LCE) methods as the best approaches.

The main purpose of this study was to analyse the experiences, perceptions and conceptualization of LCE by newly qualified teachers.

A mixed methods approach was employed to collect and analyse data from multiple sources. This was done to help in triangulating the results from these sources. Questionnaires were developed to collect quantitative data whereas interviews, Focus Group Discussions and lesson observation checklists were used to collect qualitative data. Document analysis of schemes of work and lesson plans enriched the findings. Items for the questionnaires and interviews were guided by aspects of methodology drawn from literature and personal experience.

Data analysis was done concurrently where qualitative and quantitative data were converged. Main themes were then drawn and triangulated to make meaning of the data collected.

The study found out that newly qualified teachers have a good theoretical knowledge of LCE methods, but lack practical application of the same. This result is connected to the mode of training which does not help teachers understand the philosophy behind LCE.

Lack of effective practice in using LCE methods and teachers' reliance on teacher centred approaches for the sake of National examinations were other findings from the study.

The researcher recommends that teacher training has to accommodate LCE methods in its curriculum coupled with enough practice and effective awareness on the philosophy behind LCE to the teachers who graduated sometime back.

The researcher also suggests that national examinations should not be based in behaviorist thinking where rote memorization of facts is emphasized at the expense of critical thinking in learners, which can be achieved using LCE methods.

Dedication

To

My family members

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ABBREVIATIONS

EFA	Education for All
EGRA	Early Grade Reading Ability
FDG	Focus Group Discussion
BTL	Break Through to Literacy
IPTE	Initial Primary Teacher Education
ITP	Internal Teaching Practice
LCE	Learner Centred Education
LCP	Learner Centred Pedagogy
LSM	Learner Support Materials
MANEB	Malawi National Examination Board
MUSTER	Multi-Site Teacher Education Research
OBE	Outcomes Based Education
ODL	Open and Distance Learning
PEA	Primary Education Advisors
PCAR	Primary Curriculum and Assessment Reform
PGCE	Postgraduate Certificate in Education
TALULAR	Teaching And Learning Using Locally Available Resources
TTC	Teacher Training College
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
VUT	Vaal University of Technology
ZFI	Zone of Feasible Innovation
ZPD	Zonal of Proximal Development

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Background

This research study sought to analyse the experiences, perceptions and challenges that newly qualified teachers face in Learner Centred Education (LCE) methods in the implementation of Outcomes Based Education (OBE) curriculum in Kasungu Teachers Training College catchment area.

It should be appreciated in the first place that quality of an educational system can be judged from at least three perspectives: the inputs to the system, what happens within the system and the outputs from the system. Those who are interested in inputs will focus their attention primarily on finances, resources and infrastructure, and may use economic rationalism as the basis for their judgments about the quality or value of the system. Those interested in what happens within the system will focus their attention primarily on the processes used to organize, control and deliver education and training. Those interested in outcomes will focus their attention primarily on the products or results of education, Killen (2000). It can be argued that all these aspects of education are important and that quality should not be judged from any narrow perspective. However, in recent years there have been increasing calls in Western society for greater attention to be paid to the outcomes of education so that the return on investments in education (particularly public education) could be realized.

Relatedly, Malawi has adopted the Outcomes Based Education (OBE) curriculum as a way of enhancing learner abilities after going through instruction. According to Spady (1994), as cited in Berlach (2004:1) *“OBE means clearly focusing and organizing everything in an educational system around what is essential for all students to be able to do successfully at the end of their learning experiences. This*

means starting with a clear picture of what is important for students to be able to do, then organizing the curriculum, instruction and assessment to make sure this learning ultimately happens". In essence, Alderson and Martin (2007) place emphasis on outcomes defining long term, broadly defined goals and objectives and holding participants accountable for achieving them. The choice of policies, processes and procedures is made by participants on the basis of their professional judgment - which should or could be informed by relevant research, practice, wisdom and the needs of all those involved. Learner Centred Education methods are the recommended approaches in an OBE classroom.

For some time now the role of the teacher in a classroom has been seen as that of a master of knowledge, the custodian of the necessary values and attitudes ready to transfer the same to the learners. Vavrus, Thomas and Bartlett (2011:23) agree, "*...in a teacher dominated classroom, the learners take a more passive role as the teacher transmits knowledge that learners learn primarily through rote memorization*". However, of late there has been a challenge to the authority vested in the teacher as the person in the classroom who possesses knowledge, skills, attitudes and values deemed important to the society. Modern theories, especially constructivism, emphasize Learner-Centred Education methodologies. Learner-Centered Education is defined by McCombs and Whistler (1997:9) cited in Henson (2003): as

"the perspective that couples a focus on individual learners (their heredity, experiences, perspectives, backgrounds, talents, interests, capacities, and needs) with a focus on learning (the best available knowledge about learning and how it occurs and about teaching practices that are most effective in promoting the highest levels of motivation, learning, and achievement for all learners."

Consequently, this has therefore necessitated embracing Learner-Centred Education methodologies as a vehicle carrying through the OBE curriculum. It is often argued that the goal of any policy reform

ultimately aims at improving educational quality, Vavrus, et al. (2011). To improve the quality of education, effective pedagogical training becomes extremely important. Teacher pedagogical skills significantly affect learners' learning and acquisition of skills necessary for the twenty-first century (Vavrus, et al. 2011).

Finally, it is observed that much as LCE methodologies have been touted as the best approaches ushering in a new paradigm of Outcomes Based Education, and the teacher training programmes have been attuned to adapting to these approaches, experience has shown that many qualified, let alone newly qualified and student teachers rarely use these methods despite the importance attached. Documents on LCE mainly focus on the theoretical part of it and recommendations from researchers for education ministries to adopt the methods in OBE curriculum. Additionally, literature supporting the understanding of teachers in the importance and relevance of LCE methods is very rare, and if at all available, not very comprehensive. This situation triggered the desire in the researcher to find out the newly qualified teachers' experiences and perceptions about the importance they attach to LCE methods in lesson delivery in a more detailed and well-articulated manner.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Newly qualified teachers appear to rarely use LCE methods in their lesson delivery despite the training they had in college and the emphasis placed on the use of the methods in the current OBE curriculum.

The Education for All (EFA) Global Monitoring Report, 2004 of United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) entitled, Education for All- The quality imperative stated that: *“Pedagogical renewal across sub-Saharan Africa has included many attempts to switch to learner-centred, activity-oriented pedagogy and away from teacher-dominated instructional practices. In most of the countries concerned (in this case Malawi inclusive) attempts to institutionalise child-centred pedagogy in schools and teacher training institutions have produced inconclusive results”* (UNESCO, 2004:152-153). This is also echoed by Agigo (2010) as cited in Matsau (2007) who argues that the study he conducted revealed that the OBE curriculum developed for primary schools was never trialled for quality assurance purposes. While research results have not been adequately concluded to find out the viability of such approaches, countries including Malawi have gone flat out implementing OBE curriculum through the use of Learner-Centred methods. This is in sharp contrast with what the Director General of UNESCO, Koichiro Matsuura once said, as cited by Vavrus, et al. (2011:ix), *“Every investment in basic education must be measured against how well it serves both to expand access to education and to improve learning for all children, youths and adults.”* This endeavour begins at home, with a national consensus on quality and robust long-term commitment to achieve excellence.

However, literature in Malawi is a bit silent on the understanding of OBE using LCE methods by teachers, let alone the importance which teachers attach to such a curriculum and the required methods. So far the literature is emphasizing on the theoretical understanding of the methods and also touches on

the aspect of importance of using such methods in education such that the curriculum has been changed to focus on the learner's outcomes. While all these areas are being looked into, the experiences and perceptions of the teachers who have to implement the new innovations have not been examined so far. It is from this background that the researcher conducted a study to solicit newly qualified teachers' perceptions and experiences on LCE methods in the implementation of the OBE curriculum.

1.3 Research question

Why do newly qualified teachers appear to rarely use LCE methods in most of their lessons?

1.4 Research Objectives

The study sought to

1. To investigate whether student teachers understand LCE methods or not.
2. To examine how LCE methods are taught in TTCs.
3. To analyse the competences of student teachers in using LCE methods.
4. To find out the perceptions of head teachers and other teachers on LCE methods.
5. To assess reasons why teachers cling to traditional methods other than LCE methods.

1.5 Purpose of the study

The researcher aimed at exploring views and experiences of newly-qualified teachers on LCE methods basically focusing on their understanding of the methods, their competences in using such strategies in classroom lesson delivery and the importance they attach to using LCE methods in the implementation of Outcomes Based Education curriculum. In addition the issue of importance attached to LCE methods was critical in realigning the training programmes in teacher education so as to fully prepare student teachers before they are deployed to teach. Based on the findings, the study is positioned to make recommendations about possible suggestions in how best the methods can be used so that teachers feel comfortable to use in classroom lesson delivery.

1.6 Significance of the Study

The findings of this study are important in that it is hoped that they have the potential to:

1. Inform policy makers regarding the effective ways of implementing innovative methods such as LCE in primary schools in Malawi;
2. Help practitioners such as college lecturers prepare student teachers with the appropriate competences in handling LCE methods.
3. Contribute to the research literature about delivery of instruction using LCE for the educational systems of less developed nations, like Malawi.

1.7 Meta-Theory of the study

The study was guided by critical theory paradigm. Paradigm in this context should be understood as a framework, which is guided by a set of beliefs and feelings about the world and how it should be understood and studied (Guba, 1990) as cited in Ndengu (2012). This study was composed of certain philosophical assumptions that guided and directed thinking and action. Critical theory guided action and specifically in the research realm of this study; reflected the researcher's world view with a set of philosophical beliefs: Ontology (reality), epistemology (knowledge), Axiology (ethics) and methodology (enquiry). Furthermore, this research was premised on the critical theory paradigm as it endeavoured to assess newly qualified teachers' perceptions and experiences on learner-centred methodologies.

Critical theory as a paradigm in this context has a 'realistic orientation'. Neuman (2006) as cited in Ndengu (2012) notes that realistic orientation means that reality has several layers and what is observed on the surface does not reveal structures at the deeper levels. In essence, the paradigm showed that there are multiple realities and in Social research several realities are expected to be revealed. In his summary, Ndengu (2012:18) gave a synopsis of the relevance of the theory by stating that Critical theory is emancipatory, helping to free people from the shackles of the past thinking. Things can change if people can be positive and willing to take action. The mere introduction of LCE is not enough if it is not followed by relevant changes in the perceptions of the teachers who are the implementers.

1.8 Theoretical Framework

The study was further guided by constructivist theory. No inquirer can investigate a problem from all perspectives simultaneously. Therefore, it was only logical to be guided by a theoretical framework that established the vantage point, a perspective, a set of lenses through which the researcher viewed the problem (<http://education.astate.edu/dcline/guide/framework.html>). Learner-centred education methods largely draw on a theory of knowledge known as constructivism. It is basically a theory based on observation and scientific study about how people learn. It says that people construct their own understanding and knowledge of the world, through experiencing things and reflecting on those experiences (<http://www.thirteen.org/edonline/concepts>, retrieved on 4/02/2013).

Constructivism assumes that knowledge emerges through interactions and experiences among students and through reflection on the student's own ideas. In other words, knowledge is not external to the student and awaiting discovery; rather, knowledge, argue Vavrus, et al (2011:26) "*is created through a process of new information interacting with the prior knowledge and experiences of learners*". For instance, when the lecturer assigns work to students to work in groups on their own, the expectation is that students will work through the problem based on their shared experiences making sure that the new information is related to already existing knowledge students have. In other words students discover knowledge on their own and the role of the teacher is to facilitate the process. In fact Sikoyo and Leah, (2010) note that constructivism is a personal and social construction of meaning out of the bewildering array of sensations which have no order or structure besides the explanations fabricated for them.

Several prominent education scholars, such as John Dewey, Jean Piaget, and Levi Vygotsky, are associated with constructivism and have demonstrated its relevance to pedagogy. They all see knowledge as emerging in specific situations and contexts; additionally, they consider knowledge as

relevant for teachers and learners when it is ‘in use’ rather than when it is ‘delivered’ in a way that dissociates it from previous experience and from the opportunity for engagement with it (Vavrus et al. 2011). This is in sharp contrast with lecture method where the lecturer is expected to give out information for the students to simply take in. In essence, with a well-planned classroom environment, the learners learn ‘how to learn’.

Related to this study therefore, the constructivist theory suited well as it suggests that teachers should create the conditions for students to discover and actively construct knowledge- to ‘learn to learn’. Henson, (2003:396) says that, “*Learner-centred approaches are practices of teaching based on the assumption that people learn best by actively constructing and assimilating knowledge rather than through the passive addition of discrete facts to an existing store of knowledge*”. Some of the LCE methods have been appended at the end of this study (Appendix iii). From this perspective, lessons should encourage learners to draw upon, connect, and analyze their prior knowledge and experiences through self-discovery and interaction with other learners and with the teacher. Therefore, the critical question which this research wanted to find out is the experiences, understanding, perceptions and challenges of newly qualified teachers in using LCE methods from a constructivist point of view.

1.9 Research Design and Methodology

The study employed a mixed method approach of research design. Recognizing that all methods have limitations, the researcher felt that biases inherent in any single method could neutralize or cancel the biases of other methods. Another equally important point considered for the choice of the method was to make triangulation of data sources simple. The study followed triangulation method of data generation. Babbie and Mouton (2001) as cited in Ndengu, (2012) describe triangulation as collecting data in as many different ways and from as many diverse sources as possible with the aim of helping the

researcher get an understanding of a phenomenon from as many angles as possible. It is further felt that one method can be nested within another method to provide insight into different levels or units of data analysis, Creswel (2002).

On the one hand, being a study that aimed at deeply understanding reasons that inhibit teachers from adequately employing LCE methods despite being taught in colleges, qualitative research design perfectly suited. It meant immersion in the everyday life of the setting chosen for the study; the researcher entered the informants' world and through ongoing interaction, sought the informants' perspectives and meaning. Qualitative research is exploratory and is useful when the researcher does not know the important variable to examine. This type of approach was needed because the topic is new, and has never been addressed with a certain sample or group of people, or existing theories do not apply with the particular sample or group under study (Creswell, 2002).

Based on the arguments above, this researcher strongly felt a mixed method design was the best for the study.

The choice of qualitative approach as one form of conducting this study is supported by a number of considerations. Firstly it occurs in the natural settings, where human behaviour and events occur. Such being the case, chances are high that data collected will reflect the true behaviour of the subjects under study. Relatedly, the focus of qualitative research is on participants' perceptions and the way they make sense of their lives (Fraenkel and Wallen 1990). This augurs well with the problem under study; soliciting experiences and perceptions of newly qualified teachers on LCE methods. The attempt is therefore to understand not one, but multiple realities.

1.10 Research Site

The study setting was Kasungu District. The target group was newly qualified teachers especially the Initial Primary Teacher Education teachers (IPTE 5 and 6 and Open and Distance Learners (ODL 1) who are teaching in Kasungu right now. Kasungu TTC campus was the site to collect data from lecturers. Kasungu district was chosen for two reasons. Firstly, it was easy for the researcher to travel to the school as the residence is in Kasungu. Another reason is on financial considerations, to minimize costs.

1.11 Sampling Technique

Sample selection was purposive and convenient. Purposive sampling is a form of non-probability sampling in which decisions concerning the individuals to be included in the sample are taken by the researcher. This is based upon a variety of criteria which may include specialist knowledge of the research issue, or capacity and willingness to participate in the research. Some types of research design necessitate researchers taking a decision about the individual participants who would be most likely to contribute appropriate data, both in terms of relevance and depth. (<http://srmo.sagepub.com/view/the-sage-dictionary>). In this regard therefore, newly qualified teachers are the ones with appropriate knowledge on LCE, hence the choice of the technique.

On the other hand, convenient sampling was opted for because the researcher had to choose subjects because of suitability of the respondents. Convenience is evident within Kasungu because it was likely going to be easy for the researcher to identify the newly qualified teachers during teaching practice visits to schools.

Such sampling procedures were opted for because participants best helped the researcher understand the problem of rare use of LCE methods. The newly qualified teachers under Initial Primary Teacher Education (IPTE) in their first or second year of teaching were the best sources because they are the ones who have undergone training in LCE methodologies, hence having the necessary information for the study. Convenience sampling was complimented by snowball sampling because the newly qualified teachers have been randomly posted and the researcher depended on the informants' knowledge of where the next informant could be found. Twenty-five newly-qualified teachers (IPTE 6 and ODL1) who are currently in the field were targeted. This does not necessarily suggest random sampling or selection of a number of participants and sites, but the approach has borrowed heavily from Miles and Huberman (1994) as cited in Creswell, (2003). Four aspects were taken into consideration; the setting (where the research took place), the actors (who were observed or interviewed), the events (what the actors will be observed or interviewed doing), and the process (the evolving nature of events undertaken by the actors within the setting).

Taking these four aspects into consideration, the setting was within Kasungu district targeting newly qualified teachers especially IPTE6 and ODL1 (twenty-five) who are teaching in Kasungu district. In addition, five Head teachers were also targeted. Lecturers (ten, two from each academic department since there are five departments in TTCs) were involved in responding to the questionnaire, on how LCE methods are taught to student-teachers giving a total of forty respondents.

