



Teacher Educators' Experiences in Mainstreaming Child Friendly Schools
Concept: A Case study of A Teacher Training College in South West Division

By

Stella Theodora Stima

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Education in partial fulfilment of Master
of Teacher Education

At

Mzuzu University

Supervisor: Simeon M. Gwayi, PhD

Date: July, 2019

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Dedication

This work has been dedicated to my family, (Nathaniel Chauluka, Comfort Chauluka, Collins Chauluka, Joseph Kombezi Chauluka and Sylvia Stima) for their endurance and support during my MEd study.

Declaration

I, **Stella Theodora Stima**, hereby declare that this study is my own original work, and it has not been submitted for a degree or examination at any other university. All the sources that I have used or quoted have been acknowledged by complete references.

Signature..... Date.....

Stella Theodora Stima

CANDIDATE

Signature..... Date.....

Simeon M. Gwayi, PhD

SUPERVISOR

Abstract

Teacher educators' experiences in mainstreaming child friendly schools concept had been contributing factor to the training of pre-service teachers. This study concentrated on different experiences teacher educators had in mainstreaming child friendly schools concept since its introduction to Teacher Training Colleges. The following research questions guided the study: What is the understanding of teacher educators regarding the CFS concept? How do teacher educators train student teachers the concept of CFS? What challenges do teacher educators face in the training of CFS concept? The purposive sampling of six (6) teacher educators in South West Education Division was used. Teacher educators responded to semi-structured questions in focus group discussions and face-face interviews in order to seek their views on CFS implementation.

The findings study revealed that teacher educators had clear understanding of the concept. However, they lacked practical knowledge on how to train and assess. Lack of resources also contributed to inadequate preparation of student teachers on CFS model. It was established that although the teacher educators were aware of CFS in theory; practically, they required proper guidelines. The research study recommended that the principal should consider monitoring and supporting the CFS implementation at college level. In addition, teacher educators should support and monitor the CFS activities, thereby, enhancing the promotion of quality education in student teachers. Finally, there should be clear guidelines on how teacher educators are to mainstream CFS. This would help to enhance the creation of child friendly schools in primary schools in Malawi.

Key words: *teacher education, child-friendly schools, quality education, teacher training college*

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Table of Contents

Dedication	iii
Declaration	iv
Abstract	v
Table of Contents	vii
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	1
1:1 Background to the Study	1
1:2 Statement of the Problem	4
1:3 Purpose of the Study	5
1:4 Critical Research Question	5
1:4:1 Research Questions	5
1:5 Significance of the Study	5
1:6 Operational Definition of Terms	Error! Bookmark not defined.
1:7 List of Abbreviations and Acronyms	7
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW	8
2:1 Introduction	8
2:2 Conceptualization of Child Friendly School	8
2:2:1 An Academically Effective School	9
2:2:2 A Right-Based And Inclusive School	11
2:2:3 A Safe and Healthy Promoting School	12
2:2:4 A Gender Sensitive School	13
2:3 Empirical Studies on CFS and Best Practices from Other Context	15
2:4 Training	18
2:5 Theoretical Framework: Systems Theory	Error! Bookmark not defined.
2:6 Conclusion	244
CHAPTER 3: METHOSDOLOGY	
3:1 Introduction	255
3:2 Research Design	255
3:3 Research Paradigm	276
3:4 Study Setting	277
3:5 Study Population	277

3:6	Sample and Sample Size	288
3:7	Sampling Techniques	288
3:8	Data Collection Methods.....	288
3:9	Data Collection Instruments.....	30
3:10	Data Analysis	30
3:11	Trustworthiness	32
3:12	Ethical Considerations.....	32
CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS		
4.1	Introduction	35
4.2.	Teacher Educators' Conceptualization of CFS	36
4.2.1	Conducive Environment	36
4.2.2	Accomodative School	37
4.2.3	Relevant Teaching Approaches	39
4.2.4	Gender.....	41
4.3	Training.....	42
4.3.1	Motivation for Training	42
4.3.2	Modes of Training.....	44
4.3.3	Resources for Training.....	50
4.3.4	Training Assessment.....	50
4.4	Challenges to CFS Training.....	53
4.4.1	Implicit Curriculum	54
4.4.2	Fragmentation of Information.....	55
4.4.3	Resource Inadequacy	56
4.5	Anticipated Challenges for Student Teachers	57
4.5.1	Lack of School Support	58
4.5.2	Culture.....	58
4.6	Possible Solutions to the Challenges in Training Student Teachers	60
4.6.1	Revisiting the Curriculum.....	60
4.6.2	Integration when Teaching	61
4.6.3	Modelling.....	62
4.6.4	Strengthening CFS Club Participation.....	64

4.7	The Best Approaches to Prepare Student Teachers	64
4.7.1	Training the Teachers and the Community.....	65
4.7.2	Resource Provision	66
CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS		
5.1	Introduction	68
5.2	Teacher Educators' Conceptualization of CFS Concept.....	69
5.3	Training of Student Teachers.....	72
5.4	Training Limitations of CFS	73
5.4.1	CFS Club Limitation.....	74
5.4.2	Modelling Limitations	75
5.4.3	Assessment Limitation.....	78
5.5	Conclusions	79
5.6	Recommendations for Policy	80
5.7	Recommendations for Further Research	81
	References.....	82
	Appendices.....	89

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1:1 Background to the Study

The realization of quality inclusive education is one of the goals for many nations (UNESCO, 1994). Thus, every nation is making efforts to ensuring that all its citizens receive quality education both as a fundamental right as well as a catalyst of social economic development (UNESCO, 1994). Similarly, Malawi is committed to promoting quality inclusive education for its citizens. Affirming its commitment, Malawi ratified a number of international legal frameworks and policies on inclusive education which include but not limited to: The Salamanca Legal Framework (UNESCO, 1994), The Dakar Framework for Action, (UNESCO, 2000), and The Policy Guidelines on Inclusive Education (UNESCO, 2009). Inclusive education is defined as “a process aimed at offering quality education for all while respecting diversity and different needs and abilities, characteristics and learning expectations of the students and communities, eliminating all forms of discrimination” (UNESCO, 2009, p.8).

Nationally, Malawi translated the international legal frameworks and policies to fit its societal needs. The development of National Educational Sector Plan (NESP II 2008-2017) which focuses on three thematic areas of Quality and relevance, Equity and Access, and Governance and Management (MOEST, 2010). Through the NESP II, the government aims at providing quality and relevant education; attaining fair educational admission; and finally enforce efficiency, transparency and accountability in educational leadership. One of the critical areas, under equity and access that NESP (2008-2017) prioritizes is the promotion of inclusive and safe schools.

In promoting inclusive education, Malawi drafted a final policy document ‘Malawi’s National Inclusive Education Strategy’ (2016-2020), which aims at addressing and responding to issues concerning the learners’ increased participation through minimising exclusion in education system (MOEST, 2015). The main emphasis lies on the provision of quality education, right to education, and respect for diversity. Although there are all these attempts for the implementation of inclusive quality education, Malawi encounters challenges ranging from lack of adequate trained teachers, lack of resources, inadequate and unfriendly infrastructures and lack of community involvement in promoting quality education (Steiner-Khamsi & Kunje, 2011). These challenges, eventually, lead to school children drop-out, decreased learner retention, high and frequent absenteeism (MIE, 2012). As a way of showing political will and commitment towards the implementation and achievement of inclusive quality education and child rights, Malawi government, in collaboration with other national and international organizations, put in place interventions such as Keeping Girls in Schools, School Nutrition and Health, Inclusive Education projects, Primary School Improvement Plan (PSIP), Cash Transfer, and Child Friendly Schools (CFS) (MOEST, 2015).

It is against this background that Child – Friendly School (CFS) initiative was introduced in Malawi’s public primary schools in 2005. The main aim was to address challenges schools were facing in the promotion of quality inclusive education (MOEST, 2008). It is believed that provision of quality inclusive education for all is possible when the rights of children are promoted through ensuring that the learning environment is conducive (Maundidza, 2013). CFS promotes the child rights through its five characteristics namely: (i) An academically effective school; (ii) A right-based and inclusive school; (iii) A healthy

promoting and protective school; (iv) A gender sensitive school and (v) School and community linkages and partnerships (UNICEF, 2009). The implementation of the characteristics is believed to enhance learner participation in school and classroom activities, reduce absenteeism, repetition, dropout of learners, early marriages, and hence increase in the number of educated people resulting in reduction of poverty among its citizen.

Several studies have been conducted in order to find out how primary schools are implementing CFS concept (MIE, 2012; Chiwaula, Meke, Jere, Nampota, and Kadzamira, 2012). The findings provide evidence that schools are not doing enough to overcome existing problems such as absenteeism, repetition, dropout, poor performance and in general, low retention of learners. These problems are attributed to attrition and increased number of newly recruited teachers without knowledge about CFS.

Pressed by these problems, and in recognition of the role Teacher Training Colleges (TTCs) play, the government called for the introduction of CFS in all public teacher training colleges in 2008. It was assumed that the introduction would be a smart way of mainstreaming CFS into public primary schools (MIE, 2012), thereby enhancing good practices as a way of addressing challenges schools face in Malawi. Furthermore, it is believed that when student teachers at TTCs are equipped with the CFS knowledge and practices, they will be able to join hands with in-service teachers in the realization of inclusive quality education, hence bridging the CFS knowledge gap (Dorji, 2010).

1: 2 Statement of the Problem

Research has shown that schools are not adequately implementing CFS concept in primary schools (Chiwaula, et al. 2012). According to the survey by Chiwaula, et al.(2012), only few schools achieved a majority of key indicators used to measure success in the implementation of the five characteristics of CFS. Their findings, further, indicated that among the five characteristics, only one; School - Community linkages scored the highest mark of 45.8 percent. The conclusion drawn from the findings underlined the need to train teachers right away from teacher training colleges if schools have to register CFS achievement in the realization of quality inclusive education at primary school level.

In another study conducted by MIE (2012), it was recommended that CFS should be mainstreamed in Malawi public TTCs to ensure that pre-service primary school teachers are equipped with the necessary skills on CFS. Following recommendations from these studies, the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology commissioned MIE to develop CFS training manuals for TTCs (MIE, 2012) so that student teachers similarly acquire CFS knowledge and skills while at college. For this reason, teacher educators were trained on how to use the training manuals (MIE, 2010). However, there has been limited empirically documented information on the experiences of teacher educators in the mainstreaming of CFS guidelines at TTC level. Informed by the findings from the previous studies and the current situation on the ground, the researcher sought to investigate the experiences of Teacher educators in mainstreaming CFS concept as they facilitate training of primary school pre-service teachers. Lunenberg (2007, (p.590) states, “teachers teach the way they were taught” Understanding teacher educators’ experiences will help to bridge the gaps that exist as they train, since teachers emulate best practices from their teachers.

1:3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative case study is to explore the experiences of teacher educators in training student teachers the CFS concept at a TTC in the Southern Region of Malawi.

1:4 Critical Research Question

What are the experiences of teacher educators in the implementation of CFS concept?

1:4:1 Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

- a. What is the understanding of teacher educators regarding the CFS concept?
- b. How do teacher educators train student teachers the concept of CFS?
- c. What challenges do teacher educators face in the training student teachers?

1:5 Significance of the Study

Several studies on CFS have been conducted in United States of America, Asia and Africa. Most of these studies focused on implementation of CFS holistically (MIE, 2010; Maundidza, 2013; Chiwaula, et al, 2012; Baxter, 2010) others on separate principles of CFS such as inclusiveness (Chitiyo, 2014; Dorji, 2010) and other few on school-community linkages (Gordon & Louis, 2009). Despite CFS concept being studied worldwide (UNICEF, 2009), the researcher decided to take a different approach and direction by using qualitative approach and targeting a different population in a setting where little is known about the experiences of teacher educators with respect of challenges in CFS implementation at TTC level other than primary schools.

Understanding teacher educators' experiences and exploring how they were dealing with the challenges they were facing at TTC had a potential to advance promotion of quality in education through CFS concept. Most importantly, the study has some recommendations to address the challenges in order to realize quality education starting from TTC level.

The results of the study may benefit college principals and teacher educators who are directly involved in the training of CFS at college level to reflect on how effectively they are mainstreaming CFS initiative and improve on areas of weaknesses. Additionally, relevant stakeholders such as UNICEF and VSO may be informed by the findings of this study on how far the CFS has gone in terms of adoption and fidelity of implementation to yield intended results. Most importantly, the findings may also inform the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology and Malawi Institute of Education about the fidelity of mainstreaming the CFS concept in the TTC curriculum. The study will also provide further insights and perspectives to policy makers, practitioners and researchers and contribute to advocacy of evidence-based approaches in CFS.

1.6 Operational Definitions of Terms

Experiences: Knowledge, skills and practices teacher educators have on CFS

Teacher educator: A teacher trainer at Teacher Training College responsible for training pre-service teachers

Child-Friendly School: a concept that is worldly accepted at a model for improving quality education

Mainstream: Ensuring CFS practices, knowledge and skills are being transferred to students and reflected at TTC.

1.7 List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

CFS:	Child Friendly School
TTC:	Teacher Training College
MIE:	Malawi Institute of Education
MoEST:	Ministry of Education Science and Technology
UNESCO:	United Nation Education Science Organization
NESP:	National Education Sector Plan
UNICEF:	United Nations International Children Education Fund
PSIP:	Primary School Improvement Plan
CRC:	Convention on the Rights of the Child
EFA:	Education for All
VSO:	Volunteer Service Overseas

Study Limitations

Due to limited time and resources, it was not possible to conduct study in all the Teacher Training Colleges in Malawi. As such, the findings and recommendations of this study could not be generalized to other TTC.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2:1 Introduction

This chapter outlines literature based on studies conducted internationally and nationally on Child-Friendly Schools concept. The literature has been organized in an integrative approach (Creswell, 2014) focusing on the following: CFS concept and the five pillars or characteristics of CFS- academically and effective school; Right-based and inclusive school; safe and healthy promoting school; gender sensitive school; school and community linkages; empirical studies on CFS; implementation and approaches (best practices) from international countries and local (Malawi).

