Gender Responsiveness of the pre-service primary school teachers' training

program: the case of four teacher-training colleges in Malawi

By

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A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Education in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
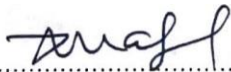
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DECLARATION

I declare that, *"Gender Responsiveness of the pre-service primary school teachers' training program: the case of four teacher training colleges in Malawi"* is my own work and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been dully cited. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education in Leadership and Management at Mzuzu University. I further declare that this thesis has not been submitted before for any other degree at any other university.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to our mother, a NyaMoyo for raising us: Thununu, Mwayi, and Nyembezi.

You mothered us extremely well. May God Bless you!

ABSTRACT

Malawi is a country plagued by high levels of gender inequality in its education system (National Planning Commission (NPC), 2020). This affects the attainment of education outcomes. Therefore, the aim of this study was to investigate the gender responsiveness of the Pre-service Primary School Teacher-Training Programme in four Teacher Training Colleges (TTCs) in Malawi. To achieve that, the study sought to establish an understanding of the concept of gender among students, teacher educators (including principals, heads of departments and lecturers), and library assistants, and the nature of gender responsiveness in the pre-service primary school teacher-training programme. It further explored implementation challenges and ways of improving gender responsiveness in the training of the pre-service teachers. This research used a qualitative case study design. The case was the initial primary teacher education (IPTE) program implemented in TTCs. The study purposefully selected 4 TTCs and 35 participants and collected data through interviews, focus group discussions, lesson observation and document analysis. The generated data was analysed using thematic analysis. Using the Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE) Gender Responsiveness Model as a lens, the results showed that the initial primary teacher education (IPTE) program in the sampled TTCs in Malawi was partially gender-responsive. The study found that physical infrastructure and management systems were gender-responsive while classroom pedagogies were not. Indeed, the sampled teacher educators' failure to use gender-responsive pedagogies in their lessons is systematically reproducing gender inequality in teacher education. Therefore, the study recommends that teacher educators need to adopt and incorporate gender responsive pedagogies in the teaching and learning process to create a gender responsive primary teacher-training program.

KEY TERMS

Gender, Gender Equality, Gender-responsive, Gender-responsiveness, pre-service, teacher

education, pedagogy

ACRONYMS/ABBREVIATIONS

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
DHRMD	Department of Human Resource Management and Development
DTED	Directorate of Teacher Education and Development
EFA	Education for All
FAWE	Forum for African Women Educationalists
FAWEMA	Forum for African Women Educationalists in Malawi
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GAD	Gender and Development
GiZ	German Technical Cooperation
GR	Gender Responsive
GRP	Gender Responsive Pedagogy
GRTE	Gender Responsive Teacher Education
HIV	Human Immune Virus
IET	Invitational Education Theory
ILO	International Labour Organization
IPTE	Initial Primary Teacher Education
JCE	Junior Certificate of Education
MANEB	Malawi National Examinations Board
MIE	Malawi Institute of Education
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoEST	Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology
MSCE	Malawi School Certificate of Education

NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NICE	National Initiative for Civic Education
NPC	National Planning Commission
NSTE	National Standards for Teacher Education
ODeL	Open Distance and Electronic Learning
SMT	Science, Mathematics, and Technology
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
TTCs	Teacher Training Colleges
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNESCO	United Nations Education, Scientific, and Cultural Organization
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WID	Women in Development
WHO	World Health Organization

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Chapter Overview

This chapter introduces the study. The chapter provides the background to the study, which is divided into six themes: gender in education; the history of gender; gender policy framework in Malawi; gender in Malawian teacher education; teacher education policies and preservice primary teacher training in Malawi. From this background, the chapter further explains the statement of the problem. It also presents the justification and significance of the study and research objectives. Finally, it provides the conceptual framework that guided the study and definitions of key terms used in this thesis.

1.2 Background to the study

1.2.1 Gender in education

Gender and education are important issues in 21st century education research and practice. Education is a basic human right and a key catalyst to economic growth, social progress, and an instrument for empowering the poor, the weak and the voiceless (Government of Malawi, 2006). That means regardless of sex, race, or other categorisations, every person needs to have access to education. In addition, apart from its economic value, education transmits a society's culture from one generation to another (Ogachi, 2006). On the other hand, gender is one of the aspects of culture. As a concept, gender refers to "socially determined roles and relations between males and females." (Mlama, et. al., 2005, p.1) while gender responsiveness involves "creating an environment that reflects an understanding of the realities of females and males and addresses their issues" (Bloom & Covington, 2010).

Therefore, realising the significance of education, Malawi is a party to the 1990 Jomtien "World Conference on Education for All (EFA)" internationally agreed targets for the provision of education as a basic human right (MoEST, 2015). Similarly, Malawi is a signatory of gender conventions and declarations like the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the SADC Declaration on Gender, and the Addendum on Violence against Women (Government of Malawi, 2015; MoEST, 2015). All these seek to ensure equal access to opportunities including education for all regardless of sex.

1.2.2 History of Gender

Historically, the concept of 'gender' started because women struggled to have equal rights to those of men. The term gender emerged in the 1970s as a way of classifying individuals socially rather than biologically which was seen as a cultural bias (Browne, 2007). It was around that time that the international feminist movement began to gain momentum hence the United Nations General Assembly declared 1975 as the International Women's Year and organized the first World Conference on Women in Mexico City, Mexico. Conceptually, though, gender is a highly fluid and contested concept (Henderson, 2015; Sjϕrup, 2005). This is because gender evolves within the same societies and varies from one society to another. Therefore, to understand gender, one needs to consider the social, cultural and economic context.

Globally, the United States of America pioneered the gender responsiveness drive. The gender responsiveness concept started around the 1990s in the American justice and correctional services (Bloom & Covington, 2010). The authors said that its primary concern bordered around handling female prisoners in a manner that addressed their needs. Currently, the concept of gender

responsiveness has extended across countries and to other fields like education, health, agriculture, and so on.

1.2.3 Gender policy framework in Malawi

Regionally, Malawi subscribes to the African Union's Agenda 2063's aspirations that envision an inclusive African continent with gender equality in all spheres (AU, 2014). Locally, Malawi has prioritised education and gender in key policy documents. For example, the Republican Constitution of 1994, sections 13 (f) (iii) and 25 (i) provides for free and compulsory primary education for all citizens. In addition, from the year 2000, the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology's Policy and Investment Framework (PIF) for 2000 to 2015 clearly stated that high priority would go to the gender imbalance and inequity in the education system at all levels (MoEST, 2015). This indeed led to several programmes and interventions.

1.2.4 Gender in Malawian teacher education

In 2009, the Ministry of Education mainstreamed Gender-Responsive Pedagogy (GRP) in teacher training colleges (FAWE, 2018). Furthermore, in 2017, the Ministry revised the Initial Primary Teacher Education (IPTE) curriculum among others, to address and respond to contemporary issues such as gender, information and communication technology (ICT), HIV and AIDS, climate change, and critical thinking (MoEST, 2017a). The Government of Malawi further introduced Life Skills Education in the curriculum with gender as one of the topics and oriented teachers and teacher educators to gender issues.

1.2.5 Teacher education policies

Again, in 2017, the Ministry developed National Standards for Teacher Education (NSTE) for teacher education institutions to use as benchmarks for achieving student teachers' expected competencies for the teaching profession (MoEST, 2017b). For example, using Teacher Education Standard 12 on student safety, support, and welfare, teacher-training institutions need to demonstrate zero tolerance to bullying or sexual exploitation and harassment of students by staff, peers, or community members and take firm action, using the necessary formal procedures (MoEST, 2017b). These policy interventions geared to make education relevant by addressing the interests, values, and needs of both females and males (Maluwa-Banda, 2003). However, contrary to such declarations and interventions, "gender inequality still exists in education setups in Malawi" to this date (NPC, 2020, p.39).

Therefore, to understand the gravity of this problem in the teacher education sub-sector, it was important to understand how Malawi selects and trains its pre-service teachers. After scrutinizing the Ministry of Education's official selection lists for Initial Primary Teacher Education (IPTE), cohorts 16 and 17, who were students at the time of the research, data revealed that the Ministry selected students using a 50:50 policy. That is, it balanced the number of females and males enrolled in the teacher-training programs. Since this study established that student enrolment was gender balanced, it opted not to dwell on that. Instead, it turned to investigating the training program and whether that was the source of the gender inequalities.

1.2.6 Pre-service Primary Teacher Training in Malawi

Malawi trains its primary school teachers both in public and private teacher training colleges under the coordination and regulation of the Ministry of Education through the Directorate of Teacher Education and Development (DTED). As of March 2022, there were fifteen (eight public and seven private) teacher-training colleges (Refer to Appendix 2 for a list of these). The student teachers undergo a two-year certificate course termed the Initial Primary Teacher Education (IPTE). The Malawi Institute of Education (MIE) develops the IPTE curriculum which teacher training colleges (TTCs) facilitate but the programme is examined and certified by the Malawi National Examinations Board (MANEB).

Since teachers influence the social construct of gender by "*acting as role models for the learners*" (MoEST, 2017, p.viii), their understanding and awareness of gender responsiveness are key to the effective participation of female and male students in the learning processes (Mlama et. al., 2005). Therefore, this study aimed to investigate whether the Initial Primary Teacher Education (IPTE) programme in teacher training colleges (TTCs) addressed gender inequality among student teachers and how the IPTE programme's gender responsiveness compared with global trends.

1.3 Statement of the problem

Malawi faces high levels of gender inequality (ranked 115 out of 156 countries in the 2021 Global Gender Gap Index) (Lovell, 2021; World Economic Forum, 2021). It is therefore not surprising that the National Planning Commission (NPC) (2020) admitted that, in Malawi's education system, gender inequality exists. NPC further explained that discriminatory customary practices fuelled the gender inequality.

Even though many believe that quality pre-service and in-service gender-sensitive training helps teachers to assess and challenge their own gender biases and learn ways to diversify their teaching and assessment styles (FAWE, 2018), Sadker and Sadker (1986) view schools as places that systematically reproduce gender inequality. They argue that females and males who sit in the same classroom, study the same course books, and listen to the same teacher can still receive a different education because females are the invisible members of the class. In addition, Sadker and Sadker (1988) showed in their study that male students received more active and precise teacher attention and feedback, unlike their female classmates. In that way, education institutions shape and socialize female and male students differently through the official and hidden curriculum through behaviour codes, classroom organization, and informal pedagogical methods such as discipline, punishment methods, and many other teaching practices) (Esen, 2013).

It is against the background of the arguments of Sadker and Sadker (1986) that schools are places that systematically reproduce gender inequalities that the researcher conceived this study to investigate the gender responsiveness of the Pre-service Primary School Teachers' Training program in teacher-training colleges in Malawi. So far, research on gender responsiveness of pre-service training of primary school teachers in Malawi is anecdotal, and therefore, this study will be one of the first of its kind in the Malawi academia to investigate gender responsiveness of the teacher-training program.

While some studies have focused on Malawi's gender regime (Chikapa, 2017), women's careers (Chikapa, 2018), gender gaps in political leadership (Kayuni, 2017), and gender disparities in

technical entrepreneurial and vocational education training (TEVET) institutions (UNESCO, 2018), very few studies have specifically focused on gender responsiveness in the Pre-service Primary School Teachers Training programme. The bulk of studies on gender in education have focused on school-related gender-based violence (James, 2015), gender equality and others on female students' education.

1.4 Justification and significance

In our lives, we cannot avoid gender discourses and practices since as people we normatively think, act, and behave according to our gender roles or identities (Widodo & Elyas, 2020). However, some studies (Esen, 2013; FAWE 2018; UNESCO, 2018) have shown that education institutions are capable of being sites of change and transformation if educators are aware of the gendered messages they pass on to students through their attitudes and actions as well as through the curriculum.

Again, Esen (2013) observes that education is an effective tool for minimizing differences among social groups and genders. Conversely, as Osuji and Kalio (2018) point out, educationists cannot achieve quality education without addressing the gender dimension. Therefore, it is paramount that policymakers, educationists, and students consider building awareness of gender-related issues such as gender responsiveness (Widodo & Elyas, 2020). This study through its findings, contributes to knowledge about gender in pre-service teacher training and makes evidence based recommendations for improvement, which different stakeholders can use.

Firstly, the Directorate of Teacher Education and Development (DTED), which coordinates and regulates teacher training and development in Malawi can use the results in designing and

implementing gender responsive teacher training. Similarly, the researcher will also benefit from evidence-based knowledge and skills in gender responsiveness that will contribute towards effective practice as an educationist.

Secondly, the study can further help teacher educators by providing them with useful information for improving management systems and the use of gender-responsive pedagogies for effective teacher training practices by addressing gender-related challenges they face.

Lastly, the study findings may help education stakeholders identify areas for intervention to improve the gender responsiveness of teacher education. Surely, pre-service teacher education being the formative preparation of teachers is very crucial and has the potential to improve learning outcomes in the basic education sub-sector.

1.5 Objectives of the study

1.5.1 Main objective

The main objective of the study was to investigate the gender responsiveness of the Pre-service Primary School Teacher-Training program in teacher-training colleges in Malawi. To achieve this main objective, the study developed specific objectives as follows:

1.5.2 Specific objectives

1. To establish an understanding of the concept of gender among students, teacher educators and college management

2. To investigate the nature of gender responsiveness of the Pre-service Teacher Training programme

3. To explore challenges faced by the TTC management and teacher educators in implementing a gender-responsive pre-service teacher training programme

4. To identify ways of improving the TTC management and teacher educators' gender-responsive practices in the training of pre-service teachers

1.6 Conceptual framework

This section presents the conceptual framework that guided the study. Jabareen (2009) defines a conceptual framework as a network or "plane" of interlinked concepts that comprehensively describe a phenomenon. The Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE) (2005) Model of Gender Responsiveness guided the study as it provided the lens for investigating gender responsiveness of the pre-service teacher-training program.

1.6.1 Description of the Model

FAWE developed an Institutional Gender Responsiveness Model in 2005 and reviewed it in 2018. The model is a tool for training teachers to be more gender aware with the skills to understand and address the specific learning needs of both sexes (FAWE, 2023). Malawi is one of the countries that have used the GRP model in training in-service and pre-service teachers in TTCs and schools. Specifically, teachers are trained in 9 elements. These are designing gender-responsive lesson plans, classroom interaction, classroom set-up, language use in the classroom, teaching and learning materials, management of sexual maturation, strategies to eliminate sexual harassment, gender-responsive school management systems, and monitoring and evaluation. Figure 1.1 presents the FAWE model.

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┌─────────────────────────┐                          ┌─────────────────────────┐
│ Supported by            │                          │ **Gender Awareness**    │
│ **Physical Environment**│                          │ through GRP Trainings   │
│   • Furniture,          │                          │                         │
│   • Sanitation facilities,│                        └─────────────────────────┘
│   • Classrooms & Labs   │
└─────────────────────────┘
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┌─────────────────────────┐   ┌─────────────────────────┐   ┌─────────────────────────┐
│ Supported by   │   │ **Gender Responsive**   │   │ Strengthened   │
│ **Social Environment** │──────│ **Teacher Education**   │──────│ through   │
│   • GR Management   │   │ **Programs**   │   │ **M & E**   │
│   Systems   │   └─────────────────────────┘   └─────────────────────────┘
│   • Policies and rules │
│   • Bursaries   │   ┌─────────────────────────────┐
│   • Prevention of GBV   │   │ Facilitated by   │
└─────────────────────────┘   │ **Gender Responsive Pedagogy** │
                                         │   • Involvement in class   │
                                         │   • IEC Materials   │
                                         │   • Participation in STEM   │
                                         └─────────────────────────────┘

Figure 1.1: Showing the FAWE Institutional Gender Responsiveness Model

1.6.2 Understanding the FAWE Institutional Gender Responsiveness Model

Creating gender responsive education programs takes teaching practices to create equal treatment and participation of females and males (FAWE, 2023). The model starts with creating gender awareness to educationists mostly through gender responsive pedagogy trainings. Once the teachers understand gender dynamics in their classroom and the school environment, then they facilitate education using gender responsive pedagogies. The pedagogies emphasise on involvement of females and males in the teaching and learning process as well as the increased participation of females in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM).

For any institution to provide gender responsive education, it requires the support of both the physical and social environments. Physically, the furniture, sanitation facilities plus the classrooms and laboratories need to be supportive. Socially, the management systems, policies, rules and

bursaries need to be gender responsive. In addition, a vibrant monitoring and evaluation system will ensure the functionality of all this. For that reason, the study found the FAWE's Institutional Gender Responsiveness Model to be a valuable tool for assessing gender responsiveness of the initial primary teacher education program. The Institutional Gender Responsiveness Model is summarised in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1: Showing Institutional Gender Responsiveness

Area/Aspect	Gender Responsive Elements	Expected Gender Responsiveness
Physical Environment	Furniture	Gender responsive size, height and privacy
	Amenities (water, electricity and sanitation)	Availability for both female and male students
	Students' College Accommodation	Availability and segregation
	Classrooms & Laboratories and spaces for STEM	Availability
Social Environment	Good level of gender awareness	Knowledge of gender issues
	Needy females and males supported through bursaries	Welfare tracking system Availability of support programmes
	Gender responsive management systems, rules and policies	Availability and functionality
	College addresses cases of sexual harassment	Availability of prevention and reporting systems
Academic Environment	Lecturers use gender responsive pedagogies	Usage of gender responsive pedagogies
	Encourages females in all subjects, particularly STEM subjects	Involvement of females in all subjects
	Walls have illustrations/pictures/ posters that send positive images of both women and men	Availability
	Desks and groups arranged to increase participation of both female and male students	Arrangement which facilitates participation of both males and females students

1.6.3 Application of the FAWE Institutional Gender Responsiveness Model

In line with FAWE 2005 Institutional Gender Responsiveness Model, teacher education programmes can be gender-responsive if they meet the physical, social, and academic needs of female and male students. Moreover, if teacher education institutions question gender biases, stereotypes, and its lecturers practice gender-responsive values and attitudes, programmes like the initial primary teacher education can help transform gender constructions. Therefore, the model was used in this study to check the understanding of gender, and whether the physical, social and academic environment in the teacher training colleges was gender responsive.

1.7 Definition of key terms used in the thesis

Gender: Refers to the socially constructed roles, behaviours, expressions, and identities of people that a given society considers appropriate for men and women, female and male students (CIHR, 2023). This study treated gender as two distinct classifications, namely, male and female. This anticipates the association of masculine perceptions with males, and femininity with females.

Gender awareness: Refers to the ability to identify problems arising from gender inequality and discrimination, even if these are not apparent on the surface (FAWE, 2018; Cambridge English Dictionary, 2023). However, gender awareness does not automatically translate into gender responsiveness although increased awareness raises chances for gender responsiveness.

Gender-Based Violence (GBV) is an umbrella term for any harmful act perpetrated against a person's will, which bases on gender differences between females and males (UNHCR, 2023).

Gender bias: Concerns making decisions based on gender that result in favouring one gender over the other (UNICEF, 2017b).

Gender equality: The notion that females and males have equal opportunity to access the right of schooling and other rights to facilitate the realization of potential (UNICEF, 2017b).

Gender gap: Refers to the disproportionate difference between men and women and male students and female students, particularly as reflected in the attainment of development goals, access to resources, and levels of participation (UNICEF, 2017b). A gender gap indicates gender inequality.

Gender mainstreaming is a political strategy that integrates gender equality into all decisions, legal frameworks, and activities developed within a given area (UN Division for Advancement of Women, 2000).

Gender parity is the proportional representation of females and males in an education system, and is the initial phase in achieving gender equality (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2011).

Gender responsiveness: Refers to taking action to correct gender bias and discrimination to ensure gender equality and equity (FAWE, 2018; INEE, 2019). Societies in general and education programs specifically, need to help correct gender biases and discrimination. The study used this definition to gauge whether the pre-service primary school teachers' training program had the elements of taking action to correct gender biases and discrimination in the Malawian education system.

Gender-responsive pedagogy: the teaching and learning processes that pay attention to the specific learning needs of female and male students (FAWE, 2018). Gender-responsive pedagogy helps to create overall gender responsiveness in education programmes. Therefore, teachers and education leaders need to create a positive environment that addresses the learning needs of female and male students to achieve learning outcomes.

Gender roles: Refers to social and behavioural norms that, within a specific culture, are widely considered socially appropriate for individuals of a specific sex (EIGE, 2023).

Gender-sensitive: Refers to the ability to recognize gender issues (UNICEF, 2017b). The student teachers, lecturers, and management need to recognize gender issues to apply them in their life and work.

Gender Stereotype is a generalised view or preconception about attributes or characteristics that are or ought to be possessed by, or the roles that are or should be performed by men and women (OHCHR, 2013).

Gender stereotyping: Is the practice of ascribing to an individual woman or man specific attributes, characteristics, or roles because of her or his membership in the social group of women or men (OHCHR, 2013; UNICEF, 2017b). Such ascription can be in the media, conversation, jokes, or books. Gender stereotyping becomes harmful when it limits a person's life choices, such as training, professional path, and life plans.

Pedagogy: Encompasses lesson content, teaching methods, and students learning strategies. Pedagogy involves what is going to be taught, what is taught, how teaching will take place and how it is taught and what is taught is learned inside and outside classroom (Dorji, 2020).

Pre-service teacher training: This is the training provided to prospective teachers and is generally a pre-requisite for the teaching profession (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2011). In Malawi, the Initial Primary Teacher Education (IPTE) is a residential two-year certificate program targeting those who intend to become primary school teachers. These are trained both in private and public teacher training colleges and upon successful completion are certified by the Malawi National Examinations Board (MANEB).

Sex: Refers to the biological and physiological attributes of being female or male that people are born with (CIHR, 2023). Although there is a possibility of more than two sexes, this paper uses the above definition to understand sex

Socialization: refers to ongoing process of learning the expected behaviours, values, norms, and social skills of individuals who occupy particular roles in society (Robson, 2023). Education institutions are social sites where the socialization process is reinforced.

Social perceptions: The common impressions particular societies have regarding femininity and masculinity. Perceptions are mainly peoples' opinions, positions, and myths, and are not necessarily factual (Karuti, 2013).

1.8 Chapter summary

The chapter has presented the background to the study. It has shown that gender-responsive pedagogy (GRP) in teacher training colleges and the revised Initial Primary Teacher Education (IPTE) curriculum were implemented to address gender gaps. In addition, it presented the statement of the problem, the justification and significance of the study, research objectives and the FAWE Model of Gender Responsiveness as the conceptual framework guiding the study. The next chapter presents a literature review for the study.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Chapter Introduction

This chapter reviews the literature in line with the objectives set out for the study. Literature review is a systematic study of available documents (both published and unpublished) on the topic to learn from them. This literature review focused on understanding the concept of gender, the gender responsiveness of pre-service teacher-training, challenges faced by teacher training colleges in implementing gender-responsive pre-service teacher training, and ways of improving the management of gender-responsive practices in the training of pre-service teachers.

2.2 Understanding the Concept of Gender

2.2.1 History of the Concept of Gender

Gender has always been there. It is as ancient as the existence of the human race itself. However, the study of the concept of gender first emerged in the late 1970s as a tool to distinguish between the biological disposition of women and men described as sex, and the social construction of the distinct social expectations described as gender (Sjϕrup, 2005). Gayle Rubin proposed such a distinction in her famous article, "The Traffic in Women," (1975), in which she presented an attempt to formulate a coherent theory of the sex/gender system (Sjϕrup, 2005). It is from this conceptualization that gender studies have continued to evolve.

According to Unterhalter (2008), gender values have transformed since the 1970s. Significantly, though, one recognizable step was the organization of the first World Conference on Women held in Mexico City, Mexico in 1975 where women's status to men's came to the attention of the world.

During that period, issues of gender equality emerged to address barriers that had kept females out of schools, jobs, and political participation (Unterhalter, 2008).

Similarly, in development policy and practice, these ideas of gender related to the Women in Development (WID) agenda. Later on, the Gender and Development (GAD) movement emerged upon realising that gender equality needed the transformation of the wider social structures that formed it. In education, the GAD approach drew attention to unequal gendered relations in schools, families, and the political economy (Unterhalter 2005).

Another milestone in the gender movement was the Jomtien Declaration, which launched the Education for All (EFA) movement in 1990, which asserted,

> "*The most urgent priority is to ensure access to, and improve the quality of, education for female students and women, and to remove every obstacle that hampers their active participation. All gender stereotyping in education should be eliminated"* (WDEFA, 1990).

This declaration identified female students and women as a group left out of quality education. Later, the Fourth World Conference on Women that took place in Beijing in 1995 addressed this concern by drafting the Platform for Action (Unterhalter, 2005). One hundred and eighty (180) governments participated in this conference. Therefore, from that time, gender became a global agenda permeating all sectors of life. Consequently, many initiatives aimed at promoting the education of female students have emerged. In the education sector, gender equality has entailed equal recognition of female and male students in access to schooling, progression, and completion. This version of gender equality has generally prevailed to the present. However, the gender *drive* has tilted more towards females.

2.2.2 Theories of Gender

Several theories help in understanding the concept of gender. However, no theory is complete to offer a holistic understanding of the concept. For that reason, Mannathoko (1999), highlighted that throughout Eastern and Southern Africa region, feminist and gender researchers working in education either consciously or unconsciously use one or several gender theories in their (sic) research methodology. Therefore, she came up with four perspectives for analysing gender, namely, the notions of difference, inequality, oppression, and empowerment. The following section describes these perspectives in more detail.

2.2.2.1 Theories of Gender Differences and Identity

Theories of gender difference and identity state that biological factors play an important part in determining and categorizing us as male or female. Our sex depends on whether we are born with distinct female or male parts and a genetic programme that released female or male hormones to stimulate the development of the reproductive system. In that regard, gender involves feminine and masculine feelings, attitudes, and behaviours identified with a particular sex-biologically, psychologically, and socially. When we behave according to widely shared expectations about how males or females are supposed to act, we adopt a gender role.

An application of this theory is the Institutional Socialization Theory or Sex Role Theory. This perspective established that the socialisation process is one of the major constraints affecting female participation in education. According to Mannathoko (1999), most African societies regard males as an inheritance and perpetuation of family lineage while females as "*visitors*" who will leave once they get married. Therefore, institutional socialisation theorists indicate that families and education institutions need to address gender-based discriminatory practices to improve gender responsiveness.

2.2.2.2 Gender Theories of Inequality

Gender inequality is a social phenomenon in which people are not treated equally on the basis of gender. According to Kirby (1999), three broad approaches are used to explore gender inequality. These are gender socialisation models, structural theories of patriarchy and sex and gender formation approaches. Overall, gender theories of inequality have roots in liberal feminism. Liberal feminism explains that gender inequality begins with the sexual division of labour and the prevalence of separate private and public spheres of social activity (Mannathoko, 1999). The theories fault the notion that women's primary location is in the private sphere and men's is in the public sphere. This perspective views the socialization of children as a preparation for their adult roles and works in the spheres appropriate for their sex.

One shortcoming of inequality theories is the focus on access and equality of opportunity. Research on the education of females in the Eastern and Southern Africa region suggests that increasing their access to education does not guarantee the improvement of the quality of their lives. For liberal feminists, gender inequality results from a system that restricts women's access to the public sphere by burdening and isolating them with private sphere responsibilities. In that case, education studies maintain that gender inequalities limit female access and retention in certain education fields (Mannathoko, 1999). Emphasizing the importance of educating females, gender activists have argued that females' education is an investment with probably higher economic returns than that of males (King & Winthrop, 2015; Mannathoko, 1999).

2.2.2.3 Gender Theories of Oppression

Gender oppression theorists view women's situation as that dominated and oppressed by men (IGI-Global, 2021; Mannathoko, 1999). The theorists say that men implement those interests, which reinforce their control, use subjugation, and oppression of women (Mannathoko, 1999). Examples

of gender oppression theories include feminist psychoanalytic theory and radical feminism. Radical feminism perceives all of society as oppressive to women and that every institution is a vehicle by which men dominate women resulting in gender oppression (Mannathoko, 1999). In school, the radical feminists hold the view that male students have the power to reduce female students' chances of success. This view assumes that women or female students are defenceless or voiceless and have no power with which they can defend themselves. This may not be entirely true.

To exemplify oppression in the education system, Mannathoko (1999) indicated that during several social studies lessons she observed in Botswana's secondary school, primary or college level, "teachers and lecturers never followed up issues of a gendered nature which undergird the knowledge discussed during the lesson" (Mannathoko, 1999, p.455). To feminists, such practices are evidence that the education system oppresses female members of society.

2.2.2.4 Gender Theories of Empowerment

Empowerment means *giving power to* a particular group of people. Gender empowerment theories are concerned with ways in which women can be empowered to overcome gender inequality and oppression. Examples of gender empowerment theories are the Capability Approach, developed by Amartya Sen, (Sen, 1998) and the Empowerment Theory.

Generally, gender empowerment theories relate to post-structuralist feminism. This perspective investigates women's and female students' powerlessness and silence in classrooms, men's power, and domination of interactions in education institutions through speech. Empowerment, then, would facilitate discourse among women as a collective force and between men and women as unequal stakeholders (Mannathoko, 1999). Post-structuralism challenges teachers and pupils to

interrogate their politics, review the cultures in their workplaces, and reject patriarchal ideology (Mannathoko, 1999). This is because patriarchy seeks dominance over women and female students; therefore, empowerment is the strategy for challenging it.

2.3 Educators' understanding of Gender

Related studies have documented educators' views about gender. For example, a study by USAID (2005) in Jamaica found that teachers had a limited understanding of the impact of gender dynamics on educational achievement and outcomes. Specifically, the study indicated that "Teachers had limited understanding, knowledge, and training related to male students' and female students' emotional needs" (p.23). This means that teachers' limited understanding of gender affects the type of interactions between students and their lecturers. Similarly, another study by Karuti (2013) in Kenyan public schools found that the majority of teachers had positive perceptions towards male students and masculinities. The study demonstrated that a majority of teachers viewed male students as highly capable, strong, and independent. Subtly, this meant that the same teachers looked at female students as less capable. These cited examples showed that many teachers in a majority of developing countries had gender biases mostly favouring males.

2.4 Gender and teacher education

Globally, statistics show that teaching in primary schools is largely a female profession. For example, as of 2011, in the United States of America, Canada, Britain, and Australia, 90 percent of primary school teachers were female. Similarly, in the European Union (EU) a majority of teachers were female with less than one-third being men (Akhtar, 2012; Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2010; Tašner et al., 2017; UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2011). Likewise, a clear majority of Southern African countries have high female teacher ratios like Botswana (76%),

Lesotho (77%), Namibia (68%), Swaziland (70%), and South Africa (77%) (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2011).

Generally, many advocates believe that countries with high proportions of female teachers in primary education are more likely to have high enrolment rates for girls in secondary education. This relationship may partly reflect the female primary teachers' positive role modelling that makes the classroom a safer and *more inviting* space for girls, thus encouraging them to continue their education (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2011).

Some authors attribute higher numbers of female teachers to perceptions about the teaching profession as a vocation (calling) linked to the concepts of caring, giving, and helping (Tašner et al., 2017). However, the Malawi case just like a few other African countries contradicts this trend. The official census statistics revealed inequality that favoured males. The countries with minority female teachers included Chad (14%), Liberia (12%), Togo (13%), Benin (19%), and Central African Republic (14%). In Malawi, according to Maluwa-Banda (2003) as of 2000, 65% of those enrolled at Primary School Teacher Training Colleges were men, compared to 35% females (p. 10). Therefore, it was not surprising that as of 2020 there were more male teachers (55%) than females (45%) in primary schools at the national level (MoE, 2020). To address the gender gap, the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology's Policy and Investment Framework (PIF) for the period from 2000 to 2015 clearly stated that it would highly prioritise the gender imbalance and inequity in the education system at all levels (Maluwa-Banda, 2003).

2.4.1 Pre-service teacher training and gender responsiveness

The quality of teacher training colleges depends on many factors, including equal opportunities for men and women (UNESCO, 2017a). One way of ensuring equal opportunities for men and

women in teacher training, according to a study by Wanjama and Njuguna (2015), is through scaling up Gender-Responsive Pedagogy (GRP) in pre-service training. Therefore, it is along that line that Malawi mainstreamed gender responsiveness in teacher training in the early 2000s.

Strikingly, studies by Unterhalter et al, (2015) disputed that pre-service teacher training adequately prepared teachers to address gender issues. The authors asserted, "*There has been much focus on teachers' basic educational qualifications, and less attention given to softer skills such as ideas about gender, equality, or inclusion*" (p.7). Similarly, in Malawi, the main challenge has been to put gender-sensitive policies into practice in the school management, learning environment, and implementation of the curriculum (Maluwa-Banda, 2003)

Likewise, a study by CODE (2015) in Mozambique conducted at four teacher-training colleges' revealed differences between men and women at the same institution. While significantly more male respondents indicated that they knew of policies at the colleges that promoted a safe environment and equal opportunities for pre-service teachers, only 25 percent of female pre-service teachers and none of the female teacher educators indicated knowledge of the policies (CODE, 2020). Moreover, female pre-service teachers reported not having adequate female leaders and role models to whom they could turn when they had issues with harassment, abuse, violence, or even the need for female hygiene products (CODE, 2020). The current study found out what the situation was in Malawi's pre-service primary teacher training colleges. Chapter 4 presents and discusses the findings of this research

2.5 Myths about females and males education.

Myths are widely held but false beliefs or ideas. Unfortunately, myths based on gender persist, despite the evidence to the contrary. For example, there is a popular belief that males are good at

sciences and mathematics while females are good at reading and other art subjects. However, Campbell and Storo, (1996) show that gender is not a good predictor of academic skills, interests, or even emotional characteristics despite common beliefs that it is. Campbell and Storo (1996) argued, "There is no evidence of a *math gene"* (p. 5). Instead, a lot of evidence shows that practice and encouragement improve math and science skills for female students (and male students alike). Therefore, educationists need to be aware of this and dispel myths. Instead, they need to encourage hard work and practice for students to improve their performance in all subjects.

Another myth is that female students learn better from female teachers. On the contrary, Campbell and Storo, (1996) countered that it makes little difference to most students whether a man or a woman teaches them. Rather, it is the quality of the teaching not the gender of the teacher that matters. Likewise, a study in the Philippines by Batugal (2019) among pre-service teachers of secondary and primary schools found no significant differences in the teaching performance of the pre-service teachers when grouped according to sex. This implied that whether female or male, teaching performance does not differ. This significant finding may dispel gender biases and stereotypes that usually contribute to the formation of myths about one gender being a better teacher than another gender.

Just like the above, a study by Evans and Le Nestour (2019) in Ecuador that examined the impact of teacher gender on math scores found that teacher gender did not affect the math achievement of female or male students in their sample. Therefore, teachers and teacher educators need to challenge these myths, as these do not have scientific evidence. Overall, quality teaching and learning is paramount, unlike the sex of the one handling the classes.

Similarly, another popular myth is that role models must always be of the same sex as the student. While women and men can teach female or male students well (or poorly), if students never see women teaching math or science, the myths about who does and does not do math and science are reinforced (Campbell & Storo,1996). Role models, whether females or males, should be able to inspire their students with brilliance and quality of service. A role model must display superior qualities regardless of their sex. Therefore, it is not correct to assume that someone qualifies to be a role model simply based on his or her sex. This is inadequate. They must be able to model brilliance.

Finally, the gender of the teacher has little or no effect on how they treat female and male students. While teachers treat male and female students differently, this is true for teachers of both sexes. To sum it up, educationists must read "scientific" research publications with a critical eye to distinguish facts from opinions. This is because most of the beliefs about gender are opinions and not facts.

2.6 Importance of Gender Responsiveness in education

According to Osuji and Kalio (2018), addressing the gender dimension would lead to quality education. Therefore, gender responsiveness is important in helping females and males to develop and maintain healthy relationships, both within institutions and in their community (GET 2003). Similarly, CODE (2020) argued that it is crucial to provide female and male students with a quality and gender-responsive education, one that all students can access and in which they can thrive. To achieve that, there is a need for transformation at all levels: in classrooms, in teacher training colleges, in communities, and at the national level. This means that the task of bringing gender-responsive education is not limited to school grounds only.

For instance, Lamptey et. al., (2015) concluded, if gender equality in education is to be achieved, the entire education system must adopt gender-responsive policies, plans, strategies, and budgets. This draws the link between gender responsiveness, the focus of this research, and gender equality, which is the ultimate goal. According to Lamptey et. al., (2015), UNESCO aspires that education institutions in general, and teacher education institutions in particular, wherever they are located, should champion gender equality through mainstreaming gender into teacher policies and plans, curriculum development, pedagogy, research, and communication. These various aspects of an education program must respond to gender.

Surely, gender responsiveness goes beyond equal numbers of females and males, otherwise termed gender parity. According to Karuti (2013), gender parity in education is a narrow aspiration that simply talks about numbers and provides little information about the nature of gender relations between female and male students as social groupings within the education system. Therefore, having gender responsiveness should mean improved interactions between females and males and not just equal numbers.

2.7 Administrators' role in gender responsiveness

According to a study by Osuji and Kalio (2018), the role of administrators is to work collaboratively with teachers to create gender-responsive academic environments. The study stated that any teacher should be sensitized, taught, or encouraged to facilitate both female and male students' abilities to learn and progress equally and develop their potential to the fullest. Similarly, educators need sensitisation to react cautiously to unfriendly and potentially gender-biased attitudes. Therefore, educational administrators have a crucial role in ensuring gender responsiveness through mentorship and supervision.

2.8 Educators' Understanding of Gender Responsiveness

Gender-responsive means planning and carrying out programmes, policies, or activities in ways that consider the different needs of women/female students and men/male students and involve them in decision-making, participation, and opportunities (Uworwabayeho et. al., 2018). One of the ways through which lecturers can understand gender responsiveness is through exposure to gender-responsive pedagogy. For example, a study by Ananga (2021) in Ghana's initial teacher education in colleges of education found that some tutors had misconceptions of gender responsiveness to mean having equal numbers instead of giving equal opportunities.

However, after being trained in gender responsiveness, the study found that there was a change in tutors' attitudes and values, which led them to start applying gender responsive pedagogy in their classrooms over time. For example, the tutors indicated, "using gender-responsive pedagogy eliminated gender biases and stereotypes from the classroom which provided equal opportunity for active involvement of both male and female student teachers" (Ananga, 2021, p. 856). This positive result may be transferable across contexts.

Similarly, a study at Sokoine University of Agriculture by Kahamba et. al., (2017), found that the ability of instructors to adopt and practice gender-responsive pedagogy starts with their understanding and knowledge of the concept itself and the skills for applying them (p.7). The study concluded that the instructors partially understood the meaning of gender-responsive pedagogy (GRP). The study also indicated that defining the concept of gender responsiveness was attributed to the gender policy implementation committee's efforts in raising awareness on gender issues among staff through workshops on gender mainstreaming in the curriculum.

Since the intensification of gender education seminars, elective courses, and workshops with pre-service teachers, in-service teachers, and teacher trainers elsewhere have reportedly produced successful results (Esen, 2013), the study by Kahamba et. al., (2017) recommended awareness campaigns and training workshops to academic staff on how to apply gender-sensitive teaching techniques. In addition, the study recommended the drafting of a gender policy and its implementation strategy to guide GRP mainstreaming in curriculum and teaching (Kahamba et. al., 2017). However, the study findings cautioned that regardless of the high level of awareness in terms of what gender-sensitive teaching means, instructors failed to identify practical methods or techniques in teaching to ensure gender equality outcomes in learning (Kahamba et. al., 2017).

2.9 Educators' Role in Gender Responsiveness

According to Ogachi (2006), education is the main avenue for transmitting a society's culture from one generation to another. Therefore, educators have a crucial role in shaping the attitudes and practices of their students. They model the way. However, as discovered by Osuji and Kalio (2018) in Sub-Saharan Africa, most teachers do not go beyond 'cognitive understanding' of gender concepts for them to facilitate moral grounding. The study further revealed that eventually, the lack of gender responsiveness finds its way into the classroom (Osuji & Kalio, 2018). These findings were very crucial as they informed the current study to understand the causes of the mismatches between gender policies and the practice of educators. Therefore, the role of educators is to collaborate with administrators through their conduct, practices, and teaching pedagogies to eliminate gender unresponsiveness in education.

2.10 Students' Understanding of Gender

Since pre-service teacher training is a preparation for eventual teaching, how well students are prepared affects their practice. The way students view issues of gender is mostly a reflection of

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their adult societies from whom they are learning. For example, a study by Gündoğan and Taşdere (2021) in Turkey showed that pre-service teachers mostly had stereotypical judgments. This showed that the pre-service teachers did not fully develop awareness about gender issues. The authors argued that that might have been the case since teacher training in that country did not focus on gender issues. Therefore, it implied that pre-service teacher training that does not focus on gender issues is less likely to inculcate gender-responsive values in the students.

Likewise, a study by Sultana and Lazim (2011) in Malaysia on students' perception and understanding of gender found that most student teachers did not have basic knowledge of gender. However, the same study found that female student teachers generally performed better than males in various activities of gender studies classes. The study observed that male students were less attentive in class or forced to take the course. Moreover, the researchers observed that because the course used English as a language of instruction, it also hindered its full implementation. In Malawi, English is also the language of instruction in all education institutions including in teacher education. This may affect students' meaningful understanding of gender issues in gender classes like in the Malaysian case.

Similarly, another study by Gray and Leith (2004) in Northern Ireland, observed that there was a gap between teacher theory and practice regarding gender sensitivity in teacher education. The study detected that pre-service teachers did not take any gender-related courses during their education and they discussed gender issues indirectly, not directly. The current study investigated whether Malawi's pre-service teachers studied gender and their training was gender-responsive. Teachers are key in bringing about the much-needed change to the prevailing gender inequality (Esen, 2013).

2.11 Students' Understanding of Gender Responsiveness

For students to understand gender responsiveness, it requires their lecturers to embrace gender-responsive pedagogy. A study by Ananga (2021) showed that when tutors have a good understanding of gender-responsive pedagogy, they apply them during lessons. For example, the tutors indicated, "Using gender-responsive pedagogy eliminated gender biases and stereotypes from the classroom which provided equal opportunity for active involvement of both male and female student teachers" (p. 856). This positive result may be transferable across contexts. Therefore, student teachers are most likely to embrace positive gender values if a lecturer uses gender-responsive pedagogies in teaching them.

In agreement, a study by CODE (2020) in four of Mozambique's teacher training colleges noted that once pre-service teachers and teacher educators have been involved in activities on gender, it raised awareness and increased understanding of gender equality. However, CODE (2020) pointed out that male pre-service teachers lacked awareness of the structural inequalities in their colleges. The study however, conceded that despite positive responses from participants on the idea of gender equality, changes in deeply embedded societal attitudes towards the role of women take time. The authors said,

> "*Although many respondents seemed to be aware of gender equality as an idea and many could speak to what it might be like, in the abstract, their responses about their experiences in everyday life showed that attitudes had not shifted greatly away from stereotypical views of women*" (CODE, 2020, p. 4).

This could hint that social researchers need to be cautious not to conclude without a thorough assessment that increased gender awareness equates to gender responsiveness. People can be aware of gender issues and still practice gender biases and discrimination.

2.12 Gender-responsive Teacher Training College Environment

According to INEE (2019), a gender-responsive education is the one that addresses gender-based barriers; respects gender differences; enables structures, systems, and methodologies to be sensitive to gender; ensures gender parity and evolves to close gaps and eradicate gender-based discrimination. Likewise, a gender-responsive education institution provides a safe and secure learning environment for female and male students. This is consistent with FAWE's Gender Responsive Model. A gender-responsive education institution creates both physical as well as psychological security and safety. Providing such an environment requires governments, education institutions, lecturers, and students to take part in ensuring that TTCs are free from violence and discrimination and provide a gender-sensitive education of good quality. To ensure gender responsiveness in the classroom, there is need to discuss gender-based violence including the links between gender norms, discrimination, and violence (INEE, 2019). Such discussions would help in facilitating effective life skills training for all teachers and all students in all settings.

On its part, governments need to develop non-discriminatory curricula and make sure sanitation facilities are adequate. On the other hand, the TTCs are responsible for addressing college-related violence and providing sexuality education. On their part, lecturers need to follow professional norms regarding disciplinary practices and providing unbiased instruction (UNESCO, 2019b). Such an environment would surely be gender-responsive.

2.13 Creating Gender-Responsive Teacher Training Programmes

Gender-responsive teacher training programmes can be created in various ways. The first way as presented by Widodo & Elyas, (2020), is to build awareness of gender-related issues such as gender responsiveness among educationists and students. This can be done through formal programmes and activities like the curriculum as well as informal channels like clubs and societies. There is strong evidence from work in Africa (Ghana, Mozambique, Kenya, Tanzania, Nigeria, and Uganda) that clubs are an important space where female and male students can discuss and challenge gender norms, including those associated with sex, gender-based violence, and school progression (Unterhalter, et. al, 2014). This may include gender clubs and societies.

The second way is through entrenching knowledge of gender into one's values and practices. This would involve creating an understanding that gender responsiveness goes beyond equal numbers or merely a cognitive understanding of the concept of gender but translating these into a lifestyle. This may require designing teacher-training programmes with courses focusing on gender issues. Through course activities, pre-service teachers can acquire universal skills such as equality and justice.

The third one is that of deliberately using gender-sensitive language and involving more females in the classroom and leadership roles in the instructional process (Ananga, 2021). This enhances fairness bearing in mind that most societies, do not usually give these roles to females. Roles like class monitors, group leaders, and secretaries should involve both females and males. When the education system incorporates these suggestions, perceptions of women and men in society can change and some progress based on justice and equality can be seen (Gündoğan & Taşdere, 2021).

2.13.1 Gender-Responsive Pedagogy in Teacher Training Colleges

In Malawi, Gender Responsive Pedagogy (GRP) was introduced through FAWE's project in August 2009 (FAWE, 2018). GRP was piloted at Karonga Teachers Training College through training for lecturers and management staff. In collaboration with the Department of Teacher Education and Development (DTED), FAWE Malawi (FAWEMA) rolled out the GRP training to all grant-aided Teachers Training Colleges between October 2009 and June 2011. The GRP project impacts (2009-2013) included the establishment of a gender committee and the appointment of a gender focal person in all the TTCs across the country. It also led to the establishment of a gender-balanced student council, the development of a gender policy at the TTC level, and the development of a Gender Responsive Orientation manual for TTC lecturers (FAWE, 2018). The study, among others, looked at these interventions in the sampled TTCs in a bid to establish their gender-responsiveness.

2.13.2 Adoption of Gender Responsive Pedagogies

Gender-responsive pedagogies are one of the main vehicles through which education programmes can become gender-responsive. According to research by Ananga (2021), in colleges of education in Ghana, the adoption of Gender-Responsive Pedagogy (GRP) accelerated over time and *not instantly*. Ananga (2021) in his four-year study (2015-2018) involving 310 participants from 46 colleges of education found that tutors' use of GRP in core subjects (English, Mathematics, Science) grew significantly from 1.8% to 68% for males and 3.6% to 64.4% for females between 2015 and 2018. The study showed that perceptions about gender and the adoption of gender-responsive pedagogies followed a gradual acceleration process.

The study by Ananga (2021) showed that forming values takes time and effort. Although Ananga conducted his study in a different context, the Malawi Pre-service Primary Teacher Training

Programme's gender responsiveness may be similar or different hence it is crucial to learn from its findings.

Unlike the Ghana case reported by Ananga, studies in Botswana primary-level colleges by Mannathoko (1995) had contradictory results. They revealed that lecturers in teacher education institutions did not prioritise gender-responsive pedagogy. Their primary objective was to complete the course syllabus and prepare students for examinations. Consequently, such teaching approaches usually overlooked gender issues. Particularly interesting, Mannathoko (1995) pointed out that "an overwhelming majority of male and female lecturers believe that in the classrooms what affects student learning is authoritarian teacher-centred and student-centred teaching methods, *not gender-sensitive pedagogy*" (p2). Mannathoko observed that the majority of male and female lecturers were not aware of the fact that in certain contexts it is important to focus on gender matters during the teaching process, rather than student-centred teaching. Findings of this study support this observation. Therefore, teacher educators need to be aware of the importance of gender-responsive pedagogy for all students to benefit meaningfully from their training and to carry into their professional practice, the required values as agents of change.

2.14 Gender Socialization

Gender socialization is a process of female and male students, women and men learning social roles based on their sex, which leads to different behaviours and creates differing expectations and attitudes by gender. An example is the expectation that female students and women should do more household chores, such as cooking and cleaning, while male students and men should do more work outside the home. According to UNICEF (2017), gender roles often lead to inequality. In school, many teachers expect higher performance from female students in reading and expect male students to do better in Maths and natural sciences. This is a basis for many problems amongst

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students and teachers. To reverse such beliefs, during teacher education processes, it is necessary to highlight gender issues and problems related to gender equality (Gray & Leith, 2004)

Therefore, the work of changing attitudes towards female students and women must not only include female teacher educators, pre-service teachers, and officials – rather engaging men in the conversation is crucial, as true transformation must come from all of those involved in the education system (CODE, 2020)

According to Uworwabayeho et. al., (2018), schools are social sites where the socialization process is reinforced. As Lamptey et. al., (2015), argued, teachers frequently form attitudes based on stereotyping acquired from their upbringing and culture. For example, if teachers demonstrate attitudes and expectations that regard women and men differently, then they could reinforce societal perceptions (directly or indirectly). For example, a study by Gray and Leith (2004) stated that the school and teachers unintentionally brought the gender stereotypes of society to the class. This finding is in agreement with findings by Osuji & Kalio, (2018). In addition, according to Mlama et. al., (2005), the major obstacle facing teachers today is an apparent lack of gender skills for instruction, yet with training you can strengthen their gender-responsive teaching.

In the literature, gender usually focuses on women. Although gender refers to both men and women, it focuses more on favouring women (Sultana & Lazim, 2011). This view might be prejudiced but may also be because feminist movements have overshadowed the gender movement. That way, it is difficult to distinguish women's or girls' issues and gender ones. World over, feminist theorists agree on the principle that gender relations are socially constructed. They argue that we actively shape our gendered lives in the particular historical and social contexts in which we live.

2.15 Challenges Female and Male Students face

The third research objective aimed at analysing challenges confronting the implementation of gender-responsive teacher training. The review of literature established that female and male students face certain challenges that increase the likelihood of underachievement in education. The following sub-sections discuss these challenges.

2.15.1 Neglect of Male Students

A study by Karuti (2013) in Kenya documented participants' views that suggested that male students face neglect from various dimensions as initiatives emphasise female students. The neglect manifested in two key areas of financial and interactional aspects. Respondents categorized financial challenges into two; lack of school fees and inadequacy or lack of pocket money. While respondents unanimously agreed that problems of tuition fees affect both male and female students in similar ways, the departure point is that parents, government, and even non-governmental institutions treat female and male students disproportionately. This disproportionate treatment usually creates problems as male students retaliate through gender-based violence among others.

Karuti's (2013) study also revealed that the emphasis on females' education, though appropriate, might be leading to the neglect of issues promoting males' education. Some participants noted that various legal and policy provisions, such as; affirmative action, school readmission policies, and textbook illustrations, have contributed to inequalities in education. The study argued that, while such interventions have benefited the females, there has been some level of "over-illustrating" and glorifying females while side-lining males.

The study noted that even though focused attention on female students' education is not entirely negative, it, nonetheless, called for gender-balanced attention to address factors that militate

against males education. A balanced focus is vital because male students are just as important players if gender equality in education is to be realised. Otherwise, continued imbalances may reverse the gains realised over the years.

2.15.2 Reproductive Health

According to FAWE (2018), educational facilities often do not provide for the means to manage menstrual hygiene like privacy, water, incinerators, sanitary towels, and waste bins. This makes life challenging for students, especially females that in turn affects their academic participation.

2.15.3 Gender Stereotyping and Subject Preference

Findings of Karuti's (2013) study in Kenya also revealed that gender socialisation affected academic performance of male and female students. In that study, general perceptions attributed academic superiority to the male students. Consequently, the study reported that females lacked motivation to go beyond mediocre grades. Generally, the society socialised female students to believe that male students were better in everything including mathematics and sciences. Many considered these as hard subjects and associated them with masculinity. This is a myth. In contrast, languages and humanities were considered as soft, hence feminine. This too is a myth. Unfortunately, female students usually internalize these notions and hence dislike subjects considered a male domain when in fact subjects are neutral.

These findings revealed a common belief that male students perform better academically than their female counterparts. Such gendered perceptions alienate female students from sciences, mathematics, and other technical subjects - often perceived as "masculine". Such beliefs and attitudes may not be unique to Kenya but most developing societies. However, for purposes of

achieving gender-balanced results, the study recommended that education systems should develop initiatives to inspire male students to do well in subjects with which they struggle.

From the literature, it was clear that gender responsiveness is a relatively new concept in the Malawian academia. Although gender responsive pedagogy was introduced in 2009 at Karonga TTC and in all the other public TTCs by 2011 (FAWE, 2018, Wanjama & Njuguna, 2015), so far literature on this subject is sketchy. For example, these authors reported that Malawi and Ethiopia had fully embraced gender responsive pedagogy, however, the Ministry of Education revised the current primary teacher training model in 2017 hence the need for recent studies. The report might have applied to the former cohorts but there is a gap if that was still the case.

Elsewhere, like in Ghana, Ananga (2021) showed that Gender-responsive pedagogies are one of the main vehicles through which education programmes can become gender-responsive. Similarly, Kahamba et. al., (2017) from Tanzania revealed that for the majority of staff to understand the concept of gender responsiveness there is need to raise awareness through workshops on gender mainstreaming in the curriculum. In Malawi, there was still a gap as to what constituted gender responsive pedagogies and how responsive the teacher-training program was, hence the need for this study.

2.16 Chapter Summary

The literature review presented the history and theories of gender, educators' understanding of gender responsiveness, and Gender-Responsive Pedagogy (GRP) in teacher education and its implementation challenges. It also looked at myths regarding gender and education. The literature has revealed a dearth of studies on gender responsiveness of pre-service teacher education in Malawi. The next chapter discusses the methodology used in the study.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Chapter Introduction

This chapter describes the methodology used to carry out the study on gender responsiveness of the pre-service primary school teachers' training program in Malawi. The chapter is divided into fourteen sections. These are the research design, research paradigm, research approach, study site, population, sample and sampling approach, data instrument development, data collection methods, data collection tools/instruments, scope, trustworthiness, data analysis procedures and ethical considerations and limitations of the study.

3.2 Research Design

The study used the case study research design. Case studies are popular in social sciences and practice-oriented fields such as education, management, public administration and social work. By definition, a case study is an in-depth exploration from multiple perspectives of a particular subject, project, policy, institution, program, or system in a 'real-life' situation (Starman, 2013). The case in this research was the pre-service teacher-training program. This study chose the case study design in order to gather rich and detailed data about the program. Comparatively, the multi-site case study analysis hoped to generate an even deeper understanding of the program. With case studies, the question of generalising the findings does not apply, as they are specific to their context. Therefore, conclusions that are drawn are applicable to the case being explored.

3.3 Research paradigm

This study adopted the Interpretivism Paradigm. The choice of research design, approach, data collection methods and data analysis process were guided by this paradigm. According to Bryman, (2012) and Starman, (2013), Interpretivism usually denotes a subjective understanding of human action by an individual. Furthermore, Bryman (2012) pointed out that when a social scientist

adopts an interpretative stance, he or she is not simply laying bare how members of a social group interpret the world around them, but almost certainly places the interpretations into a social scientific frame. In that case, there is a double interpretation going on as the researcher also provides an interpretation of others' interpretations based on the concepts, theories, and literature of a discipline. As observed by Starman (2013), an interpretative paradigm characterises qualitative studies. Moreover, the context in which the research is conducted informs the interpretation of the data. Therefore, the *double interpretation* of the participants' views offered a good frame for a qualitative case study research of this kind.

3.4 Research Approach

This study employed a qualitative research approach to determine the gender responsiveness of the preservice teacher-training program. The qualitative research approach was chosen because it helps the researcher get many details about the nature of the phenomenon being studied (Creswell, 2012). Moreover, qualitative studies give an understanding of the situation in its uniqueness, presenting what respondents perceive about the situation (Dako-Gyeke & Owusu, 2013).

3.5 Site Description

Data was generated from four primary teacher-training colleges in Malawi. Out of the country's 15 primary school teacher training colleges (8 public and 7 private), the researcher purposefully selected four TTCs (3 public and 1 private). The first institution was chosen because it is the oldest public institution that trains teachers; therefore, it would provide very rich information. The second institution was the largest teacher training college in Malawi. The third institution was chosen because it is a private teacher training college with additional courses and unique philosophy, which would provide very rich information for the study. The fourth institution was chosen because a female leader, which would provide a different dimension to the study, headed it. The

institutions were given codes, College H, College J, College K and College I. The study expected to generate data on how gender responsive the teacher-training program was from these institutions. The following subsections give further details about the four teacher-training colleges.

3.5.1 College H

Description

The college is a public teacher training institution located in Blantyre district of Southern Malawi. The TTC operates under the South West Education Division (SWED). The college opened in 1973. It inherited Soche Hill College premises, which opened in 1962. This made it the oldest co-education public teacher training college in Malawi. At the time of data collection, the TTC had 539 student teachers of whom 239 were male and 300 were female. In addition, the college had 55 (30 female and 25 male) academic staff. Of these, 44 possessed a Bachelor's degree, 10 had a Master's degree and one had a Doctorate.

The organizational structure is the same for all public TTCs. It consists of the Principal, Deputy Principal, heads of department and lecturers. The college also has committees, which coordinate different activities. For example, there is a discipline committee, social welfare committee, and a sports committee among others.

3.5.2 College J

Description

The college is a private teacher training institution located in Dowa district in the Central Region of Malawi. The college operates under the Central East Education Division (CEED). It started its operations in 2010. The college operates on a unique philosophy of "*another kind of a teacher*." It has additional courses and placements that help students integrate well into community life and

work. The college's philosophy and additional programmes differentiated the students' experiences from those of other institutions.

At the time of data collection, the college had 71 student teachers of whom 42 were female and 29 were male. Similarly, the TTC had six lecturers of whom two were female and four were male including the principal. Of these, two possessed a Master's degree and four had a Bachelor's degree.

3.5.3 College K

Description

The college is a public teacher training institution located in Lilongwe in the Central Region of Malawi. It is under the Central West Education Division (CWED). The TTC started its operations in 1971. It is the largest in Malawi in terms of student enrolment. During the data collection period, the college had 670 students of whom 438 were male and 232 were female. The college had 48 academic staff. Of these, 22 were female and 26 male including the principal. In terms of academic qualifications, 39 possessed a Bachelor's degree while nine had a Master's degree.

3.5.4 College I

Description

The college is a public teacher training institution located in Phalombe district in the Southern Region of Malawi. It is under Shire Highlands Education Division (SHED). The college started its operations on 4th May 2015. During the time of data collection, the college had 295 student teachers: 156 females and 139 males. In addition, the college had 34 academic staff members. Of these, 19 were male and 15 were female including the principal. Of these staff, 33 had a Bachelor's degree and one possessed a Master's degree.

3.6 Population

In research, a population is a well-defined group of individuals or individual "items" with similar characteristics from which research participants are selected. From the four institutions, data was generated from principals, heads of departments, lecturers, student teachers, and college library assistants. The study took place at co-educational TTCs only to compare how females and males were treated. Refer to Appendix 2 for teacher training colleges in Malawi as of March 2022.

3.7 Sampling Approach and Participants

The study used non-probability sampling techniques. In this type of sampling, the sample is deliberately selected to reflect particular features. A sample is a small portion of the total set of people that make up the subjects of the study. Guided by Creswell (2012), this study used purposive sampling. This is because the study targeted participants hoped to provide *rich information* on the issue under study. The total sample was 35 and comprised of 4 principals, 9 heads of departments, 11 lecturers, 8 student teachers, and 3 library assistants.

Firstly, the study involved TTC Principals because they lead in implementing government policies related to teacher training. This includes gender-related policies like instituting a gender-responsive environment, pedagogy, and rules and regulations at the institutional level. Secondly, the study targeted heads of department as participants because they are part of the management team but also supervise lecturers in pedagogy. In addition, they also teach classes.

Thirdly, the study chose lecturers since they implement the curriculum in the classrooms. Fourthly, it involved some female and male students as recipients of the instruction process and hence could confirm the information from the management team members and lecturers. Lastly, library

assistants were involved to give information on how students utilised the library services. The next sub-sections give further details.

3.7.1 Age of teacher educators

Data revealed that ages of the teacher educators ranged from 26 to 63 years with the majority being above 41 years. This meant that most of the teacher educators involved in the study were cognitively mature to grasp the concept of gender responsiveness and its requirements for implementing it effectively. However, the study hypothesised that flexibility to incorporate emerging issues usually declines with advancing age and experience.

3.7.2 Teacher Educators' Professional Experience

The study also investigated the experience of those teacher educators observed teaching. The data showed that the majority (8 out of 11) had been teaching in TTC for up to 9 years while only a few had taught between 10 and 14 years. Table 3.1 summarises the teacher educators' teaching experience.

Table 3. 1: Showing Summary of Teacher Educators' Professional Experience

TTC Teaching Experience	Number of Participants
0 – 4 years	4
5 – 9 years	4
10 – 14 years	3
15 years Above	0
Total	**11**

The table above shows that the majority of teacher educators involved in the study had a relatively short experience in teacher education. Based on the experience of the teacher educators, the study hypothesized that the educators would effectively integrate gender-responsive pedagogy in their lessons. However, the researcher acknowledges the fact that sometimes the experience can be a

contributing factor to educators' resistance to change as some experienced staff may find it difficult to abandon their usual approaches to teaching. This is because most of the teachers first taught in either primary or secondary school before joining the teacher education sub-sector. In terms of participants' characteristics, Table 3.2 summarises their biographic data and the corresponding data collection method for each category.

Table 3. 2: Showing summary of participants' biographic data

Participants' Category	Number of Participants	Sex		Academic Qualifications				Data collection method
		M	F	MSCE	Dip.	B.Ed.	M.Ed.	
Principals	4	2	2			1	3	Interviews
Heads of Department	9	5	4			7	2	Interviews
Lecturers	11	6	5			9	2	FGDs & Lesson Observation
Students	8	4	4	8				Interviews
Library Assistants	3	0	3	2	1			Interviews
Total	**35**	**17**	**18**	**10**	**1**	**17**	**7**	

Data revealed that the teacher educators were academically well educated. For example, out of eleven lecturers whose lessons I observed, nine had a Bachelor's degree and two had a Master's degree. Having teacher educators' with required qualifications increases chances of them being responsive to gender during lesson delivery in their classrooms.

3.8 Data Instruments Development

Credible data collection begins with development of quality data collection instruments. The study used interview guides for principals, head of department, lecturers, and student teachers. The researcher adapted various gender responsive questions and interview guides in line with the study objectives. For example, the researcher developed the lecturers' and head of departments'

interview guides following themes on gender responsive lesson planning adapted from FAWE (2018). FAWE was chosen because it is an authority on gender responsiveness in Africa. More so, because this study used FAWE's Institutional Gender-Responsive Model as its conceptual framework. So the questions formulated had to reflect the aspects that the model focuses on for effective assessment of the case study.

3.9 Data Collection Methods

This study collected its data through interviews, focus group discussions, lesson observation and document analysis.

3.9.1 Interviews

The researcher conducted individual interviews with 4 principals, 9 heads of department, 3 library assistants and 8 students. In qualitative research, researchers collect data to learn from participants in the study. Therefore, the purpose of interviewing people is to find out what is in their minds - what they think or how they feel about something (Fraenkel, et al., 2012). For confidentiality, pseudonyms identified the sampled colleges and numbers 1 to 4 for their principals as well as 1 to 3 for the library assistants.

3.9.2 Focus Group Discussions and Lesson Observation

Furthermore, the researcher engaged 11 lecturers through focus group discussions and lesson observations. While the focus group discussions aimed to hear the lecturers' views on gender responsiveness, the classroom observations aimed at validating what the participants said against the reality of their classroom practices in terms of gender responsive pedagogy. This is triangulation, which could ensure trustworthiness of the conclusions. For anonymity, the study gave the lecturers numerical identities of 1-11 that corresponded with their lesson numbers.

3.9.3 Document Analysis

In addition, the study of 'official documents' was one of the primary means of investigating the intended way in which the TTC management and lecturers are expected to train pre-service primary school teachers which included the gender responsive practices. The term 'official documents' in this study refers to IPTE programme's policy documents with information on the 'intended' gender responsive practices such as IPTE Program Handbook (2014) and IPTE Modules for Social Studies and Expressive Arts which TTC management and lecturers are expected to use or employ in training pre-service teachers.

Apart from official documents, documentary sources were also studied to investigate the intended practices used in training pre-service primary school teachers in the colleges. The term 'documentary sources' in this study refers to both official and other relevant written materials obtained from the colleges, such as lesson plans, lecturers' notes and illustrations. These were analysed for gender responsiveness.

3.10 Data Collection tools/Instruments

The research used guides for semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and lesson observations to gather data on the gender responsiveness of the preservice teacher-training program. Though the interview questions were structured, the researcher generated other questions during the interview to probe and find out the real condition of the phenomena.

3.10.1 Semi-structured Interview Protocols

Interview protocols were used to collect in-depth information from participants. The researcher used protocols to collect data from the four principals, 9 heads of department, 3 library assistants and 8 students. Each participant according to their category responded to the same set of questions

with flexibility to explore issues that surfaced during the interview (Merriam, 1998). The interviews were audio recorded and later transcribed into Word form to enable analysis.

The value of protocols during interviews included the reduction of interviewer bias during the interview facilitation, organization, and analysis of the data (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003). The interview protocols consisted of semi-structured, open-ended questions in line with the study objectives in an endeavour to gain enriched insight into the gender responsiveness of the management, teaching pedagogies, college environments, and the organizational processes of the IPTE teacher-training program. Perceptions of management teams were triangulated with students' interviews while the lecturers' focus group discussions were checked against actual classroom practice through lesson observations.

3.11 Scope of the study

The study focused on the Pre-service Primary School Teacher Education programme conducted in both public and private teacher training colleges. This is because teacher training determines the quality of teachers in the primary education sub-sector. The teacher training colleges use the Initial Primary Teacher Education (IPTE) curriculum as revised in 2017. The study analysed this training programme, alongside the colleges' physical environments, management systems, and teaching pedagogies to determine their gender responsiveness of the IPTE programme.

3.12 Trustworthiness

It is important for the information to be confirmable for the audience to be convinced about the credibility and significance of the interpretations offered. According to Creswell, (2012), trustworthiness involves checking the accuracy of the findings. Therefore, this study ensured trustworthiness by obtaining information from different sources. The study collected information

from different members of the same institution asking them similar questions for confirmability of the responses. For example, some questions asked to management teams and students who corroborated or differed as the case might be. Both perspectives have been reported and were considered before arriving at conclusions.

Furthermore, the study also triangulated data collection methods. For example, focus group discussions data was validated through lesson observations and document analysis. The researcher inquired from lecturers how they understood gender responsiveness and pedagogies. Lesson observations formed a valid basis for assessing implementation of GRP. Eventually conclusions drawn could be trustworthy.

3.13 Data Analysis Procedures

Analysing qualitative data involves understanding how to make sense of text and images so that one can form answers to research questions (Creswell, 2012). This study generated data from face to face interviews with principals, heads of departments, students, and library assistants. Additionally, the researcher collected data from focus group discussions with lecturers and observing their lessons. The data analysis of this qualitative study adapted the six-step model as presented by Creswell (2012). The author slightly modified some steps to suit the context. Nevertheless, the first step involved preparing and organizing the data for analysis. This began with listening to the audio recordings and then writing them down. The notes were typed into Word Form using a computer. The process of converting audiotape recordings or field notes into text data is termed transcription.

The printed texts were used for analysis. The hand analysis of qualitative data involved the researcher in reading, marking the data, and dividing it into parts. Traditionally, analysing text data involved cutting and pasting text.

After transcription, the second step involved the researcher's initial exploration of the data. The researcher read the texts several times to develop a general picture of the data. In the course of doing that, the researcher identified key themes and patterns from the data. This way of analysing data is termed thematic analysis. According to Braun and Clarke (2012), thematic analysis is a method for systematically identifying, organizing and offering insight into themes across a dataset. The method involves coding, analysing qualitative data systematically, and then linking it to broader theoretical or conceptual issues.

The third step was coding. This is the process of segmenting and labelling text to form descriptions and broad themes in the data using numbers. While initially, the researcher read the whole text, at this stage, he divided the text into segments of information and labelled those segments with codes. After coding the whole text, the researcher made a list of all code words. Similar codes were grouped to reduce overlap and redundancy. Finally, the researcher collapsed codes into themes. Themes (also called categories) are similar codes aggregated together to form a major idea in the database.

The fourth step was representing the findings through narratives and visuals; the fifth step involved interpreting the meaning of the results by reflecting personally on the impact of the findings and on the literature that might inform the findings. The final step was validating the accuracy of the findings. This included referring to critical literature related to the study.

3.13.1 Analysis of data from classroom observations

The researcher read the data obtained from lesson observations and analysed them to identify key themes. The data included copies of lesson plans, lesson observation forms, illustrations and the researcher's own notes. The classroom observations triangulated data collected through interviews and focus group discussions. This aimed at establishing whether what the participants said was the reality of their classroom practices.

3.14 Ethical Considerations

The researcher ensured that the study adhered to all ethical requirements by obtaining permission from the Mzuzu University Research Ethics Committee (MZUNIREC), the Directorate of Teacher Education and Development (DTED), and Principals of the sampled teacher training colleges (TTCs). (Refer to appendices 3, 4, 11 and 12 for copies).

The involvement of college principals apart from helping in identifying research participants, contributed to the research's success as they provided adequate information for the study. Moreover, after participants understood the research objectives, they gave consent in writing before taking part in the research. (Refer to Appendix 1). Such a procedure followed ethical research practice and ensured collaboration between the researcher and participants (Creswell (2012). For data reporting, the study has used pseudonyms, general titles and numbers to protect the identities of institutions and participants. This is in line with research ethics.

3.15 Limitations of the Study

Although the study came up with interesting results, it is important to recognize that the current findings also have limitations. First, the study only involved four institutions while in Malawi there are fifteen TTCs. Second, this case study research has limited application in other contexts other

than those in which it was conducted. For instance, the current study only focused on gender responsiveness of the pre-service primary teacher-training programme using the face-to-face delivery mode. That means there is a need to conduct a similar study with those students attending pre-service teacher training using the open distance and electronic learning (ODeL) delivery mode to compare the findings.

Moreover, the current study focused only on pre-service primary school teachers; this may mean that its findings may not be generalised to other levels of education. Therefore, there is need to conduct similar studies in secondary school teacher training institutions.

From a methodological perspective, there is also a need to carry out a study beyond examining perceptions only in a descriptive manner by testing relationships among different study variables of interest to evaluate how the pre-service teacher-training program affects primary school teaching. Such impact and evaluative studies may establish how well the IPTE-trained student teachers are facilitating gender issues in their classrooms.