1.12 Data collection methods

Qualitative data generation was employed with a bit of quantitative data. Data generation is preferred more in qualitative research design as opposed to data collection because the former recognizes the

active and cooperative role of participants in the research as opposed to a passive role of information givers (Ndengu,2012).

Qualitative data were collected through interviews, classroom lesson observation and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) while quantitative data were collected through questionnaires administered to Lecturers. Document Analysis of Schemes and Records of work and Lesson Plans was done to see how ready the teachers are in using LCE in their lessons.

Using observation, the researcher carefully watched the teachers in practice to see whether they are following LCE methods or traditional (teacher-centred) methods, so that at the end of the lesson observation, an in-depth interview followed to solicit their views on the importance they attach to LCE methods. To further explore the problem, the researcher had Focused Group Discussion (FGD) comprising newly qualified teachers.

1.13 Instrumentation/Tools

The study used observation checklist, interviews, Focus Group Discussions, Questionnaire and document analysis as tools to collect data.

Observation checklist is a tool which a researcher uses to check whether or not a phenomenon is being shown by the individual being observed. For instance the researcher observed lessons being taught and checked whether or not, the observed teacher is using LCE methods during lesson delivery. This researcher opted for this tool because he experienced and observed at first hand a number of issues in the setting like; interaction and relationships between teachers and the learners. Observation checklist was emphasized because the researcher felt learner interaction, behaviour and actions with the teacher are very central in understanding perceptions of teachers over LCE methods.

Relatedly, interviewer guides were used to collect qualitative data. Interviews which Mason, (2002, p.62) as cited in Ndengu (2012) call “conversations with a purpose” (emphasis added) were conducted with the aim of collecting data through direct verbal interaction with the respondents. The researcher used semi-structured interviews which use prepared guide with specific questions organized by topics but which are not necessarily asked in specific order. This approach guarantees flexibility to the interviewer and even the interviewee.

Collecting data from newly qualified teachers also relied on Focus Group Discussions interview guide (FGDs). This data collection tool allowed members to share experiences while at the same time correcting views that are extreme or are not socially shared. As Patton (2002) cited in Creswel (2002) ably articulates that participants tend to provide checks and balances on each other which weeds out false or extreme views.

Questionnaires were administered to lecturers to substantiate to the rich data collected qualitatively. Document analysis was done for schemes and records of work and lesson plans especially on how the teachers plan their work.

1.14 Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis is the process of organizing pieces of data systematically identifying their key features or relationships and interpreting those (Locke, et al. 2000). Throughout this study, the focus was providing accurate inductive, descriptive interpretation in as far as newly qualified teachers’ experiences on LCE is concerned.

The study employed concurrent procedures in analyzing data, in which the researcher converged quantitative and qualitative data in order to provide a comprehensive analysis of the research problem.

In this design, the investigator collected both forms of data at the same time during the study and then integrated the information in the interpretation of the overall results, Creswell (2002). Also, in this design, the researcher triangulated one form of data within another, larger data collection procedure in order to analyze different questions or levels or units in an organization. In fact this study analyzed research objectives 1-4 qualitatively while research objective 5 was analyzed quantitatively.

Data collected through interviews were transcribed verbatim and from there smaller units of meaning were grouped into categories. Themes were used in discussion of the findings drawn from observation checklist, interviews and focus group discussions. Quantitative data collected through questionnaires were analyzed using simple descriptive statistics i.e., mean, mode, standard deviation and graphs.

1.15 Validity

In trying to be consistent with research requirements, the researcher pilot- tested the instruments for data collection to a small group of the sample to see whether the anticipated results were being collected. For instance, a semi-structured interview was conducted to make sure the data collected is what was being sought after. The whole purpose for pilot-testing the instrument is to guarantee credibility to the research. This is called ‘truth value’- the confidence in the truth of the findings, including an accurate understanding of the context.

1.16 Reliability

Issues of dependability of results are very crucial if people are to take the research results seriously. Dependability entails the degree of consistency with which instances are assigned to the same categories. The findings in this study are dependable because all the requirements in conducting a

credible research were adhered to, for instance the research used a number of data collection tools in order to triangulate the results of the study.

1.17 Ethical considerations

Consent was sought from the District Education Manager (Kasungu) to allow the researcher carry out the research in the district after explaining how the research is to be conducted and the target informants (See consent letter on page 109)

Informants were asked to participate in the research voluntarily and were allowed to withdraw any time they felt obliged to do so. However, risks (if any) and benefits of participation were explained to informants before the start of the research. Issues to do with respect for the informants' freedoms and rights were guaranteed at the on-set of the study.

One critical issue when conducting research is maintaining confidentiality/ anonymity of informants. The researcher assured informants of their safety and anonymity throughout the period of research by explaining how the data they gave was to be handled. Names were not needed. Informants were assured of their co-ownership of the data collected and that the safest means of keeping the data away from anybody who is not an interested party were adhered to.

1.18 Conclusion

In summary, the chapter has given a brief background to the concept of LCE and OBE as they relate to modern theory of learning which is constructivism, guided by critical theory, articulating the significance of LCE in today's education and the need to understand teachers' experiences and perceptions in LCE. Emphasis has been on the newly qualified teachers' understanding of LCE, the purpose of the study and how relevant the results will be to the educational needs of children of Malawi.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Brief Overview

This review starts with a brief overview of the genesis of OBE, followed by philosophical underpinnings to OBE. Thirdly, an understanding of theoretical assumptions embracing Learner- Centred Education (LCE) will be expounded. This will be followed by issues of change in education. Lastly, a review of teachers' experiences, perceptions and attitudes when embarking on a new approach in teaching will be tackled.

Mizrachi, Padilla, Susuwele-Banda (2010) argue that active-learning pedagogies have generated much interest in the international development community. They further note that the new curriculum is designed to be implemented by teachers using active-learning methodologies and continuous student assessment. No longer is it sufficient to simply get children in school; it is now important that they receive education that is relevant and of high quality as well. One widely held general aim of education is to equip students with knowledge, skills, attitudes and competencies that enable them to render useful services to themselves and to the society at large. Education is, therefore, viewed as an indispensable catalyst that strongly influences the development and economic fortunes of a nation as well as the quality of life of its people (Baffour-Awuah, 2011).

As part of its expenditure, the government invests significantly in designing and implementing curricula and policies, including the training of teachers, since the priority of all countries, especially the developing ones, is to improve the quality of schools and the achievement of students (De Grauwe, 2001) as cited in Baffour-Awuah (2011). Baffour-Awuah (2011) further notes that quality education

partly depends on how well teachers are trained since they are some of the key inputs to education delivery. A recent survey conducted by the Malawi Primary Curriculum and Assessment Reform (PCAR) programme has shown that the general public was not satisfied with the performance of children who complete standard eight and join the community (Inwent, 2008). Many factors contribute to such a situation. One obvious challenge as seen from PCAR process is the approach teachers take in lesson delivery. It is from this observation that Malawi has recently adopted an Outcomes-Based Education (OBE) curriculum, which opted for Learner-Centred Education (LCE) methods in order to properly determine the outcomes from each learner. Realising the need to give relevant training to student teachers, especially in LCE methods, the Government of Germany through GIZ partnered with the Malawi Government's Ministry of Education to sandwich Learner Centred Education methods in the Initial Primary Teacher Education (IPTE) programme (Inwent, 2008). Mizrachi, Padilla, Susuwele Banda (2010) add that a close study of the two curricula reveals extensive reorganization of subject content and a shift from teacher-centered toward student-centered, active-learning pedagogies.

2.2 Understanding Outcomes Based Education (OBE) Curriculum

According to Rogan, (2006:442) C2005, a curriculum modeled in OBE principles in South Africa, asserts that, *“the move towards an outcomes-based approach is due to the growing concern around the effectiveness of traditional methods of teaching and training, which were content-based. An outcomes-based approach to teaching and learning, however, differs quite drastically and presents a paradigm shift.”* Why a paradigm shift? Rogan (2005) argues that with the introduction of OBE, the focus shifts to what they (learners) can do with their knowledge, in particular whether they can use what they know to meet the specified outcomes. One other view is that Outcome-Based Education is a model of education that rejects the traditional focus on what the school provides to students, in favour of making

students demonstrate that they ‘know and are able to do’ whatever the required outcomes are (Castleberry, 2006). MIE (2007:viii) in the final report on PCAR observe that, “*OBE defines clearly what the learners are to learn, measures their progress based on actual achievement, meets their needs through various forms of mediated learning experiences and gives them enough time and help to meet their potential.*” Kiggundu and Nayimuli (2009) further add that OBE can be referred to as a method of curriculum design and teaching that focuses on what students can actually do after they are taught. The stimulus for OBE approach comes from the political, economic and educational sources. OBE reforms emphasize setting clear standards for observable, measurable outcomes. Nothing about OBE demands the adoption of any specific outcome.

OBE, like most concepts in education, has been interpreted in many different ways. In the words of Killen (2000), OBE can be viewed in three different ways—as a theory of education, or as a systemic structure for education or further still as a classroom practice. OBE can be thought of as a theory (or philosophy) of education in the sense that it embodies and expresses a certain set of beliefs and assumptions about learning, teaching and the systemic structures within which these activities take place. The emphasis in an OBE education system is on results that can be measured rather than "inputs," such as how many hours students spend in class, or what textbooks are provided. Outcomes may include a range of skills and knowledge. Generally, outcomes are expected to be concretely measurable, that is, ‘Student can run fifty metres in less than one minute’ instead of ‘Student enjoys physical education class.’ A complete system of outcomes for a subject area normally includes everything from mere recitation of fact to complex analysis and interpretation (Castleberry, 2006).

On the other hand, OBE is seen as systemic structure for education in that it goes beyond structured tasks by demanding that students demonstrate their skills through more challenging tasks. The OBE system can also be benefited when the outcomes are used to guide instructional planning.

Moreover, OBE is seen as a classroom practice in that using the student-centered approaches, which are actually the recommended approaches in OBE classrooms, the teacher meets each student at his or her level of competency and builds upon the existing strengths throughout the course. In the course, students must clearly understand the programme objectives. In addition, mutual respect should have been built in the classroom and the teacher has detailed information about each student. At this juncture, the teacher can conduct an assessment of students' mastery in the content they have learnt and other skills that they have developed, (Kiggundu and Nayimuli, 2009). The assessment helps the teacher determine the instructional levels for the course to start. Student-centered approaches (Refer Appendix iii) do not use a specific textbook in classes because doing so brings a sense of confinement. Instead, a varied range of reference books and authentic materials from the world around is preferable. Students' interests can be built upon when units of study are developed according to the changing needs of the student population.

Jansen (1997) starts by advancing what he considers merits for OBE. There appears to be sound reasons for a curriculum policy modelled on OBE. Outcomes would displace an emphasis on content coverage and make explicit what learners should attend to while directing assessment towards specified goals. For instance, for purposes of graduation, progression, and retention, a fully developed OBE system generally tracks and reports not just a single overall grade for a subject, but also gives information about several specific outcomes within that subject. For example, rather than just getting a passing grade for mathematics, a student might be assessed as level four for number sense, level five for algebraic concepts, level three for measurement skills, etc. This approach is valuable to schools and parents by specifically identifying a student's strengths and weaknesses.

Outcomes signal what is worth learning in a content-heavy curriculum and can be a measure of accountability, thus a means of evaluating the quality and impact of teaching in a specific school. For

Spady (1994) as cited in Killen (2000) states that learning is not significant unless the outcomes reflect the complexities of real life and give prominence to the life-roles that learners will face after they have finished their formal education. These are universal claims associated with OBE in several first-world countries. Equally, OBE is argued as facilitating human resource development and potentially contributing to a vibrant economy (Kiggundu and Nayimuli, 2009). However, Bradly (1996) argues that, there is no shred of evidence in almost eighty years of curriculum change literature to suggest that altering the curriculum of schools leads to or is associated with changes in national economies.

OBE-oriented teachers think about the individual needs of each student and give opportunities for each student to achieve at a variety of levels. Thus, in theory, weaker students are given work within their grasp and exceptionally strong students are extended. In practice, managing independent study programmes for thirty or more individuals is difficult. Adjusting to students' abilities is something that good teachers have always done: OBE simply makes the approach explicit and reflects the approach in marking and reporting.

Furthermore, Jansen (1997) also pinpoints what seems as flaws of OBE in his assessment. There are several problems documented regarding the OBE experience in some countries. Do outcomes in fact deliver what they claim? How do outcomes play out in a resource-poor context (in this study, Malawi?) Can outcomes survive their psychological roots in behaviourism? Mogaki, 2010 further observes that OBE is criticised for being used to justify increased funding requirements, increased graduation and testing requirements, and additional preparation, homework, and continuing education time spent by students, parents and teachers in supporting learning.

However, proponents of OBE argue that all students can learn, regardless of ability, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and gender. Furthermore, OBE recognizes that a complex organization is more

likely to produce what it measures, and to downplay anything it considers unimportant. The adoption of measurable standards is seen as a means of ensuring that the content and skills covered by the standards will be a high priority in the education of students (Alderson & Martin, 2007).

In essence, OBE seeks to reject a rank-ordered definition of success by essentially promising that all students will perform at least as well as the stated standards. Contrary to the popular thinking, going by the research findings conducted by Kiggundu and Nayimuli in 2009 at Vaal University of Technology (VUT) for Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) students during their Teaching Practice, it was concluded that employing OBE approaches proved a difficult task. All respondents (24 in total) admitted that they found it very difficult to implement OBE effectively because of the lack of learner support materials (LSMs) in all schools, the large numbers of students in class, poor learner discipline and the time limitation.

2.3 Philosophical background to Learner-Centred Education

Learner-Centred Education is a pedagogical practice which focuses on learning rather than teaching. It emphasizes on the role of the active learner at the centre of the teaching and learning process. It aims at developing learners' autonomous thinking (Inwent, 2008). Student-centred learning was endorsed in the National Curriculum Statement as an appropriate teaching strategy to teach outcome-based curriculum (Rogan, 2006). The OBE learning outcomes are student-centred in that they are written in terms that enable students to be in charge of their own learning. Student-centred learning recognises that no two students are the same with regard to their learning needs. The aim is to allow teachers to be more flexible in determining the most effective ways to help all students in a class to achieve the learning outcomes set for each subject.

This is in contrast to the traditional Teacher- centred approach, which literally means that the teacher is the person who is imparting knowledge or information to the student. The student is the receiver of this knowledge. It involves planning for instruction, implementing the instructional plan, and evaluating students' learning toward the instructional objectives (Woolfolk, 2001). Lessons are often designed to address the gap between what students currently know and what schools think students ought to know. The classroom teacher will help select the material best suited to meet the academic needs of the child, and will provide instruction that reflects a preferred instructional format. Some educators feel this deprives the learner of the opportunity to choose what to learn and how best that learning should proceed (Berlach, 2004).

Learner Centred Education has its philosophical roots in what Dewey calls 'experience'. "*An ounce of experience is better than a ton of theory*", writes Dewey, (1985:151) as cited in Inwent (2008). For Dewey (1991:214) as cited in Inwent (2008) experience always consists of both active as well as passive components, and it is the very perception of the connection between doing and undergoing that supplies meaning to the act. As a pragmatist, Dewey thinks that knowing is an instrument of acting. What is more striking in Dewey's observation is that without vital connection to the experience of learners, learning soon degenerates into a merely symbolic procedure, because any theory only gains significance and verifiable meaning in its application to experience. Learning from experience, notes Dewey (1985:151) as cited in Inwent (2008), "*basically means learning through one's own activities 'doing' and the activities of others (e.g. a classroom) in connection with an observation of the effects produced by the activities 'undergoing'.*" LCE is entrenched in experience-based learning initiated by Dewey (1938); Vygotsky's (1978) social learning theory; and founded in the premise of situated learning (Kiggundu & Nayimuli 2009).

In fact Rousseau in his book *Emile* (Inwent, 2008) recommended a type of education that at the time was unknown, an education that was natural, child-centred and experience-based. His intent was to protect the children from a corrupting society and permit them to develop naturally. However, in opposition to Rousseau, who wanted to protect children from society, Dewey (1938) believed that the only way a child would develop to its full potential was in a social setting. He believed that the school should be a microcosm of its community and that education is living, not just a preparation for life. Dewey's works were made powerful because he recognised that each child has both a psychological dimension and a social dimension and to be effective, education must begin with understanding how the child's capacities, interests, and habits can be directed to help the child succeed in the community.

One other important authority in this regard is Levi Vygotsky who, according to McLeod, (2010) viewed interaction with peers as an effective way of developing skills and strategies. This concept is what is referred to as *Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)*. This has been defined as the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem-solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem-solving under adult guidance, or in collaboration with more capable peers. Less competent children develop with help from skillful peers-within the *Zone of Proximal Development*, the term Wood (1976) as cited in McLeod (2010) coined, 'Scaffolding'. This fits in well with LCE because a learner is left to encounter new experiences alone and with peers to discover new knowledge.

2.4 Theoretical background

Educators concerned with the growing problems of school dropout, low levels of academic achievement and other indicators of school failure are arguing for more learner-centered models of schooling. Such models attend to the diversity among students, and use this diversity to enrich learning and to produce results within the context of current school reform (BEA, 1997).