2:2 Conceptualization of Child Friendly School

Child-Friendly School concept was first introduced in Thailand (MIE, 2010). The Child-Friendly framework is a means of translating the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC,1989) into school management and classroom practice, and ensuring the right of all children to have access to quality basic education (UNESCO, 2008). For this reason, CFS approach focuses on a child as a whole: physically, socially, emotionally, morally and intellectually (UNICEF, 2009; MOEST, 2008). In ensuring that the child reaches his/her full capacity, provision of a conducive learning environment is very vital. In order to realize that children reach their full potential, CFS initiative is based on different dimensions, but Malawi's chosen five dimensions (Figure 2) include: inclusiveness, effectiveness, safety and protectiveness, gender sensitivity and school and community partnership (Baxter, 2010).

• Dimensions of Child friendly schools

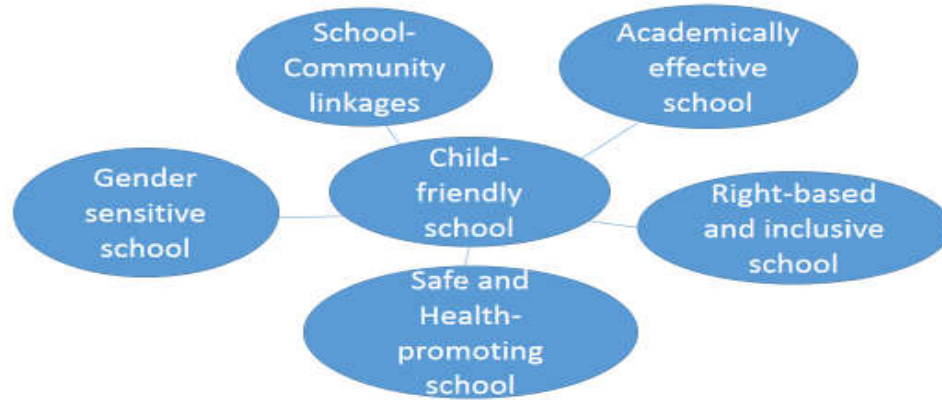


Figure 2: Dimensions of Child Friendly School concept

2:2:1 An Academically Effective School

An effective school is basically a school where its teaching and learning and assessment processes are based on ensuring that the success of the learner is attained through various support systems (UNICEF, 2009). ‘Effective Schools’ concept is both an educational movement and body of research which examines school-based factors which positively influence learning outcomes in schools (Lezotte, 1991). Lezotte establishes that effective school is contributed by various factors which support the school system to achieve its goal.

Many studies on effective schools have widely adopted the Lezotte’s “Seven Correlates of Effective Schools”, the popular benchmark of all the recent studies on effective schools. The correlates included: instructional leadership; clear and focused mission; safe and orderly environment, climate of high expectations; frequent monitoring of student progress; positive home-school relations; opportunity to learn and student time on task (Lezotte, 2001). Other

researchers, whose work were also based on factors that can enhance effectiveness of schools included: Edgerson and Kritsonis, (2006); Alma Harris and Daniel Muijs (2005). They added the factors such as; principal-teacher relationships, leadership and management. Similarly, Harris and Muijs (2005) assert that teachers play a critical role in leading improvement in the classroom at school level. This form of leadership contributes directly to raising achievement among learners, hence contributing to creation of a Child Friendly School.

Similarly, in studies conducted by Lyer (2009); Shannon and Bylsma (2007), and Sammons and Bakkum (2011), also found that teachers' attitude towards students, effective use of school resources, teacher job satisfaction and good organizational culture promote effectiveness of a school. Sammons and Bakkum (2011) concluded that education cannot be a solution to social marginalization by itself but remains an important means of implementing policies intended to address the issue of social disadvantage. However, it can be argued that unless school principals and teachers are adequately trained on issues concerning leadership, schools in Malawi can be effective (MIE, 2010).

Another study conducted by Otto (2016) shows that not only are school factors contribute to students' academic achievement but also home factors. In his study, Otto examined parenting ideologies, styles, and practices for Korean-American students. His findings show that when parents support their children at home by creating conducive home environment (mother/father-child relationship), set socialisation goals and emotional climate, children academic achievement is promoted. Although the study population for Otto is different from Malawi, however, parental support on children education remains vital and influential in improving children academic achievement worldwide. Otto's findings also support Lyer's

(2009) suggestion that the path to greater school effectiveness is through a shared vision and commitment by stakeholders in the children's education.

2:2:2 A Right-Based and Inclusive School

Many authors have defined inclusive education in terms of their own perspectives. For example, UNICEF (2003) defines inclusive education as a throughput:

[It is] a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all learners through increasing participation to learning, culture, and communities in reducing exclusion within and from education. This process involves modification of content, approaches, structures and strategies with common vision that covers all children of appropriate age and a conviction that it is of the regular system to educate all children (p.7).

CFS holistic approach acknowledges that children have a right to education, hence, focusing on access and quality (UNICEF, 2009). A rights-based and inclusive school respects and responds to diversity by ensuring that all children have equal opportunity to learn while recognizing the rights of every child (MOEST, 2016). It also believes in welcoming and embracing diverse learners-non-discriminatory as in Education for All (EFA). Malak, Sharma and Deppeler (2017. p 31) in their study entitled, *Reflecting on a Daughter's Bilingualism and disAbility Narratively* commented,

“When teachers embrace and celebrate diversity manifested in different abilities, languages, and backgrounds among their students,

they, then, help their students become empowered and appreciate diversities in others to create a more just society.”

Although the study was conducted in a different setting, the same applies to Malawian setting. Teachers are obligated to recognise and accept the differences of the children. The rights of children are also safeguarded by ensuring that teachers, parents and community have been empowered to support and acknowledge learners’ rights (UNICEF, 2009). Therefore, a right based school promotes rights of children and accepts learners who have disabilities, girls who were once impregnated orphans and vulnerable children, and street kids. It ensures that all children have an increased access to education.

In the same vein, Marishane (2013) argues, “school leadership should not only adapt inclusive policies to their schools, but also monitor the implementation of such policies” (p.6). This implies that school leadership has a role in enforcing policies on the rights of a child. In addition to enforcing policies, it should also take an initiative to supervise and see if the staff members are indeed promoting educational child rights as stipulated in Child Rights Conference (UN, 1989). However, someone may ask, ‘Do Malawian pre-service and in-service teachers have adequate knowledge of children rights? Do they know that promotion of child rights increases access to education? What is the role of teacher Training College in the promotion of knowledge about children rights and inclusive education?’

2:2:3 A Safe and Healthy Promoting School

A child-friendly school is a school that promotes safety, protection and health (UNICEF, 2009). According to Orkodashvili (2010) noted that children who feel safe and protected excel in their education. Children who are safe, protected and health participate actively in

classes. As a result, they achieve more, both academically and in their future life. He added that safety of a child at school increases access to quality education. This is the result of building trust to the people around them. For this reason, school leadership, teachers, parents and communities have a vital role in the protection of children. Teachers have to create a safe, enabling conducive learning environment for all learners. MIE, (2008) observed that one way of ensuring safety is promoted in child-friendly schools is by having rules and regulations that promote learners' safety and health. Establishment and implementation of school rules and regulations can only be achieved if the school leadership, teachers, students and communities work towards achieving a common and shared goal. In another study, Marishane, (2013) asserts, "the role of school leadership is to develop staff and create safe and secure conditions suitable for effective teaching and learning for all children in a school. This entails that provision of quality inclusive education is possible where school system promotes safety and good health of a child.

2:2:4 A Gender Sensitive School

A CFS is a school that promotes gender equality and equity. Gender equality is defined as ensuring that boys and girls are given equal opportunity in education and other life aspects (MIE, 2008). During instructions, teachers should ensure there is no differentiation on tasks and questions given to boys and girls. Both boys and girls should be encouraged to participate actively. Hornby (2012) assert that inclusion in education is both the means to an end and encourages school systems to address issues of inequality by widening access and participation beyond school. For example, schools should sensitize the community about equality between boys and girls so that access to education for girls should increase. In addition, schools should re-admit girls who drop out due to pregnancy.

Malawi in 1994 introduced readmission policy which stipulates that girls who are impregnated can later be readmitted into schools (NESIP 2007-2017). Black-Howkins (2007) supports the readmission policy and observes that there is positive relationship between level of inclusion and level of achievement. He adds that high level of inclusion results in high level of achievement. Hornby (2012) and Black-Howkins (2007) argue that the possibility of the relationship between inclusion and achievement is practical only if teachers are willing to support full participation of all learners in education. Therefore, teachers have a great role to play in inclusive and access to education by making sure that both girls and boys are fully supported. Their teaching should demonstrate impartiality by not neglecting or discriminate any group of children including girls. The practice of treating boys and girls equally highly increases access. However, realization of this heavily depends on teacher educators training student teachers about issues to do with gender which CFS promotes.

2:2:5 School and Community Linkages and Partnerships

This involves parents, communities in all aspects of school policy, management and support children. The school makes parents part and parcel of the school governing bodies, such as PTA and SMC, with clear roles and responsibilities (MIE, 2008). To ensure strong partnership, Otto (2016) found that parents who create a supportive and conducive home environment for their children contribute highly to the children's academic achievement. Lyer, (2009) asserts that parents' involvement in their children's school activities, improve learners' performance and well-being. He points out that this can be realized if schools work

hard in building capacities of parents so that they actively participate in the development and monitoring of their children.

2:3 Empirical Studies on CFS and Best Practices from Other Context

According to UNICEF (2009), there are five characteristics which make child friendly schools. Empirically, it has shown that effectiveness, right-based and inclusiveness, gender sensitivity, health and sanitation and community linkages interrelate based on right-based approach (UNICEF 2007). Right-based approach's main goal is to make sure that every child receives quality education that focuses on respect and full development of the child (Maundidza, 2013). According to UNICEF (2007), CFS models rely on all stakeholders' involvement and support in order to facilitate children's rights to quality education. These stakeholders include parents, communities, teachers, school heads, education planners, civil society groups as well as local and government and their development partners. However, in CFS model, a child is central and main beneficially to education process. Since the model depends much on the support and commitment of all concerned parties for its processes and outcomes, it is, therefore, informed by systems theory (Chabott, 2004 cited in UNICEF, 2009). According to Laszlo and Krippner (1997), systems components work together in order to maintain a process.

A number of literatures have shown that many countries in both Asia and Africa are successfully implementing CFS. Their goal is to improve quality of education either in primary or secondary schools. According to UNICEF (2007) report from Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office (ESARO), countries such as Eritrea, Ethiopia, Tanzania and Mozambique adopted CFS model. They are now experiencing remarkable improvement

in provision of quality education in their education system. It is reported that these countries, at first were experiencing challenges, which among others include; poor basic education and unhygienic school facilities which led to increase in absenteeism, dropout and decline in girl academic achievements (UNICEF, 2009).

The introduction of CFS, in most countries, has registered a positive impact. For example, the launching of CFS conceptualization and planning in Eritrean education system has improved academic achievement of many students. The government developed strategies to enhance quality and management of schools using CFS approach. This led to introduction of a five-year (2005-2009) strategic plan and action plan for teacher training in child-centred pedagogical skills. Baseline survey results, which were conducted in 25 schools in six districts, showed that hygiene and sanitation in these schools improved tremendously. As a result, 8000 more students benefited from the UNICEF/WASH project by the year 2008. In addition, there was a development of a 'Gender Fair Teaching Training module' by Ministry of Education; and introducing National award for 20 female role models to girls in attempt to deal with gender issues in schools (UNICEF, 2009).

Likewise, Mongolia, in its attempt to ensure that schools are child-friendly, integrated CFS training programme into the curriculum of the national teacher training colleges and in-service teacher training and distant learning programs (UNICEF, 2008). Integrating CFS training program into teacher education curriculum is a means to ensuring that the best practices and principles of CFS are spread fast to all schools.

Similarly, Tanzania integrated CFS approach into minimum standards in an attempt to deal with the challenges of failure to complete primary school and decline in achievement rate in girls (UNICEF, 2009). The Ministry of Education led in the development and institutionalization of national minimum standards for primary schools based on CFS principles. The development resulted in adoption of CFS principles in the education standards and revision of inspection handbook to suit CFS principles. These developments have seen a decline in school drop outs and girls' achievement has improved. Looking at the success stories, it is worth noting that the involvement of the government through Educational ministries, the integration of standards and conceptualization of CFS approach into planning made the implementation accepted by the implementers on the ground.

In the same context, Malawi adopted the CFS concept using intersectoral partnership. The model stresses on the importance of intersectoral partnership. UNICEF and World Food program work in partnership with the government, non-governmental organizations and civil society organizations to provide quality primary education (UNICEF 2010). This partnership encompasses teacher training on CFS methods, school feeding and take-home packages for girls and orphans (UNICEF, 2009).

In order to achieve quality education in primary, Malawi included teacher training for both pre-service and in-service teachers on CFS methods. To provide standard guidance in the training of teachers, the government, with funding from UNICEF instructed MIE to develop a CFS handbook, training manual and Reference Toolkit (UNICEF, 2007). There is enough evidence that most of teacher educators were trained how to use the training manuals to

equip student teachers with CFS knowledge and skills (Kaambankadzanja, et al, 2010; MIE, 2012). However, there is very limited information on experiences of teacher educators in CFS implementation in TTCs, as such; there are a number of windows of opportunity for conducting other studies.

