

EXAMINING EARLY CHILDHOOD TEACHER EDUCATION IN MALAWI: A CASE  
STUDY OF FEW SELECTED EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTERS IN LILONGWE DISTRICT

BY

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*M'MERA MPOYAMBA( A GOOD FOUNDATIONS YIELDS SUCCESS IN THE CHILD'S EDUCATION)*

## **DECLARATION**

I hereby declare that this thesis represents my own work and was carried out at Mzuzu University under supervision of Dr Dominic Ndengu. This thesis has not been previously submitted to this University or any other institution for the award of a degree or any other qualification except where reference is made to scholars in the literature review which is acknowledged under reference column.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

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## **DEDICATION**

This work is dedicated to my late beloved Father Mr. Maxwell James Pwele and my mother Esther Juma Pwele.

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## **LIST OF ACRONYMS**

CBCC	Community Based Care Centers
ECDC	Early Childhood Development Centers
ECE	Early Childhood Education
ECD	Early Childhood Development
ECTE	Early Childhood Teacher Education
GOM	Government of Malawi
TOTs	Trainer of Trainers
AECD	Association of Early childhood Development in Malawi
APPM	Association of preschool playgroups in Malawi
EFA	Education for All
IYCC	International Year of Child Conference
IHS	Malawi Integrated Household Survey
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MGDS	Malawi Growth and Development Strategy
MoEST	Ministry of Education Science and Technology
MoGCWD	Ministry of Gender, Children Welfare and Disability
NESP	National Education Sector Plan
NSPECD	National Strategic Plan for Early Childhood Development
NSO	National Statistical Office
IPTE	Initial Primary Teacher Education
PSLCE	Primary School Leaving Certificate of Education
JCE	Junior Certificate of Education
MSCE	Malawi School Certificate of Education
Dip	Diploma
BEd	Bachelor of Education
CEE	Certificate in Early Childhood Education
UNESCO	United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations International Children’s Fund

**ABSTRACT**

Despite efforts by government in improving the quality of training of early childhood teachers in Malawi, pedagogical skills and knowledge of early childhood teachers in pre-schools, are in question. This study was aimed at understanding the nature of early childhood teacher education in Malawi. The critical research question which guided this study was “How are early child hood teachers prepared in Malawi?”

Review of literature was done to ascertain the role of early childhood teacher education in improving the quality of early childhood education (ECE). The target populations for the study were early childhood trained teachers; trainer of trainers (TOT) from District social welfare office and policy makers form Ministry of Gender. The rationale for targeting the aforementioned three categories were regarded as key to giving information on the type, organization, successes and challenges of early childhood teacher training.

Mixed research methods were used to collect and analyze data. Questionnaire, interviews and document analysis guided data collection and analysis of this study. The study used triangulation design-convergence model. Simple random and purposive sampling techniques were used to recruit participants into the study. Descriptive analysis was used to establish the nature of early childhood teacher training in Malawi. Inferential analysis was performed to check whether statistically significant relationships among selected variables existed. Qualitative data was analyzed using thematic analysis to establish patterns which supported meaning to the findings.

The results revealed that ECD teachers in Malawi undergo two types of training: Basic and comprehensive training which take a different modes. The results further revealed that government has little control over early childhood teacher training since it is initiated by development partners. However, major challenges include unregulated training, failure to attract male practitioners into ECD sector and unattractive recruitment and remuneration policy of early childhood workforce which eventually compromises the quality of ECE in Malawi. The study

concludes by recommending the need for regularized ECE teacher training programmes and development of career path for ECD accreditation modalities.

## **CLARIFICATION OF TERMS**

- Care givers:** These are men and women from the community that are assigned the duty of offering care and stimulation to children in CBCCC in the communities (Government of Malawi 2004).
- Child:** According to the UN, a child is any person below the age of 18. CBCCC's carter for children aged 0-8 years (Government of Malawi 2009). However, in this study, it refers to children aged 0-5 years who are found in ECD centre.
- Child Development :** The process of change in which the child learns to handle more complex levels of moving, thinking, feeling and relating with/ to others in his/ her environment (Government of Malawi 2004).
- Curriculum:** In the early childhood setting, curriculum means all the interactions, experiences, activities, routines and events, planned and unplanned, that occurs in an environment designed to foster children's learning and development (Australia government 2009) Adapted from Te Whariki.
- Early Childhood:** A period of a child's life from inception to 8 years (Government of Malawi 2004). In the study, these are children found in ECD centers and CBCCs.
- Early Childhood teachers:** These are teachers who handle children in kindergarten, nursery schools and pre-schools of ages 3 to 5 years in this study.
- Trainers of trainers:** This refers to the District social welfare officers whose main duty is to train early child teachers when need arises.
- Policy maker:** This study refers to Ministry of Gender officials who take a leading role in managing ECD department and participate in crucial decisions surrounding ECD sector.
- Preschool:** A type of education that prepares young children between the ages of three to five and half years for schooling (Ministry of Gender and Community services, 2003). This is the group that this study focuses on.

## CHAPTER ONE

### 1.1 Introduction

The study examined the nature of early childhood teacher education in Malawi. It has been organized in chapters with the first chapter providing the study background, the problem statement, the purpose of the study, main research objective, critical research question, sub questions and rationale. The chapter concludes with significance of the study.

### 1.2 Background

The study examined early childhood teacher education in Malawi. For the purpose of this study early childhood teachers are regarded as those that teach children between the ages 3-5 in both public and private early childhood education centres (ECEC). In the study the word teacher education and teacher training were used interchangeably. In Malawian context early childhood centres refers to both Community Based Care Centers and preschools. Barnett and Jason, (2003p54–57) defines Preschool as an early childhood program in which children combine learning with play. This collaborates with Ministry of Gender and Community services, (2003) who defines preschool as the type of education that prepares young children between the ages of three to five for schooling. It is during this age when children discover stimulating senses and learn by doing (OECD, 2006). This justifies the need for well-trained teachers to help children realize their innate potentials.

Early childhood Development policy, (2006) advise that Community Based Care Centers and Day Care Centers must be within the context of Early Childhood Development (ECD). In Malawi, the people who handle children in CBCC Centres are known as Care givers while those

in kindergarten, nursery schools and preschools are called teachers. The policy explains that the country opted to use care giving because the major focus of ECD in Malawi was about care and support not learning (ECD Training Manual, 2002). However, this study focused on the area of Pre School which demands qualified teachers to prepare young children for formal education.

### **1.3 Context of the study**

CBCCs are found in rural communities while preschools are mostly located in urban areas in Malawi (UNICEF, 2007). Rural and urban early childhood development education center's (ECDE) were included in the study because the teacher undertook almost the same Basic ECD training course. For the purpose of this study therefore, CBCCs centers were considered as public ECD centres while pre schools, kindergartens and nursery schools were used as private ECD centres. The difference of public from private ECD centers was that in public ECD centres, Care Givers were used to teach children between 3-5 years while in Private ECD centres teachers are the ones who teaches the preschool children. In addition, public ECD centres mainly focus on care and support. In private ECD centers apart from care and support, children are exposed to learning areas such as literacy, Numeracy, Science and life skills education. In other words, private ECD centers prepare children for formal primary education.

This study focused on early childhood teacher education since these are believed to ease transition of children to elementary school, improve progression through elementary grades, and raise school performance, all of which are expected to increase post-school productivity (World bank report, 1999). Therefore trained early childhood teachers present a good case to reveal the

nature of training they go through help them teach effectively in ECD centers and how this meets the Education for All (EFA) goal requirements.

#### **1.4 Why focus on early childhood teacher education?**

Senemolu, (2009) argued that providing well qualified educational environments to children in early years of their lives is necessary for the development of any country. He further explained that attaching education to early years of any child represent an important developmental period that can affect them in their latter stages. He further explained, the experiences lived in this period lie the basis for the future successes or failures of the person.

Ural and Ramazan, (2007) added that pre-school period has potential to yield great gains in relation to academic achievement and social adjustment of the children in the later years. The authors further explained that pre-school period is the main determinant of whether the individual will attend higher levels of schooling. This is supported by Ministry of gender and children welfare in its ECD policy, (2006) which posits, early childhood education prepares the ground for life-long learning and helps to reduce the dropout rates. The policy argued that pre-school education is anticipated to contribute to the realization of the required outcomes in economic, social, educational and cultural spheres. Following scholarly arguments above, countries like Malawi, where socio-cultural and economic characteristics are dynamic, attaching importance to children's care and education in early years will result in outcomes necessary for the well-being of the society.

Research concerning education in early years of children reveals that opportunities provided for children can carry their growth to the possible highest point (Evans, 1971). Trained early

childhood teachers provides children with the environments where they can realize their fullest capacity. Edwards, Gandini & Forman (1998) suggested areas of competencies that early childhood teachers need to possess. These include skills necessary to provide children with environments where they can realize their psychomotor, social affective, linguistics, cognitive and self-care capacities.

In addition; effective listening, empathy, communication and computer literacy skills are among the competencies that a preschool teacher need to possess. Another competency area is related to ability of a preschool teacher to help students to improve their research discovery and alterative solution, finding skills, encourage them to design special products and instill aesthetic awareness and skill of being selective in them (MEB,2008). Whether early childhood teachers' has these competencies is determined by the pre-service education they are exposed to.

It is an indisputable fact that early childhood education is a major solution to reducing late entry, repetition and dropout rate in the primary school (Education for All assessment report, 2000). In addition, the report explained that early childhood education helps to reduce adult illiteracy. However, Malawi is still a long way from achieving the Education Millennium Development Goals (MDG) of universal primary completion. Access to standard one is almost universal but as the children go in upper grades there is high dropout rate leaving only 35% primary completion rate (UNESCO, IBE 2010-2011). The report explained that poor retention rate is highest among the rural communities due to unconducive learning environments such as: crowded classrooms, inadequate teaching and learning resources such as untrained teachers. This is the reason;

Malawi presents the best case to examine early childhood teacher training on delivery of instruction in early education centers.

## **1.5 Early childhood teacher training in Malawi**

### ***1.5.1 Organization of early childhood teacher training in Malawi***

Association of Early Childhood Development (AECDM) is mandated to conduct early childhood teacher training by the government of Malawi. The organization trains the national core team of trainers who offer training to district social welfare officers. These in turn facilitates the training of early childhood teachers in various centers, under the supervision of the core team members (UNICEF, 2007 p.15). The training at AECDM is conducted in two phases: The basic Early Childhood Development training that lasts for two weeks and the comprehensive one which lasts for six weeks; however, it is ad hoc and is divided in three phases. After every two week of face to face training teacher trainees go for practicum after sometime they are invited for two week training and later are offered a certificate in Comprehensive ECD training (ECD policy, 2006). Research, however has shown that very few trainers of trainers have been exposed to comprehensive training, but many of them have gone through basic ECD training (Cursick, n.d. 2013). This situation is even worse to early childhood teachers since many of them have not undergone even the basic two week ECD training and very few are exposed to the latter one (UNICEF report, 2007).

In an attempt to promote early childhood teacher training, the government of Malawi decreed early childhood teachers and care givers to work on voluntary basis. The government offered to provide on job training to ensure that early education is owned by the community members

(Ministry of Gender, children and Social Welfare, 2012). However, there are a number of problems related to quality of teachers if early childhood education is to be deemed meaningful (UNICEF, 2007). Problems related to delivery of instruction, children being forced to memorize things, which lead to assimilating concepts beyond their age, failing to group learners according to their stages of development and use of teacher centered approaches. This contradicts Driscoll, (1994) in Wool- folk, et al., (2006) who believes in encouraging ownership in learning through children centered instruction. In support of the views, Barnett, (2006) posit that children learn better through play. In contrast, some early childhood teachers in most early childhood development centres in Malawi, fail to mix play and education activities. This is denying children chance to exercise free play instead focus much on cognitive development.

Several studies have been conducted in Malawi related to early childhood development. The studies includes: Inclusion of children in development (Bohmer, 2007). Inventory of Community Based Care Centers in Malawi, the Successes against the Odds in Positive Deviant CBCCs' and Investing in Early Childhood Education (Government of Malawi, 2008 & 2009). No detailed study has been done to examine the effectiveness of early childhood teacher education in a micro study site like in Lilongwe district. Most of the studies have been baseline survey type covering large areas or the whole country. Furthermore, the literature is silent as to whether early childhood teacher training has been reviewed to unveil some of the strengths and short falls to help improve the programme. Therefore, the researcher felt the need to examine the nature of early childhood teacher education in Malawi.

## **1.6 Context of the problem**

The government of Malawi in its profile of poverty in Malawi Integrated Household Survey (MIHS) 2010-2011 reported that about 50.7 percent of the country's population lives below the poverty line. Therefore, as a nation, adopting the idea of investing in children of 0-8 years of age is one way of reducing extreme poverty. Furthermore, early childhood education is considered as a starting point for everybody's whole life learning, characterizing it as an important component of the national education system and the basis for further education (National policy on Early Childhood Development, 2003 p2). This is the reason; Malawi included early childhood education as a foundation for basic education in the National Education Sector Plan, (NESP) (2009-2015), which drew predominantly from the second Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MGDS II) and also in tandem with Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Education for All (EFA) goals assessment (UNESCO, 2000), enlighten that countries in Sub-Saharan Africa including, Malawi need to focus their attention on early childhood development and learning. This is evident by improved access and equity in early childhood education from 2.63%-36.89 % in Malawi (National strategic plan for early Childhood Development 2009-2014 p7).

Equally, the inclusion of preschool education as part of basic education in the National Education Sector Plan in 2009 (NESP 2009-2017) is one of the country's greatest achievements. However, the original policy and its subsequent review did not address the quality of early childhood

teacher training. This is corroborated by results of a study conducted by UNICEF (2007). Therefore, the country's responsibility is to ensure that early childhood teacher training is effective to meet international goals. Barnett (2008) argues that well-designed preschool education programs produce long-term improvements in school success, including higher achievement test scores, lower rates of grade repetition and higher educational attainment.

Nevertheless, an overview of early childhood education in Malawi, reveals many shortcomings including a narrow understanding of the purpose of providing early childhood teacher education, fragmented teacher education and support programmes, absence of an accreditation system with commissioned institutions and monotonous ways of teaching (The Government of Malawi, National strategic plan for early Childhood Development 2009-2014 p7).

### **1.7 Problem statement**

In spite of, efforts by the government in improving the quality of training of early childhood teachers in Malawi, pedagogical skills and knowledge, particularly in many of public pre-schools are in question. This may be in part, due to the nature of training of early childhood teachers. A quick look, among early childhood teachers, I noticed problems in lesson preparation, delivery of the lessons, organization of activities and interaction with young children. Out of the many possible reasons for these inconsistencies, the type of training of preschool teachers may be one of the contributing factors. It is against this background that the study focused in examining the nature of training of early childhood teachers in Malawi whether it helps in the delivery of instruction in early child hood centre's.

### ***1.7.1 Purpose of the study***

The study examined the nature of early childhood teacher education in Malawi.

### ***1.7.2 Research objective***

This study aimed at providing greater understanding of the early childhood teacher training in Malawi so as to inform policy decisions as well as development of future strategy to improve early childhood teacher education in the country.

### ***1.7.3 Critical research question***

How are early childhood teachers prepared in Malawi?

### ***1.7.4 Research questions***

1. What type of training do early childhood education teachers receive in Malawi?
2. How is the training of early childhood education teachers organized in Malawi?
3. How does the training of early childhood teachers prepare them for effective lesson delivery in classroom?
4. What are the challenges that surround early childhood teacher education in Malawi?
5. Is there relationship between possession of a professional qualification by teachers and their success at early childhood basic training?
6. What is the relationship between possession of a professional qualification by teachers and their feeling as trained early childhood teachers?
7. Is there relationship between success of teachers at early childhood basic training and their feeling as trained early childhood teachers?

## **1.8 Rationale of the study**

As a teacher I have taught in early grade classes such as 1 and 2 and at tertiary level. I have observed that children who went through quality preschool education perform better than those who did not attend any preschool or those who went through preschool programmes which had little emphasis on cognitive development. This trend of poor performance continues even in tertiary education. Early years of children's life is an absorbent age, it would be appropriate if they are exposed to a number of intellectual stimulating activities which they will utilize later in their school life. In addition as a teacher trainer, I would prefer a combination of formal and play as a better method of teaching since children learn better through play.

Consequently, many early childhood teachers have challenges to balance between social and intellectual development which threatens the future of young children. For instance, many of the early childhood centres emphasizes feeding and play which makes children not to be serious in learning some literacy skills which they are supposed to grasp in their first five years of life. This is what motivated me to carry out the study to unveil the existing gaps in early childhood teacher education system.

## **1.9 Significance of the study**

The study questions the fundamental quality of training of preschool teachers and early childhood education as they affect the child's success at primary, secondary and tertiary education. This is because Pre School acts as a foundation where children acquire basic skills that may later help them effectively function in the society. Consequently, there is need for well

trained teachers who are ready to assist and direct without interfering with children natural desire to become independent. Therefore the findings of this study will help policy makers to design appropriate training for early childhood teachers. It will as well open up opportunities for policy makers to explore the possibility of establishing early childhood training institutions which will in turn improve the provision of quality early childhood education. On the other hand, the study will inform policy makers as regards to how they can regulate training of preschool teachers, since a regulated training programme is believed to produce desirable results. Finally the study is anticipated to provide greater understanding of early childhood teacher education system in Malawi. This will help inform policy debates as well as development of future strategy to improve early childhood teacher education system.

## **CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents a review of literature on the nature of early childhood teacher education in Malawi. It presents scholarly articles and research findings on early childhood teacher education dealing with; the type of early childhood teacher education, its organization, and the methodologies used. The chapter has included models which provide insights on how Malawi early childhood teacher education can be crafted to achieve quality early childhood education.

### **2.2 Conceptualizing early childhood education in Malawi**

The terms Early Childhood Development and children Day Care Center are commonly used in Malawi. Child Day Care Centre is normally a short form of Early Childhood Care and Development Centre. Early Childhood Care and Development Centre's (ECDC) are places organized with the purposes of offering the child all his or her needs for holistic development (UNESCO, Malawi, 1991). In addition, ECD centre's, main purpose is to make children grow healthy in all aspects: physically, emotionally, socially and intellectually.

In Malawi, Early Childhood Development encompasses; Pre-School Playgroup, Community Based Care Centre's and Day care centre's (ECD policy, 2006). UNICEF, (2007) described pre-schools as centre's organized for pre-primary education with very little to do with the health-related provisions. The authors further explained that in the Pre-school playgroup, the central theme is peer socialization with little cognitive preparation for formal education, may be thus

why they use care givers not teachers. Early Childhood Development Education activities start at the age of 3-5 years as opposed to Early Childhood Care and Development activities (ECCDA) which begins from conception targeting the mother of the child even before the child is born (Early Childhood Development Manual, 2003). Comparing, the definition of preschool by UNICEF, Malawi presents a big gap which need to be worked on so that we meet international standards.

NESP acknowledges that early childhood education is one of the recent developments in the education sector (NESP, 2009-2015). Its origin can be traced to somewhere towards late 60's when Christian churches and faith based organizations opened a few pre-school playgroups in the urban centre's of the country. The Pre School playgroups initiative was part of response to the need of a few full time employed women in the urban areas, who lacked officially designed and designated places for the care and recreation of their pre-school age children while they were at work (UNESCO Malawi, 1991).

Following a number of international protocols that Malawi affiliated towards ECD, the need for introducing pre-school playgroups slowly began to grow. Through, Ministry of Community Development and Social Welfare started supporting the activities of Early Childhood Care Development Education (ECCDE) in the early 70's. Pre-school play groups and Community Based Care Centre's were opened by District administration centre's, using borrowed premises like town, cities, district Council Halls and Church buildings (UNICEF, 2007).

## **2.3 Formal education and teacher training in Malawi**

The education system in Malawi is organized around two years of preschool education, eight years of primary education, four years of secondary education and four years of university education (Mulkeen, 2010). In Malawi education is delivered in formal structures with well-trained teachers to facilitate the lessons in various education institutions. The government policy on teacher training is that teachers are supposed to undergo initial teacher training which equip them with knowledge and skills for handling learners. Initial Primary Teacher Education (IPTE) training policy recommends the recruitment of teachers who hold Malawi School Certificate of Education (MSCE) with a credit in English and a pass in Mathematics (as compulsory subjects), and passes in any other two science subjects (IPTE handbook manual, 2006). This is different from early childhood teacher training policy that recommends a 10-14 days teacher training. Eligible candidates to attend ECD basic teacher training are required to have attained Primary School Leaving Certificate (PSLC) and Junior Certificate of Education (JCE). In contrast, those who go through ECD comprehensive teacher training are recommended to be MSCE holders with no condition attached as primary school teacher training programme.

### **2.3.1 Comparing practice of Early Childhood Teacher Education with other countries**

Preschool Teachers in the UK are required to hold either diploma or degree certificates and more than 75% of the teachers are females. Jessica cook (2010) states that dealing with preschool children (PSC) calls for creative Preschool teachers.

In South Africa preschool classrooms are managed by licensed teachers and the requirement is bachelor's degree and completion of an approved teacher education Programme, Educational Institutions Resource Bank (2010). This requirement is not effected in some countries such as Kenya. Alternative licensing programmes are offered to attract professionals into teaching. In more than 50% of the Preschools' in South Africa teachers manage one class of pupils in several subjects such as number work, language and science. In less than 50% of the Pre Schools two or more teachers work as a team for and are jointly responsible for a group of pupils in at least one subject.

In Uganda Preschool teachers get training in the Institute of Teachers' Education Kyambogo (ITEK) at degree, diploma and ordinary certificate levels, World Education Forum (2000). The training produces teachers with different levels of profession qualifications which could affect the ways the teacher's deliver lessons in preschool classroom. It is reported that about 12 % of preschool teachers in Uganda are untrained.

In Kenya, the District Centre for Early Childhood Education (DICECE) offers a two year in-service training course, UNESCO (2005) for the Preschool Teachers. These courses equip teachers with skills required for teaching in preschools. The DICECE teacher training programmes are developed at the National Centre for Early Childhood Education (NACECE) based at the Kenya Institute of Education (KIE) in Nairobi. For Islamic Preschools' there are integrated courses to enable the teachers teach the schools they call Madrassas. In addition,

Preschool Teacher training programmes are managed by different organizations in Kenya, which influences teachers' characteristics. The teacher training programmes are of the highest quality to compete favourably with international standards although, most of the preschool teachers are untrained in Kenya ( Session paper No. 1 (2005). Statistics indicated that there were 42,609 preschool teachers' in 2006, less than half were not trained(Ministry of Education , 2006). This is an indication that even today there is still a big number of untrained Preschool teachers.

Conversely, in Zimbabwe, early childhood teacher education including ECD training is done through teachers' colleges, which are associate colleges of the University of Zimbabwe (UZ). The Department of Teacher Education (DTE) supervises the colleges and certifies the students after successfully passing the final exams and practicum. This is different from Malawian setting, since the department of teacher education only focuses on training of primary teachers. Certification of the primary teachers is done by Malawi Examination Board (MANEB) in collaboration with DTED. Zimbabwe uses assistant ECD teachers to support home based programmes and other general child care duties among others (Dyanda, Mudukuti and Makoni 2006). Unlike in Malawi assistant teachers are responsible for teaching children in ECD centers. Bachelor of Education in Early Childhood Education (B.E. d ECE) started in 1995 at the University of Zimbabwe. Currently the university offers teacher education programmes up to Master of Education in Early Childhood Education (M.E. d ECE). Zimbabwe by 2006 had a total of four university undergraduate level programmes and one master's level programme offering ECD training while in Malawi there is none.

From the discussion above, one may notice that most of the countries attach a high value to early childhood teacher education. This is evident from the qualification that they would want the teacher to acquire. You would notice that in many countries early childhood teacher training is done in structured institutions such as universities and colleges unlike in Malawi where up to now teacher training is not yet formalized. However, there are some commonalities in terms of struggling to have a good number of early childhood teacher trained in most of African countries. For example half of the teacher not yet trained and in Uganda 12% of the teacher are not. This situation threatens the future of early childhood.

## **2.4 History of early childhood teacher training**

### ***2.4.1 International history of early childhood education***

Orwa (1990) observed that the earliest centres were basically places where breastfeeding mothers could leave their children under the care of a custodian while they went to work. The centres were originally not meant for teaching or formal education. It was for this reason that they acquired the name nursery especially in Russia and in Eastern Europe. They were called kindergarten in Germany which translates into gardens for nurturing the children (Orwa, 1990).

Further, Council of Europe (1979) explained the first function of pre-school services developed to provide substitute care for children whose parents both worked or where conditions of home living were considered detrimental for development. The second trend was more positively educational and advocated the value of complementing children's experiences at home by providing carefully planned learning activities in the company of other children, which would promote all aspects of their personal development.

### **2.4.1.1 Historical overview of early childhood teacher training in Malawi**

History of early childhood education dates from 1960's but it was until 1966 that the first truly early childhood education centre appeared in Blantyre, in Malawi. During these years early education for children below six years was in the hands of private individuals and religious organizations. The main interest for early childhood education centers was not on learning but to care for young children for a while (UNICEF, 2007). Following, 1979 designated international year of child conference (IYC), Malawi governments decided to include early childhood education in their plan of action.

In 1980s, Malawi identified Community Based Care Centers (CBCC) approach as a meaningful opportunity for reaching young children especially those living in poor rural communities (ECD Basic Training Manual, 2004). UNICEF, (2007) described CBCCs approach as a holistic package that help children develop their fullest potential. Ministry of Gender, Children and social welfare, (2004) eludes that Community Based care centers comprise of day care centers, nursery schools and pre-schools.

Unlike other categories of CBCCs and Pre-schools demand for well-trained teachers has gained prominence for the decades. Elliot, (2006) argues, the initial teacher education and training in areas of early child development and early childhood education increase the likelihood that practitioners are effective in promoting the educational, socio-emotional and healthy development of children.

In spite of the need for trained preschool teachers, the government gave more attention to teacher training programmes for primary and secondary schools, neglecting the area of early childhood (EFA assessment report, 2000). Compared to primary and secondary teacher training programmes, in Malawi there is no formal public institution that offer preschool teacher training. This has led to numerous organization offering local trainings that sometimes are substandard (UNICEF, 2007).

In early 70s' the government of Malawi through Ministry of Gender and Community Services used to send officers to Israel to train as preschool teachers for a period of one year (Ministry of Gender welfare and Community Services, 2002). Later, in 1990s, the government of Malawi in collaboration with UNICEF introduced two-week early childhood teacher training at Mpemba in Blantyre. Since then, early childhood teacher training is being conducted by the association of Pre School Play Groups in Blantyre (APPB), currently known as Association of Early Childhood Development in Malawi (AECDM) in Malawi (UNICEF, 1991).

AECDM Policy document explained that pre-school programme in Malawi aims at promoting the social, intellectual, emotional and physical development of children aged 3-5½(AECDM, Policy, 2003). The programme focuses on education through play and proper care of children in a healthy and friendly environment. Increasing public awareness of the importance of education have expanded the demand for preschool playgroups and trained teachers. This contradicts with the ECD policy objectives which focus much on care and support and not teaching and learning.

## **2.2 Benefits of early childhood education**

Studies have shown that early childhood education has great potential in improving the quality of both compulsory education and people's lives in general. This is the reason the development of early childhood education is a hot issue for the nation, society and parents, and an important subject in educational theory across the world (Bloemen, 2010). The author made it more clearly in his argument that an investment in early childhood care and development not only transform a child's future prospects but makes a significant difference in a country's development.

Heckman (2006) applied an economic principle to early learning and showed that early success begets later success. This implies that children who do not have good early learning experiences are more likely to fail. In fact, there is strong experimental evidence, primarily from early childhood demonstration programs, that high-quality interventions beginning in the earliest years help children learn and achieve (Nation center for children in poverty, NCCP 2006). This is supported by Young and Enrique (2009) who alluded that providing basic health care, adequate nutrition, nurturing and stimulation in a caring environment helps to ensure children's progress in primary school, continuation through secondary school, and successful entry into the work force.

In addition, three large-scale descriptive studies that looked at the relationship between high quality early childhood programs and child outcomes reported positive gains for low-income children. On the other hand, some studies found that middle-class children benefit from centre-based, high-quality early learning programs as well. However, research has shown that high quality early childhood programs were most effective for low-income children. The most

practical issue may be, to consider the magnitude of the gains that were seen with low-income and minority children.

Studies have shown that early childhood teacher education benefits all children and that an early start and high quality are important and the benefits to children remain evident up to the age of 10 (Sylva, Melhuish, Birkbeck, Sammons, Siraj-Blatchford and Taggart, 2007). These researchers studied 2,857 children from differing social backgrounds and in a range of preschool settings from when they entered pre-school at the age 3 up to 7 years. They also studied 315 children who had no pre-school experience, referred to as the 'home' group under Effective Pre School and Primary Education (EPPE) project. The project collected information on children's intellectual and social behavioral development as well as data on their family and home backgrounds and the quality of their home learning environment (HLE). The study revealed that pre-school improved children's intellectual development and their social behaviors. In contrast, the home group performed less well at entry into primary school even after taking into account differences in child, family and home learning environment characteristics. The study also showed that an early start of preschool education at the age of 2-3 years was particularly more beneficial because it helped to improve the effects of social disadvantage and provided children with a better start to school.

Describing the benefits of investing in early childhood development various experts, Meinzer, Gertsch and Light-Borselilin, (2013) explained that ECD remains one of the most powerful forces for accelerating education for All (EFA) and meeting the millennium development Goals (MDGs). The authors assert that early childhood education is essential for all further learning

and personal development. Therefore ensuring comprehensive child development is an investment in a country's future work force and its capacity to thrive economically and as a society which in return will reduce poverty. In support of the subsequent views Myers (1999) adds that ECD helps to not only attack the worst effects of poverty on children but it also effectively helps to break the vicious cycle of poverty transmitted across generations

Literature has claimed that preschool education facilitates access to primary schools, especially in developing countries. However, UNESCO (2004) warns against the possibility of exerting excessive pressure on children to succeed and conceive pre-primary as a primary school (Myers, 2006). Fenech argues against the idea of narrowing the focus of pre primary education on getting children ready for school (Fenech, 2011). In agreement, Arnold et al. (2007) points out that primary schools should be prepared to welcome the children and provide enabling environment in which young children can learn. This is in support with reviews of empirical research which posits that children are born eager to learn and that learning occurs faster in the first five years of life than at any other time (Woolfolk, 2006)

However, Malawi's major challenge, is to cope with high percentage of children who enter primary school with no educational preparation or basic foundation for learning according to UNICEF report (2010)

### ***2.4.1 Evolution of Early childhood teacher education in Malawi***

In Africa, ECE was previously taken as the responsibility of parents and families and not the state (White Paper 1995). This makes it difficult for one to find tangible documentation and evidence on how ECE has evolved over the years. Elements of ECE interventions in Malawi can however be traced to as early as the 1960s. During that time, the focus was largely on the provision of care to young children whose parents were working, just like it was the practice in European countries. As alluded by Government of Malawi (2009), the first conventional ECD center was established in 1966 by a wife to a Scottish missionary and other two Malawian women at the Henry Henderson Institution (HHI) in Blantyre.

There after centre's taking various forms started mushrooming across the three regions of the country. According to Government of Malawi (2004) some centers took the form of day care centers, others pre-school play groups and more others took the form of CBCC. All these served the sole purpose of supporting the early years of child development. The pre-school play groups were the most favoured forms of ECD centers at that time. As a result of their ever increasing numbers, a seminar was organized in Blantyre in 1970 with support from the University of Malawi which resulted to the formation of the first Association of Preschool Playgroups in Malawi (APPM). The APPM was mandated to coordinate and support activities for all pre-schools in the country (Government of Malawi, 2004).

Following the United Nations (UN) general assembly declaration on the International Year of the Child (IYC) in 1979, new developments started unfolding in the provision of ECD in the

country. Modifications and changes to the existing ECD activities continued to progress in the early 1980s. In 1989, the Community Based Child Care Centers (CBCCs) started mushrooming as a national response to the wide spread malnutrition which resulted in high child mortality rate. Government interventions gathered momentum in the 1990s due to the increased burden of caring for orphans and other vulnerable children (OVC) resulting from HIV & AIDS pandemic. The population boom in ECD centers culminated into the development of ECD policy which was launched in 2003 which was later revised in 2006 to accommodate emerging issues (Government of Malawi 2009). However the major issue is to ascertain the extent to which the goals and objectives of the policy are being realized in ECD centers.

The country established a national ECD network to support the Ministry of Gender, Women and Child Development in mobilizing resources, setting standards and providing direction in the implementation of ECD policy in Malawi (Government of Malawi, 2009). It is indicated that the network helps to push the ECD agenda forward by providing guidance on the implementation of the program. The network also supported the government to scale up sensitization and awareness on the role of ECD in development. Due to increased awareness, more ECD centre's are still being opened in all the districts in the country (MGCCD, 2012 report). According to Education Sector Implementation Plan (ESIP) (2009) recognizes ECD services as part of the basic education in the country. Furthermore, the expansion of child survival programs in the health sector has led to an increase in reaching out to more children with ECD services (Government of Malawi, 2009).

In rural areas CBCCs are considered to be major institutions where preschool education is being implemented. CBCCs are favoured in rural areas because the centers are found at community level and are managed by the community members themselves. As observed by Government of Malawi (2003) communities in rural areas are increasingly getting organized to form informal playgroups as CBCCs. As such they are often less clearly structured with limited resources but accommodate a large number of children in a community. This is the reason the government of Malawi encouraged full involvement and participation of communities in CBCCs, as it was believed that they own them to improve their communities (Malawi Government (2004).

Current statistics indicated that there were over 9,873 ECD centers referred to as CBCCs in Malawi targeting 38% pre-school children that are attaining ECD services in the country leaving the 62% with no access to ECD services (Ministry of Gender, children and Social Welfare, 2013). In addition the MGCCD, (2013 quarterly report) indicated that there were 27, 000 early childhood teachers against 1,050,000 children. However out of the 27, 000 early childhood teachers 13,000 are trained representing 50 percent of trained teachers. However, what is not known is whether the training of this training is effective to impact on quality ECE.

#### ***2.4.2 Achievement that Malawi has registered in early childhood development sector***

Following the development of ECD policy, a wide range of materials were developed to support early learning at early care centers such as; early childhood training manual and guides, the Community Care based child care givers guides and profile, Community Based Care Centers parents and care givers manual, The ECD programme document, The ECD syllabus level 1-2 and operational guidelines (MOEST, 2008).

ECD policy (2003) stipulated that the training of care givers/ ECD teachers must be conducted using cascading modal. Cascading is where national core team of trainers who are trained by AECDM trainees the District Social welfare officers who later facilitate the training of ECD teachers/caregivers in their localities. However, these local trainings are not only done by District Social welfare officers but different organizations offer these courses (UNICEF, 2007).

ECD policy guidelines further explained that the training of ECD teachers whether done by the government, faith based organizations or non-governmental organizations at local level are supposed to be facilitated and monitored by District social welfare officers, however little is known whether the DSWO facilitates and monitors the trainings of ECD teachers (UNICEF, 2007). Besides, the period of training of national core team of trainers is not well documented, but according to ECD policy the recommended training of care givers/ ECD teachers is supposed to last for 10-14 days. Whether the policy guidelines for training are being followed in the implementation of ECD is not well known.

## **2.5 Models of pre-school teacher training**

There are a number of preschool teacher training models practised across the world. The study discussed three early childhood teacher education models which Malawi seemed to have borrowed its attributes in implementing its ECD programmes. These models are Reggio Emilia, Montessori and high /scope approaches.

### ***2.5.1 Reggio Emilia Model***

Reggio Emilia model of early childhood teacher education was well known in Italy because of using Art, as a core-learning medium. Edwards, Gandini & Forman, (1993) explains that educators' of this model were promoting children's intellectual developments through a systemic focus on symbolic representation. Furthermore, the authors explained using this model; the children were given every chance to explore with art materials and to express themselves in various ways. In addition, the model was adopted on assumption that art can enhance one's ability through promoting affective domain while simultaneously deepening one understands of culture and history (Wong, 1997).

In addition, the authors of Reggio Emilia approach outlined a number of traits that best defined the model. These include: teachers reflecting on their teaching practices; Children are celebrated and seen as competent and capable; teachers realize it's an ongoing quest to capture what children are actually doing; the use of documentation is evident, and it truly illustrated the children's explorations like capturing the process children go through to come up with ideas and examining children's thought; the teachers seek to learn, not copy. The model propagates good relationships between teachers and parents', children with teachers and teachers with each other.

### ***2.5.2 Montessori preschool training model***

Another model is Montessori that believes that children learn from errors, yet the set-up in which errors may occur is controlled differently in the Montessori classroom. Maria Montessori developed a program to educate the children in a housing development for poor families in Rome. She created many self-correcting materials designed to be used by individual children in prescribed ways to teach very specific concepts. She developed a program that emphasized teaching children responsibility through practical life skills and independent activities in a carefully planned environment (Roopnarine & Johnson, 1999). According to Klein, 2007, the model was promoting unguided kind of learning but self-discovery was encouraged in Montessori classroom. The model mainly aimed at capturing the fullest possible development of the whole child, ultimately preparing them for life's many rich experiences.

The model was developed on the assumption that children pass through sensitive periods of development early in life and that the child's mind between the time of birth and six years of age has an absorbent mind. According to the author, it is during this stage that a child has a tremendous ability to learn and assimilate from the world around him, without conscious effort. As a matter of fact, during this time, children are particularly receptive to certain external stimuli.

Montessori teachers recognize and take advantage of the highly perceptive stages through the introduction of materials and activities which are specially designed to stimulate the intellect. In addition, Montessori model encourages teachers to focus their attention on the child works and

his optimum level in an environment where beauty and orderliness are emphasized and appreciated. A spontaneous love of work is revealed as the child is given the freedom within boundaries to make their own choices.

Montessori teachers are trained to be facilitators in the classroom, always ready to assist and direct. Their purpose is to stimulate the child's enthusiasm for learning and to guide it, without interfering with the child's natural desire to teach them and become independent. In this model each child works through his individual cycle of activities, and learns to truly understand according to his own unique needs and capabilities. In addition, everything in a Montessori classroom has a specific purpose. There is nothing in the prepared environment that the child cannot see or touch. All of the furniture and equipment is scaled down to the child's size and is within easy reach. In other words, a quality Montessori classroom has a busy, productive atmosphere where joy and respect abound. The author of the model believed that within such an enriched environment, freedom, responsibility, and social and intellectual development spontaneously flourish.

### ***2.5.3 High/scope Model***

Finally, there is High/Scope model which has roots in constructivist theory who believe that children learn by mentally and physically interacting with the environment and with others (Papalia and Odds, 1998). The model further explains that although errors may be made during the interactions, they are considered just another part of the learning process. Roopnarine & Johnson, (1993) explains that teachers who are new to the High/Scope curriculum sometimes find work confusing because they are not sure of their roles. Since sometimes, a list of the key

experiences is displayed in the classroom, but then most of the day is spent in teacher-directed activities which are not what is meant by key experiences. Key experiences in which the children have plenty of time for active exploration in the classroom, is a major component of the High/Scope approach. Furthermore, in high/scope model, the teacher is not just passively facilitating while the children play rather, teachers are interactive though not interruptive of peers playing in high/scope classroom. According the authors of this model, believe that the role of a High/Scope teacher is to be actively observing and setting up problem solving situations for children.

Although both Constructivism and the Montessori Method involve learning by doing, there are significant differences. In Montessori, for instance, the didactic, self-correcting materials are specifically designed to help prevent errors. They argue that children learn by repetition, instead of trial and error (Mc Nichols, 1992). The role of pretend play is also different in the two methods. In High/Scope, children's creative exploration is encouraged, and this sometimes leads to pretend play, while in Montessori, practical life work that relate to the real world is stressed. Besides, Constructivism is a theory of learning, as opposed to a theory of teaching; High/Scope has exemplified an approach of teaching that supports Constructivist beliefs. Thus, children learn through active involvement with people, materials, events, and ideas.

Early childhood teacher education in Malawi seems to have borrowed from the three models discussed above. This kind of approach seems to agree with National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), a leading International organization dedicated to improving the quality of education and care provided to children birth through age 8 (Knitzer

and Klein, 2006). The NAEYC developed a position statement on curriculum in conjunction with the National Association of Early Childhood Specialists in State Departments of Education (NAECS/ SDE)). In their paper they argued that to achieve quality ECE, what matters is not a single best curriculum, but to identify what features of a curriculum are most effective for what outcomes and under what conditions) (NAEYC,2003). In other words there is no prescriptive ECE curriculum but a contingency one could be ideal. However, the challenge for Malawian early child teacher training, it seems the model being used is not clearly outlined to guide early childhood teacher training. This compelled the researcher to examine the nature of early childhood teacher education.

## **2.6 Research studies on early childhood teacher training**

### ***2.6.1 Training of early childhood teachers***

Teacher's and caregiver's training is one of the key dimension for quality ECDE this implies that better quality services can be obtained through upgrading professionals (ARNEC, 2011a). For some countries it seems urgent to increase and improve the pre-service and in-service training opportunities, and to address the disparities in the coverage of qualified teachers at sub national level, especially between urban and rural areas (UNESCO et al., 2012). Others sustain that this dimension should be a core part of ECD programme evaluation (Yousafzai, 2010). However Udommana, (2012) asserted that educational requirements for early childhood teachers differ by countries. For instance, some indicate the period of specific trainings whereas others require diplomas or college degrees. Following these disparities UNESCO et al., (2012)

suggested that there is need to identify standards in the region for the duration of teacher training and the teachers'/care givers' educational level requirements.

### ***2.6.1.1 Variations in early childhood teachers training***

Training of early childhood teachers ranges from short term training long term, often knowledge or technique based. Garret and Porter et al., (2001) posit that the nature and quality of these trainings virtually have no evidence of effectiveness due to greater variations that exist in the early childhood teacher training. This corroborates with a study that was conducted by UNICEF (2007) which revealed disparities in the implementation of early childhood Education services due to variation in early childhood teacher preparation. However, ARNEC (2011b, 2011c) explains that the training could be offered by different stakeholders such as the government, NGOs, or private institutions but must be supervised by governmental bodies.

The study carried out in Los Angeles revealed that variation in children's experiences emanates from variation in early childhood teacher education (Lara-Cinisomo, Allison Sidle Fuligni, Daugherty, Howes and Karoly, 2009). However, this study concentrated on variation in the highest level of education of early childhood teachers, but did not consider the benefits of participants' ongoing professional development. This research will look at all types of education such as academic qualification, pre service training and ongoing professional development courses that teachers in early childhood development centers acquire to properly handle children in early childhood centers.

### ***2.6.1.2 Relevance of early childhood teacher training***

Zaslow & Martinez-Beck, (2005) explained that the promise of early childhood education depends in large part on the professional development and training of teachers in instructional, interaction skills, pre-service and in-service teacher training. They further explain that the training that targets high quality interactions in classrooms have powerful potential to prepare children to enter school ready to learn. This collaborates with Njoroge (2010) who says that a good foundation during the formative period of the child results to increased achievement in primary education.

The tracer study conducted in Embu District, Kenya, compared children who were taught by preschool teachers trained in the two-year, in-service course run by District Centers for Early Childhood Education (DICECE) with those who had untrained preschool teachers. These cohorts of children who enrolled in the first level of primary school (Standard 1) in three consecutive years: 1991, 1992 and 1993, were tracked through primary school to the classes they were in 1999. The comparison based on academic performance and the factors affecting academic performance, such as retention, repetition and development of psychosocial characteristics. The study found several statistically significant differences between the two groups of children. The children cared for by DICECE trained teachers made the transition from preschool to primary school more successfully than those cared for by untrained teachers. This was shown in the significantly lower dropout and repetition rates in standard 1 for the children who had trained preschool teachers (Dheimann, 2003).

### ***2.6.2 Teacher qualification and quality preschool education***

Research indicates that young children's learning and development depend on the educational qualifications of their teachers (Barnett, 2004). The author observed that the most effective preschool teachers are those that have at least a four-year college degree and specialized training in early childhood. Despite a substantial body of evidence, public policy has yet to fully recognize the value of well-educated, professional, early childhood education teachers in Malawi.

Numerous studies have shown that high level of education is associated with higher pedagogic quality in Early Childhood Education Centers (ECEC) settings. One study found that preschool teachers with bachelor's degrees were the most effective practitioners. Their effectiveness was measured within the classroom and based on stimulation, responsiveness and engagement of the children in learning activities (Howes et al., 2003). The results of the Effective Provision of Pre-school Education (EPPE) study from England also had shown that key explanatory factors for high-quality ECE were related to staff with higher qualifications, staff with leadership skills and long-serving staff; trained staff working alongside and supporting less qualified staff; staff with a good understanding of child development and learning (Siraj-Blatchford, 2010). In contrast, higher proportions of staff with low-level qualifications were associated with less favourable child outcomes in the socio-emotional domain such as; poor social relationships with their peers and co-operation.

Using data from two massive studies, Howe et al (2003) examined the effects of four year levels of teacher education on teaching quality and child development. The studies revealed that higher education was associated with better teaching and better language acquisition (Howe, 2003). These findings are collaborated with the study which was conducted by White book (2003) which revealed that children whose teachers had four year degrees engaged in more creative activities. According to the results from the two authors, teachers with the most advanced education appear to be most effective.

In support of the subsequent findings, the multi-state studies of child care which was undertaken by Phillipson and colleagues that involved 521 preschool classrooms. The study used the Early Childhood Environment rating scale (ECERS) to measure teacher qualification and preschool classroom quality. The study used indicators such as teachers' warmth, attentiveness and learner engagement to predict preschool classroom quality. The results revealed that high percentage of teachers with a four year college degree were able to show warmth, attentiveness and engagement of their children in their classrooms more than those did not have college degrees.

Large-scale studies, such as the one that involved about 2,500 preschool and early elementary classrooms looked at how teacher education and training are related to changes in children's' achievement. The results revealed that on average, there was only a small association between child outcomes and teacher training, experience and teacher education (Guarino; Hamilton; Lockwood & Rathbun, 2006). This contradicts with NCEDL pre-kindergarten study that showed positive effects of teacher education on quality ECE. The author attributed the success to training which was closely tied to knowledge about child development. This is in support with one of the

OECD policies which talks about improving qualifications, training and working conditions as one way of achieving quality ECE (OECD, 2011).

Good and Grouws (1979, p 355-362) reported the results of a study in which 40 teachers received instruction in effective teaching practices, then implemented these with their students. Trained teachers out performed control teachers in monitoring daily review, checking daily seatwork, checking homework, weekly and monthly reviews as these were the major features of the program in which teachers received training. The above studies contradict with other studies of pre-k which examined the relationship between teacher education and child outcomes. In a study of Georgia's state-funded pre-k program, there was no difference in child outcomes based on whether they had teachers with Bachelor of Arts degree and other technical degrees (Henry and Rickman, 2005).

Other studies point out that it is not necessary that all staff have high general levels of education. Highly qualified staff can have a positive influence on those who work with them and who do not have the same high qualifications. The EPPE study found that the observed behaviour of lower-qualified staff turned out to be positively influenced by working alongside highly trained staff (Sammons, 2010).

Despite the general conclusion that higher education of ECEC staff leads to higher pedagogical quality, better child outcomes are not supported by all studies. Early et al. (2007) emphasize that teacher quality is a very complex issue. The authors argue that there is no simple relationship between the level of education of staff and classroom quality or learning outcomes. Early et al

(2007) studied the relationship between child outcomes and staff qualifications. They found contradictory associations between the two. They argue that increasing staff education will not suffice for improving classroom quality or maximizing children's academic gains. Instead, raising the effectiveness of early childhood education will likely require a broad range of professional development activities and support for staff's interactions with children.

Supporting the views above, Blau (2001) posits that teacher education does not contribute to teacher effectiveness. Findings from all these studies suggest that even if the entire early learning workforce had a four-year degree, it would still not be enough to ensure classroom quality and positive child outcomes unless the teachers have some specialized training in early childhood development and how young children learn.

### ***2.6.3 Specialised education in early childhood teaching***

Not only the level of education but also the specialised content of the staff's education is important for the level of quality in ECE. In this context, Specialisation refers to any education or training focusing on early childhood education, child development or similar, above and beyond general educational attainments (Litjens and Taguma, 2010).

Initial education and training in areas such as early child development and early education increase the likelihood that practitioners are effective in promoting the educational, socio emotional and healthy development of children. Sommer et al., (2010) posit that practitioners' ability to create rich, stimulating environments in ECEC is jeopardized when staff have inadequate, insufficient or incorrect content and pedagogical knowledge.

Research has shown that when early childhood teachers are trained on matters related to early development and care, they can develop a better child's perspective which will enable them to integrate playing and learning into practice (Samuelsson and Carlson, 2008; Johansson and Samuelsson, 2009). NIEER, (2004) adds that teachers have increased ability to solve problems and develop targeted lesson plans; and have an improved vocabulary, which stimulates early literacy development.

Several studies have shown that specialized education is associated with better child outcomes and improved staff competences to provide suitable pedagogical learning opportunities. Howe's, et al., (2003) explains that, staff with higher education and specialized training engage in more positive teacher-child interactions including praising, comforting, questioning and being responsive to children. This is supported by Nation institute for early childhood education research (NIEER) (2004) which reveals that low educational qualifications and a lack of specific preparation in preschool limit the educational effectiveness of many preschool teachers.

Furthermore, eight studies of child care and Head Start explored the contributions of a bachelor's degree and specialized training in early childhood to teacher behavior and program quality. The study suggested that the best results were found when teachers had a bachelor's degree and specialized early childhood training at the college level. Another study found similar results to the effect that teacher education paired with specialized training in early childhood was the key to increasing quality and achievement. Teachers with a four-year college degree and a teaching

certificate in early childhood were rated as creating a more positive emotional climate and providing more learning activities than teachers with no formal training in early childhood.

Despite, the evidence on the benefit of specialized training, Hyson et al., (2009) counter argued that specialized teacher training does not guarantee greater effectiveness. He suggests the quality of the education or training programme may be more critical factor in staff's ability to stimulate children's development and learning. Elliot, (2006) supports Hyson line of thought, by emphasizing the need for good initial staff preparation and a call for greater consistency across initial professional preparation programmes to enhance quality ECE.

#### ***2.6.4 Curriculum and quality early childhood education***

Curriculum content is also one of a dimension highlighted in a regional forum on quality ECE which deserves attention for the formulation of standards on quality ECE (Udommana, 2012). Rao and Sun (2010a) mentioned curriculum as a key element of quality, which influences the teacher-child interaction. The authors also highlight the importance of curricular continuity between pre-primary and primary education. The debate around the concept of quality in ECEC also means that the content of the training and education of ECE staff remains a point of discussion. Spodek and Saracho (1994) argued that educators need to separate the curriculum content of education (what to teach) from the process of education (how to teach). This is when teachers can know how to select appropriate contents, from the cultural and educational perspectives, not only from children's developmental capability.

According to OECD, (2006) ECE curricula is categorized into academic and more comprehensive models. An academic approach makes use of a staff-initiated curriculum with cognitive aims for school preparation. A comprehensive approach centers on the child, seeks to broaden the scope for holistic development and well-being (Bertrand, 2007). Several scholars observed that an academic approach can prescribe teaching in critical subject areas but can also limit a child-centred environment characterized by self-initiated activity, creativity and self-determination (Eurydice, 2009; Prentice, 2000).

Siraj-Blatchford, (2010) posit that high-quality ECE settings are related to curriculum practice in which cognitive and social development are viewed as complementary and of equal importance. Sheridan et al., (2009) posits that such integrated curriculum is believed to contribute to high-quality ECE and improved social behaviors'. As an example, Sweden is considered to have high quality ECEC in part because its curriculum contents place the same value on social and cognitive learning (Pramling and Pramling Samuelsson, 2011).

Bierman et al. (2008) studied a Research-based, Developmentally Informed (REDI) early childhood teacher training program that was integrated into regular Head Start centers that used High/Scope or Creative Curriculum. This program was designed to promote academic and social-emotional school readiness to preschoolers by training teachers using program-based strategies and techniques in their classrooms that combined Preschool Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategy (PATHS) and Dialogic Reading; a set of Sound Games and print center activities, for emergent literacy skills (Whitehurst, Arnold et al., 1994).

Teachers received a three-day intensive training prior to the intervention and a one-day follow-up training four months after the intervention. In addition, teachers received weekly mentoring support provided by REDI trainers. Parents were also provided with materials for home activities with their children. Hierarchical linear models were employed to estimate the intervention effect. According to Adams et al., (1998) significant treatment effects in pre-kindergarten were detected on language (ES = +0.18), literacy (ES = +0.16), and phonological awareness (ES = +0.43).

It should be noted that mixed models that combine different curriculum approaches are not always successfully integrated in practice. Bennett, (2004) explains that in some countries, the implementation of a mixed model curriculum has been found to be less effective than pure academic or comprehensive approaches. Nevertheless, a clear dichotomy between the academic and comprehensive approaches is not necessarily warranted.

### ***2.6.5 Continuous professional development and early childhood teacher training***

Research shows that in order for staff to maintain their professional quality, they need to engage in ongoing professional development. A well-trained practitioner does not only have a good initial level of education but makes sure that the effects of initial education do not fade out (Fukkink and Lont, 2007; Mitchell and Cubey, 2003). Ongoing professional development has the potential to fill in the knowledge and skills that staff may be lacking or require updating due to changes in particular knowledge fields. This is especially crucial in ECEC where new programmes are being developed continuously. The body of research on what works is growing, the discussions on quality in ECEC are ongoing, and the focus has changed to a developmental perspective.

In-service training can be conducted on the job or can be provided by an external source, such as training institutes or colleges. It can be provided through, for instance staff meetings, workshops, conferences, subject training, field-based consultation training, supervised practices and mentoring. The key to effective professional development is identifying the right training strategies to help ECE practitioners stay updated on scientifically based methods and curriculum subject knowledge so as to be able to apply this knowledge in their work (Litjens and Taguma, 2010). It also pointed out that it should continue over a longer period of time: staff should have long-term or regular opportunities for training (Sheridan, 2001). Only when learning experiences are targeted to the needs of staff and are true learning experiences with development opportunities can professional development have favorable outcomes (Mitchell and Cubey, 2003).

On the other hand, studies have shown that an effective way of improving knowledge and skills is subject training. Burchinal et al., (2002) suggests that field based consultation could also be effective as it provides ECE staff with the possibility to receive feedback on their practices. He further asserts that practitioners who do not have a degree, but who attend ECE relevant professional workshops are found to provide higher quality care than colleagues who did not attend. However, in general, there is little clarity about what forms of professional development are most effective. One of the reasons is that staffs have different needs: practitioners have very different backgrounds, and effective training methods should suit these differences (Elliott, 2006).

### ***2.6.6 Certification***

Scholars argue that Preschool teachers should not be allowed entry into their classroom just based on their claim of love for children. A proper teacher training qualification is the basis on which schools should hire preschool teachers (NAEYC, 2001). Therefore the very first step to a preschool teacher career is to get the right certification. They posit that it would be proper to choose an internationally recognized course provider and check on their accreditation, affiliations and go through the curriculum very carefully. According to NAEYC, (2001), they argue that the course duration should be that of a diploma program and the course content should cover both theory and practical application of the same in the right balance. In addition, studies have shown that the curriculum should have appropriate and relevant techniques and methodology of teaching.

Besides, National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) (2001) explains that learning should be evaluated and be given proper feedback to make the training more effective. In 2001 NCATE and NAEYC approved standards to prepare early childhood professionals. According to them, they posit that early childhood teachers require a four-year college degree and practical experience in which teacher candidates learn and demonstrate the abilities of effective teachers (NAEYC standards, 2001)

## **2.7 Challenges in teacher education**

### ***2.7.1 Working conditions for early childhood teachers***

Research points out that the ability of staff to attend to the needs of children is influenced not only by their level of education and training but also by external factors, such as their work environment, salary and work benefits (Shonkoff and Philips, 2000). Working conditions can have an impact on staff job satisfaction and their ability to carry out their tasks; and their possibilities to positively interact with children, give them enough attention and stimulate their development. Working conditions in ECE settings are often referred to as structural quality indicators such as: wages, staff-child ratio, maximum group size, working hours and other characteristics like non-financial benefits, team-work, manager's leadership, workload that can influence the ability of professionals to do their work well and their satisfaction with the workplace, work tasks and nature of the job (Capko, 2001).

A study by Huntsman, (2008) found that low wages affect the ways in which staff interact with children, and are related to high turnover rates. High turnover rates can have a negative effect on ECE quality since staff provision is less stable, which, in turn, can impact child development. When staff members regularly change within a group of children, staff and children are less able to develop stable relationships; and nurturing, stimulating interactions take place less often (CCL, 2006).

The body of research on the effects of working conditions on child development is not very extensive, and findings do not always point in the same direction. This is mainly because there is

a complex inter-relationship between staff-child ratios, staff qualifications, quality and type of provision that makes it difficult to single out the effect of a particular characteristic of working conditions (Sammons, 2010).

In addition, research evidence for the impact of working conditions on child outcomes is not yet very strong from the literature. It seems working conditions have not often been at the heart of many studies. Researchers have linked certain workplace characteristics staff-child ratios and staff compensation to differences in programme quality and to staff turnover and less often to measures of child development (White book, 2009). Research on how working conditions affect ECE quality and child outcomes could shed new light on the importance of working conditions.

### ***2.8 Requirements for pre-school teachers to achieve quality preschool education***

Several studies show preschool teacher training to be a pivotal issue. Describing the importance of training of professionals Yu & Zhang, (2011) explains that training is not simply a matter of putting knowledge into practice; it also involves learning how to use one's judgment and inventiveness to change, adapt and master criticism and unavoidable or uncertain situations. What Yu and Zhang are emphasizing is that professional teachers' judgment informs their participation in practical education and is the key to making education theory real and important. Early childhood teachers are special members of the teaching profession. Their charges are innocent children, and teachers must not only care for them and impart knowledge, but also cultivate their moral character. These children face increasingly unstable and difficult problems which need more adult support during the teaching process. This implies that student teachers in preschool education programs need more practice touching, crawling, rolling, and playing, as

these activities will help them adapt to kindergartens' work quickly, and benefit their research and practices.

### ***2.8.1 Appropriate training and practice***

Studies have found that it really does not matter whether one has a post-graduate degree, a graduate degree, a diploma or just a school leaving certificate as their educational qualification, what really matters is the type of teacher training. Teaching is a skill and therefore one needs both training and practice in it. American Tesol Institute (2008) in their paper emphasized that to teach preschoolers effectively one needs to be aware of early childhood theories and principles, educational psychology, methods and techniques that engage young learners, how to handle a classroom full of 2 to 5 year olds. They further assert that an effective preschool teacher training will not only cover all this but a lot more. They add that practical experience of being with children is the core to all teacher learning and training. Chen (2011) adds that based on current societal needs and previous requirements, new preschool teachers must possess both theoretical knowledge and specific practical skills to support their future teaching and their students' future learning.

### **2.8.2 Art skills**

Strong teaching ability in music, singing, painting and dancing could be vital in the training for early childhood teachers (OECD, 2012). Research has shown that arts can boost children's attention, improve cognition and help children learn to envision, such as how to think about what they cannot see. The ability to envision can help a child generate a hypothesis in science later in life or imagine past events in history class. Intensive music training can help train children for geometry tasks and map reading. However, according to Litjens and Taguma (2010) posit that there is little attention in research to children's use of art and music practices and its effect on developmental outcomes.

### **2.9 Policy debates on early childhood teacher training in Malawi**

After the world declaration of Education for all at Jomtien (1990), there was an introduction of the idea that "learning begins at birth" which affirms that early childhood education is an integral part of basic education and education level in its own right. Then the Dakar Education for All (EFA) declaration further institutionalized and propagated this objective (UNICEF, 1990). These developments influenced Malawi government and UNDP including ECD under basic education in 1994, this initiated the training of preschool teachers by UNESCO, UNICEF, save the children USA and Bernard Van leer foundation. Through this initiative four national core trainers were trained and 42 district trainers across the country (ECD basic training Manual, 1996)

In 2003, as part of the country's commitment towards achieving EFA goals and as a result of the recognition of the importance of providing holistic care to children, the National Policy on Early

Childhood Development (ECD was developed to provide guidelines and coordination of ECD activities within the country (Republic of Malawi 2006). In this policy, the government considers the provision of care and support services for the Malawian child as critical towards the growth and development of the future generation. Another policy document, National Education Sector Plan (NESP) (2008-2017) recognizes that the provision of ECD is an important pillar to Education for all.

Furthermore, the 2010 Moscow declaration framework sought to elevate the priority attached to early childhood education even more by stressing on three major principles which include:

- putting in place committed valued and trained professionals appropriate for Early Child Care Education(ECCE) as well as context sensitive curricula and materials
- improving and expanding teacher training accreditation and the professional development of early child hood education professionals and;
- Mobilizing diverse and innovative financing sources and mechanisms in support of early childhood education (ECE); enhance appropriate and necessary regulations, resources through partnerships with private sector (UNESCO, 2010b).

But according to Chiziwa (2012) policy intentions are often not matched with practices. This argument was raised following considerable variation in the training of preschool teachers and Care givers reported, which results to disparities in the implementation of ECD policy in Malawi.

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)(2005) recommends that lead teachers should possess an associate's degree or equivalent and supplementary training in early childhood education, child development or special education; assistant teachers have at least a high school diploma or General Education Degree; all teachers' participate in professional development training; a maximum class size of 16 children and the minimum child-to-teacher ratio of 8 to 1 for three-year-olds; and a maximum class size of 20 children and the minimum child-teacher ratio of 10 to 1 for four-year-olds (NAEYC, 2005).

National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) (2004) suggests that in order to achieve quality preschool programs, there is need to adhere to the following 10 structural benchmarks: teachers must possess bachelor's degree; teachers need to receive specialized training in teaching four to five-year-old children; teachers must complete at least 15 hours or one year in-service training; assistant teachers must have a child development associate's degree or its equivalent; a comprehensive curriculum that cover domains of language/literacy, math, science, social-emotional skills, cognitive development, health, physical development and social studies; a maximum class size less than or equal to Teacher-Child Interactions 1:20 children; a child-teacher ratio of 10:1 or better; at least 1 meal served each day; vision, hearing, health screening/referral for children; and at least 1 family support service, which may include parent conferences, home visits, parenting support or training, referral to social services, and information relating to nutrition.

### ***2.9.1 Empirical studies for ECD training***

Martha Dozva and Chipso Dyanda(2006) carried out a reflective study on early child hood development teacher training from University of Zimbabwe in the department of teacher education. The purpose of the study was to establish the status of ECD training in tertiary institutions in Zimbabwe. Questionnaires, observations and structured interviews were used to collect data hence a mixed methodologies approach was effectively used. The results revealed that since its inception in the mid 1990's, ECD training in Zimbabwe has developed considerably in nature and scope. However, remaining major challenges were limited leave of absence for infant teachers to upgrade themselves professionally and failure to attract male practitioners into ECD training. This was further compounded by high University fees, inadequate supply of material resources, limited local literature and published research studies in ECD and unregulated accreditation of paraprofessional training. The study also, identified opportunities in ECD training which include Government scholarships in accredited programmes, a responsive ECD policy framework, autonomy of universities to accredit programmes and development of a career path for ECD graduates at various levels. It concluded by recommending the need for further training focusing on accreditation of training for paraprofessionals, increased training capacity at all levels, coordinated funding for accredited training by NGOs irrespective of level and research and scholarship funding for higher training in tertiary institutions.

Dr. Esther Oduolowu and Fatimah Ayodele Oyesomi (2004) in the *International Journal of learning and Development* (2012) presented a survey of daycare and nursery schools which was conducted in Nigeria. The title of the study was '*The Effects of Training on Preschool Teachers*

*Practices in Oyo State*'. The study investigated the teaching practices of those preschool teachers exposed to the training in Ibarapa East Local Government Area of Oyo State. It adopted the descriptive survey research design. The population of the study consisted of the entire pre-school teachers from the 16 public primary schools that attended the training given by Oyo State Universal Basic Education Board (OYO SUBEB) between 13th and 16th of December 2005. 32 pre-school teachers participated in the study. Two instruments titled "Pre-school Teachers Teaching Practices Questionnaire" (PTTPQ) and "Pre-school Teachers Observation Schedule" (PTOS) were used to gather relevant data. Findings of the study revealed the pre-school teachers used teacher-centred method of teaching with few materials provided. It was also revealed that the pre-school teachers used the new curriculum but did not encourage hands-on activities in learning the content of the curriculum. The study also revealed that most of the teachers were not trained in area of early childhood education and that most early year programmes were managed by people who have never been in the classroom. Among others, it was recommended that trained pre-school teachers should be recruited to teach in the pre-schools and workshops should be organized to train and re-train those on the job regularly on pedagogy.