LCE allows students to shape their own learning paths and places upon them the responsibility to actively participate in making their educational process a meaningful one. *“By definition the learner-centred learning experience is not a passive one, as it is based on the premise that ‘student passivity does not support or enhance ... learning’ and that it is precisely ‘active learning’ which helps students to learn independently”* (MacHemer and Crawford, 2007: 11) as cited in Vavrus, et al (2011). Constructivist theories of teaching and learning suggest that there is no universal path of human learning, Reich (2006) as cited in Inwent, (2008).

Hammond and Bransford (2005:34) add that, *“Piaget’s theory emphasized the constructive nature of knowing. This refers to the idea that we all actively attempt to interpret our world based on our existing skills, knowledge, and developmental levels”*. In fact, Garcia and Nolan (n.d) have given what they consider as principles of LCE: firstly LCE takes into account the context where learning tasks should have real-world applications. Secondly LCE considers construction of knowledge where learners have to link their own experience with new learning materials. Thirdly, collaboration is also given preference where learners develop, test, and evaluate their ideas with peers. Lastly, conversation whereby in groups, learners plan, collaborate, and make sense of new learning. BEA (1997) adds to the list of principles where they consider goals of learning. For them a successful learner, over time and with

support and instructional guidance, can create meaningful, coherent representations of knowledge. Relatedly, they also take into account the principle of strategic thinking where a successful learner can create and use a repertoire of thinking and reasoning strategies to achieve complex learning goals. Last on their list is the principle of motivational and emotional influences on learning. What and how much is learned is influenced by the motivation. Motivation to learn, in turn, is influenced by the individual's emotional states, beliefs, interests and goals, and habits of thinking.

Creating a good balance between learning about theory and learning practical skills is a common problem in teacher education (Stuart, Akyeampong and Croft, 2009). Practical action and analytical understanding should go hand-in-hand and cross-fertilise each other, (Stuart et al. 2009) if education is to give learners its true meaning, hence the need to find out whether newly qualified teachers employ the methods they learn in college.

2.5 Issues of Change in Education

Sinyolo (2007:33) notes that in their joint publication on teachers, UNESCO and the OECD argue that *“a better trained teaching force is an important factor in educational quality”*. The two organisations further support the importance of professionally trained and qualified teachers by contending that *“teachers’ subject matter expertise must be complemented by pedagogical competence”*(UNESCO,2004) However, teacher training on its own is not enough to guarantee important changes in education. Significant educational change, observes Werner (1980), as cited in Fullan and Stiegelbauer (1991), consists of changes in beliefs, teaching styles, and materials which can come about only through a process of personal development in a social context. It is a popular belief

among teacher educators that teachers who have graduated from college are expected to practise what they have been trained irrespective of their beliefs and attitudes.

Contrary to the findings above Wideen et al. (1998) as cited in Stuart, et al. (2009) reviewed nearly a hundred research-based studies on learning to teach. They found that many traditional programmes of teacher education have little effect upon the firmly held beliefs of the beginning teachers. Those programmes that are successful in changing attitudes do so by building upon the beliefs of the student teachers and giving them systematic and consistent long-term support, such as working closely with a mentor or other experienced colleague as they teach. The IIEP/UNESCO report (2007) notes that too many programmes for quality improvement have been imposed from above and have failed, and that Ministries have come to realise that quality improvement cannot be imposed from outside. The report notes that in the end, it is the teacher and the principal (head teacher) who have to facilitate improvement. It suggests that schools themselves should be encouraged and empowered to monitor and improve the quality of the services they deliver. The UNESCO report further posits that without the commitment of teachers and head teachers “very little happens”, and this commitment comes from internal conviction.

Rogan and Grayson (2003:16) contend that, *“all too often the attention and energies of policy-makers and politicians are focused on the ‘what’ of the desired educational change, neglecting the ‘how’.”* In this regard the how is about teacher competences in handling LCE methods.

However, the sandwiching of the teacher training curriculum was felt as a way out in ensuring implementation of OBE curriculum using LCE methods as some teachers especially the newly qualified would possess the necessary skills and competences in delivering lessons using the new approaches.

Interestingly, Fullan and Stiegelbauer (1991:127) argue that *“one of the great mistakes over the past thirty years has been the naïve assumption that involving some teachers on curriculum committees or in programme development would facilitate implementation, because it would increase acceptance by other teachers”*. They further add that change is highly personal experience- each and every one of the teachers who will be affected by change must have the opportunity to work through this experience in a way in which the rewards at least equal the cost. In an interesting way, Fullan and Stiegelbauer (1991) conclude their argument by saying that those who advocate and develop changes get more rewards than costs, and those who are expected to implement them experience many more costs than rewards, goes a long way in explaining why the more things change, the more they remain the same. Porter (1980) as cited in Rogan, (2005:313) claims that *“.....the people concerned with creating policy and enacting the relevant legislation seldom look down the track to the implementation stage.”* In agreement, Verspoor(1989) cited in Rogan (2005) observes that large-scale programs tend to emphasize adoption and neglect implementation. This makes the teachers to have problems in implementing the innovations much as the intentions for the same could be good. Johnson et al (2000) cited in Rogan and Grayson (2003:1175) suggest that, *“introducing regular small changes can allow teachers to vary their practice, find successful variations and be prepared for further changes which allows for accelerated evolution of classroom practice.”*

However, this researcher’s personal view is that change is good because it encourages innovative thinking, creativity and general advancement in doing things which have a substantial departure from the ‘normal’ and accommodate new ideas.

2.6 Teachers experiences, perceptions and attitudes

The Multi-Site Teacher Education Research project (MUSTER) team attempted to measure students' attitudes and views by means of surveys administered to samples of students at three different stages: as they entered college, as they finished their training, and as newly qualified teachers, in Ghana, Lesotho and Malawi. The results suggest that the teacher education programmes in those countries at that time did not have great impact on student views. While there was some change, it was not always in the hoped-for direction. In fact Fullan and Stiegelbauer (1991) argue that teacher training does not equip teachers for the realities of the classroom. Nor could it be expected to do so in the light of the abruptness of the transition. The conclusions seem to be that training does not seem to change attitudes very much. Those changes that do show up are not very encouraging. *“Their sense of personal effectiveness and their use of modern educational terms like LCE (emphasis added) seem to predate the training, and do not translate into practice”*. Lewin and Stuart (2003:112) as cited in Stuart, Akyeampong, K & Croft, A (2009).

In agreement to Hammond and Bransford (2005), Sikoyo and Leah (2010) found out that teachers' implementation of the problem-solving approach, which is one example of LCE methods, was far more regulated by contextual affordances and constraints within schools and the broader education system and society than by their interpretations of the official curriculum. The findings by Sikoyo and Leah (2010) highlight the influence of structural contextual factors in regulating pedagogic practice and teachers' take-up of Learner- Centred pedagogies in Africa. The evidence from this paper suggests the need for education researchers in developing countries to focus on helping teachers develop strategies for teaching large classes as Learner- Centred pedagogies have a bleak future in the region because of the

teacher-pupil ratio which is on the higher side. However, that close analysis has not taken place in Malawi to conclude that LCE is a failure, hence the relevance of the current study.

2.7 CONCLUSION

Most of the research findings and literature consulted so far, show that it is quite hard to develop student teachers' beliefs, attitudes and preconceptions about the whole art of teaching, but the research findings are silent on the teachers experiences, perceptions and challenges that seemingly prevent their change of attitudes and beliefs even after going through teacher training. Arguably, Fullan and Stiegelbauer (1991:129) state that, *"teachers should have some understanding of the operational meaning of the change before they can make a judgment about it. Clarification is a process and full understanding can come only after some experience with the change."* Having taught for a year or two, the newly qualified teachers have some experience, hence the need to explore more on the teachers' experiences and perceptions on LCE methods.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH DESIGN

3.1 Overview

In this chapter, the first section describes the research design, while the second describes the participant sampling and selection procedures. In the third part, the data collection instruments and administration procedures are detailed. The fourth section describes the methods of data analysis used in the study.

3.2 Research Design

The study employed a mixed method approach of research design. Recognizing that all methods have limitations, the researcher felt that biases inherent in any single method could neutralize or cancel the biases of other methods. Multiple sources and/or methods of data gathering increase the credibility and dependability of the data since the strengths of one source compensate for the potential weaknesses of the other. Another equally important point considered for the choice of the method was to make triangulation of data sources simple. The study followed triangulation method of data generation. Babbie and Mouton (2001) as cited in Ndengu (2012) describe triangulation as collecting data in as many different ways and from as many diverse sources as possible with the aim of helping the researcher get an understanding of a phenomenon from as many angles as possible. It is further felt that one method can be nested within another method to provide insight into different levels or units of data analysis, Creswel (2002).

On the one hand, being a study that is aiming at deeply understanding reasons that inhibit teachers from adequately employing LCE methods despite being taught in colleges, qualitative research design perfectly suits. It means immersion in the everyday life of the setting chosen for the study; the researcher enters the informants' world and through ongoing interaction, seeks the informants' perspectives and meaning (Creswell, 2002). Qualitative research is exploratory and is useful when the researcher does not

know the important variable to examine. This type of approach is needed because the topic is new, the topic has never been addressed with a certain sample or group of people, or existing theories do not apply with the particular sample or group under study (Creswell, 2002).

The choice of qualitative design as one approach in the study is further supported by a number of considerations. Firstly, it occurs in the natural settings, where human behaviour and events occur. Such being the case, chances are high that data collected will reflect the true behaviour of the subjects under study. Relatedly, the focus of qualitative research is on participants' perceptions and the way they make sense of their lives (Fraenkel and Wallen, 1990). This augurs well with the problem under study: soliciting experiences and perceptions of newly qualified teachers on LCE methods. The researcher used a concurrent mixed methods design in the current study. In a concurrent approach, two or more data collection instruments are administered within the same time frame. Both forms of data (questionnaire and interview) were collected at the same time during the study, and then integrated the data into the interpretation of the overall results (Creswell, 2003). The attempt was, therefore, to understand not one, but multiple realities. Based on the arguments above, this researcher strongly felt a mixed method design was the best for the study. This was in part because of financial and time constraints on part of the researcher.

The researcher chose interviews because they have the potential to provide insight into how respondents experienced and thought about Learner Centred Education (LCE) methods, since they would provide an opportunity to probe further for explanations of responses provided by respondents. Furthermore interviews were intended to provide important information that would be difficult to capture using a

questionnaire. It is also true that interviews allow exploration of variables under investigation in greater detail, and so complement the survey (Creswell, 2003).

The researcher used a standard open-ended (semi-structured) interview guide (Patton, 1990 as cited in Baffour-Awauh, 2011) to examine the perceptions and experiences of five head teachers, twenty-five IPTE5, IPTE6 and ODL1 teachers in Kasungu district. Standardized open-ended interviews consisted of a set of questions carefully worded and arranged with the intention of taking each respondent through the same sequence of issues by asking them the same questions using essentially the same words to minimize variation in the questions being posed (Appendix i). The researcher used this type of interview protocol because there were specific questions in mind and wanted to take respondents through the questions in a fixed order in order to avoid digression from the main focus (Ary, et al. 2006 as cited in Baffour-Awauh, 2011). The reasons behind this choice are because semi structured interviews are highly focused and efficient. Though they are less flexible than unstructured interview, they reduce interviewer effect and facilitate data analysis.

Questions used in this approach are the same and guided to minimize variations so the responses usually fall into their respective categories/ themes and thus facilitate the speed at which data is analysed. However it is noted that semi-structured interviews allow the interviewer to focus on the research questions, yet open up new avenues for further questions (Ary, et al, 2006 as cited in Baffour-Awauh, 2011). This ensures that the same questions are asked but in a more conversational manner, yet the interviewer has more freedom to rearrange the order of questions or even rephrase them. The researcher used an audio recorder to capture each interview with the participants. The interviewees were audio-taped to ensure that a more accurate picture of the questions and answers is achieved and therefore

to enhance validity. Similarly, recording the interviews allowed the researcher to give full attention to the interviewee rather than pausing to take notes. While interviews with teachers lasted between eight-ten minutes, those with head teachers lasted between six-nine minutes. The interview times were short because of the structure of the items.

These were followed by Focus Group Discussion interviews (Refer Appendix ii) where two or more respondents were available to cross-examine the findings from the interviews.

Self-administered questionnaires were used (Appendix v) with eight Likert scale questions and four open-ended questions. Questionnaires are appropriate for use because numerous variables can be measured by a single instrument, and statistical manipulation during data analysis can permit multiple uses of the data set (DePoy & Gitlin, 1998) as cited in Baffour-Awuah (2011). The researcher used questionnaire because the participants (Lecturers) were all literate and therefore could read and respond to the items easily and quickly.

An overview of this study’s design, framed against the research questions, is given in Table 1 below.

Table 1 An Overview of Research Design

Research Question	Participants	Instruments	Type of data collected
What are LCE methods?	Newly Qualified teachers (N= 25)	Interviews using semi-structured questions FGD using interviews	Qualitative (Interview transcripts)
How are LCE methods taught in TTCs?	Lecturers (N=10)	Questionnaire (Likert scale & open-ended items) Interviews (semi-structured+ open ended items)	Quantitative (Questionnaire) Qualitative (Interview transcripts)
What competences do newly-qualified teachers have to enhance	NQT (N=25) Lecturers (N=10)	Interviews (structured questions)	Qualitative (Interview+FGD)

their ability to use LCE methods		FGD (FDG Interview schedule Questionnaire (Likert scale) + open-ended items Document Analysis	transcripts) Quantitative (Questionnaire) Document Analysis (Document Analysis checklist
How are LCE viewed by teachers in schools?	Head teachers (N=5) NQT (25)	Interviews (semi-structured questions FGD (FGD Interview schedule)	Qualitative (Interview transcripts) FGD Interview transcript
Why do most teachers cling to traditional methods when teaching?	Lecturers (N=10) NQT (N=25) Head teachers (N=5)	Questionnaire (Likert scale + open-ended items) Interview (structured items) FGD (FGD Interview schedule)	Quantitative (questionnaire) Qualitative (Interview transcript

3.3 Research Site

The study setting was Kasungu District. The target group was the newly qualified teachers especially the Initial Primary Teacher Education teachers (IPTE 5 and 6 and Open and Distance Learners (ODL 1) who are teaching right now. Kasungu TTC campus was the site to collect data from lecturers. Kasungu district was chosen for two reasons. Firstly, it was easy for the researcher to travel to the schools since he resides in Kasungu thus it was cost effective for the researcher to collect data in the chosen schools.

3.4 Sampling Technique

Sample selection was purposive and convenient. Purposive sampling is a form of non-probability sampling in which decisions concerning the individuals to be included in the sample are taken by the researcher. This is based upon a variety of criteria which may include specialist knowledge of the research issue, or capacity and willingness to participate in the research. Some types of research design necessitate researchers taking a decision about the individual participants who would be most likely to contribute appropriate data, both in terms of relevance and depth (<http://srmo.sagepub.com/view/the-sage-dictionary>). In this regard therefore, newly qualified teachers are the ones with appropriate knowledge on LCE, hence the choice of the technique.

On the other hand, convenient sampling had been opted for because the researcher had to choose subjects because of convenience. Convenience was evident within Kasungu because it was likely going to be easy for the researcher to identify the newly qualified teachers during teaching practice visits to schools.

Such sampling procedures had been opted for because participants helped the researcher understand the problem of rare use of LCE methods. The newly qualified teachers under Initial Primary Teacher Education (IPTE) in their first or second year of teaching were the best sources because they are the ones who have undergone training in LCE methodologies, hence having the necessary information for the study. Convenience sampling was complimented by snowball sampling because the newly qualified teachers are randomly posted and the researcher depended on the informants' knowledge of where the next informant could be found. Twenty-five newly-qualified teachers (IPTE5 and 6) who are currently in the field were targeted. This does not necessarily suggest random sampling or selection of a number of participants and sites, but the approach has borrowed heavily from Miles and Huberman (1994) as

cited in Creswell, (2003). Four aspects were taken into consideration; the setting (where the research took place), the actors (who were observed or interviewed), the events (what the actors were observed or interviewed doing), and the process (the evolving nature of events undertaken by the actors within the setting).

Taking these four aspects into consideration, the setting was within Kasungu district targeting newly qualified teachers especially IPTE5 and 6 who are teaching in the district. Lecturers were involved in responding to the questionnaire, on how LCE methods are taught to student-teachers.

3.5 Data collection methods

Qualitative data generation was employed with a bit of quantitative data. Data generation is preferred more in qualitative research design as opposed to data collection because the former recognizes the active and cooperative role of participants in the research as opposed to a passive role of information givers (Ndengu, 2012). The method was also chosen because it complements the critical paradigm mainly because it recognizes that reality can manifest itself in multiple ways and each respondent has a unique way of interpreting reality.

Qualitative data were collected through interviews, classroom lesson observation and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) while quantitative data were collected through questionnaires administered to Lecturers. Schemes and Records of work and Lesson Plans were analysed to see how ready the teachers were in using LCE in their lessons.

The researcher also observed the teachers in practice to see whether they were following LCE methods or traditional (teacher-centred) methods, so that at the end of the lesson observation, an in-depth interview followed to solicit their views on the importance they attach to LCE methods. To further

explore the problem, the researcher conducted Focused Group Discussion (FGD) with newly qualified teachers.

3.6 Instrumentation/Tools

The study used observation checklist, interviews, Focus Group Discussions, Questionnaire and document analysis as tools to collect data.

Observation checklist is a tool which a researcher uses to check whether or not a phenomenon is being shown by the individual being observed (Refer Appendix iv). For instance the researcher observed lessons being taught and checked whether or not, the observed teacher was using LCE methods during lesson delivery. This researcher opted for this tool because he experienced and observed at first hand a number of issues in the setting like; interaction and relationships between teachers and the learners. Observation checklist was used because the researcher felt learner interaction, behaviour and actions with the teacher are very central in understanding perceptions of teachers over LCE methods.

Relatedly, interviewer guides were used to collect qualitative data. Interviews which Mason (2002, p.62) as cited in Ndengu (2012) calls “ *conversations with a purpose*” (emphasis added) were conducted with the aim of collecting data through direct verbal interaction with the respondents. The researcher used semi-structured interviews which use prepared guide with specific questions organized by topics but which are not necessarily asked in specific order. This approach guarantees flexibility to the interviewer and even the interviewee.

Collecting data from newly qualified teachers relied on Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) guides. This data collection tool allowed members to share experiences while at the same time correcting views that

are extreme or are not socially shared. As Patton (2002) cited in Creswel (2002) ably articulates that participants tend to provide checks and balances on each other which weeds out false or extreme views.

Questionnaires were administered to lecturers to substantiate the rich data collected qualitatively. Document analysis was done for schemes and records of work and lesson plans especially on how the teachers planned their work to check whether they included LCE methods.

3.7 Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis is the process of organizing pieces of data systematically identifying their key features or relationships and interpreting those (Locke 2000). Throughout this study, the focus was to provide accurate inductive, descriptive interpretation in as far as newly qualified teachers' experience on LCE is concerned.

The study employed concurrent procedures in analyzing data, in which the researcher converges quantitative and qualitative data in order to provide a comprehensive analysis of the research problem. In this design, the investigator collects both forms of data at the same time during the study and then integrates the information in the interpretation of the overall results, Creswell (2002). Also, in this design, the researcher nested one form of data within another, larger data collection procedure in order to analyze different questions or levels or units in an organization. In fact this study analyzed research objectives 1-4 qualitatively while research objective 5 was analyzed quantitatively.

Data collected through interviews were transcribed verbatim and from there smaller units of meaning were grouped into categories. Themes were used in discussion of the findings drawn from observation checklist, interviews and focus group discussions. Quantitative data collected through questionnaires were analyzed using simple descriptive statistics thus mean, mode, standard deviation and graphs.

Conclusion

This chapter has described the research design in detail. It has also described the sampling and selection procedure as well as data collection instruments, administration procedures and methods used for data analysis. The next chapter will now present the data and analyse it. This will be concluded by a discussion of the results.

CHAPTER 4

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

The research was a case- study based on the “Analysis of the implementation of Outcomes Based Education curriculum using Learner-Centred Education methods (LCE).” This chapter will present information on the analysis and discussion of the data obtained.

The analysis produced themes including; knowledge of LCE, mode of Training, use of LCE, practice with LCE, teachers’ response as regards LCE, the issue of national examination and resources and reliance on traditional methods. These themes were directly matched with what was observed in document analysis of schemes of work and lesson plans comparing these themes and noting differences and offering recommendations. This research study sought to positively explore and reinforce the good practices that would seek to influence policy on the identified gaps by Ministry of Education, Science and Technology and stake holders’ roles in the application of LCE methods in TTCs.

Data analysis in this study was in several stages. The first stage was the classroom lesson observation which gave first-hand information about the actual Learner Centred Education methods application in a classroom situation. Then the researcher analysed data obtained from the two main instruments (questionnaires and interviews). The researcher first analysed the data from the questionnaires, which had three parts. The first part was the coded demographic and Likert scale data which was analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). SPSS was used to generate contingency tables for frequencies, percentages and histograms in order to validate the findings. The second part was standard deviation computed to check whether the deviations were statistically significant or were likely

due to error or chance. The third part was qualitative analysis of data using common themes/categories as established in interview analysis so as to further explore useful information.

4.2.1 Classroom Lesson Observations

The researcher observed lessons first before engaging the respondent in an interview. The essence of doing that was to see the application of LCE methods in lesson delivery and compare the same with the documents which respondents used, that is, schemes of work and lesson plans. This agrees with Hook (1994) and Wiersma (2000) as cited in Matsau (2007) who observe that classroom observation can be undertaken for the purpose of studying and understanding the learners' behaviour as well as getting first hand information about the actual Learner-centred strategies applied in the classrooms. It was observed that out of twenty-five respondents (newly qualified teachers), eighteen respondents indicated some LCE methods in schemes of work, representing 72%. However in the actual lesson delivery only fourteen out of the twenty-five respondents representing 56% used LCE methods. Out of the fourteen who indicated use of LCE methods, only eight used the methods appropriately, representing 32%. It can therefore be inferred that much as the teachers indicated LCE methods in their schemes of work, very few used the planned methods in their lessons and also very few used them appropriately. That is, it appears what is planned sometimes does not match with what is practiced.

4.2.2 Document Analysis

As alluded to earlier, the researcher wanted to analyse the documents teachers often use in their day to day work. Consequently schemes of work and lesson plans were analysed. It was noted that 72% of the teachers indicated use of some LCE methods in their Schemes of work. Such methods included; group work, pair work, brainstorming, think-pair-share, discussion, role play, and case study. It was surprising however to note that most lesson plans did not indicate use of LCE methods. For example 56% of the

respondents planned to use LCE methods in their schemes of work and lesson plans. However, the correct use of LCE methods was only 32%.

So far, what was observed in the classroom as the teachers were teaching in as far as the application of LCE methods is concerned, seems to disagree with what was documented in schemes of work and lesson plans in certain instances. It seems in the initial planning phase, teachers remembered to employ LCE methods in their lessons, but the challenge was to translate the same in the real classroom situation. However the current OBE curriculum's emphasis is to see teachers employing LCE methods in actual lesson delivery. OBE ought to be taken as a classroom practice. According to Kiggundu and Nayimuli (2009:56) "*OBE is seen as a classroom practice in that using learner centred approaches, the teacher meets each learner at his or her level of competency and builds upon the existing strengths throughout the course*". Analysis of classroom observation and the teaching documents so far contradict the thinking by Kiggundu and Nayimuli. It can be inferred, therefore, that something is seriously missing to effectively bridge the planning and delivery phases in order for teachers to implement the OBE curriculum using LCE methods so as to serve its intended purpose. There could be issues that are still outstanding or unresolved that are impeding on the effective implementation of the curriculum of which this research is poised to bring to light.

4.2.3 Demographics of Lecturers' Questionnaire Respondents

Lecturers, being another crucial category of individuals in the implementation of OBE curriculum through LCE, were asked to complete a questionnaire that sought to solicit their understanding of LCE methods and how they perceive the training in the same, which is given to student teachers in college. Ten lecturers, two from each of the five departments were sampled.

The table below shows the Lecturers' Demographics

Table 2: Demographics of Questionnaire Respondents (Lecturers)

VARIABLE		Number of respondents	Percentage
Sex	Male	6	60
	Female	4	40
Years of Service	0-4	5	50
	5-9	4	40
	10+	1	10
Professional Status	HODs	2	20
	Lecturers	8	80
Qualification	BED	9	90
	BA	1	10

Source: Based on field data (January, 2014)

Table 2 shows that there were comparatively slightly more male than female respondents. About half the number of lecturers was more experienced than the other half. Naturally there were more lecturers than Heads of Department and more qualified respondents than less qualified ones. The data shows a fairly well represented sample of a typical Teacher Training College staffing structure in Malawi Teacher Training Colleges.

Experience of lecturers in this sample counted since the sandwiching of the curriculum happened when half of the members (0-4 years) in the sample were not in the Teacher Training College by then. The assumption was that probably more experienced lecturers could demonstrate a better understanding of LCE than less experienced ones because the experienced ones were there and were also oriented in the appropriate use of LCE methods. Surprisingly, there was really no difference in terms of the application of LCE methods between more experienced lecturers and less experienced ones.

Section A of the questionnaire contained items that were to be responded to by indicating the level of agreement to the given item.

The table below gives a summary of the responses.

Table 3

Level of agreement	1 Understanding of LCE		2 Impact of Training		3 Using LCE		4 Curriculum Emphasis		5 Effect sandwiching		6 LCE best in OBE		Issue of resources	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	N	%
Strongly agree			1	10			1	10			4	40	5	
Agree	8	80	5	50	4	40	7	70	2	20	3	30	3	
Disagree	2	20	4	40	4	40	2	20	7	70	1	10	2	
Strongly Disagree					2	20			1	10	2	20		
Total responses	10	100	10	100	10	100	10	100	10	100	10	100	10	100

Source: Based on field data (February, 2014)

4.2.3.1 Understanding LCE methods

Table 2 shows that the understanding of LCE methods by student teachers as observed by lecturers seems to be quite good as evidenced by the level of agreement which was 80%. This also agrees with the findings from the interviews with respondents which showed that respondents had a good understanding of LCE methods. However, this level of agreement seems to be in sharp contrast with what was observed in lesson observations (4.2.1) where only 32% used LCE methods in their lessons. The findings agree with what Mizrach, Padilla and Susuwele Banda (2010) found out in their research on ‘Active Learning Pedagogy’ that teachers and supervisors in both project-supported and non-supported schools were able to effectively describe active-learning methodologies and unanimously agreed that student-centered methods are more useful than teacher-centered methods. They also agreed that the use of active-learning has been promoted by the government – through the courses at the government-funded TTCs and through the rollout of the new curriculum. It could be inferred therefore that theoretical understanding of the methods by teachers is evident but the practical application of the same poses a challenge.

4.2.3.2 Impact of Training

According to **Table 2** impact of training showed that few respondents (40%) were not comfortable with the type of training in LCE methods that is being offered to student teachers right now. As the tally is showing, 60% of the respondents indicated that they were seeing the impact of the current mode of training. This raises more questions than answers. If the training was having the expected impact to the trainees, why are these teachers failing to deliver as expected despite the training in LCE methods? A critical analysis reveals that something is seriously missing either in the training

of the student teachers or there may be constraints in the schools which make them fail to deliver using LCE methods.

4.2.3.3 Use of LCE methods

Based on the data in **Table2**, 60% of the respondents indicated that newly qualified teachers rarely use LCE methods in their lessons. This observation agrees with lesson observation where only 32% of the teachers used LCE methods appropriately. This finding contradicts the document analysis where in some cases newly qualified teachers indicated LCE methods in their plans (schemes of work and lesson plans). A critical question worthy considering from this analysis so far is, ‘why are newly qualified teachers failing to employ the methods that they were taught in college despite demonstrating a good theoretical understanding of the curriculum (OBE) and its concomitant methods (LCE)?’ Stuart, Akyeampong and Croft (2009) have noted that creating a good balance between learning about theory and learning practical skills is a common problem in teacher education. It could be inferred at this point of the analysis that really something has to be identified which is preventing the teachers from effectively translating theory into practice in as far as LCE methods are concerned.

4.2.3.4. Curriculum Emphasis

Curriculum emphasis on LCE showed that 80% agreed that the current curriculum emphasized on LCE use. However, many respondents had the view that LCE methods are not taught as per the emphasis of the curriculum as lecturers teach the methods at their discretion and not obligatory as it were as illustrated in **4.2.2** (Document analysis). In the spirit of the OBE curriculum, LCE methods were supposed to be the methods of delivery but the reality on the ground proves

otherwise. The sandwiching of the curriculum without including LCE methods in the Foundation Studies syllabus has led to some lecturers disregarding the new approaches altogether. Curriculum sandwiching is a phenomenon where the primary teacher training curriculum was merged with LCE methods to ensure that as teachers get trained in the teaching profession, the issue of LCE methods should be incorporated as this was the spirit behind the Outcomes Based Education (OBE) through Primary Curriculum and Assessment Reform (PCAR) Mizrach, Padilla, Susuwele-Banda (2010).

4.2.3.5 Effect of sandwiching of the curriculum

Related to curriculum emphasis is the effect of sandwiching of the IPTE (Initial Primary Teacher Education) curriculum with LCE methods. During primary school curriculum reform under PCAR, it was felt imperative to sandwich the curriculum so that new pedagogical approaches could be in cooperated. After some years now, the impact of the sandwiching is not actually felt by the implementers of the curriculum. It transpired that 80% of the respondents disagreed that the sandwiching is bearing tangible fruits in the training of student teachers. As alluded to earlier, the treatment of LCE methods outside the official Foundation Studies syllabus in teacher training course could partly be the cause, leaving lecturers at liberty to either use and teach LCE methods or leave the methods completely. This research is poised to come to the root of the problem after analyzing all necessary documents and data collected.

4.2.3.6 LCE methods as best approaches to teaching

Referring to **Table 2**, 70% of the respondents were of the view that LCE methods were the best approaches in the implementation of the OBE curriculum. However, they were not happy with the

way these methods were handled. Only 30% were of the contrary view as regards LCE and its concomitant methods. This agrees entirely with MacHemer and Crawford(2007) as cited in Vavrus, et al (2011) who argue that LCE methods allow students to shape their own learning paths and place upon them the responsibility to actively participate in making their educational process a meaningful one. Simply saying and observing that LCE methods are best approaches in an OBE curriculum is not enough but taking practical steps in implementing such innovations is what is of great importance. It appears most implementers place more emphasis on the theoretical than the practical aspect of the innovation.

4.2.3.7 Resource Challenge

The last item in this section sought the views of respondents as regards the impact of resources in the implementation of OBE through LCE methods. 80% of the respondents felt that lack of resources was one of the many issues that prevent teachers from using LCE methods in their lessons as shown in Table 2. This agrees with the observation by Rogan and Grayson (2003) who assert that new practices will only survive if there is a fit with the working environment. Here the researcher wishes to make the difference between a deficit (teacher blaming) view and a selection (environmental pressure) view, of the link between teachers' pedagogical content knowledge and their classroom actions. This shows that even if a teacher is aware of LCE methods, implementation of the same in classroom lesson delivery will be hampered by the environment which does not have the required resources.

4.2.3.8 Conclusion

LCE methods are rarely used as evidenced in classroom lesson observations and Document analysis where many respondents did not use LCE methods in their lessons though they included the methods in the schemes of work.

Even the lecturers who responded through a questionnaire observed that there was good theoretical understanding by teachers but practical application of the same proved challenging.

Despite being convinced about the mode of training, the impact of that training is almost negligible as evidenced by lack of use of the methods by the teachers irrespective of training in the same.

Related to this was the effect of sandwiching which has not helped much as initially envisaged.

Lack of resources was also cited as one of the obstacles in the implementation of OBE through LCE methods.

Table 4

4.2.4 Descriptive Statistics from the lecturers' questionnaire

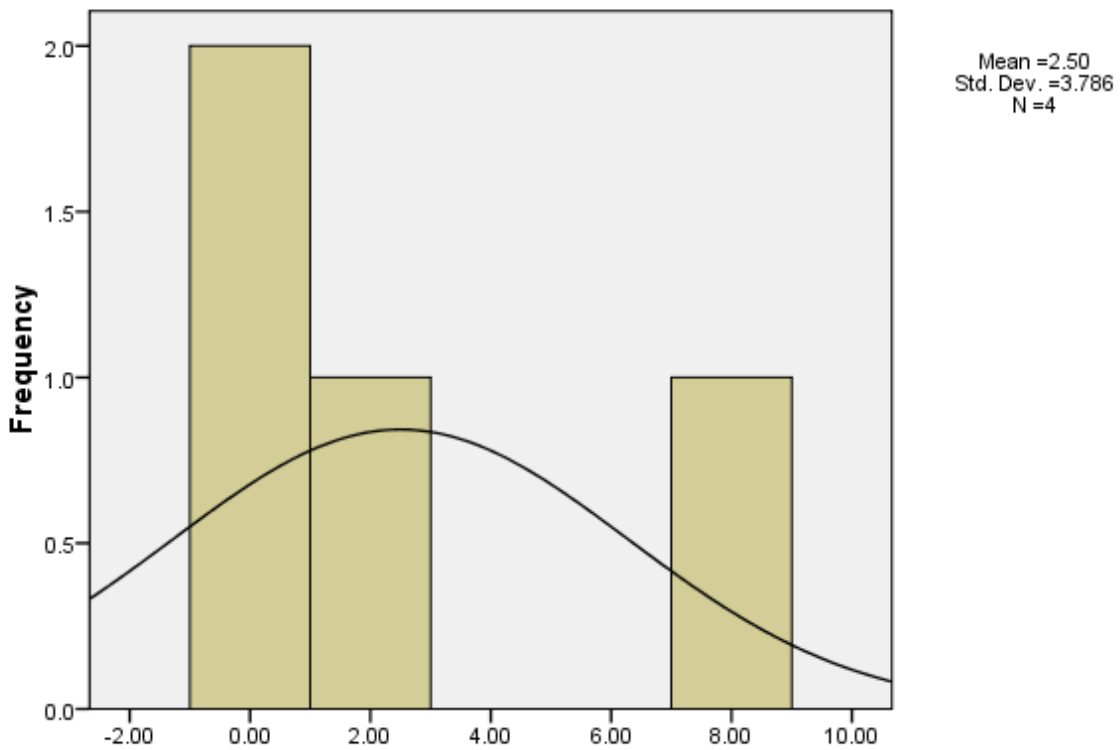
Descriptive Statistics							
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Deviation
Understanding of LCE	4	.00	8.00	10.00	2.5000	3.78594	1.2839
Impact of Training	4	.00	5.00	10.00	2.5000	2.38048	
Use of LCE methods	4	.00	4.00	10.00	2.5000	1.91485	-.6093
Effect of lack of training	4	1.00	4.00	10.00	2.5000	1.29099	
Curriculum emphasis on LCE	4	.00	7.00	10.00	2.5000	3.10913	
Effect of Sandwiching	4	.00	7.00	10.00	2.5000	3.10913	
LCE as best methods	4	1.00	4.00	10.00	2.5000	1.29099	-1.29001
Resource challenge & exams	4	.00	6.00	10.00	2.5000	2.51661	
Valid N	4						

Source: Based on field data (February, 2014)

From the statistics above there are three main areas that are statistically significant as one positively deviates from the mean. This is understanding of LCE which is 1.2839 above the mean, while the other two negatively deviate from the mean and that is LCE as best methods which is at 1.29001 below the mean and use of LCE which is .6093 below the mean.

