

**EXPLORING LEARNING IMPLICATIONS OF THE DISTANCE SECONDARY
SCHOOL TEACHER TRAINING IN MALAWI: A CASE STUDY OF MZUZU
UNIVERSITY AND DOMASI COLLEGE OF EDUCATION**

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ABSTRACT

This study is an interpretive-qualitative case study grounded in the literature regarding institutional organisation of distance education founded on the industrial education theory. In regard to the differences in adoption and enactment of distance education amongst institutions, it was important to understand the learning implications of the distance teacher training in Malawi. Within the interpretive parameters, the study blends tenets of the industrial education (Peters, 1973), conversational learning (Holmberg, 2003) and phenomenology (van Manen, 1995) theories in a single theoretical framework. Globally, distance education founded on dual mode institutions is enacted parallel to traditional education requiring the establishment of a distinct system with sub-systems within the traditional parameters to serve the distance mode. This thesis explores the nature of institutional organisation of the Mzuzu University and Domasi College of Education as dual mode institutions in Malawi using industrial aspects of planning, coordination, specialisation, division of labour, and mass production of instructional materials. The study further employs real and mediated aspects of conversational learning, and lived and shared experiences from phenomenology to explore student teachers learning experiences and implications.

Data was generated through semi-structured interviews, organisational and academic documents while Miles and Huberman (1994) framework of qualitative data analysis and Moustakas (1994) psychological data analysis procedure guided its analysis.

The study revealed that there are challenges with the one-size-fits-all approach in the enactment of distance teacher training in Malawi. The study presents a distance education system for Malawi teacher training for an in-depth understanding of open and distance education in theory and practice within the one-size-fits-all philosophy. The study thus, modifies the industrial education theory to incorporate conversational learning and phenomenology so as to change the rigidity of industrial education by employing mediated and real conversation and promoting sharing of lived experiences.

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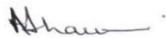
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

| | |
|--------|--|
| AIDS | Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome |
| CDSS | Community Day Secondary School |
| EMIS | Education, Management Information System |
| HIV | Human Immune Virus |
| IGNOU | Indira Gandhi National Open University |
| JICA | Japan International Cooperation Agency |
| JCE | Junior Certificate of Education |
| MASTEP | Malawi Special Distance Teacher Education Programme |
| MCDE | Malawi College of Distance Education |
| MSCE | Malawi School Certificate of Education |
| ODL | Open and Distance Education |
| ODE | Open and Distance Learning |
| OSS | Open Secondary Schools |
| SMS | Short Message Service |
| SWOT | Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats |
| UKOU | Open University of the United Kingdom |
| UNESCO | United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation |

STATEMENT OF ORIGINAL AUTHORSHIP

I declare that the thesis: Exploring Learning Implications of the Distance Secondary School Teacher Training in Malawi: A Case study of Mzuzu University and Domasi College of Education is my original work and that all sources used and cited are duly acknowledged by means of complete references. Further that this thesis has not been submitted to any other university other than to the University of KwaZulu-Natal in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD).

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my late mum, Hellen Yoram Nyalongwe (May her beautiful soul continue to rest in eternal peace) who instilled in me the hardworking spirit and the endless desire to learn. I further dedicate my thesis to my children; Sylvia Palisa, Hellen Katarina and Martin Patani for their patience, understanding, support and perseverance throughout my doctoral journey. To my only grandson, Joshua, my nephew, Nathan and all my children, I set a precedent for them to trail.

CHAPTER 1

INDUSTRIAL EDUCATION AND THE NATURE OF THE STUDY

Introduction

Education is “the catalyst for socio-economic development, industrial growth and an instrument for empowering the poor, the weak and the voiceless” (Malawi Government, 2008, p. 3; Malawi Government, 2013, p. v). It thus follows that “education as a basic human right” (Simango, 2016, p. 15) should be enjoyed by every person regardless of the location or physical ability as it is the vehicle that drives every citizen through the attainment of one’s potential to contribute to national development. Education thus, sharpens people’s skills and abilities, helps them to identify their rights and responsibilities and advance their social economic security as they apply the know-hows to develop themselves and communities. This means that, ignorance leads to unemployment, dependency, poor health and undeveloped communities. Simango further explains that, “education is a mirror through which the society’s strengths, weaknesses, hopes, biases and key values are viewed” (Simango, 2016, p. 1). This implies that education has a constructive role to play in changing the nation and its citizens as it is a source of growth.

The provision of higher education in the world and developing countries in particular, is challenged by high enrolments of students attending primary and secondary school levels through the traditional mode. Similarly, the training of secondary school teachers to cater for the increased enrolments in those lower levels of education is challenged, as the traditional training fails to take student teachers in large numbers. This has forced nations to go for other innovative approaches to teaching and learning of their citizens (Musingafi, Mapulanga, Chiwanza, & Zebron, 2015; Ipaye, 2015; Chawinga & Zozie, 2016; Simango, 2016). In Malawi, as elsewhere, distance education among other approaches was adopted at higher education levels to help bridge the qualified secondary teacher gap with Domasi College and Mzuzu University taking the lead. As a driving force behind socio-economic development of the country, distance education has been adopted and mainstreamed into the Malawian education system.

“Distance education” is defined differently denoting the same mode of education whose instructions are conveyed at a distance (Grooms, 2015). The concept “distance education” is

thus, defined in terms of its industrial or organisational issues, generations and technological evolution, and transactions amidst students and educators (Saba, 2014; Modesto & Gregorioso, 2016; Ramdas & Masithulela, 2016). Distance education descriptions are hence founded among other things on theories such as the industrial education (Peters, 1973) cited in Peters (1994), conversational learning (Holmberg, 2003), and independent learning (Wedemeyer, 1977) philosophies. Technologically, distance education has evolved from correspondence to open and distance or flexible learning (Anderson, Lorne, Jon, & Judi, 2015) extended to web-based education (Cleveland-Innes & Garrison, 2010; Moore, 2013; Fardaneth, Purjamshidi, & Norouzi, 2014; Anderson, Lorne, Jon, & Judi, 2015). Correspondence education is thus, the birth of distance education whose teaching and learning is achieved while educators and students are separated in place and or time for the majority of instructions (Cleveland-Innes & Garrison, 2010; Groom, 2015; Malawi Government, 2017). The term “distance education” is hence an umbrella term covering different constructs and approaches grounded on diverse educational theorists’, sociologists’ and practitioners’ perceptions directed towards learning outside the four walls of the classroom (Peters, 1973; Wedemeyer, 1977; Moore, 1983; Holmberg, 2003).

While utilising the interpretive approach, this thesis draws on complementary strengths of the industrial education theory founded by Peters (1973), conversational learning theory by Holmberg (2003) and phenomenology by van Manen (1995). All three theories were developed by German Philosophers with Peters and Holmberg additionally being distance education practitioners. In this thesis, tenets of the three theories are blended into a single theoretical frame through which this study is understood. This implies that while engaging the interpretive paradigm for an in-depth understanding, this study obtains its theoretical understanding from a blend of lenses from Peters’1973 industrial education (Peters,1994), conversational learning (Holmberg, 2003) and phenomenology (Manen, 1995) in a single framework. This qualitative study continually abides by the three theories while leaning towards the interpretative paradigm devoted to philosophical hermeneutics rooted in Edmund Husserl’s (1936/1970) philosophy (van Manen, 2007; Bhattacharjee, 2012; Magrini, 2012; Lin, 2013). Philosophers and practitioners following the interpretive roadmap are among other things concerned with drawing detailed descriptions of the phenomenon for an in-depth understanding and generation of a theory from the data (Shah, Elyas, & Nasseef, 2014; Uehara, Button, Falcous, & Davids, 2014).

Further, those in support of the industrial education, pay more attention to inter alia, organisational issues and the value of education to widen access and for massification (Aliveya, 2013; Moore, 2013). Similarly, within the interpretive stance, this thesis draws on tenets of the industrial theory to explore the learning implications of the distance secondary teacher training in Malawi. For example; given that the distance teacher training is hosted at a traditional institution (Moore & Kearsley, 2012; Ipaye, 2015), such analysis is required to define the distance education institutional organisation, its enactment and the impact it brings on student teachers' learning experiences.

Since the probable nature of institutional organisation offers teaching for students to learn at a distance, it is thus, a must that the impact the organisation brings to students and reasons for such impact be explored. Subsequently, those in support of the conversational learning theory are interested in incessant instructor-student, student-student and student-content interaction to bridge students' psychological gap (Holmberg, 2003). This study required such exploration to understand the nature of teaching, students' learning and learning support as provided by the institutional organisation mediated through instructional media and or real occasional face-to-face instructions. For instance; instructional materials (print or electronic) efficacy requires conversational learning tenets to unveil educators' continued interaction with students within or without the learning materials.

Husserlian phenomenologists intend to uncover the essence of the shared experiences of the phenomenon for an extensive description and interpretation of the experiences (van Manen, 2007; Magrini, 2012; Lin, 2013; Perlin & Soner, 2015). Since the aim for organising instructional provision is learner satisfaction, the thesis further focused on phenomenology to gauge student teachers' lived experiences of the distance training as organised in Malawi. I desired to phenomenologically determine learning experiences and learning implications of the distance institutional organisation on student teachers through participants' own narrations of their lived experiences. These enriched the data and the findings as the phenomenological narrations covered all the focal areas of the study. For example, the findings revealed Malawi's adoption and mainstreaming of distance secondary teacher training on a one-size-fits-all approach and educators' lack of ODE enactment understanding blocks planning.

In view of the foregoing, a blend of nine (9) tenets from industrial education, conversational learning and phenomenology theories compatibly revealed the learning implications of the

distance secondary school teacher training in Malawi. The interpretivist's stance of describing and understanding learning implications of the distance secondary teacher training meant to upshot a deep understanding of the nature of institutional organisation and its impact on student teachers' learning. A well planned distance secondary teacher training in Malawi is essential for a better distance learning environment that retains students and promotes educators' creativity in response to existing qualified teacher gaps. In exploring the learning implications of the distance secondary teacher training in Malawi, the thesis draws on Mzuzu University and Domasi College of Education instructional materials, corporate documents, interview data from administrators, instructors' and students' phenomenological reflections. In this case, the study addresses a gap in our knowledge about the learning implications of distance secondary teacher training in Malawi. As such, the thesis adds to theoretical and epistemological understanding of distance education institutional organisation, its impact on student teaches' learning experiences while also suggesting ways of improving the distance teacher organisation and enactment as revealed by the data.

The industrialised teaching and learning was found appealing as follows:

- the emphasis on industrial principles for organising the distance system and improving the teaching and learning systems;
- the breaking down of activities into different constituents or systems to be handled with combined professional knowledge, skills, attitudes and technical know-how from experts in various disciplines for quality design and production of instructional materials;
- the use of machinery and mass instructions to replace teachers in educating multitudes (Peters, 1994).

According to Keegan (2013, p. 4) the definition of industrialisation then was twofolds. First, it was attached to its foundations in industrialised countries that demanded for new jobs and qualification, vocational and social mobility. Second, the production and distribution of printed teaching and learning materials is an industrial process. In this study, the notion of industrialisation serves to demonstrate a match between what takes place in the production of goods and services in the industry and what is expected to take place in distance education. The listed thoughts above clarify what actually happens not only in production of instructional materials but also in industrial production. Peters argued that all distance education is an industrial form of education as it follows characteristics of Weberian organisation as rationalised as follows:

...division of labour...capital intensive technology...organisation of activities...planning and specifying each work progress to ensure efficient and effective...teaching in broken up into constituent parts...could be undertaken by separate people...mass production become apparent... (Rumble, 2006, pp. 133-134).

Peters (1973) further described a distance system as the carefully structured procedures of a distance teaching university, in which the unity of the teaching/ learning process is split into many units performed by different persons and elements of the education system. The student in an industrialised education system finds that the instruction is available in such ways that he or she can choose his or her own way. In this case, the instruction is not linked to fixed times or fixed persons.

Peters' framework offers structure to this study. As a consequence, thus, following on Peters, this study attempts to explore the nature of the distance institutional organisation, the impact it brings on student teachers' learning and experiences with reasons for such impact. As empowered by the interpretive paradigm, the study attempts to refine the industrial education theory to suit the Malawi distance secondary teacher training for positive learning implications.

In this study, the notion of institutional organisation encompasses industrial aspects of planning to review distance education constituents or systems, their coordination, division of labour and specialisation for mass production of instructional materials to influence students' learning (Moore & Kearsley, 2012). The notion learning implications thus denotes consequences or impact the distance institutional organisation brings on student teachers' learning experiences. In this way, the study makes a comprehensive perspective of the distance secondary teacher training making the exploration and suggestions for improvement of the learning implications of the distance secondary teacher training in Malawi possible.

The industrial education theory has since been criticised by exponents such as Holmberg (1989), Moore (1993), Moore and Kearsley (2012), Saba (2012), Bordes (2015) and Ramdas and Masithulela (2016). However, the theory's aspect that sustains its development is that the industrial theory needs to be industrial, implying that it focuses on industrial applications that set the foundation for other distance education theories as they rely on pre-planned mass produced instructions. Exploring the nature of distance institutional organisation requires both comprehensive descriptions and interpretation of its industrial nature of the distance secondary teacher training that impact on student teachers' learning experiences. To draw an

in-depth understanding of the phenomenon, interpretivists use the idea of holistic exploration and its flexibility to apply in diverse situations while embracing theory building (van Manen, 1995; Lavery, 2003; van Manen, 2007; Shah, et al., 2014; Uehara, et al., 2014). To achieve a suitable distance institutional organisation model for an improved distance system, this thesis refines the industrial education theory in chapter 10 based on the data. To refine the industrial education theory, its tenets: planning, coordination, division of labour, specialisation and mass production are combined with real and mediated conversation, and lived and shared experiences from phenomenology. The blend of tenets from the theories is meant to expose the institutional organisation of distance education, the teaching and learning impacted by the organisation and student teachers' learning experiences for probable implications

Research problem and research questions

Since 1965, the Malawi government has made tremendous efforts to expand educational opportunities for its citizens through the introduction of distance education for secondary school level and teacher training. The secondary distance education not only expanded the secondary sub-sector but also provided primary school teachers' upgrading opportunities from junior certificate level to Malawi school certificate level (Malawi Government, 2017). This meant that the junior certificate grade holders were promoted to the Malawi school certificate grade. Through a similar mode, Malawi anticipates to increase teacher supply to reduce pupil to qualified teacher ratios in the secondary sub-sector (Msiska, 2013; Chawinga & Zozie, 2016). Malawi as is the case with most developing countries in the Sub-Saharan region recognises distance education as a tool to teacher education and continuous professional development (Perraton, 2012). Besides the development importance, questioning how institutions of higher learning organise distance education alongside traditional higher education and the impact of such organisation on students learning experiences is scantily dealt with in literature. Despite the introduction of distance education for secondary teacher training in Malawi sixteen years ago which resulted in education colleges becoming dual mode, the nature of institutional organisation and learning implications remain unknown. Further, despite the general agreement that distance education is taking the mainstream education and training in its status and attention, there is still limited understanding of its enactment. This result from among other issues, changes in technology, communications and knowledge of distance teaching, learning and learning support. Educational institutions hence differ in institutional organisation and the levels of adopting and implementing distance

education. Some follow the systems approach to institutional organisation while others adopt the holistic and or transactional approaches. Some implement distance education to the fullest, while others are blending distance and traditional education or not even sure of how to best implement it. There is also a diverse technology use in distance education between and among institutions (Jegede, Fraser, & Fisher, 1995). These discrepancies and diversity invite questions on what implications are there for the existing institutional organisation approaches, modes, and technologies used in distance education enactment and learning. The argument is that, students' and educators' application of distance education knowledge to learning and enactment is a probable contributor of students' learning experiences and an effective distance education system.

In trying to understand challenges and contestations within distance education, international studies have attempted to understand the quality issues (Kangai, Rupande, & Rugonye, Students perceptions on the quality and effectiveness of guidance and counselling services at the Zimbabwe University, 2011), systems approach to distance education (Saba, 2012) student support (Kangai & Bukaliya, Teacher Development through Open and Distance Learning: The Case of Zimbabwe, 2011) increasing access (Ofoegbu, 2009), organisation of dual mode (Ipaye, 2015) and retention of teachers (Mhishi, Bhukuvhani, & Sana, 2012). In Malawi, studies have focused on increasing access, prospects and challenges of open learning, methodological approaches and experiences (Chakwera & Saiti, 2005; Chimpololo, 2010; Chawinga & Zozie, 2016). Exploring learning implications of the distance secondary teacher training with the aim of drawing an in-depth understanding is pertinent if Malawi is to satisfy its desires of using education, for example, to fulfil developmental goals which it is struggling to achieve (Malawi Government, 2008; 2011). The study's findings may emerge a source of feedback to the Ministry of Education and the educating institutions on the extent to which the distance secondary teacher training is achieving its intended objectives.

Other writers, for example, (Moore & Kearsley, 2012; Polk State College, 2012; Minnaar, 2013) stress the need for the establishment of a particular distance education system with supporting systems that are properly coordinated for effectual teaching, learning and learning support. Such organisation not only creates a healthier learning environment, but promotes students' retention and educators' adoption of novel strategies in response to emerging and contemporary needs of students and the society. The process of planning in distance education embraces the creation of systems within systems and influence coordination,

specialisation, division of labour and mass production of instructional materials. The research questions are discussed next.

Research objectives and questions

The purpose of the present study is to explore the learning implications of the distance secondary teacher training in Malawi. The research objectives and questions in this thesis adhere to the blended tenets of the study's framework taking the interpretive stance. The first objective is founded on the industrial teaching theory searching for the nature of institutional organisation of the distance training through planning, coordination, division of labour, specialisation and mass production. The second objective focuses on both the industrial nature (institutional organisation) and the way it effects student teachers' learning, thus, conversational nature (mediated and real conversation) of the distance training. The third objective while focusing more on phenomenology (lived and shared experiences) assesses student teachers' lived experiences of the distance training, relates the industrial and conversational nature of the distance training to bring about learning implications. With this background, the thesis conceived the following research objectives:

1. To explore the nature of distance institutional organisation for secondary school teacher training at Domasi College of Education and Mzuzu University in Malawi;
2. To explore how the distance secondary school teacher training at Domasi College of Education and Mzuzu University affects student teachers' learning experiences;
3. To explore learning experiences of secondary school teachers trained through distance education programmes at Domasi College of Education and Mzuzu University.

Research objectives were phrased into the following three related research questions.

1. What is the nature of institutional organisation of the distance secondary school teacher training at Domasi College of Education and Mzuzu University?
2. How does the institutional organisation of the distance secondary school teacher training at Domasi College of Education and Mzuzu University affect student teachers' learning experiences?
3. Why does the institutional organisation of the distance secondary school teacher training at Domasi College of Education and Mzuzu University affect student teachers' learning experiences in the way it does?

Research significance

This study is significant in several ways. The thesis adds new knowledge in many ways: First, it contributes to the development of a theoretical framework and its real-world application. For example, this study has blended tenets of the industrial education (1973) conversational learning (Holmberg, 2003) and phenomenology (van Manen, 1995) theories in a single framework to help guide the study. Second, the study adds to scientific knowledge to all institutions of higher learning that are contemplating to move into dual mode model in the delivery of distance or traditional education. While the findings may not be generalisable to other exact areas of distance education in Malawi, the study may still provide insights about distance education that may inform future distance education studies. The study may hence contribute to formulation of institutional policies, and development and review of strategic plans with identified possible strengths, challenges, opportunities, and threats with remedial actions well stipulated. Third, the thesis generates and introduces phenomenological reflections into distance education research as a data collection tool. For example, phenomenological reflections as used in this study meant administration of semi-structured in-depth interviews to student-teachers whose reflections and responses were given in written narrations. As used in this study, phenomenological reflections are thus, an innovative strategy to distance education research. Phenomenology helped in determining student teachers' learning experiences as shared through their written reflections thereby exposing the way the distance training impacted on their learning and its accompanied implications. Fourth, it adds to scientific knowledge, the adaptation of industrial education systems embedded in planning to suit the Malawi situation. The inclusion of study circles are a source of the much sought conversational environment that would respond to students' individual needs other than just training on the one-size-fits-all strategy. This adds new knowledge to understanding of how the interpretive paradigm can be employed in deep understanding of a specific phenomenon as well as recognising shared relationships, division of labour and a model development (Goldkuhl, 2012; Ismail & Zainuddi, 2013; Shah, Elyas, & Nasseef, 2014). Fifth, it contributes to the understanding of effectual planning of distance education at any nature of institution with specific focus on dual modes. Conceptualisation of abstract notions of planning, study circle and one-size-fits-all provides a guide to how distance education can be organised institutionally and enacted to effect positive learning experiences. In this case, the thesis adds to theoretical and epistemological understanding of distance education institutional organisation, its impact on student teachers' learning experiences and

suggests ways of improving the distance teacher organisation and enactment as revealed by the data.

Methodology

This study draws on complementary strengths of tenets of industrial education, conversational learning and phenomenology theories guided by the interpretive approach to explore learning implications of the distance secondary teacher training in Malawi. The industrial tenets of systems (embedded in planning), coordination, division of labour and mass production focused on exploration of the nature of institutional organisation of the distance secondary teacher training. The conversational lenses ‘real’ and ‘mediated’ targeted exploration of the interactive nature of the actual teaching and learning to bring about effective learning and learning support. The phenomenological lenses ‘lived’ and ‘shared’ experiences meant to gauge individuals’ lived experiences of the distance training to draw their learning experiences and implications of the training. The study embraced an interpretive paradigm using qualitative and case study methodology. The qualitative design was required in this study to aid in drawing detailed descriptions and interpretations of Mzuzu University and Domasi College’s distance education institutional organisation and its impact on students’ learning experiences. Johnson and Christensen (2012) defined research design as the outline, plan or strategy guiding the answering of research questions. Since the interpretive paradigm considers social interaction as the genesis of knowledge, participants shared lived experiences provided insights, perceptions and understandings (Lin, 2013) of the learning implications of the distance secondary teacher training.

Purposive and snowball sampling techniques were employed in this study. Distance education administrators were purposively included depending on the researcher’s judgment while reflecting on the purpose of the study. I used the snowball technique to reach out to student teachers deployed across the country, Malawi. Purposive sampling also known as subjective sampling refers to the selection of research participants based on the researcher’s judgement in relation to characteristics of the population and research objectives (Crossman, 2018). Purposive sampling stipulates the characteristics of the population of interest and tries to locate candidates with those characteristics (Johnson & Christensen, 2012). Purposive sampling also focuses on selecting information-rich cases whose study illuminates the questions under study. Snowball sampling according to Crossman (2018) is the selection of research participants in which the researcher starts with a known lesser population and uses

the initial sample to inform the researcher about the other individuals that should participate in the study. The sample starts small and expands or snowballs into a large sample as the study progresses. Snowball sampling helps the researcher in identifying specific and fairly small population that is hard to find or locate.

The study used document analysis and semi-structured in-depth interviews which further bred phenomenological reflections as data generation tools. Document analysis is defined as a research data collection technique that involves reviewing of documents of a system or systems to extract important and relevant information for research (Adam, 2010). Triad 3 (2016) define document analysis as the researcher's qualitative way of interpreting documents to give them voice and meaning in relationship to the topic of study. In this interpretive study, I chose document analysis and not content analysis which is mostly considered as a realist approach aimed at verifying how participants' views reflect their ideologies, thoughts and feelings. This implies that, document analysis serves qualitative purposes while content analysis mostly quantifies words in texts and speeches. Jamshed (2014) define semi-structured interviews as unwritten communication which involves a person asking questions in an attempt to elicit detailed information from another person. Semi-structured interviews use a set of pre-planned open-ended questions that activate discussions and allow probing for thick data. The flexible nature of semi-structured in-depth interviews allows participants to pursue important issues and make sense of their experiences (Longhurst, 2009).

Data from semi-structured in-depth interviews and documents was analysed using the Miles and Huberman (1994) framework of data reduction, display, and conclusion drawing and verification. Data was reviewed, selected, interpreted and summarised in relation to research questions and theoretical stances. Phenomenological reflections followed the Moustakas (1994) psychological phenomenological data analysis procedure. The next section presents limitations of the study.

Limitations

This thesis follows the hermeneutics nature of interpretivism and, as such, analysis is bent towards the researcher's reflexivity and epoche to gain new insights into the learning implications of the distance teacher training. The use of snowballing to reach out to student teachers, brought in time and distance estimation challenge, sorted out through adequate

allocation of time to the activity and meeting student teachers at a central point. This reduced the feared time and travel costs while I shouldered student teachers' transport reimbursement to and from their destinations despite that they also came for their own academic undertakings. Being a qualitative research, the results reflects the semi-structured interviews held, self-instructional materials and distance education guidelines read, ten phenomenological reflections analysed and two teacher training institutions visited.

Chapter conclusion

Chapter 1 has introduced the industrial theory and the nature of the study. The chapter presented the main limitation of the industrial education theory as side lining learning and learning support to bring in complete students' learning experiences. It has been argued that the industrial education theory requires complementary strengths from conversational learning and phenomenology to successfully explore the learning implications of the distance secondary teacher training in Malawi. The chapter presented the interpretive paradigm as the roadmap guiding navigation of this study while centring on a blend of tenets of three theories; the industrial education, conversational learning and phenomenology as theoretical framework. It has been argued that a blend of tenets planning, coordination, division of labour, specialisation, mass production, real and mediated conversation, shared and lived experiences from three related theories is central in exploring the learning implications of the distance secondary teacher training in Malawi. The chapter further presented the research problem, research objectives and questions, research significance, methodology and limitations.

Chapter outline

Chapter 2 provides an overview of the education system and teacher training in Malawi and explains the rationale for the distance secondary teacher training as to expand access to teacher education and reduce gender inequalities. The chapter presents two arguments: first that slow growth of secondary education in Malawi facilitated the adoption of distance education at secondary school level while its abrupt expansion called for secondary teacher distance training. Second, that, as a technologically underprivileged nation, Malawi relies on predetermined instructions and thus, requires the systems strategy to explore its distance education institutional organisation. It is explained in this chapter that total adherence to traditional practices hinders effectual provision of learning and learning support as discussed in chapters 7, 8 and 9.

Chapter 3 briefly describes distance education and its institutional organisation with more focus on dual mode models, the main global challenges they face mentioning: Some organisational philosophy, absence of national policy and stakeholders' doubt on ODE's legitimacy and quality, academics resistance to change, unclear career path, insecurity and tension due to lack of expertise and lack of support from traditional institutions on how existing barriers hinder total mainstream of distance education and growth of dual mode institutions. While discussing dual modes, the chapter argues that the establishment of a special system with supporting distance education systems ensures effective distance education and learning support that yield positive learning experiences. The chapter hints that total immersion of the distance teacher training in the traditional practices impedes growth of distance education and students' achievement of goals to be discussed in chapters 8 and 9. It augments the general argument that, with limited understanding of distance education institutional organisation, the distance secondary teacher training in Malawi may entirely adopt traditional practices.

Chapter 4 formulates the theoretical framework by integrating tenets of industrial education: planning (systems), coordination, specialisation and division of labour and mass production with that of conversational learning: mediated and real conversation and phenomenology's lived and shared experiences within the interpretive paradigm to guide this study. The chapter details the theoretical framework and shows why it is useful in exploring the learning implications of the distance secondary teacher training in Malawi. The chapter starts by discussing opposing paradigms, positivist, critical and interpretive and indicates that the

interpretive is more suitable for this study. The chapter suggests holistic descriptions and in-depth interpretation as guides for the analysis and improvement of the industrial education theory by merging some of its tenets to those of phenomenology and conversational learning. The chapter presents two arguments: first, that the industrial education theory appears inadequate in effecting learning and learning support to students, the conversational learning theory cannot expose organisational issues while phenomenology is fit only for sharing of lived experiences. Second, that a blend of tenets from industrial education, conversational learning and phenomenology theories can ably expose the learning implications of a distance secondary teacher training.

Chapter 5 outlines the research procedure for this thesis. While expounding and positioning the qualitative- interpretive research design with a case study method as suitable for the study, I also engaged reflexivity and epoche for the data's trustworthiness. The chapter explains the study's population, data collection methods and analysis and ethical issues. It is explained in this chapter that data analysis was done by drawing emerging themes pointing to a blend of industrial education, conversational learning and phenomenology to yield institutional organisation and learning implications. It is mentioned in this chapter that while chapter 6 presents participants understanding of open and distance education, chapters 7, 8 and 9 present nature of institutional organisation, distance teacher training enactment and learning implications of the training respectively. The argument presented in the chapter is that, the interpretive paradigm permitted the researcher to draw a holistic and deep understanding of the learning implications of the distance secondary teacher training in Malawi.

Chapter 6 discusses findings on participants' understanding of open and distance education and the application of their understanding to learning and enactment based on the data. The chapter presents the argument that participants have a good understanding of open and distance education by definition, reasons for training through distance education, instructors' roles and nature of distance students. However, the chapter further presents the argument that it is not just the understanding that is important but the understanding of what to do with what you understand that matters.

Chapter 7 discusses research findings on the nature of institutional organisation of the distance secondary teacher training in Malawi based on participants' views. It shows that effectual institutional organisation of the distance secondary teacher training is challenged by

lack of planning to help set precise systems within the established distance education unit and guide distance training enactment. In this chapter, I argue that distance institutional organisation of the secondary teacher training in Malawi shows that the country has adopted one-size-fits-all philosophy, which negatively affects planning of the distance mode.

Chapter 8 discusses research findings on the enactment of the distance secondary teacher training based on the data. The chapter examines the distance teaching, learning and learning support offered by the uncertain distance secondary teacher training. It indicates a mismatch between student teachers' expectations and their lived experiences registering inadequacy in teaching, learning and learning support. It shows that effective institutional organisation of distance education is challenged by the adoption without adaptation of the one-size-fits-all approach reflecting mix of traditional with distance systems impeding effective enactment of ODE. The argument presented in this chapter is that, regardless of the adoption and mainstreaming of distance education in Malawi, the system exhibits limited understanding of the enactment of the distance mode.

Chapter 9 reflects and draws learning implications from chapter 6, participants' understanding of ODE, chapter 7, nature of distance education institutional organisation and chapter 8, enactment of the distance secondary teacher training in Malawi. Drawing on the three aspects, the learning implications are also wedded to theoretical lenses of planning (systems), coordination, specialisation, division of labour, real and mediated conversation, shared and lived experiences. It is in this chapter that participants' views on improving the distance secondary teacher training in Malawi are incorporated. The chapter presents the argument that, thorough understanding of the open and distance education enactment even within the one-size-fits-all approach could impact student teachers' learning positively and improve retention.

Chapter 10 concludes the thesis by suggesting improvements on the distance secondary teacher training as well as the blending of the industrial education theory's tenets with those of the conversational learning and phenomenology that formed the study's theoretical framework as a way of integrating learning and learning implications. It suggests distance education implication model integrating planning (systems), coordination, specialisation and division of labour, mass production, real and mediated conversation, lived and shared experiences. It is argued that planning in distance education encompasses establishment of systems and sub-systems requiring coordination, specialisation and division of labour to

achieve interactive mass production of instructional materials. It is further argued that interactive instructional materials offer mediated conversation while students' direct interaction with instructors and peers provide real conversation. Again, students' experiences of participating in the distance training produce lived experiences whose disclosure entails shared experiences which are essential for training improvement and knowledge generation. The chapter further proposes a Malawi systems model incorporating study circle innovation based on the data. Lastly, the chapter presents issues for further research.

CHAPTER 2

THE EDUCATION SYSTEM AND DISTANCE TEACHER TRAINING IN MALAWI

Introduction

In this chapter, I argue for a need to engage with learning implications of the distance secondary teacher training in Malawi. This need is captured through the background that shows a research gap in institutional organisation of distance secondary teacher training and its impact on student teachers' learning experiences. This chapter intends to locate secondary education and the distance secondary teacher training in the context of the Malawian education system. The chapter presents the argument that, slow growth of secondary education in Malawi facilitated the adoption of distance education at secondary school level while its abrupt expansion called for secondary teacher distance training. It further provides the background to education and rationale for the introduction of distance teacher education in Malawi and secondary school teacher training in particular. The discussion starts with education divisions, districts, schools and enrolment in Malawi and the context of the study. This is meant to emphasise the need for an effectual distance training to produce qualified teachers for the increased secondary school enrolments stemming from the amplified primary school enrolments across the country.

Education divisions in Malawi and the context of the study

A discussion on education divisions, districts, schools and enrolment sets the basis for the understanding of Malawi's hunger for education and the need for vigorous distance education organisation and enactment. As shown in Figure 1, Malawi is generally divided into six educational divisions or regions: Northern Education Division in the north, Central East Education Division and Central West Education Division in the central region and South East Education Division, Shire Highlands Education Division and South West Education Division in the south. However, during the colonial administration through the one party dictatorship rule, Malawi was politically divided into three regions: Northern, Central and Southern regions up until its attainment of democratic rule that the Eastern region was added to the existing three regions (Lansford, 2012). As shown in Figure 1 and Table 1, education districts are clustered in various divisions as follows:

Table 1: District education offices by divisions

| | Division | Districts |
|----|---|--|
| 1. | South West Education Division –SWED | Chikwawa, Blantyre Urban, Nsanje, Blantyre Rural, Neno, Mwanza |
| 2. | Shire Highlands Education Division-SHED | Chiradzulu, Phalombe, Mulanje, Thyolo |
| 3. | South East Education Division –SEED | Machinga, Balaka, Mangochi, Zomba Rural, Zomba Urban |
| 4. | Central West Education Division-CWED | Dedza, Lilongwe Rural East (LLWE), Lilongwe Rural West (LLRW), Lilongwe Urban, Mchinji, Ntcheu |
| 5. | Central East Education Division-CEED | Kasungu, Nkhotakota, Ntchisi, Salima, Dowa |
| 6. | Northern Education Division-NED | Chitipa, Karonga, Likoma, Nkhata Bay, Mzimba North, Mzimba South, Rumphi, Mzuzu City |

Politically, Malawi has 28 districts split amongst the four administrative regions while academically; the regions are further split into six with 34 districts as shown in figure 1. Each district has an education office managed by a District Education Manager while a division is managed by an Education Division Manager. Understanding these demarcations is helpful in exploring the learning implications of the distance secondary teacher training in Malawi as they help explain the need for effectual learning support to students studying far away from the training institutions. It shall be shown that Mzuzu University and Domasi College of Education as lone public providers of distance secondary teacher training in Malawi need to outspread the distance systems to student’s door steps for positive learning implications. With Domasi College located in Zomba and Mzuzu University in Mzuzu City education district jurisdictions (Table 1; Figure 1), distance students may incur high travel costs when visiting educating institutions from their various destinations. Further, it may not be possible for distance students to access institution’s facilities like libraries and laboratories while away from the institution due to long distances hence, need for alternative support mechanisms.

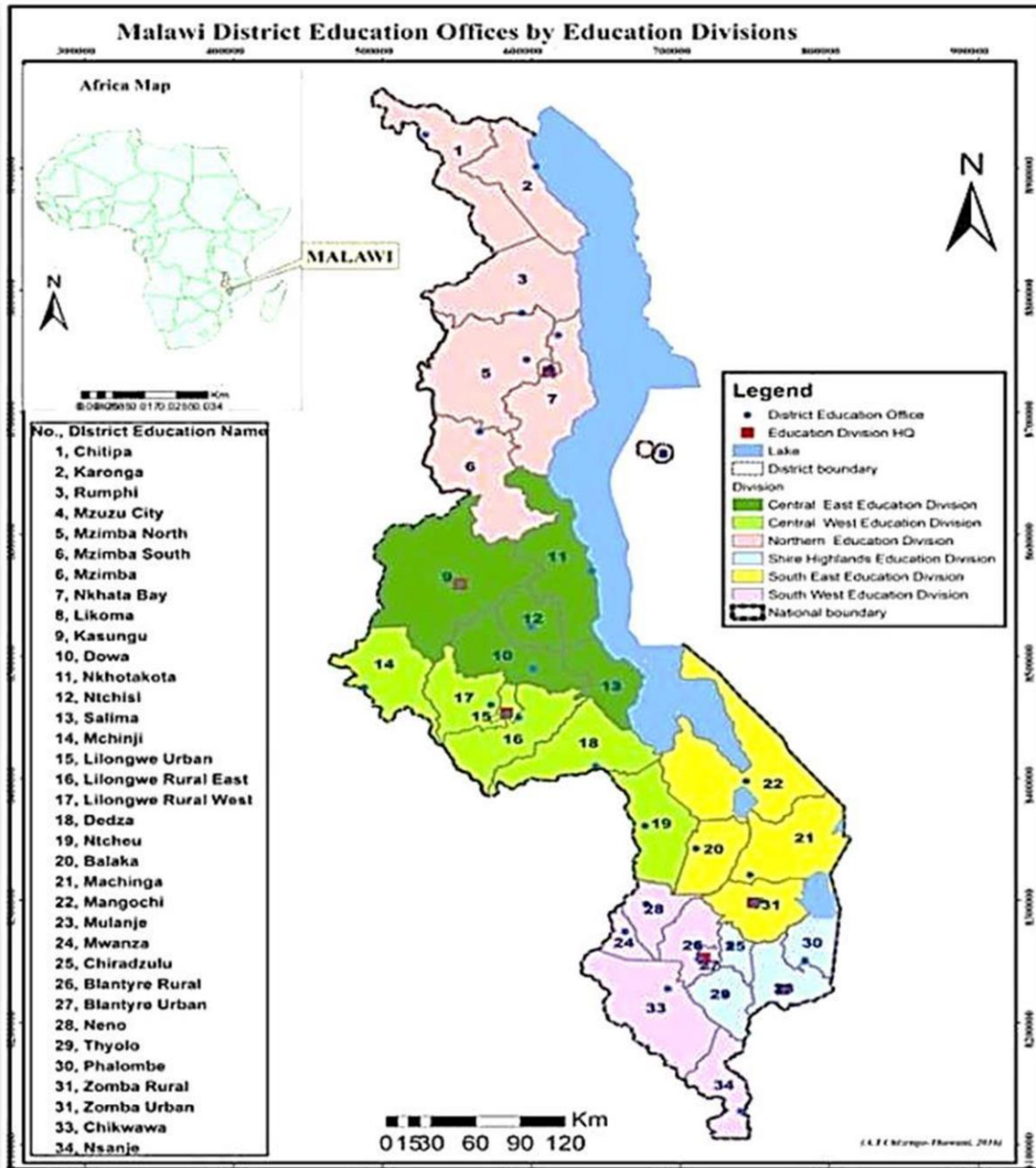


Figure 1: Map of Malawi showing Education Divisions and districts

The six education divisions have academically shown some different experiences in the number of education districts, schools, teachers and enrolment as shall be shown in Table 2 of this thesis. As noted, the Northern education division has eight districts in a single division and region, Central region has two education divisions and Southern region has three as it still takes in the Eastern region which has since been in the Southern part. As shown in the table, the number of districts is making up the education division ranges from four to eight with the Northern, South West, Central West and Central East comprising both urban and rural

districts. Understanding these diverse experiences is important in exploring learning implications of the distance secondary teacher training as they all explain the country's need for innovative ways of satisfying its educational hunger and distance students' learning needs.

The education system in Malawi and teacher training: Past and present

This discussion shows how Malawi has fought to address the high demand for secondary school education and to close the qualified teacher gap since the pre-colonial rule. The developments in Malawi education and teacher training follow four diverse stages of pre-colonial era, colonial era, one party and multi-party era thus considered as 'past and present' in this study. This discussion is essential as it links the delay in the development of secondary education and secondary teacher training to the introduction of distance education in Malawi. The argument is that, slow growth of secondary education in Malawi led to the adoption of distance education at secondary school level while its abrupt expansion brought in the need for secondary teacher distance training. This implies that Malawi needs a well spread effectual distance education to adequately address not only the qualified teacher space but the entire national educational hunger. Number of primary schools surpasses by far the number of secondary schools while under-qualified and unqualified teachers still exist regardless of the 16 years of distance teacher training adoption (see Table 2). Further, while under-qualified or unqualified teachers get training through the distance mode, those left out of the traditional university selection have no alternatives as distance education is mostly for teachers.

Primary and secondary education in Malawi: Past and present

As discussed, formal education was introduced in Malawi through the opening of the first primary school at Cape Maclear in Mangochi district in 1875 by the Free Church of Scotland led by Dr Robert Laws. This opened the way for the establishment of schools in various places of the country by different missionaries such as the Dutch Reformed Church, Seventh Day Adventist, Catholic, United Free Church of Scotland and the Universities Mission to Central Africa (Maravi Post, 2017). The dawn for the new era in Malawi's education system started with the churches' interest to partner with the colonial government in 1925 and the establishment of the Department of Education in 1926 (Chirwa, 2013). During the missionary era the school cycle was 10 years, which is 4-3-3 as the village and vernacular school took four years, three years for middle school and station school respectively. Currently the

Malawi education system follows the 8-4-4/5 structure with eight years of primary school, four years of secondary school and four to five years university education depending on the course of study. The then education cycle embraced village and vernacular, and middle and station schools with the former being established within children's reach with the aim of bringing education closer to the people. Village headmen were mandated to provide the village school with classrooms and a teacher's house. Teachers for village and vernacular schools were either qualified or middle school graduates. Those who graduated from village schools proceeded to middle schools in a larger catchment area generally in mission substations while station schools were located in mission headquarters and were taught by full time or part time missionaries. As was the case in most of the African countries, in Malawi the missionaries controlled the education system during the entire colonial era up until the countries got independence in 1964 (Chirwa, 2015).

As echoed in the 1961 Proceedings of the Addis Ababa Conference of African Ministers of Education, previously colonised nations' need for apt manpower enticed their focus in developing education after independence (Chirwa, 2015). While not forgetting the need for agricultural skills and community developments, the focal point for the conference was academic reform. The conference further embraced the introduction of African history and culture in the curriculum among other goals while allotting urgency to secondary and post-secondary education. Adult (andragogy) and primary education were developed correspondingly to drive the attainment of universal primary education in 1980. The conference's plan to educate most school aged children did not materialise in most of the independent nations regardless of the efforts made. For example; bordering countries such as Tanzania, Zambia as well as Malawi abolished school fees in the early 60's to increase equitable access to children's education (Chirwa, 2013). Malawi in 1965 developed a five year plan for education to expand the secondary and post-secondary education to accelerate the acquisition of skilled workforce. However, the plan could not only suffice expansion of the secondary and post-secondary levels while leaving out the primary school system. The Minister of Education empowered by the Act which was passed to establish Local Education Authorities. Section 4 (iii) of the 1962 Education Act authorised the Minister of Education with consultation with the Minister of Local Government to establish Education Authorities by Order published in the Gazette declaring local authority should be the local education authority for its area. Section 15 of the Education Act empowered Local Education Authorities fund to establishment and maintenance of primary schools while the government

focused on secondary schools (Chirwa, 2013; 2015). As a repeat of the missionary strategy, the Act promoted establishment of primary schools on a self-help philosophy thereby increasing enrolment in primary schools from 359,841 in 1964 to 779,676 by 1980 regardless of the failure in the free education plan.

After independence in 1964, the government longed for an education system that would respond to the needs and challenges of the independent Malawi which desired indigenous skilled manpower. This confirms the said gap in the then existing colonial education system. Malawi launched the first Education Plan in the formal education as a roadmap to the setting of the new education system in 1973 with the aim to:

1. respond to needs of the labour market;
2. synchronise curricular relevance with socio-economic and environmental needs;
3. improve efficacy in the use of existing resource;
4. promote equitable distribution of educational facilities and resources (Malawi Government, 2008, p. 2).

This was a seven year plan, from 1973 to 1980. The second education sector plan which included parastatal organisations associated with the Ministry of Education was set in 1985 to live up to 1995. In between 1995 and 2005, the education sector was guided by the Policy and Investment Framework and the Medium Term Expenditure Framework. Presently, the National Education Sector Plan (NESP) has been guiding the education sector since 2008 to 2017 (Malawi Government, 2008). The plan which applies to all levels of education in Malawi, embraced objectives which were from the former plan but in an improved manner as follows:

1. Expand equitable access to education to enable all benefit;
2. Improve quality and relevance of education to reduce dropout and repetition and promote effective learning;
3. Improve governance and management of the system to enable more effective and efficient delivery of services (Malawi Government, 2008, p. 1).

Malawi's education sector draws its three priority or thematic areas from the stated objectives. The government of Malawi through the Ministry of Education Science and Technology prioritises governance and management, quality and relevance and access and

equity as priorities attached to strategies to aid in attainment of improved education. Through the 2008-2017 NESP strategy, the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology sets out three priority or thematic areas which are educational pillars for all levels of education to positively contribute to national growth (Malawi Government, 2008).

As discussed earlier, the transition from one-party dictatorship rule to multi-party democratic rule in Malawi and the introduction of free primary school education in 1994 further inflated the primary enrolment. Regardless of the high dropout rate in the multi-party democratic rule leading to pyramidal primary education as it starts full with children and ends the cycle with a hand full (Malawi Government, 2016). This means that, standard one starts with high enrolment and the number decreases as the pupils go to upper classes. Despite the registered high dropout, enrolment in primary schools has massively increased in the past 20 years consequently exerting pressure on secondary and teacher education (Table 2). In 2016 the primary school enrolment increased by 17 % from 4, 154, 427 in 2012 to 4, 813, 883 (Malawi Government, 2016). It is this increase in primary school enrolment that has amplified the demand for secondary school education, widened the secondary teacher gap thus touching student teachers' learning experiences. With the qualified teacher gaps shown in table 2, the student teachers may be overwhelmed with large classes and heavy workloads while also studying on-the-job.

Table 2: Number of schools, teachers and enrolment per division by 2016/18

| Division | Primary Schools | Primary enrolment | Primary school teachers | Secondary Schools | Secondary Enrolment | Trained Teachers | Untrained Teachers |
|----------|-----------------|-------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|---------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| NED | 1,380 | 686,026 | 10,494 | 195 | 72,554 | 1,451 | 1,380 |
| CEED | 1,042 | 797,296 | 10,385 | 133 | 54,098 | 1,097 | 855 |
| CWED | 1,344 | 1,248,857 | 17,537 | 178 | 81,852 | 1,919 | 1,769 |
| SHED | 551 | 660,160 | 8,415 | 93 | 39,938 | 798 | 804 |
| SEED | 813 | 842,126 | 9,878 | 126 | 49,560 | 1,247 | 1,015 |
| SWED | 734 | 666,528 | 9,217 | 118 | 53,649 | 1,573 | 1,243 |

Source: Malawi education statistics (Malawi Government, 2016)

As shown, primary school enrolment does not match the secondary enrolment. The number of traditional secondary schools increased from 1,190 in 2016 to 1,226 in 2017 (Malawi

Government, 2016, p. 61 & 109). However, lack of space in secondary schools forces the government to base its selection on merit where those with excellent grades get places in well-resourced boarding and day schools. With very few government and Grant Aided secondary schools which are adequately resourced with qualified teachers, laboratories, libraries, furniture, other infrastructure and monthly government funding, most learners are selected to CDSSs. The remnants go for private or distance education. As discussed, and according to 2016 Education Management Information Systems data, only 18 % of the secondary schools are in the urban areas while 82% are in the rural where the majority of economically underprivileged Malawians live (Malawi Government, 2016). This implies that the rural settlers can hardly pay for good quality education or access good educational facilities due to lack of such resources in their localities and at their disposal. The challenges extend to distance secondary student teachers whose access to improved facilities may promote their learning at a distance.

Secondary school education

The delay in development of secondary education in Malawi broadens the gap between the number of primary schools and secondary schools while also leaving out eligible secondary school aspirants (Table 2). From the time the missionaries opened the first primary school in 1875, