A STUDY OF TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF CHALLENGES IN EMPLOYING CHILD-CENTERED APPROACH IN SELECTED STATE PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN KENG TUNG AREA, MYANMAR

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Abstract: This study tried to identify the level of perceptions of teachers towards challenges in employing child-centered approach in their schools and to compare the differences in their perceptions according to their demographics. This research was conducted on a total population of 51 teachers in eight state primary schools in Kengtung area, Eastern Shan State, Myanmar. The research was designed as quantitative research by using a set of questionnaire which covers teachers' demographic profiles including teachers' age, educational background, years of teaching experience and grade level. Ten challenges of teachers based on previous research and related literatures were provided in questionnaire to identify the level of teachers' perceptions towards challenges. The collected data were analyzed by using descriptive statistics, frequency and percentage, mean and standard deviation, One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). In addition to survey questionnaire, the researcher did observation and informal interview to some teachers. The study found out that most of the given challenges were perceived not challenging by the teachers in selected state primary schools in Kengtung area of Myanmar. Nevertheless, the findings of the research revealed new challenges for teachers such as language barrier, parents' involvements, time insufficiency and learning ability of students. There were no significant differences in teachers' perceptions of challenges in employing child-centered approach according to their age, educational background, years of teaching experience and grade level.

Keywords: Teachers' Perceptions, Challenges, Child-centered, Approach, Myanmar

Introduction

In this 21st century, thus, the new challenge of education is to equip the students with 21st century skills such as innovation, creativity, critical and analytical thinking, communication, collaboration and problem solving skills which are essential in their real life out there after school. The ability of education system to adapt with the new trend in society has become one of crucial issues (Rao, 2004). Modern age calls for modern education system. According to Brad Haves as cited in Han (2008) we can no longer stick ourselves to old paradigms of "chalk and talk", teacher-centered approach in which learning is accepted as knowledge transmitting process. Knowledge construction becomes a matter of facts in this knowledge age. Accordingly, the idea of teaching and learning and how people learn is changed worldwide. It is very important for the schools to encourage their students for lifelong learning and pursuing their interest in and out of the schools, nowadays. The duty of educational institutions is no longer merely preparing for knowledge transmitting from knowledge experts to learners. Learning is considered as a process of constructing knowledge by active learners. Active and authentic learning as essential tools for preparing the students to meet the 21st century learning needs.

Chalk and talk instruction, repeating and rote memorization are norm in teaching and learning in Myanmar. In schools, teacher-centered approach to teaching has been practiced for several decades up to now. However, fortunately, there are endeavors by government to develop broad and balanced curriculum and learning-centered education, instructional methods not only in private but also in state schools nationwide with the help of local, national and international non-government organizations to improve quality of education (Lwin, 2012). Change brings both opportunities and challenges. Change can enable us to create and invent new and different ways of solving problems. But change in other words innovation often was seen as a problem rather than as a solution. Likewise, according to personal talking and evaluation of the project field staff on implementing child-centered approach, teachers in state schools in Myanmar see employing child-centered approach in teaching and learning process very challenging as it is a huge change for education in Myanmar.

The quality of education and experience of learning that we want to give the students depend in a large measure on the support teachers receive. Unless we ensure the conditions that support the teachers, the school may not work as effectively as they can for the students. The principals, school administrators and superintendent are responsible to involve and supportively facilitate in changing process and innovations.

Objectives

This research had three main objectives
1. To identify the demographic profiles of the teachers from the selected state primary schools particularly: their age, educational background, and years of teaching experience and grade level.

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2. To determine the levels of teachers' perceptions of challenges in employing child-centered approach.
3. To compare the teachers' perceptions of challenges in employing child-centered approach according to their age, educational background, years of teaching experience and grade level.

Literature Review

Managerial Approach to Curriculum and Instruction Development

The managerial approach became dominant in the 1950s and 1960s among school principals and school administrators. School superintendents with administrative backgrounds during this area dominated the field of curriculum in terms of setting policies and priorities, establishing the direction of change and innovation and planning and organizing curriculum and instruction. They were much involved in curriculum leadership, often developing a plan in one school district and being hired by another one to implement curriculum plan. Principals are in the role to ensure that real change is occurring in practicing instructional method in everyday classroom. Managerial approach to curriculum and instruction development and implementation encourages principals to play a key role of curriculum leader and instructional leader at the same time. They are supposed to be general manager who make sure to provide the teachers with everything they need in order to implement the change especially in curriculum and instruction. To assist the teachers in implementation of curriculum and instructional change, principals inevitably need to know what challenges and obstacles teachers are facing in their schools, the availability and lack of school and personal resources within their schools. It is their duty to manage resources and structures of the schools to meet the goals of education around curriculum and instructional changes and innovations.

Galen Saylor and his associates (1981) adopt an administrative approach to curriculum development (this approach is also known as managerial approach). They describe and analyze curriculum plans in terms of the relations of ends and means, the attention to pertinent facts and data, and the flow of activities or procedures from beginning to end. Saylor (1980) saw curriculum as general plan, through which particular plans for individual programs of studies, coursed of study, syllabi, unit plans, policy statements, handbooks, and learning packages were used in different parts of the school and school district by many groups of people and individuals. Curriculum had to be put together or incorporated as a total package, or curriculum plan, by those in charge of running the schools. In Saylor, Alexander and Lewis's managerial model of curriculum development considered (1) external forces including legal requirements, research data, professional associations, state agencies and interest groups, (2) bases of curriculum such as society, learners

and knowledge as influential factors goals and objectives of curriculum development. The, based upon agreed goals and objectives, curriculum developers then choose the combinations of curriculum design, implementation strategies and evaluation procedures that are calculated to maximize the attainment of goals, review feedback from the plan in effect through instruction; and re-plan the elements of the curriculum as indicated by data.

Curriculum design involves decisions made by curriculum planners about the characteristics of a good curriculum: the content, its organization and appropriate learning opportunities. The individual needs and interests design is concerned with what is relevant to and motivates learners and what learning experiences lead to their full potential. Depending on the nature of management, the design can be optional and chosen by a school curriculum committee (administrators, supervisors, or teachers) or recommended by a school district. School authorities, however, rarely require a particular design because curriculum matters involve teachers as well as possibly students and parents (Lunenburg, Ornstein, 2008).

Curriculum implementation involves decisions regarding instructional activities that facilitate or put in practice the design including instructional methods, materials and resources, often listed in courses of study, unit plans and lesson plans deicide by teachers. Instruction is the implementation of curriculum plan. Saylor (1980) argues curriculum planners must see instruction and teaching as the summation of their efforts. Curriculum implementation includes supervision of instruction, teacher-supervisor planning and meetings, as well as staff development programs. The help teachers receive from resource personnel, supervisors and administrators is the basis of implementation (Lunenburg, 2011).

Curriculum evaluation involves the process of evaluating expected student outcomes and entire curriculum plan. Saylor and his colleagues recognize both formative and summative evaluation. Evaluation data become the basis for decision making and planning among administrators. The provision for systematic feedback during each in the curriculum system and from students in each instructional situation constitutes a major contribution to Saylor and associates managerial model of curriculum development.

Background Concept of Teacher-Centered Approach

It is argued that the teacher-centered approach (traditional teaching) is rooted in behaviorism theory of learning in which teaching is defined to change the behavior of the pupils. Like behaviorists traditional teachers believe that teaching is changing the behaviors of the learners. According to Skinner (2002), operant conditioning is to be used to change the behaviors. He pointed out that to improve personal habits it is depend to a large extend on the kind of conditioning methods people use to make their life better.

Ozmon (2008) mentioned that traditional teachers (also known as behaviorists) have conditioned pupils to be quiet and to change undesired behavior through looks, rewards and punishment in the classroom. The reason is they think conditioning is one way to improve a step-by-step program through rewards or punishment when students are emotionally disturbed, so that, they will lead to achieve desirable behavior in the future. Transmitting the knowledge from teachers to pupils is the underlying concept of the teacher-centered approach in teaching. The fact that learners can construct their own knowledge and have the opportunity to make choice is ignored in traditional teaching and learning.