Below is an analysis of major themes as interpreted from the descriptive statistics above (**Table 3**)

4.2.4.1 Understanding of LCE methods



Source: Based on field data (February, 2014)

Figure 1: Understanding of LCE methods

Understanding of LCE by student teachers, as observed by lecturers, seems to be quite good. However, use of LCE has been shown as not very encouraging. The negative skewing in figure 1 is testimony of the level of understanding shown by student teachers in LCE approaches. In the final analysis, the figure above disagrees with findings from other data sources. For instance, lesson observation showed newly qualified teachers rarely employed LCE methods in the implementation of the OBE curriculum. The theoretical understanding is in contrast with the practical application of the approaches.

4.2.4.2 Impact of Training

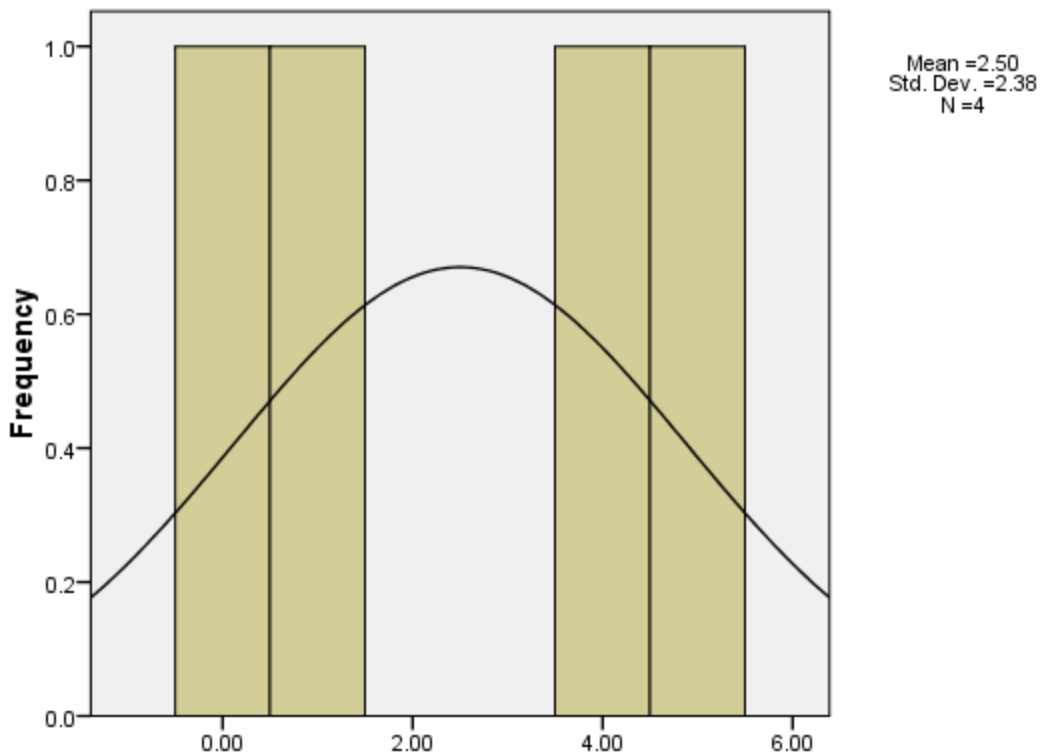


Figure 2: Impact of training

Source: Based on field data (February, 2014)

Referring to the histogram in figure 2 the skewing is slightly positive which implies that many respondents were not convinced that the training given to student teachers while in college was enough to spur them to use LCE methods when they finally graduate. This is further evidenced by the data in Table 3 where impact of training is pegged at 2.38048 below the mean which is at 2.5000. This statistics is significant as it agrees with findings from other non statistical data collection sources, thus interviews and lesson observation where newly qualified teachers rarely employed LCE methods. This state of affairs could be attributed to the training they had in college.

4.2.4.3 Use of LCE methods

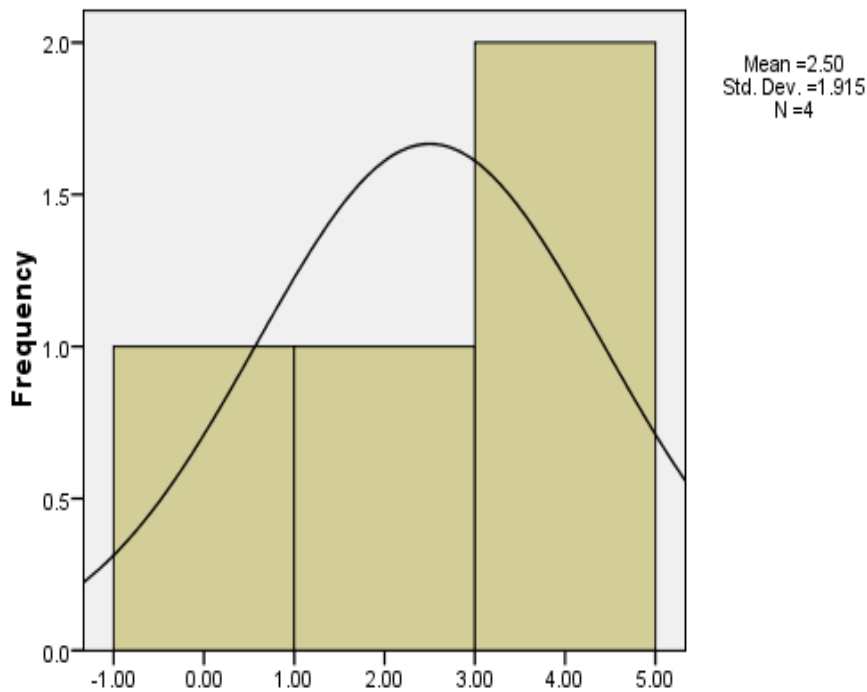
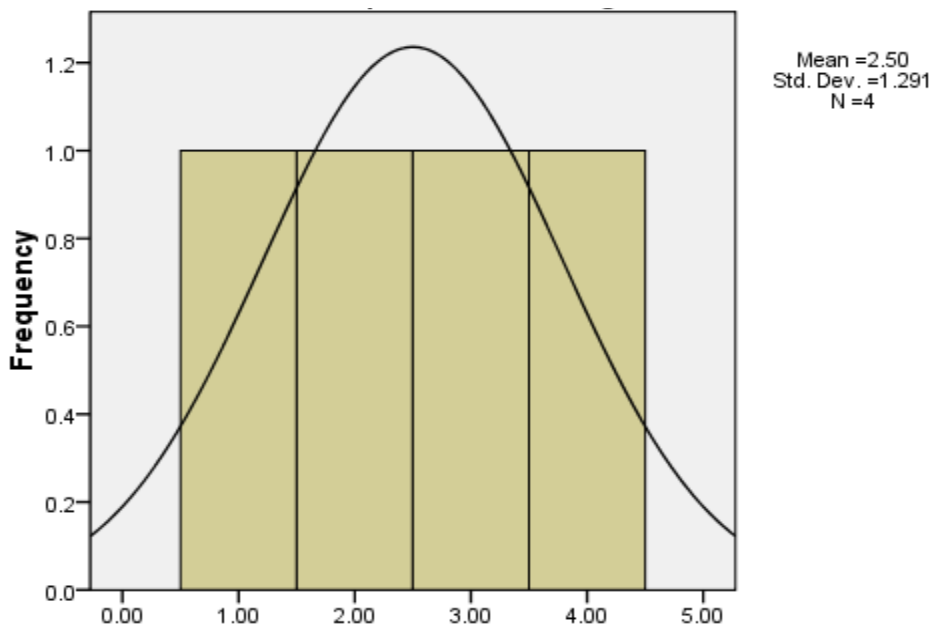


Figure 3: Use of LCE methods

Source: Based on field data (February, 2014)

The negative skewness implies that many respondents disagreed with the aspect of using LCE methods by student teachers. Many respondents observed that many student teachers do not use LCE methods. In fact the standard deviation vindicates the whole argument. Over 60% of the respondents indicated rare use of LCE methods by student teachers when they supervise them. The argument is strengthened even more when a cross examination of data sources is done. Document analysis for example showed that even though some teachers indicate LCE methods in their schemes of work and lesson plans, in most cases they do not teach using these methods. Furthermore the actual lesson observation sessions also bear witness to the rare application of these new approaches.

4.2.4.4 Impact of lack of Training

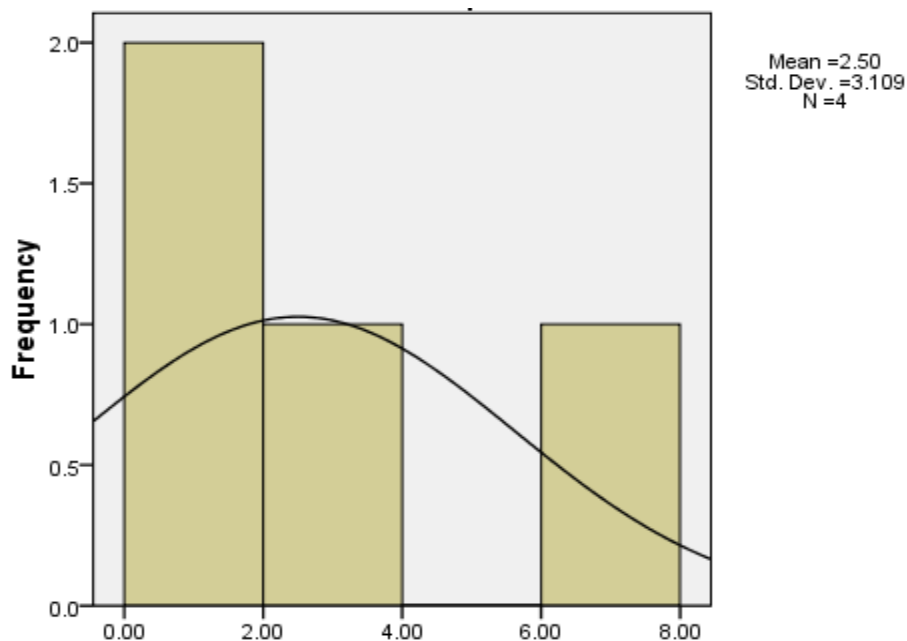


Source: Based on field data (February, 2014)

Figure 4: Impact of lack of Training

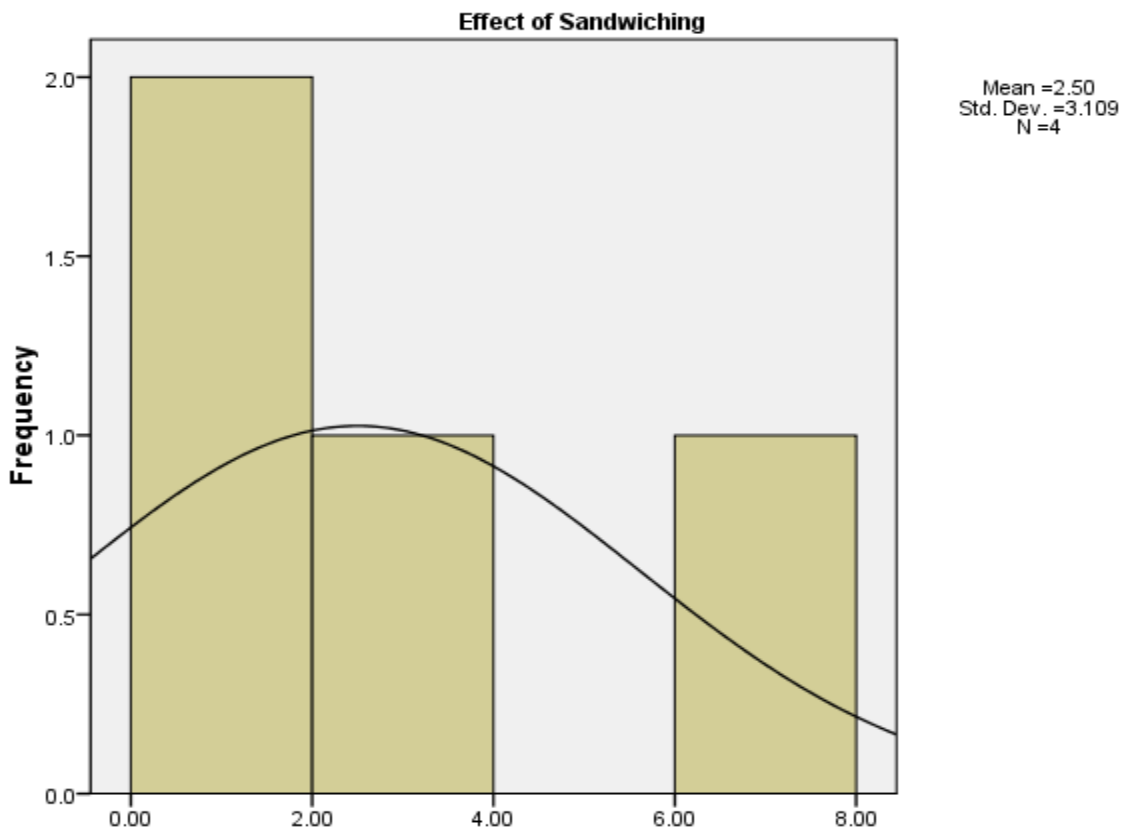
Impact of lack of training specifically in LCE methods is singled out here as one of the items which has significantly deviated from the mean and obviously has huge impact on the findings of this research project. Many respondents (60%) agreed with the idea that initial training which student teachers attended did not prepare them thoroughly to handle LCE methods while only 30% disagreed with the impact of lack of training. The slight positive skewness bears witness to the observation above. Many respondents felt the training currently offered in colleges only helps student teachers to know the pedagogical approaches in teaching without actually emphasizing on LCE methods as the spirit of sandwiching the IPTE syllabus with PCAR (OBE) originally envisaged. Many respondents were of the view that training teachers in LCE methods ought to be obligatory and not left at the lecturers' discretion as is the case now.

4.2.4.5 Curriculum emphasis on LCE methods



Source: Based on field data (February, 2014)
Figure 5: Curriculum emphasis on LCE

As alluded to earlier, it was also shared by eight out of the ten respondents that the current teacher training curriculum does not emphasise on teachers using LCE methods despite being included in the sandwiched teacher training curriculum adopted during the initial implementation of PCAR and OBE curriculum. 80% of the respondents agreed that the curriculum does not put emphasis on LCE methods in the implementation of the current OBE curriculum, hence the positive skewness of the graph. This is also evidenced by the sort of deviation from the mean as indicated in the statistics above (refer to the graph above). This lack of emphasis was blamed on treating LCE methods outside the Foundation Studies syllabus which is currently in use.

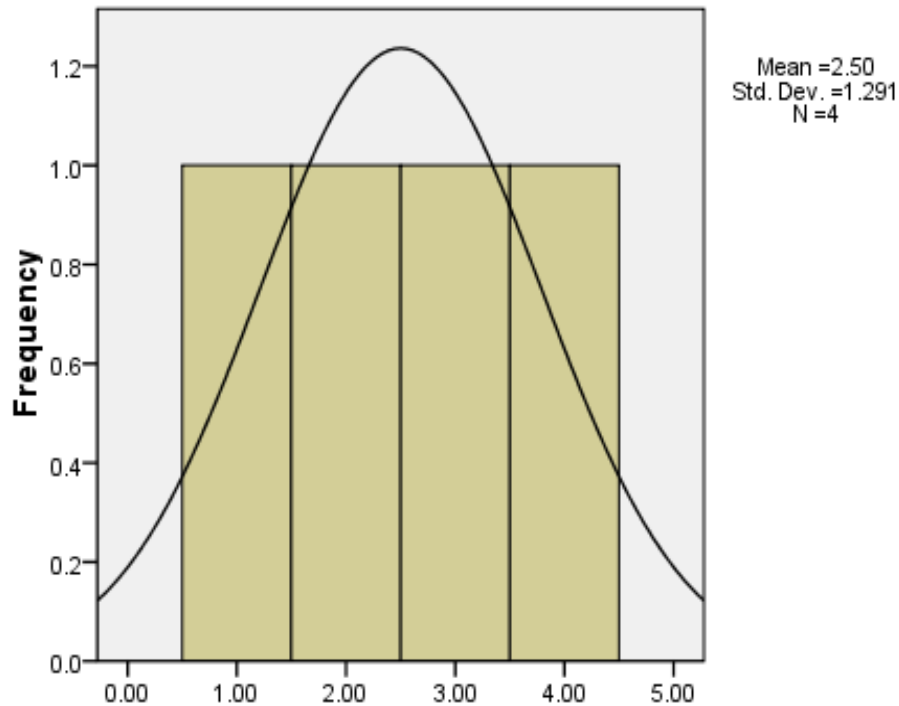


Source: Based on field data (February, 2014)

Figure 6: Effect of Curriculum sandwiching

As observed above, the OBE curriculum did not oblige teachers to use LCE methods in all their lessons hence the rare use of the methods. This, in part, could be put on the effect of sandwiching of the PCAR curriculum and the Teacher Training curriculum which did not yield the expected results. As it can be observed on the graph the positive skewness shows that many respondents were not convinced on the impact of sandwiching as teachers continued to teach using teacher centred methods yet the curriculum had taken on board LCE methods. The standard deviation as seen above shows that the sandwiching did not impact positively in ensuring the use of LCE methods.

4.2.4.7 LCE methods as best approaches to teaching

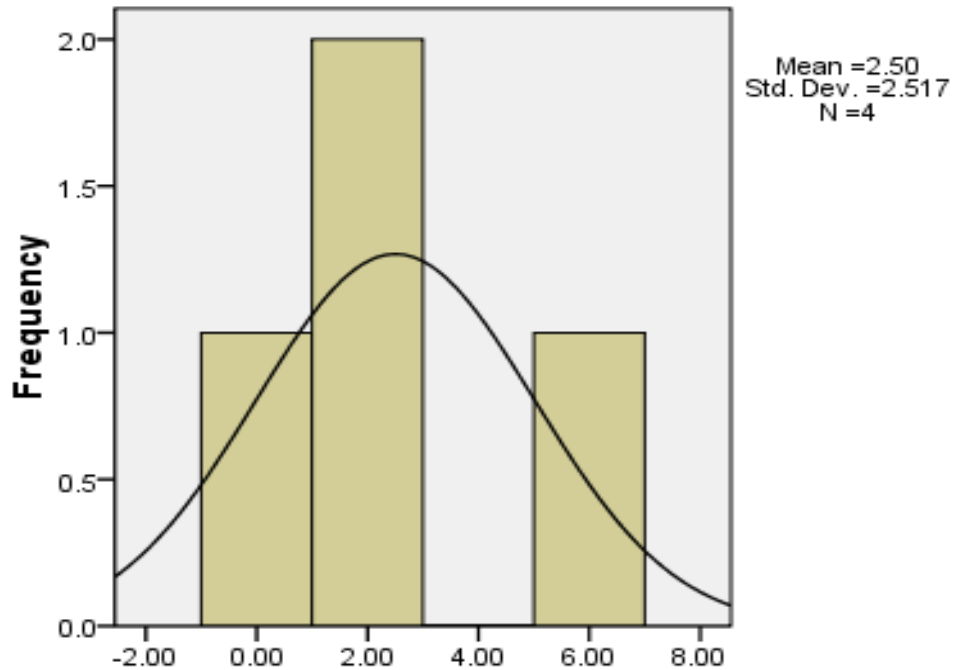


Source: Based on field data (February, 2014)

Fig 7: LCE as best approach

The curve is reflecting that at all the 4 levels individuals responded though differently hence the 'normal' distribution. Referring to table 2, 70% of the respondents of the questionnaire were of the view that LCE methods were the best in implementing an OBE curriculum. Despite showing satisfaction with the methods (LCE), many respondents felt something is missing in order for all teachers to seriously implement the OBE curriculum using these LCE approaches.

4.2.4.8 Resource Challenges



Source: Based on field data (February, 2014)

Figure 8: Resource Challenge

Resource challenges especially teaching and learning materials were one of the issues that took centre stage when teachers were asked about application of LCE methods. Though the statistics above is not significant enough probably due to error or otherwise, the resource issue is very important in the use of LCE methods as most of these methods require a lot of resources. Card collecting and clustering for example require a lot of paper in order to use it. It should be appreciated that funding in Teacher Training Colleges has been a problem of late. Recent strikes by student teachers over delayed allowances bear witness to the issue of funding in TTCs. Such being the case, the implementation of the OBE curriculum was done at a critical time when

funding of TTCs was erratic in some instances or inadequate at other times to allow the purchasing of the much needed resources for effective implementation of LCE methods. Some respondents in the interviews confided in the researcher that they rarely employed LCE methods due to challenges in sourcing resources.

4.2.4.9 Conclusion

This section has analysed the first part of the questionnaire administered to lecturers. It can be concluded that several issues have come in the fore in as far as implementation of OBE through LCE methods is concerned. Most of the figures in this section are statistically significant as there is mutual agreement with other data sources, that is, document analysis, lesson observation, interviews, and focus group discussion.

The understanding of the methods (LCE) is quite good though the implementation of these methods is hampered by lack of proper training in the effective use of the new methods. This is evidenced by rare use of the methods by many newly qualified teachers even after training. Lack of curriculum emphasis on LCE use even after the sandwiching of the same (IPTE and the Primary curriculum) is one major issue that is not supporting the effective implementation of the new methods as the methods are still outside the Foundation Studies syllabus currently in use. This situation, coupled with lack of resources, is seen as a loophole by most lecturers not to use LCE methods in their lessons which deprives the student teachers the much needed experience in effective use of LCE methods.

The subsequent section continues to unpack the data as collected through opinion section in part B of the questionnaire.

4.2.5 Questionnaire part B: Opinion Related Data

4.2.5.1 Training in LCE methods

Lecturers were also asked to give their own views on some aspects of LCE methods. The first item here sought lecturers' views on what ought to be done to make LCE methods serve the intended purpose. The general view was that treating LCE methods outside the formal Foundation Studies syllabus makes the methods seem less important than other methods, hence the superficial coverage of the methods. This is in agreement to what Mizrach, Padilla and Banda (2010) observed. Their observation was that the new curriculum is designed to be implemented by teachers using active-learning methodologies and continuous student assessment. This, however can only be done if LCE methods are part of the official curriculum. One respondent said,

“LCE methods should be incorporated in the IPTE- Conventional programme just as it is the case with IPTE- ODL programme.”

Another respondent suggested that there should be in service courses for lecturers in their respective areas of specialisation since different LCE methods can effectively be used in specific learning areas. Furthermore, another respondent blamed lack of understanding of LCE methods by student teachers as a direct reflection of some lecturers' attitudes to the methods. He/she was quoted as saying,

“Lecturers should develop positive attitudes to LCE methods so that student teachers can learn from them.”

It was generally shared by many respondents that the training given to student teachers while in college does not prepare them thoroughly to effectively deliver an OBE curriculum using LCE

methods. This observation agrees with the importance of training on quality delivery as argued by Sinyolo (2007:33) who says that “...a better trained teaching force is an important factor in educational quality...” and contends that “*teachers’ subject matter expertise must be complemented by pedagogical competence.*” In light of this, perhaps the training aspect should be reviewed.

4.2.5.2 Resources

On the sort of support that lecturers needed to effectively train student teachers in LCE methods, many respondents indicated resources that could enhance effective delivery of these methods. This had also been shared by the newly qualified teachers as to why most of them do not use LCE methods when implementing the OBE curriculum. It was observed that many LCE methods require many resources like paper, pen and markers, charts and indeed relevant books hence difficult to implement in resource challenged environments. This agrees with the findings by Kiggundu and Nayimuli (2009) as alluded to earlier, in their study at Vaal University of Technology (VUT) for post graduate certificate in Education who concluded that employing OBE approaches proved a difficult task due to lack of Learner Support Materials (LSM) in most schools coupled with large number of learners in class. This is also very true in the current Malawi scenario where many primary schools do not have the required text books and other resources like chart papers for the effective implementation of the OBE curriculum through LCE methods. This is evidenced when lecturers visit student teachers in their teaching practice schools during supervision. So many learners are seen scrambling for one text book when the teacher gives them an exercise to do in group

4.2.5.3 Supervision

In terms of supervision, many lecturers indicated that many students they observed rarely used LCE methods. This, they said, meant that something was missing in the way these students are trained in LCE methods while in college. For example, One lecturer was quoted as saying,

“Student teachers rarely use LCE methods. They adopt the use of group work as LCE.”

By implication, one can conclude that LCE is not well understood by student teachers because of the way they are taught.

4.2.5.4 Lecturers’ perceptions of LCE

The researcher was also interested in finding out from lecturers the perception they have of LCE methods, to check whether this lack of proper training goes back to the trainers’ views. However almost all the respondents placed high value to LCE methods as ways through which meaningful and realistic learning is allowed to take place. One respondent said of LCE,

“Learners become independent; find new knowledge through sharing, discovery and experimentation.”

To this, they attached other attributes like enhancing high levels of learner participation, instilling autonomy in learners, helping learners to reflect on their experiences thereby promoting effective learning, interpersonal relationships and independent thinking, developing other critical skills such as observation and explanation which can come if learners employ LCE methods. Therefore, this indicates that lecturers perceive LCE methods as very instrumental in the implementation of the OBE curriculum.

4.2.5.5 Challenges in using LCE methods

Lecturers also noted some challenges in the implementation of OBE curriculum through LCE methods. Many respondents observed that LCE methods are generally time consuming in their preparations and even in final execution. One respondent observed that some teachers and indeed lecturers fail to use LCE methods in their lessons because they are not very conversant with the methods coupled with the large number of learners per class. This observation agrees with the findings of the research by Mizrach, Padilla and Susuwele Banda (2010) who noted that active-learning methods require more time and are not very effective in classes with a large number of students. It can be inferred therefore that the implementation of LCE methods is also hampered by many challenges in our schools ranging from lack of resources to large and difficult to manage classes.

4.2.5.6 Language challenge

Language challenge also came in the fore especially when the communication has to be in the second language of the learners, thus English in this case. One respondent was quoted as saying,

“LCE methods require full participation of learners which is hindered in most cases by poor language background, hence poor participation by learners.”

It is a fact that most learners in primary schools in Malawi now have challenges in using English as a medium of communication. This, coupled with the nature of task before the learners, often impede on their contribution which dilutes the essence of LCE methods as they place more emphasis on co-construction of knowledge as opposed to teacher-centred methods where learners are passive recipients of knowledge from their teachers.

4.2.5.7 High enrolment in classes

Another weakness of LCE methods as highlighted by lecturers in their response is the high enrolment in the classes, which prevents teachers from reaching individual learner's needs. It was observed that in most Malawian classrooms the enrolments are very high such that using LCE methods would end up making a teacher cover less work thereby failing to fully prepare learners for Malawi National Examination Board (MANEB) examinations, a sentiment that also featured high among teachers and head teachers as to why they do not use LCE methods in their lessons.

In summary, the above responses show that even lecturers agree that to some extent LCE methods are not very relevant according to prevailing conditions in Malawi schools and the mode of training that student teachers undergo.

4.2.5.8 Suggestions for effective implementation of OBE

The last item sought the lecturers' views on what can be done to address the cited challenges. Many respondents were of the view that reviewing the curriculum where LCE methods become part of the Foundation Studies methods topic will go a long way in making the methods serve OBE curriculum better.

“LCE methods should be incorporated in Foundation Studies so that by the end of year one (college phase) student teachers are acquainted with the methods,” observed one respondent.

4.2.6 Interviews with Newly Qualified Teachers and Head Teachers

The researcher analysed the interview responses from the three groups of interviewees (teachers, head teachers, and Focus Group Discussions) which Denzin and Lincoln (1994) as cited in Matsau (2007) note that group interviews in a qualitative research study can be data rich because they are elaborative, draw on group diversity and can be stimulating for participants. The analysis was done after transcription. The cross-case analysis procedure (Patton, 1990 as cited in Baffour-Awuah, 2011) was used to analyse the interview data. In this approach, responses to a common question from all interviewees in each category were analysed together. Thus, each question was analysed separately for teachers, head teachers, and the focus group discussions. Patton (1990) posits that it is easy to do a cross-case analysis for each question in the interview when a standardised open-ended approach is used. In a cross-case analysis, participants' responses to a particular question/item are combined. Common themes across participants (cases) are then identified, analysed and interpreted item by item.

The interview data for the three groups of respondents (teachers, Headteachers and Focus Group members) were analysed in a systematic manner. First, the researcher replayed the audio recordings of each respondent and transcribed them by hand on paper. The researcher transcribed sentences and phrases directly to avoid misinterpretation of the sense or meaning of information participants provided as suggested by Patton (1990). Then the researcher read through the responses for each item across all the twenty-five teachers, ten head teachers and the three Focus Group Discussions members (FGD) separately and recorded the key ideas.

Since a standardised interview protocol was used, questions were framed around specific ideas drawn from the literature. For each interview item, the researcher looked for common phrases or

statements, and organised them under the pre-determined themes based on the literature. Therefore, the key ideas from responses were organised by question. In this case, common phrases or statements which fit together were put into categories and organised into the mes. For example, responses like “I use LCE in my class, I know what LCE is” were put under a theme ‘Knowledge of LCE’. Six themes were identified to be central in this study. These included:

- (i) Knowledge of LCE,
- (ii) Mode of training in LCE in TTCs,
- (iii) Practice in LCE methods,
- (iv) Teachers’ response on LCE,
- (v) Challenges- the issue of National examination and Resources
- (vi) Reliance on traditional methods.

In this section, the researcher presents the data from interviews with the three groups of respondents; twenty-five newly qualified teachers, ten Head Teachers and three Focus Group Discussions members. The data were presented from each group according to the interview question that was asked. The interview questions were semi-structured and sought to understand in a greater detail the respondents’ conceptualization and experiences in LCE methods, suggestions on how LCE ought to be taught to student teachers and the challenges that teachers face in employing LCE methods. At the very end of this section, teachers were asked the reasoning behind going back to traditional teacher-centred methods.

4.2.6.1 Knowledge of LCE Methods

In trying to find out the understanding of LCE methods among the sampled newly qualified teachers the question ‘what are Learner-Centred Education methods’ was posed. Several statements were given which indicated what they conceptualized as LCE. They provided statements like,

“These are methods in which learners get fully involved in the course of teaching and learning by doing some activities assigned to them.” Other respondents said, *“These are methods whereby learners fully participate in the lessons.”*

Much as the responses to the question of knowledge of LCE showed that most teachers understood LCE methods, it was also observed that some teachers confessed having little knowledge of these methods. One respondent said, *“I know LCE but not very much”*

However the general impression from the quoted statements of respondents, suggest that most teachers understand LCE as methods that involve learners’ active participation in the learning tasks. One head teacher admitted that they had been oriented in LCE methods and the PEAs emphasized the need to employ LCE methods in implementing OBE curriculum. These responses agree entirely with the findings in the questionnaire where 80% of the respondents were convinced that student teachers had a thorough understanding of the concept of LCE methods. It can be inferred, therefore, that the theoretical part of the training is good but what is missing is the practical application of the same. This missing link was also observed by Mizrachi, Padilla, Susuwele Banda (2010:12) as they question the relevance of training alone, *“Interviewees also differed regarding whether exposing teachers to active-learning methodologies in training sessions necessarily resulted in their using those methodologies in the classroom.”* This implies

that knowledge on LCE methods is not enough unless teachers employ the methods in their own classrooms.

4.2.6.2 Mode of Training in LCE methods

Newly qualified teachers indicated that the training they got from Teacher Training College was not enough to help them teach their learners using LCE methods. Sampling some of the responses, it was interesting to note that really the training did little to spur these new teachers to use LCE methods. One respondent had this to say,

“Am not so convinced because we have learnt just a few methods of LCE,” while someone said, *“.....theoretically the methods were taught well but practically we did little.”*

It was further observed by some respondents that time was not enough to properly learn all the LCE methods as one respondent said in their class they did not learn much about LCE methods.

More striking was the observation by one respondent who said,

“Mmm, am not comfortable using LCE methods in my class just because they (lecturers) did not clarify on most of these methods, I only know of a few yet there are so many LCE methods am told.”

Some respondents observed that some LCE methods are only partially taught without ensuring practice. It was further discovered that in certain cases lecturers only made a mention of some of the methods without teaching student teachers how to use the methods in their own classrooms.

This contradicts the spirit of scaffolding as advanced by Vygotsky, who according to McLeod (2010) views interaction with more capable peers or adult guidance as the surest way to solve problems seen to be beyond the individual learner's ability. To this effect, one respondent (teacher) confessed during the interviews that he was not even aware of certain methods up until this

researcher mentioned to him some of the LCE methods. This observation summarises the kind of training which is offered to student teachers in college in as far as LCE is concerned. It seems the training is well-grounded theoretically but lacks practical application. This observation was also shared by two of the head teachers who were interviewed, saying the way some teachers handle LCE methods during lesson delivery leaves a lot to be desired. In Focus Group Discussion an item talking about the need for teachers to use LCE methods sought to get the respondents understanding of the concept. In one of such fora with FGD respondents, it was observed that most teachers understood LCE and its attendant methods, but the question of implementation was cited as the major challenge.

4.2.6.3 Practice in LCE Methods

This area is where twenty out of twenty-five respondents representing 80% showed dissatisfaction as they observed that most LCE methods were only presented to them theoretically without giving them ample time to try and use the methods through peer teaching or the Internal Teaching Practice (ITP) sessions they had at the Demonstration School. Of those teachers who indicated full understanding of LCE methods, eighteen out of twenty-five indicated that they are deficient in the practical part of it. Some respondents said,

“.... Practice is needed whilst in college so that student teachers acquire more skills in order to handle OBE curriculum using LCE methods. While others said, “practice was imperative as some LCE methods were not only difficult but also complicated”. For instance one respondent said, “ I think in college, Lecturers should make sure they clarify the methods so that student teachers should be comfortable to use in their own classroom.”

While five out of twenty-five agreed that they were given ‘some’ practice in their own college classes, the remaining twenty respondents were not comfortable with time allocated for the same.

Rogan (2006) declares that the learning by a classroom teacher about an educational innovation and its implementation goes beyond the bounds of traditional learning environment. It could be inferred, therefore, that enough practice was needed for the students to master these methods since they were very new to them having gone through a school system that was dominated by Teacher-Centred methods.

On the issue of lecturers demonstrating use of LCE methods in classrooms, one respondent gave a unique response to this question in reference to how some lecturers handle LCE methods in their classes. He observed that,

“.....lecturers must be in the fore front showing mastery of LCE by employing them in their own lessons so that student teachers can emulate and use the methods when they graduate.”

By demonstrating how to use LCE methods in class, lecturers are likely going to help student teachers to use the same methods in their own classrooms. This confirms the concept of Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) which, according to McLeod (2010:47) is defined as *“the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem-solving under adult guidance, or in collaboration with more adult peers.”*

4.2.7 Interviews: Qualified teachers’ Response to OBE curriculum through LCE methods

The item wanted to find out from the newly qualified teachers how old members of staff were responding to OBE through LCE methods. The responses were diverse as the results showed that many old teachers were talking good of these innovations though they were not comfortable to use

the methods themselves. One observation was that some qualified teachers do not like using LCE methods in their lessons because little work is covered per period as compared with teacher-centred approaches. This, they observed, makes syllabus coverage difficult while the aim of the teacher and indeed the ministry is to see to it that the syllabus for each class is covered diligently. The respondent observed that,

“Old members of staff are not comfortable to implement OBE curriculum using LCE methods because syllabus coverage is compromised as learners often engage in lengthy discussions but gaining little in the process while time is wasted. Hence they just go for teacher-centred methods.”

This sentiment is also shared by Mizrachi, Padilla, Susuwele Banda (2010:1) who observe that, *“Veteran teachers who have been lecturing for years can find using active-learning pedagogies burdensome, while new teachers, who were likely taught using rote-learning, teacher-centered methods, may find it difficult to put the new methods into practice.”*

One other critical area when it comes to OBE through LCE methods is the issue of discipline of learners. Most qualified teachers feel that letting learners discuss issues on their own breeds chaos in the classroom. To such teachers, teacher-centred approaches are ideal because the teacher is in full control of the proceedings in the classroom hence discipline is maintained. A respondent was quoted as saying, *“when using LCE methods some learners dominate and become unnecessarily furious when their idea is being challenged. Sometimes they ignore views from their friends which at times culminate into fights, which according to such teachers is indiscipline in class.”*

When the same question was posed in one of the FGD sessions, respondents observed that the type, design and scale of particular innovations create far more costs than benefits. Citing LCE methods as one of such innovations for instance, respondents observed that the scale at which the

new innovation was to be implemented was overwhelming. Asked as to what they expected as the reasonable scale of implementation, they indicated that...

“class by class introduction would be ideal to the teacher as the implementer so as to make necessary changes before rolling the programme in all the classes.”

It seems teachers are ready to adapt to innovations provided their input is taken on board and the implementation is done after thorough ground work has been done. Thus there should also be enough resources and adequate training.

4.2.8 Challenges- The issue of National Examinations and Resources

The last but one item hinged on the impact of national examinations at standard eight level and resources in the implementation of OBE curriculum through LCE methods. It was observed that most teachers do not teach using LCE methods because they direct their energies to cover the syllabus so that standard eight candidates should do well during MANEB examination. These teachers fear that by using LCE methods learners are not properly guided as to the requirements of national examinations, hence they employ teacher- centred approaches for two reasons: syllabus coverage and transmission of the desired knowledge, values, skills and attitudes as opposed to LCE methods where learners learn what they want. The words of Kahle and Kelly (2001) as quoted by Rogan (2005:37) could be applied to this situation as well. *“Because of the success, teachers have been unwilling to incorporate standards-based reforms that may enhance students’ thinking.”* Rogan and Aldous (2005:33) have ably contextualized this finding as they observe that, *“as long as schools and students are judged by the results of the matriculation examination, teaching and learning will be geared towards this end rather than the outcomes.”* This is the current situation in Malawi.

It was highlighted in one of the FGD interview session that the questions often asked by MANEB often require learners to recall discrete facts and reproduce them during examination. Furthermore, most examination items often ask on the cognitive domain yet most LCE methods serve the affective domain better. One respondent observed that,

“I think teachers do not use LCE methods as a matter of being afraid not finishing the syllabus in time.” Another teacher said,

“..... for example in standard eight, if they discuss, they just waste time and cannot finish the syllabus.”

Two head teachers who responded to this item indicated that teachers’ work performance is judged by the results of their learners in standard eight. This, they observed, puts the teacher in a dilemma since they have to prepare learners for national examination whilst adhering to innovations introduced within the school system.

“Teachers are often subjected to ‘uncertainty’ not knowing whether they are making any difference in their learners. It is, therefore, only natural to see many teachers not jumping in to new innovations for fear of the reaction of the community after results of examinations are poor.”

This observation was noted as the major reason why teachers rarely employ LCE methods. Mizrachi, Padilla, Susuwele Banda (2010) contend that the examination system in Malawi is high-stakes; promotions to the next level of school are based on students’ performance on the examination. This poses obstacles when trying to integrate active-learning or student-centered pedagogies into classrooms, because often these pedagogies are seen as being ineffective in preparing students to pass the examination, which is the priority for most teachers, students, and parents.

Relatedly, lack of resources was also high on the list of challenges that impede the implementation of OBE through LCE methods. It was observed from the responses that many LCE methods require a lot of resources for effective delivery. Methods like ‘card collection and clustering’ ‘letter to the author’, can only work well if the teacher has enough paper. Compounding on the challenge of resources was the issue of high enrolments in schools which strain the already insufficient resources in most primary schools in Malawi. One respondent summarized the two problems in this way,

“Yes, we are lacking resources so that is why we just choose lecture method. For instance teaching ninety learners with one book becomes so difficult, and then the only option left is to lecture.”

However, some respondents felt that resource challenges cannot entirely prevent a teacher from using LCE methods in their lesson delivery because there are other methods which do not require more resources. They further said that it all goes back to how the teacher was trained in using LCE methods. To this end a respondent was quoted as saying, *“resources cannot prevent a teacher from using LCE methods but laziness of teachers since these methods require thorough preparation.”*

This was also shared by respondents in one of the FGD sessions. Respondents were of the view that teachers who are graduating right now have been taught the concept of TALULAR (Teaching And Learning Using Locally Available Resources) as such they cannot be excused if they do not use LCE methods. Teachers are asked to be creative and resourceful by looking for not only resources but relevant and appropriate resources. This means that some respondents attributed failure in using LCE methods to lack of interest.

However, one head teacher, agreed with the newly qualified teachers that resource challenge is one of the many reasons that prevent teachers from employing LCE methods.

One other challenge which most respondents also highlighted was the issue of time management. The observation was that LCE methods require enough time to prepare in terms of resources and even during the delivery of the lesson. The method that was often cited as requiring more time was role play where learners are supposed to clearly know and perform their role. This meant that more time was supposed to be allocated for the same yet more ground could be covered using other methods .

“ When I use role play for example, it normally takes a lot of time for learners to catch-up on what they have been told to do in the play. So to help them achieve that, it takes a lot of time, ” one respondent observed.

The issue of lack of some learner involvement in some LCE methods was also mentioned. Some respondents gave group work as a ready example of such methods. From their observation, many shy learners do not participate in group activities because outgoing learners dominate. This, therefore, implies that some learners do not benefit from LCE methods as opposed to teacher-centred approaches.

4.2.9 Reliance on traditional teaching methods

The researcher wanted to find out the reasons as to why many teachers seem to cling to old methods of teaching despite many innovations in terms of methods. Many diverse responses emerged. To some respondents teacher-centred methods were preferred over LCE methods because of time constraints in view of syllabus coverage. It was observed that using LCE methods work coverage ‘drags’ forcing many teachers to leave some work untaught for a particular class. One respondent said, *“teachers use old methods of teaching because they want to finish teaching the whole syllabus in preparation for national examinations in standard eight.”*

Some respondents, on the other hand, said that teachers cling to old methods because they are not bothered with preparation of materials and learning tasks. Having memorized the material, they simply come to class and lecture to learners. Some respondents labeled this practice (Teacher-Centred) as ‘laziness’, because LCE methods require thorough preparation by the teacher.

Other respondents mentioned lack of resources and high teacher-pupil ratio (high enrolment in class) as reasons for clinging to traditional methods of teaching because they can reach to as many learners as possible with little or no resources. Lecture method was given as an example in this particular regard.

Fifteen respondents said with teacher centred methods their lessons often achieved the success criteria because the teacher knows what he or she wants to achieve and can go straight to that other than skirting around the issue as do LCE methods. This is what one respondent said on traditional methods: *“Teachers want their lessons to be successful by not involving learners to say their views or their suggestions but just going straight to the content.”*

One respondent said, *“..... it is something to do with attitude. These old teachers were taught using other methods of teaching and now to use these new methods they do not feel comfortable.”*

4.2.10 Conclusion

The analysis has brought to light some of the outstanding issues affecting the implementation of the OBE curriculum through employment of LCE methods. Classroom observation, document analysis, interviews with newly qualified teachers, interviews with some head teachers, questionnaire completed by Lecturers being the data sources for this study all point to the fact that OBE curriculum is not effectively implemented using LCE methods as the required approaches in the spirit of OBE. The general picture that this analysis has given is that many teachers know LCE

methods and appreciate the contribution of the same to the success of education in general but there are few 'grey' areas like training, practice, supervision, resources and national examination that have to be closely scrutinized and harmonized if the education system especially the primary sector is to reap from the ambitious curriculum through LCE methods.

4.3 DISCUSSION

This section discusses findings from the data analysis done in the second section of this chapter. The findings are responding to the main themes of this study based on the interviews and questionnaires as main data sources which were administered to the respondents; lecturers, newly qualified teachers and head teachers. Lesson observation, document analysis and Focus Group Discussion were other data sources that also helped in cross examining the findings from different data sources so as to establish the main themes in this case study. The findings vindicate the choice of critical theory as the guiding philosophical assumption in this study since several realities and perspectives have emanated from it as fully presented below.

4.3.1 Knowledge of LCE

Knowledge of LCE as the first theme showed that both newly qualified teachers and lecturers partially understood LCE and how they should teach using such methods. Thus, the overall picture one gets is of teachers not fully understanding the concept as manifested in the responses from newly qualified teachers and even the lecturers on how often they use LCE. It was discovered through this study that teachers have a limited understanding of what it actually means to encourage co-construction of knowledge. The issue of knowledge of LCE shows that teachers who

have been trained in LCE have embraced the form as shown by the partial use of the methods (LCE) but not the spirit and content of pedagogical reforms preached by the proponents of LCE.

As observed during lesson delivery, most LCE methods were understood in procedural terms than as something that promotes learning, with change limited to symbolic displays without resulting in the intended learning. In almost all the schools this researcher visited, group work was the sign for LCE where learners were put in groups but the teacher could teach using teacher-centred approaches in such an arrangement.

As such a gap still exists between what teachers profess to know and what they do in their classrooms. This finding is further corroborated by the checklist (Refer Appendix iv) where many teachers who were observed teaching rarely used LCE methods and just attempted to use some LCE methods yet during interviews they showed to have understood the concept of LCE better.

4.3.2 Mode of training in Teacher Training Colleges

Many of the respondents to this study, over 80% (Refer Appendix i) attested to the fact that the training they had did not give them ample time to internalize LCE and its effective application in classroom lesson delivery. One respondent had this to say, *“I think it would be better that Lecturers or tutors should teach and demonstrate the use of LCE methods to student teachers and allow them to practice using such methods so that when students graduate they should be able to use the methods”*. It was further observed that LCE methods were neither emphasized nor used by many lecturers in their own lesson delivery (Refer Appendix iv). This gave student teachers little or no experience in the best practices when employing LCE methods. As Vavrus (2011:75) observed, *“LCE is a critical element in the development of teachers’ and Lecturers’ pedagogical*

content knowledge because student learning depends to a large extent on teachers' ability to transform their subjects into lessons that their learners can comprehend". Without such a practice, student teachers resort to using Teacher-Centred methods since they are very conversant with them having gone through a school system that was chiefly teacher-centred. This further agrees to Leyendecker, etal (2008) as cited in Vavrus, (2011) who argue that significant cultural change especially in training is required for teachers educated in school systems grounded in behaviourism and teacher-centred classrooms to understand and embrace the philosophy and methods of LCE which are more participatory. The Training of teachers through IPTE is only emphasizing on teaching methods found in the lecturers' Foundation Studies book which are mostly teacher-centred disregarding the sand-wiching of LCE methods which were agreed upon during the introduction of the Primary Curriculum and Assessment Reform (PCAR).

4.3.3 Practice in Learner Centred Education methods use

It was also observed that newly qualified teachers failed to use LCE basically because of lack of practical experience using the methods in the real classroom situation. Many respondents said that the only time (once per year per student) they had at the Demonstration School was not enough for them to master and effectively employ LCE methods in their classrooms. It was, therefore, suggested that enough time should be given for student teachers to practice with the new methods which they did not have during their own school days. For instance, one respondent was quoted as saying; *"I think there should be more practical sessions in college because if students graduate only knowing few of the methods, it would be difficult for them to teach learners using these methods,"* This augurs well with Elmore(1986) quoted in Vavrus (2011:79) who observe that, *"For LCE to take root in local African contexts, teachers need to understand the underlying idea,*

be motivated to change practice, adapt and apply appropriate pedagogies, and have the capacity to do it.”

4.3.4 Teachers’ views on LCE methods

The analysis has shown that many qualified teachers do not support and use LCE methods in implementing the OBE curriculum because of its limited integration into curriculum and national examinations. It was also found that teachers seek ways to adapt LCE to mesh with the contexts in which they teach, namely, classrooms with many learners, limited access to facilities like libraries, and little training in how to utilize locally available resources as teaching enhancements. Not many teachers have the professional competence to use LCE methods hence these are often shelved and remain unused.

This observation is also shared by Vavrus, et al. (2011) who argue that without sufficient professional development (training in this case) opportunities to learn how to make these changes, teachers will continue to rely on more familiar and ‘functional’ approaches and methods, (teacher-centred). This research found out that teachers are often times under immense pressure to simultaneously improve the learning outcomes of more learners, cover a much crowded curriculum, and make sure candidates are fully prepared to ably sit for national examination which in the final analysis promotes rote learning. It can, therefore, be concluded with certainty that until teacher education programmes, curricula and national examinations in Malawi are coherently organized and harmonized, it is unlikely that teachers will fully embrace LCE concept.

4.3.5 Reasons for Teacher-Centred Methods

This research has also found out that high-quality initial training is very crucial in preparing teachers who are both adaptive and adoptive(adaptive in looking for new methods and approaches that enhance effective lesson delivery and adoptive in implementing new innovations introduced within the system such as OBE through LCE methods). Vavrus, et al (2011:71) allude to this fact as they note that without high quality initial training; teachers largely teach the way they were taught. UNESCO Global Monitoring Report, (2010:118) as cited in Vavrus (2011) observes that, *“Teachers are the product of the education systems they teach in. Where these systems are of low quality it is even more important for teachers to receive effective training and support throughout their careers. In many countries, initial training is not good enough to develop these skills.”* For instance the Primary Teacher education programme for Malawi has adopted the one plus one mode that compresses theoretical work which was initially for two years to be taught in just a year. This surely compromises on the quality of training given to student teachers while being assured of the quantity to address the acute shortage of teachers in the primary schools.

4.3.6 Conclusion

This research was situated in the critical theory research paradigm with emphasis on experience and interpretation of LCE methods by newly qualified teachers. Constructivism was the theoretical framework guiding the study. True to the philosophical assumption guiding this research, knowledge is constructed not only by observable phenomena, but also by descriptions of people’s intentions, beliefs, values and reasons, meaning-making and self understanding. This research bears witness to the argument above. The implementation of OBE curriculum has not been very successful because the methods with which the curriculum was to be implemented by are rarely

used by teachers. Several factors are behind this lack of implementation as discussed in chapter 5. It can be concluded, therefore, that any event or action is explainable in terms of multiple interacting factors, events and processes, such that causes and effects are mutually interdependent.

The implementation of OBE curriculum through LCE methods has been a challenge because the curriculum was introduced when the education system was not ready in terms of properly trained human resource, lack of adequate resources, emphasis on the LCE methods by lecturers and Primary Education Advisors (PEAs), just to mention a few.

It can be concluded, therefore, that the education system was not very ready to implement such an ambitious curriculum but it was bull-dozed by few top policy makers. House (1986) as cited in Fullan and Stiegelbaner (1991) states that there is a strong tendency to 'oversell' innovations in order to obtain funding or to get them adopted by policy makers, teachers and others. The gap between the benefits promised and those received is often very large as evidenced by the findings in this study.

Change is a process and not an event which means, therefore, that it will take probably a bit longer before effects of change can be seen, should other interventions be implemented as suggested by this researcher in the recommendations segment. The difficulty of learning new skills and behaviour and unlearning old ones is in most cases vastly underestimated if the results of this study are anything to go by. It has come out clearly that many teachers are afraid to try new skills and methods for fear of compromising the quality in the system even if evidence to support that fear is not available.

Furthermore, Fullan and Stiegelbaner (1991) argue that even potentially good changes do not fare well because of too many changes implemented at the same time. Taking the scenario of Malawi, there have been programmes calling for the change in approach to teaching such as Break Through to Literacy (BTL) piloted in Ntchisi and Mzimba, OBE curriculum through LCE methods and now there is EGRA (Early Grade Reading Ability) being piloted in Salima and Mchinji. These changes have left the teachers exhausted and frustrated at times because they are not fully prepared to embark on the innovations; and resources to support implementation of the same are not made available in most cases. This study, therefore, supports the theory of Zonal of Feasible Innovation (ZFI) as grounded by Rogan and Grayson (2005) whose thinking is that innovation is most likely to succeed when it proceeds just ahead of existing practice and that implementation of an innovation should occur in manageable steps.

In the final analysis, curriculum change is a very positive endeavour aiming at offering the education that is relevant and adequate to the socio-cultural, political and economic needs of the people. However, changes sometimes meet resistance due to how and by how much they were introduced. This thinking could be ably summarized by what Rogan and Aldous (2005:38) commend, *“The intended changes should be made clear to the teachers, and the practical changes that are required in the classroom must be thoroughly thought through and explicitly transferred to the teachers in a way that is considerate of the natural pace acceptance of change.”* This study has revealed that most of the observations made by Rogan were not met when OBE curriculum using LCE methods was being introduced in the primary schools in Malawi. As Hopkins (1998:1049) as cited in Rogan (2006) puts it, *“most initiatives are poorly conceptualized in the precise ways in which they might impact upon learning or classroom practice.”*

In summary, the implementation of OBE curriculum has been a problem because of the many challenges in the Ministry of Education ranging from teaching resources, training, practice in teaching using LCE methods, national examinations to human resource as earlier explained. The researcher is convinced that success in curriculum implementation can be achieved if the innovation occurs in manageable steps other than implementing it wholly as Malawi did. Change is good only when it is thoroughly thought through, otherwise mere curriculum change does not bring substantial impact to the education sector unless the implementation strategy encompasses all important stakeholders including the teachers as implementers.

The next chapter presents the conclusion and recommendations arising from the findings in this chapter.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents limitations of the study, summary of findings, areas for further studies, recommendations based on the study's findings regarding participants' conceptions, perceptions and experiences about LCE methods among newly qualified teachers, before it comes to the final conclusion.

5.2 Limitations of the Study

The study covered a small geographical area of Kasungu TTC as such it is not feasible to generalize the results to other similar institutions because of the small sample used in the current study. Another important consideration in not generalizing the results is because of the research methods employed; the study was basically qualitative with some elements analysed quantitatively. With qualitative data analysis it becomes difficult to generalize the findings since people construct their own meanings of the phenomenon under study.

5.3 Summary of Findings

5.3.1 Knowledge of LCE methods

While there is a good theoretical understanding of LCE methods among most teachers, the practical part has to be given much emphasis. There is need to supervise both seasoned and newly qualified teachers in the implementation of LCE so that the needed impact can be actualized. The

current scenario is not very healthy because the emphasis of LCE is to see teachers using such approaches other than just knowing them.

Teacher Training Colleges, Primary Education Advisors, the Directorate of Inspection in the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, all need to work collaboratively to help the teachers to understand the philosophy and need to use LCE methods in their lessons if OBE curriculum is to benefit the learner.

5.3.2 Training in LCE methods

Training of teachers at Teacher Training Colleges needs to be reorganized so that lecturers use LCE methods in their courses across all subjects and demonstrate to student teachers how these methods ought to be used in everyday lessons if the new approaches are to impact positively in the implementation of OBE curriculum. This augurs well with Lortie (1975) as cited in Vavrus (2011) that student teachers begin learning how to become teachers through an apprenticeship of observation which goes all along their school life when they observe and admire their teachers. Pedagogical reform takes time and requires significant unification of policies and programs such as teacher training.

5.3.3 Practice in using LCE methods

Practice in using LCE methods has to be looked at from two fronts. Firstly the current practice in TTCs has to be revisited where student teachers are given just one opportunity to teach at the Demonstration school. This trend prevents student teachers from fully practicing the best ways in using the new approaches as they master the art of teaching. This author feels three sessions at the Demonstration school could make a huge difference in both the understanding and employment of LCE methods. The training regime has to give more prominence to practical sessions as opposed

to the current scenario where more emphasis is given to the theoretical understanding of the methods.

Secondly, lecturers should teach by doing and undergoing LCE methods in their lessons. This will bridge the widening gap between theory and practice. This researcher is of the view that if lecturers continuously teach using LCE methods in all learning areas students can also use the methods in their own classrooms when they graduate.

5.3.4 Resources for LCE methods

Resources being one of the challenges noted in this study, it is only logical to provide them and embark on more in- service teacher training programmes to help teachers understand and implement changes in policy and curriculum. This makes more sense especially when new innovations such as LCE methods are introduced in the education system, in order to discover how best to use the methods in challenging environments for example overcrowded classrooms and limited teaching resources.

5.3.5 Teacher-centred approaches in teaching

The study has also uncovered the assumption that change is not an event but rather a process which means, therefore, that it will take a considerable time before teachers unlearn the old practices and embark on new ones. This researcher considers bringing in effective awareness to the teachers on the need to employ LCE methods. Teachers being implementers have to understand the methods rather than just imposing innovations on them even when they are not convinced as to why they should abandon old practices in preference of the new ones whose impact is yet to be felt.

5.4 Recommendations

5.4.1 Mode of Teacher Training

If LCE has to impact positively on Outcomes Based Education (OBE), teacher preparation at Teacher Training Colleges needs to be re-organized so that lecturers use LCE methods in their courses across all the subjects and demonstrate to student-teachers how these methods ought to be used in everyday lesson delivery. This augurs well with what Lortie (1975) as cited in Vavrus (2011) as earlier explained (5.3.2).

5.4.2 Training of Qualified Teachers when new Innovations are implemented

Common practice has it that when new innovations are introduced in the system many teachers are more or less 'disqualified' because their training competences are left useless. The introduction of OBE using LCE methods left many teacher incompetent and could not help the newly qualified teachers to use and practice LCE methods because they themselves were not knowledgeable on the new approaches. This defeats the concept of scaffolding as propounded in the Zonal of Proximal Development by Levy Vygostky.

This researcher, therefore, recommends that any new innovation in the education sector should be followed by in-service training to update the old teachers so that they can effectively play their role as knowledgeable adults to the newly qualified teachers. This could be implemented by Primary Education advisors (PEA), Education Methods Advisory Services (EMAS) and college lecturers.

5.4.3 National Examinations at the end of the primary cycle

This researcher recommends that national examinations should also examine other non-cognitive abilities other than the current cognitive abilities that force teachers to use teacher-centred

approaches to help learners get discrete facts. These facts are later reproduced during an examination at the expense of affective domain and psychomotor skills that ably prepare learners for the realities of the modern society. In fact this is the spirit behind Outcomes- Based Education curriculum. There appears to be a need to think about engaging in an examination reform that will respond to the Outcomes-Based Education curriculum.

5.4.4 Teaching Resources

The study recommends adequate supply of teaching resources since LCE methods are resource intensive. Failure to provide such resources is seen as a mockery to the whole innovation. Much as TALULAR is there, there are other resources that cannot be locally made but should be bought. It is the role of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology or other stakeholders to procure such resources for the smooth implementation of OBE curriculum using LCE methods.

5.5 Areas for further studies

The study has tried to explore the aspect of curriculum implementation by zooming in more on the pedagogical side. However, there are many areas where curriculum implementation can also be critiqued. The following areas are felt to be very critical; therefore calling for an in-depth study in as far as curriculum issues are concerned.

- How do LCE methods challenge the socio-cultural context of the Malawian teacher in the light of current economic environment?
- Does the introduction of many programmes simultaneously within the education sector have any impact in the implementation of curriculum innovations?
- Does the number of simultaneous of programmes introduced in the education sector at any given period have any impact on the success of implementation?

- Which LCE methods can be practically and realistically used within the current socio-economic environment in Malawi and still achieve the spirit behind OBE?

5.6 Conclusion

Knowledge is constructed not only by observable phenomena, but also by descriptions of people's intentions, beliefs, values and reasons, meaning-making and understanding. The study bears witness to this fact as several realities have come to light.

The implementation of Outcomes Based Education using Learner Centred Education methods is a complex endeavour and as such requires careful planning both at policy and implementation levels. For instance curriculum development, the mode of teacher training and examination system all need good coordination if the curriculum is to be a success. This augurs well with what Vavrus et al (2011:95) argue, "*one of the main barriers to the use of Learner Centred Pedagogy is its lack of alignment with current examination structures.....*"

Another equally important aspect is the scale at which innovations are implemented. It is clear from this research that the scale of implementation was beyond the capacity of many teachers. Lessons can, therefore, be drawn from Rogan and Grayson (2003), who observe that innovation is most likely to succeed when it proceeds just ahead of existing practice and that implementation of an innovation should occur in manageable steps. The steps in this study could refer to the training and practice in using LCE methods given to students when they are still in college.

This research study has also brought to light the fact that changes should reflect the current practices of the implementers rather than being imposed from above. Hopkins et al. (1994) as cited in Rogan and Grayson (2003:1176) note that, "*it is almost always the case that centrally imposed*

(or top-down) change implicitly assumes that implementation is an event rather than a process; that is a change proceeds on an autopilot once the policy has been enunciated or passed.” This perspective ignores the critical distinction between the object of change and the process of change—that is how schools put the reforms into practice. The issue of LCE methods in teacher training curriculum was imposed from above without convincing the implementers (lecturers) on the need to help student teachers use LCE methods in all their lesson delivery.

Change is good and has to be encouraged. However it is critical to pay careful attention in the design of training programs to the level of teachers’ knowledge and experience so that implementation of innovative curriculum like OBE using LCE methods can smoothly be implemented.

It can be reiterated, as it is also the strongest conviction of this researcher, that *“until teacher education programmes, curricula and national examinations in Malawi are coherently organised and harmonized, it is unlikely that teachers will fully embrace the LCE concept.”*

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Appendix (i)

Interview Schedule

1. Which methods do you use when teaching in your class?
2. What are Learner-Centred Education methods?

Can you explain on any three of these methods?

3. How are these methods taught in Teacher Training Colleges?
4. When you were graduating, did you master all the skills for you to comfortably use LCE methods?
5. What do you think should be done to make sure that student teachers are fully prepared to handle LCE methods before they graduate from college?
6. What is the general feeling out there among teachers on LCE methods?

Does the reaction/response affect your employment of LCE?

7. Do you encounter any challenges when you are using LCE methods in your lessons?

Elaborate

8. Why do you think teachers cling to traditional methods in their lesson delivery?

Appendix (ii)

Focus Group Discussion (FGD) Interview Schedule

1. You have now taught for some time, are you using LCE methods in your lessons?
Can you mention any four of these methods?
2. What is your perception of the methods? Are they good or not? Why?
3. Why are teachers asked to use LCE methods in their lessons?
4. Did you fully understand the methods while in college?
5. Do you have the skills to effectively employ LCE methods in your lessons?
6. What are the general comments about LCE methods from head teachers and other teachers in your schools?
7. Do you think of any reason that makes teachers (and probably yourselves) cling to traditional methods when teaching?

LIST OF LCE METHODS IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER AND THEIR RESPECTIVE PURPOSES

Method	Purposes
Analytical Teams	Critically analyzing a controversial topic presented in written text etc
Artistic Problem Solving	Discovering new aspects and possible solutions for a problem
Ball Bearing	Understanding and summarising a written text
Brainstorming	Collecting ideas, opinions, short statements on a certain topic
Bus Stop/ Work Station	Working on a sequence of tasks presented on different spots of the classroom
Card Collecting and Clustering	Collecting and categorizing learners' ideas and knowledge
Conversation Circle	Becoming acquainted with each other
Debate	Exploring and defending possible points of view on a controversial issue
Feed Back	Expressing opinions on a lesson, presentation or other activity
Fish Bowl	Exchanging aspects, opinions and experiences on a topic
Flashlight	Quickly bringing forward everyone's opinion or idea on a topic
Gallery Walk	Presenting and explaining a poster with results from group work
Group Work	Collecting experiences, processing knowledge, discussing opinions, practicing skills and preparing presentations together
Individual work	Reading texts, processing knowledge, Practicing skills
Jigsaw	Understanding and summarizing a written text composed of a number of items
Letter to the Author	Encouraging learners to engage with written text in a personal and critical way
Making a Stand	Encouraging learners to decide and justify their decisions, getting a quick overview on a group's activity
Mind Mapping	Visualising ideas linked around a central key word
Pair Work	Collecting experiences, processing knowledge, practicing skills
Poster Making	Designing posters displaying results of group work

Appendix iv

Lesson Observation Check list

Elements to be observed	SA	A	D	SD
1. Is the teacher using LCE methods in the lesson?				
2. Is the teacher using a number of LCE methods in the lesson?				
3. Are success criteria achieved using LCE methods?				
4. Is the teacher competently using the LCE method chosen in the lesson delivery?				
5. Do learners benefit from the employment of LCE methods in the lesson?				
6. Does the teacher use traditional methods of teaching?				
7. Is there sufficient evidence to support the understanding of the methods (LCE) by the teacher?				

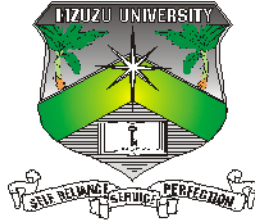
Key for scoring the list

SA (Strongly Agree) = 4

A (Agree) = 3

D (Disagree) = 2

SD (Strongly Disagree) =1



MZUZU UNIVERSITY

Appendix V Questionnaire for College lecturers

“Analysis of the implementation of Outcomes Based Education Curriculum focusing on Learner Centred Education (LCE)

Lecturers’ perceptions on how LCE is taught in TTCs

Dear Participant,

I am Joseph JW Sandamira, a student in a Masters programme at Mzuzu University. As partial fulfillment to my programme, I am carrying out a research study on, “Analysis of the implementation of Outcomes Based Education Curriculum focusing on Learner Centred Education (LCE) methods.

The purpose of this study is to collect information and/or ideas on how Newly Qualified Teachers in primary schools use LCE methods. Your information will help the study to establish how students are prepared in LCE use while in college which has a bearing towards the use of such methods when they qualify. Ultimately some of the ideas will be used to improve the implementation of LCE methods in schools.

Thank you for agreeing to help by completing this anonymous survey. Please feel free to indicate your opinions because no response is treated wrong. Be assured of the confidentiality of the information provided and feel free to withdraw should you feel so.

Back ground Information

Name of Institution: _____

Sex: Male Female

Your Position: Head of Department Lecturer Other: -----

Number of years you have served in your current position

A. Please tick whichever matches with your understanding

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. Are you convinced that student teachers understand the concept of LCE?				
2. Do you think the training sessions and networking in LCE were enough for you to train students in LCE?				
3. What is your observation when you supervise student teachers? Do you see them using LCE methods in their lessons?				
4. If no, could it be because of how they were trained?				
5. Does the current curriculum for teacher training emphasize in using LCE methods?				
6. Has the sandwiching of LCE in teacher training curriculum been very effective?				
7. Do you consider LCE methods as the best approach in implementing OBE curriculum?				
8. Could resources be among the challenges that prevent students from using LCE methods?				

B. Answer the following questions to the best of your knowledge.

9. What things do you think could be done to make LCE methods serve the intended objectives?

10. Suggest any support that you need to improve your handling of LCE when teaching students while in college.

11. Briefly describe your own experience when you supervise students as regards to the use of LCE methods

12. What are the main strengths of LCE methods?

13. What are the main weaknesses of LCE methods?

14. Suggest how the weakness may be addressed in order to further improve it.

15. Any other comments related to LCE?

Thank you for completing this questionnaire. Your participation is very much app

Appendix vi

Timeline schedule for the study

Period	Activity taken
March to July 2013	Working on the research proposal and presentation of the same
September to December 2013	Reading and consulting different sources in order to write a literature review
January to March 2014	Data collection
April to August 2014	Data analysis
August 2014 to Feb, 2015	Writing the Thesis
March to April 2015	Presentation of the findings to the Colloquium and working on the final corrections
May 2015	Sent for external examination

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