Xu, Yingru(2012) a student who was pursuing a Master degree in Education at the University of Hong kong conducted an evaluative study to assess the effectiveness of the newly kindergarten teacher training program in Shanghai. He was from China and so he was interested with the newly adopted early childhood Pre-service teacher training programme which was copied from United States of America (USA). The Art Education Department of East China Normal University was the first College to use the programme. The study involved 10 AED trained early childhood teacher 3 AED trainers and 10 kindergarten principals (Employers). The variables

which were being tested in the study included: Course content and performance of early childhood teachers who undertook AED training. The instruments used to collect data for the study included: questionnaires, interviews and document analysis. The results of this study indicated that the AED program cultivated elite preschool teachers who satisfied the needs of the preschool education market. AED graduates obtained praise from their employers because of their pedagogical competency and skills in handling preschool children.

Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (PATHS) was one of early childhood teacher education curriculum which was used in Spain. This was a social-emotional curriculum, delivered in a developmentally- appropriate sequence. The curriculum emphasizes affective awareness of self and others, targeting children's ability to self-regulate their behavior. Domitrovich et al. (2007) tested the effectiveness of PATHS for preschoolers in a randomized study. The first year of the three-year study was devoted to familiarizing intervention teachers with the PATHS curricular processes and materials. The following year, 20 classrooms within two Pennsylvania Head Start centers (246 children in total) were randomly assigned to 10 intervention and 10 control conditions. Demographically, the participant sample reflected the make-up of their Head Starts in terms of race, gender, and SES indicators. On pretest measures, intervention and control students performed similarly. Delivery of the treatment consisted of 30 lessons. At post-test, 201 students remained, due to 18% attrition over the school year. Several child outcomes were administered, but only one cognitive measure, the Leiter Sustained Attention scale, met the criteria for inclusion in this review. After one year, PATHS scored non-significantly higher than the controls on this measure, with an effect size of +0.16.

The purpose of the study was to identify relationships among type of early childhood teacher training programs and levels of perceived efficacy beliefs concerning the inclusion of young children with disabilities. Pre-service teachers' enrolled in general early childhood, early childhood special education, and unified teacher training programs completed the *Teacher Efficacy for the Inclusion of Young Children with Disabilities*. This scale contains four subscales pertaining to (a) knowledge of procedures related to special education, (b) knowledge of young children with disabilities, (c) teaching confidence with young children having a disability and who are included into the general education classroom, and (d) perceptions of their abilities to implement both effective vi teaching strategies and modification to the general education curriculum to meet the needs of young children with disabilities.

Results indicated pre service teachers enrolled in general early childhood teacher training programs reported significantly lower levels of perceived efficacy beliefs concerning the inclusion of young children with disabilities on all four subscales of the dependent measure compared to their early childhood special education and unified counterparts. Pre service teachers enrolled in early childhood special education teacher training programs reported a higher degree of perceived teaching efficacy concerning special education procedures compared to those enrolled in a unified program. There were no significant differences among early childhood special education and unified teacher training programs on the three remaining subscales.

The findings of this study suggest pre service teachers participating in separate early childhood education teacher training programs lacked confidence in their beliefs regarding their skills and

performances concerning including children with disabilities in their future general education classroom. The meanings of these efficacy doubts may be explained by minimal exposures to special education content and direct experiences with children having disabilities. Additionally, the results indicate a need for more instruction concerning special education evaluation and drafting individualized education and service plans in unified teacher training programs.

Harris DN and sass TR (2008), in the Journal of entitled "*Tracking learning of every student*" presented their study which they conducted in education department at the University of Florida in the USA. The purpose of their study was to establish the relationship between teacher training, teacher quality and student achievement. The authors used a number of models that included detailed measures of pre-service and in-service training, a rich set of time-varying covariates, and student, teacher, and school fixed effects. The results of the study indicated that only two of the forms of teacher training influenced productivity. First, content-focused teacher professional development indicated that, positively associated with productivity in middle and high school math. Second, more experienced teachers appeared more effective in teaching elementary math and reading and middle school math. There was no evidence that either pre-service (undergraduate) training or the scholastic aptitude of teachers influenced teachers' ability to increase student achievement.

## **2.10 Conclusion and Summary**

The conclusion that can be derived from the literature review is that early childhood education need quality teacher education in order to yield reputable results in lesson delivery in early childhood centers. The chapter presents early childhood teacher training models which Malawi can borrow from. It also presents necessary things to reconsider such as the curriculum and duration of training to enable produce quality early childhood teachers. The literature within Africa and internationally seems to suggests the need for tertiary qualification and specialized early childhood teacher education to achieve quality ECD. The literature also unveils variations that exist in early childhood teacher education, however advises that this could be mitigated through having commissioned institution to regularize ECD training. Almost all the authors discussed in this chapter suggest the benefits of providing quality teacher education to achieve quality ECE. However, none have shown inconclusive results except a few, therefore this study adds to the existing literature by providing findings from a Malawian context

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter provides a detailed presentation of the design and the methodology that was used in the study. It starts with a description of the design that the study adopted. The chapter presents the research paradigm and theoretical framework which guided the study. It also describes the study population and explains how the sample for the study was drawn with reference to the design that was chosen. Besides, data collection procedures and instruments are discussed. In addition, it offers explanation on the instrumentation and measures that were used to ensure validity and reliability of the study. The limitations and delimitation that the study encountered has also been included. The chapter also includes procedures that were used in data analysis. The chapter concludes by stating ethical considerations.

##### ***3.1.1 Research design***

Participants were selected using multilevel concurrent sampling design. This is because the study involved collecting quantitative and qualitative data at approximately the same time (concurrently) and on different levels of the population under study (multilevel).

### **3.1.1.1 Mixed methods**

Polit and Beck (2008) defined research design as an overall plan of obtaining answers to questions being studied and for handling various challenges to the worth of the study. A research design determines techniques to be used in sampling, data collection and analysis. This study used a mixed method research design. Tashakkorri & Teddlie, (2003) described a mixed research method as a procedure for collecting and analyzing data by mixing both quantitative and qualitative data at some stage of the research process within a single study in order to understand a research problem more completely.

The rationale for adopting the mixed approach was that many studies similar in nature used mixed approach methods and the results were effective. A case in point is a study conducted by Martha Dozva and Chipo Dyanda (2012) from University of Zimbabwe who used the mixed approach method. The focus of the study was to evaluate early childhood development teacher training in tertiary institutions in Zimbabwe. In the study, questionnaire, observation and structured interviews were used to collect and analyze data. Therefore, this study has used the mixed approach methods to examine Early Childhood Development teacher training in Malawi.

Mixed research studies are advantageous because as stated by Creswell, Vick and Clark (2007) they provide more comprehensive evidence for studying a research problem than either quantitative or qualitative research alone. The subsequent views are corroborated by Green, Caracelli, & Graham, (1989) and Tashakkorri & Teddlie, (1998).

### **3.1.1.2 Quantitative methods**

The quantitative part provided descriptive and inferential statistics to help provide a general understanding of early childhood teacher education on how it is organized, substantiated with the qualitative part to provide an in-depth understanding of the effectiveness of the training on teacher classroom practices and the challenges involved.

In quantitative research, an investigator relies on numerical data (Charles & Mertler, 2002). The researcher uses post positivist claims for developing knowledge, such as cause and effect thinking, reduction to specific variables, hypotheses and questions, use of measurement and observation, and the test of theories. A researcher isolates variables and causally relates them to determine the magnitude and frequency of relationships. In addition the researcher also determines which variables to investigate and chooses instruments, which will yield highly reliable and valid scores. This study was subjected to the aforementioned processes to establish the relationship between ECD training and delivery of lessons in ECD classroom.

### **3.1.1.3 Qualitative methods**

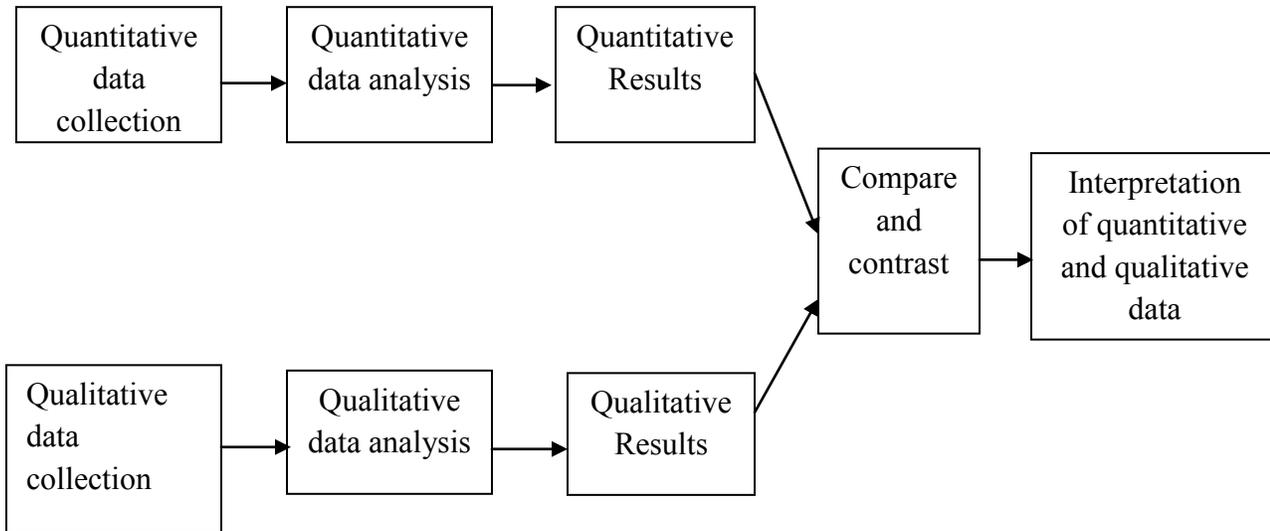
Qualitative research is an inquiry process of understanding where the researcher develops a complex, holistic picture, analyzes words, reports detailed views of informants, and conducts the study in a natural setting (Creswell, 1998). In this approach, the researchers make knowledge claims based on the constructivist (Guba & Lincoln, 1982) or participatory perspectives (Mertens, 2003). In qualitative research, data is collected from those immersed in everyday life of the setting in which the study is framed. Miller (2000) adds that in qualitative research, data

analysis is based on the values that the participants perceive their world. Finally, it produces an understanding of the problem based on multiple contextual factors. This study was subjected to the above captioned processes to describe the nature of early childhood teacher training in Malawi.

#### **3.1.1.4 Triangulation**

This study used triangulation design-convergence model which is sometimes referred to as concurrent triangulation design (Figure 1). The approach was driven by use of both quantitative and qualitative methods during the same time frame (Creswell, Vicki & Clark, 2007). According to Mertler and Charles (2008), this approach of combining both quantitative and qualitative data allows the researcher to combine the strengths of each form of data. Furthermore, Creswell et al., (2007) added that the design generally involves the concurrent, but separate collection and analysis of quantitative and qualitative data so that the researcher may understand best the research problem. Similarly, this study adopted the same approach.

The rationale behind using triangulation convergence model in this study was that the researcher valued equally the two forms of data. The data were thereby merged, and the results of analysis were used simultaneously to understand the research questions through the comparison of findings from the quantitative and qualitative analysis. Creswell & Plano Clark (2007) stated that during interpretation, this design helps the researcher to directly compare and contrast quantitative statistical results with qualitative findings in order to elaborate valid and well-substantiated conclusions about the problem under study.



(Adapted from Creswell & Plato, 2007)

Figure 1: Summary of Triangulation Design Convergence Model

### 3.2 Research paradigm

The study adopted Interpretivism as its guiding philosophy with some elements of positivism. This approach corresponds to Saunders et al (2009), who said that the practical reality of research philosophies is that no research question falls neatly into one philosophical domain. Positivists' view is sometimes called the scientific method (Kothari, 2006). In the scientific method, an individual begins with a theory, collects data that either supports or refutes the theory, and then makes necessary revisions before additional tests are made. Positivist paradigm is often associated with the quantitative research method (Tashakkorri & Teddlie, 2009). The proposed study fits into positivist paradigm because a number of theories were used to support the understanding of the research problem. For example, the theoretical framework is informed by a number of theories which include, identical element, stimulus generalization and cognitive theories. Identical theory assumes that preschool teacher training is similar to work

environment. It emphasizes on the need to provide similar conditions between training and work environment to allow teachers adept. On the other hand, stimulus generalization theory assumes that knowledge and skills can be manipulated to suit a particular context or situation. A case in point, teachers trained in Montessori ECD model when asked to practice in Malawian context, need to adjust to suit the current needs. Finally, the cognitive emphasizes on the need for preschool teachers to possess strong academic and profession background in order to effectively grasp and apply knowledge and skills in the work environment. It is argued that, when these three theories are harmonized in preschool teacher training, the likelihood of yielding quality result is high at a preschool centre (Baldwin,1988).

Interpretivism is adopted because the study aimed to make in-depth investigations into the nature of early childhood teacher training in Malawi. For example, the third and fourth research questions seek to understand how early childhood teacher education helps them to deliver lessons in their classroom and some of the challenges that are related to teacher education. These questions invited multiple views and opinions which required the researcher to make personal interpretations in order to fully understand the research problem. As Saunders et al (2009) put it, Interpretivism makes it necessary to explore the subjective meanings motivating the actions of social actors in order for a researcher to be able to understand those actions in a given context. According to Angen, (2000), interpretive approaches rely heavily on naturalistic methods such as interviews, observations and document analysis. This study, therefore, utilized interviews, classroom lesson observation and document analysis as methods of data collection which made it interpretive in nature.

### **3.3 Theoretical frame work**

The study was guided by Baldwin and Ford (1988) training transfer model. The model views effective training as being dependent on the type of content, the method of delivery and the enabling environment to exhibit the acquired skills and knowledge. These are the major variables that guided the study in examining effectiveness of ECD teacher training in Malawi. The study mainly focused at the training characteristics, training design and the work environment as they affect any training and its implication on understanding the research problem of the study.

Training transfer model means that learners are able to transfer their knowledge and skills learned in a training session back to their jobs (Rhodenizer and Bowers, 1999). There are three different theories which help to explain training transfer model. These theories have been explained in the following sub-sections and then a detailed explanation of training transfer model in relation to the quality of early childhood teacher training in Malawi.

#### ***3.3.1 The identical elements theory***

This theory assumes that the training and work environment are the same. The transfer of knowledge and skills should be fairly stable and straight forward (Baldwin,1998). This is relevant to the type of early childhood teacher education that is being practised in Malawi where early childhood teachers are recruited and offered on-the job training by the experienced and trained colleagues. This is to make sure that the teachers are trained in their natural environment such as same management and classroom.

### ***3.3.2 The stimulus generalization theory***

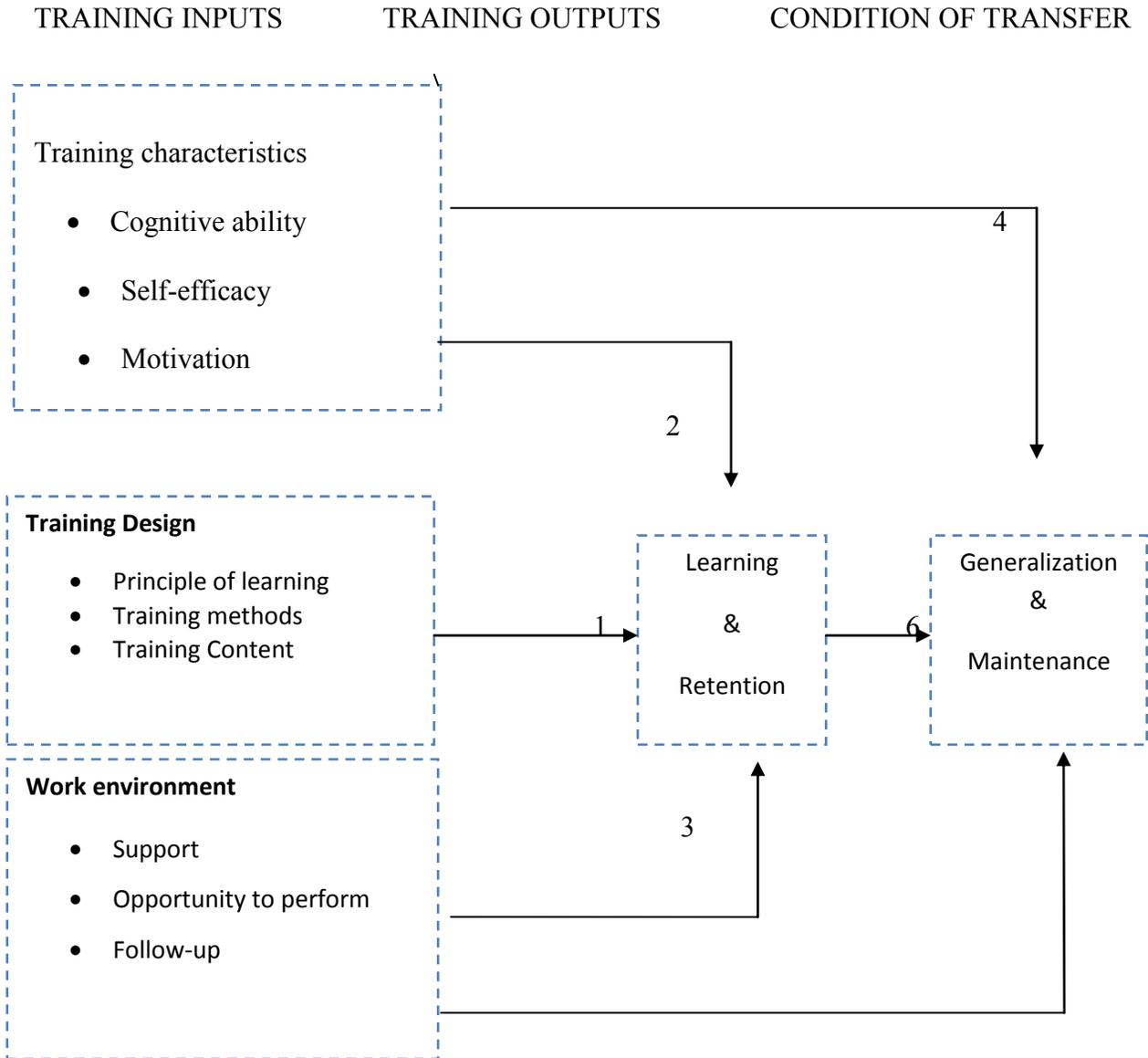
The theory assumes that there are trained knowledge and skills that can be used in different work situations. This type of transfer is considered “far” since the exact steps to apply the trained skill might not be uniformly applied across situations, thereby requiring the trainee to generalize the training to other situations ( Rhodenizer and Bowers, 1999). This can be applicable if the context of the ECD teacher training is changed. There is need for teachers to modify the application of knowledge and skills to suit the work environment. For example, teachers who have been exposed to Montessori model of training when they want to practice in Malawian context, there is need to use mixed model approach to suit the context.

### ***3.3.3 The cognitive theory***

The cognitive theory focuses on the internal processes that help learners retain and recall knowledge learned and apply it in a work setting. A good example of the application of the cognitive theory is the use of goal setting at the end of a training program. Goal setting helps learners focus on a specific and challenging goal to apply their knowledge and skills in the work setting.

### ***3.3.4 Training transfer model***

Effective training transfer model incorporates six linkages among training inputs, training output and condition of transfer which Baldwin and Ford (1988) presented. Training inputs are thought to influence conditions of transfer both directly and indirectly, through their impact on training outputs.



(Adapted from Baldwin, T.T. & Ford, J.K, 1988)

**Figure 2:** Transfer of Training model

Baldwin and Ford (1988) defined conditions of transfer as the extent to which knowledge and skills acquired in training setting are generalized and maintained over a period of time in the job setting. It was further argued that generalization involves more than mimicking trained responses to events that occurred in training. It requires trainees to exhibit behaviours in response to different settings and situations from those trained. On the other hand, training outcomes include knowledge, skills and affect acquired as a function of training and the retention of the training content (Kraiger, Ford and Salas 1993). The model identifies three types of training input factors that can impact training outcome and training transfer. These include; trainee characteristics, training design and work environment. These are the main variables that help to frame this study in examining early childhood teacher education in Malawi.

The model posits that trainee characteristics impact the transfer of the training. The training characteristics include learners' intellectual ability and self-efficacy is ability to understand and use their knowledge and skills and certain motivational factors, such as personality and usefulness of learning to job and career enhancement. The first research question, which is looking at the type of training that early childhood teachers receive in Malawi, guided the discussion on teacher characteristics. For example, Section A of the questionnaire deliberately captured issues on teachers' academic qualification and the training which they received. These aspects were relevant to the study since understanding early childhood teachers and trainers' characteristics such as their level of academic education act as a barrier towards knowledge and skills transfer in a preschool classroom.

Training design also impacts training transfer: According to Baldwin and Ford (1988), training design include; development of specific learning goals, learning principles, methods used to facilitate the training and the use of instructional media to support near and far transfer. The goals are very important to training transfer because they help the learners to think about how they will use their knowledge and skills in their work setting and mainly goals are found in a curriculum.

The model supported to collect and analyze research question 2 and 3 which were looking at how early childhood teacher education is organized and how the training of early childhood teachers prepare them for effective lesson delivery in classroom. For example, early childhood teachers may need adult learning principles for them to be able to transfer the training to their work station. This collaborates with Salas et al., (2006) who explained that the sequencing of the training material, the relevance of the content may affect both the transfer of the knowledge and skills to their work environment.

With reference to the arguments above, deliberate effort was made to review Early childhood basic training manual to establish relevance of the training content if has the potential to impact transfer of skills and knowledge to their work place.

Work Environment is yet another factor that impacts training transfer on the job Salas et al., (1988). The fourth research question which is looking at the challenges that surround early childhood teacher education in Malawi will be framed around this factor. The authors argue that training knowledge and skills are better transferred where the work environment is conducive for

teachers to exhibit what they have learnt. The model also emphasized on the support from the supervisors and peers. They argue that support systems help the application of learning in the work setting by helping learners' access knowledge 'on demand'. They also cited issues like constraints and opportunities to allow trainees to perform the learned behaviors' on the job (Kragar, Ford and Salas, 1993). This meant that the teachers might be well trained but not motivated to exhibit the skills and knowledge learnt during training, and may be discouraged from performing as expected due to work environment.

Training transfer model has supported to frame the study in terms of collecting and analyzing data for *research question 4: What are the challenges that surround early childhood teacher education in Malawi?* For instance, when collecting data the focus was on observing and probing about training environment, the support such as incentives and follows that the trainers and policy makers offer to enable transfer skills and knowledge in to their classrooms by the trained preschool teachers.

### ***3.3.5 Application of the theoretical framework on the study***

Relating back to Baldwin and Ford transfer of training model considered three critical areas for successful training. These include: training input, training output and condition of transfer . The concepts which emanated from the theory above have influenced the framing of research questions, data collection, analysis and interpretation of the results of this study. The concepts which emanated from training transfer model under training input was training characteristic,

training output was training design while condition of transfer was work environment. This study has been profoundly shaped by these three elements

The concept of training design promotes learning and retention of training guided the formulation of research question 1, 2 and 3 which were aimed at understanding the nature of training , its organization and relevance of the content. During analysis, the basic ECD training modules were reviewed to establish relevance of the content and the duration attached to each topic in the module to see if the time allocated for training is effective.

The concept of condition of transfer(work environment) guided the study in capturing the challenges related to preschool teachers at their work station and even in the course of training as well as challenges encountered by trainers and policy maker which later , The condition of transfer concept largely informed recommendations of the study. The factors that formed the concept of condition of transfer include support, opportunity and element of monitoring. These factors were of great value in framing research question 4. Research question4, aimed at understanding the challenges surrounding preschool teacher education. This was guided by the above mentioned factors which influences transfer of training at work place. Using the guided questions respondents expressed themselves on what they felt were threats to them as trained teachers. The data was analysed and interpreted based on the respondents feelings and perceptions but within the framework of condition of transfer.

Another concept which was embedded in the training transfer model is training characteristics which has four variables namely: Cognitive ability, self efficacy, motivation and perceived

utility. The aforementioned variables influence transfer of training. The preschool teacher training study was greatly framed around these variables. The cognitive ability focuses much on teacher education such as academic and professional abilities which enable them to perform while self efficacy, motivation and utility are biased to person values of knowledge and skills acquired from the training . The four variables guided framing, data collection and analysis for research questions 5, 6 and 7. Research question5,6 and 7 specifically looked at the relationship between professional qualification by teachers and their feelings as trained teachers; and between success at early childhood teacher training and their feeling as trained early childhood teachers. The framing of closed ended questions for section A, B and C on the questionnaire were guided by the same variables which centred around training characteristics. Above all, the analysis of question 1 section A, Band C were guided by the same concept. The analysis also followed similar pattern . The study deliberately used Pearson model to establish colleration coefficient of the variables which were being associated.

### **3.4 Research site, population and sampling techniques**

#### ***3.4.1 Research site***

The study was conducted in Lilongwe rural west and urban preschool centers in the same district. The site of the study was chosen purposefully because there were many preschools within the district that were expected to provide the much needed data for the study.

#### ***3.4.2 Target population and sampling techniques***

##### **3.4.2.1 Target population**

Gay, Mills, & Airasian (2006) defined population as the group to which the researcher would like to generalize the results of the study. It is the larger group from which participants of the study are recruited. The study targeted pre-schools in urban and rural areas in Lilongwe district. The target population was 2000 pre-schools, 1150 pre-school teachers. The study concentrated on pre-school teachers handling children from 4-5 years old, Policy makers, trainers and AECDM officials.

##### **3.4.2.2 Sampling and sampling procedure**

A sample is made up of the individuals, items, or events selected from a population; and sampling is the process of selecting the number of participants in a way that they represent the larger group from which they were selected (Gay et al., 2006, p 99). In the study, 43 respondents were selected from the larger population. The study used a smaller sample following the advice from Patton (2001) who argued that it is better to focus on a small number of carefully selected

participants rather than gather standardized information from a large and statistically significant sample.

The sample of the proposed study was drawn using purposive sampling which is non-probability (non-random sample) and simple random sampling technique which is probabilistic (random method of sampling), respectively (Kothari, 2011). Non probabilistic sampling is that sampling procedure which does not afford any basis for estimating the probability that each item in the population has the ability to be included in the sample. Purposive sampling is one of the examples of such. Probability sampling is the type of sampling design under which every item of the universe has an equal chance of inclusion in the sample. Simple random sampling is one of such type. Saunders, Lewis and Thorn hill (2009) define simple random sampling as a sample which is chosen in such a way that each of the possible samples has the same probability of being selected. Kothari (2011) explains that simple random sampling gives the participants equal probability of getting into the sample and all choices will be independent of one another. It also gives each possible sample an equal probability of being chosen.

The 40 trained early childhood teachers from 20 preschools were selected using simple random sampling. Two teachers per school in the selected sample were asked to fill the questionnaires. Simple random sampling fitted very well with this study because it gave equal opportunity to all trained preschool teachers to participate in the study hence reducing interview biasness (Kothari, 2011). The two trainers from Lilongwe District Social welfare office were chosen purposively to participate in the study because they were the ones who facilitated ECD teacher training. It was assumed that the trainers were better placed to give an account of the type of training early

childhood teachers go through and how this training is organized. The trainers responded to the first and second research questions.

The national early childhood coordinator was chosen purposively to participate in the study. This was because it is this office that coordinates and monitors early childhood teacher education in Malawi. Therefore the coordinator was an ideal person to provide the much needed information to the fourth research question which aims at evaluating the successes and challenges of early childhood teacher education in Malawi. In this regard, purposive sampling allowed the researcher to have a stronger understanding about the results from this study. Ritchie, Lewis, and Elam (2003) recommend purposive sampling because it has particular features or characteristics, which enable detailed exploration and understanding of the central theme or puzzles which the researcher wishes to study.

With reference to lesson observation, ten lessons were observed from ten schools. The choices of lessons were done purposively targeting literacy & language and numeracy & mathematics. Five lessons in literacy and language were observed and five were observed in numeracy and mathematics. The reason for selecting these learning areas was because most studies that followed children into kindergarten, or further into elementary school, measured children's language, literacy, or mathematics outcomes (Rothstein et al., 2005; Slavin, 2008; Slavin & Smith, 2009). The early childhood teachers whose lessons were observed also participated in responding to a questionnaire which was administered after lesson observation.

### ***3.4.3 Data collection methods and tools***

#### **3.4.3.1 Questionnaire**

The major methods of collecting data were questionnaire, interviews and observation. These were chosen because they are recommended by many scholars when one adopts use of mixed research approach. (Brook hart & Durkin, 2003 and Lai & Waltman, 2008). They further explained that questionnaire and interviews are often used together in mixed method studies especially when investigating educational issues in order to generate confirmatory results. Kendall,( 2008) argued that while questionnaires can provide evidence of patterns amongst populations, qualitative interview data often gather more in-depth insights on participant attitudes, knowledge, and actions In the study,, lesson observation was used to triangulate the results.

To address the quantitative aspect, a questionnaire comprised of closed- and open-ended questions was used to solicit information from the trained early childhood teachers. Closed ended questions are advantageous because they require less time to administer and ensure that all questions are responded to by the interviewer (Mertens, 2005). In contrast, closed-ended questions usually do not give much room for the respondent to give their personal views as they are already prescribed options for selection (Saunders, 2009). In the study, the closed-ended questions helped tap information on the type of training that is being done in Malawi. The third research question aimed at confirming if the knowledge and skills which preschool teachers acquire from their training help them effectively deliver lessons.

Open-ended items were included on the same questionnaire to allow the teachers to express their opinions towards the type and organization of the training. It should be noted that the open-ended questions were used to answer the third research question which reads: ‘How does the training of early childhood teachers prepare them for effective delivery in classroom?’

Besides, questionnaire for early childhood teachers was translated into Chichewa (local language). This is because literature has shown that in most of rural preschools, many teachers use vernacular as a medium of instruction, so use of local language would make it easier for them to express themselves freely. Hence, detailed information is expected to be gathered by the researcher. The questionnaire was translated into the local language by language experts. Chichewa was chosen because it is the main language of instruction in Lilongwe district. This was done carefully to ensure that the meaning of the questions remained the same. Mertens, 2005 advised that proper care must be taken in translating questions to ensure that the meaning of questions is not changed as this may also change the type of data to be collected. Translation of the questionnaires into local languages has its own advantages because it ensures that questions are asked consistently each time resulting in getting consistent information from all respondents.

#### **3.4.3.2 Validity and reliability**

According to Babbie (2004), validity refers to the extent to which an empirical measure accurately reflects the concept it is intended to measure. Items measuring both the success of early childhood basic training and feeling about being a trained early childhood teacher used a 5-point frequency based Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5).

These measures, adopted in the questionnaire have been shown to be psychometrically sound. The developers of the scales report high correlations between scales and the constructs they measure.

Reliability refers in general to the extent to which independent administration of the same instrument (or highly similar instruments) consistently yields the same (or similar) results under comparable conditions. Reliability is primarily concerned not with what is being measured, but with how well it is being measured (De Vos et al, 2005). De Vos et al. (2005) states that Cronbach's alpha is a measure of internal reliability.

### **3.4.3.3 Observation**

Lesson Observation was carried out using an observation checklist. The observation checklist mainly focused on the knowledge and skills that early childhood teachers display in their classroom. The aim was to ascertain if they are able to transfer the knowledge and skills that they acquired from their ECD training. Lesson observation helped the researcher to explore how theory learnt during training matched with the classroom practice. Besides, lesson observation helped the researcher to triangulate the results from the third research question which reads 'How does the training effectively help early childhood teachers handle the children in their classroom?' Observation method is advantageous because it eliminates subject bias (Kumar, 2011). In addition, the method is independent of respondents' willingness to respond, as such it is relatively less demanding of active cooperation on the part of respondents contrary to the case in the interview or questionnaire method. However, observation may suffer from bias resulting from behavioral changes at delivery. (Kothari,2011).

#### **3.4.3.4 Interviews**

The qualitative part of the study used semi-structured interviews which King (2004) in Saunders et al., (2009) described as non-standard interviews. Semi-structured interviews is where the researcher designs a set of key questions to be raised before the interviews, but builds in considerable flexibility about how and when these issues are raised and allows for a considerable amount of additional topics to be built in response to the dynamics of conversational exchange (Kothari, 2011). In this study, semi-structured interviews were administered to the early childhood national coordinator and the trainers. The interviews were responding to the first, second and fourth research questions which read: ‘What type of training do early childhood teachers receive in Malawi?’; ‘How is early childhood teacher training organised in Malawi?’ and ‘What are some of the challenges that surround early childhood teacher education?’

In the study, the semi-structured interviews began with a small set of open-ended questions but spent considerable time probing participant responses, encouraging them to provide details and clarification. Interview schedules were used to keep participants within the objectives of the interviews thereby avoiding biases. According to Kothari (2011), during interview follow up, questions were asked to probe more on the phenomenon. At times, some questions were omitted if the situation required so and sometimes the sequencing of the questions was changed to make the discussions flow.

The semi-structured interviews were carried out to probe more on the type of early childhood teacher training, its organizational challenges and opportunities that surround early childhood

teacher education. In addition, they provided information on the support that the employers, community members and training institutions offer to help teachers to transfer skills and knowledge to classroom practice. The rationale for using semi-structured interviews was to provide contexts where participants can ask for clarification, elaborate on ideas, and explain perspectives in their own words. Besides, use of questioning helps to manipulate interviewee responses to understand the research problem as explained by Shear & Knobel, (2004).

All interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim by the researcher. Audio recordings of interviews, expressions and other non-verbal cues, supported the researcher to concentrate fully and listen attentively to what was being said. Recordings guided the researcher to make brief notes to maintain focus of the study as alluded to by Ghauri and Gronhaugh, (2005) in Saunders et al., (2009). In addition, during the period of the research, I developed a research journal to record a series of activities including the dates which formed part of evidence. These processes helped to increase validity and dependability of my study.

In the study, structured interviews were conducted to policy makers as key informants of ECD policy, ECD trainers as providers of the training and ECD teachers as implementors with an aim of gaining deep insights on the effectiveness of ECD training in Malawi. The trainers, policy makers and teachers were involved equally. Whilst the teachers participated in the study by answering the questionnaire, the trainers and policy makers were involved through face to face interviews. Lessons were observed from the teachers who took part in responding to questionnaire in order to gain a deep understanding of the phenomenon. However, the quantitative and qualitative data was collected and analysed separately.

### **3.5 Data analysis**

Data analysis involved breaking up the data into manageable themes, patterns, trends and relationships (Cohen, 2003). It was aimed at establishing an understanding of various constitutive elements of the data through an inspection of relationships between concepts and variables. This is done in order to ensure that there are patterns or trends that can be identified, to establish data themes (Kothari, 2011). This study adopted quantitative and qualitative data analysis techniques because of the convergence triangulation design which the study took.

The quantitative data were managed in excel with analysis done using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The qualitative data from interviews and lesson observations were analyzed using thematic analysis. Later, the results were integrated to establish the relationship. The questionnaire interviews and lesson observation results were interfaced to help isolate common lines of argument and outstanding themes which formed part of the study discussions. The quantitative results drawn from the analysis of questionnaire responses acted as a basis for evidence of the magnitude of the problem.

The statistical processing of data is presented in terms of quantitative procedures and statistical techniques. Because the sample was small, appropriate statistical techniques were limited. Descriptive statistics include frequencies, means and standard deviations. Inferential statistics are statistical techniques that make it possible to draw inferences about population parameters using sample statistics. The generic name for these techniques is hypothesis tests (De Vos et al, 2005).

The standard deviation (SD) has been used to describe the results. It is the positive square root of the variance. The value of the standard deviation indicates how much the scores vary. The larger the value of the standard deviation the more the scores vary (Kerlinger & Lee, 2000).

Correlation analysis was adopted for analyzing data from this study. Correlation analysis is concerned with ascertaining whether or not a relationship between two or more variables exists, and if so, the degree of the relationship between two or more variables (Nortjie, 2003). The purpose of correlation is to show how much two variables go together or convey (Neuman, 2003). Correlations were found to be an important part to the research as they played a major role in describing the results of the study. In this research, bivariate analysis were employed in which correlation coefficients and corresponding significance levels were used to determine existence of statistically significant relationships between two variables as follows: possession of a professional qualification by teachers and their success at early childhood basic training; possession of a professional qualification by teachers and their feeling as trained early childhood teachers; and success of teachers at early childhood basic training and their feeling as trained early childhood teachers. The use of the correlation analysis technique is reinforced by the fact that the sample size is small and also that the last three research questions are concerned with relationships.

It is worth noting that the variables on highest professional qualification, success of teachers at early childhood basic training and teachers' feelings about being trained early childhood teachers were regrouped into dichotomies as follows: possession of a professional qualification (Certificate in ECCD, Diploma & above); success of teachers at early childhood basic training

(low for mean scores of up to 3, high for mean scores of more than 3) and teachers' feelings about being trained early childhood teachers (low for mean scores of up to 3, high for mean scores of more than 3).

Professional qualification was correlated with categorical mean scores of teachers' success to determine if the two variables are statistically significantly associated in any way. On the other hand, professional qualification was correlated with categorical mean scores of teachers' feelings to ascertain if the two variables are statistically significantly related in any way. Finally, mean scores of teachers' success were correlated with mean scores of teachers' feelings to find out if the two variables are statistically significantly associated in any way.

The data which was collected from the questionnaire was examined concurrently with the data collected from face to face interviews and lesson observation. This interface was done with an aim of triangulating the quantitative and qualitative results. Furthermore the quantitative and qualitative data was analyzed separately which helped the researcher to have a deeper understanding of the phenomenon. Then later the two sets of data were merged to help in drawing conclusions from the study findings.

### ***3.5.1 Quantitative analysis***

Closed-ended questions from the questionnaire were first converted into numerical values then all questions were assigned codes and labels which differentiated them from questions with similar answers. The possible answers to the questions were also assigned codes for easy identification when entering in the data base. Recoding of variables was done to enable the researcher perform inferential data analysis.

The second stage is exploring the data which involved visually inspecting the data, conducting a descriptive analysis and checking for the trends and distributions. Finally, the data was run on SPSS to establish the various relationships alluded to earlier. The results from SPSS were presented in tables and figures.

### ***3.5.2 Qualitative analysis***

Qualitative data from interviews and lesson observation were analysed using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is a search for themes that emerge as being important to the description of the phenomenon (Daly, Kelleher, & Glikzman, 1997). Creswell, et al., (2007) described thematic analysis as the process which involves recorded interviews, identification of significant statements, generation of units' meanings and development of detailed description through coding, creation of themes and interpretation.

From recorded interviews, transcription was done on day-to-day basis to facilitate thematic data analysis. These transcriptions were organized and kept ready for analysis. This was done with an

aim of reducing the workload of transcribing huge amounts of data at once during the time of data analysis as recommended by Rice & Ezzy (1999, p. 258). The transcribed data was read several times in order to get familiar with the data and identify the emerging themes as Ndengu (2009) suggested. The process of identifying themes was done through careful reading and re-reading of the data. Boyatzis (1998) defined a theme as a pattern in the information that at minimum describes and organizes the possible observations and at maximum interprets aspects of the phenomenon (p.161). Themes were useful to this study because they act as a guide in capturing important aspects about the data in relation to the research questions. In addition, themes represent some levels of patterned response or meaning within the data set as Braun and Clarke (2006, p.82) observed.

The themes were coded and assigned labels. The labels came from exact words of participants, a term composed by the researcher or concepts. These themes were grouped into categories according to the general trends that emerged from the data, the process known as open coding. Open coding is described as the process of breaking down data into themes or patterns to create a meaningful story from volumes of data (Chilisa and Preece, 2005). It should therefore be noted that the data from the interview were categorized and presented according to the questions that were asked. Thematic analysis is advantageous because it explicitly relates between what the researcher claims to do, and what is shown to have been done. More importantly, the researcher is positioned as active in the research process (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.79.).

### **3.6 Limitation and delimitation of the study**

The study was limited in its generalization and application, since it was carried out in a small area and this had a bearing on the small sample size. Although the study findings may not be generalized in the whole country it will serve as a basis for understanding effectiveness of early childhood teacher education in Lilongwe district which can generate need for further research on a larger scale. These findings may also lay a foundation for more detailed research in ECD services. On the other hand, the study delimits the many factors that affect the quality of early childhood teacher education. However, it mainly concentrated on the training of preschool teachers since it is the foundation of achieving quality early childhood education.

### **3.7 Pre testing and piloting of the study**

To ensure validity and trust worthiness of the study; the questionnaire, interview schedules and lesson observation checklist were pre-tested to a small sample to allow room for necessary amendment where required before conducting the research. The purpose of pre-testing was to identify problems that the potential respondents might have either in understanding or interpreting the questions. This led to modification of the instruments to make it clearer and unambiguous to obtain accurate information as Kumar, (2011) posited.

### **3.8 Member checking**

Member checking is one of the strategies of checking validity in qualitative research (Creswell, 1998, Creswell and Miller, 2000). Member checking is an approach in which the investigator takes summaries of the findings back to key participants in the study and asks them whether the

findings are an accurate reflection of their experiences (Creswell et al., 2007 p.135). Member checking was done to care-givers, policy maker and ECD trainer to allow them confirm if the findings reported in the study reflect the responses that they gave during the data collection process.

### **3.9 Probing and prolonged engagement with the participants**

Probing and prolonged engagement allowed the researcher to spend an adequate amount of time during the study to establish effectiveness of teacher training in relation to classroom practice. Prolonged engagement helped to build a sense of trust between the researcher and the informant as Lincoln & Guba (1985, p. 301) explained. Furthermore, probing in an interview enabled the researcher to explore areas which were significant for understanding of the research questions hence increase the reliability and validity of the research (Saunders et al., 2009).

### **3.10 Ethical consideration**

#### ***3.10.1 Briefing and Consent letter***

The researcher required permission to collect data from individuals and sites. This permission was sought at three levels: From the individuals who are in charge of the site; from people providing the data and from campus based institutional research boards according to the recommendation by Creswell et al (2007). Therefore, in this study, first permission was sought from Mzuzu University research board, which was later presented to Lilongwe District assembly office where the study site was identified. Before pre-testing, a discussion with the District Commissioner (DC) for Lilongwe was held to seek his approval to carry out the study in

Chitukula area. A discussion was conducted on an agreed date where the researcher described the background of the study and how it was structured to be conducted. It was made clear to the DC that the study was meant only for learning purposes and not for any profit. As such, participants to the study did not receive any material or financial support for participating in the study. This was done to ensure that the respondents were not coerced into participation in the research study.

After the discussion on the purpose of the study, written documentation was sent to the DC to authorize the researcher to conduct interviews with ECD trainers and early childhood teachers. The DC managed to send a written communication to the trainers and managers of ECD centers in the designated area, to allow the study to be conducted on the set dates. Prior to the commencement of the research, a meeting was held with early childhood center managers to ascertain the data collection team of the early childhood teachers. This was in line with the advice made by Oppenheimer (1992) on the ethics required in research. A meeting with preschool teachers was carried out in their usual meeting places to allow free flow of information among respondents. This was done with an aim of eliminating disturbances on the social and school settings.

### ***3.10.2 Confidentiality and anonymity***

Each participant was assigned a pseudonym for analysis and reporting purposes. These pseudonyms were utilized throughout the study to ensure confidentiality and anonymity. The researcher assured the participants that the information shared during the discussions will be used solely for the study and no other publications. They were also assured that the results of the

study would be consolidated to give a general picture of the situation of the effectiveness of training of early childhood teachers in the area and not attributed to only one person. This will be done to ensure that participants are well protected from any misconception so as to confidently participate in the study.

### ***3.10.3 Voluntary participation and freedom to withdraw***

The participants were informed that they were free to participate in the study or not. As observed by Family Health International (2004), the principle of voluntary participation in the study entailed ensuring that people were not coerced into participating in the study. The respondents were told that they were free to withdraw from participating in the study at any point and that no one would take them to task or penalize them for making such a choice. This was to ensure that people's dignity and rights were well observed during and after the study period.

### **3.11 : Conclusion and Summary**

The chapter clearly outlines the research design and methodologies that were used in carrying out the study. The study employed purposive random sampling and simple random sampling to meet its requirements. It also describes the three research methods used in data collection, these include questionnaire, interviews and lesson observation. The chapter has stated the research paradigm and theoretical framework which guided the study. It described the study population and explained how the sample for the study was drawn with reference to the design that was chosen. Besides, data collection procedures and instruments were discussed. In addition, it offered explanation on the instrumentation and measures that were used to ensure validity and reliability of the study. The limitations and delimitation that the study encountered were

included. The procedures that were used in data analysis and ethical considerations have been stated..

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

This study is aimed at providing a greater understanding of the nature of early childhood teacher training in Malawi so as to inform policy decisions as well as to assist in development of future strategies for the improvement of early childhood teacher education in the country. This chapter presents results from the quantitative and qualitative analysis. In addition, the results were triangulated to compare findings from the quantitative and qualitative analysis.

#### **4.2 Quantitative analysis**

The quantitative part of analysis looked at the basic description of characteristics of the respondents and inferences through examination of the various relationships that existed among possession of a professional qualification by teachers, success of teachers at early childhood teacher training and feelings of teachers about being trained early childhood teachers.

##### ***4.2.1 Background characteristics of research participants***

This section presents demographic information and other results that were derived from the quantitative component of the study. The variables that were measured included the following:

sex; age (categorical); highest academic qualification; highest professional qualification; years of experience on current position (categorical); whether ever attended early childhood teacher training; length of early childhood teacher training.

#### 4.2.1.1 Sex and age of respondents

Figure 4.1 shows that the study was predominated by females (97.5 percent). This may mean that early childhood teaching is taken up more by females teachers compared with males. In terms of age distribution, most of the respondents were aged 44 years and above (32.5 percent) followed by those aged between 26 and 31 years (25.0 percent). The youngest teachers aged between 20 and 25 years accounted for the smallest share in the sample of teachers interviewed (Figure 4.2).

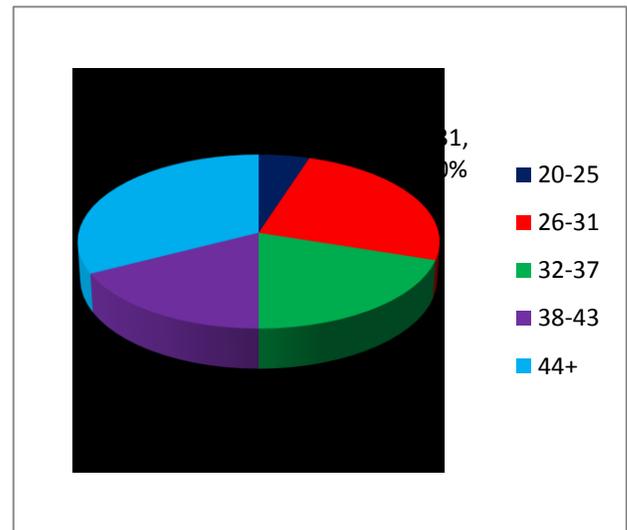
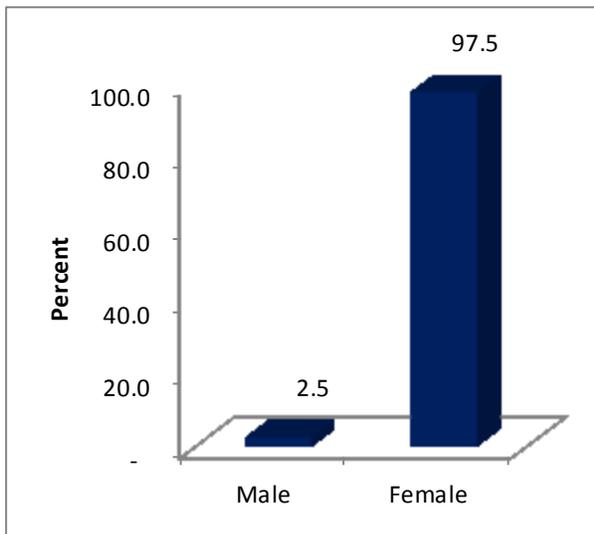


Figure 3: Sex distribution of respondents  
respondents

Figure 4: Age distribution of

#### **4.2.1.2 Academic and professional qualifications of teachers**

The intention of capturing academic and professional qualifications of teachers was to see if the teachers who are recruited for early childhood training had right qualifications that would enable them to grasp the training concepts and later on transfer them to classrooms. Figures 4.3 and 4.4 showed the distribution of academic and professional qualifications of the 40 early childhood teachers who participated in the study. The results indicate that most of the teachers interviewed held a Junior Certificate of Education (43.6%) followed by those who possessed a Malawi School Certificate of Education or a General Certificate of Secondary Education (41.0 percent) (Figure 4.3).

7.7 percent held a Primary School Leaving Certificate while 2.6 percent possessed other qualifications, exclusively a Master's degree. Although the findings show that the majority of early childhood teachers attempted secondary education, the distribution of the qualifications is quite alarming considering that early childhood teachers are expected to have undergone early child teacher training which has some abstract early childhood education theories that demand good comprehension skills if they are to be applied in the preschools.

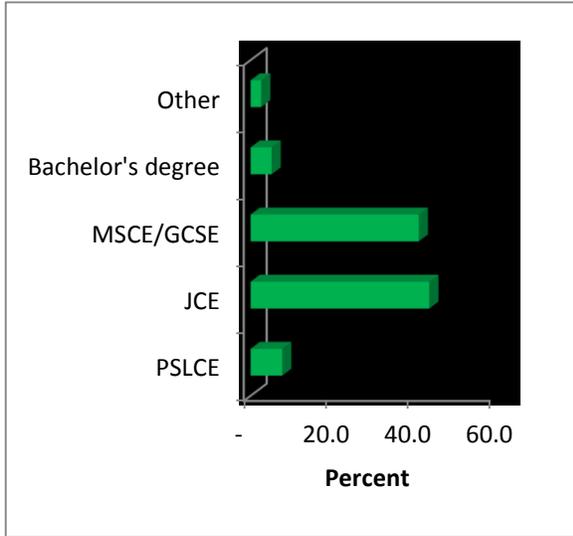


Figure 5: Academic qualification of teachers

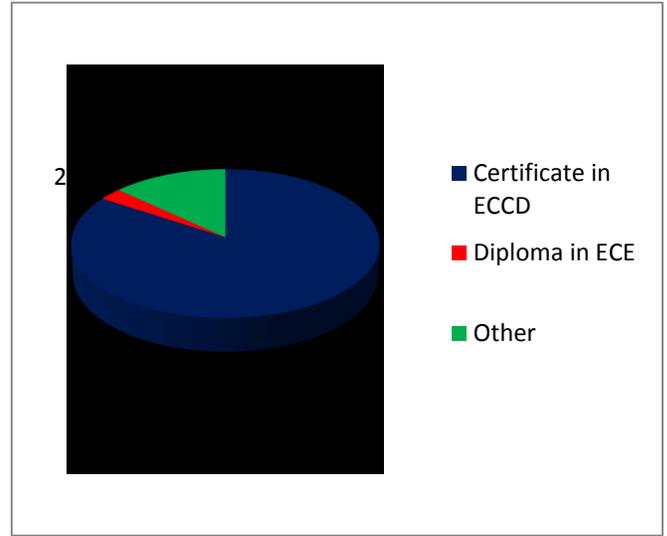


Figure 6: Professional qualification of teachers

In terms of professional qualifications, the majority of teachers interviewed had a certificate in early child development (84.2 percent) (Figure 4.4) followed by holders of other professional qualifications such as in service/staff development certificates, certificates given by some organizations with an interest in ECE such as ISAMA. In addition, one of the respondents had a Master's Degree in which one of the components studied was early childhood education.

#### 4.2.1.3 Number of years of experience on current position

The results revealed that about 70.0 percent of the respondents had at least 6 years of experience on their current position of being early childhood teachers (Figure 4.5). Only 5.0 of the teachers interviewed had less than one year's experience on their position. This means that most of the respondents had vast experience in early childhood teaching, with very few being new in the system.

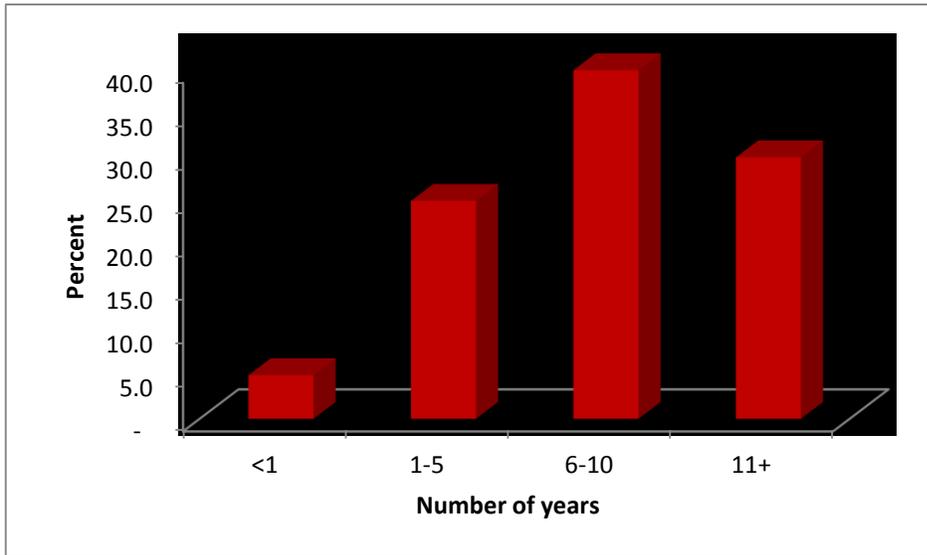


Figure 7: Years of experience on current position

#### 4.2.1.4 Attendance of early childhood teacher training

While the majority of teachers interacted with attended early childhood teacher training (97.4 percent), 2.6 percent did not (Figure 4.6). Regardless of the depth of the training, it is gratifying to note that almost all respondents underwent some form of early childhood teacher training.

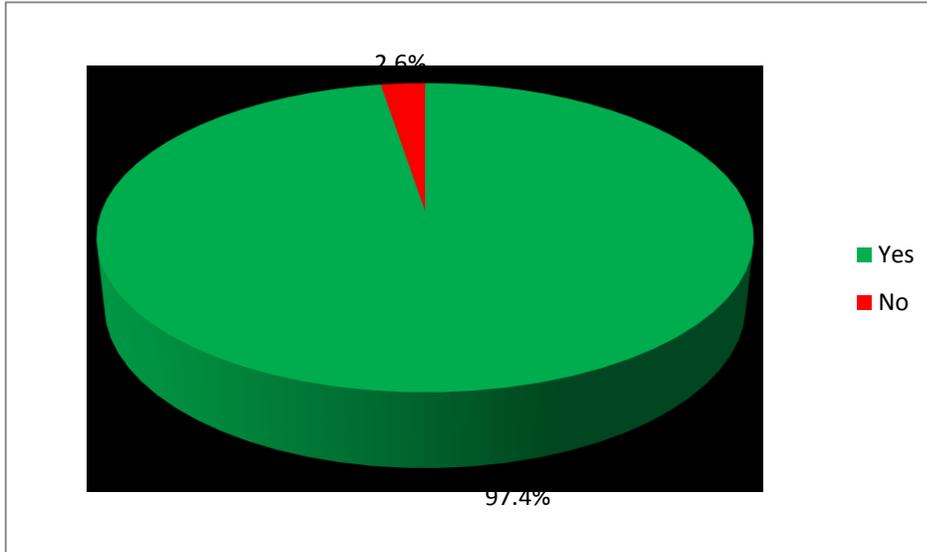


Figure 8: Attendance of early childhood teacher training

#### 4.2.1.5 Length of early childhood teacher training

Early childhood teacher training duration ranged from 1 day to 24 months of training (Figure 4.7). It should be noted that the duration of the training was dependent on the initiator of the trainings and the amount of resources available as echoed by ECD District trainer. The results show that 42.4% of the respondents were trained for 14 days, followed by those trained for 7 days (15.2 percent). The results also show that only 3.0% each went through the training which lasted for 1 day, 4 weeks, 6 weeks, 8 weeks, 3 months and 18 months. It should be noted, however, that all the teachers who underwent training for not less than 1 week qualified to teach in early childhood centre's, and these accounted for about 97.0 percent of all the interviewees. On the other hand, only 42.4% of early childhood teachers went through the 2-week long ECD teacher training which is recommended by Malawi ECD policy. One wonders if it is possible to achieve standardized teacher training durations which can translate into quality ECE with these kinds of disparities in early childhood teacher training durations.

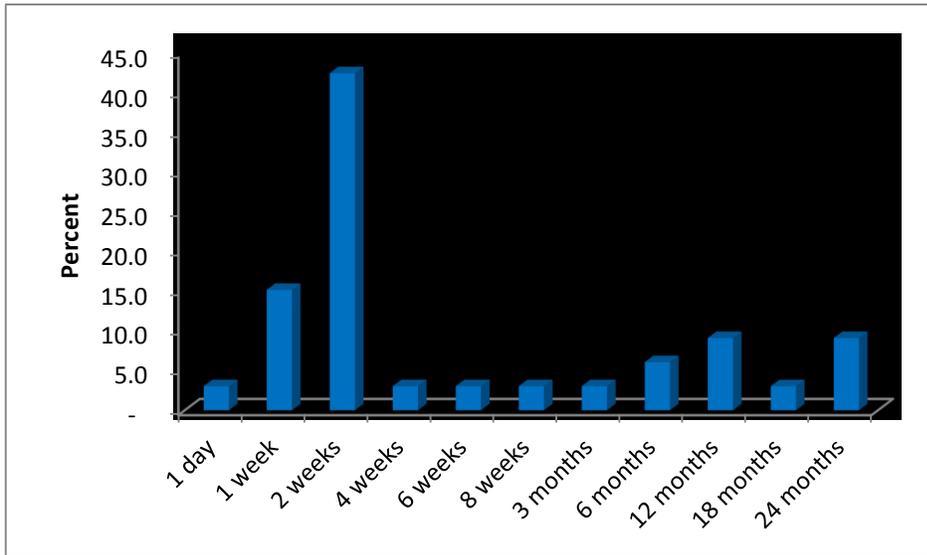


Figure 9: Variation in length of early childhood teacher training

#### ***4.2.2 Inferential analysis***

This section is concerned with determining whether or not a relationship between two or more variables exists, and if so, the degree of the relationship between the variables. In this research, bivariate analysis were performed in which correlation coefficients and corresponding significance levels were used to ascertain the existence of statistically significant relationships between two variables as follows: possession of a professional qualification by teachers and their success at early childhood basic training; possession of a professional qualification by teachers and their feeling as trained early childhood teachers; and success of teachers at early childhood basic training and their feeling as trained early childhood teachers.

#### **4.2.2.1 Mean and standard deviation of scores**

While the mean score of all questions relating the success of early childhood basic training was 4.17, the mean score of all questions concerning the feeling about being a trained early childhood teacher was 4.19. This means that, on average, the teachers were in agreement with all factors on the success of early childhood basic training and the feeling about being a trained early childhood teacher. Like for standard deviations for questions on the success, standard deviations for questions on the feeling are clustered around mean values of 0.66 and 0.78, respectively. This indicates that the ratings on questions that measured the success of early childhood basic training and those on the feeling about being a trained early childhood teacher were not so different from each other.

#### ***4.2.2.2 Internal consistency, sufficiency and reliability***

Internal consistencies of scales used for rating questions on success of early childhood basic training and feeling about being a trained early childhood teacher are sufficient and reliable with average Cronbach alpha estimates of 0.71 and 0.83, respectively. This confirms that the proposed set of variables adequately measures the success and feeling constructs. Since all the measures used in the study were found to be reliable and met the criteria of sufficient internal consistency ( $>0.70$ ) as prescribed by Cronbach (1990) and Sekarani (2000), all the scales were accepted for further data analysis.

### 4.2.2.3 Inferences from the study results

Bivariate correlation analyses were conducted to determine whether or not statistically significant relationships existed between possession of a professional qualification by teachers and factors concerning the success at early childhood basic training, on one hand, and possession of a professional qualification by teachers and their feelings about being trained early childhood teachers, on the other, to address the fifth and sixth research questions. The seventh research question involved determining the relationship between success of teachers at early childhood basic training and their feeling about being trained early childhood teachers. Mean scores of factors on the success of teachers at early childhood basic training were correlated with corresponding mean scores of factors on their feelings about being trained early childhood teachers to ascertain if there was any statistically significant correlation between the two variables.

*Research Question 5: Correlation between possession of a professional qualification by teachers and their success at early childhood basic training*

As shown in Table 4.1, possession of a professional qualification by a teacher is statistically significantly correlated with his/her success at early childhood basic training ( $p = 0.000 < 0.05$ ) at 5 percent significance level. This means that a teacher who holds a professional qualification succeeds in early childhood basic training. In other words, teachers who hold a certificate in ECCD and those that hold a Diploma & higher, as professional qualifications, have a statistically significant difference in their success at early childhood basic training.

Table 1: Pearson correlation of possessing a professional qualification by teachers and their success at early childhood basic training

	Highest professional qualification	Mean score for each factor
Highest professional qualification	1	. <sup>a</sup>
Pearson Correlation		.000
Sig. (2-tailed)		
N	38	38
Mean score for each factor	. <sup>a</sup>	1
Pearson Correlation	.000	
Sig. (2-tailed)		
N	38	40

a. Cannot be computed because at least one of the variables is constant.

*Research Question 6: Correlation between possession of a professional qualification by teachers and their feeling as trained early childhood teachers*

The results show that possession of a professional qualification by teachers has statistically significantly correlated with their feeling as trained early childhood teachers ( $r = -0.221$ ,  $p = 0.182 > 0.05$ ) at 5 percent significance level (Table 4.2). The results on this output indicated that teachers who hold certificate in early childhood development (ECD) and those that hold

Diploma & higher, as professional qualifications, do have a statistically significant difference in their feeling as trained early childhood teachers. From the findings one may conclude that high early childhood profession qualification gave early childhood teachers a more satisfactory feeling and confidence than holding an ECD certificate.

Table 2: Pearson correlation of possessing a professional qualification by teachers and their feeling as trained early childhood teachers

	Highest professional qualification	Mean score for each factor of feeling
Highest professional qualification	1	-.221
Pearson Correlation		.182
Sig. (2-tailed)		
N	38	38
Mean score for each factor of feeling	-.221	1
Pearson Correlation		.182
Sig. (2-tailed)		
N	38	40

*Research Question 7: Correlation between success of teachers at early childhood basic training and their feeling as trained early childhood teachers*

Table 4.3 shows that the success of teachers at early childhood basic training is statistically significantly positively correlated with their feelings as trained early childhood teachers ( $r = 0.562$ ,  $p = 0.000 < 0.05$ ) at 5 percent significance level. This means that teachers who underwent early childhood teacher training and succeeded did register a statistically significant difference in their feelings as trained early childhood teachers.

Table 3: Pearson correlation of success of teachers at early childhood basic training and feeling as a trained early childhood teacher

	Mean score for each factor of success	Mean score for each factor of feeling
Mean score for each factor of success	1	.562**
Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
N	40	40
Mean score for each factor of feeling	.562**	1
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
N	40	40

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

### **4.3 Qualitative Analysis**

The qualitative part examined the nature and organization of early childhood training as well as the challenges that surround early childhood training. The aim of the qualitative part is to substantiate the arguments on the interpretation of the study results.

#### ***4.3.1 Type of early childhood teacher training in Malawi***

Interview with the District Social welfare Officer and ECD national coordinator revealed that there are two types of training that are given to the ECD teacher's, basic training and comprehensive training. In their explanation, they said that, Comprehensive ECD training is offered to early childhood teacher who have successfully completed the Basic ECD training and the duration of training for comprehensive training is six weeks while the Basic ECD training is two weeks. Besides, the policy maker added that entry qualifications for the two training differ. For example, the comprehensive ECD training recruits people with a minimum academic qualification of JCE and maximum of MSCE while with Basic one there are no clear guidelines for entry qualification. However, the ECD national coordinator said,

“Anyone who has passion for children in the community qualifies to teach in ECD/CBCCs”

This is worrisome because where there are no minimum set standards for recruitment of teachers in to early childhood basic training; anyone who grabs the opportunity can pass through the system and graduate as a teacher.

### 4.3.2 Variation of training

Unlike primary teacher training, the results of the study have also shown that teachers have undergone through different early childhood teacher training in Malawi. For instance, 62.5 percent of the respondents went through the recommended Malawian early childhood teacher education; 6.3 percent underwent Montessori early childhood teacher training and 6.7 percent got trained by ISAMA (Figure 4.8). The rest of the participants undertook other institutions. In addition, the results also indicate that various participants of the study received training from various institutions inside and outside Malawi. It has also revealed that only government and Bambino Foundation Early Childhood Teacher training appear to be Malawian. However, the researcher could not ascertain whether Bambino Training institution was an accredited institution by the government of Malawi or if they were following any recognized curriculum.

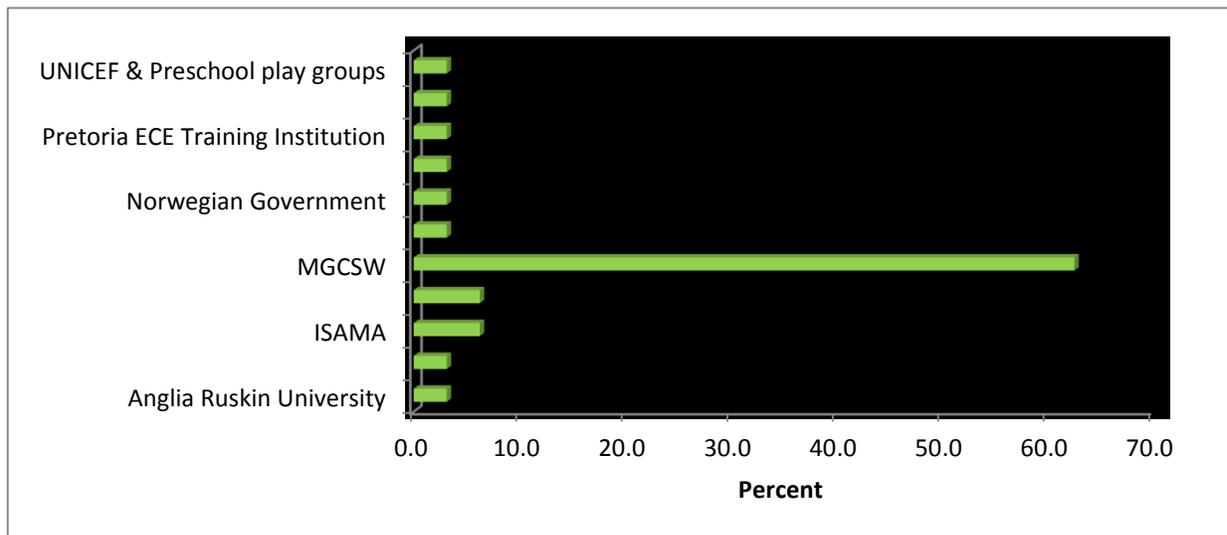


Figure 10: Variation of early childhood teacher training institutions

From the list of different colleges, the likelihood of having different kinds of early childhood curriculum is high which may later bring disparities when it comes to the implementation of early childhood education (Figure 4.8). From the numerous institutions shown above, the researcher could not ascertain whether all of these early childhood teacher training agencies are accredited or not. Although, it would be very difficult to conclude, the results of the study reveals that there is no regularized and standardized early childhood teacher education curriculum.

#### **4.4 Document analysis**

##### ***4.4.1 Analysis of Basic ECD training Manual in Malawi***

Early childhood development basic training manual was reviewed to ascertain the content that is being offered to the teachers. This was done to check if it is relevant to handle children in early childhood centre's. It was discovered that there eight modules offered during ECD basic training (table 4.4)

Table 4: Table showing topics contained in the ECD Basic Training Manual

MODULE	CONTENT
Module -1	Child development
Module -2	Child protection
Module -3	Water and Environment sanitation
Module-4	Water, Hygiene and sanitation
Module -5	Nutrition
Module -6	Health
Module -7	HIV/AIDS
Module-8	Management of an ECD/CBCC

A quick analysis of the list of topics above, none of them is tackling issues of teaching and learning. It can be concluded that main themes in the he ECD basic training manual are biased to care, support and protection of the young children rather than teaching and learning (ECD Basic Training Mannual, 2003). It should therefore be noted that, if the same content is transferred to early child hood centres', the possibility of putting more emphasis on cognitive development and affective domain may be very little because of the nature of the contents.

The findings above agree with what was revealed from the interviews of the ECD coordinator, who said,

“Our major interest in early child hood education is not on teaching, teaching approaches and cognitive skills development such as solving Mathematics problems and affective skills aaaa!!!! But to see that children’s environment is supported, cared and protected”.

While the content of the ECD training programme was proven relevant, the study revealed that the duration of the training was not adequate for teachers/care givers. A case in point is depicted in Table 4.4 which shows that the training has 8 modules which are taught within a period of 14 days. Looking at the scope, some topics could demand more than 12 hours to complete. In such scenario, the possibility of the training being done haphazardly may be high to cover the curriculum instead of uncovering it. This may affect the uptake of the concepts by the trainees which, in turn, may affect the delivery on the ground.

The District trainer listed the main area of interest of ECD education as: literacy and language, social domain, spiritual and physical domain. The participants were asked to comment of their satisfaction the content of the training, there were some mixed reactions between the policy makers, trainers and the teachers themselves. For instance the Coordinator and District trainer said that the content of the programme was adequate to the teachers, but not enough for the trainers. However, he felt that the trainers needed at least a University degree with specialized ECD training. The subsequent qualifications would enable the trainers to competently unpack the basic and comprehensive ECD content.

The ECD coordinator further said “To my opinion I wished the trainer of trainers (TOTs) had a Masters’ degree in ECD to competently impart knowledge to the district trainers or regional trainers”.

In contrast, results from the questionnaire indicate that early childhood teachers were not very comfortable with the content of the training. They demonstrated confidence and appreciation having gone through the training but they felt the training would have been more helpful if there was an inclusion of topics such as; classroom management of learners with mixed abilities and approaches to teaching and learning. Mrs. Phiri, note that this is pseudonym said,

“I liked the training because it enables me handle young children without difficulties, but I would be very happy if the training equipped me with some approaches to teaching and learning and some basic skills on how to identify and teach learners with special education needs,”

Regrettably the scenario on the ground is such that ECD basic training is being given to the candidates. This reveals the knowledge and skill gap that exists among ECD staff. The knowledge gap that was revealed during the study is likely to offer an explanation of why early childhood teachers in Malawi struggles with pedagogical knowledge and skills during lesson delivery.

*Research Question 2: How is the training of early childhood teachers organized in Malawi?*

#### **4.4.2 Organization of early childhood teacher training**

In response to the above question, both the District trainer and ECD national coordinator explained that the organization of early childhood teacher training differs. In their explanation they mentioned that, the comprehensive early childhood teacher education is residential while the basic one is non-residential. They further said that the Comprehensive training includes practicum while Basic ECD training does not. The two specialists explicitly said that the early childhood basic teacher training have limited requirements for one to be recruited for the training. For instance they said,

“The minimum requirements for a candidate to be enrolled for the basic training, is just having someone who has great passion for children. In addition, may be a minimum of PSLCE certificate would be required as an entry qualification.”

Comprehensive training on the other hand requires the candidate to hold at least MSCE certificate. The District social Welfare officer did not specify though as to the grades a candidate should have on the certificate. One would only assume that may be the mandatory basic six passes are enough for someone to be considered for training.

In addition, for the organization of comprehensive training , the trainer explained that teachers are invited for two weeks training then allowed to go for practicum then they will come for another two weeks and finally they end up with the next two weeks making a total of six weeks.

After the completion of six week training, the teacher are offered certificate in comprehensive early childhood teacher training

Besides, the study revealed that early childhood teacher training was demand driven by the non-governmental organization that deals with early childhood Education. According to the ECD Lilongwe District trainer, he explained that whenever, the developing partners have need for building capacity of ECD staff, they are supposed to submit their request to the Ministry of Gender. It is the mandate of the Ministry of Gender, to organize trainers from district and regional level to facilitate ECD training in Malawi. However, he said that the training is done in collaboration with AECDM officials.

The trainer was asked to explain the process of recruitment for early childhood teacher training (Alezi in vernacular). He explained that communities are asked to identify eligible candidates for training and submits them to authorities to be considered for either ECD Basic or Comprehensive ECD training the names are given to CBOs or NGO. He further explained that if it is the community have established their own ECD centre, they go through the same process of name selection but then the name are submitted to the District social welfare officer responsible for training for further consideration in any forth coming training. Besides, he alluded that CBOs, FBOs and NGOs go through similar process as explained above but these have an opportunity of submitting the names directly to the Ministry of Gender directly to act.

The ECD national coordinator added that, the government does not have the capacity to initiate early childhood teacher training because of inadequate funding in the department. However, he said,

“As a government, we have full control over the training that no organization or individuals are allowed to mount their own kind of early childhood teacher training.”

The development which contradicts with findings in fig 4.5 above, which shows that 38 percent of the participants had undergone different kinds of training. One wonders whether, government is fully monitoring standards of numerous training institutions in the country and above all if all institutions are accredited.

Furthermore, the study revealed that the training do not have a specific training institution. This is confirmed by the District trainer, who said,

“We do not have a specific training institution. Training are done in lodges, halls and other similar areas”

This makes it very impossible for the trainers to effectively demonstrate the methodologies. The venues are not purpose built.

How does the training of early childhood teachers prepare them for effective lesson delivery in classroom?

#### ***4.4.3 Lesson Observations***

With reference to lesson observation, ten lessons were observed from ten schools. The choices of lessons were done purposefully targeting literacy and language and Numeracy and Mathematics. 5 lessons in Literacy and language were observed and 5 were observed in Numeracy and mathematics. The reason for selecting these learning areas was because most studies that followed children into kindergarten, or further into elementary school, measured children's language, literacy, or mathematics outcomes (Rothstein et al., 2005; Slavin, 2008; Slavin & Smith, 2009). It should be noted that early childhood teachers whose lessons were observed also participated in responding to a questionnaire which was administered before lesson observation. The researcher sought to establish the effectiveness and relevance of the early childhood teacher training programmes with delivery of lessons in Malawi.

During the study I, observed ten lessons in ten sampled schools. Ten out of 40 early childhood teachers were selected randomly to participate in teaching of Numeracy and Literacy learning areas in their preschool during normal working hours. Nine out of ten lessons were taught by teachers trained within Malawi and one was handled by an American teacher. The respondents were assessed on ten attributes that every teacher of repute must embrace (Table 4.5). During analysis results from core attributes of teaching were compared against the ECD centre's where lessons were observed. The data with teaching skills were subjected to excel to compare the performance of individual teachers under each attribute (Fig 4.9).

The study revealed that out of the ten lessons 53.3 percent of teachers scored yes aggregate responses on very important attributes on lesson delivery which is the skill of introduction which is positive development. On the other hand, teacher showed that they are much better in communication skills which indicate an aggregate yes, response of 46.7 percent. It may thus be concluded that more than half of the teachers who were recruited in the study were good in the use of skill of introduction and communication.

Early childhood teachers scored lowly on the following attributes timing and closure which had aggregate yes responses of 10 and 20 percent respectively, which is actually very pathetic. The study also revealed that only 16.7 percent of the teachers demonstrated knowledge on use of learner centred methodologies and classroom management respectively. It was worth noting that teachers' scores on knowledge of the subject were quite discouraging which was rated at 36.7 percent (Fig 4.9). This is really a worrying situation.

Table 5: Important teaching skills that the teacher is supposed to Possess

Introduction
Timing of the lesson
Questioning skill
Logical presentation of content
Use of appropriate teaching methodologies
Knowledge of subject matter
Classroom management
Communication
Evidence of achievement of success Criteria
Closure of the lesson

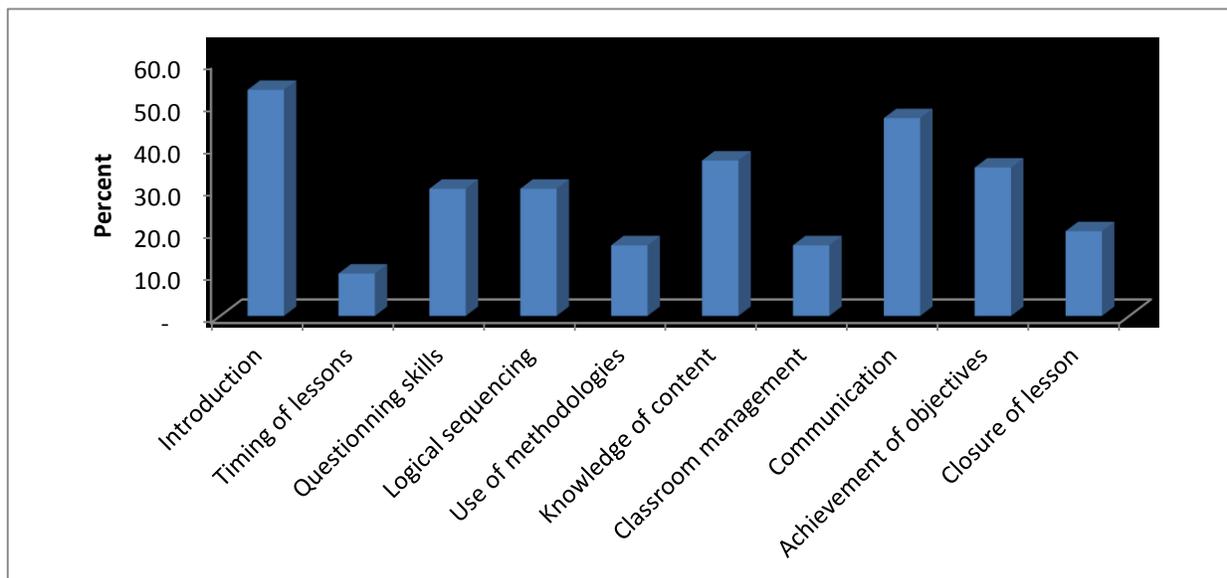


Figure 11: Performance of ECD teachers in core teaching skills

#### ***4.4.4 What are the challenges that surround early childhood teacher education in Malawi?***

There are numerous challenges related to ECD education in Malawi. According to this paper the challenges have been categorized in to two: the policy related challenges and the early childhood teacher challenges. There might be training institution related challenges which was not the focus of this research.

##### **4.4.4.1 Policy related Challenges**

The coordinator and trainer, responses indicated that one of the major challenges in the ECD training is inadequate funding. He further said that due to limited resources, the government does not normally initiate early childhood teacher training unless if donors or developmental partners demands.

He said, “As a government we do supports the training by identifying trainers and provision of facilitation materials through Ministry of Gender but the rest of logistical issues are handled by the initiator of the training”.

From the findings one may conclude that the government has very little role to play in terms of ensuring that standards of early childhood training are adhered to by the partners. There seems that there is no sense of purpose in the whole training arrangement the government. Since most of ECD trainings are funded by NGOs, some trainers underestimate the costs hence duration of the training is not done as per policy guidelines. The respondents felt that the above arrangement is problematic because the developmental partners’ may sometimes have insufficient resources

to continue with the programme. This results in the trimming down the training programme prematurely. The line Ministry has very little say since the ministry has limited resources to conduct national training.

In addition, the ECD national coordinator acknowledged that different partners have different visions and mission which may result to transmission of values which may not necessarily be of the government of Malawi. Besides, he said that some NGOs attach very low value to ECD the training which leads to reducing the training to an orientation instead of training. He explained that the partners deliberately plan for few days against the recommended duration which increases knowledge gap among early childhood teachers

When the National ECD coordinator was asked who is supposed to monitor the training as he complained about the partners not following the standard of training. He said, it is the government role to monitor the standard of ECD trainings as a line ministry. However, he said it is common that many of our partners deliberately choose to trim the training for their own selfish agenda such as reduction of the activity costs. From the above discussion, one may conclude that many times early childhood teacher training standards are not adhered to.

From the discussion with the ECD trainer and national early childhood coordinator one would deduce that early childhood teacher training is not well coordinated between initiators (partners) and organizers (Ministry of Gender officials). For example, the trainer complained that they are not involved in planning of ECD training which results in compromising the standards.

#### *4.4.4.2 Early childhood teacher related challenges*

Despite the basic training early childhood teachers registered some challenges related to the training.

When teacher were asked to explain some challenges that they face during training 30 out of 40 teachers representing 87.5 percent complained about loaded curriculum which do not much with the duration of the training too. The results on this agree with results from document analysis which shows that they are 8 modules of ECD basic training.

Mrs pyata (pseudonym) complained that “HmMMM!!!, the nature of the training was very good and I really enjoyed it but I feel the course content was too much as compared to the period of training”

Furthermore, 92.5 percent of the teachers of the respondents expressed the need for absence of continued professional development after graduating. This is not directly linked to training but it gives an insight of some pert net needs that the government should plan to address in early childhood education.

Despite, being not one of the focuses in the study when I went through 16 preschools, I discovered that only two had authenticated reference materials such as ECD syllabus, early childhood teacher’s guide and children’s supplementary books and play materials.

One of the teachers from certain preschools commented, “We do not have prescribed curriculum instead we use what proprietors tell us to do such as use of alphabet letters books and story books”

Looking at the findings above one may conclude that, prescribed preschool curriculum are not adequately distributed to a number of preschool centre’s, the development that force many of these centre’s to use curriculum of their own.

Referring to lesson observation results, one of the challenges that were coming out clearly in the study was that a good number of early childhood teachers have little knowledge in the key teaching attributes such as use of interactive teaching methodologies (Figure 4.6).



Figure 12: Showing a preschool classroom environment

Looking at the seating plan of this preschool classroom one may conclude that the teacher sparingly used interactive approaches. In addition the classroom environment is not conducive for the children between 3-5 years who mainly get motivated with bright colour drawings, number models and play materials. This may conclude that the teacher had limited knowledge on how a better preschool classroom should look like.

#### **4.5 Triangulation**

Triangulation was adopted to directly compare and contrast quantitative statistical results with qualitative findings so as to elaborate valid and well-substantiated conclusions arising from the study.

Quantitative analysis aimed at establishing correlation coefficients and corresponding significance levels to ascertain the existence of statistically significant relationships between two variables: possession of a professional qualification by teachers and their success at early childhood basic training; possession of a professional qualification by teachers and their feeling as trained early childhood teachers; and success of teachers at early childhood basic training and their feeling as trained early childhood teachers. The results of this study indicated that there is statistical significance between profession qualification and success of teachers at early childhood training which revealed 5 percent level of confidence ( $p = 0.000 < 0.05$ ). The findings which agree with the qualitative results on classroom observation which indicated that only 36.7 percent of the participants demonstrated knowledge of the content which they were teaching . Comparing the two results, they clearly confirm that more than 50 percent of early childhood teachers may be struggling to comprehend early childhood curriculum. However, the study could

not ascertain to the drivers of this problem but one may question the training or the type of curriculum which these teachers were using.

Qualitative results indicated that different early childhood centre's use different curriculum, though this was not the focus of the research. The disparities that early childhood teachers experience between theory and practice may be the main reason why teachers were struggling to display full teaching attributes in their classroom. For example, if the ECD nation curriculum is different from preschool curriculum, the teacher who was exposed to the ECD curriculum has the challenge of comprehending new concepts and achieving programme effectiveness.

In contrast, the qualitative analysis aimed at understanding the nature of early childhood education in Malawi. The following were the working variables, type of training, training organization and challenges of early childhood teacher training. The challenges were divided into two, those that affected Policy makers and early childhood teachers. The findings for the qualitative part of the study indicated that ECD training had lots of flaws such as unstructured learning environment and failure for the policy makers to protect the training standards. A case in a point, interviews with policy maker and District ECD trainer, revealed that there was no definite duration of the training despite the policy guidelines. The findings which agree with, quantitative results of research question 6, which revealed that early childhood teacher who had ECD certificate, were not confident on success of the training despite being trained.

## 4.6 Conclusion and Summary

This chapter presented results from the quantitative and qualitative analysis. In addition, the results were triangulated to compare findings from the quantitative and qualitative analysis. As presented in the chapter, three different groups of respondents articulated issues surrounding preschool teacher education in Malawi. Each of these groups expressed itself in such a way that they brought out issues that would help them perform their duties better. Preschool teachers' perceptions were based on what they expected to be done by the government as regards to their career growth.

Preschool teacher trainers wished if the preschool teacher training was well coordinated and controlled by the government so that there were no bogus ECD teacher training institutions which affect the quality of the teachers found in the centre. On the other hand, the policy makers were optimistic of a bright future in the ECD teacher education, only if the local state Universities will embrace the ECD model and introduce ECD courses so that content is standardized.

It was also noted that each of the interviewed groups were able to unveil some challenges they encounter and make propositions to contribute towards resolving some of the challenges.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION OF RESULTS**

### **5.1 Introduction**

While the preceding chapter presents data analysis, this chapter concentrates on the discussion and interpretation of the results. The results are presented and discussed in a simple manner based on the sub topics identified in line with the research questions. The results come from different data collection tools which the study use a case in point questionnaire, interview guide and lesson observation protocol.

#### ***5.1.1 Training characteristics of ECD teachers***

Results of structured interviews with the ECD national coordinator and District ECD trainer confirmed the nature of early childhood teacher training in Malawi, leaves a lot to be desired. This is because it lacked sense of purpose by the government and unstructured organization. The study revealed that government has little mandate in initiating ECD training and that it is has no designated place where it can be held. The respondents said,

“As for ECD basic training course we sometimes meet in the lodges”

On the other hand, the study discovered that early childhood teacher training was conducted in institutions which are not purposely built. In view of the above finding, it is important for the government of Malawi to peruse sensible training programme if the children are to benefit gainfully from early childhood teachers. The programme that is in place now is a far cry from the programme proposed by the Embu District study in Kenya for training of early childhood teachers (Dheimann, 2003).

The study revealed that there is no clearly stipulated criterion for the recruitment of the trainees in basic ECD teacher education which is against international standards. Remarkably, ILO and UNESCO (2006) advise that all stake holders who are involved in preschool teacher preparation should link teacher education, initial and continued professional development with policy, educational plans and budget of the national and local government in every country. Furthermore, decreed that the process of recruiting preschool teachers into any training must have a minimum entry standard and they should be adhered to. The subsequent comment, contradicts with the findings of this study. The trainer and policy maker said that for basic ECD teacher training, there is no explicit criteria but in Comprehensive ECD training.

### ***5.1.2 Duration of preschool teacher training***

Literature explained that Preschool teacher training is meant to last for a period of 10-14 days according to the standard guidelines(ECD, policy, 2003) . However, the results of the study revealed that a good percentage of preschool teacher were exposed to a training which lasted for 3-7 days and there were offered an ECD certificate. . This is worrisome where profession preschool teacher training has been reduced to a mere orientation or workshop.

### ***5.1.3 Certification of ECD teachers***

It would be shrewd for the government to follow the advice given by some education scholars. They argue that Preschool teachers should not be allowed entry into their classroom just based on their claim of love for children. This research has established that the mere love for the children has been one of the attributes that qualifies a candidate to be considered for training as a

early childhood teacher. It should be noted that, a proper teacher training qualification is the basis on which schools should hire preschool teachers (NAEYC, 2001). Therefore the very first step to a preschool teacher career is to get the right certification. Consequently, the authors suggested that the qualification should be that of a diploma program and the course content should cover both theory and practical application of the same in the right balance.

Conversely, the research wanted to establish the relationship between possession of a professional qualification by early childhood teachers and their success in their execution of duties as trained teacher. The results of the study revealed that the variables were statistically significant correlated with teacher' success which was at ( $p = 0.000 < 0.05$ ) 5 percent significance level. Howes *et al.*, (2003) argued, staff with higher education and specialized early childhood teacher training engage in more positive teacher-child interactions including praising, comforting, questioning and being responsive to children. Regrettably, the aforementioned attributes were missing in the lessons which were observed during the study refer (figure4.9)

#### ***5.1.4 Training Design of early childhood teachers***

Conversely, results from the document analysis indicated that the content of ECD from the basic training manual is generic which may not directly influence learning in early care centres. NAEYC, (200) advises that the curriculum should have appropriate and relevant techniques and methodology of teaching. Goleman, (1998) argued, the training is deemed to be effective when it is valid so that it addresses the proper objectives; well designed with solid content so that participants can learn how to achieve the objectives, and participants are held accountable to use what they learned so that the impact of the demonstrated behavioral changes can have an effect,

then it is possible to gain a measure of the effectiveness. This agree with transfer of training theory which frames this study which support relevant training content as one of the factor that would enable transfer of skills to a work place (Baldwin,1988).

It is saddening however to establish that the curriculum in Malawi is not very coordinated. Research has established that the NGO's that advocate for ECD education tends to be disjointed in their programmes; this has led to imparting quite different values to the teachers. The government while it has some sort of frame work does not have an upper hand in controlling the training of ECD teachers. The social welfare officer did point out that the government does have some supervisory and monitoring role in the whole exercise. Regrettably the same Government does not enough financial resources to effectively carry out the exercise.

#### ***5.1.5 Lesson observation***

Results from lesson observation indicated that, despite, early childhood teacher being trained, there were some existing gaps in the content and pedagogical skills among them. For example, almost 95 percent of the respondents scored less than 50 percent in all key teaching attributes which measure teachers' competency and performance after being exposed to teacher training. Litjens and Taguma (2010) commented that the practitioners' ability to create rich, stimulating environments in ECEC is jeopardized when staff have inadequate, insufficient or incorrect content and pedagogical knowledge. This is

## **5.2. Conclusion and summary**

The conclusion reached in this study that ECD training programme is handled by development partners. The government claims to play some monitoring role which is not very clear. The training of the teachers and the trainers is very basic thus making a mockery of the whole exercise. The curriculum is not very clear either, each development partner tend to teach as they see it fit. It is indeed pathetic that such an important stage of a child s development is so disorganized. We as a nation are condemning our children to total educational disaster.

## CHAPTER SIX

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### **6.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents a summary of the major findings and conclusions. These summaries are presented in line with the main research objectives and the research questions and addressed throughout the study. The chapter also presents recommendations drawn from the findings followed by areas befitting further research. The recommendations are provided for both preschool teachers, trainers and the policy makers.

##### ***6.1.1 Conclusion of the study***

A number of valuable outcomes emerged from this study. Importantly, the study helped to establish a better understanding of how preschool teachers are prepared in Malawi. The study probed more on the type of preschool teacher training, its organization and how preschool teacher training influence quality of early childhood education lesson delivery in the preschool milieu. The findings raise some of the core and contentious issues as regards to preschool education in Malawi, focusing on the central question of how are preschool teachers prepared in Malawi?. In this respect the study supports Howe's et al. (2003) in the proposition that the preschool teacher education is a far too demanding expectation of a generalist teacher's knowledge. Under such an arrangement it appears that early childhood education sector suffer the most out of all, lack of professionalism. Specifically, the breadth of knowledge and experience needed in order to effectively handle preschool children well, was viewed by many of the participants in this study as beyond the skills of most generalist preschool teachers. A case in

point, most of the preschool teachers bewailed for a more comprehensive, detailed training and lack of career growth.

Absence of coordinated efforts and government directives of less time to be spent during preschool teacher training a case of 10-14 days as standard guidelines, have compromised quality of preschool teachers. Besides, Organization have taken advantage to reduce preschool teacher training duration to 3-7 days. The adhoc and short period preschool teacher training explains the challenges such as teachers struggling to use pedagogical skills and knowledge such as failure to use interactive approaches in classroom during lesson delivery. These were evident during the study among many research participants.

Research Participants especially policy maker, also admitted, it was difficult to have consistency and regularity in terms of preschool teacher education content, because of the time constraints and the lower educational priority given to the trainers and trainees. The policy maker sited example of some preschool teacher who hold no certificate but were recruited due to their passion of children. This resonate with the poor quality of primary graduates we see in Malawi, since the foundation is not grounded.

This research study has shown that within the context of Malawi education, the issues of teacher preparedness and value for the preschool education are highly relevant in regards to the quality of preschool teacher education It confirms the claims of a number of other Malawi studies—that there is an undeniable gap that exists between the expectations of our curriculum frameworks and the preparation in initial teacher education courses, particularly at preschool level. Despite the fact that this study is particular to the Malawi preschool education context, the findings from

this study are relevant to the field as a whole. The information should assist individuals who are interested in promoting preschool education

## **6.2 Recommendations of the study**

In view of the above, the researcher has made a number of recommendations.

The study revealed that there need for specialized training in ECE. Providing specialised training in pre-service preschool teacher education would go some way to redressing lack of prior knowledge and skills of handling children at preschool centre. The regularity of comments about a lack of depth, relevance and more specialised training in preschool teacher training sector featured highly in the study. There is need for the government to regard preschool teaching highly like any other profession so that standards are met. This collaborates with (Howe's et al., 2003) who argued that specialized education is associated with better child outcomes and improved staff competences to provide suitable pedagogical learning opportunities.

The issue of lack of continuous professional development also was revealed in the study. This suggests the need for in-service training for the ECD trainers and preschool teachers. Ongoing professional development has the potential to fill in the knowledge and skills that staff may be lacking or require updating due to changes in particular knowledge fields. In most cases the participants described a situation in which they had little or no in-service training and support. For example, continuous professional development can be conducted on the job or can be provided by an external source, such as training institutions or colleges. It is high time as a country we began to maximize the meager resources we have on a few individuals and maintain them rather than large masses that we cannot contain.

Further, the research revealed that most of the ECD trainers and trainees have low levels of academic and professional qualifications, and that most of these teachers are females. There is need for the government to set standards on education limit for the trainers and trainees respectively as well as enforcement of gender balance to ensure quality play and learning for the children in preschools is achieved.

In Nigeria Dr. Esther Oduolowu and Fatimah Ayodele Oyesomi (2004) in the *International Journal of learning and Development* (2012) presented a survey of daycare and nursery schools which was conducted. Among others, the researchers recommended that trained pre-school teachers should be recruited to teach in the pre-schools and workshops should be organized to train and re-train those on the job regularly on pedagogy. It is the view of this researcher that the Malawi government could adopt the same. The researcher therefore strongly recommends that the government seriously evaluates its programme with a view of adopting some of the recommendations from the Nigerian experience.

The participants of this study described how they actively sought out expert help from others when they felt their skills and knowledge were insufficient to the task of teaching certain topics. There is need for the government to intensify supervision, monitoring mentorship, leadership and expertise as a follow up of the initial preschool teacher training . The government in collaboration with key players in ECD teacher training should facilitate formation of CBCC area /district networking committees that can help support quality and effective

Finally, the research also revealed that in Malawi there is no formal institution which provides preschool teacher training. The government should help to come up with an accredited institution to train preschool teachers in their roles so that they can also be recognized by communities once they are fully trained. This can help to address the problem of inconsistencies in the standard that exist between the public and private preschools. It could be appropriate for the government to explore ways of running preschool teacher education parallel to Initial Primary school teacher education, in the same premises and within the same period of time.

### **6.3 Contribution of my study to knowledge**

This study has enabled me to answer the questions outlined in the introduction and to obtain a deeper understanding and knowledge of the preschool teacher education in Malawi. In addition, through the study there are some grey areas which I feel they need urgent attention from the service providers (government). These include; formalization of early childhood teacher training, review of preschool teacher training guidelines to support uplifting the standards of preschool teacher education rather than being reduced to an orientation or workshop. It could also be appropriate if the education policies or guidelines were revisited to consider moving early childhood teacher education section to the Ministry of education unlike where it is placed now to accord the value it deserves. The exposure I have acquired during the study has increased my ability to give advice and guidance to preschool teachers, proprietors and the policy maker as regard to ideal against the odds of preschool teacher training.

The study used training transfer theory which helped me to understand preschool teacher training. As already discussed in chapter three, the training transfer theory revolved around three main variables: training characteristics, training design and work environment as core to successful transferring of knowledge and skills to work environment. This research was profoundly guided and framed within the three aforementioned variables from introduction up to the recommendations of the research. The choice of research methods, for example was guided by the same variable. The same variables framed data collection tools, analysis and interpretation.

The study used mixed research method which include, quantitative and qualitative methods. Referring to research questions 1, 2, 3 and 4 were framed using two concepts which emanated from the theory namely, training design and work environment. This is where respondents were asked to express their feeling and perception as to what they feel they are challenges in preschool teacher education. this is with reference to question 4 while document analysis was done to establish the relevance of training content, principle of learning and training methods. These supported much to understand research questions 1, 2 and 3. In this part, analysis, data collection tools and interpretation of results twinkled towards qualitative approach.

The second part of the study was informed by training characteristics which is one of the concept which emanated from the theory. In this case research question 5,6 and 7 which aimed at establishing relationships between training characteristics and preschool teachers feeling. The three questions were more quantitative in nature. The results from the study informed the recommendations.

## **6.4 Areas for further research**

Several areas for further study were unveiled during the study. These include:

1. An investigation on the relationship between early childhood teacher qualification and quality instruction.
2. The role of the government in enhancing quality Early childhood teacher education
3. Examining the effects of continuous profession development on quality instruction
4. An investigation on the effectiveness of ECD teacher training on classroom pedagogies
5. An investigation on the effects of volunteerism on quality of early childhood education especially with the fact that most of preschool teachers in Public preschools are not paid .

## **6.5 Conclusion and Summary**

Preschool teacher education is key to a successful implementation of ECD centre's in Malawi. It is however, disappointing to note that it is not given special attention as opposed to other teacher trainings such as primary and secondary teacher education. It is evident from the study that there is no local state university or teacher training college which offers preschool teacher training. Although, the government of Malawi signed a number of agreement in response to EFA goals very little effort is made to improve the training conditions of preschool teachers in Malawi. The development which likely to affect the whole ECD sector in terms of quality graduates. Suffice to say this will have ripple effects even when it comes to the socio economic development of the country.. Even though the government is attempting to address some of the challenges surrounding preschool teacher education, there is need for more coordinated efforts to address them.

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**APPENDICES:*****APPENDIX-1 STUDY TIME FRAME***

ACTIVITY	TIME FRAME
Presenting the proposal to Mzuzu University Colloquium	May 27- 1 <sup>st</sup> June, 2013
Presenting Letter of approval from Mzuzu University to Ministry of Education	23 <sup>rd</sup> August, 2013
Presenting letter of introduction to Lilongwe District Assembly Commissioner	26 <sup>th</sup> August, 2013
Presenting letter of introduction from the DC to the trainers(DSWO')	2 <sup>nd</sup> September, 2013
Presenting letter of introduction to preschool teachers in Chitukula area	4 <sup>th</sup> September, 2013
Administering questionnaire to trainers	10 <sup>th</sup> -15 <sup>th</sup> September, 2013
Conducting interviews with preschool teacher training, audio recording and manual recording of responses	20 <sup>th</sup> -25 <sup>th</sup> September, 2013
Observing lessons and making field notes	27 <sup>th</sup> -30 <sup>th</sup> September,2013
Data Cleaning	1 <sup>st</sup> -30 <sup>th</sup> October, 2013
Data analysis	1 <sup>st</sup> -30 <sup>th</sup> November, 2013
Report writing	1 <sup>st</sup> January,2014-30 <sup>th</sup> May, 2014

*Appendix 2 Budget*

Items	Amount
Fuel to move to and from Lilongwe to the research site	100,000-00
Stationary(pencils, pens, writing pads and 3 reams of plain paper)	30,000-00
Internet services	50,000-00
Secretarial and printing services	50,000-00
Food and drinks	30,000-00
Allowances for research assistance	50,000-00
Total Budget	310,000-00 MK

### ***Appendix 3: Participants Briefing and Consent Letter***

Dear Participant,

Master's in Teacher Education-“Examining early childhood teacher education in Malawi”

I am Florence Hendrina Pwele; I would like to collect data, which will be used in my thesis for Ministry of Education Science and Technology, as part of my fulfillment for Master degree in Teacher Education at Mzuzu University.

The aim of the thesis research is to assess the effectiveness of preschool teacher training in Malawi. Through the research, I hope to gain insights into how preschool teacher training help to improve classroom practices. This research could also allow educational practitioners like trainers and policy makers to gain a better understanding of areas needing interventions and additional support to achieve quality education in early childhood education sector.

All the data collected will be kept strictly confidential. No individual will access the data, except as part of the thesis findings, or as part of the supervisory or assessment processes of the University of Mzuzu. No Participant will be identified in my research; instead the participants will be referred to by pseudonyms. The data collected will be kept for a certain period to allow scrutiny by the University of Mzuzu as part of the assessment process.

If you feel uncomfortable with any of the questions being asked, you may decline to answer specific questions. You may also withdraw from the study at any stage if you wish so, and your answers will not be used. Besides, if you later decide that you wish to withdraw from the study,

please write to me at Florence Hendrina Pwele, P.O. Box 40046, Kanengo, Lilongwe- 4 and you can Email at: [florencepwele@gmail.com](mailto:florencepwele@gmail.com), no later than 1<sup>st</sup> December, 2013. I will be able to remove your response from my analysis and findings, and destroy your response.

The study will be carried out under the supervision of Dr Dominic Ndengu ([ndegud@gmail.com](mailto:ndegud@gmail.com)) Department of Education (ETS) University of Mzuzu. If you have any questions as regards to the research study, please kindly call 265999771975/265888771185

I have read and understood the contents of this consent and briefing form, and freely and voluntarily agree to participate in this research. I am happy to be identified as a participant in the research by my position at work.

Name of the participant \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

*Appendix-4 Questionnaire for trained teachers*

Please read through the questionnaire carefully and respond objectively as possible to all questions

SECTION A

1(a) Sex: (Tick as appropriate) Male  Female

Age (Tick age range appropriate to you)

20-25 years

26-31 Years

32-37 Years

38-43 Years

44 Years +

(b) Highest Academic Qualification (Tick as appropriate)

Standard eight certificate (P.S.L.C.E)

Junior Certificate (J.C.E)

Malawi school Certificate of Education/G.C.S.E

Bachelor Degree

Other (specify please).....

© The highest professional qualification (Tick as appropriate)

Certificate in ECCD

Diploma in ECE

Bachelor Degree in ECE

Master in ECE

Other (specify please).....

(d) Years of experience on the current position (Tick the range appropriate)

Less than 1 year

1-5 years

6-10 years

11 +Years

2. (a) Have you attended any continuous professional development on Early childhood education

(Circle one) Yes/No

(b) How important was the training to your career.....

## SECTION B

3. Reflect on your early childhood basic training (Tick the statement that best describes the success of your training from the table)

	1	2	3	4	5
Training is learner focused					
Training includes active participation by trainee					
Learning is facilitated through peer exchange					
Training is culturally and ethnically meaningful					
Training encourages trainee to assume active responsibility for learning					
Training models productive behavior and effective life skills					
Training acknowledges individual and group achievements					
Flow of learning was appropriate during training					
Training addresses the needs of the society					

1=strongly disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Not sure, 4=Agree, 5=strongly agree

**SECTION C**

4. Please indicate your opinion that now you are a trained early childhood teacher (Tick the most appropriate statement that best describes your feeling)

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly agree
	1	2	3	4	5
I have a better self-concept, satisfaction, and confidence in my ability as a teacher now					
I have desire to try out new ideas.					
I have desire to know more about my field					
I feel better informed about the new curriculum goals now.					
I have a better understanding of learners' roles in the class now.					
I have an increased awareness of the characteristics of young learners					
I know better what multiple intelligences mean.					

I have a better understanding of different learning styles					
I am equipped with variety of instructional strategies to promote learners' engagement					

1=strongly disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Not sure, 4-Agree, 5=strongly agree

5. What methods do you use to teach the desired knowledge and skills to young children?
6. What resources do you use when teaching young children in pre schools?
7. What are the challenges that you encounter during lesson delivery despite being trained?
8. What else do you think could be done to improve the early childhood teacher training in Malawi?

*Appendix-5 Classroom observation checklist*

AREAS OF ASSESSMENT	YES	NO
<p>LESSON PREPARATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lesson plan that followed a scheme of work</li> <li>• Clearly stated success criteria/objectives</li> </ul>		
<p>LESSON PRESENTATION</p> <p>Introduction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Captures learners' attention</li> <li>• Provides continuity</li> </ul>		
<p>Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Logical flow of ideas</li> <li>• Use of variety of teaching methods</li> <li>• Questioning technique and varied reinforcement effectively used</li> <li>• Effective use of T/L/A resources/play materials</li> <li>• Suitability of language and voice</li> </ul> <p>Conclusion</p> <p>Evidence of achievement of success criteria</p>		

<p>CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Class control and discipline</li> <li>• Organizational and monitoring of learning activities</li> <li>• Use of time</li> <li>• Clarity of instruction</li> </ul>		
<p>MASTERY OF CONTENT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ability to give relevant examples</li> <li>• Clarity of explanations</li> <li>• Relates content to learners' experience</li> <li>• Accuracy and correctness of content</li> </ul>		
<p>LEARNERS' ORIENTATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learners' involvement in activities</li> <li>• Sensitivity to gender and special education needs</li> <li>• Feed back to learners response</li> <li>• Evidence of checking learners' work</li> </ul>		

***Appendix 6: Interview guide for trainers***

1. Can you comment on the organization of the training of early childhood teachers in the following areas?

(i) The subject content if it meets the needs of those attending the training

(ii) Adequacy of the training content

(iii) The adequacy of training duration

(iv) Training design whether it is formal and full time

(v) The one who initiates and funds the training in terms of resources

2. What are the activities done during the training that promotes teacher-learner interaction?

3. What methods do you advise your teachers to use when teaching preschool children?

4. How do you monitor your teachers to make sure that they implement what they have learnt during training?

5. What are the successes of early childhood teacher education in Malawi?

1. What challenges do you face in the process of training early childhood teachers?

2. What else can be done to improve early childhood teacher training in Malawi?

*Appendix-7: Interview guide for policy makers*

1. Can you comment on the organization of the training of early childhood teachers in the following areas?

(i) The subject content if it meets the needs of those attending the training

(ii) Adequacy of the training content

(iii) Adequacy on training duration

(iv) Training design either formal or full time

(v) Who initiates and funds the early childhood teacher training

2. What are the major policies debates around early childhood teacher education, whether it is a priority to the country or not?

3. Comment on the implementation of early childhood teacher education in Malawi

(a). Do you think the people whom are mandated to implement early childhood teacher training have got the capacity?

(c) What are your plans to improve the trainers of early childhood teacher education programme in Malawi?

4. How is coordination of early childhood teacher education program done?

5. How is early childhood teacher training monitored in Malawi?

6. How are the stakeholders involved in the training of early childhood teachers in Malawi?

7. What are the successes of early childhood teacher education programme in Malawi?
8. What are the challenges in early childhood teacher education programme in Malawi?
9. What else can be done to improve early childhood teacher education programme in Malawi?