3.16 Chapter Summary

This chapter has described the design and methodology of the study. To investigate the topic under examination, the research used a qualitative case study. The study included four teacher-training colleges, both public and private. It used interviews, document analysis, focus group discussions and lesson observations to generate data and thematic analysis to analyse it.

CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Chapter Introduction

This chapter presents and discusses the findings of the study. It presents these findings in relation to the objectives of the study. It further discusses them in relation to the literature reviewed and the conceptual framework, which guided the study.

4.2 Key Research Findings

4.2.1 Participants' understanding of the meaning of Gender

The first research objective sought to explore the understanding of the concept of gender by management teams, lecturers, and students. This is because a correct understanding of gender is important for successful implementation of gender responsive practices in teacher training. To ascertain whether the participants had the correct information about gender, the researcher asked them whether they had attended any gender training. The data revealed that the majority (25 out of 32) of management, lecturers, and students had attended gender sensitization training. This meant that only a minority (7 out of 32) did not attend gender trainings. Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) such as UNICEF, FAWEMA, Save the Children, GiZ, NICE and Theatre for a Change, among others, organized the trainings. The trainings had a duration ranging from one day to three months.

Generally, a good training should translate into knowledge and skills for the attendees. Therefore, the researcher engaged the interviewees most of whom (25 out of 32) had attended gender sensitization training to define the term gender. The data revealed that over half (19 out of 32) of the participants had the correct knowledge of the concept of gender demonstrated through correctly defining what gender was. For example, one department head at TTC DE said,

"Gender means the societal expectations on the roles of males and females" (Head of Department, TTC DE, 24th May 2022). Similarly, the Head of Department for TTC AB indicated, "*Gender is the roles and responsibility that the society attaches to people based on our sex*" (Head of Department, TTC AB, 23rd May 2022). Likewise, a group of TTC BC lecturers said, *"Gender is socially constructed roles played by males and females. The society decides which roles to be played by males or females"* (FGD, TTC BC, 24th October 2022).

Common among these definitions was the fact that gender was not an in-born status but one that society constructed. However, whether the TTC managements and lecturers' knowledge of the meaning of gender contributed to their ability to make the training of pre-service teachers to be gender responsive is yet to be seen in their teacher training practices presented in the findings of this study.

The researcher however, noted that slightly below half of the participants (13 out of 32) both trained and untrained had misconceptions about the concept of gender. For example, some participants said gender

"is just a biological term that differentiates a male and a female" (student, TTC DE, 24th May 2022). Similarly, Principal 4 for TTC DE said gender, "*means providing equal opportunities to people regardless of their sex*" (Principal 4, TTC DE, 24th May 2022). Not only that, a team of lecturers from TTC BC said gender *"means being male or female"* (FGD, TTC BC, 25th October 2022).

These definitions showed that some confused gender with sex, while others confused it with gender equality, yet others mistook it for gender balance or inclusion. Worth noting is that, all the seven

untrained respondents wrongly defined the term gender as "being male or female". Such wrong definitions showed their lack of knowledge hence justifying the need for training to clear misconceptions. The evidence showed that whether the participants were students, lecturers, or heads of department, as long as they had not undergone gender sensitisation training, they still held misconceptions about gender.

4.2.2. Reasons for inadequate training in Gender

To establish factors responsible for the inadequate understanding of gender, the researcher probed whether colleges provided gender trainings to staff. The data revealed that no TTC (0 out of 4 TTCs) had a definite plan for organizing gender training for staff within the past academic year. For example, Principal 3 of TTC CD said,

> "*We organize training on gender for staff when the need arises*" (9th May 2022). Similarly, Principal 1 of TTC AB concurred with Principal 3 and said, "*Sometimes, at least once a year*" (23rd May 2022). Likewise, Principal 4 of TTC DE said, "*It is a requirement and we have a committee that spearheads and monitors gender issues on campus but for the past year we have not had any training on gender*" (24th May 2022). Just like the others, Principal 2 for TTC BC indicated, "*We have had two consecutive trainings in the past as part of continuous professional development (CPD) but not as a stand-alone training*." (26th May 2022).

Overall, these quotations agreed on the inadequacy of the training in gender for teacher educators. The researcher wanted to verify whether TTC DE, organises training on gender, through asking one department head who confessed, "*No, normally it is organized by outside institutions who come here to conduct training with lecturers*" (Head of Department, TTC DE, 24th May 2022).

The outside institutions referred to the NGOs pointed out earlier. This confirmed the general assertion that gender trainings are mostly externally driven. Therefore, the study concluded that without external intervention, teacher-training colleges do not prioritise training in gender. Moreover, the content of such training may not directly address the needs of the teaching and learning process other than creating general awareness. Therefore, it would be important for TTCs to plan for and organise gender trainings for staff and students.

4.2.3 Understanding of Gender Responsiveness by college management

One can only act appropriately when one fully understands a particular concept like in this case, gender responsiveness. As Lovell (2021) observed, "There is good knowledge of the barriers to gender equality in Malawi and of culturally-sensitive approaches to address harmful social norms, including engaging men, male students, and religious and traditional leaders in interventions" (p.40). This is what this author considers *head* knowledge. Still, as a way of establishing TTC college management's capacity to implement gender responsiveness, the study set out to establish their understanding of the concept of gender responsiveness.

The study established that only a minority (4 out of 13) of TTC management members had the correct knowledge of gender and were able to define gender responsiveness. This was despite almost all (12 out of 13) participants having attended gender sensitization training and accepting that they had ever heard of the term gender responsiveness. To show their understanding of gender responsiveness, for example, Principal 1 of TTC AB said,

> "*Gender responsiveness is being aware and having a positive attitude that males and females can perform equally*" (23rd May 2022). Similarly, Principal 3 of TTC CD mentioned that *"gender responsiveness is how we are tackling issues of gender, for*

example, are we trying to balance the distribution of positions" (Principal 3, TTC CD, 9th May 2022). Not only that, a Head of Department for TTC AB responded, "*Gender responsiveness simply means how we lecturers respond to issues concerning gender*" (23rd May 2022).

Although he used the word simply, reality showed it was not. In the same vein, a head of department at TTC BC said,

"Gender responsiveness means being aware and able to recognize roles of people or members in an institution." (26th May 2022).

From these quotations, the data showed that most of the teacher education managers lacked an understanding of the concept of gender responsiveness. The vague definitions provided evidence for this. Overall, these findings revealed that teacher-educator participants did not understand much about gender-responsiveness.

The mismatch between almost all (12 out of 13) that attended the gender sensitisation training and the minority (4 out of 13) that were able to define gender responsiveness intrigued the researcher. In Tanzania, a study by Kahamba et. al., (2017) revealed that the majority of staff to define the concept of gender responsiveness resulted from efforts to raise awareness through workshops on gender mainstreaming in the curriculum. Therefore, this study concludes that the educators need gender trainings specific to pedagogy to have an impact on the teaching and learning process. Otherwise, general awareness on gender may not be enough to create specific knowledge of gender responsive pedagogy as this study has revealed.

4.2.4 Inadequate understanding of Gender by teacher educators.

The study set out to establish an understanding of the concept of gender among teacher educators in teacher training colleges. After discovering that more than half of the sampled lecturers (7 out of 11) had attended gender sensitisation training, the researcher investigated their capacity to use gender-responsive pedagogies. Generally, the findings showed that the majority of lecturers failed to use gender responsive pedagogies in their lesson facilitation. The short and heavily loaded gender trainings may have hindered the participants from internalising the knowledge.

These findings confirm the findings of a study by Ananga (2021) that showed that lecturers' use of gender-responsive pedagogy accelerated significantly over time, *not instantly*. By implication, academic staff in the colleges needed regular trainings and practice on using GRP for the concepts and practices to be entrenched in their values. The study findings demonstrate that the once-off and heavily loaded trainings are not effective. Practically, it is difficult for teacher educators that do not have adequate knowledge of gender and gender-responsive pedagogy to use it effectively in their classrooms. The lesson observation data corroborated this assertion as most educators failed to use gender-responsive pedagogy.

4.2.5 Reasons for the inadequate understanding of Gender among educators.

Since the data revealed that teacher educators in public and private TTCs in Malawi had inadequate understanding of gender, the study probed for possible reasons. The staff cited three major reasons. First, high staff turnover. This was particularly an issue in private TTCs. This was because the new staff lacked training in Gender-Responsive Pedagogy (GRP) in a majority (3 out of 4) of TTCs studied. This meant that there were disparities in knowledge among the teaching staff, a factor that would ultimately affect their classroom facilitation. Second, some staff that had been working for a long time had difficulties adapting to the application of gender concepts in their teaching and

learning processes. For example, the majority of the eleven staff whose lessons the researcher observed were aged over 41 years and most had been teaching for some time. Third, the study noted that, "*short and heavily loaded training where participants failed to internalize the information*" was also responsible. This revealed that the way trainings were organised being "once-off" and "heavily loaded" was not effective. Indeed, according to a study by Ananga, (2021) teacher trainers' use of gender-responsive pedagogy can accelerate significantly over time. For example, in Ghana in four years, it grew from 1.8% to 68% for male tutors and 3.6% to 64.4% for female tutors (Ananga, 2021). This showed the need for regular orientation workshops, training, and interaction among the teacher educators if gender-responsive pedagogy would be a reality in Malawi pre-service teacher education.

4.3. Capacity of TTCs to implement gender responsiveness

In addition to reviewing the teacher educators' understanding of the concept of gender, the study further attempted to ascertain capacity of the TTCs to implement gender-responsive teacher education. It scrutinised representation of both females and males in TTC leadership positions, student leadership and college management systems. The following sub-sections present findings on this objective.

4.3.1. Gender-Balanced TTC Management positions

The study found that the majority of teacher training colleges have gender-responsive management systems suitable for the facilitation of gender-responsive pre-service teacher education. For example, in all sampled TTCs there was gender-balanced management teams with almost 50:50 representations in Academic Staff Management (11 females against 12 males). All college principals involved in the study explained that this gender-balanced representation in management

was deliberate and evidence of implementation of gender guidelines. They took affirmative action as college managers; for instance, Principal 3 of TTC CD said,

"*What happens is that since these are acting positions, there is a deliberate move by management to share positions among the two sexes. We appoint a coordinator or head of department and their deputy to be of different sexes* (Principal 3, TTC CD, 9th May 2022).

However, in administrative and support services, the study found that in almost all TTCs under study, females were heading support and administrative sections. It was only in one TTC where males led the administrative and support services section. The findings showed that more females were heading or working in supportive roles unlike academic ones. This included Human Resources and Accounts sections. Though not directly related to teaching and learning processes, this may have an impact on the perceptions of student teachers. Some students may feel that these sections are only for females hence reinforcing career biases.

Overall, the researcher noted that gender balance was easier to achieve with elected or appointed positions, unlike substantive ones. The latter had rigorous recruitment and posting processes for staff to go to colleges. Such functions were under the jurisdiction of the central government over which the colleges had no control. For example, accounting staff was under the Office of the Accountant General while other administrative staff belonged to the Department of Human Resource Management and Development (DHRMD).

4.3.2. Gender-balanced student leadership

Participatory leadership is a desirable form that can facilitate gender responsiveness. This is because once students take part in general college administration; it is likely to address the needs

of female and male students. Really, the study established that in a majority of TTCs (3 out of 4), student leadership was almost balanced between males and females. For example, TTC AB had 24 males versus 23 females, TTC CD had 8 males versus 7 females and TTC DE had 9 males versus 8 females. When probed about how the TTCs achieved this, Principal 4 of TTC DE said,

> "*We just follow the guidelines of gender responsiveness where we ensure like in the student council, if the one who has won the portfolio is male, then the deputy will be the female with the highest votes. Similarly, if the one who has won the portfolio were female then the next would be the male who is in the highest position, something like that so that we ensure there is a balance. Likewise, for the class monitors, we ensure that each class the monitor, if the monitor is male the deputy should be female, if the monitor is female the deputy should be male.*"(Principal 4, TTC DE, 24th May 2022)

The only exception to the balanced student leadership was TTC BC, which practiced a group leadership system. The TTC did not designate any student as a leader, instead; students worked in teams called core groups and others micro-groups. Students of both sexes worked in different sectors like welfare, library, and sanitation among others. However, the study established that there was no core group responsible for gender issues.

Overall, the data showed that TTCs shared student leadership equally among females and males. This could enhance gender responsiveness since gender balanced student leadership gave chance to both female and male students to participate in college management. This gave both sexes an opportunity to contribute towards prioritisation of their needs. This finding is consistent with Lamptey et. al., (2015), that a gender-responsive management system gives confidence that those

teacher education institutions would effectively create staff and student systems that would not tolerate any forms of violence and injustice.

4.3.3. Gender-Responsive College Management Systems

Staff and students who encounter sexual harassment or injustice need a secure place where they can report incidents, be comforted, and feel confident in the knowledge that their cases will be heard fairly and promptly (Lamptey et. al., 2015). Therefore, an effective college management system needs to develop effective and safe procedures and create offices for reporting sexual harassment and any forms of injustice against staff and students. The authors further note that these structures and channels need to be publicized, well explained, and effective. Therefore, to establish how gender-responsive the Malawi TTCs were, the researcher interviewed the management and students on these matters.

The study found that all TTCs (4 out of 4) had gender-responsive management systems. Firstly, the TTCs had institutional arrangements for tracking student welfare and support through the hostel wardens, student advisors, and various committees. For example, a majority of TTCs (3 out of 4) had gender committees. These committees administered student support. In addition, all the TTCs had gender responsive policies like the Readmission Policy. For example, Principal 2 for TTC BC said,

> *"Females are not supposed to be denied their right to education because one is pregnant*
>
> *so one can withdraw and re-join the course after delivery of the baby."* (26th May 2022)

Secondly, the TTCs had a system for handling sexual harassment cases, clear reporting channels, and prevention measures. The study found that all sampled TTCs had zero tolerance for obscene language, bullying, and sexual harassment. For example, Principal 3 of TTC CD said,

"Bullying is one of the items in our rules that bullying is not accepted at our college"
(9th May 2022). In agreement, Principal 4 of TTC DE indicated, *"at our institution we*
tell each other that we should not cause harm or distress to one another" (24th May
2022).

However, people being who they are, the institutions still have put in place clear reporting channels
for seeking redress. In addition to the reporting structures, students and staff were sensitised of
their freedom to speak out if they felt injured. Therefore, in terms of reporting channels, the study
found a majority of TTCs (3 out of 4) had Wardens for both female and male hostels, Student
Advisors for both females and males, discipline committees, and then a management team where
students who felt victimized could report. Figure 4.1 shows the general reporting channel that staff
and students utilise.
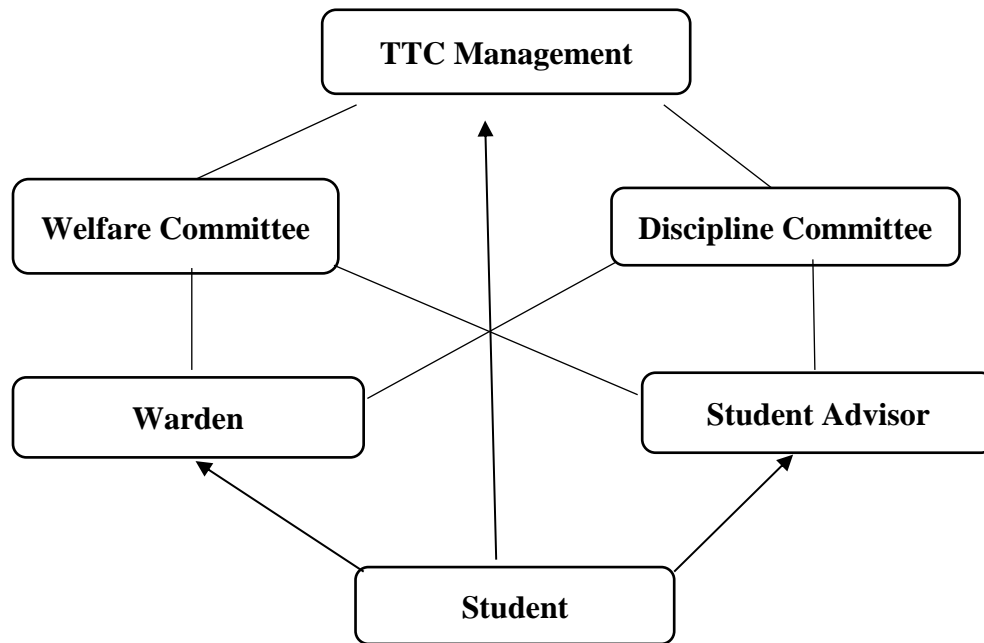
Figure 4. 1: Showing the general reporting channel

As observed from the figure, students may report an issue to either a Warden or a Student Advisor
who in turn refer matters to the welfare or discipline committee depending on their nature. The

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committees may deal with those matters and or refer them to the college management for implementation of committees' resolutions or recommendations. In very crucial circumstances, students can report matters directly to the management team who may either deal with them or sanction a responsible committee to handle them. For example, students or staff can report examination malpractices or issues of sexual abuse directly to management. The study found evidence of students utilising such a reporting channel at the sampled TTCs. This gave chance to institutional support and redress mechanisms.

Since teacher-training colleges in Malawi only enrol adults aged between 18 and 35 years, some matters are not issues unless they connote abuse between lecturers and students or among students themselves. For example, a head of department at TTC CD confessed,

> *"it is not very easy to report when it comes to lecturers because they are always there in the classroom and students might not be very comfortable reporting them. Lecturers might say I will never come back to this class so we cannot say that it does not happen, it might happen we can have traces of that one"* (Head of Department, TTC CD, 9th July 2022).

When asked how such issues are dealt with to ensure that no student is abused bearing in mind that to a large extent females usually fall victim of abuses, the head of department at TTC CD said:

> *"Still, yeah, we ask them to report. We trained them on issues of Human Rights. Therefore, it is an issue of child protection, so there are some lecturers in whom the students can confide. They are advisors and some we call them counsellors because they can be trusted… Students always report to them when they have an issue and when they see that the lecturers are just changing without harming them then they keep coming because it is*

an issue of trust. ...when you have not handled the issue with care the students will not come back to you but if you handle it well, they will always come back and report what is happening" (Head of Department, TTC CD, 9th July 2022).

Therefore, such level of maturity in management mitigates against abusive practices of some lecturers and guarantees freedoms hence making the TTCs conducive for both female and male students.

After looking at the participants' understanding of gender and the capacity of TTCs to implement gender responsiveness, the study went on to investigate the nature of gender responsiveness of teacher training colleges. Consequently, the next section presents the status of the nature of gender responsiveness in teacher training colleges.

4.4 Nature of gender responsiveness of the teacher training colleges

4.4.1 Whole college physical and social environment

One of the key indicators of gender responsiveness in an education institution as proposed by FAWE (2018) in the Institutional Gender Responsiveness Model framework is the availability of a physical and social environment that meets the needs of both female and male students. This study, therefore, investigated the extent to which the physical and social environment of the four TTCs met the needs of both female and male students. The study focused more on the gender responsiveness of the student accommodation, water and sanitation facilities for students, and security and safety of the colleges.

4.4.1.1 Availability of college accommodation for students

To begin with, in many countries, such as Zambia, Malawi, and South Africa, some teachers' colleges provide hostels for their students and housing for single and married staff on college

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campuses; a trend that needs to be supported and encouraged (Lamptey et. al., 2015). The provision

of adequate, safe, and affordable accommodation near the college spares staff and students from

travelling on congested roads and crowded public transport in the morning and evenings.

Therefore, in terms of accommodation, this study found that all sampled TTCs were gender

responsive with adequate and separate hostels with requisite sanitary facilities for both female and

male students. Indeed, when asked, all principals and some student participants confirmed this.

For instance, Principal 1 of TTC AB agreed,

> "*The TTC has adequate boarding facilities (hostels) for females and males"* (23rd May
>
> 2022). In the same way, a male student from the same TTC AB said, *"Yeah, definitely.*
>
> *There are enough hostels and each hostel has got three toilets, yeah"* (Student, TTC AB,
>
> 23rd May 2022). Similarly, Principal 2 of TTC BC concurred, *"We have adequate*
>
> *boarding facilities as well as clean water and sanitation facilities"* (Principal 2, TTC BC,
>
> 26th May 2022).

4.4.1.2 Water and sanitation facilities for students

The data revealed that, generally, all the four sampled TTCs had adequate water and sanitation

facilities. For example, one student said,

> "*Each hostel has toilets, yeah"* (Student, TTC AB, 23rd May 2022). Similarly,
>
> Principal 2 of TTC BC concurred, *"We have adequate boarding facilities as well as*
>
> *clean water and sanitation facilities"* (Principal 2, TTC BC, 26th May 2022).

In addition to toilet facilities, the study also found that half of the TTCs (2 out of 4) had easy access

to sanitary pads because the TTCs had a project for teaching student teachers how to make sanitary

pads. However, in terms of disposing of used sanitary materials, only one out of the four TTCs

had an incinerator. The other three used pit latrines. Of those that used pit latrines, TTC CD had

challenges because it used toilets at the nearby Demonstration Primary School, which is about 100 meters away from the female students' hostels. This was a big challenge and two female interviewees mentioned it as something requiring urgent attention.

As already alluded to, the data revealed that only one TTC (TTC AB) had an elaborate water and sanitation programme that catered to the needs of females. For instance, the TTC has an incinerator for the disposal of used sanitary materials and a project for teaching the student teachers how to produce sanitary pads. In her own words, Principal 1 of TTC AB said,

> "*We also have hand washing facilities and an incinerator for disposing of used menstrual hygiene materials. We had a project for making sanitary materials using locally available materials because the commercial ones are expensive but also we wanted the students to have the skills in making sanitary pads which they can teach to learners in the teaching practice schools once they go out*" (23rd May 2022),

Although the second TTC (TTC BC) did not have an incinerator, it made efforts to ease the problem of scarcity and high prices of sanitary pads through local production. On his part, Principal 2 for TTC BC said,

> "*We have also started a programme on the production of sanitary materials for female students. Not only for them but also we think that even when they graduate they can also help the kids out there.*" (26th May 2022)

Overall, the finding that half of the TTCs (2 out of 4) had gender-responsive water and sanitation programmes meant the situation was challenging for almost half of the female student teachers. This finding corresponds with what FAWE (2018) indicated that education facilities often do not

provide for the means to manage menstrual hygiene like privacy, incinerators, sanitary towels, and waste bins. Admittedly, the Ministry of Education observed that the unavailability of changing rooms and incinerators in secondary schools is among the challenges affecting females' education (MoE, 2020). Correspondingly, the absence of incinerators in teacher training colleges neglected female student teachers' welfare. This is because the disposal of used sanitary materials has strong cultural connotations, raises issues of privacy and human dignity for the female students. Therefore, in terms of the disposal of menstrual materials, the majority of TTCs in Malawi are not gender-responsive.

In terms of water availability, the study found that almost all TTCs (3 out of 4) had no serious challenges as they had multiple water sources like piped water, underground water, and boreholes. The study established that half of the studied TTCs (2 out of 4) had donor-supported rehabilitation of water and sanitation facilities. Accordingly, the majority of the TTCs had reliable water supply that ensured adequate hygiene and sanitation. As Principal 1 of TTC AB said,

> *"We have boreholes and new ones which should be in operation soon"* (23rd May 2022). However, Principal 3 for TTC CD said, *the water facilities are available but not adequate. The students are informed on when the water will be opened so they can keep it in their buckets after use in addition to that we have a borehole which was placed at the hostels so that in event that we do not have running water students can still access the water from the borehole.* (9th May 2022).

4.4.1.3. Adequate students' security and safety

In addition to the presence of water and sanitation facilities, this study applied National Standard for Teacher Education Standard 12, which evaluates the effectiveness of the steps taken by the

institution to ensure that student teachers live and learn in safe, secure, and supportive environments (MoEST, 2017b). Also, according to Lamptey et. al., (2015), strong and well-enforced policies against sexual and other forms of harassment are vital to protect students in and around colleges. On this, the study found that all studied TTCs were safe as they had security guards working around the clock. Moreover, half of the TTCs (2 out of 4) had perimeter fences to enhance security.

In addition, the TTCs had security lights in strategic places and a time limit for students to be in the teaching area, especially at night. For example, this was set at 10:00 pm for College AB and 9:00 pm for College CD. Such limited mobility at night reduced the vulnerability of the student teachers to attack by ill-intentioned individuals. Not only that, the TTCs further reinforced security through patrols and supervision by matrons (for females), patrons (for males), and security guards (for all). In addition, one of the colleges had an emergency bell that any individual could ring to call for help from security personnel. All these demonstrated that the TTCs were supportive, safe, and secure for students.

4.4.2. Gender-Responsive system of tracking students' welfare

A person's wellbeing usually enhances their ability to contribute effectively to their community. The study found that all sampled TTCs had an institutional gender-responsive arrangement for tracking and supporting student welfare. For example, all three public TTCs used male and female Wardens and Student Advisors to help trace needy students while the private TTC had welfare groups: one for males and another for females. In explaining how the system functioned, Principal 1 for TTC AB said,

"*The Gender Coordinator and other members of staff identify needy students and mostly female students and then we organize a little as a college and we support them*" (Principal 1, TTC AB, 23rd May 2022). For instance, she said, *"9 females and 24 male students for IPTE 17 received materials support in terms of soap and sugar from College Social Welfare Committee, and the Social and Environmental Studies (SES) Department provided clothing through their Reach and Touch Program."* Additionally*, "the Lake Land College (USA) Alumni paid school fees for three (3) male students. Again, one Local District Council paid fees for 1 male student." "For IPTE 16, 14 male and 15 female students were supported in terms of materials and school fees,"* she concluded (Principal 1, TTC AB, 23rd May 2022). Similarly, at another college, Principal 2 said, "*Through the welfare group, we assisted ah, four if not five students*" (Principal 2, TTC BC, 26th May 2022).

4.4.3. Availability of Gender committees at teacher training colleges

The study found that all sampled TTCs created a conducive environment for both female and male students. For example, a majority of TTCs (3 out of 4) had gender committees. Perhaps this was evidence of gender responsive pedagogy as rolled out in 2009 by the Ministry of Education. Interestingly, all the three public institutions had gender committees while the private one did not. The gender committee's main role was to enforce gender policies at the institutional level. One of such responsibilities was to ensure gender balance in appointments into leadership positions and representation of staff in different activities.

Although it was pleasing to find gender committees at the majority of the sampled TTCs, it was surprising not to find any students club for gender issues at two out of the three TTCs. It was only at one TTC where Pamtondo Education for Sustainable Development and Theatre for Change

clubs were present. The absence of gender clubs for students meant their limited participation in issues of gender outside the formal curriculum. As gender activists have observed, and research has recorded, the presence of gender-related clubs is crucial for the entrenchment of gender values among students (Unterhalter et. al., 2014; Mlama et. al., 2005). Regardless of not having a gender committee, the private TTC had a gender-sensitive culture that encouraged males and females to do things together. This compensated for the lack of a gender committee, which as observed in some TTCs only stopped at involving lecturers.

The aim is not just to have a gender committee for staff; it must reach out to students as well. In line with Burr (2015), this finding allows us to question whether the presence of a gender committee alone, disregarding its functionality guaranteed gender responsiveness at an institution. Presence alone is not enough. Similarly, the absence of gender structures at TTC BC did not preclude an absence of gender awareness and behaviour. Therefore, the functionality of gender-related committees or organisational philosophy in lieu of the same is crucial to ensure gender responsiveness in teacher education.

4.4.4. Prevention and Handling of sexual harassment cases

Generally, females are more vulnerable to abuse. This results from both social and cultural factors. According to MoEST (2017b, p. 41), "lecturers, particularly male, occupy positions of power and influence within the institution and the community". For that reason, "it may be difficult for students to assert themselves, to question, challenge, resist or refuse if confronted with a situation in which they feel uncomfortable or under pressure to act in a way, which they do not want or approve of, or if they believe, they are victims of unfair decision-making." (MoEST, 2017b, p. 41)

Realising that, this study investigated measures put in place for preventing and handling sexual abuse in teacher training colleges. This is in line with Teacher Education Standard 17 on modelling of professional conduct by staff applied together with Teacher Education Standard 12 on student safety, support and welfare.

Therefore, the study established that the TTCs had an effective system for preventing and handling sexual harassment cases. For instance, to help in student safety from gender-based violence, the study established that once students arrive on campus for the first time at all the four TTCs, they were oriented on their rights. Furthermore, the study found that three out of four TTCs had Wardens for both female and male hostels, as well as Student Advisors for both, college discipline committees and management teams to whom victimized students could report.

4.4.5. Safety from Gender-Based Violence

Realising that females usually fall victim to gender based violence (GBV), the researcher asked participants to provide their views on specific challenges that female students faced in the colleges. The study established that almost all TTCs (3 out of 4) were safe and free from gender-based violence as there were no reported cases of sexual abuse in the past academic year. However, at one TTC (TTC CD), there was a case of alleged rape, which affected a female IPTE 16-day scholar. Principal 3 of TTC CD reported,

> *"I remember there was one incident, during one night one student was raped." "We told the student to go to the police, but what is lacking is a report from relevant officers that were assigned. But they were told to go to the police"* (9th May 2022).

Looking at the way the TTC management handled the matter, it implied that the management was not keen to follow up on the issue. Instead, the college management placed the responsibility on

the victim herself. However, such neglect could fuel gender-based violence, as it fails to facilitate that the law should deal with perpetrators. In addition, at the same TTC CD, there were also claims of isolated but equally serious cases of female student teachers engaging in sexual relationships with male lecturers. Two participants indicated that the need for *favours* to access or pass college-based assessments usually drove such relationships. However, it was difficult for the participants to substantiate those claims. Still, the researcher could not dismiss this notion since the participants themselves mentioned it. Relatedly, the issue of exam leakage at TTC AB (cited as a challenge in section 4.9.4) pointed to similar sentiments of inappropriate lecturers-to-student affairs.

In contrast, at TTC DE, there was a case of cyberbullying, which the college management ably handled. When asked, Principal 4 of TTC DE indicated,

> "*Yes, we had a case of cyberbullying where the students have their WhatsApp forum and this one a male student insulted a female one to say you are pregnant.*" (Principal 4, TTC DE, 24 May 2022). She further admitted,

> "*...and it caused a commotion within the campus because the females reacted following that male student so that he should apologize, the way it was handled is, the students were counselled, we advised them that we will address the issue. So, firstly, the female student appeared before the discipline committee. The TTC management handled the matter by disciplining and counselling both the male and female students involved.*" (Principal 4, TTC DE, 24 May 2022).

As highlighted in the excerpt, the management handled the matter by disciplining and counselling the male and female students involved. This provided a good learning ground for the entire student body and prevented recurrence of such behaviour.

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4.4.6. Gender responsive TTCs rules, regulations, policies, and practices

Rules and regulations usually govern behaviour and provide boundaries for both students and staff in an education institution. This study investigated how gender responsive the TTC rules, regulations, policies and practices were. The study found that the majority of TTCs (3 out of 4) had zero tolerance for obscene language, bullying, and sexual harassment. Almost all managers at the sampled TTCs (3 out of 4 TTCs) agreed that their TTCs did not condone sexual harassment in whatever form. For example, Principal 1 of TTC AB said,

"*use of abusive language is not allowed. Even sexual harassment*" (23rd May 2022). Likewise, Principal 3 of TTC CD concurred and said, "*Sexual harassment is an offence*" and "*Bullying is also one of the items in our rules and that it is not accepted at our college*" (Principal 3, TTC CD, 9th May 2022). Additionally, Principal 2 of TTC BC emphasised, *"I always tell students to say no member of staff should harass or cheat you that you will get good grades just because maybe they can sleep with you. Just work hard, then everything will be okay we have also put posters around the corridors yeah, about issues to do with sex for grades* (Principal 2, TTC BC, 26th May 2022).

From the above quotations, almost all TTC managers in all the sampled TTCs asserted that their institutions, rules and regulations as well as staff code of conduct did not condone gender-based violence. In addition, to reduce the risk of sexual abuse, all four TTCs had restrictions on students visiting hostels of the opposite sex. Surely, the student participants corroborated this and said,

"*The College has got laws, for example, a male student is not supposed to visit a female hostel, and a female student is not supposed to be found in the male hostels during day or night* (Male student, TTC AB, 23rd May 2022). Similarly, a female student from TTC

BC agreed, "*female students are not supposed to be found in male students' hostels and male students are not supposed to be found in female students' hostels*" (Female student, TTC BC, 26th May 2022). Finally, one student summarised, "*as teachers, we need to be exemplary so we are encouraged to behave appropriately. Any bad behaviour is not acceptable*" (Male student, TTC AB, 23rd May 2022).

Culturally, the above measures reduce the vulnerability, especially of female students to gender based violence (GBV). This follows that female students are usually more exposed or indeed more vulnerable to GBV. Although these measures might not be applicable in other setups, the Malawian pre-service teacher education found it workable as strategies against GBV.

4.4.7. Equal sharing of manual work among students

In Malawian culture, females do most domestic chores such as sweeping, mopping, cooking and the like. Therefore, equal distribution of manual work made all the four TTCs gender responsive. This is because, ordinarily, without gender interventions, this would not have been the case. Therefore, one of the student participants said,

> "*When the college wants to distribute work they don't even see that this is male or female they just say that we are all the same.*" (Female student, TTC CD, 9th May 2022). Likewise, another student participant from TTC DE admitted, "*We are both given the same chores here at the college*" (Female Student, TTC DE, 24th May 2022). In the same way, Principal 1 of TTC AB said, "*As a college, we make a deliberate move in the way we distribute roles to both males and females.* (Principal 1, TTC AB, 23rd May 2022) From

the first excerpt, although the participant likened equality with sameness, the researcher interpreted that the participant meant that the college treated female and male students equally.

4.4.8. Gender responsive treatment for pregnant and lactating students

The study found that all four sampled TTCs gave female students a second chance for their education in case they withdrew due to pregnancy. The colleges allow female students to withdraw but reserve their place so that they can re-join with the subsequent cohort. Indeed, Principal 2 of TTC BC said,

> "*Females are not supposed to be denied their right to education because one is pregnant so one can withdraw and re-join the course after delivery of the baby*" (24th May 2022). Concurring, Principal 3 of TTC CD said, "*We reserve a place and then they go and manage the pregnancy until they are ready to come back to school*" (9th May 2022). He continued to say, "*The guidelines for the students are that when one is pregnant or lactating they have to withdraw and join the subsequent cohort*" (Principal 3, TTC CD, 9th May 2022). More importantly, Principal 4 of TTC DE indicated that beyond readmission, these students were supported. She said, "*Yes, once female students have been readmitted after delivering babies, they are encouraged, and given guidance and counselling*" (24th May 2022).

Assuredly, apart from readmitting students, the colleges' support through guidance and counselling helps to reintegrate them into the teacher-training programme after the maternal break.

To sum up, the study found that all sampled colleges were secure and safe for the students. The TTCs ensured safety and security through security guards and patrols around the clock, placing security lights in strategic places, and limiting student mobility at night. These strong and well-reinforced policies were vital to protecting students in and around colleges against sexual and other

forms of harassment (Lamptey et. al., 2015). Therefore, the nature of the physical and social environment in Malawi's TTCs was gender-responsive.

4.5 Gender irresponsive pedagogies in lecture rooms

According to Lamptey et. al., (2015) mainstreaming gender into different curricular courses of pre-service training makes it more effective for teachers to be agents of change. Similarly, Dorji (2020) argued for one to use gender-responsive pedagogy, they need to understand what gender and gender-responsive pedagogy are. Therefore, to understand the use of gender responsive pedagogy, the researcher observed eleven lessons in the TTCs distributed as follows: English (3), Social Studies (3), Education Foundation Studies (2), Mathematics (1), Human Ecology (1) and Expressive Arts (1). Presented in the following sections are the key findings from lesson observations.

4.5.1 Gender irresponsive lesson planning

The first key issue that emerged from the data was that TTC lesson planning was not gender-responsive. This was contrary to what a study by Wanjama and Njuguna (2015), reported that Malawi and Ethiopia were two countries that fully embraced Gender-Responsive Pedagogy (GRP) in teacher training colleges. According to these authors, a gender-responsive lesson plan took into consideration the teaching and learning materials, methodologies, activities, and classroom arrangement (FAWE, 2018). In line with this, the study scrutinized eleven lesson plans for each of the observed lessons to determine how the planning responded to gender issues. The study found that the lesson plans were not gender-responsive. Although the lecturers claimed,

> "*When planning we take into account gender issues by choosing methods, teaching, and learning resources that will incorporate all: males and females so that they can easily*

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use those methods or use those materials. Also you do not separate that these are only for

males and these are for females" (FGD, TTC DE, 21st October 2022).

After analysing the lesson plans, the study found that almost no lesson plan specified teaching methods, activities, classroom management strategies, and assessment methods in their preamble. This was contrary to the claims in the excerpt above. In addition, out of 11 lesson plans scrutinized, none segregated lesson tasks by sex. Thus, none indicated the number of questions that will go to females or males and how the group work would involve both sexes. Implicitly, it would be difficult for these lecturers to facilitate acquisition of values of gender responsiveness in their students when they did not practice them in class.

After noticing that the lesson plans consistently followed a format that did not incorporate gender issues, the researcher probed the matter. A head of department at TTC DE revealed that teacher educators were restricted from changing the lesson plan format to incorporate gender responsive pedagogy. He said,

> "*We talked about gender-responsive lessons so that it has to be embedded in the lesson*
>
> *plans and there is a conflict to say no we cannot change the format of the lesson plan. So*
>
> *normally, we cannot include gender issues in the lesson plan. Instead, we are only*
>
> *encouraged to embrace gender in the process of teaching and learning as a result*
>
> *sometimes you may forget because it's not written in the document*" (Head of Department,
>
> TTC DE, 24th May 2022).

In line with the above quotation, the researcher observed contradictions with gender responsiveness that Wanjama and Njuguna (2015), as well as FAWE (2018), reported that Malawi's pre-service teacher training programmes had fully embraced Gender-Responsive

Pedagogy (GRP). The participant used the word *conflict* to describe the situation that despite embracing gender policies in teacher education classrooms, individual teacher educators could not adapt the existing centrally designed lesson plan format to incorporate gender responsive pedagogy. Having established that lesson plans were not gender responsive, the researcher went on to observe lessons to ascertain whether the classroom practices would utilise gender responsive pedagogy.

4.6. Lesson delivery
4.6.1. Use of gender irresponsive pedagogies

Observation plays a central role in determining the practice of teaching. According to King and Winthrop (2015), use of gender-sensitive pedagogy improves female students' education. Therefore, the researcher observed eleven lessons to sample the kind of teaching that takes place in teacher training colleges to determine whether it was gender responsive or not. An analysis of the Expressive Arts Module 1 revealed that almost all illustrations presented both sexes and challenged stereotypes. For example, it showed a girl weaving a basket and a boy modelling a pot (p. 3), both sexes singing and dancing (pp. 1-2), skipping a rope in pairs (p.34) and a female referee (p. 50). This meant that the curriculum document made an effort to address gender stereotypes.

However, the study established that in Malawi's TTCs, teacher educators' used gender-irresponsive pedagogies. According to INEE (2019), being gender-responsive mainly involves adopting and adapting content, methods, and resources to correct gender biases and discrimination. Most of the observed lessons failed to meet this description for many reasons.

Surely, the study found that lecturers failed to adapt content to address gender biases and stereotypes. For example, at TTC CD, during an Expressive Arts lesson 8 on 'How to Interpret Artworks', the lecturer did not address gender issues. The lesson, which was highly participative,

used many visual aids and an excursion around the TTC, failed to address gender issues associated with dances, costumes or churchwomen uniforms. Examples used included churchwomen uniform, *adzukulu okumba manda* (gravediggers), *jando* (initiation ceremony) and *gule wamkulu* (a type of traditional dance). The lesson did not challenge gender biases and stereotypes that identify with the different roles played by males and females but just reinforced the status quo.

Furthermore, from the lessons observed, the teaching pedagogy was mostly student-centred and not gender-responsive. Therefore, this researcher questions *whether participatory teaching and learning methods are synonymous with gender-responsive pedagogy*. These are not the same. For example, it was interesting to note that, despite ease and frequency of use, pair work was not preferred among the female student teachers. From the study, half of the female student participants disliked pair work because as adults it turned out as a fertile ground for *sexual abuse*, ridicule, or had a higher chance of discussing off-task topics even in *same-sex pairs*. For example, a female student from TTC DE said,

> "*the teaching method that affects me negatively is the pair work itself, let's say for example when we are learning and a teacher says to be in pairs you pair with a male friend, and your friends will be mocking you aaah, your husband what what what. (laughs)*" (Female student, TTC DE, 24th May 2023).

> In the same way, another female student from TTC AB agreed, "*Pair work affects us negatively because sometimes you will find that you have paired with a friend and instead of participating you do the opposite (laughs), instead of participating ah, what can I say (silence). Chatting, yes*" (Female Student, TTC AB, 23rd May 2023).

Therefore, teaching methods like pair work increased the vulnerability of female students *to sexual abuse* when opposite-sex pairs are used or *chatting* or *off-task discussions* in same-sex pairs. Beyond the classroom, some students especially females reported of being subject to ridicule or mockery by their peers because of the classroom *pairs*. Some attributed the class pairing to love relationships, which made some female students reluctant to participate effectively. Teacher educators need to be aware of this to find mitigating strategies.

Additionally, pair work is not easy to monitor. No wonder some participants said *chatting* resulted. This resulted from the difficulty for teacher educators to monitor the pairs' discussions due to their large numbers. In general, the TTC lessons observed had a minimum of 10 pairs since student attendance ranged from 21 to 44. Consequently, this study questions whether pair work guaranteed effective discussions. In many of the observed cases, it did not.

The other shortfall of TTC lessons observed was that lecturers stopped at involving female and male students in lesson activities but not correcting gender biases and discrimination. According to INEE (2019), to make the classroom gender responsive, there is need to discuss gender-based violence including the links between gender norms, discrimination, and violence. Such discussions would help in facilitating effective life skills training for all teachers and all students in all settings. However, the observed classroom discussions did not challenge gender biases and discrimination.

Therefore, this finding confirms what Mannathoko (1995) declared that the majority of female and male lecturers are not aware that in certain contexts it is important to focus on gender matters during the teaching process, rather than student-centred teaching. Similarly, the study showed that most lecturers' priority in teacher education institutions was to finish the course content and

prepare students for examinations. Such examination focus and primary concern forces lecturers to consciously or unconsciously to relegate gender issues to the background.

In summary, these findings concur with studies by Unterhalter et. al., (2015) that disputed that pre-service teacher training adequately prepared teachers to address gender issues. The authors further noted, "There has been much focus on teachers' basic educational qualifications, and less attention given to softer skills such as ideas about gender, equality, or inclusion" (p.7). This was also the case with the Malawi pre-service teacher education hence making it academically gender irresponsive.

Overall, the study found that the teaching pedagogy was mostly student-centred and not gender-responsive. The two are not the same thing although a high level of misconceptions exists among the lecturers. Being gender responsive majorly involves adopting and adapting content, methods, and resources to correct gender bias and discrimination thereby addressing the needs of males and females. This was not usually the case with the observed lessons. Mostly, the lecturers stopped at involving both female and male students in the lesson activities, unlike correcting gender biases and discrimination. It seemed that student participation was what gender-responsive pedagogy meant to these educationists. It is deeper than that.

For many lecturers observed, gender responsiveness stopped at assigning students of different sexes to activities. Indeed, lecturers modified the group numbers during class time to ensure mixed-sex groups in almost all lessons observed. This is not the whole picture as what takes place, the interactions, within the groups or pairs are as important as the content under study. Therefore, as observed, the use of group methods does not mean that a lesson is gender-responsive. Rather, their adaptation to incorporate gender issues make them so.

4.6.2. Gender-balanced distribution of questions and learning tasks

To verify what the lecturers claimed during pre-lesson observation discussions, the researcher observed eleven lessons in the sampled TTCs. The researcher investigated whether the lecturers gave female and male students the same chances for class participation. The researcher tallied number of tasks or questions assigned to the students in the lessons observed and segregated them by sex. The total student attendance in the observed lessons totalled 327: 175 females and 152 males. The data showed that out of 251 questions that were asked, slightly over half (130) went to females and slightly below half (121) went to males. From the researcher's observation, more male students were willing to volunteer for tasks, unlike females who mostly responded to lecturers' calls. Therefore, the lecturers intentionally involved female students in the lessons in order to balance up the participation. This finding supports the gender responsive pedagogy, which advocates for giving both sexes a chance to succeed.

The balancing of the questions is a positive development and may have resulted from several gender-related pieces of training that lecturers may have attended. This has a gender connotation as traditional societies expect males to be forthcoming on issues, and females to be quiet. Many equate this to a good female character. A majority of female students seemed to conform to this pattern of thinking.

Such behaviour by female students is what post-structural feminism terms women's and female students' powerlessness and silence in classrooms as opposed to men's power and domination of interactions in education institutions through speech (Mannathoko, 1999). Although these theorists view such behaviour as women's acceptance of patriarchal ideology, the women themselves have a role to play, *to empower themselves*. Consequently, the theory challenges teachers and pupils to

interrogate and analyse the cultures in their classrooms and workplaces. That way, the resultant equal participation would enhance gender responsiveness.

4.6.3 Obscured Portrayal of Women's Contributions

There was obscured portrayal of women's contributions in a Social Studies lesson taught by Lecturer 10 on the topic *Work of Early Missionaries in Malawi.* The researcher observed the lesson at TTC BC. The lecturer listed different missionaries like The Catholic Missionaries of Africa (White Fathers) who first arrived in Malawi in 1889. Along with the early Montfort and White Father Missionaries, there was also the Missionary of Our Lady of Africa, the Daughters of Wisdom, the Xaverian Brothers and the Marist Brothers, and many others who helped in the establishment of the Church in Malawi (Episcopal Conference of Malawi, 2023).

To put things into perspective, according to MIE (2008), the earliest Catholic Missions came in three groups: the White Fathers (1889), the Montfort Fathers (1902), and the White Sisters (1911). However, Lecturer 10 in a Social Studies class in TTC BC only emphasized the White Fathers thereby presenting an incomplete picture of the women's contribution. For example, the Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of Africa popularly known as the White Sisters opened the first printing press in 1932 and the Saint Joseph's Teacher Training College in 1937 at Bembeke in Dedza. This college is the only all-female public teacher training college in Malawi. These two examples could have brought to limelight the role played by women in missionary work in the topic under discussion.

Such failure to highlight women's contributions contradicts recommendations by Sadker and Sadker (1986) that incorporation of women's achievements and contributions into the curriculum would help address gender inequality in the classroom. The failure to highlight the contribution of

women in various spheres of life results in women's lives remaining invisible in lesson delivery (Mannathoko, 1999). Therefore, obscuring of women's contributions cannot inspire female students' success.

4.6.4 Teacher educators' inflexibility to receive feedback

Students' freedom to provide feedback on teaching methodology to their lecturers creates a conducive environment for them to learn facilitating gender-responsive teaching. Therefore, the study inquired whether students had a chance of giving feedback on their lecturers' teaching methodologies. From the lessons observed, only a minority of teacher educators (3 out of 11) provided a chance for feedback on their teaching methods. Although participants in all the four sampled TTCs, indicated that students were given chance to provide feedback, the study discovered that close to half of the respondents said giving opportunities for feedback depended on individual educator's flexibility and willingness with their students. This meant that there were no institutionally agreed-upon norms for soliciting and handling students' feedback. Thus, the practice was subjective and hence ineffective.

For example, at TTC DE, during an English lesson 1 in classroom H on the topic Reflection on Schemes and Records of Work, Lesson Plan and Lesson Notes, Lecturer 1 said,

> *"I have used a lot of methods, now can you list the methods that I used"* (Lecturer 1, TTC DE, 21st October 2022). In response, the students mentioned group work, pair work, think-pair-share, and games. The lecturer proceeded and asked, "*What methods would you use if you were to reteach the same lesson?"* The students mentioned question and answer, research, think-ink-pair-share, group work, and pens-in-the-middle. The lecturer then quizzed the class, "*Why am I asking you all this? It is because in our lessons we*

need to use different methods that will give chance to every learner to participate," she concluded.

Furthermore, at TTC DE in lesson 2 in classroom G, in a Mathematics lesson on teaching the Concept of Time, Lecturer 2 said,

"*during this lesson, can you name some of the methods that we have used?*" In response, the students listed jigsaw, group work/discussion, and pair work. The lecturer proceeded and said, "*do you think there are other methods that we could have used?*" (Lecturer 2, TTC DE, 21st October 2022) To which the student teachers responded, gallery tour, and walk around-talk around.

Finally, at TTC BC, in lesson 11 in classroom 1, during Education Foundation Studies class on the topic of Cognitive Child Development, Lecturer 11 asked,

"*Which methods have we used in this lesson?*" (Lecturer 11, TTC BC, 25th October 2022). Students mentioned ball bearing, question and answer, author's chair, gallery walk, and group discussion. Then the lecturer probed, *"which of these methods have you liked most?"*(25th October 2022) Gallery walk and group discussion the students responded.

As seen, not all lecturers engaged their students in reviewing their methods of teaching. Moreover, for the three who did, only one asked for justification of the suggested methods. The other two simply stopped at listing the alternative methods. This revealed the nature of reflection that the student teachers engaged in. From the researcher's observation, the level of engagement was shallow. Consequently, this implied the students acquired a limited level of critical thinking after

going through the IPTE programme. The students would not be critical enough to question the status quo on issues including gender inequality. Just like the findings in the study by Mannathoko (1995), the Malawian lecturers did not intellectually stimulate the students to probe into the reasons for gender disparities throughout the education system.

Essentially, these findings on use of gender irresponsive pedagogies contradict what Wanjama and Njuguna (2015) and FAWE (2018) reported about Malawi teacher education's gender responsiveness. The authors indicated that Malawi teacher education fully embraced gender responsiveness, but the present study contradicts those findings. However, two elements that lecturers consistently modified to incorporate gender dynamics were ensuring mixed-sex groups and mostly balancing questions and tasks assigned to females and males in all lessons observed.

4.7. Participation of females in Science, Mathematics, and Technology (SMT)

Contrary to popular beliefs and myths that mathematics and sciences are hard and only suitable for males, Campbell and Storo (1996), declare that there is no "*math gene"*. This means that the ability to do math or indeed excel at it does not depend on heredity or sex. Moreover, Evans and Le Nestour (2019) found that teacher gender does not affect the math achievement of female or male students. Therefore, this study endeavoured to investigate the participation of females in science, mathematics, and technology subjects in pre-service primary school teacher education. The data revealed that half of the TTCs had activities to promote females' participation in SMT subjects like science projects and science clubs. It was hoped that such participation would enhance their abilities, knowledge, and skills in science teaching and learning. A head of department at TTC DE indicated:

"We have several projects organized by the science department and female students are deliberately included in the project, Yeah, I remember last year we had a project, it was a competition and our college performed well in coming up with technology in science and within those groups that were coming up with the innovations female students participated. I have an example we have a motorized wheelchair here yeah, female students took part they were working with male students, so that is ah, a good example I can give (Head of Department, TTC DE, 24th May 2022).

Similarly, Head of Department at TTC AB, stated, *"We organize open days and also the clubs themselves; during practical sessions and experiments we ensure that both males and females handle apparatus and chemicals. In addition, both male and female students participate in leading the groups.* (23rd May 2022)

Likewise, Head of Department of TTC BC said, *"Females are involved in the handling of the materials used and then in actual conducting of the science practicals or experiments, so they are involved in the learning activities and science subjects. We engage them at all stages.* (26th May 2022)

Regarding computers, a student participant at TTC BC reported that,

"on Thursdays every week, all students are encouraged to have access to computers; we have computers in our classes where most of the science subjects are accessed. We talk about tasks, courses and other assignments. Yeah so, this access is to both females and males, yeah. (Male student, TTC BC, 26th May 2022)

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On a positive note, one participant at TTC BC noted a self-drive among females to participate in science, mathematics, and technology because of its utility value. He said,

"Ah, what I have noted is that there is a self-drive from the students themselves knowing that they are going to teach the learners out there, so I have seen them participating freely without being pushed (Principal 2, TTC BC, 26th May 2022).

It is this view that needs to be encouraged. Participation in science, mathematics, and technology is important for all regardless of sex because of the multitude of benefits it presents both individually and professionally.

Worth noting, however, is that a few participants (2 out of 13), members of the management team (one from TTC AB and another from TTC DE), mistakenly, believed that because Science and Maths were compulsory, then that meant that both females and males had equal chances for participation in these subjects. This may not be true. Instead, individual effort should drive the student teachers to participate since as this research has shown with library services, provision or access does not guarantee utilisation by the female student teachers (refer to section 5.7.4). Therefore, the female students themselves must be willing to utilise the provided services to change the gender dynamics that usually suggest vulnerability and powerlessness of the female members of society.

4.8. Students' Access to instructional materials

4.8.1. Students' Access to Textbooks

The study found that in all the four sampled TTCs, students had access to textbooks. This was usually through libraries, which had scheduled times, and through academic departments.

However, on deeper analysis and interviews with college staff, the study found that there were variations in utilising the services as females lagged despite the provisions being open to all. For example, at TTC CD, out of 48 book borrowers, it was found that 17 were female (representing 35 %) while 31 were male (representing 65 %).

This finding suggests that access goes beyond the availability of resources. Despite books being available to both sexes, few females utilised the provision. This suggested a need for attitude change by the users as well. When investigated further, three female library assistants agreed and one said,

> "*Many of the library users are males, yes. Though there are some females that do use it"* (Library Assistant 1, TTC CD, 9th May 2022).

Similarly, at TTC DE, when asked what the pattern of library usage was between females and males, Library Assistant 3 said,

> *"Kusiyana kulipo. Kwambiri anthu amene amachuluka obwera kudzagwiritsa ntchito library, ochuluka amakhala anyamata*" [There is a disparity. Mostly male student teachers are the ones who come to access library services]. She continued to say, *"In terms of borrowing, maybe only 40 percent of all library users are female"* (Library Assistant 3, TTC DE, 21st October 2022).

When the researcher probed further why that was the case, the three library assistants from half of the sampled TTCs cited five reasons. The first reason given by Library Assistant 1 of TTC CD was,

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"*Ah, maybe to the ladies most of the times they think that they are* (silence) *Aaah, I don't know* (speaks Chichewa) *'koma'* (but) *I don't know, I don't know the reason why they don't use the library frequently*" (Library Assistant 1, TTC CD, 9th May 2022).

Likewise, Library Assistant 2 of TTC CD gave the second reason as, "*The females, yeah. Maybe they rely much on consulting male students. I have seen that. Yes, to help them.*" (Library Assistant 2, TTC CD, 09th May 2022). In addition, Library Assistant 1, of TTC CD further said, "*Ah, the other reason I think most of the female students rely on modules like ODL modules. Some females also say that they have their materials brought from home*" (9th May 2022). When asked to compare with males she said, "*Males also use the modules but they do use in the library including the books.*" (Library Assistant 1, TTC CD, 9th May 2022).

The fourth reason given by two library assistants was laziness of the female students. For example, Library Assistant 1 of TTC CD said,

"*maybe most of the females are just lazy to use the library the way I have seen it*" (9th May 2022). At the same time, a Library Assistant for TTC DE concurred by saying "*koma ineyo ndimaona ngati kuti atsikana mwina ndi kaulesi chabe kuti abwere ku library kunoko*" [what I see is that it is just laziness by the female students to come to the library] (Library Assistant 3, TTC DE, 21st October 2022).

The fifth reason given was the females' reliance on male students for information. According to a statement by Library Assistant 3 of TTC DE,

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"*We hear that students are placed in permanent working groups, so what happens is that the books that male students borrow are also being used by the females through those groups*" (Library Assistant 3, TTC DE, 21st October 2022).

From the above quotations, on deeper analysis of excerpt 1, it was clear that the silence that preceded the Library Assistant's "*I don't know*" has a lot of meaning. The way the sentence was constructed and the tone in which she said it, "*Ah, maybe to the ladies most of the times they think that they are (silence)…*" suggested that the female student teachers do not think positively about themselves. No wonder, a majority of them do not seek first-hand information. Instead, they rely on consulting male student teachers. This attitude is self-defeating. It was not surprising that one female student verbalised this on one specific issue,

"*normally male students are good at science subjects so when it is time for science learning, we females have chances to learn from our male friends*" (Female Student, TTC DE, 24th May 2022).

Upon further probing what was the basis for such an assertion she said, "*I don't know (laughs)*". This too has deep meaning. In her own words, she again said,

"*It is only that we female students look down on ourselves, but not that those males are geniuses at it (science) but we just look down on ourselves, by saying in science am a female I think I can't do that, yeah things like that.*" (Female Student, TTC DE, 24th May 2022).

From the pattern and manner of speech, it may imply there is a deep underlying attitude problem among majority of female students. It showed that a majority of them do not think positively about

themselves. In the face of their male counterparts, females feel less capable. This is not biologically true although it seemed to have taken root socially. Certainly, this perception affects the female students' motivation and academic performance.

4.8.2 Possible Implications for the disparities in library usage

When the researcher wanted to know whether the disparity in library use contributed to student performance, Library Assistant 3 of TTC DE said,

> *"If we consider performance for example during IPTE16 final MANEB results; 3 or 4 males passed with distinctions but there was no female. This is a concern because we expect females also to be among star performers. Even when you consider those who passed with credits, the higher number is for males, unlike females"* (21st October 2022).

> On how to improve the situation, the library staff said, *we just encourage students to come to the library to access the services as this shows that they are motivated to do well,* she concluded (Library Assistant 3, TTC DE, 21st October 2022).

Although student performance depends on many factors, the limited utilisation of library services by female students negatively affected their performance compared to their male counterparts. To reverse this negative trend, female students need to utilise available opportunities at a TTC for them to perform well.

4.8.3 Limited access to computers by students in TTCs

The study found that in all the four sampled TTCs, both female and male students equally accessed computers and instruction. Students worked in groups that took turns to access computer laboratories. In addition, at one of the four TTCs, there was access to free Wi-Fi for both female

and male students. Although, almost all interviewees (15 out of 17) agreed that student teachers had access to the computer laboratories and attended computer lessons, two female participants said that was not the case. The female student from TTC AB said:

> "*Aaaaaaah hmmmm when we were coming they told us that we are going to learn computers but look this is the fifth term but we have not learnt computers as it were since there are no specific lessons to learn about computers. In true sense, we don't learn computer lessons.*" "*Last week we were learning presentations so we went there and the lecturer was telling us how to use a spreadsheet. We just learn computers for particular uses and how to do it*". "*We go there as a class and we work in groups of 5 because the computers are not enough for everyone as there are less than 20 computers versus 541 students* (Female student, TTC AB, 23rd May 2022). Likewise, a female student from TTC BC refuted, "*Not computer lessons as such but we use computers in writing assignments, we have computers here. Our lecturers introduced us to computers where they send tasks and assignments so that everyone should access and use the computer in writing the assignment.*" (Female Student, TTC BC, 26th May 2022)

Crucially, from the emphatic "Aaaaaaah hmmmm" from Female student of TTC AB and "Not computer lessons as such…" by Female student from TTC BC meant that the lessons did not meet the students' expectation. Again, another issue highlighted was the number of computers that could not match the high student numbers, for example, at TTC AB there were less than 20 computers against 541 students. Similarly, TTC CD had 20 computers versus 695 students. Certainly, there were not enough computers for students to effectively use and acquire usable skills. This meant that the IPTE course did not prioritise computer skills for students.

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However, when asked how the TTCs ensured all students accessed computers, the Head of Department at TTC AB said,

"*Yes. Almost every class has a schedule when students have to attend computer lessons. Right now, there are computer lessons in progress, yes. In terms of facilitation, we have more female lecturers who teach computer classes than males*" (Head of Department, TTC AB, 23rd May 2022). Likewise, a student from TTC CD concurred and said, "*They use class by class; we go there class by class. Each classroom has a different timetable. Yeah, so, so that each classroom has a chance of using the computer and in that class, all members have a chance at least to hold even a mouse of the computer actually to understand how the computer works. However, "We are 695 students against 20 computers*" (Female Student, TTC CD, 9th May 2022). Moreover, another student from TTC DE added, "*Yes, Yes. When it is time for IT learning the lecturers will put both males and females in different groups yeah, so that everyone gets access to the use of computers.* (Female Student, TTC DE, 24th May 2022). Lastly, at TTC BC, a student agreed, "*Yeah, of course. I should say every student has a computer account. Yeah, whether female or male but everyone has an account so during their free time that they can access a computer when it comes to these science subjects, mathematics, and others. Ah, I think when it comes to these tasks or assignments to do on computers they do not think of a student who is male or female they just do it for everybody. Therefore, there is that equal treatment when it comes to these computer lessons both to female and male students* (Male Student, TTC BC, 24th May 2022)

From the above quotations, it was clear that TTCs took computer lessons as an afterthought for the pre-service teacher education programme. Colleges were ill equipped for effective computer

lessons. Although they used groups, to attend computer lessons but in the majority of TTCs, the student enrolments were quite huge compared to the available computers. This showed that colleges did not prioritise computer instruction. The only exception was TTC BC, which had 50 computers against a student enrolment of 106. This could mean that at least two people could use one computer hence it was more effective.

Overall, the findings on the gender responsiveness of the TTCs involved in this study in comparison with FAWE (2018) expected Institutional Gender responsiveness indicators are summarised in Table 4.1:

Table 4. 1: Showing Teacher Training Colleges' Gender Responsiveness

Area/Aspect	Gender Responsive Elements	TTC	Observation
Physical Environment	Furniture	AB	Appropriate size, and height for female and male students
		BC	Appropriate size, and height for female and male students
		CD	Appropriate size, and height for female and male students
		DE	Appropriate size, and height for female and male students
	Amenities (water, electricity and sanitation)	AB	Adequate, toilets plus incinerator, sanitary pad making project for female students
		BC	Adequate, toilets no incinerator, sanitary pad making project for female students
		CD	Adequate, toilets no incinerator
		DE	Enough toilets, inadequate water supplies, no incinerator
	Students' College Accommodation	AB	Adequate & separate hostels for male and female students
		BC	Adequate & separate hostels
		CD	Adequate & separate hostels
		DE	Adequate & separate hostels
		AB	Available
		BC	Available

Area/Aspect	Gender Responsive Elements	TTC	Observation
	Classrooms & Laboratories and spaces for STEM	CD	Available
		DE	Available but laboratories not furnished
Social Environment	Good level of gender awareness	AB	Yes
		BC	No
		CD	Yes
		DE	Yes
	Needy females and males supported through bursaries	AB	Yes
		BC	Yes
		CD	Non-functional bursary program
		DE	Yes
	Gender responsive management systems, rules and policies	AB	Generally responsive
		BC	Gender neutral
		CD	Generally responsive
		DE	Generally responsive
	College addresses cases of sexual harassment	AB	Yes
		BC	Yes
		CD	No.
		DE	Yes
Academic Environment	Lecturers use gender responsive pedagogies	AB	No
		BC	No
		CD	No
		DE	No
	Encourages females in all subjects, particularly STEM subjects	AB	Irregular activities, inadequate computers
		BC	Incorporates ICT for all
		CD	Science Clubs, inadequate computers
		DE	Science projects, inadequate computers
	Walls have illustrations/pictures/ posters that send positive images of both women and men	AB	None
		BC	Anti-GBV Posters in corridors
		CD	None
		DE	None
	Desks and groups arranged to increase participation of both female and male trainees.	AB	Yes
		BC	Yes
		CD	Yes
		DE	Yes

4.9 Challenges in implementing gender-responsive teacher education

The study established that the implementation of gender-responsive teacher training was facing some challenges. The data revealed challenges such as inadequate understanding of gender among teacher educators, negative stereotypes, and prioritisation of female students over male students, professional limitations in adopting gender-responsive lesson formats, and inadequate resources. The following sections give more details.

4.9.1 Inadequate understanding of the Concept of Gender

The first challenge that the data revealed was inadequate understanding of gender among teacher educators. Slightly below half (5 out of 13) of the TTC managers reported inadequate knowledge of gender among teaching staff as one of the challenges affecting the implementation of gender-responsive pre-service primary teacher training in the four TTCs in Malawi. For instance, a Head of Department at TTC AB said,

> "*Among lecturers, we have some new lecturers who have not been oriented in gender-responsive pedagogy*" (Head of Department, TTC AB, 23rd May 2022). Similarly, another Head of Department for TTC AB corroborated this. He said, "*Among lecturers, almost every year we have new lecturers who have not been trained, we do have the gender committee which is supposed to conduct trainings even for the new lecturers and refresher trainings to the old staff but because of finances these do fail sometimes*" (23rd May 2022). Additionally, Head of Department from TTC CD concurred, "*The challenge we have among lecturers is that some lecturers are not yet trained on GRP yeah, due to limited resources*" (Head of Department, TTC CD, 9th July 2022).

Another dimension added to the causes for the inadequate understanding was the ineffective organisation of the gender trainings. A Head of Department at TTC CD indicated,

> "*The training sessions were so short in such a way that people got a lot of information at once but failed to internalize it."* (Head of Department, TTC CD, 9th July 2022). Additionally, Principal 2 for TTC BC mentioned that, "*Among lecturers, I think you know because some people here are old since they were brought up in a situation where issues of gender were not so common so it becomes difficult for them to adapt, mmmm* (Principal 2, TTC BC, 26th May 2022).

From the above quotations, the inadequate knowledge of gender among teaching staff was affecting the implementation of a gender responsive teacher training programme in the four TTCs. For example, a Head of Department at TTC CD said,

> "*Exactly. The lecturers who haven't been trained in GRP can't deliver lessons in a gender responsive way yeah, even the resources, the methodologies they use are different from those who were trained"* (Head of Department, TTC CD, 9th July 2022).

Reasons cited for the inadequate understanding of gender were high staff turnover, old staff who had difficulties adapting to gender-responsive pedagogies, new staff not trained in GRP in a majority of TTCs, and short and heavily loaded trainings where participants failed to internalize the information shared. That being the case, for gender-related training to be effective, there is need for them to be held regularly. That way, there will be effective coverage of the content.

Since student teachers learn from their lecturers, whom this study has established had an inadequate understanding of gender; it was difficult for the students to acquire enough knowledge,

skills, values, and attitudes to facilitate gender responsiveness in their classrooms. Therefore, this thesis concluded that the type of training facilitated through the IPTE programmes did not adequately help the teachers to go beyond head knowledge of gender to facilitate responsiveness. This is because gender awareness among lecturers did not translate into the use of gender-responsive pedagogies in their classrooms.

4.9.2 Negative stereotypes towards females

The second challenges cited, as a hindrance to gender responsiveness was a negative attitude towards females. Half of the college principal participants (2 out of 4) mentioned this challenge. For example, TTC AB principal said,

> "*It is an issue of attitude, yeah so you can see that it's still there among some lecturers because others will maybe shout at a student because of gender. Even if that student maybe has done something wrong, they will not take it that this student has done this wrong but this female student has done this or that or this male student has done this or that not just a student but attaching the offence to the sex of the student.*" (Principal 1, TTC AB, 23rd May 2022).

Such attachment of behaviour to a particular sex disregarding the individual is a stereotype. Similarly, the TTC BC principal said,

> "*among lecturers, I think you know because some people here are old,* [meaning they joined the TTC after serving in other institutions] *so they were brought up in a situation where issues of gender were not common. Therefore, it becomes difficult for them to adapt, mmmm, that is one. The second thing is about the issue of culture that has an impact too"* (Principal 2, TTC BC, 26th May 2022).

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The issue of negative attitudes also affected management like one female manager confessed,

"*In management, yeah still the challenge is mainly that of attitude. Maybe if you put a female member in a particular committee where there are male members some still have feelings that aaaah no this female cannot do a, b, c or d until that female proves that they can perform. So it's the issue of attitude"* (Principal 1, TTC AB, 23rd May 2022).

From the above quotation, some males still doubted the capabilities of female leaders, just based on sex. This was a gender stereotype not based on performance but mere association. Apart from the lecturers' negative attitudes, the data also revealed that some male students also held stereotypical beliefs due to culture. At times, this led to verbal abuse towards females. For example, the Principal of TTC BC said,

"*Among students again culture, yeah. Some of them have been brought up in a situation where one sex is seen as superior so when they come here as a boarding institution they find it difficult to adjust*" (Principal 2, TTC BC, 26th May 2022).

In the same way, a male student at TTC DE expressed similar views as above by saying, "*We have challenges that maybe some males look down at females and don't give an opportunity to women to lead them. It is gender stereotypes or the feeling that they are superior to females. They think that women have weak minds than males*" (Male student, TTC DE, 24th May 2022).

In concurring with one of her students, the Principal 4 for TTC DE, observed, "*We have very few with a mind-set of looking down upon females may be from their upbringing but most of them work collaboratively."* (TTC DE, 24th May 2022).

Such negative attitudes eventually affect females' participation in class activities. For example, another participant said,

> "*Among students, normally the males dominate yeah, males dominate, though we try to encourage females' participation naturally there is males' dominance.*" (Head of Department, TTC DE, 24th May 2022).

Such dominance has an effect on the overall performance of students. Generally, those who are more active during class activities have higher chances of success.

4.9.3 Verbal sexual abuse among student teachers

At TTC AB, one participant mentioned verbal sexual abuse as the third challenge. Although only one participant cited this challenge, due to the serious nature of the claim, the researcher took it on board as representative of many who suffered in silence. Indeed, a female student of TTC AB lamented,

> "*There is verbal sexual harassment by male student teachers. It happens often but since they do those things, they think it is fun but they do not know that it affects others. They just take it for granted so people get used to it but it is not good*" (Female student, TTC AB, 23rd May 2022).

Such behaviour created unfavourable living and learning environment for female students hence not gender-responsive. Such *getting-used-to-it-attitude* perpetuates these negative behaviours. For that reason, all stakeholders need to work together to reduce it.

4.9.4 Students' perceptions of "favouritism" by teacher educators

The fourth challenge cited as an effect of the gender stereotypes by a student was "favouritism" by teacher educators. For example, one male participant said,

"When we go for teaching practice (TP), some lecturers do give marks or grades considering the person who is teaching. Yeah, it is possible and it is common for male lecturers to give good marks or grades to female student teachers. You find that female student teachers pass with more A grades finding A, A, A, but it is very difficult for a male student teacher to pass with an A grade" (Male student, TTC AB, 23rd May 2022).

This researcher questioned whether this really happened or it was just an issue of perception. If it did, why was it that, as reported in section 4.8.2, during externally administered MANEB examinations, more males performed better than females? If the teacher educators used standardised assessment protocols, then, the results for female and male students were supposed to be comparable. If not, then the perceptions of favouritism could really have a basis.

On another note, at the same TTC, during data collection, there were issues of college based assessment tests leakages from lecturers to students. Two participants reported,

"Last week we were supposed to have an assessment but unfortunately some female students had the question papers on their phones. We do not know if there was a connection between those female students and male or female lecturers so as students, we concluded that some female students are in relationships with male lecturers who help them to have access to exam assessments. That one is a challenge on the ground." (Male student, TTC AB, 23rd May 2022). Likewise, a Head of Department who also doubled as a Male Student Advisor corroborated the incident and said, *"Like a case involving an*

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exam paper, there was leakage. Some students came to report to management. We are still digging the source of the leakage but two lecturers who were being suspected were of different sexes" (Head of Department, TTC AB, 23rd May 2022).

The above quotations show that among the teaching staff, some get involved in unprofessional conduct with students. This might be exploitative and abusive in a way because usually, such actions may stem from ulterior motives. However, from the above excerpt, lecturers of both sexes could be involved in alleged indiscipline cases. Therefore, it would be better to treat the indiscipline cases aside from gender stereotypes.

4.9.5 Prioritization of female students' education

The fifth challenge cited at TTC BC by one Head of Department was the prioritization of female students' over males in education thereby relegating the latter. At that TTC, for the past two student cohorts, female enrolment was higher than males (70 percent female; 30 percent male) during IPTE 16 and 59 versus 41 percent males during IPTE 17. The enrolments had a bias towards females. No, wonder, this was cited by one female member of management who said,

> "*Our major effort is put on female students and then we end up leaving out the other gender which might affect male students as they may feel side-lined*" (Head of Department, TTC BC, 26th May 2022). She further explained that:

> "*among students, the issue creates an atmosphere where the male students relax, especially in this institution where we have more females than males mostly the excuse that male students give is that they are fewer than the ladies as such they feel they cannot participate even more. They feel they are lightly represented based on proportion or ratio of males to females*" (26th May 2022).

This finding agreed with the findings of a study by Karuti (2013) in Kenya that also revealed that the emphasis on females' education, though appropriate, might be leading to the neglect of issues promoting males' education. This suggests the need to balance interventions to meet the needs of both females and males. This suggestion made sense. After all, the issue of imbalanced student enrolment did not arise in the other TTCs because those had 50:50 female-to-male student ratios.

Malawi, being a developing society, gender parity could be a good starting point for gender dialogue. As observed from the excerpts above, males excused themselves from active participation in situations where they were in minority. This created unhealthy relationships because of cultural dynamics. Therefore, to propel gender equality values, equal numbers would work to the advantage of both sexes, but more so the females.

4.9.6 Professional limitations on adapting lesson plan format to suit GRP

Gender-responsive pedagogy (GRP) is specifically important for teachers to create a gender-responsive academic environment (Mlama et. al., 2005). To facilitate GRP, teachers must incorporate it in their planning of lessons. However, the study data revealed that the sixth challenge that emerged was the professional restrictions on adapting lesson plan formats to incorporate gender-responsive pedagogy. The staff described this as a "conflict" between policy and practice. This was because the policy on the lesson plan layout had not changed although gender-responsive pedagogy advocated for the inclusion of gender issues in the lesson plans. Specifically, the participant said,

> *"For example, we talked about gender-responsive lessons, so that gender has to be embedded in the lesson plans and there is a conflict to say no we cannot change the format of the lesson plan. So normally we cannot include gender issues in the lesson plan."* Instead,

"*we are only encouraged to embrace gender in the process of teaching and learning as a result sometimes, you may forget because it is not written in the document*" (Head of Department, TTC DE, 24 May 2022).

This finding exposed the bureaucratic resistance that characterises education systems and confirmed what Maluwa-Banda (2003) asserted that in Malawi, the main challenge has been to put gender-sensitive policies into practice in the school management, learning environment, and implementation of the curriculum. In this case, this showed resistance in implementation of the curriculum. It may be interesting to investigate whether gender responsive pedagogy is part of the mainstream education policies in Malawi as claimed by some publications like Wanjama and Njuguna (2015) and FAWE (2018).

4.9.7 Inadequate financial resources and time

The seventh challenge mentioned in half of the sampled TTCs was inadequate resources like finances and time. Both female and male TTC participants agreed that finances and time were major hindrances to achieving gender-responsive college environments. For instance, one female member of management said,

> "*I don't think we have the resources for that aaaah,*" (Head of Department, TTC DE, 24th May 2022), while a male member of the management team concurred, *"In terms of lecturers' ah, maybe resources and time"* (Head of Department, TTC CD, 9th July 2022). Likewise, another Head of Department at TTC CD concurred that, "*some lecturers have not yet been trained on GRP yeah, due to limited financial resources to facilitate trainings*" (Head of Department, TTC CD, 9th July 2022).

The study learned that the inadequate time and resources hindered the colleges from fixing time for staff trainings in gender responsive pedagogies. The data revealed that TTCs do not allocate resources for gender trainings. This accounted for the inadequate financial resources. For example, Head of Department at TTC BC revealed,

"*Some challenges could be that activities that are supposed to promote this gender-responsive training programme are not included in the work plan so to implement such activities becomes a challenge. Therefore, it could be something that we preach, but then fail to implement* (26th May 2022).

This finding confirms what Maluwa-Banda (2003) argued that in Malawi, the main challenge has been to put gender-sensitive policies into practice. One of the reasons this study has established for such a challenge, is that TTCs rely on externally organised gender trainings, which is at the mercy of those institutions.

Consequently, it was not surprising to find that no TTC (0 out of 4 TTCs) had a definite plan for organizing gender trainings for staff within the past academic year. When the researcher asked a Head of Department at TTC DE, he confessed,

"*No, normally these trainings are organized by outside institutions who come here to train lecturers*" (24th May 2022).

This confirmed that without external intervention, the teacher-training colleges do not prioritise trainings in gender. Obviously, this means that TTCs could not fully embrace GRP that way.

Moreover, pressure to cover academic work limited the emphasis on gender. This finding is consistent with findings of studies by Mannathoko (1995) which concluded that amidst academic

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pressure, lecturers usually relegate gender issues in the classroom. In this study, the data from lesson observations corroborated with the interviews, really showed gender being relegated. For example, Principal 1 of TTC AB said,

> "*We know we are integrating it (gender) but then like this term, we have a short term of only 10 weeks and a lot of content. Therefore, I feel it is not as much as it is supposed to be* (Principal 1, TTC AB, 23rd May 2022).

Collectively, these findings concur with findings by Unterhalter et. al., (2014) that concluded, "translating policy on gender and education into practice requires considerable resources way beyond that planned for or provided" (p.41). further to that, this study has established that TTCs do not even plan for gender trainings hence it becomes difficult to allocate resources for the same. However, it would be a good thing for these institutions to plan for and conduct gender trainings.

Overall, this section has explained the challenges faced in implementing gender-responsive pre-service teacher training. These were inadequate understanding of gender among teacher educators, negative stereotypes towards females, verbal abuse among students, perceptions of favouritism by lecturers, prioritisation of female students' education, professional limitations to change lesson plan formats, and inadequate resources. The next section looks at suggested strategies for improving gender responsiveness in the pre-service teacher education programme in TTCs.

4.10 Suggested strategies for improving gender responsiveness.

After identifying the challenges faced in implementing gender-responsive teacher training, the participants suggested strategies that could improve the programme. These were gender sensitisation programmes, workplace gender policies, role modelling, organizing extracurricular

activities, and initiating social dialogue on issues of gender. The next section explains these suggestions.

4.10.1 Gender sensitisation programmes

Scholars agree that increased awareness may help facilitate change in the values, attitudes, and practices of people, including students. For example, Sultana and Lazim (2011) indicated that holding seminars, forums, and discussions related to gender issues could help in increasing awareness among teacher educators and students. Therefore, in this study two participants suggested gender and civic education campaigns as one of the ways of raising awareness on gender issues. For instance, Principal 1 of TTC AB stated,

> *"We keep on sensitizing members of staff so that they are fully aware of the gender issues. We also conduct students' orientation on gender.* Practically, *we make a deliberate move in the way we distribute roles to both males and females"* (23rd May 2022). In agreement, Principal 2 of TTC BC said, *"We need to talk more about gender with the students. So that it is part of their living, they should understand this, because the world is changing yeah, so they need to get a lot of information on gender and we can be inviting people who are well versed in these issues so that they can talk to the students"* (26th May 2022).

From the quotations, the participants agreed on the need for gender and civic education campaigns to raise awareness on gender. This is a good suggestion and corresponds with recommendations from Kahamba et. al., (2017). This could take many forms like public campaigns, sensitisation talks, student orientations, and other awareness programmes. However, there is need for a methodical gender sensitisation programme for it to be effective. First, it needs to begin with teacher educators themselves. Specifically, this needs to target how to incorporate gender-

responsive pedagogies in their classroom practice. Afterwards, then the sensitisation should move to students through orientations, curriculum content as well as practice teaching.

Overall, in line with recommendations by Mannathoko (1995), lecturers and student teachers must receive quality training in gender reform. In this regard, the programmes should offer more than gender awareness training but provide skills in implementing gender reform. Therefore, the training should focus on changing attitudes, which resist gender reform for them to be effective.

4.10.2 Developing and implementing work place Gender policies

Guidelines are usually helpful in entrenching social values like gender. Therefore, to help improve the gender responsiveness of teacher education, half of the college principals (2 out of 4) said, it was important to have workplace gender policies. While one college had already developed a gender policy, the other was still developing it. Having gender workplace policies would help the colleges follow the guidelines, which would ensure gender responsiveness. Principal 1 of TTC AB said,

> *"We have a gender workplace policy in place which is championed by the Gender Coordinator who is also under the Social Studies department where there is also a head of department*" (Principal 1, TTC AB, 23rd May 2022). Similarly, Principal 4 of TTC DE indicated, *"Locally we are developing a gender policy, and following the guidelines for gender responsiveness*" (Principal 4, TTC DE, 24th May 2022).

Once developed, the policies need to be adequately publicised both formally and informally through dramas, clubs, and other forums. This would help narrow the information gaps and ensure successful implementation. In addition, this would avoid a repeat of the findings of a study by CODE (2015) in Mozambique's four teacher-training colleges, which revealed differences in

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knowledge of policies between males and females at the same institution. In that study, while a majority of male respondents indicated knowledge of policies at the colleges that promoted a safe environment and equal opportunities for pre-service teachers, only 25 percent of female pre-service teachers and none of the female teacher educators indicated knowledge of the gender policies (CODE, 2020). Therefore, for the Malawi pre-service teacher training programme, developing and publicising them would help ensure that students learn and live in safe, secure, and supportive environments.

4.10.3 Use of role modelling

Teacher educators inspire and empower their students in terms of knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes. At the same time, they can also discourage and impose limitations whether consciously or not. Most likely, students imitate what they see their teachers practice. Therefore, for any student, their teacher is their most immediate, if not, the most influential role model available. According to the MoE (2017b), without necessarily realising it, college and academic staff influence students' attitudes to the teaching profession through their implicit or explicit reactions and conduct. Realising this, half (2 out of 4) of the college principal participants indicated that teacher educators are role models for student teachers even on matters of gender responsiveness. For example, Principal 1 of TTC AB said,

> *"Above all, we try to be role models so that students can learn from us and should be able to implement. In addition, maybe we could have role models from outside to come for a talk. There is need to integrate gender issues at a higher level. We know we are integrating but…I feel it is not as much as it is supposed to be"* (Principal 1, TTC AB, 23 May 2022).

The above quotation highlighted three key issues. First, teacher educators try to be role models. This emphasises both the inadequacy and effectiveness of their intentions. Inadequacy, because this research has shown that teacher educators, have an inadequate understanding of gender. Crucially, though, the conscious efforts to facilitate gender issues are in line with *the intention* principle of the Invitation Education Theory and Teacher Education Standard 17 on modelling of professional conduct by staff. As pointed out earlier, it is a myth that role models must always be of the same sex as the student. Instead, the teacher educator whether female or male should display superior qualities and brilliant performance regardless of their sex (Campbell & Storo, 1996; Evans & Le Nestour, 2019). Certainly, the teacher educators' performance is more crucial for them to be good role models as opposed to their sex. That way, role models could inspire both females and males regardless of their sex.

Second, external role models could come for a *talk* in addition to the lecturers themselves. Nevertheless, 'one-day talks' cannot supersede daily routines and practices. Classroom lecturers have more influence on the students' learning hence their efforts cannot be replaced. Indeed, the 'external role models' may just complement the lecturers' daily routines and practices. Last, is that TTCs could still improve integration of gender in the IPTE programme, meaning teacher educators could intensify their efforts to model the student teachers to be more gender-responsive beyond what was presently the case.

4.10.4 Creating gender awareness through extracurricular activities

Clubs, sports, games, festivals, competitions and other forms of social activities are a good source of excitement among the youth. Such non-authoritative ways would lead to higher information uptake through social interaction. For example, utilising the *Sports for Development Model* in which extracurricular activities are just a vehicle for communicating gender messages, every

student would be involved since the focus is not on perfection in performance but just participation. One principal hinted that extracurricular activities could facilitate acquisition of positive values and attitudes toward gender. Evidently, Principal 1, TTC AB stated,

> *"In addition, we could have competitions on gender for example we could use essay writing so that students should be made more aware of gender issues"* (23rd May 2022).

Writing competitions could be utilised to bring gender awareness to both writers and readers. Unterhalter et. al., (2014) posit that clubs where female and male students have space to reflect on aspects of gender are very effective in giving opportunities to discuss gender equality, develop confidence, change gender norms, and enhance inclusion. There is strong evidence from work in Africa that clubs help female and male students to discuss and challenge gender norms, including those associated with sex, gender-based violence, and school progression (Unterhalter et. al., 2014). Therefore, extracurricular activities could enhance the gender responsiveness of teacher training in Malawi.

4.10.5 Initiating social dialogue

Social dialogue is a process of negotiation, consultation, or simply the exchange of information between, or among different actors in society (or 'social partners') to reach an agreement and work together *on issues of common interest* relating to economic and social policy (ILO, 2023). Although the social dialogue concept has its origins in the labour market, its processes can take place at different levels and sectors. For example, we could have social dialogue in education. It is along this line, that, a Head of Department at TTC AB said,

> *"There is a need to have a social dialogue between lecturers and students. I wish the college could have some discussions between lecturers and students on matters of gender*

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and not having training for lecturers only and having another for students only, no. Instead, we could have something that would be a combined thing so that students and lecturers could air out their concerns on gender. Maybe that one can minimize some inequalities because some of these things are usually talked about during assemblies where we are in power and students are just passive and cannot ask questions" (23rd May 2022).

From the above quotation, it can be learnt that, gender as a concept needs to be negotiated and deliberated upon in an environment that is not *authoritative* for some of the concerns to be addressed. This finding is consistent with recommendations by Mannathoko (1995) that lecturers need to develop *cooperation* with student teachers prior to theoretical discussions about sensitive and complex gender issues. This is because gender knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes need two-way modes of communication unlike general talk or authoritative unidirectional addresses of dos and don'ts. Such methods suppresses the recipients' voice. These are less effective as the data has revealed. Instead, holding forums and discussions related to gender issues, which includes social dialogue, are helpful in entrenching gender-responsive values and attitudes. Findings by Sultana and Lazim (2011) support this.

4.11 Chapter Summary

This section has discussed key findings in terms of participants' understanding of gender, the capacity of TTCs to implement gender responsive teacher training as well as the nature of gender responsiveness of the TTCs regarding the physical, social and academic environment. The chapter also explored challenges encountered by teacher educators in facilitating gender responsive teacher training. Finally, it suggested sensitisation programmes, developing and implementing work place gender policies, use of role modelling, organising extracurricular activities, and initiating social

dialogue as strategies for improving gender-responsive teacher education. The next section summarises and concludes what the data showed as well as offers recommendations based on the findings of the study.

CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Chapter Introduction

This chapter gives a summary of the whole study in terms of the research problem, study objectives, its key findings and discussion as well as its academic contribution. Additionally, the chapter identifies issues arising from the research that require further investigation.

5.2 Summary of findings

As pointed out in Chapter 1, research findings on gender showed that education institutions systematically reproduce gender inequality by offering different education to female and male students. That was despite the students studying the same courses and listening to the same lecturer. The literature indicated that male students received more active and precise teacher attention and feedback, unlike their female classmates who were mostly "invisible" members of the classroom. In this light, the current study investigated gender responsiveness of the pre-service primary school teachers' training program in four selected teacher-training colleges in Malawi. Thus, the next sub-sections summarize the findings in relation to the objectives of this study.

5.2.1. Objective (1): To establish understanding of the concept of gender

Regarding the understanding of gender, the findings of the study reported in Chapter 4 indicated that there was inadequate understanding of gender by teacher educators. A majority of teacher educators failed to use gender responsive pedagogies in their lessons. In relation to these findings, this thesis rejects the assumption that because Malawi mainstreamed gender responsive pedagogy in teacher training colleges from as far back as 2009, then it follows that the pre-service teacher education program is gender responsive.

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5.2.2. Objective (2): To investigate the nature of gender responsiveness of the pre-service teacher-training program

Through the study findings reported in Chapter 4, the study has established that the physical and social environment for the pre-service teacher-training program is gender responsive. The TTCs have adequate student accommodation with required sanitary facilities. In addition, the colleges have gender responsive management systems, rules, policies and practices, which ensure student security and safety from sexual abuses or any other form of gender based violence.

However, the study also established that the TTCs academic environment was not gender responsive. The pedagogies used in training pre-service teachers such as lesson planning, content as well as delivery methods failed to address gender biases and discrimination. Regarding participation of females in library use and classrooms, the study has shown that negative self-perceptions hinders females from fully utilizing the provided opportunities such as textbooks, computers and classroom instruction. This shows that female students need to utilise available opportunities for them to perform well.

5.2.3 Objective (3): To explore challenges faced in implementing gender-responsive pre-service teacher training programs

With respect to implementation of gender-responsive teacher training programs, the findings revealed challenges such as inadequate understanding of gender among teacher educators, negative stereotypes, and prioritisation of female over male students, professional limitations in adopting gender-responsive lesson formats, and inadequate resources. Limited resources like time and finances hindered implementation of gender trainings and other awareness raising programs.

5.2.4 Objective (4): To identify ways of improving TTC gender-responsive practices

Regarding the strategies that can improve gender-responsive practices in teacher training programs, the findings of the study reported in Chapter 4 of this thesis showed that gender sensitisation programs, workplace gender policies, and role modelling, organizing extracurricular activities and initiating social dialogue on issues of gender could improve gender responsiveness of teacher education.

5.3 Contribution to knowledge

The present study on gender responsiveness of the preservice primary teacher-training program covers part of the research gap on the subject in Malawi. The study has helped reveal how responsive the teacher education program is towards gender. It has unearthed challenges facing the implementation of gender-responsive teacher training programmes and proposed solutions in addressing some of them.

The findings of the study can be useful to different stakeholders in education. Firstly, the results of this study have the potential of equipping teacher educators with evidence-based knowledge on need to adopt and incorporate gender responsive pedagogy in the teaching and learning process to create a gender responsive primary teacher training program.

Secondly, the findings of the study have the potential of helping the Directorate of Teacher Education and Development (DTED), and the Ministry of Education, to improve the gender responsiveness of the teacher training policies and programmes by addressing the needs of both female and male students.

Lastly, the study can further help teacher educators who took part in the research by providing them with useful reflection on their policies and practices and how to address gender-related

challenges they are facing. The findings can help them to improve management systems and utilisation of gender-responsive pedagogies.

5.4 Conclusion

The study has established that the initial primary teacher education program in the sampled TTCs in Malawi was partially gender-responsive. As observed, the physical and social environment were mostly gender-responsive unlike the pedagogies. Gender responsive pedagogies are those acts of teaching that challenge gender biases and discrimination. Indeed teacher educators' failure to use gender-responsive pedagogies in their lessons is systematically reproducing gender inequality in teacher education. Looking at the way teachers are trained under the current pre-service primary teacher education program there is little chance that they can be change agents to challenge gender biases and discrimination in Malawi. For gender transformation to occur, the program needs to challenge gender inequalities in the education system and society.

Unless teacher educators adopt and incorporate gender-responsive pedagogy in the teaching and learning process, teacher education in Malawi will continue to perpetuate gender inequality. Its effects are far-reaching as it passes on the gender biases and discrimination to the primary education sub-sector and the education system as a whole.

5.5 Recommendations

The study makes the following recommendations:

- **The Ministry of Education and stakeholders** need to incorporate gender responsive pedagogy (GRP) in teacher-training curriculum to facilitate responsiveness

- **Teacher educators** need to adopt and incorporate gender responsive pedagogy in the teaching and learning process to create a gender responsive primary teacher training program.

- **The Ministry of Education and Development Partners** need to finance implementation of gender responsive interventions like gender responsive pedagogy (GRP) trainings for teachers and teacher educators

- **Teacher Training Colleges** need to develop and implement workplace gender policies and establish gender clubs for students.

5.6 Suggested areas for further study

This study focused on the gender responsiveness of the pre-service primary teacher-training programme. Future studies could focus on other areas such as:

- Evaluating how well teachers trained under the IPTE program facilitate gender-responsive pedagogies in their classrooms.
- Gender responsiveness of other preservice teacher training modes such as the open distance and electronic learning (ODeL)
- Gender responsiveness of secondary school teacher training programmes or institutions.
- Gender responsiveness of other levels of education such as primary, secondary, and tertiary institutions or programmes

5.7. Chapter Summary

This chapter has presented the conclusions drawn from the research findings and suggested areas for further research. Largely, the study offers a significant knowledge contribution to the existing

body of knowledge regarding gender responsiveness of pre-service teacher education in Malawi. From a practical perspective, the findings of the study might be useful to educational policy makers and teacher educators in TTCs in identifying gender irresponsive systems and pedagogies and developing strategies for improving the quality of pre-service teacher education.

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Appendix 1: Informed Consent Form:

Mzuzu University Research Ethics Committee (MZUNIREC)

Informed Consent Form for Research in the Faculty of Education

Introduction

I am **Thununu Mafuleka** from Mzuzu University. We are doing research on *Gender Responsiveness of the pre-service primary school teachers' training program: the case of four teacher-training Colleges in Malawi* This consent form may contain words that you do not understand. Please ask me to stop as we go through the information and I will take time to explain. If you have questions later, you can ask them of me or of another researcher.

Purpose of the research

This research aims to investigate gender responsiveness of the pre-service primary school teacher training program in Teacher Training Colleges (TTC) in Malawi.

Type of Research Intervention

This research will involve your participation in a group discussion and/or individual interview.

Participant Selection

You are being invited to take part in this research because you are one of managers in primary teacher training program in TTC with vast experience and necessary qualifications.

Voluntary Participation

Your participation in this research is voluntary. It is your choice whether to participate or not. If you choose not to participate nothing will change. You may skip any question and move on to the next question.

Duration

The research takes place for a period of one year running up to 30 November 2022.

Risks

You do not have to answer any question or take part in the discussion/interview/survey if you feel the question(s) are too personal or if talking about them makes you uncomfortable.

Reimbursements

You will not be provided any incentive to take part in the research.

Sharing the Results

The knowledge that we get from this research will be shared with you and your community before it is made widely available to the public. Following that, we will publish the results so other interested people may learn from the research.

Who to Contact

If you have any questions, you can ask them now or later. If you wish to ask questions later, you may contact: **Dr. Grames W. Chirwa,** Mzuzu University, P/Bag 201, Luwinga, Mzuzu 2, Phone numbers: **0888 445 227** or **0996 373 227.**

This proposal has been reviewed and approved by Mzuzu University Research Ethics Committee (MZUNIREC), which is a committee whose task it is to make sure that research participants are protected from harm. If you wish to find about more about the Committee, contact Mr. Gift Mbwele, Mzuzu University Research Ethics (MZUNIREC) Administrator, Mzuzu University, P/Bag 201, Luwinga, Mzuzu 2, Phone: 0999404008 or 0888641486

Do you have any questions?

Part II: Certificate of Consent

I have been invited to participate in research about **Gender Responsiveness of the pre-service primary school teachers' training program: the case of four teacher-training Colleges in Malawi**

I have read the foregoing information, or it has been read to me. I have had the opportunity to ask questions about it and any questions I have been asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I consent voluntarily to be a participant in this study

Print Name of Participant_____

Signature of Participant _____ **Date** _____

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If illiterate [1]

I have witnessed the accurate reading of the consent form to the potential participant, and the individual has had the opportunity to ask questions. I confirm that the individual has given consent freely.

Print name of witness_____   Thumbprint of participant

Signature of witness _____

Date _____

Day/month/year

Statement by the researcher/person taking consent

I have accurately read out the information sheet to the potential participant, and to the best of my ability made sure that the participant understands the research project. I confirm the participant was given an opportunity to ask questions about the study, and all the questions asked by the participant have been answered correctly and to the best of my ability. I confirm that the individual has not been coerced into giving consent, and the consent has been given freely and voluntarily.

Signature of Researcher /person taking the consent_____

Date: _____

Day/month/year

---

[1] A literate witness must sign (if possible, this person should be selected by the participant and should have no connection to the research team). Participants who are illiterate should include their thumb print as well.

Appendix 2: Teacher Training Colleges in Malawi as of March 2022

Division		TTC	Year Opened	Capacity	Public	Private
Northern	1	Karonga	1987	540	X	
	2	DAPP Mzimba	2013	256		X
	3	Loudon CCAP Synod of Livingstonia	2010	220		X
	4	Theodora van Rossum, Mzimba, Diocese of Mzuzu	2021	160		X
Central East	5	Kasungu	1988	690	X	
	6	DAPP Dowa	2010	256		X
Central West	7	Lilongwe	1971	720	X	
	8	St. Joseph's Diocese of Dedza, grant aided	1937	600	X	
South East	9	Machinga	2010	560	X	
	10	Maryam, Mangochi, Bilal Trust	2005	250		X
South West	11	Blantyre	1973	540	X	
	12	DAPP Chilangoma, Blantyre	2003	224		X
Shire Highlands	13	Montfort Special Needs Education	1971	100	X	
	14	Chiradzulu	2014	560	X	
	15	Phalombe	2014	280	X	

Appendix 3: Request for permission to carry out Research DTED

C/O Mzuzu University

P/Bag 201

Luwinga, Mzuzu 2

01st April 2022

The Director

Directorate of Teacher Education and Development (DTED)

Private Bag 215

Lilongwe

Dear Sir

Request to conduct research in Teacher Training Colleges (TTCs) for Master of Education Studies

In line with requirements for the Master of Education (Leadership and Management) course at Mzuzu University, I write to request permission to carry out research in four TTCs (3 public and 1 private)

I am Thununu Mafuleka (Student Registration Number: MEDLM 1920), have been cleared by Mzuzu University Research and Ethics Committee to conduct a research study titled: **Gender Responsiveness of the pre-service primary school teachers' training program: the case of four teacher-training colleges in Malawi.** The purpose of the research is to investigate the gender responsiveness of the pre-service primary school teacher-training program in Teacher Training Colleges in Malawi.

For more information on the study, you may contact my supervisor, **Dr. Grames W. Chirwa** on **0888 445 227** or **0996 373 227** or through **Email:** grameschirwa@yahoo.co.uk

Yours faithfully

THUNUNU MAFULEKA (Mobile: **0999 189 083**)

Appendix 4: Request for permission to carry out Research TTC

C/O Mzuzu University

P/Bag 201

Luwinga, Mzuzu 2

01st April 2022

The Principal

_____

_____

Dear Sir/Madam

Request to conduct research at your Teacher Training College for Master of Education Studies

In line with requirements for the Master of Education (Leadership and Management) course at Mzuzu University, I write to request permission to carry out research at your TTC as one of the four selected in this study. Your TTC's participation will be highly appreciated.

I am Thununu Mafuleka (Student Registration Number: MEDLM 1920), has been cleared by Mzuzu University Research and Ethics Committee to conduct a research study titled: **Gender Responsiveness of the pre-service primary school teachers' training program: the case of four teacher-training colleges in Malawi.** The purpose of the research is to investigate the gender responsiveness of the pre-service primary school teacher-training program in Teacher Training Colleges in Malawi.

For more information on the study, you may contact my supervisor, **Dr. Grames W. Chirwa** on **0888 445 227** or **0996 373 227** or through **Email:** gramseschirwa@yahoo.co.uk

Yours faithfully

THUNUNU MAFULEKA (Mobile: **0999 189 083**)

Appendix 5: Interview Guide for TTC Principal

A: Biographic Data

1. Division_____District_____

2. Proprietor of the TTC_____

3. Bed capacity: Total _____Female _____Male_____

4. Support Staff: Total _____ Female _____ Male _____

5. Academic Staff: Total _____ Female _____Male _____

6. Students in each cohort

Total _____Female _____ Male_____

Total _____Female _____ Male _____

7. Sex of participant (s)_____

8. Highest qualification _____TTC Teaching experience_____

9. Date _____

B: Understanding of the concept of gender

1. How many academic and support staff have undergone gender sensitization training?

   Staff: Total _____ Female _____Male _____

2. What were the training particulars?

a. Duration of the training

b. When and where did the training take place?

c. Who organized the training?

3. Does the college conduct academic staff trainings on gender issues?

4. If yes, how often?

5. What does Gender mean to you?

6. In your own view, how is gender different from sex?

7. Have you ever heard of the term Gender responsiveness? What is your understanding of gender responsiveness?

8. From your understanding of Gender responsiveness, do you see it relevant in your teacher training in the TTC?

9. If yes, Explain

C: General TTC Information

Leadership and Responsibilities

1. How many female and male academic and support staff are in any leadership position at this TTC?

Total _____ Female_____ Male _____

Do you have any suggestion for the differences in (1) above?

2. How many students are in TTC leadership positions?

Total _____Female _____Male_____

3. Do you have any suggestion for the differences in (2) above?

D: Psychological and Social Support to Students for Gender responsiveness

1. Does the TTC have a committee responsible for gender issues?
2. If yes, what are its roles
3. Does the college sensitise students on gender issues?
4. If yes, how many students have undergone gender sensitization training?

Total: _____ Male _____ Female _____

5. What were the particulars?
    a. Duration of the training
    b. When and where did the training take place
6. What specific gender related clubs or activities are students engaged in at this TTC?
7. Does the TTC have a system of tracking the personal welfare of students by gender
8. If yes,
    a. How many needy female and male students have received bursaries?

Total_____ Female _____ Male _____

    b. How many cases of sexual harassment or bullying in this TTC have been reported in the past academic year?
9. Are you aware of any male or female student who dropped out from this TTC in the last academic year? If Yes, indicate Total _____Female _____ Male_____
10. Give reasons responsible for those drop outs in the last academic year
11. Does the TTC have options for female students who are pregnant or lactating? If yes, explain

12. Do you know of any student who was assisted by the community to continue with education at this TTC?

13. If yes, what kind of support was provided

Academic Support

14. How does the TTC ensure that both female and male students have equal access to learning resources (textbooks, library, laboratory)?

15. Does the TTC have activities to promote the participation of female students in science, mathematics and technology (SMT) subjects?

16. If yes, explain

17. Does the IPTE program have courses, topics or activities that focus on the future professional life of females and males, like goal setting, jobs and career life, managing work life balance? Managing relationships? family?

18. If no, explain what could be done to improve the training program

Gender Responsive Physical Facilities

1. Does the TTC have adequate boarding facilities (hostels)?

2. If no, how is the situation being managed?

3. Does the TTC have adequate and clean water and sanitation, especially to enhance menstruation management and the overall health of the female students at the TTC?

4. If no, how is the situation being managed?

5. How does the TTC ensure females easily access menstrual hygiene materials like sanitary pads?

Gender responsive TTC Management

Gender balance in TTC management structures (Board, head of departments, prefects, student council, committees)

6. How many males and females are in each of the management structures:

    a. Principal

    b. Deputy Principal

    c. TTC Board: Total _____Female_____ Male_____

    d. Heads of Department: Total _____Female _____Male_____

    e. Prefects and Student Council Total_____ Male _____Female_____

7. Which of these structures are headed by males and which ones by females?

8. What techniques do you use to eliminate gender unresponsiveness in the TTC?

9. How many cases of sexual harassment in the TTC have been reported during the last six months?

TTC rules and regulations that ensure a gender responsive environment

10. Give specific examples of TTC rules and regulations that make the TTC gender responsive

Existence and enforcement of gender responsive national and TTC policies

11. Give examples of the national gender policies which are being implemented in the TTC

12. What gender-related policies does the TTC have? Give specific examples of how the TTC is implementing these policies (e.g., a policy on zero tolerance for sexual harassment or bullying, gender balance in student leadership positions etc.)

13. Are there cases of female students who have been readmitted to the TTC after delivering a baby?

14. How do lecturers assist these so that they perform well in their studies?

E: Challenges in implementing gender responsive teacher training

15. What challenges do you face in implementing gender responsive teacher training program?

    a. Among lecturers

    b. In Management

    c. Among students

16. In your own view, would you say this TTC is gender responsive or not? Explain

F: Ways of improving the TTC management gender responsiveness

17. What strategies does the TTC already use to minimize gender inequality among staff?

18. What strategies does the TTC use to minimize gender inequality among students?

19. What other strategies would you recommend that should be employed to improve the gender responsiveness in this TTC?

END OF QUESTIONS

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION

Appendix 6: Interview Guide for TTC Head of Department:

   A. Biographic Data

   1. Sex of participant (s)   Highest qualification

   2. Teaching experience   Date

   B: Understanding of the concept of gender

   3. Have you undergone any gender sensitization training?

   4. If yes, what were the training particulars?

        a. Duration of the training

        b. When and where did the training take place?

        c. Who organized the training?

   5. Does the TTC conduct trainings for academic staff on gender issues?

   6. If yes, how often?

   7. What does Gender mean to you?

   8. In your own view, how is gender different from sex?

   9. Have you ever heard of the term Gender responsiveness? What is your understanding of gender responsiveness?

   10. From your understanding of Gender responsiveness, do you see it relevant in your teacher training in the TTC?

   11. If yes, Explain

   C: Support to Students

   12. Do female students actively participate in class (leading group discussions, making presentations, leading science experiments and projects)?

   13. If yes, give examples of the ways

C: Gender responsiveness of the TTC

TTC Management

Gender responsive pedagogy

   14. Have academic staff undergone training in gender responsive pedagogy?

   15. If yes, how many lecturers are producing gender responsive lesson plans?

Lecturers: Total _____ Males _____Females _____

   16. How many lecturers are using gender responsive lesson plans?

Lecturers: Total _____ Males _____Females _____

Gender responsive delivery of the lessons

17. Do you know any gender responsive pedagogies?

18. If yes, give examples

19. What type of gender responsive teaching methodologies do lecturers use? Give specific examples in different subjects and provide the relevant lesson plans

20. What techniques do lecturers use to ensure that both female students and male students participate equally in class?

21. What techniques do lecturers use to know if students have understood the lesson? Give specific examples

22. Are there opportunities for female/male students to give feedback on lecturers teaching methodologies?

23. If yes, how is this done?

Supportive structures for gender responsive pedagogy

24. Is the type of furniture used in the TTC appropriate for female and male students? Do students share desks?

25. In your own view, what seating arrangement could best promote participation of both male students and female students?

26. How does the TTC ensure that both female and male students access and benefit from textbooks equally?

27. Does the TTC have a system for awarding excellence (academic and social)?

28. If yes, how many students were awarded last year?

Total_____ Female_____ Male _____

29. What safety and security measures are in place for students, especially at night?

30. Does the IPTE training teach the values of embracing learner diversity in the TTC? If Yes, Explain

Participation of female students in science, mathematics and technology (SMT) subjects.

31. What specific approaches do lecturers use to encourage females' participation in science subjects?

32. What specific activities do lecturers organize to promote science learning for female and male students?

33. What techniques do lecturers use to ensure that females and males participate equally in SMT subjects including practical sessions? Give specific examples

34. Does this TTC offer computer classes to students?

35. If yes, how many students take computer classes? Female _____Male _____

36. How many male _____and female_____ computer lecturers are there in the TTC?

37. What techniques do lecturers use to make sure that females and males have equal access to computers?

Handling sexual harassment in the classroom

38. What techniques do lecturers use to eliminate use of gender insensitive language by themselves and by the students in class?

39. What techniques do lecturers use to avoid inappropriate sexual behaviour towards students (touching, standing too close, coaxing, unwanted physical sexual advances)?

40. How many cases of sexual harassment in the classroom have been reported during the last six months?

41. If none, could this be a result of failure to speak out? Explain

D: Challenges in implementing gender responsive teacher training

42. What challenges do you face in implementing gender responsive teacher training program?

     a. Among lecturers

     b. In Management

     c. Among students

E: Ways of improving the TTC management gender responsiveness

43. What strategies does the TTC already use to minimize gender inequality among staff and students?

44. What other strategies would you recommend that should be employed to improve the gender responsiveness in this TTC?

END OF QUESTIONS

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION

Appendix 7: Interview Guide for Student Teachers

Understanding the Concept of Gender

1. Have you undergone any gender sensitization training?
2. If yes, what were the training particulars?

    a. Duration of the training

    b. When and where did the training take place?

    c. Who organized the training?

3. What does Gender mean to you?
4. In your own view, how is gender different from sex?
5. What specific gender related clubs or activities are you engaged in as students?
6. Have you ever heard of the term Gender responsiveness? What is your understanding of gender responsiveness?

Gender Responsive Environment

7. What safety and security measures are in place for both male and female students, especially at night?
8. Do you know any college rules and regulations that make the TTC gender responsive?
9. If yes, give specific examples
10. Does TTC have separate and adequate toilets for males and females?
11. How many for females _____ for males _____
12. Does the TTC have adequate and clean water and sanitation, especially to enhance menstruation management and the overall health of the college community?
13. If no, how is the situation being managed?

Participation of female students in science, mathematics and technology (SMT) subjects.

14. What specific activities do your lecturers organize to promote science learning for female and male students?
15. What techniques do lecturers use to ensure that females and males participate equally in SMT subjects including practical sessions? Give specific examples
16. Does this TTC offer computer classes to you as students?
17. If yes, have you ever participated?
18. What techniques do lecturers use to make sure that females and males have equal access to computers?

Gender Re1sponsive Pedagogy

19. What are the common methods that your lecturers use in teaching you at this TTC?

20. Do you think the methods used give opportunity to both females and males to learn well?

21. If no, explain the reason for your response

22. Which of those methods which the lecturers at this TTC commonly use help you to improve your performance?

23. Which of those methods affect your learning negatively?

24. Are there opportunities for female/male students to give feedback on lecturers teaching methodologies?

25. If yes, how do you give the feedback?

26. What can lecturers do to improve your learning and performance at this TTC?

E: Challenges in implementing gender responsive teacher training

27. What gender related challenges do you face as students in your teacher-training program?

F: Ways of improving the TTC management gender responsiveness

28. What strategies does the TTC already use to minimize gender inequality among staff?

29. What strategies does the TTC use to minimize gender inequality among students?

30. What other strategies would you recommend to be employed to improve gender responsiveness in this TTC?

END OF QUESTIONS

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION

Appendix 8 Lesson observation protocol

1. Demographic data

College: ……………………………………Department: ……..…………………..

Lecturer's highest academic qualification: ……………………………..………

Lecturer's age: (Date of Birth) ……………… Years ………………Sex: ………..

TTC teaching experience: ………………………………………………………….

Class: ……………Number of students in class: ………F……….……. M…..……

Subject: ………………………………………………………………………………….

Lesson duration: From: …………………….to ……………………………………

Date of lesson observation: ………………………………………………………..

2. Lesson Preparation (to be completed before the lesson)

Lesson planning	Yes	No	Comment on Gender Responsiveness
Lesson plan available			
Lesson plan addresses gender responsiveness in format and content			
Outcomes (success criteria) of the lesson			
Methods to be used in the lesson			
Teaching and learning materials to be used in the lesson			
Learning activities to be used in the lesson			
Class management strategies to be used in the lesson			
Assessment method to be used in the lesson			

Classroom observation (observation of what happens during the lesson including what lecturer and students *do and say* in the teaching and learning process)

Lesson Introduction	Yes	No	Gender responsiveness aspects
Does the topic have gender stereotypes attached to it? Does it generate interest from both sexes?			
What gender responsive methods are used in the introduction of the lesson?			

Lesson Development	Yes	No	Gender responsiveness aspects
Demonstrates knowledge on the usage of gender responsive methods for teaching and learning the subject matter			
Uses teaching and learning activities that promote equal participation of both female and male students			
Establishes conducive classroom atmosphere for learning for both female and male students			
Asks questions to………female………male students			
Creates equal opportunities for learning for female and male students			
Motivates the students of both sexes			
Uses gender appropriate teaching and learning aids and resources			
What gender responsive methods are used in the development of the lesson?			
Addresses gender stereotypes in teaching and learning materials Does the lesson present both female and male characters'/role players in a balanced way?			
Assessment	Yes	No	Gender responsiveness aspects
Provides opportunities to both females and males to seek clarifications within the lesson			
Gives feed-back to students assessment activities in gender sensitive manner			
Uses appropriate language for reinforcing both female and male students' responses			
Creates adequate time for feedback from both females and males			
What gender responsive methods are used in assessment of learning?			
Class Management	Yes	No	Gender responsiveness aspects
Sensitive to gender and cultural issues in class			
Manages behaviours of male and female students in a sensitive and fairly manner			
Lesson Conclusion	Yes	No	GR aspects
Measures achievement of learning outcomes for both female and male students			
What gender responsive methods are used in conclusion of lesson?			

Appendix 9: Lecturer's interview guide

Examples of probing questions to establish what *lecturers do* in the lessons

Knowledge of gender

1. Have you ever attended gender sensitization training?

2. What does the term gender mean to you?

3. What is your understanding of the concept of gender responsiveness?

4. What is your understanding of gender responsive pedagogy?

Lesson Planning

5. During your lesson planning, how do you take into account gender issues?

6. How gender-responsive are the IPTE modules you use?

7. Do the materials contain gender stereotypes?

8. Looking at the language used in the teaching and learning materials you are using. From a gender point of view, is any of it negative?

Classroom set up

9. What messages do the pictures and visual aids on the walls send?

10. Is classroom furniture/stools in laboratories appropriate in size and shape? Do they preserve privacy and dignity?

11. Is the height of shelves in the libraries appropriate for both female and male students? How do students reach out to books or materials at the top?

12. Do the science laboratories have high stools? How does this affect female students' participation in science practicals?

13. Is class furniture (desks and chairs) of appropriate size, shape and weight?

14. How is the sitting arrangement in the classroom? Where do female students sit? Does the classroom set up mix female students and male students?

15. Does the sitting arrangement encourage student-centred or teacher-centred learning?

Teaching and Learning Methods

16. What teaching and learning methods do you commonly use in your lessons? Which ones encourage equal participation of male and female students?

17. How do you encourage female students to improve performance?

18. How do you get feedback on methods used and content being taught from your students during the teaching and learning process?

Classroom interaction and management

19. How do you as a teacher address the maturation issues of both males and females during classroom interaction?

20. How do you as a teacher respond to the issue of females who miss classes during their menstruation?

21. How do the college rules and regulations address the special needs of female and male students? For example, menstrual hygiene or voice breaking?

22. How do you handle bullying, sexual harassment, adolescent hormonal emotions and peer pressure, teacher-student relationship in your class?

23. What kind of gender specific needs of students have you noticed in your class in the school? How do you address or solve them?

24. What are the non-verbal communication that are used among students and between teachers and students? Do you think these communications are negative or positive and what are the impact of their use on females and males?

25. If so, how do you change it to be gender responsive?

26. What challenges do you encounter in implementing gender responsive pedagogy with your students?

27. What suggestions do you have to improve gender responsiveness in this class/ TTC?

Appendix 10 DTED Clearance Letter

Telegrams: MINED LILONGWE

Telephone:+2651789422/01788961   MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

Fax: +2651 788064/184   PRIVATE BAG 328,

                                                    CAPITAL CITY,

                                                    LILONGWE3

REF.NO.DTED/ADMlN/22/22   28th April, 2022

The Principal:
    Blantyre TTC,
    Lilongwe TTC,
    Phalombe TTC,
    DAPP Dowa TTC,

Dear Sir/Madam,

CLEARANCE FOR MR. THUNUNU MAFULEKA TO COLLECT DATA FOR HIS MASTER OF EDUCATION STUDIES

I write to certify that Mr. Thununu Mafuleka, a bonafide officer of the Ministry of Education, who is currently studying with Mzuzu University for a Master of Education (Leadership & Management) has been granted permission by the Directorate of Teacher Education and Development (DTED) to carry out research in public and private teacher training colleges (TTCs).

His research project is titled: Gender Responsiveness of the pre-service primary school teachers' training program: the case of four teacher-training colleges in Malawi.

I will be grateful for your assistance.

Rose Kalizang'oma (Mrs.)
DEPUTY DIRECTOR – DTED

Appendix 11: University Clearance Letter

Mzuzu University
Private Bag 201
L u w i n g a
M z u z u   2
M A L A W I

Tel: (265) 01 320 575/722
Fax: (265) 01 320 568
mdolo.mm@mzuni,ac.mw

MZUZU UNIVERSITY

**Department of Teaching, Learning and
Curriculum Studies**

27ᵀᴴ APRIL 2022

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Dear Sir/Madam,

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION: MR THUNUNU MAFULEKA

Mr. Thununu Mafuleka is a registered Master of Education (Leadership and Management) Program student at Mzuzu University. He has been cleared by the Mzuzu University Research Ethics Committee (MZUNIREC) to collect data for the research study he is conducting as a requirement for the program.

Kindly assist him accordingly.

Yours faithfully,

Dr. Margaret M. Mdolo

Program Coordinator

Appendix 12: Research Ethics and Regulatory Approval

MZUZU UNIVERSITY

DIRECTORATE OF RESEARCH

Mzuzu University
Private Bag 201
L u w i n g a
M z u z u   2
M A L A W I
TEL: 01 320 722
FAX: 01 320 648

MZUZU UNIVERSITY RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (MZUNIREC)

Ref No: MZUNIREC/DOR/22/52   **25th April, 2022**

Mr. Thununu Mafuleka,

Mzuzu University,

P/Bag 201,

Mzuzu.

Email: thununum1@gmail.com

Dear Mr. Mafuleka,

RESEARCH ETHICS AND REGULATORY APPROVAL AND PERMIT FOR PROTOCOL REF NO: MZUNIREC/DOR/22/52: GENDER RESPONSIVENESS OF THE PRESERVICE PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS' TRAINING PROGRAM: MANAGEMENT AND STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVES IN SELECTED TEACHER TRAINING COLLEGES IN MALAWI

Having satisfied all the relevant ethical and regulatory requirements, I am pleased to inform you that the above referred research protocol has officially been approved. You are now permitted to proceed with its implementation. Should there be any amendments to the approved protocol in the course of implementing it, you shall be required to seek approval of such amendments before implementation of the same.

This approval is valid for one year from the date of issuance of this approval. If the study goes beyond one year, an annual approval for continuation shall be required to be sought from the Mzuzu University Research Ethics Committee (MZUNIREC) in a format that is available at the Secretariat. Once the study is finalised, you are required to furnish the Committee with a final report of the study. The Committee reserves the right to carry out compliance inspection of this

approved protocol at any time as may be deemed by it. As such, you are expected to properly maintain all study documents including consent forms.

Wishing you a successful implementation of your study.

Yours Sincerely,

Gift Mbwele

MZUZU UNIVERSITY RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATOR

CHAIRMAN OF MZUNIREC