2.4 Training

Worldwide, before one becomes a professional teacher, s/he undergoes training to equip him/her with the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes. Oladosu (2009) defines training as intentional instructional experiences on individuals in order to acquire a particular practical skill that will normally be applied soon after.

Many studies have been conducted on different kinds of training for both pre-service and in-service teachers. As things keep on changing in an effort to make education better, a number of innovations also keep on emerging. As a result, teacher educators have a vital role to play in ensuring that student teachers have adequate knowledge and skills in accordance to innovations.

Kazan and ELDaou (2016) conducted a study where they were exploring relationship the perceived teachers' self-efficacy related to ICT usefulness and attitudes after training and students science education performance results. The study used mixed methods. The findings revealed that teachers' self-efficacy level of technology use had significant effects on the students' performance and interaction of students with special needs. Despite the study focusing on ICT, but it shows that knowledge and beliefs can influence teachers' intent to apply or use new innovation such as CFS concept.

In 2005, Jung conducted a study aimed at analyzing and organizing different ICT approaches that were in use in teacher training into four-cell matrix. The study employed desk analyses of various ICT teacher training cases and published approaches in selected articles and websites accompanied by face-to-face interviews with experts for verification. The study showed that any innovation is susceptible to challenges. Similarly, CFS concept mainstreaming at TTC level as an innovation cannot be spared in facing challenges.

Another study was conducted by Nzau and Ondimu (2011). The study was purposed to examine the teaching of AIDS education. The main focus was on implementation of AIDS curriculum. The investigation was done on trainers and trainees on their attitudes towards AIDS subject. The sample included students, teacher educators and a principal from where data was collected through questionnaire. The results showed that the respondents had positive attitudes towards AIDS education. However, the findings indicated that some teacher educators were having challenges in integration and infusion of AIDS content in already existing curriculum. The results from this study concur with what Jung (2005) found that any innovation faces a variety of challenges.

2.5 Theoretical Framework: System Theory

The theoretical framework for this study was basically grounded in Von Bertalanffy's system theory. Input, process and output are the major components of system theory (Parson, 1965; Luhmann, 1995; Friedman and Neuman, 2005). According to Bertalanffy (1956; as cited by Mele, Pels and Polese, 2010), elements in a system interact and relate to each other. System theory is defined as an interdisciplinary theory about every system in nature, in society and in many scientific domains as well as a framework with which we can investigate phenomena from a holistic approach (Capra 1997 as cited by Mel, et al. 2010).

This definition entails that system theory fits in multiple disciplines since it emphasizes on interrelationship of elements. Likewise, Von Bertalanffy (1956) asserts that when elements in the system interact with one another, there is high performance of a whole. This leads to an assumption that ‘the whole is great than the sum of its parts’ (Dee Ann, 1982, p. 18). Friedman and Neuman (2005) state that, the elements interact and relate to each other in order to achieve a common goal. However, it should also be noted that since the elements are interconnected, a change in one of the elements can affect all other elements. For example, in teacher training system, if there is inadequacy of teacher educators (Input) this can affect teaching and learning because of increased workload (process) as a result, quality education will be compromised because teachers that will be produced will be of undesirable quality (output), hence failure to deliver effectively to the learners in the society (environment).

Dee Ann, (1982) assert that when a problem rises, it requires investigation of the whole situation rather than one or two aspects. This signifies that one person cannot hold responsibility; rather a systems analysis would be conducted to search how the mistake occurred within a system and look for opportunities to make corrections in the processes used. Mele, et al., (2010), pointed out that each system is a unit of wholeness with a distinct property or structural limitation that demarcates it from other systems. Von Bertalanffy termed the system’s boundary. The boundary contributes to the uniqueness of system whereby it gives its definition. Some boundaries are clearly distinct and are closed system; others may be porous and are open system (Friedman and Neuman, 2005; Dee Ann, G.,

1982). In their assertion, Mele, et al (2010) further explained that a system has a boundary around that differentiate internal elements from external elements.

However, viability of a system depends on strong goal-direction, feedback, and its ability to adapt to changing circumstances. Feedback to a system plays a vital role in informing whether the system is achieving its goals or not. For example; in a n education system like teacher Training, feedback from supervision or assessments provide the teacher educators, students and the college as a whole on the students performance on the acquired knowledge and skills.

Although Systems theory is largely applied in multidiscipline, Kast and Rosenzweig (1972) argued that there was a mist on relationships between subsystems within organizations and in studying the environmental interfaces. However, they admitted that having a system paradigm would require advanced investigations due to its major practical problems. They further explain their dilemma,

One of the major problems is that the practical need to deal with comprehensive systems of relationships is overrunning our ability to fully understand and predict these relationships. We vitally need the systems paradigm but we are not sufficiently sophisticated to use it appropriately. This is the dilemma. Do our current failures to fully utilize the systems paradigm suggest that we reject it and return to the older, more traditional, and time-tested paradigms? Or do we work with systems theory to make it more precise, to understand the relationships among sub- systems, and to gather the informational

inputs which are necessary to make the systems approach really work?

We think the latter course offers the best opportunity (Rapoport, 1968 as cited by Kast et al, 1972 p. 130).

They, however, concluded; “Thus, we prefer to accept current limitations of systems theory, while working to reduce them and to develop more complete and sophisticated approaches for its application” (p.131). Mel, et al (2010) suggest the use of systems theory in integrative disciplines such as service science which comprises of engineering, technology, management and other social sciences integration is found in service science. In addition, (Meyer, 1983 as cited by Friedman and Allen, 2005, p. 3) assert that “systems theory does not specify particular theoretical frameworks for understanding problems, and it does not direct the social worker to specific intervention strategies. Rather, it serves as an organizing conceptual framework or meta-theory for understanding”. Even though system theory has some complexity when used in other disciplines however, the provision of common elements gives a better framework to all those who want to use it.

For this reason, the researcher believes that mainstreaming of an initiative into an existing curriculum demands for coordination of different units. In this regard, teacher training is a system within a larger education system. According to UNICEF (2009), mainstreaming CFS infuses key elements of the model into aspects of the education system, including the processes and boundaries that shape the system.

Therefore, mainstreaming of the CFS initiative could be looked at as a system and therefore the ‘systems approach’ is relevant. Inputs - things that go into a system that affect it;

processes – the means of achieving desired outputs and their effects to the system, and outputs- the products of the effects and how they affect the individuals in the external environment such as learners, and society as a whole. Laszlo et al (1997) indicate that in the system approach, ‘the whole is greater than the sum of its parts’ (p.21). For the entire system to work effectively, each component is important and must function effectively. In this case, teacher training is the ‘whole system’ and has elements such as teacher educators, student teachers, workshops/orientation (inputs); resources, curricular materials, content, assessment and methods/strategies (processes); and knowledge, skills and values transferred and imparted to student teachers (outputs), refer to Figure 1. The students’ performance in the implementation of CFS principles in the primary schools in promotion of quality inclusive education becomes an outcome of the training system. However, all these units are connected to the ‘system’ which is affected by its external environment (Figure 1).

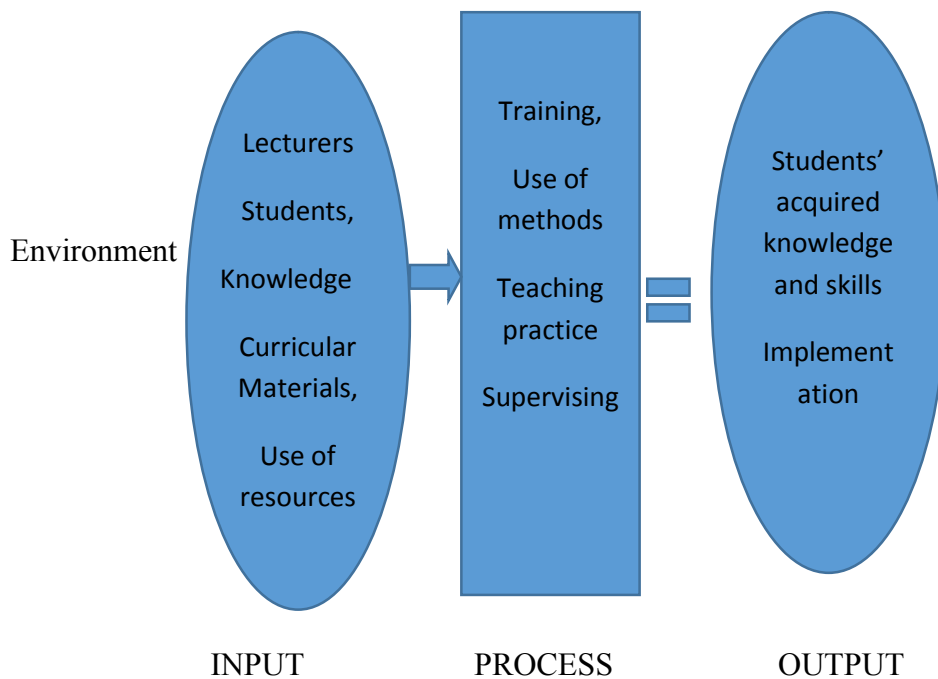


Figure 1: Systems Theory Framework

2: 6 Conclusion

Mainstreaming of Child-Friendly Schools concept in Malawi public primary education is an inevitable approach for the achievement of quality and inclusive education. Literature shows that in contexts different from Malawi where CFS is effectively implemented, successful results have been achieved. However, locally, there are limited studies on the implementation and experiences of the implementers. The available studies by UNICEF, MIE and few individuals were directly supported by mother initiator-UNICEF and indicate a gloomy picture in terms of achieving intended results. Therefore, there is need for more and independent researchers to study the CFS concept and contribute to a body of existing knowledge, especially from contexts such as Malawi which has been under researched. The Systems approach has been widely used to understand system components, processes and outputs and in this study it is quite relevant and has been used to inform the study of the CFS initiative.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3:1 Introduction

The intent of this study was to investigate the experiences and practices of teacher educators in the implementation of CFS concept in TTCs. Two interviews and focus group discussion were conducted in order to come up with data for thematic analysis which would report the realities of participants' experiences and meanings. The nature of the study is qualitative in which narrative descriptions were used to come up with an understanding of the experiences and practices of teacher educators had in implementing CFS concept. This chapter, therefore, presents the research paradigm (3.2) with a brief description and its rationale in this study. Details about the research design have been presented in (3.3); study setting in (3.4); and study population in (3.5). In addition, details about population sample in (3.6); sampling techniques in (3.7); detailed procedures for collecting data and instruments in (3.8); and data analysis (3.9); ethical considerations (3.10); timeline (3.11); brief budget (3.12).

3:2 Research Paradigm and approach

A paradigm is defined as an ideal or model (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). Viewing the same term using scientific lenses, Schutt (2006) defines scientific paradigm as “a set of beliefs that guide scientific work in an area, including unquestioned presuppositions, accepted theories, and exemplary research findings” (p. 39).

The researcher believed that investigating the experiences of teacher educators in the mainstreaming of CFS would require constructivist paradigm which reflects interpretivist philosophy. Schutt (2006) explains that interpretivist philosophy emphasizes the

significance of exploring and representing the ways in which different stakeholders in social setting construct their beliefs. In short, it is a belief that reality is socially constructed and it is from people where meaning is obtained (Schutt, 2006). Therefore, this paradigm was thought to be most suitable because the researcher gradually developed a shared perspective on participants' experiences in the implementation of CFS. Additionally, the unstructured interviews gave chance to the participants to bring out multiple realities that would be expected to be experienced. Rubin and Rubin in Schutt (2006) assert that different individuals understand things or events differently, these are their realities hence, the need for constructivist researchers to focus on.

3:3 Research Approach and Design

A qualitative approach was followed in this study. Dawson defines qualitative research as “the study of things in their natural setting, attempting to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meaning people bring to them” (2002 p.3). However, in qualitative approach, there are many designs that exist (Tesch, 1990; Wolcott, 2009; and Creswell, 2013 in Creswell, 2014). The common five traditions to qualitative inquiry that were discussed by Marshall and Rossman (2011) include narrative, phenomenology, ethnography, case study and grounded theory. This study used the case study research design. Case study, is defined by Creswell (2014) as “qualitative design in which the researcher explores in depth a program, event, activity, or one more individuals”, (p. 241). The intent of this qualitative case study was to “create a thick description of the setting studied” (Schutt, 2006, p.293). This design was appropriate for this particular study because it seeks to investigate experiences of participants who are involved in the implementation of a program (CFS). A case study has different methods that are used to collect data such as

interviews and focus groups methods (Dawson, 2002). For this study, the researcher used both interviews and focus group discussion in order to develop in-depth analysis of CFS implementation and for triangulation.

3:4 Study Setting

This study was carried out at a Teacher Training College which is located in the southern region of Malawi. The study took place while classes were in session. The researcher ensured that the study had no interference with the normal school activities or if any but there were minimal. The researcher was also aware that during focus group discussion, a number of teacher educators would be involved, as such; the researcher made both interviews and focus group discussion take place when teacher educators were not very busy with classroom teaching. Data for this study was collected in four weeks in the month of April, 2017. Schutt (2006) contends that qualitative study can be carried out for a little long time.

3: 5 Study Population

The target population of the study was teacher educators at a Teacher Training College in South West Education Division. They were chosen because of their direct participation in training of student teachers in CFS concept. In addition, the targeted group was believed to have rich and lived experiences on the case. Therefore, the participants provided rich detailed data for the study which was the researcher's intention. In addition, no generalization of the findings to other TTCs would be required as Thomas (2013) asserts that findings from a case study cannot be generalized or be a representative of another setting. The findings only apply to the studied TTC. However, the researcher did all it takes

in order to obtain detailed information needed for rich descriptions to enable the reader see how the context resembles his/her own situation.

3:6 Sample and Sample Size

There are fifty seven teacher educators at the TTC. A total of six participants were purposively chosen because they were the main players in implementation process through training of student teachers. Although all TTCs in Malawi were implementing CFS initiative, the researcher decided to study a case of one TTC only in the southern region for its convenient location. Schutt (2006), also explains clearly that in a case study, a researcher is at liberty to focus on one case or more cases.

3:7 Sampling Techniques

The researcher used purposive sampling technique. According to Schutt (2006); and Creswell (2014), purposive sampling targets individuals who are knowledgeable of the issue on the ground. This is in line with the type of the participants whom the researcher engaged. The researcher decided to stick to this non-probability sampling because there was need to interact with teacher educators who were initially trained in CFS concept when it was introduced in TTCs. These participants included one member from the five departments and CFS committee that existed at the college and one member who happened to be in administration but was also a teacher educator. From the total sample (six) half were males and the other half females. In this case, the sample had a 50 % gender representation.

3:8 Data Collection Methods

There are several techniques of collecting data both in qualitative and quantitative. Some of the qualitative techniques include: intensive (depth) interviewing, and focus groups (Schutt,

2006). Schutt points out that focus group discussion and intensive interviewing are mostly used in the same project. Focus group discussion when combined with interview forms a unique approach of collecting data. In particular, the researcher mainly used focus group discussion in collecting information about the experiences of teacher educators in the implementation of CFS. However, this was complemented by interviews. Blaxter, et.al (2006) noted that using multi-method helps a researcher to obtain a more detailed perspective of some of the issues in study. Focus group, also known as discussion group (Dawson, 2002) complemented by interviews. A focus group, according to Schutt (2006) involves unstructured group interviews in which the focus group leader actively encourages discussion among participants on the topics of interest. In the case of this study, the researcher involved a focus group of teacher educators who shed more light on their experiences on CFS concept.

Apart from focus group discussion, semi-structured interview was used. Blaxter, et.al (2006) explains that interview method involves questioning or discussing issues with participants. They recommend the method as very useful for data collection due to its accessibility as compared to observation or questionnaires. They further state that during interview process, the researcher is able to “uncover, discover or generate the rules by which they are playing the game” (p.72).

In this study, the researcher used semi-structured interview which contains both structured and unstructured questions. The researcher chose this technique because semi-structured interview allows flexibility and it also involves open-ended questions and follow-up probes (Schutt, 2006). In addition, the researcher sought in-depth information on the participants’ experiences with the CFS initiative, this method suited the study.

3:9 Data Collection Instruments

The study used an interview guide and focus group guide. These guides contained some of the questions that the researcher used. In addition, there were forms for interviews and focus group discussion which were completed soon after interacting with the participants. Blaxter et.al (2006) commend that the forms help the researcher to be reminded of the details about the content, time, place and emergings. The interview guides and focus group discussion guide were piloted using different participants from the same TTC. According to Schutt (2006), piloting enables the researcher to know whether the instruments are user friendly or not. In the case of this study, indeed the piloting served that purpose. It happened that after piloting, some questions produced unclear responses. Therefore, corrections were made on such questions. Apart from taking notes, during both interviews and focus group the researcher audio recorded the discussions since it was difficult to take detailed notes.

3: 10 Data Analysis

Data analysis involves taking the collected data and interprets it in a meaningful way (Sharp, 2012). Researchers use several methods to analyze data. However, the methods that researchers use always depend on several factors. For qualitative research, the choice of methods is influenced by the researcher's personal and methodological preference, educational background and the methodological standpoint of research course teacher (Dawson, 2002). For this study, the researcher preferred thematic analysis, whereby analysis of data followed the framework in Figure 3.

The data analysis process commenced as soon as raw data was being collected. The researcher then organized the data. The data organization involved transcribing the recorded data by listening and typing on the computer using Word processor (also known as verbatim

transcript). Next, the researcher read through the transcribed data and identified themes. The themes were coded using letters. The themes were further categorized by gradually clustering according to their commonalities (Blaxter, et.al 2006). The researcher planned, identified and clustered common emerging themes pertaining to teacher educators' experiences in relation to CFS. However, some of the generated themes resembled some of the characteristics of CFS. After clustering, the data would be interpreted by identifying the meanings in the respondents (Creswell, 2014). Taking into consideration that data analysis task cannot be completed at one goal, therefore, iterative procedure was followed to ensure that all important issues were well captured.

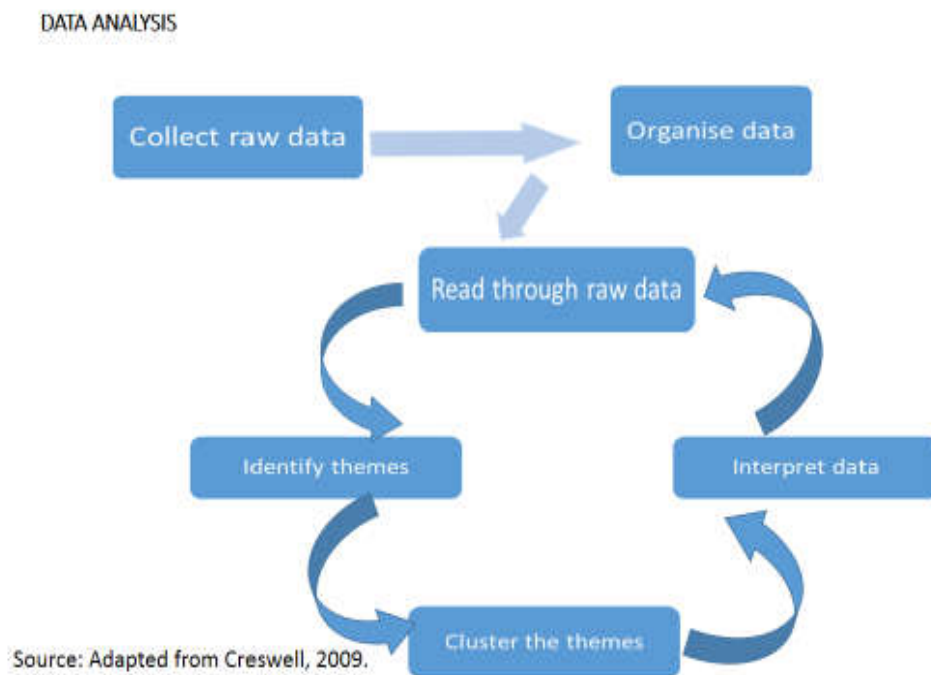


Figure 3: Data analysis framework

The researcher acknowledged that in qualitative research, participants could be influenced by participating in the research activity. However, the researcher's preferences and experience were taken on board to the project. As Hatch (2002) points out that "the knower and the known are taken to be inseparable" (p.10). Dawson (2002) also asserts that analyzing data in a qualitative research is a subjective process, as two researchers can analyze a same transcript but ending up with different results.

3:11 Trustworthiness

The researcher ensured that the issue of trustworthiness was considered. The following was done: The researcher triangulated the data collected during focus group with data from interview of the teacher educators (Silverman, 2005). The data collection instruments were also piloted before the actual use (Schutt, 2006). Transcriptions were transcribed 'verbatim' as Creswell (2014) affirms that transcribing of recorded data is done word for word. The researcher also considered member check thus, the presentation of data analysis to the participants for their confirmation or correction (Lincoln & Guba, 1985 as cited in Lacey & Luff, 2007). Finally, peer debriefing was done. This allowed the researcher's supervisor and another qualitative research expert to explore biases and make clarification on the meanings and the basis for interpretations (Lacey & Luff, 2007).

3:12 Ethical Considerations

The researcher acknowledged the ethics associated with research such as confidentiality, access and consent (Cohen, et al., 2007). For this reason, participants for both interview and focus group were granted freedom whether to participate or not in the activity. All activities were voluntary to the participants.

Hatch (2002) emphasizes on the ethical consideration that must be seriously taken by the researcher when working with teachers. He points out that teachers mostly see themselves as the people who have no right to say no when approached by an educational researcher considering that the researcher have letters of approval from the educational authorities. In avoidance to this situation, the researcher clearly disclosed her intention in the research and explained that participants were free to decline if they were unwilling to participate. Hatch (2002) strongly warns that it is unfair to use teachers' vulnerability because of consent from their authority. Fortunately, the researcher had an advantage that the participants she interacted were workmates of her level of profession. Despite being professional colleagues, participants were informed of their voluntary status as well. In addition, the participants were informed that the results of the study were purely for academic purposes.

The other important issue the researcher considered was the confidentiality. The researcher assured the participants that all transcripts and notes were kept safely at the researcher's home. In addition, participants' names were concealed in any part of the research instead codes were used (Miles & Huberman, 2014).

The researcher also got a letter of introduction from Mzuzu University certifying the research was for academic purposes only and granted permission to collect the data. Then the college principal, who is a gatekeeper for the TTC, also was contacted in-person and presented with the letter from the University. Burton, Brundrett, and Jones, (2008) highlight the information a researcher should give when seeking permission from the gatekeepers which include; project background, purpose of the study, participants to be involved and phases of the study. After the principal informed consent, then the researcher sought

individual participant's written consent. The letter contained information about the research and a consent form for the researcher to keep.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents findings of the study. These findings emerged through data generated from discussions with six teacher educators who were involved in a focus group discussion and two individual follow-up interviews about experiences of implementing Child-Friendly Schools at their college. The approach to data collection was informed by Von Bertalanffy, systems theory. This theory tried to reveal the teacher educators' experiences (Reed-Danahay, 2005 in Torombe, 2013). Von Bertalanffy views a system as having three elements; the input, process and output. First, input can be conceptualised as teacher educators, students, curricular materials, teaching and learning resources and teacher educators' skills and knowledge of CFS. Secondly, process can be conceptualized as training, teaching and learning methods and teaching practice. The third concept is output which can be conceptualised as students' acquired knowledge and skills and implementation of CFS in primary schools. Five major categories and their themes emerged through a qualitative analysis of teacher educators' comments. The first category that emerged was teachers' awareness of the concept of CFS. This category also included teacher educators' general knowledge and understanding about CFS characteristics. The second category emerged as teacher educators' practices in training and preparing student teachers to create CFS when they go into teaching practice schools. The third category that emerged was teacher educators' limitations on effective implementation of the CFS. The fourth category emerged covered approaches to overcome the challenges. Lastly, the fifth category that emerged was based on the way forward for preparing student teachers' to ably create CFS after graduating.

The five categories and their themes are presented using brief excerpts narrated by the informants. The informants' excerpts are presented in symbolic form. Each informant's excerpt has an identity to differentiate it from the rest. This will assist in easy follow-up. The excerpts from focus group discussion have been marked with a letter (F), while excerpts from interviews have been marked with letter (R). Therefore, the excerpts have been assigned the informant's code plus the excerpts code such as; (P2-F) for a focus group discussion excerpt of Participant 2 and (P2-R) for an interview excerpt of Participant 2.

4.2. Teacher Educators' Conceptualization of CFS

When informants were asked to explain their general understanding of the concept of child friendly schools, they expressed their opinions in various ways. Generally, they focused much on the principles of CFS. The themes that emerged were closely related to the characteristics of CFS. The following themes represent their conceptualization of CFS: Safety and conducive environment, inclusiveness, academically effective school, and gender.

4.2.1 Conducive Environment

According to P1-F's response on her understanding of CFS, he explained: "*it is a process of creating a conducive environment where learning and teaching can take place.*" This response indicated that creation of child friendly schools is not an overnight task. It requires adequate planning time in order to realize the intended outcomes. In other words, for a process to take place, it requires input in order to have the outcome (CFS). The process of making it safe and conducive is also gradual. Similarly, P2-F repeatedly referred a child friendly school as school with safe environment which is "*not threatening to learners*". She added that a school is safe and conducive when it "*has good sanitary conditions*". It is also a

place “*Where learners have the freedom to move around without any fear*. She concluded by saying, “*This is generally a safe school*”. In addition, P4-F’described CFS as having an environment that enables learners to learn. “*This is a school where both teachers and learners are friendly. There should be mutual respect*”.

In a UNICEF Child Friendly School baseline survey report, by Jere, Kadzamira and Nampota (2012) defined a safe, protective and healthy school as “protective of children’s emotional, psychological, physical and moral well-being. It creates safe spaces and healthy environment for girls and boys to effectively learn” and “includes school based health and nutrition programmes, life skills and safe gender-sensitive sanitation facilities” (p. 2).

4.2.2 Accommodative School

According to the CFS Handbook for Malawi (2010), a right-based and inclusive school is described as a school that promotes and helps to monitor the rights and well-being of all children, regardless of their physical, intellectual, emotional status, linguistic and social economic background. King (2003 in Chitiyo, 2014, p. 11) explained that “inclusive education means that all students within a school regardless of their strengths or weaknesses, or disabilities in any area become part of the school community”. In this perspective, learners with impairments have an opportunity to go to same school with their neighbours and friends where they develop mentally, physically, morally and emotionally. One participant expressed her understanding of CFS in terms of accommodation of all children to school.

P3-F “*CFS accommodates the needs of all learners the way they are, both academically and personally*”.

This participant based her understanding about CFS on the accommodation of the two aspects of child development which is mental (academic). All children whether they are fast or slow learners are accepted to learn. Constructivists believe that all children can learn provided teachers use their previous knowledge in learning a new concept as far as the approach is learner-centred (MOEST, 2008; Fosnot, 2005).