It mainly focuses on content and subject matters rather than students' motivation and reflection. In other words, teacher-centered approach is more focus on competency-based learning. Learning goals are set by teachers and they reinforce the students to achieve these goals (Husen, 1985).The mastery of subject matter and lessons are important and what students are required to achieve. In traditional teacher-centered learning approach, students much follow the fixed procedure of learning process and direct instructions of instructors or teachers. And students are rarely expected to ask questions and develop their ideas. Note taking, repeating and memorizing information for later recognition or reproduction are the pedagogic methods that could be seen in teacher-centered learning settings (MacLellan and Soden ,2004). Instructivism's teacher-centered forms of instruction refer to what some theorists and researchers (Merrill, 2008; Sweller et al., 2007; Mayer, 2004) view as well-formulated, teacher directed, didactic learning.

Background Concept of Child-Centered Approach
McCombs and Whistler (1997) stated that — "learners are treated as co-creators in the learning process, as individuals with ideas and issues that deserve attention and consideration." Student-centered learning environments recognize that the prior knowledge of learners powerfully influences future learning and thus attempt to build on prior knowledge. The belief of constructivists that learners must construct their own knowledge from their own activities is the born of student- centered learning. Zvenbergen (1995) noted that "constructivists believe that the very nature of human learning requires that each individual create his or her own understanding of the world from firsthand experience, action and reflection, not from having predigested information and skills presented by a teacher and a textbook."

Constructivism's student-centered forms of instruction include social (Bandura, 1977), situated (Lave and Wenger, 1991), knowledge creating (Bereiter, 2002), and intersubjective (Suthers, 2006) pedagogies. Learning is interactive, authentic, collaborative and effective in the classroom where student-centered learning approach is practiced. Student-centered approach concerned with not only knowledge construction but also the development of

effective learning strategies. The emphasis is on the learning process rather than the acquisition of factual knowledge. Students are provided materials, hands-on exercises and environments in which they can have firsthand experience. Student-centered learning approach is also subtitled as inquiry approach problem based learning, activity-based learning, guided discovery learning, and situated learning, experiential learning and self-directed learning and so on (Westwood, 2008).

According to Maslow (as cited in Sahakian, 1978) the drive to learn is intrinsic and learning is to bring about self-actualization. Since the students' interests, needs, values, choice and potential are the concern of the student-centered learning, students are motivated intrinsically. Besides, student-centered learning encourages students for life-long learning. From the humanistic learning theory point of view, learning is for personal growth and students are encouraged to reflect their own work. The practice of self-regulation is to let the student not only construct their knowledge but also to control their own learning. Thus, in student-centered learning, students are responsible for their choice and are self-motivated for lifelong learning. Moreover, student-centered classrooms are the norm where active learning is strongly encouraged.

Adopting Child-Centered Approach in Primary Schools in Myanmar
The Ministry of Education is the main provider of education in Myanmar. The vision of MOE is *"to create an education system that will generate a learning society capable of facing the challenges of the Knowledge Age".* There are two main sub-sectors in the education sector — the basic education sub-sector and the higher education sub-sector. Under the Ministry of Education, there are two Departments of Higher Education — one for lower Myanmar and one for upper Myanmar. However, in this study, the focus is on the basic education level.

Myanmar basic education school system separates into two levels– primary and secondary. Primary level consists 3 years schooling at the lower primary level and 2 years at the upper primary level. Secondary includes 4 years at the lower secondary level and 2 years at the upper secondary level. At the end of the upper secondary level, students sit for the matriculation examination to enter the tertiary level. The schooling age in Myanmar starts from 5 years. Therefore, the total years of primary level education lasts 5 years starting at the age of 5 and finishing around 10. All basic education schools are under the supervision of the Ministry of Education (Ministry of Education, 2004). State run schools are the main resources for both basic and higher education in Myanmar though there are very limited private schools established in the following years. However, primary education is also delivered in monastic schools or community based education centers and non-formal primary education programs with the approval of government in order to improve access to basic education. To improve not only

accessibility but quality of education is one of the national objectives for basic education.

In line with the long term basic education development plan and Education for All- National Action Plan (EFA-NAP) Ministry of education attempts to attain the prime objective of "all school aged in school and ensuring opportunity to raise the quality of basic education". To ensure the quality of basic education, several actions such as introducing continuous assessment and progression system, adopting child-centered approach, establishing child-friendly, upgrading curricula and syllabus, upgrading teacher quality have been taken. Adopting child-centered approach (CCA) was aimed to improve children's creativity, analytical skills, critical thinking and problem solving skills. With this purpose, since 2004-2005 academic years it was planned to expand CCA project townships and to conduct more CCA training for teachers from 2012-2013 to 2015-2016 to use effective child-centered approach in teaching and learning process at the primary level nationwide in collaboration with JICA (Japan International Cooperation Agency)(Education For All, 2012).

For the purpose of improving the quality education, reformation has been introduced. Curriculum is reviewed to be more balanced and responding the need of children. Similarly, there are movements to replace child-centered approach (CCA) in other words student-centered learning method with traditional lecture-style teaching and rote memorization which has been norm in Myanmar education system. Thus, series of training and projects are conducted in selected townships with the support of the United Nations International Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and other local, national non-profit organizations in order to build child-friendly schools and conduct effective application of child-centered teaching approach (CCA) in schools more broadly. Nevertheless, the task is found to be a challenging one to be achieved within a short period of time (Ministry of Social Welfare Relief & Resettlement, 2006).

Conceptual Framework

(See Figure 1 on the next page)

Method

Population
This study was conducted in Kengtung area, Eastern Shan State, Myanmar. The researcher selected total number of state primary schools situated in Kengtung area. The target population of the study was teachers from eight selected state primary schools. Total number of 51 teachers from 8 schools who were teaching in grade 1, grade 2, grade 3, grade 4 and grade 5 by utilizing child-centered teaching approach were representatives in this

research. All 51 teachers from 8 schools were subjects of data collection.

Instrumentation
For this research, a set of questionnaire developed based on review of literatures, related researches and personal experiences and observation was used as instrument to resolve the objectives of this research.

The first part of the questionnaire was adapted from the research questionnaires done by Nway Nway (2011) and based on researcher interest. There were four items regarding the respondents' personal background (age), educational background (degree and teacher training they received), and professional background (years of teaching experience and grade level).

Second part of the questionnaire was based upon the idea of managerial modle and approach of curriculum and instruction development and implementation. Saylor, Alexander, and Lewis's managerial model and approach of curriculum and instruction development and implementation encourages school administrator to play facilitator role by discovering the challenges and difficulties that teachers may have in implementing the process of curriculum and instructional change and school administrators to be in charge of ensuring teachers are provided with supportive aids to overcome the challenges faced during carrying out their instructional activities.

In the part II of the survey questionnaire, a set of challenges of teachers in employing child centered approach were provided to cover the second and third research questions. Child centered approach is a big change in instructional practices of teachers from eight selected primary schools in Kengtung area, Myanmar. Thus, this study tried to find out how the teachers in this study perceive the challenges that teachers normally face in employing child centered approach as a process of instructional change. Ten common challenges faced during shifting period from teacher centered to child centered instructional practices were listed according to the several previous researches done by researchers as follows (Tin, 2004), (Ginsburg, 2006), (Serbessa, 2006), (Catterick, 2007), (Caixiangduojie, 2008), (Porcaro, 2010), (Lwin, 2010), (Thanh, 2010), (Nway, 2011) and (Luo, 2012), world reports and literature review with slight adjustments for the appropriateness of targeted area and present study.

To determine the level of teachers' perceptions and to see the differences in their perceptions of challenges in employing child-centered approach in their schools, teachers were asked to rate the level of challenges according to their perceptions. The score 1-5 in the questionnaire represent the level of challenges. The criteria of scale interpretation of the level of challenges are as follows:

4.51 – 5.00 Very challenging
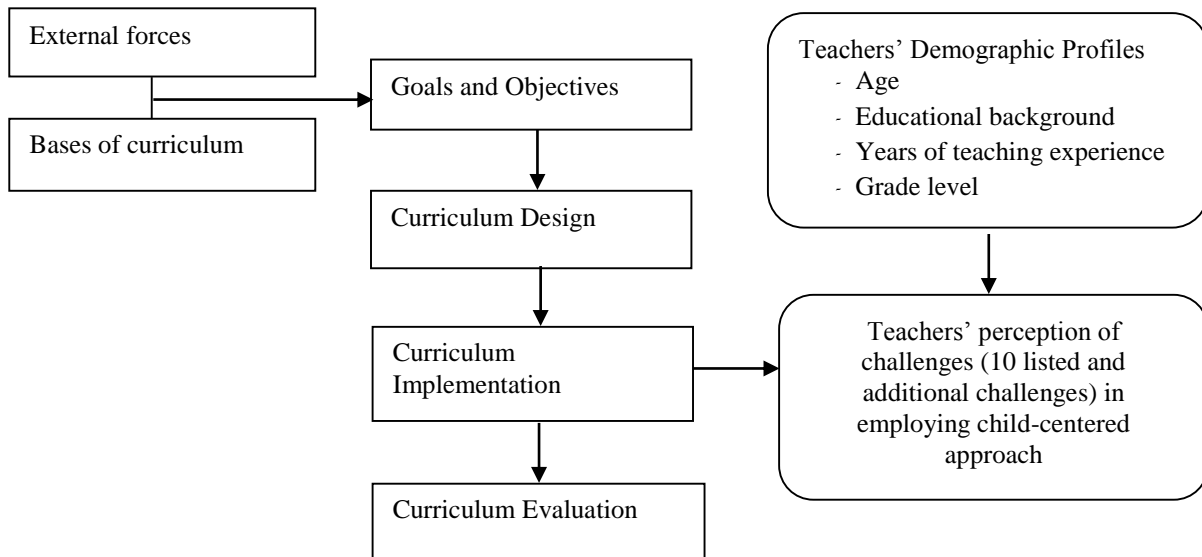3.51 – 4.50 Challenging
2.51 – 3.50 Not sure

Figure1: Conceptual Framework

1.51 – 2.50 Not challenging

1.00 – 1.50 Not challenging at all

To have high validity and reliability, the instrument items were adapted from previous related researches that has been done successfully by Caixiangduojie (2008), Nway Nway (2011), Ginsburg (2006) and based on review on local and international literatures by Lwin (2010), Tin (2004), Serbessa (2006) and many others. The researcher approached three experts from Myanmar for the content covering and validity of the research questionnaire in line with Myanmar context. Based on the experts' comments, some edits and rearrangement were made. Afterwards, the questionnaire was translated into Burmese version by the researcher and checked and confirmed by three persons for appropriateness and accuracy of the translation for two times: before proposal and after proposal. Translation check experts were highly experienced in translating and fluent enough in both English and Myanmar. After that, the researcher went back to Myanmar and conducted a pilot study upon 30 teachers from state primary schools in Tachileik which is neighboring township of Kengtung, Myanmar. The reason why the researcher decided to choose this particular school of this area to do a pilot study was that the targeted pilot schools have much similar features with sample schools of this study.

The reliability of the survey was calculated by Cronbach's alpha coefficient after gathering back the data from the pilot study. The value of Cronbach's alpha of the survey was .755.

Procedure

To conduct this study, the researcher got permissions from the district level education officer and again from the principals of selected eight state primary schools in Kengtung area, Myanmar and the researcher distributed the survey questionnaires to all 51 teachers from the selected schools with the help of the permission letter from education officer and principal and with the help of coworkers starting on the 1st of March. Data collection lasted for 2 weeks and the researcher gathered all the surveys by 14 March, 2013. Then, the collected data were summarized and analyzed.

Findings

Demographic profiles of teachers

The descriptive stasticstis revealed that majority of the respondents were aged between 21 to 30 and 31 to 40 (41.2%) each. With regard to educational background, the majority of teachers were graduates holding bachelor degrees (72.5%) but there was no teacher holding master degree. Only (2%) were postgraduated whereas (23.5%) were high school graduates. In terms of years of teaching experience, most of the teachers (45.1%) had 6-10 years of teaching experience, followed by (35.3 %) who had more than 10 years of teaching experience, and then (15.7%) of teachers who had 2-5 years of teaching experience and the lowest percentage of teachers (3.9 %) had less than 2 years of teaching experience. With regard to teaching grade level, the majority of the respondents taught in grade 1 (24.6%).

Teachers' perceptions of challenges

Research objective two was to determine the levels of teachers' perceptions of challenges in employing child centered teaching approach in state primary schools in Kengtung area,Myanmar.The means for there challengs out of listed ten challenges in employing child-centered approach were Influence of traditional teaching culture (2.64) , Provision of training to teachers (2.51), Insufficient of learning material (2.86). This was interpreted that teachers were not sure whether these factors are challenges for them. According to table 1, the

findings pointed out that teachers perceived the following factors not challenging for them. The means for the challenges measuring teachers' perceptions were Tradition of child upbringing in the culture of society (2.19), Students' lack of prior experience to participate actively in teaching and learning process (2.41), Unbalance of teacher-student portion (2.03), Workload for teachers(1.90), Inappropriate curricular materials for learning approach (1.98), Lack of appropriate assessment system (2.31), Inadequate classroom design and setting (2.11). However, teachers added new factors that they perceived challenging for them. The mean score of the new challenges was (3.82). The challenging factors were Teaching time insufficiency, Language barrier, Students learning ability, Lack of practical session, Parents involvement.

The result of testing of hypothesis "There are significant differences in teachers' perceptions of challenges in employing child-centered approach according to their educational background" is shown in table 3. The result showed that the probability significance of .936 was bigger than .05, which meant that there were no significant differences between the means of teachers' perceptions of challenges according to their educational background. Thus, the hypothesis "There are significant differences in teachers' perceptions of challenges in employing child-centered approach according to their educational background" was rejected.

The means of teachers' perceptions of challenges were tested to find out wherether there are differences in their perceptions according to years of teaching experience they have. The result described in table 4

Table 1: Teachers' Perceptions of Challenges

Challenges	N	Mean	Std. Deviations	Interpretation
Tradition of child upbringing in the culture of society	51	2.196	.849	Not challenging
The influence of traditional teaching culture	51	2.647	.955	Not sure
Students' lack of prior experience to participate actively in teaching and learning process	51	2.412	.853	Not challenging
Provision of training to teachers	51	2.510	1.046	Not sure
Unbalance of teacher-student portion	51	2.039	1.264	Not challenging
Workload for teachers	51	1.902	1.220	Not challenging
Insufficient learning materials	51	2.863	1.296	Not sure
Inappropriate curricular materials for learning approach	51	1.980	1.067	Not challenging
Lack of appropriate assessment system	51	2.314	1.029	Not challenging
Inadequate classroom design and setting	51	2.118	1.194	Not challenging
Other challenges: - Teaching time insufficiency - Language barrier - Students learning ability - Lack of practical session - Parents involvement	50	3.820	.919	Challenging
Overall	51	1.941	.835	Not challenging

Comparison of teachers' perceptions of challenges according to demographic profiles
The result of table 2 gives the comparison of teachers perceptions of challenges in employing child-centered approach among different aged groups. The probability significance of .538 was bigger than .05, which meant there were no significant differences between the means of teachers' perceptions of challenges in employing child-centered approach according to their age.

indicated that there were no significant differences between the means of teachers' perceptions of challenges according to years of teaching experience. Sig .680 was bigger than .05 level. Therefore, the hypothesis " There are significant differences in teachers' perceptions of challenges in employing child-centered approach according to years of teaching experience" was rejected.

Table 2: Summary of ANOVA Table for Teachers' Perceptions of Challenges According to Age of Teachers

Summary of ANOVA Table					
Source of Variance	SS	df	MS	F	Sig.
Between groups	.408	2	.204	.629	.538
Within groups	15.262	47	.325		
Total	15.671	49			

Table3: Summary of ANOVA Table for Teachers' Perceptions of Challenges According to Educational Background of teachers

Source of Variance	Summary of ANOVA Table				
	SS	df	MS	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.140	3	.047	.139	.936
Within Groups	15.530	46	338		
Total	15.6713	49			

Table 4: Summary of ANOVA Table for Teachers' Perceptions of Challenges According to Years of Teaching Experience

Source of Variance	Summary of ANOVA Table				
	SS	Df	MS	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.500	3	.167	.505	.680
Within groups	15.171	46	.330		
Total	15.671	49			

Table 5 shows the resut of hypotheis testing the difference between the means of teachers' percptiosn of challenges according to grade level. The significant F 1.051 and Sig .392, which was bigger than .05 level of significance and it implied that the means of the teachers' perceptions of challenges were not significantly different according to grade level.

that the majority of the teachers in selected eight state primary schools in Kengtung area, Myanmar are experienced enough in teaching professional. The findings of the study pointed that most teachers in selected eight state primary schools in Kengtung area, Myanmar taught in grade 1, followed by grade 5 and grade 3. The lowest mode percentages of grade teachers taught were grade 4 and grade 2.

Table 5: Summary of ANOVA Table for Teachers' Perceptions of Challenges According to Grade Level

Source of Variance	Summary of ANOVA Table				
	SS	df	MS	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1.338	4	.335	1.051	.392
Within Groups	14.332	45	.318		
Total	15.671	49			

Discussion

Teachers' Demographic Profiles
The study showed that most teachers in selected eight state primary schools in Kengtung area, Myanmar were at the age of 21-30 years and 31-40 years, followed by age of above 40 years. There was no teacher under 20 years. Some researchers studied on teacher's educational backgrounds such as Burchinal et al., 2002; de Kruif, McWilliam, Ridley, & Wakely, 2000 supported the argument that improving classroom practice requires increased teacher credentials (Gerde and Powell, 2002). In this study, teachers in selected eight state primary schools in Kengtung area of Myanmar, mostly hold bachelor degrees and some were high school graduates. There was only one postgraduate degree holder and one community development diploma holder. There was no teacher holding master degree. According to this finding, it could be concluded that the majority of teachers in selected eight state primary schools have similar level of educational background.

The study found out that most teachers in selected eight state primary schools in Kengtung area, Myanmar, had 6-10 years of teaching experience, followed by more than 10 years of teaching experience, and 2-5 years of teaching experience. The lowest percentage of teachers had less than 2 years of teaching experience. This implied

Teachers' Perceptions of challenges
Serbessa (2006) noted that what teachers can do in classrooms is affected by quality and availability of learning materials. Again, he indicated teachers' own experience of traditional teacher-centered approach both as students and teachers was challenge for them to shift to child-centered approach to teaching. And, the influence of traditional teaching culture creates tendency of continuing the same approach (Serbessa, 2006). According to Hung et al. (2003), resistance was found when teachers shift their role to as a facilitator. Alexander (2002) listed lack of the quantity/quality of pre-service preparation and the effectiveness of in-service professional development as one of the challenges in promoting teachers' use of active learning, student-centered pedagogies.

The findings of the study revealed that teachers were not sure whether insufficient of learning material, provision of trainings and influence of traditional teaching culture were challenging for them. According to responses from teachers, it can be assumed that teachers are provided pre-service and in-service trainings regarding child-centered teaching pedagogy to some degree.

Teachers in selected eight state primary schools were not sure whether they continue using teacher-

centered teaching approach more because it is the approach they knew well and used to practice or not. Accordingly, this could be assumed that the teachers self assessment and evaluation regarding their practice of certain teaching approach is still lacking.

The findings of the study also showed that tradition of child upbringing in the culture of society, students' prior experience to participate actively in teaching and learning process, teacher-student portion, workload for them, curricular materials for learning approach, assessment system, classroom design and setting were not challenging for teachers in selected eight state primary schools to employ child-centered approach to teaching. Instead, teachers mentioned the following new factors as challenges for them. They were: 1) Teaching time insufficiency, 2) Language barrier, 3) Students learning ability, 4) Lack of practical session and 5) Parents involvement.

According to informal interview with teachers, each period of a class is thirty minutes in grade 1 and 2. From grade 3 to 5, a class takes thirty five minutes. Limited time bound for each class is a big challenge for them to carry out child-centered activities such as open discussion in which students can talk more, generate and share their ideas, pair works, group works and practical exercises during the class. Jones (2007) suggested "Generally, it's better to err on the side of longer time rather than shorter time because this will encourage students to say more. Having a longer time limit also gives students a few moments to reflect in silence and prepare themselves before they begin their conversations." Timing matters in student-centered classrooms activities. Besides the short period of class, large size of class made teachers not feasible. According to Jones (2007) the ideal size for student-centered class is probably 12 whereas there are minimum 30 students and maximum 50-60 students in a typical classroom in Myanmar so as in selected schools in this study. The difference between a large class and a smaller class is the amount of time we have to monitor the groups. Furthermore, it is also found out from the findings that teachers were concerned about students' different learning ability as a challenge for them. In many ways, every class is a mixed-ability class. Teachers need to arrange students in different pairs and groups according to their strengths and weakness for different kinds of activities based upon teachers' knowledge of each class and the individuals within it. However, it is discovered that it can be hard to do in larger class to observe closely and give time to each individual with different level of learning ability and arrange the groups with well mixture of weaker and stronger students (Jones, 2007).

In addition, students' population in selected eight state primary schools in Kengtung area of Myanmar is diverse in terms of ethnicity. Majority of the students are Shan, Ah Khar and Larhu whose mother tongue are not Burmese. The younger students are stronger in their native languages and weak in Burmese. And teachers do not speak local native languages. Therefore, it is a big challenge for teachers to communicate with the students interactively in classroom in which Burmese language is used as medium of instruction. Language barrier is a big concern for both teachers' instruction and students' learning in schools in this area.

Moreover, teachers in state schools (i.e. government schools) are assigned to accomplish targeted course within fixed time bound regardless of how much and how well students learn the lessons taught. Thus, organizing of class is most likely content and course accomplishment oriented emphasizing less on practicality. And this discourages teachers from enabling to create active, realistic teaching and learning environment child-centered classroom.

Lastly, but not least importantly, the findings indicated that teachers perceived lack of parents involvement in their children' educational activities is a challenge for teachers. The study done by Nway Nway (2011) also found out that teachers in monastic schools in Yangon area of Myanmar raised intangible assets that they lack such as weak collaboration of parents with teachers as challenge for them.

Comparison of teachers' perceptions of challenges according to demographic profiles

According to the research findings, there were no significant differences in teachers' perceptions of challenges in employing child-centered approach according to their age, educational background, years of teaching experience and grade level. Nway Nway (2011) did a research on teachers' perceptions of challenges and leadership styles in monastic schools in Yangon area of Myanmar and the findings also revealed that there were no significant differences in teachers' perceptions of challenges according to their age and degrees. However, the dissertations done by Biggerstaff (2012) showed that teachers' perceptions of principal leadership style were significantly different according to their educational background and age. But, again in his research, it was revealed that there was no significant differences between teachers' perceptions of job satisfaction and their age. In his study of "The Relationship Between Teacher Perceptions of Elementary School Principal Leadership Style and Teacher Job Satisfaction , the results revealed no significant difference between teacher perceptions of elementary school principal leadership based upon their teaching grade level. The study found out no statistically significant differences between teachers perceptions of elementary school principal leadership style and combined years of teaching experience as well (Biggerstaff, 2012). Thus, indication of the results explained that differences in demographic factors of teachers in selected eight primary schools in Kengtung area, Myanmar does not make any significant differences in their perceptions towards challenges in employing child-centered approach.

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