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Unearthing Motives that Propel Pre-service Teachers Venture into Special Education Career at the University of Zambia

Francis Simui[1,*], Kenneth Kapalu Muzata[2], Gift Masaiti[2], Shila Mphahlele[3], Gistered Muleya[1], Victor J. Pitsoe[3]

[1]Institute of Distance Education, University of Zambia, Lusaka, Zambia
[2]School of Education, University of Zambia, Lusaka, Zambia
[3]College of Education, University of South Africa, Pretoria, South Africa
*Corresponding author: francis.simui@unza.zm

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Abstract This study contributes to the discourse on the motives that propel pre-service teachers venture into special education. Studies on education are not yet conclusive on why special schools should continue to experience shortage of teachers in special education when universities churn-out graduates in the field every year, thereby questioning the motive of special education students. In this case study, we interrogated the motives of pre-service teachers that propelled them to venture in Special education at the University of Zambia. The findings indicate that a minority had intention of pursuing special education from the onset, while the majority never desired to pursue special education. Pre-service teachers were propelled by a strong desire to advocate for Human Rights of the marginalised, become inclusive teachers, and amass economical gains. Overall, the findings of this study have serious ramification as they show the need for curriculum transformation in favour of inclusive education.

Keywords: *inclusive education, higher education, Motives, pre-service teachers, special education, Zambia*

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1. Background

Special Education has been in existence since antiquity. In Zambia, Special Education is said to have taken root first in 1905 at Magwero through the works of Mrs Isie Hofmeyer, wife of a missionary, in the Eastern Province of Zambia [1]. Whereas Special Education is documented to have been in existed since 1905, practically it was not until 1971 through the Presidential degree by Dr. David Kenneth Kaunda that it began to flourish in Zambia. The then President, Kaunda decreed that Ministry of Education was mandated to mainstream Special Education as a discipline within its policies and practices [1] and [2].

In 1971, the Lusaka College for Teachers of the Handicapped was born later renamed as Zambia Institute of Special Education (ZAMISE) [2]. ZAMISE has been the sole nursery bed for teachers specializing in Special Education at Certificate and Diploma levels. In 1996, the University of Zambia introduced a degree programme in special education tapping some of its entrants from ZAMISE and Technical and Vocational Teachers' College (TVTC) at 3rd year level [3] before first year entrance was initiated. The degree programme in Special Education has grown its numbers becoming one of the most lucrative and competitive programmes in the school of education [3]. This can also be attributed to the heightened levels of civic awareness arising from the civic educational processes [4-15].

Currently, ZAMISE has introduced courses at degree level in Special Education under the affiliation of the University of Zambia. Other institutions such as Kwame Nkrumah also train teachers in Special Education amongst other programmes. Despite, the large numbers of teachers being trained in special education at the University of Zambia, anecdotal evidence seems to suggest that a number of Pre-service teachers trained in Special Education are not necessarily practicing Special Education after graduating from ZAMISE and the University of Zambia. Instead, a significant number has continued to take-up other teaching and none teaching careers outside Special Education, thus departing from the overall aim of the University of Zambia, Department of Educational Psychology and Special Education training special education teachers for basic and secondary school. The initial objectives for establishing specialised Units in Special Education was to create a reservoir of specialised teachers in Special Education who once graduated would drive the Special Education agenda primarily within the school system.

Studies on education in Zambia and elsewhere have not as yet established why special schools and units should continue to experience shortage of teachers in special education when the university churns-out graduates in the field every year, thereby questioning the motive of special education students studying Special Education [16,17,18]. Worldwide literature shows negative attitude towards people with disabilities has been cited as the greatest barrier in championing the education of learners with special education needs in the regular school set-up worldwide [19,20,21]. Concomitantly, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [22] observes that no educational reform can successfully be implemented without the support of teachers. This study was therefore conducted to unearth motives that propelled Pre-service Teachers to venture into Special Education career at the University of Zambia as a means to effective teacher education.

1.1. Statement of the Problem

While teachers' involvement in the education of learners with special needs is critical, very little is known regarding the motives driving them to venture into the Special Education discipline at least in Zambia. Thus, this study was mooted to unearth motives that propelled Pre-service Teachers to pursue Special Education as a career at the University of Zambia. This study findings informs teacher education process on how to effectively nurture Pre-service teachers as they venture into the field of special education.

1.2. Specific Objectives

The following specific objectives guided the study:

i. explore the primary career path chosen by Pre-service teachers;
ii. describe initial experiences into the field of special education; and
iii. explore reasons for venturing into special education.

1.3. Theoretical Framework

This study was guided by social influence theory, as proposed by [23]. In Kelman's view the social influence theory, is evident where an individual's attitudes, beliefs, and subsequent actions or behaviours are influenced by referent others through three processes: compliance, identification, and internalization. Social influence can shape an individual's attitudes, beliefs and actions [23]. Thus, we postulate that the behaviours of students pursuing special education degree courses at the university of Zambia could be influenced by their own society's beliefs about what special education can offer, which without this study, we would not know.

2. Review of Related Literature

[24] conducted a study on Preparation of Special Education Teachers. This was a qualitative phenomenological study whose focus was to understand how beginning special education teachers experience the relationship between their teacher training and their actual teaching practice. The findings showed that some areas of their special education training were adequate while others were not. Paperwork and legalities, academics and curriculum, scheduling, time management, and lack of experiences were areas that interviewed participants described as insufficient. Further, benefits of hands-on experiences as well as life experiences were noted. The findings also pointed to special education teacher job conditions as being less than ideal [24].

A related study by [25] on reforming school experience in pre-service teacher preparation for quality teacher graduates, observed that school experience in pre-service teacher preparation was pivotal as it was during the practicum that trainees are granted an opportunity to apply theories that they learnt. Similarly, [26] posit that Teacher education issues were high on the policy agenda across Europe. The study focused on Core Values as the Basis for Teacher Education for Inclusion. This was in line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities agenda particularly article 24. In this study evidence was gathered from discussions with over 450 European stakeholders in education – policy makers, school leaders, teachers, support staff, parents and learners. These stakeholders, over a series of 14 country study visits, highlighted the importance of the core values as the foundation for all teachers working in inclusive education.

[27] study focused on breaking the Silence of Mainstream Teachers' Attitude towards Inclusive Education in the Bahamas. This was a qualitative study. Findings indicated that teachers generally had positive attitudes toward inclusion. However, lack of funding, administrative support and minimal opportunities for training and development were identified as negative influential factors regarding teachers' attitude towards inclusive education.

Still on inclusive education agenda, [18] conducted a study entitled 'Challenges facing implementation of Inclusive Education in Public Secondary Schools in Kenya.' The key findings were that, first, physical and critical teaching learning resources were either inadequate or were dilapidated. Secondly, there were inadequate specialised teachers to handle the special needs education curriculum. In addition, there were several socioeconomic and cultural variables that constraints effective teaching and learning in most sampled schools.

[28] observed that the shift from special schools towards inclusive education was becoming increasingly prevalent across education systems around the world. In their case study, they examined how a general education teacher strategized her teaching and classroom practices while accommodating a student with complex learning and behavioural disabilities within a regular classroom. Data generated through observations, in depth interviews and reflective journals suggested that the teacher made conscious efforts within limited resources to create strategies to help the student fit in the mainstream classroom.

[16] in their study noted that high rates of attrition make it challenging for schools to provide qualified special education teachers for students with disabilities, especially given chronic teacher shortages. In their synthesize special educator attrition and retention, were influenced by (i)

teacher preparation and qualifications, (ii) school characteristics, and (iii) working conditions among others. Equally, [18] in his earlier study on 'Promoting Teacher Quality and Retention in Special Education,' noted that qualified special educators were needed to carry out research-based practices in schools. He bemoaned the shortage of special educators, the high numbers of uncertified teachers, and high attrition rates as threaten the practice of special education. One anti-dot to countering high special teacher attrition was in understanding the complex conditions in which their practice occurs.

Further, [29] in their study on 'Relationships between Working conditions and Special Educators' Instruction observe that students with disabilities depend upon special education teachers to provide effective instruction. In addition, their findings indicate that working conditions such as administrative support and school culture influence general educators' effectiveness and their students' achievement.

In Zambia, a study of students' skills in teaching learners with special education needs during teaching practice by [3] found that students demonstrated better knowledge and skills in teaching the minor subject than special education which was their major programme of study. [30] also allude to this research finding suggesting a practice-based training of special education teachers in Zambia. Generally, in Zambia, research seems to suggest a gap in teacher skills and sometimes subject content [31] [32] & [33]. Thus, [34] suggests mentorship of newly trained teachers so that learners fully benefit from the knowledge and skills of newly trained teachers. Specifically, if students taking the degree in special education cannot exhibit the skills they are trained in, questions arise, as in this study what the motive for taking special education as degree programme of choice would be.

3. Methodology

The study was guided by a Qualitative Methodology with a Narrative design to generate evidence on the motives that propelled Pre-service teachers to venture into Special Education careers. Twenty-five (25) participants with an average age of 23 years were purposively drawn across Zambia from the Bachelor of Education Special Education second year cohort of 2019 academic year at the University of Zambia. Below is a table summary of the participants profiles.

3.1. Data Generation Procedure

Data was generated from the 25 purposively selected pre-service students pursuing a Bachelor of Education (Special Education) during the 2019 academic year at the University of Zambia. Each participant was requested to write a one paged personal profile detailing their motives for pursing special education as a career and any other prior careers they had in mind before settling for Special Education. Data generation took two months and was documented, collated and the documents were uploaded onto the ATLAS ti version 8. The documents were coded using Atlas.ti's Open Coding. The reason for not using Auto Coding was to be able to incorporate the theoretical framework underpinning this study. When all the documents were coded, intercoder mode was enabled on ATLAS ti version 8 for reliability of the codes. The codes were then categorised according to the three processes of social influence theory(the theory underpinning this study) namely: compliance, identification, and internalization.

Table 1. Participants' Profiles

Pseudonym	Age	Home Province
AMF	21	Copperbelt
BGM	25	Eastern
BMF	23	Muchinga
BBF	23	Eastern
CFM	22	Luapula
CAM	26	Central
CSM	26	North-western
CQF	23	Copperbelt
CRF	23	Southern
JCM	25	Northern
SCM	26	Western
CVM	24	Southern
DSM	24	Luapula
DLF	24	Lusaka
AGM	25	Lusaka
GZF	22	Copperbelt
HHM	23	Southern
KHF	22	Lusaka
KJM	25	Western
MKM	23	Western
MHM	24	Central
MGM	26	Luapula
OMM	23	Southern
CSF	24	Lusaka
TRF	24	Lusaka

Note: The first two letters for each Pseudonyms were coined from the initial letters of each participant's name while the last letter represented the sex of the participant accordingly.

3.2. Trustworthiness

This study followed Guba's (1981) four criteria on trustworthiness. They are credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. The data generation process was triangulated using observation, focus groups and individual interviews. The researchers used a reflexivity approach to decipher meaning from generated data. In addition, the researchers had early familiarity with the culture of participants prior to data generation. The data generation procedure and boundaries were documented for the purposes of ensuring transferability of the study findings to different settings. Further, the elicited information was cross-checked by participants to avoid the usual emic/etic problems. This means that interpretation of physical traces or observations may be from the point of view of the stranger, or outsider (etic), and therefore may fail to grasp important in-group meanings (emic). Given that the findings were presented verbatim, coupled with participant checks on the research, the study meets the dependability and confirmability criteria as well.

3.3. Ethical consideration

In carrying out this study, ethical issues as guided by [35] such as written consents from all participants, were followed. Pseudonyms were assigned in place of actual names to assure confidentiality and privacy. The pseudonyms given included BGM, BMF, CFM and others.

4. Presentation of Findings

Presentation of the findings was guided the study questions as follows:

i. What are the primary career paths chosen by Pre-service teachers?
ii. What initial experiences into the field of special education exist among pre-service teachers? and
iii. Why do pre-service teachers venture into special education?

These three questions were used to generate codes. The 25 students' personal profiles were coded using open coding on the Atls.ti. Four codes were formulated as follows: (i) Career expectations prior tertiary education; (ii) Experiences; (iii) Reasons to pursue the degree; & (iv) Expectation.

4.1. Career Expectations Prior Tertiary Education

There were forty quotations for this code from the 25 students' personal profiles. The sample of quotations are presented in Figure 1 below.

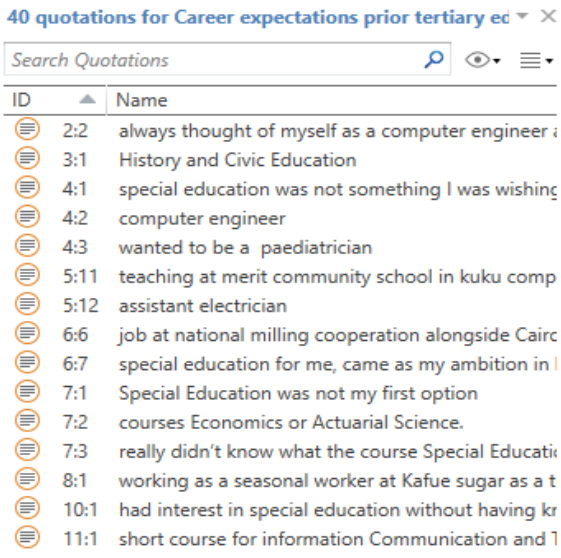

Figure 1. Sample of quotation form career expectations prior tertiary education

The number of quotations suggests that majority of special needs education students did not expect to pursue a career in special needs education.

4.2. Special Education as a First-choice Career

Four out of the 25 participants indicated that they considered special education as their first choice among many other careers. For instance, DSM, he recounted how much he had craved to pursue a degree in special education. He observed that,

Personally, I have the desire to open up an organization for the physical and health impaired individuals and this has been the main reason why I took interest in pursuing a degree in special education at university of Zambia (DSM 2019).

Equally, MGM preferred special education to other careers. For example, he noted that,

I developed a passion to be part of the solution out there to the disabled who cannot understand mathematical concepts. I chose to come here at the University of Zambia to pursue Bachelor of special education with mathematics (MGM 2019).

In addition, OMM observed that,

I was born with the 'heart' to help Children with special needs, not only that but also encourage and support children with disabilities because I saw how my mother suffered before she died. For many years, she was helped by the society, which motivated me to help someone out there who is in need (OMM 2019).

4.3. Special Education as a Second-choice Career

Emergent in the conversation with the pre-service special education students were a host of careers such as Pharmacy, Physiotherapy, Medicine, Agriculture science and Law among others that they had wanted to venture into before settling for special education as an alternative career. For instance, CQF observed that,

I wanted to pursue a career in pharmacy because I was so passionate and concerned with the health and well-being of the people in my town (CQF 2019).

In the same vein, BBF had no intention of pursuing special education as a career.

However, she developed interest in due course. She noted that,

Initially, studying special education was not on my list, I had always wanted to pursue pharmacy or physiotherapy and with my points I actually qualified (BBF 2019).

Similarly, TCF recounted how she had wanted to pursue Medicine. However, due to lack of funds, she ended up settling for special education.

Growing up, like most children, my desire was to study medicine and later major in neurology but due to lack of funds, I settled for special education (TCF 2019).

In the same vein, HHM's dream career was medicine. He had wanted to pursue medicine upon completing secondary school education. He observed, '*I obtained good points, and this made me proud and thought of doing medicine since it was my dream career from childhood*' (HHM 2019).

Like CQF, TCF and HHM, CAM had a strong desire to pursue a career not related to special education. For CAM, he wanted to pursue a Law degree. He observed that,

In the year 2016, I applied at the University of Zambia under school of humanities and social sciences where I wanted to pursue a degree of law (CAM 2019).

4.4. Experiences

While the majority of the participants had no passion for special education, they only developed interest in the discipline while on the course later as they experienced it. There were fouty-four quotations from this quote as indicated in Figure 2 below

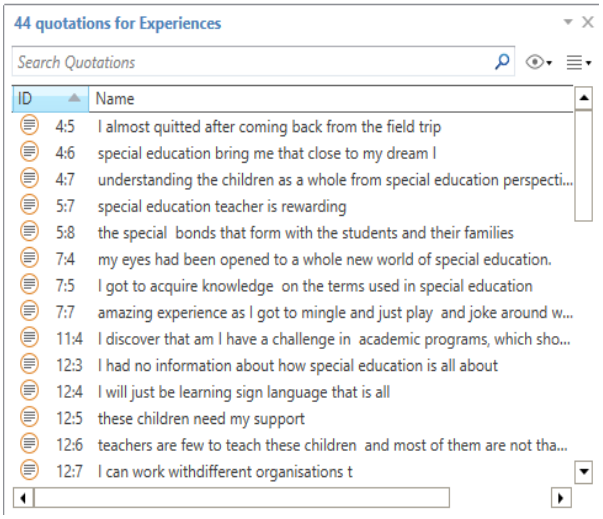

Figure 2. Quotations for experiences

Most of the quotations in Figure 2 seem to reveal positive results based on the experiences of the course. For instance, MHM observed that, 'to be honest, I have never had a passion for teaching I just developed it later' (MHM 2019).

In addition, MKM noted that,

Upon being admitted at the university, I found myself falling in love with the courses I was studying because they went deeper in explaining not only cerebral palsy but other health and physical related conditions like spinal bifida, hydrocephalus, epilepsy and many more (MKM 2019).

Similarly, AMF re-echoed MKM's sentiments. She observed that,

I had found it difficult to adjust to the course but with time I have learnt to love it especially with the trip we had last semester for EPS1030 where we visited Bauleni Special School (AMF 2019).

In the same vein with AMF and MKM, KHF observed that the interest to pursue special education only came through later. She noted that,

… when I finally went to school and I had my first lecture and met different people doing the course the range of places to work in, the way people still perceive individuals with special needs I fell in love with it because I personally believe I can help change people's views about the way we see individuals with special needs (KHF 2019).

However, KJM recounted that he was not pleased to pursue special education. He noted that, '*when I started the course of studying at the school of education I honestly wasn't thrilled about it and I didn't have the zeal to study it* (KJM 2019).

From the findings above, where one's initial career was different to the programme where they were admitted, they had to be changed to like their second choice in which they were recruited. This demonstrated the role society plays in shaping people's careers as advanced within the social influence theory by [23]. The individual's attitudes, beliefs, and subsequent actions or behaviours were influenced by referent others.

4.5. Reasons to Pursue the Degree

This quote generation the most quotation as compared to other codes. See Figure 3 below

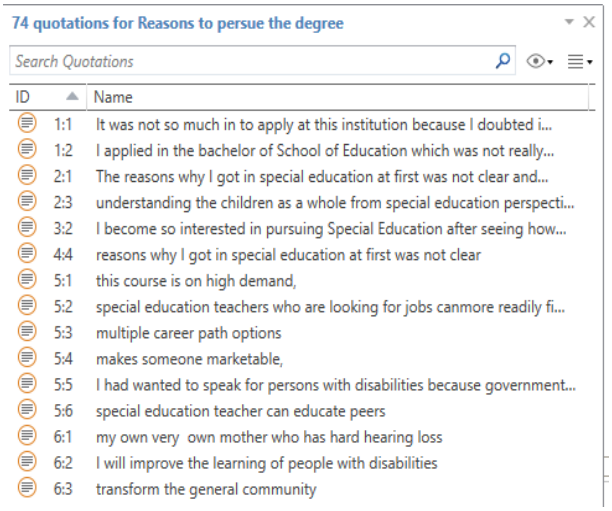

Figure 3. Quotations from reasons to pursue the degree

As presented by Figure 3, it is evident that seventy-four quotes were generated by this quote. The findings demonstrate different motives by students for taking up special education as a career. These include provision of remedy to real life special education conditions, economic gains, and advocacy for the Rights of persons with disabilities, teaching persons with disabilities and circumstances beyond personal control.

4.6. Provision of Remedy to Real Life Special Education Conditions

Participants engaged cited a number of motivating factors that led to them choosing special education among other disciplines. For instance, CSM noted that,

My interest in the course came about after I met my four-year-old nephew who had cerebral palsy. After interacting with his mother, I realised that he needed more help than just looking after him. He was a very bright child which was something that caught my attention (CSM 2019).

Equally, DLM, had personal ambition of pursuing inclusive education. He recounted that,

I become so interested in pursuing Special Education with a view of understanding inclusive education, my dream career. (DLM 2019).

Similarly, DLF like her peers such as CSM and DLM above were moved to venture into special education in order to be equipped with the appropriate knowledge and skills to be able to solve real life challenges. This is consistent with [26] study whose thrust was on the integration of Core Values as the Basis for Teacher Education for Inclusion. Without core values, pre-service

teachers would not be well prepared to manage special education related matters.

4.7. Economic Gains

Economic reasons were the motivation behind TRF pursuing special education. She noted that, '*Zambia economic state can only improve by educating our most marginalised individuals in society* (TRF 2019). Related to TRF is CAM motivated by economic reasons. CAM observed that,

Special teachers are on high demand and this demand keeps increasing. This means special education teachers who are looking for jobs can more readily find positions national wide (CAM 2019).

CAM's observation was re-echoed by AGM who noted that '*special education teachers who are looking for jobs can easily find jobs nationwide'* (AGM 2019).

Like CAM and AGM, KJM was motivated to pursue special education for economic gains. KJM observed that, '*the reason why I applied to do special education … is that this course is on high demand, there is an increasing demand for special education teachers'* (KJM 2019). The expectation above is in direct contrast with [24] findings which noted that special education teacher job conditions were far from the ideal [24].

4.8. Advocate for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Having experienced negative stigma at personal level from the community, HHM purposed in his heart to pursue special education to equip himself with the right knowledge and skills for self-advocacy. He argued that, '*Being one of the affected individuals in the disability group, it was worthwhile to learn not only about my condition but other disabilities as well* (HHM 2019).

Similarly, to HHM, DLF ventured into special education to equip herself with vital knowledge and skills to be able to not only provide self-advocacy but also render a service to other needy individuals as observed by [36] and [37]. For instance, DLF noted that,

I have been brought up from a special school my entire primary and secondary educational lifestyle (DLF 2019).

GZF like HHM, DLF ventured into special education to become an advocate for the rights of the marginalised in society. She noted that, '*I thought studying special education will help me advocate for their rights of these such as right to education*' (GZF 2019).

In addition, BMF recalled how her passion to venture into special education was cultivated after interacting with learners with special education needs consistent with [38] on preparing teachers for inclusive education. She observed that,

In 2013, 2014 and 2015 we had school competition at provincial level in Kawambwa and Nchelenge districts. Among those who participated were children with physical disabled. They were given the chance to perform and I saw ability in them and they did more than some other schools and districts. This is when I proved the statement 'disability is not inability.' Consequently, I started developing interest to do special education (BMF 2019).

4.9. Teach Persons with Disabilities

While HHM and DLM were motivated to pursue special education for self-advocacy reasons, MKM on the other hand ventured into the discipline in question to gain appropriate knowledge and skills to be able to function as a special teacher. He noted that, '*I chose to pursue a degree in special education because I want to be equipped with knowledge, attitudes and skills in the teaching of persons with physical and health impairments in school set ups and society as a whole* (MKM 2019). This is consistent with [3] advocating for qualifications that empower teachers to effectively function as special education specialists [3].

4.10. Forced by Circumstances Beyond Their Control

While CSM, DLM and DLF were all motivated to pursue special education as a means to managing real life special education conditions like cerebral palsy within their families and communities, CVM had no ambition of pursing special education, except that he was forced by circumstance beyond his control. He lamented that, *'I do not have a reason for studying special education as I was put in it by the senate'* (CVM 2019).

5. Discussion of Findings

The codes that were used to present data in the previous section, were categorised according to the three processes of social influence theory namely: compliance, identification, and internalization. Figure 4 below present the network created with Atls.ti to show how the codes were linked with the processes of social influence theory.

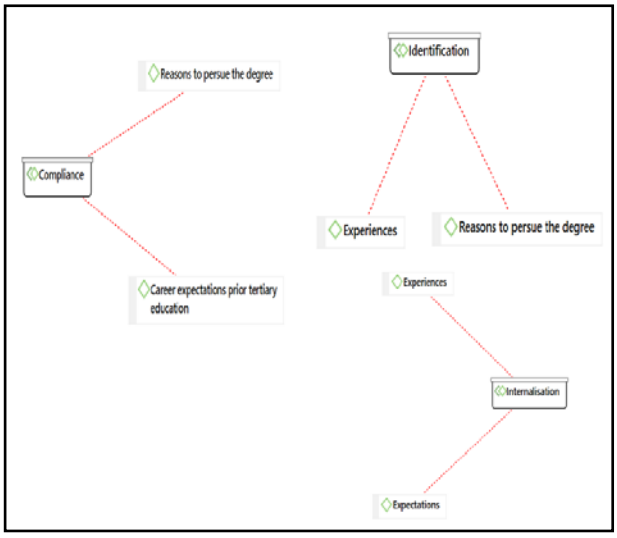

Figure 4. The link between the codes and processed of social influence theory

Compliance according to [23] is assumed to occur when individuals accept influence and adopt the induced behavior to gain rewards. The findings show a positive attitude teacher have towards their career is consistent with [28] study in the Bahamas. Findings indicated that teachers generally had positive attitudes toward inclusion.

Conversely, deficiency in funding, administrative support and minimal opportunities for training and development were identified as negative dominant factors concerning teachers' attitude towards inclusive education. The negative environmental factors are what [39] and [21] refer to as 'disablers' to academic success of the marginalised learners consistent with [18].

The very few numbers of pre-service teachers with interest in special education established in the current study could be explained partly by [28] who observed that the shift from special schools towards inclusive education was becoming increasingly prevalent across education systems. This could account for the few numbers of pre-service teachers showing interest in special education as the field has since evolved into a new field called inclusive education. In the same vein as a few noted above demonstrated passion for special education while the rest were not interested in the first place.

Identification is said to happen when individuals adopt the induced behaviour in order to create or maintain a desired and beneficial relationship to another person or a group [23]. The high number of pre-service teachers pursuing special education yet without interest in special education as their first choice should serve as a warning to the University of Zambia. This appears to be the reason for trainee teachers' failure to exhibit skills in teaching learners with special education needs that [3] found. Lack of interest signifies negative attitude and the findings seem to suggest that since special education was not the first choice, students are studying it to gain advantage and use it to enter into other careers.

Currently, it is expected students are well trained to teach in inclusive education classrooms. While the University was still offering a degree in special education, the global village had since shifted its focus to inclusive education instead. The demand for inclusive education teachers is supported by the Sustainable Development Goal particularly target number 4 [40]. It is time the University invested in developing Teachers' Competences for designing Inclusive Learning Experiences as supported by [41,42,43], [38] and [44]. Similarly, [45] noted that teachers in Sweden were not sufficiently trained to critically analyse the conditions determining their work, especially in view of the local and global trends.

[23] asserts that internalization occurs when individuals accept influence after perceiving the content of the induced behaviour is rewarding in which the content indicates the opinions and actions of others. It is also stated that individuals adopt the induced behaviour realizing that it is congruent with their value system. Motivation to pursue special education as a career appears to be influenced by society in the vignettes above. This is consistent with the social influence theory by [23]. The pre-service teachers' attitudes, beliefs, and subsequent actions or behaviours were influenced by the significant others or indeed the presence of a needy case within the community. In addition, the noted strong desire among pre-service teachers to provide real life solution among persons with disability is consistent with [26] on the need to reform schools' experience in pre-service teacher preparation for quality teacher graduates. Thus, the quality of schools depends largely on teachers' dedication to duty as demonstrated by their level of motivation. Equally, [46] advocates for direct contact with the community of the minority as a means for preparing teachers for real life. This is related to [47] who observed that enthusiasm about the profession and the social environment were the primary motives to pursue a program.

The pre-service teachers' desire to advocate for the Human Rights of the marginalised in society could be better addressed within the inclusive education agenda and not Special Education since the former is weaved within the Sustainable Development agenda by 2030. Equally, the desire for economic gains among pre-service teachers could be better addressed when the programme on offer is informed by inclusive education agenda as this is where the global community is focusing its attention and resources [40,41]. Much more, since there exist a group of pre-service teachers forced by circumstances beyond their control to pursue special education against their conscious, there is need to reform the university curriculum in favour of inclusive education away from special education [39]. Furthermore, [48] observes that there is need to organise teacher education programmes based on multiple motives, which contributes positively to completion of teacher education and teacher retention within their profession. This could be enhanced through the use of ICT platforms in the management and delivery of teacher education [49,50,51].

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, while a minority had intention of pursuing special education from the onset, the majority had other careers in mind and only settled for special education as their second or third choice. In addition, a host of motives that propelled pre-service teachers venture into special education included, (i) desire to become advocates for human rights fulfilment of the marginalised in society, (ii) desire to become competent special teachers, and (iii) economic gains. Nevertheless, others pursued special education because they were forced by societal influence beyond their control. Overall, for pre-service teachers whose first choice was not special education, direct exposure to learners with special education needs was a critical element that empowered them embrace their adopted new career within the university. The findings of this study has serious ramification as it points to the need for curriculum reformation in favour of inclusive education which is where the global village has shifted attention away from special education. Short of curriculum reformation could spell doom both in terms of quality as well as quantity of pre-service teachers pursuing special education.

7. Recommendations

Given the fore-going, the following are the recommendations:

i. The stunning reality that majority of those who venture into special education have other careers in mind and not necessarily special education calls for the need to raise the profile of a special teaching profession in terms of conditions of service if the

profession is to attract more dedicated and competent teachers.

ii. The need for quality initial lectures at year one in special education in helping the majority without interest in special education to adopt it as their career of choice calls for deliberate measures among university teaching staff to motivate and not demotivate pre-service teachers.

iii. Equally, there is need to engrave impactful field visits to special education institutions within the curriculum as a means to aiding pre-service teachers settle quickly in special education career. This will attract more pre-service teachers into the special education profession and increase their retention within the special education profession.

iv. The multiple motives that propel pre-service teachers venture into special education point to the complexity of preparing pre-service teachers for special education career. It calls for concerted effort among all stakeholders to harness available resources within the university curriculum for pre-service teachers to become competent practitioners within the special education discipline.

v. Overall, since very few pre-service teachers consider special education as their first career choice, it is imperative that the University remodels it's Bachelor of Education with Special Education programme on offer in line with the international trends advocating for inclusive education as amplified in the SDGs particularly target number 4. This is where the market has shifted to.

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