Additionally, P2-F referred CFS to “... *a school with infrastructure that would accommodate learners with diverse needs*”. In adding to accommodation of child development aspects, P2-F had brought in an element of physical condition of infrastructure by saying, “*Infrastructure must be user friendly*”. This entails that all learners including those with physical disabilities must have access the facilities of the school without any barriers. For example, learners on wheelchair must be able to move around the school premises without difficulties. Apart from looking at physical and mental aspects, P4-F looked at CFS on moral perception. He added that in a CFS respect among and between teachers and learners is paramount. P4-F commented, “*CFS is all inclusive school where both learners and teachers are respected*”. He expressed his concern by saying, “... *we cannot look at learners only*”. According to his observation, which is also true in most schools (as a Malawian culture), where learners (children) highly respect their teachers. However, P4-F proceeded with a differing statement, “*sometimes teachers can be friendly [respectful] but having learners who are unfriendly [disrespectful]*”. Therefore, “*There should be mutual respect*”. “The key assumptions about success in child-friendly schools are fairly cautious and based on widely accepted norms about human behaviour” (UNICEF, 2012.p 23). Although it is embedded in our culture that children must respect elders

including teachers, the same applies to teachers. As role models, learners must learn how to respect others from them. Learners learn by imitation (Olson & Hergenbahn, 2009).

The participants' ideas confirm what UNESCO (2009, p. 24) advocates, "An inclusive education system can only be created if ordinary schools become more inclusive – in other words, if they become better at educating all children in their communities" Inclusion is therefore, built on the principle that all students should be valued for their exceptional abilities and included as important members of the school community. Friend and Bursuck (2009 in Chitiyo, 2014) argued that inclusion is defined by the situation. In addition, (UNESCO, 2005. p. 3) views inclusion as a system whereby its input and practical processes involved will positively affect the learners and school stakeholders:

Practical changes that we can make so that all children, including those with diverse backgrounds and abilities, can succeed in our classrooms and schools. These changes will not merely benefit the children we often single out as children with special needs, but all children and their parents, all teachers and school administrators, and everyone from the community who works with the school.

4.2.3 Relevant Teaching Approaches

Academically effective school, as sub-theme under conceptualisation of CFS emerged during both focus group discussion and interviews. This mainly came about in responding to a question about teaching and learning. In her response P3-F hastily said,

“Teacher should teach and create activities for learners to understand better the concepts that are taught based on the previous experiences”.

In a CFS, teachers have a greater role to play in the delivery of lessons as to make the school academically effective. Activities that are given to learners should be interesting and motivating; appropriate for age level and enhance learning of the concept being taught (MIE, 2008). Apart from activities, effective teaching also demands use of appropriate teaching and learning resources. However, P2-F further explained on the use of appropriate resources that are not threatening to learners. The participant added,

“They [teachers] should use resources, right resources anyway, not bringing a live snake in the classroom”.

The mention of ‘not bringing a live snake in the classroom’ demonstrated that, far as resources have to be used during teaching and learning process, teachers must consider several factors, such as; the type of resources to be used, the impact the resource would have to the learner as P3-F noted, *“The resources should be developmentally appropriate”*, when to be used, number of resources, size of the class (Gwayi, 2009 in Chitiyo, 2014). Taking these into considerations will promote the effectiveness of teaching and learning. Another element of teaching and learning is methodology. P3-F observed contribution that learner-centred methods make to academically effective school by commenting, *“It is a school where teachers use learner-centred methods”*. According to (MIE, 2008), learner-centred methods have a several advantages on learners. The learners remain active and participative throughout the lesson; They motivate the learners; The methods bring about joy for learning. In addition, CFS promotes participation of children in classroom activities (UNICEF, 2011)

4.2.4 Gender

Three informants expressed their understanding of a CFS in terms of gender responsiveness. P3-F based the understanding on two areas: treatment and opportunities. The participant believed that a CFS “*must be gender responsive and ... where learners are treated equally, both boys and girls and given equal chances to participate*”. When, P6-F said that a CFS is “*a school that is responsive*”, the researcher wanted to know whether the response was corresponding to gender or something else. P6-F said, “*I mean gender responsive*”. On the issue of gender, participants clearly showed their understanding since it is pertinent concern in education. CFS advocates for acceptance of pregnant girls in schools. This is one way of promoting with gender parity in education (UNICEF, 2009; Black-Howkins, 2007).

On the other hand, another participant commented on gender responsiveness but it had a different meaning. P1-F said “*A school where stakeholders ... have interest ... in the education of the children*”. He linked the school’s responsiveness to the role and responsibility of the community and other stakeholders in the promotion of education of the children (UNICEF, 2009) other than gender. This participant showed partial understanding on CFS principle for School and Community linkages and partnership. Instead, he responded this under ‘gender’.

Generally, basing on teacher educators’ conceptualization of CFS, it indicates that the majority has basic knowledge of CFS hence explaining confidently. This may be a result of several trainings that they were involved in and their exposure to CFS materials. As two participants alluded to that they were trained more than once (P2-R and P4-R). However, since the focusing was on knowledge/information of teacher educators, it is then informing the input component of the system theory. This is because inputs of the system acquire its

energy from the environment (Cole, 2004). Apart from the in-house trainings, some of the trainings for teacher educators were done by outsiders. Participants said they were trained by officials from, for example, Ministry of Education, Malawi Institute of Education and Volunteer Service Oversees (VSO).

4.3 Training

Training student teachers the concept of CFS comprises of several themes such as motivation for training; modes of training and resources for training. These themes emerged as the participants were attempting to respond to the following question: *How do teacher educators train student teachers the concept of CFS?*

4.3.1 Motivation for Training

There is a motive behind everything that people do. Similarly, when teacher educators are training student teachers the CFS concept and practices, it is obvious that they want to achieve a goal whether short or long term. The description below indicates their expectations on the students.

P3-F) *“we believe student teachers will implement these characteristics of child friendly schools in the schools so that the schools should be conducive for a child”.*

The participant’s response confirms the meaning of the term ‘training’ which refers to “instructional experiences that are intentional on individuals’ acquisition of a particular skill that will normally be applied almost immediately” (Oladosu, 2009, p. 24). Student teachers are expected to support the creation of Child-Friendly Schools soon after they are deployed to primary schools. Not only that, they are also expected to start practicing some of the skills while at college, during internal and external teaching practice. These may include

‘displaying moral values and embracing learners’ diversity’ as stipulated Teacher education’s philosophy in reviewed IPTE curriculum (MOEST, 2017). However, Lewin and Stuart (2011) argue that implementation of an innovation is possible only if the student teachers are given necessary support. CFS is an innovation to improve quality of education in primary schools, as such, teacher educators have a critical role to play in ensuring that student teachers are given opportunities during the course of training to practice the skills and supporting them adequately.

Another participant expressed the motive behind CFS training as an issue to do with mindset change.

P2-F. *We are training students psychologically so that as teachers, they create conducive learning environment so that the learner can have that willingness to go to school and learn.*

Supporting the issue of mindset change, another participant spoke at length explaining why students were supposed to change.

P5-F) *Additionally... these student teachers are coming from different backgrounds. We should know that it’s important to train them simply because they might have been trained in an environment that was not child-friendly. So it’s a concept that they should take on board. As they are going out as teachers, they should know that we are living in changed times. For a learner to learn properly, there is a need for a conducive environment’.*

UNICEF (2009) explained its concern with the environment where most students come from and asserts that it is unfortunate many children are brought up in an environment which is not always conducive. Other environments are pathetic and uncaring that usually affect children's emotional, social and physical health. In general, their whole well being is negatively affected, as a result, the student teachers, who were brought up in such conditions, may easily transfer their harsh upbringing experiences to the classroom; hence, there is need for mindset change. Lewin and Stuart (2003) in their report titled '*Researching Teacher Education: New perspectives on practice, performance and policy*' refer training institutions to 'powerhouses of change'. They add, "if educational change is to take place, those who prepare the next generation of teachers must play a key role in innovation" (Lewin et.al. 2003, 110). For realization of this innovation, it is the responsibility of teacher educators to fully support their student teachers.

4.3.2 Modes of Training

The informants described several ways how teacher educators train student teachers the concept of CFS. The following ways emerged: modelling, cascade model (CFS club) and integrating the concept in the curriculum.

4.3.2.1 Modeling/Mirroring

In responding to the question: How do you train student teachers on CFS? Participants explicitly said;

P1-F *we train them [student teachers] through mirroring.*

This implies that student teachers were supposed to observe what teacher educators were doing so that they practice the same when they graduate. Mirroring is a way of showing someone how to do something whether explicitly or implicitly. This is also called

observational learning (Olson & Helgenhahn, 2009). Lunenberg, Korthagen, and Swenen (2007) define modelling as “the practice of intentionally displaying certain behaviours with the aim of promoting student teachers’ professional learning” (p.581). The main changes that are expected of the student teachers are knowledge, beliefs and practice. Bandura in Olson et. al (2009) believes that modelling is effective if the models are perceived to have respect, competence and power. Therefore, teachers can be very influential models because they can easily model skills, moral conduct and creativity in their students. Although, modelling strategy seems workable in some situations, it has some weaknesses. According to Lunenberg et al (2007), modelling does not promote constructivism in student teachers’ approaches to teaching and learning. In this case, student teachers traditionally emulate what the teachers want them to, hence there is no flexibility. Another area is that, during application, students become selective. It is impossible for them to apply everything they observed. However, Oslo et al (2009) look at the same modelling in a positive way. They say that modelling stimulate creativity. As Lewin et.al (2003) assert, “teaching is interactive problem-solving requiring a thoughtful and reflective approach to one’s own practice. This can be achieved through exposing students to a number of situations where they can acquire a combination of traits or skills. Therefore, promotion of modelling demands teacher educators to have a responsibility of ‘practicing what they preach’ as Dorji (2010, p. 30) commented:

“The teacher training institutes ... play a crucial role in promoting and strengthening the concept of CFS based on the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)”.

4.3.2.2 Cascade Model of Training

Participants pointed out that another way students were trained was using CFS club. P6-R openly expressed her little knowledge on how student teachers were trained through CFS club. However, she said:

P6-R ... I don't know much. But what I know so far is these members are front liners of Child Friendly Schools. They are also models to other student teachers.

Her statement revealed to the researcher that modelling is not done by teacher educators only. Members of the club are also expected to transfer the same to other students in the system.

In validating her knowledge on how CFS club operated, P2-R expounded that all student teachers are oriented on the concept upon arrival at college. Then, they are given chance to register their names to join the club. Since it is a club, only three of four individuals per class get registered. And those registered individuals form a club. She then added;

P2-R It is from this club where they discuss the child friendly school concept in details.

Concurring with P6-R, on the members of the club being 'role models' and 'front liners', P2-R explained that when the club members had been taught,

P6-R "they are supposed teach to their friends about these concepts in the classroom".

According to what the participants narrated about how the student teacher are trained through CFS club, this kind of approach is called Cascade model (Irvine & Harvey, 2010). According to Irvine and Harvey (2010), they look at this training model as so popular due to the fact that it reaches larger numbers in an inexpensive manner. In the case of reaching

student teachers with CFS message, this training model fits. However, Irvine et al (2010) argued that the model works better is a situation where a specific skill is being focused rather than a complex concept. CFS concept is complex because of its holistic approach.

In this cascade model, there are categories of people. The first category comprises of master trainers. Their role is train a small group of people of at least the same educational level. The second category comprises of trainer of trainers (TOTs). The third category is a large group of implementers. These implementers are taught by trainer of trainers. For examples, in the training of CFS concept, the master trainers are the VSO, Ministry of Education and MIE officials. These people trained a group of people who are trainer of trainers. The teacher educators then train all teacher educators. Similarly, student CFS club: Selected teacher educators mainly in CFS committee automatically become master trainers who are responsible for the training of members of the club. Later, the members of the club train their fellow students according to classrooms so that when they go to primary school they should join efforts with experienced teachers in promoting quality inclusive education.

4.3.2.3 Integration

Apart from training student teachers through CFS club and mirroring, another participant proudly explained her personal experience on training.

P6-R *I always integrate CFS into the curriculum. Actually, the concepts are already there only that they are not open”.*

The participant explained that when teaching she ensures that the pillars of CFS are integrated.

Participants gave examples of topics in some subjects in which CFS concept have been integrated. These include: The topics, Teaching Methods, Special Needs Education and

Inclusive education in Foundation studies. Both P2-R and P6-R concurred on the use of learner-centred methods such as question and answer, jig-saw and think-pair-share, as they integrate CFS elements in their daily teaching.

Integration is defined as bringing in of something from outside to adapt to pre-existing system (Jordan, Carlile & Stack, 2008). While other participants used the term integration, another participant used the term infusion. She said that CFS in different topics which are related to principles of CFS. One example this participant gave was Social and Environmental Studies in which there is a topic of Human Rights.

...in Social Studies, we have a whole topic of Human Rights. It starts from democracy and good governance as well as human rights. So it is in this topic where we pump [infuse] in the concept of CFS.

This participant added:

... again, if we go to the topic about human rights, ... one of the principles of democracy is gender equity. So, when we are talking about... gender responsive, equity and equality, what happens in this topic is ... you go further into talking about the concept gender equality; why it is in Malawi included in the constitution of Malawi. People have written about the concept of gender. And the government did also put it in the curriculum. So, we go on to say what about here at [this college]. What happens in the institutions for us to appreciate that we are gender responsive. Whether it maybe in our pedagogies and the like. So, it is here where we discuss about gender responsiveness in our methodology. There is a booklet written about

gender responsive pedagogy. As lecturers, we are supposed to use the same. At the same time, we also talk about their classroom practices. The classrooms at [this college] there are few girls than boys but the division of work is the same. Not only that we ask them to practice as both sexes in whatever such as sports. So the concept is really infused in the curriculum.

Dorji, (2009, p.30) in his article, wrote about the importance of integrating CFS into teacher education curriculum. He said, “Integrating the CFS concept into the teacher education curriculum will not just only make future teachers conscious about this concept, but will also support the nation’s developmental philosophy of Gross National Happiness”. This also applies to Malawi nation if it is to achieve quality inclusive education.

4.3.2.4 Difficulty/Uncertainty

4.2.2.4.1 Approach to Teaching

Although some participants talked about integration, some participants had different explanation. Firstly, one of them said:

P1-F the how [meaning the training] is difficult for lecturers because very little is done. So I can say we train them through mirroring.

When asked why the participant said it was difficult, he explained his uncertainty:

P1-F: Yes. The concepts are not mostly found in most learning areas; maybe in Foundation Studies. There, it is also not directly tackling issues of child friendly schools.

The statements made by the participants revealed to the researcher two different meanings.

First, it might be an indication that although teacher educators were trained on the concept,

there is negligence of some kind. Secondly, it might mean that the teacher educators do not know what exactly they should do in order to promote the CFS concept. Some might believe that the students are adults, therefore, observing and mirroring what their teacher educators do is enough for the promotion of CFS. However, it is believed that whatever teacher educators do before their own students, these students are expected emulate. According to (Lunenberg et. al., 2009 and Fosnot, 2005, p. 264), “teachers teach as they were taught”. Therefore, training of teachers is mostly considered as transferring of knowledge and skills which student teachers will apply later.

4.3.3 Resources for Training

On the resources that teacher educators used in training student teachers, one participant highlighted,

P2-R When we are training student teachers most of the times we use charts”.

She explained that the charts were used to draw things such as a child friendly school and display the pillars of CFS. She added, “... *we also use real objects*”. While P6-R included use of handouts as reference materials, resource persons, and markers. She also pointed out that sometimes, she uses CFS Active Learning Methods Training Manuals which were available in the resource centre. However, when the participant was asked if she ever used CFS student handbook when teaching or as a reference material, she expressed her lack of knowledge of the handbooks existence at the college. CFS student handbooks and manuals were designed to guide the teacher educators when facilitating CFS sessions and normal lessons (MIE, 2010).

4.3.4 Training Assessment

Assessment is one of the components that complement teaching and learning (MIE, 2008). There are several types of assessments that help a teacher to measure individual's performance. These include formal assessment and informal assessment. When participants were asked whether they assess student teachers after they have successfully learnt CFS concept, they had a different view from what was occurring on the ground.

The participants responded to this question on assessment in two ways namely: internal and external assessment. The internal assessment was referred to the assessment that was done while the student teachers were still at the college. While external assessment, in this case, referred to assessment that was done when student teachers were on teaching practice also referred to as 'student teaching'. When asked whether they had internal assessment, one participant pointed out lack of seriousness which she connected it to the issue of examination;

P2-R. I would say no. We take it for granted that after training them, they have understood. (Then added) Maybe our problem could be that... it is not examinable.

There is a common tendency among teachers whose education curriculum is examination oriented that they put much effort on subjects that are examinable. Subjects or concepts that are non-examinable are considered to be waste of time. Even though there was indication that there was no internal assessment whether formal or informal, another participant had a different explanation on her experience. She, first, reminded the researcher about her earlier explanation about the existence of CFS concepts in the curriculum. Her claim was that since

the CFS concepts were found in different examinable subjects, therefore, students were being assessed latently on the same. She said:

P6-R Yeah, as I said that because some of these concepts are embedded in already existing curriculum, so, sometimes my assessment or usual assessment which we have in one way or the other... assist this concept.

Reflecting on her explanation, it clearly indicated that there were no readily available tools that should help teacher educators measure student teachers performance on CFS while in the college. However, on a positive note, participants said that assessment was conducted when student teachers were doing their teaching practice. The participants indicated that there were positive results. As one participant explained with an example:

P2-R ...for example, last year we had a program where we went into the field to make follow up of those who were in college and were trained in CFS to find out if they are doing the same in the field. It was found out that at least a good number does the same [what they were trained about CFS]. So really there are supposed to be measures. Usually we follow them up when they go into the field but after that there is always gap.

P5-R. Another way is particularly during their second year when they are out for teaching practice, yeah! when we go there to evaluate them, and we also evaluate some of the concepts in CFS.

The researcher was interested to know how the external assessment was done. Her focus was on what the supervisors (teacher educators) especially look for during supervision. P2-R explained that they observed lessons to see if they incorporate the element of academically effective school. In addition, they thoroughly check in the student experience

journal (SEJ) if they did something to promote CFS for example putting up posters for CFS. Not only that, the participant said that they also had to examine the school surrounding to see if the infrastructure were child friendly. This was explained when the researcher posed a follow up question:

What do you look for when you are supervising the schools? Do you examine what they have done outside or what they incorporate in their teaching?

P2-R It's both. What they incorporate in their teaching for example, academically effective school. But also we look something which is outside for example infrastructure or what they have put in their Student Experience Journal (SEJ) for example if they have done something, if they have put a poster.... Still it is child friendly

The participants' comments on assessment of CFS indicate that there is lack of proper mechanisms for assessing student teachers on successfully learning of the concept at college level. While during teaching practice, teacher educators were doing recommendable work of ensuring that student teachers were indeed implementing CFS. However, it was not clear enough whether what they were observing, apart from lesson observation, were indeed the student teachers' effort or not.

4.4 Challenges to CFS Training

Informants expressed the challenges differently. The main area that participants experienced some challenges was on implementation of the curriculum in general.

4.4.1 Implicit Curriculum

Participants pointed out the issue of curriculum as one of the challenges they faced in training CFS concepts. One of them acknowledged the presence of CFS concepts in the curriculum but reported that they were secluded throughout. She observed,

P3-F *“The concepts in the curriculum ... are very isolated”*.

In asserting to the comment on the presence of CFS concepts in the curriculum, another participant added,

P1-F *“they are just embedded in some concepts of some subjects”*.

It was also observed that despite having examination-oriented type of curriculum; some teacher educators were willing to integrate the concept of CFS as much as possible in their teaching. However, they were restrained by the thought that during examinations nothing about CFS would be asked. As this participant observed:

P6-R... *we are oriented to doing something which is examinable. So if you keep on saying this is Child friendly... the students don't take it seriously. So it is a challenge. Sometimes you are tempted to keep quite. You teach the concept but not mentioning it as child friendly so that they take it seriously.*

When making a summary of why teachers were not ready to embrace CFS, Irvine et al (2010) noted that many in service teachers, when they were students and later teacher trainees, went through a rigid educational system where competition, examination and textbook were the basis of their learning. They observed that this brought about negative attitude towards CFS as its approach is different. Most teacher educators are glued to examination mentality; hence they put much of their effort in teaching subjects and

concepts which are examinable. Therefore, the issue of integrating CFS principles and methods is less important. As a result, they produce teachers who also will depend “on how well their students do in prescribed exams, rather than how well their students can work together creatively”, with an aim of promoting quality education for all learners (Irvine et al, 2010. p 23). Other researchers acknowledge the fear that teachers and teacher educators have. They assert, “if teachers do not “cover” all of the topics in the syllabus but rather engage students in deeper analysis of a few of them, students may perform poorly” (Vavrus and Bartlett, 2012, p. 641). This is one of the consequences of having centralized curriculum which is also examination oriented.

4.4.2 Fragmentation of Information

Some participants noted that student teachers were receiving different CFS information from different teacher educators. According to their observation, this was due to lack of practical knowledge on the concept. As a result, the students became confused. One of them said,

P6-R ...one of the key challenges is ... those students are given different messages by different lecturers. There are lecturers who were not taught [trained] and do not understand this concept and they teach differently. So... the same student is given different messages from different lecturers. ...this student is really confused So that's a challenge.

In addition to teacher educators feeding different information to student teachers, another participant's major concern was the indirect availability of CFS concepts in most subjects.

This again was another issue which was confusing teacher educators. They complained that they were not sure of where exactly to integrate CFS issues.

P1-F: The concepts are not mostly found in most learning areas, maybe, in Foundation Studies.

As it was the case, where CFS concepts were sparingly found in most subjects, this brings about major differences in teaching the same concept. As this participant observed:

P3-F....concepts in the curriculum are very isolated in Teacher Training Colleges curriculum.

In addition, the participants noted that CFS issues are indirectly being tackled in the curriculum. Because the concepts are hidden in the curriculum, teacher educators require creativity. However, the intensity of being creative varies from one individual to another.

4.4.3 Resource Inadequacy

Apart from the challenges above, another participant described that lack of resources such as teaching and learning materials and as being other challenges both teacher educators and student teachers face in teaching the concept.

P2-R We usually have fewer resources. ...resources like charts become a problem. At the same time ... there is always a time constraint. This is a teacher training college. The student teachers have a lot to do. Remember much of what they have to do is continuous assessment. They are supposed to work in groups and then come up [complete] assignments.... At the same time, you call

them for the club activities. So most of the times, it becomes a challenge because the group you can have today may not be that group that come next week. The numbers goes up and down. So at times, it becomes difficult but at the end of the journey, you have a group that really like the concept and you work together and they take that to their classrooms.

Another participant commented on time constraint and said:

P1-F We just need extra time on implementation out of the syllabus of the curriculum and out of the days on the timetable.

The concerns of the participants on curriculum not explicitly tackling CFS issues, inadequate resources and time constraints indeed pose a great threat to implementation of CFS at teacher Training College level. Well designed curriculum would help the teacher educators to train effectively. Availability of resources makes teaching and learning realistic (MIE, 2008). While availability of time for CFS activities would expose student teachers to a number of skills and better understanding of CFS concept. These factors are important because they support the element process of the system. Therefore, the insufficiency of resources automatically affects the whole system.

4.5 Anticipated Challenges for Student Teachers

In responding to the question on challenges that students will face in implementing CFS concepts in schools, the respondents looked at this in terms of support, culture and knowledge of the students.

4.5.1 Lack of School Support

P2-R stated that most schools do not have adequate resources that can assist students in implementing CFS concept. She also added that the funds that schools receive are not adequate to ensure that CFS activities are promoted through use of purchased resources.

The first challenge is inadequate resources in the primary schools. The students at times, go to teach, they ask the head teacher to say, 'I want charts. Some lessons will need charts.' But the school doesn't have. We also know there are funds in the schools but they are inadequate.

4.5.2 Culture

Expressing their concern on situations in most schools, participants explained the students will face challenges based on the school culture and the community knowledge of the concept.

P6-R: I think, first thing is the culture of the school. If you find that the management and maybe some teachers are trained, it will be quite easy for them. But if they are not, they will mean they will need to work extra hard. So, the first challenge is management. The second one is the community. ... The community members need to understand the concept of CFS. The teacher cannot do it alone. [He/she] has to work with parents and has to work with the committees now if they understand; it is quite easy for the students.

Another participant looked at culture in terms of influence the school has on newly qualified teachers.

P2-R. These students go to a school and find out that teachers are not doing what they learnt in college. They abandon what they learnt in college and join the band-wagon. This again is the problem in implementing the concept.

After observing that the responses participants were giving were not directly connected to the impact of their training, the researcher posed this other question: *What about those [students] who have not been well equipped here [College]?* Meaning, if the student teachers have not acquired the knowledge, skills and attitudes for CFS while at college, what challenges will they face?

One of the participants was quick to respond:

P6-R. Actually, I also wanted to say the other thing is the knowledge which students have themselves. If they have adequate knowledge about the concept, it will be quite easier for them to implement. But if they don't ... obviously, it will be a challenge.

The participant's answer clearly indicated that there is a direct linkage between the knowledge, attitudes and skills (input) that teacher educators impart to student teachers (process/throughput) and their performance in schools after graduating from college. The teacher educators know for sure that failure to do their job efficiently and effectively in promotion of CFS, means producing incompetent teachers who will also fail to implement CFS in schools (output). Asserting to this, Russell, (1999 as cited by Lunenberg et al 2007, p 589).) said, "If a genuine change is to occur in schools, then those changes may first occur in teacher education."

4.6 Possible Solutions to the Challenges in Training Student Teachers

Informants had different views on strategies to be employed in order to overcome challenges in training student teachers the concept of CFS. The main issues that came out were: inclusion of the concept in the curriculum (by curriculum developers), integration in the existing curriculum (by teacher educators) and teacher educators' practice and training.

4.6.1 Revisiting the Curriculum

One participant noted that the concept was not included the curriculum. Therefore, he suggested,

P5-F *“why not encouraging the policy makers to adopt it...”*

He based his suggestion on consideration that Malawi Institute of Education with collaboration GIZ were in the process of developing the instructional materials for a new IPTE curriculum. In agreement, another participant expressed her feelings,

P2-R *I feel that this concept could really go in the curriculum and it's really important. She also said that this inclusion should be done in the same way as other interventions such as gender issues and human rights.*

However, she was quick to point out a limitation to it. She explained that by the time interview was conducted, the Initial Primary Teacher Education curriculum was under designing and the CFS concept was not included either as a topic or sub-concept in a topic. She then expressed her worry on two issues. The first one was that a curriculum takes at least a period of ten years to be revised. This came in because the curriculum for Initial Primary Teacher Education was being revised and was at an advanced phase of development. According to Dick and Carey (2001), one of the activities during the developing phase of a curriculum, involves writing of instructional materials. As one of the

participants who were participating in developing of the materials, she noted that the curriculum itself was overloaded. Due to these issues, then, it meant that for the concept to find its way into the curriculum, it had to wait until ten years elapse.

On the other hand, another participant seemed optimistic with the existing curriculum. She explained what teacher educators should be doing;

P6-R *“lecturers must be able to integrate the concepts into the already existing curriculum. My worry is that there are many concepts out there which are in the curriculum. Integrating ..., I see that it’s very possible.”*

However, she put much emphasis on training of all lecturers on the CFS concept for successful integration.

4.6.2 Integration when Teaching

Integration is the incorporation of a new concept during instruction. Some informants explained that they were aware that the CFS concept was already in the curriculum. Unfortunately, those concepts do not come out clearly. As P5-F noted, *“It is there but is not emphasized”*. They added that it was the responsibility of individual teacher educator to identify topics in his/her subject area and relate those topics to CFS principles. One participant gave this example:

P1-F *...we have the concepts e.g. in SES we have human rights so deliberately we can talk about... a good environment, a child friendly environment which is right-based.... So it can be an extension of concept.*

P3-F also suggested that teacher educators should be creative enough to find a way on how they can integrate the concept in their subjects for example in Expressive Arts or Language.

In agreement to P3-F, P6-F said;

I agree with P3-F, but the first thing, all lecturers should be trained and learn how they can integrate the concepts in their learning areas. So that when they are teaching these specific topics, they have to relate to those pillars in CFS. Whether is in Expressive Arts, there are teaching methods so that learners can learn actively. Those pillars are already there but maybe lecturers are not aware that they are supposed to integrate.

4.6.3 Modelling

Similarly, participants suggested modelling of teacher educators as another way of preparing student teachers. Lunenberg et al (2006) in their article ‘*The teacher educator as a role model*’ came up with three main goals of modelling in teacher education. These goals included: professional development of the student teachers; transformation of education; and improvement of one’s own teaching. In order to meet these goals, teacher educators are supposed to ‘walk the talk’ in CFS practices. One participant commented,

P3-F As lecturers, we need to be exemplary. That is modelling, exemplary.

The participant was confident to say that lecturers should model whatever they were doing. He farther explained:

P4-F Tingotengera kuti pa institution yonse ikhale modelling. ... ngati ndi infrastructure rules and regulations zizikhala model of child friendly schools.

[Meaning: consider this whole institution, modelling should be portrayed.

Whether it is infrastructure, rules and regulations all should be a model of Child Friendly schools].

The researcher then asked the participants to give examples of the rules they were talking about. One participant said:

P3-F Rules governing the student teachers for example ...we talk about dining rules and rules concerning dressing.

The researcher became curious and wanted to know what the college was doing in a situation when a female student teacher was found pregnant. What rules are there? The question invited mixed reaction pertaining to the rule that is there. They explained that a female student who is pregnant during both college and teaching practice phases is supposed to withdraw and readmitted later after delivery with another cohort. Interestingly, some participants were in favour of the rule while others said it was unfair to these students who are already adults mainly during their teaching practice. One participant argued:

P1-F [But] with this, let's say, with student teachers who are in colleges, the rule is very harsh. What we could do is softening it a little bit, so that those who are strong can stay. But those who are weak can withdraw.

In softening the rule, this participant meant that when the student teacher is on teaching practice she can be accepted to continue unless her health is at risk. While another participant observed her colleague's argument as unfair. She said:

P3: Inwardly, we know that it is unfair, both to allow a student to attend school [while pregnant] and also to be withdrawn [due to pregnancy].

Some participants viewed acceptance of pregnant students in colleges, as promoting indiscipline. These participants viewed this modelling that has with negative impact.

Lunenberg et al (2007) pointed out that most teacher educators run away from modelling because they do not want to be associated with something that has a negative connotation; hence clinging to policies/rules that governed them when they were student teachers. While, those who were not in favour of the rule and called it ‘unfair practice’ viewed it in the angle that it impinges the promoting gender equality between males and females. In addition, this is one of CFS agendas of minimizing gender gap and promoting girl access to education (Black-Howkins, 2007). If the students who are pregnant are practically allowed to continue with their course, they won’t find it difficult to implement what CFS advocate for about girls who are pregnant (UNICEF, 2009). Lunenberg et al (2007. p.1) argued that” modelling by teacher educators is a means of changing views and practices of future teachers”.

4.6.4 Strengthening CFS Club Participation

One participant suggested another solution. She pointed out that teacher educators’ role.

P2-R “*Encourage as many students as possible to join CFS club*”.

She expressed her awareness of how one voluntarily joins a club. However, she stressed on teacher educators’ encouraging the students to join CFS club so that they could learn in depth about CFS concept.

4.7 The Best Approaches to Prepare Student Teachers

The respondents tackled the question about best approaches to prepare student teachers by focusing on training, integration, and resources.

4.7.1 Training the Teachers and the Community

P6-R suggested:

The government should take deliberate effort at least to train the teachers on Child friendly schools. If someone is trained, it is much easier to understand rather than somebody who has never been trained. Now, we are talking about a student, ... a teacher who has one year experience, and this student finds a conducive atmosphere at the school, if the head teacher and teachers are well trained or are aware of the concept.... if possible we can as well train the community so that they can work hand in hand.

Commenting on the importance of training all primary school teachers, another participant said:

P2-R They [government and organizations] have to teach [train] the teachers. Simply because the student teachers would say, we were learning about child friendly schools, we would want to see it here. [As such] the teachers will appreciate that it is really good.

She also emphasized on refresher trainings for those who were already trained.

Continuous Professional Development is the answer. And let me be frank to say apart from doing that, the ... stakeholders should do something ... these people have been trained but they don't want to practice the same. So ...they need to be reminded any way. The

teachers are supposed to be reminded. Secondly... adequate training on the teachers who are in the field so that they can speak the same language with the teachers who are coming out of the college.

4.7.2 Resource Provision

Informants noted to importance of resources in ensuring that the CFS concept is delivered accordingly to the students and qualified teachers as well. P6-R explained;

... Include adequate resources for them to understand the concept fully. In addition, we also need train the students using reference materials if possible they need to find some new resources, some new information which they can share. Even as himself/herself, as a student or as a newly qualified teacher may find some resources which maybe be necessary to share to the school.

Participants also suggested how the resources could be sourced in ensuring that the student teachers are adequately trained. She said;

P2-R... If something could be done on resources. I don't know if the government tries its best to have the resources, but maybe some organizations can help. Maybe organizations that have taken care of CFS to get established in the country could take initiative to help in providing resources. Much as real objects are used, but the charts are the must.

The participants contribution to ways of preparing student teachers signified that they were aware of the vital role they had to play in ensuring CFS a reality in an attempt to improve quality inclusive education. As UNICEF (2009) acknowledge that teacher educators' key role in CFS success. It also urges educational systems to consider training and support as a priority to preparing teachers.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the findings of the research carried out at one Teacher Training Colleges in the South West Division. The findings are discussed in the light of Von Bertalanthy's systems theory discussed in the literature reviewed in Chapter Two and Chapter Three. The researcher used Von Bertalanthy's systems theory to assist in the discussion of the findings in the following manner. Inputs indicate teacher educators' CFS knowledge and curriculum regarding training student teachers the concept and practices of CFS. Processes come in using the following: training, resources, and methods. Finally, outputs are largely focusing on a general anticipation of both successes and challenges students will encounter when implementing CFS in primary schools.

While Von Bertalanthy's theory was incorporated for the discussions, the purpose of the study was to explore the teacher educators' experiences in the implementation of CFS concept. Here, the researcher acknowledges that CFS concept has its origin in the conventions of the Child Rights which emphasizes on children's right to education (UNICEF, 2008). However, the researcher used systems theory in order to find out if teacher educators' experiences in the implementation of CFS are a result of college system. Firstly, teacher educators' conceptualisation of the CFS concept: Inclusiveness, safe and conducive environment, academically effective school, gender and partial understanding of school and community linkages are presented (5.2). Secondly, training of student teachers is discussed (5.3). Thirdly, limitations to CFS training are presented (5.4). Fourth part looks solutions to the challenges (5.5). Finally, the best approaches are presented (5.6).

5.2 Teacher Educators' Conceptualization of CFS Concept

The CFS has an endorsement of Malawi government through Ministry of Education Science and technology for its implementation in teacher education (MIE, 2008, UNICEF, CFS Toolkit, 2010). The study revealed that teacher educators have largely conceptualised CFS concept. This finding was encouraging. Literature suggests that it is crucial for teacher educators to see the concept as a tool to promoting children's rights to quality education because it carries the message of what a teacher training institution should groom in its student teachers (Dorji, 2010). This is in agreement with what UNICEF advocates that teacher educators need to view the concept and practices as very vital for transformation primary schools in Malawi in the provision of quality education to all learners (2009). According to Von Bertalanthy's framework, Teacher Training College is conceptualised as a system within a bigger education system. This means that it remains an asset of the education system (Emirbayer & Johnson, 2008 in Dorji, 2010).

The study revealed that teacher educators had a variety of opinions about the principle of safe and right-based school. This variety of opinions on the principle reflected the category of teacher educators who took part in the study. The study purposively included teacher educators who had training on the concept. Although their training took place at different periods of time, the knowledge acquired was almost the same. However, those who have been involved in extra CFS activities such as supervision of primary schools, committee and leading the CFS club seemed to have more information. This was evidenced through the examples they were giving during the discussions. On the other hand, the teacher educators who had only attended the trainings and then started the implementation had the knowledge but lacked relevant examples in their explanations. Generally, all participants perceived CFS

concept as very important. They saw it as a reform that has taken a right path that would lead to primary school reformation in provision of quality education to all children.

Teacher educators' attendance to CFS trainings helped them to have a clearer idea about as principles/characteristics of CFS as they understood that inclusive education, for example, increased accessibility of children and participation in school life. In addition, teachers' understanding of their role in creating a conducive and non-threatening learning environment to all children including those with impairments has improved (DFID, 2010). In previous evaluation of CSF, reports have shown that CFS remains concept with a variety of models but achieving the same goal of creating a right-based inclusive school which is welcoming and child-centred (Maundiza, 2013; DFID, 2010). Looking at the way teacher educators explained inclusiveness in this study, it was clear that they understood the philosophy behind the term and its required practices. This understanding will be of much help to future studies on specifically inclusive practices in Teacher Training Colleges.

With regard to teachers' experiences in respect of safe and right-based schools, the study revealed that teacher educators had a good understanding of this principle. The understanding was a result of training the participants had. In addition, some participants were putting the same knowledge into practice. For instance, in Life Skills, they said that they had to teach the topics of Sanitation and Safety in schools and homes. These were not only taught theoretically, but students were given opportunity to practice. Jere, et.al (2012, p. 2) note that a safe and right-based school creates safe spaces and healthy environment for girls and boys to effectively learn” and “includes school based health and nutrition programs, life skills and safe gender-sensitive sanitation facilities”.

In addition, the study revealed that teacher educators had knowledge about academically effective school. For them, their teaching work in classrooms had to speak volumes on this. However, it was not only a matter of just teaching for the sake of fulfilling duty requirements, but teaching using the constructivist approach, which recommends CFS student-centred methods. Jordan, et al (2008) concluded by recommending constructivist approach saying that it is heavily used in all levels of education due to the fact that shared meaning-making increases both motivation and task performance. Apart from methods, the participants in the study acknowledged that teaching, learning and assessment resources were so crucial in realization of CFS effective schools. Resources help learners understand the concept much easily. They also stimulate curiosity in learners. In general, learning becomes realistic (MOEST, 2008).

The study also revealed that teacher educators had adequate knowledge of gender. This was not surprising because as a nation, Malawi through the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology is currently promoting gender equality practices in all levels of education. Therefore, teacher training colleges have the same mandate to ensure that in all their businesses, gender is considered. These include leadership in classrooms, hostels and student council as stipulated in college handbook (MoEST, 2012).

According to Von Bertalanffy, inputs include knowledge and human resource in an organisation (Laszlo, 2010 & Krippner, 1997). In this case, both teacher educators and student teachers' knowledge they have on CFS are examples of inputs of the system. In the absence of inputs such as these two playing their role, effective implementation on CFS at the college level and in the primary schools can be a failure.

5.3 Training of Student Teachers

Under training of student teachers there emerged three themes which included: Motivation for training; Modes of training and; Training resources. The teacher educators acknowledged the importance of training student teachers CFS concept explaining that it would have positive impact in primary schools they would teach. Through CFS Knowledge and skills, students will psychologically have mind set change on how a CFS should be like. As such, teacher educators support would help in bringing this mind set change.

On modes of training, educators expressed the different ways that were used to train the students. These included modelling/mirroring whereby students were supposed to learn through observation. Students observe whatever their teachers do and emulate. However, this approach seemed not viable because of individual differences. The problem with this method is that what one can take as worth emulating, to another it cannot be. Another mode was training through CFS club. It was found that the college had its own initiative whereby a club was formed whereby students had an opportunity to learn more about CFS concept. The club accommodated two or three members from each class who later were teaching the rest of the class. This approach also had its own limitations which have been explained in detail in 5.4.

The third approach to training was integration. Teacher educators were supposed to be infusing CFS methods and materials in the existing curriculum. Similar to the issue of mirroring, integration had its setbacks. Due to these different approaches some teacher educators were uncertain of what they were supposed to do in order to have a uniform approach of training CFS to student teachers. As such, it was found that very little was being done as a way of promoting CFS at TTC level. This might be due to negligence of the educators or lack of adequate knowledge and skills on how to train the CFS concept.

Teaching and learning goes hand in hand with resources. The study revealed that the teacher educators lacked relevant resources. Despite one participant pointing out about availability of training manuals to guide the teacher educators in their daily practices about CFS, others showed lack of knowledge about the resources. This can also be considered as negligence or resistant to change.

5.4 Training Limitations of CFS

As shown in Chapter 4, training had a number of limitations. These impacted on teacher educators' delivery of CFS information and practices as the college lacked common approach to handling CFS concept in the classrooms and outside. The study revealed that teacher educators were struggling to model CFS practices because they had different understanding of how they were supposed to train student teachers on the concept. As a result, they found it difficult to decide on whether to integrate or infuse CFS concept when teaching. It was evident as some revealed it was difficult to train the student teachers. Others also said that they had knowledge that CFS concepts were there in the curriculum, but they found it difficult to identify the topics where they could talk about it in depth. On the contrary, some of them openly said that they did not know if the CFS concept were found in the curriculum. The teacher educators' variation on how they were supposed to train student teachers on CFS concepts needs urgent attention such as refresher training that will provide harmonization in their approaches. However, UNICEF recommends mainstreaming of CFS. According to UNICEF, mainstreaming means consideration of CFS as being a core in day to day institutional practices (UNICEF, 2010). Considering the meaning, as related to the revelations on how teacher educators train CFS, it clearly shows that there is unfilled gap that originated from the initial training for the teacher educators. What the teacher educators missed was the element of mainstreaming which demands putting CFS in all college activities not only teaching.

5.4.1 Limited CFS Club Participation

As shown in Chapter 4, training student teachers about CFS through CFS club was thought to be a brilliant strategy. It was believed that through cascade approach, student teachers would acquire the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes. However, the use of the CFS club revealed to have limitations. Firstly, it was observed that the approach the college took to train the student teachers was somehow segregative. Only few teacher educators, who were in the CFS committee, were involved in training the student teachers. As such, other teacher educators thought that it was the committee's duty to train the students. Secondly, membership to CFS club was another issue. Only few student teachers were voluntary members of the club. As such, the remaining large group of the student teachers did not benefit much from what their colleagues in the club learnt. As a result, this impacted negatively on CFS practices at the college as activities lacked proper organization to ensure that every student teacher equally benefited from the program. There was no proper strategy to ascertain that CFS information reached out to all student teachers not only the club members. It was revealed that the club members, who were the class representatives, were supposed to train colleagues. However, they were not doing as required due to lack of proper plan. Another challenge was lack of supervising and monitoring the club activities. Although the CFS committee was in-charge of the club's activities, supervising and monitoring of activities was not regular. Hence the club activities lacked proper direction on what was supposed to be done. Additionally, the members of the club had conflict of interests: They had to participate in the club's activities and at the same time, do class assignments which were contributing to their final grade. As such, most of the students could prefer assignments to being engaged with CFS club activities. The study revealed that

teacher educators were inadequately assisting the student teachers through the club because they believed that the sole club responsibility was in the hands of the committee, hence, hesitant to support the students fully. All teacher educators ‘support is considerably needed as they will make it easier for student teachers to practice CFS where ever they will teach.

5.4.2 Modelling Limitations

Using Bertalanffy’s general system theory, training can be seen as process, which plays a vital role in ensuring that the system’s inputs are transmitted accordingly. In this case, teacher educators’ knowledge and skills could be transferred to student teachers through modelling. Teacher educators’ responses in Chapter Four showed that there is limited modelling among teacher educators, as one way of training student teachers the concept of CFS. According to Bertalanffy, transmission of skills and knowledge is process. In a system, there is interdependence and relationship between elements. Thus, limited modelling, as a process element, will in turn affect the ability of student teachers to effectively implement CFS when they are posted in primary schools all over Malawi (outcome). Disregarding these two elements (input and process), it is difficult for student teachers to gain the knowledge and skills required for them in ensuring child friendly schools in Malawi (Dorji, 2010).

The lack of modelling skills and knowledge by teacher educators is a great barrier for student teachers to internalize and practise CFS. This is also reflected and argued in the literature reviewed in Chapter 2 (Malak, Sharm & Deppeler, 2017; UNICEF, 2009; Orkodashili, 2010). In order for CFS to be successful, it is important that teacher educators transfer adequate knowledge about CFS principles, theories and also practices to the student teachers (Lunenbergh, 2007). There is need for considerable learning of practical skills and

knowledge development in CFS for Malawi to register improvement in quality inclusive education (Lunenberg, 2007).

The catalyst for improved CFS practices is for teacher educators to improve their CFS modelling skills and knowledge, and to align their practices to the principles of CFS. This will probably lead to CFS practices for student teachers as Lunenberg (2007) stated, “teachers teach the way they were taught” (p.590). Modelling, as one of the skill limitations in teacher educators poses a great constraint on the development of CFS practices.

Lunenberg’s study on ‘Teacher educators as role models’ helps reveal the limitations and difficulties teacher educators experience as they try to model certain practices when they have no structured guidelines (2007). Likewise, teacher educators’ experienced limitation in modelling CFS is not only based on their lack of adequate skills (input), but also because they lack structured information to guide them. For example, teacher educators can acknowledge the advantages of modelling CFS practices to student teachers, however, if they lack information on how they can operate, as a system, there will be no interrelatedness and interdependence in the system’s elements. As such, teacher educators are struggling to achieve quality education through CFS practices because the system has no clear goals. These results suggest that teacher educators experience limitations when their capacity to perform a skill is hindered by unstructured informational processes (Friedman, 2010).

Despite teacher educators’ positive comments on their knowledge about CFS, their failure to model CFS to student teachers might be evidenced during their initial training. This would be the case due to limited understanding of their role on how they would model the concept. Although CFS is a desirable approach to improving quality inclusive education, lack of

proper guidelines for the teacher educators, largely affect their practices. Researchers have established that lack of clear institutional policies and guidelines hinder implementers to considerably execute their duties effectively. As a result, they think that anything without clear guidelines is something that brings additional responsibilities (Liasidou, 2008, 2010 in Torombe, 2013). A study by Torombe (2013) on inclusive education policy, which supports CFS implementation, perceives the policy as an additional responsibility that has to fit into the already existing educational policies meant to help in the improvement of school and classroom environment, teaching and learning and community partnerships among others. Therefore, teacher educators' limited skills and practices, such as modelling, will negatively affect the sole purpose of the CFS training which aims at improving quality education through creation of friendly learning environments. This is an important finding because it shows that limited modelling by teacher educators will automatically result in failure to create CFS in primary schools by student teachers, hence, quality inclusive education will be compromised.

5.4.3 Lack of Integration Skills

A focus on creating a child friendly environment in schools, as most international literature noted, involves a holistic approach where all CFS principles are to be considered. However, one of the principles that CFS focuses on is academically effective school (Maundiza, 2013; UNICEF, 2009; Orkodashili, 2010; Jere et al., 2012). In particular, Maundiza (2013), concluded his study by emphasizing that effectiveness of CFS could be achieved through promotion of quality teaching and learning, materials and resources, capacity of teachers and their commitment. Maundiza (2013, p.287) further recommended countries to, “embrace this concept of quality which goes well beyond pedagogic excellence and purely

academic performance outcomes. The focus should be on the needs of the child as a whole, not just academic performance dimension that educators have concentrated on”.

This study also showed that teacher educators had limited knowledge of topics that were directly linked to CFS in the existing curriculum. As a result, the extent to which teacher educators were able to integrate CFS concept was largely compromised. Teacher educators had the information about CFS but they were unable to transfer it to their student teachers. Applying Bertalanffy’s viewpoint, this issue can be interpreted as a lack of interrelation between input and process as such implementation of CFS is also compromised (Dorji, 2010).

This point is so important to policy makers to consider how teacher educators could best integrate CFS in their teaching and to what extent should the integration of CFS be supported.

A report on quality education by UNICEF and UNESCO (2011) highly acknowledges that achieving quality education largely depends on effective pedagogical processes in the classroom. This means that teacher educators’ knowledge, skills, character and commitment influence student teachers’ achievement. Subsequently, implementation of CFS in teacher training demands the same.

5.4.4. Assessment Limitation

The gathered information in this study revealed that teacher educators had no clear guidelines for assessing their own practices in CFS and student teachers as well. This was evident from the teacher educators’ differences in tackling the question concerning assessment. Using Bertalanffy’s systems theory, it could be said that teacher educators’

input did not conform to their practices, in this case, getting feedback through assessment. The findings of this study concur well with what UNICEF (2009) found as one of the challenges in CFS model implementation in most countries. It was found that most schools in particular teachers think that tracking progress of an innovation is the work of policy makers or initiators of the projects or programs. They think that their role is to take part in answering questionnaires or being interviewed. However, that should not be the case; UNICEF encourages assessment of CFS activities at school level in order to gauge progress. In the same vein, UNICEF (2009, p.5) argues “that the fundamental rationale and most critical reason for engaging in monitoring and evaluation is to enable implementing organizations to gauge progress and determine whether the innovation is working as expected”. Subsequently, Stuart et al (2009) emphasize on reflection in teacher education programs. They articulate that teacher educators have the responsibility to do self-reflection as an assessment of their own practice.

5.5 Conclusion

The findings of this study revealed that, although teacher educators have theoretical knowledge of CFS, they are inadequately transmitting the same to their students. This indicates a possible limitation on the knowledge and skills of primary teacher educators with regard to the way they are supposed to train. There is need to research on primary teacher educators’ classroom teaching practices. As noted by UNESCO (2005) and Lunenberg et al (2007) that mostly, teacher educators do not practise what they preach and as a result, many newly recruited primary school teachers lack adequate training especially in innovations that support realization of quality inclusive education. They forget that the influence of primary

teacher educators is critical in the preparation of quality pre-service teachers who will in turn provide quality education to children of Malawi.

5.6 Recommendations for Policy and Practice

This research recommends the college leadership to:

- Ensure that all teacher educators have adequate training on CFS concept in order to equip them with knowledge, skills and attitudes that will be transferred to the student teachers.
- Support Teacher educators through internal CPDs on modelling and integration of CFS concept.
- Ensure that development and implementation of curriculum is aligned with CFS principles so that all teacher educators should appreciate and confidently teach the concept.
- Monitor the CFS implementation of activities to ensure that student teachers are adequately trained during their pre-service training. Similarly, teacher educators have to support and monitor the CFS activities, thereby, instilling the promotion of quality education in pre-service teachers.
- Develop clear guidelines concerning CFS model for the college. These guidelines will enhance the creation of child friendly schools in all primary schools where the pre-service teachers are allocated and posted during after training respectively.

5.7 Recommendations for Further Research

This study identified gaps that require further research to support or add more insight into the findings. The study revealed that there is lack of interrelatedness between and among the system's elements in the implementation of CFS during pre-service teacher training. This was mainly attributed to limitations in the processes in transmitting the input in order to achieve the outcome in primary schools. According to the principle of system theory of interrelatedness, this problem in the process element would negatively affect the output. This entails that there is need to revisit the whole system as to produce good results. For this reason, there is need to investigate more on the magnitude of the impact of CFS training at Teacher Training College in primary schools where the pre-service teachers are posted to teach after graduation. The researcher also proposes that future research can focus on the effects of teacher educators' practices in primary schools.

Since this study focused on one teacher training college only due to factors of cost, convenience and accessibility, there is need to replicate the research to other teacher training colleges. This may support the findings of this study and further increase information on teacher educators' experiences on CFS implementation in Malawi.

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Appendices

1. Focus group discussion
2. One-on-one interview
3. Consent Letter

Focus Group Discussion Schedule for Teacher Educators

Implementing Child Friendly Schools in Teacher Training College

Introduction

The researcher is carrying out this study, as a partial fulfilment of academic requirement. The study aims to explore teacher educators' experiences and practices in relation to Child-Friendly Schools (CFS). The researcher would like also to audio-record our discussion. The information you will provide will be treated with confidentiality and will be used solely for academic purpose.

1. What do you understand by Child-Friendly Schools?
2. What are the characteristics of a Child-Friendly School?
3. How do you train student teachers CFS concept?
4. What approaches, methods and techniques do you use?
5. What would you consider as the key challenges in the implementation of Child-Friendly Schools concept in colleges?
6. What should be done to ensure that every student teacher is equipped with Child-Friendly Schools knowledge?
7. How best should the concept of Child-Friendly Schools be approached at TTC level to prepare student teachers to implement it in primary schools,

Teacher Educator Interview Schedule

Implementing Child Friendly Schools in a TTC

Introduction

The researcher is carrying out this study, as a partial fulfilment of academic requirement. The study aims to explore teacher educators' experiences and practices in relation to Child-Friendly Schools (CFS). I would like also to ask for your permission to audio-record our discussion. The information you will provide will be treated with confidentiality and will be used solely for academic purpose.

1. Were you trained in CFS Concept? When? How many times? By whom?
2. What do you understand by Child Friendly Schools?
3. How do you train student teachers the concept of CFS?
4. What resources do you use when training the students?
5. What curricular materials do you use when training the student teachers?
6. What approaches/strategies do you use when training the student teachers?
7. What are the key challenges that you face when training the students?
8. Explain how the following CFS elements are promoted in the learning area you teach
 - a. A rights based and inclusive
 - b. An academically effective school
 - c. A safe, protective and Health promoting school
 - d. A gender responsive, equity and equality promoting school
 - e. A school with linkages and partnerships with its community

9. How do you assess trainees to ensure they successfully learned CFS?
10. Do you think the teacher trainees are adequately prepared to implement CFS concept in primary schools in Malawi? Please explain.
11. What do you think should be done to ensure that all student teachers are equipped with the right skills to make schools child Friendly?
12. What challenges do you face in preparing student teachers to implement CFS concept in schools?
13. What do you think should be done to address the challenges you have mentioned?

A Consent Letter

Dear Participant,

I am a student of Mzuzu University in the department of Education and Teaching Studies (ETS) under the supervision of Dr. S. Gwayi. I am pursuing Masters of Education (Teacher Education).

You are hereby kindly invited to participate in a research exercise titled Teacher Educators’ experiences in Mainstreaming Child Friendly Schools Concept: A case of a Teacher Training College in South West Education Division. The purpose of the study is to explore practices and challenges of teacher educators in mainstreaming of CFS.

The study will employ focus group discussion and interview methods. The researcher hopes that’s the derived information may help in the leadership in whether enhancing or modifying the practices in regard to CFS. Furthermore, it may help to rectify challenges that educators face during implementation of CFS.

The information that will be collected will be treated with utmost confidentiality. Please note that participation in this study is absolutely voluntary; meaning one is free to excuse him/herself from participating anytime s/he feels to do so. There will not be any form of token other than verbal upon participating in this exercise. Be assured that the responses to this study will only be used for academic purposes. As such, participant’s identity will be concealed.

If you are interested to participate in this study, please sign below:

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Signature

.../.../2017

Date:

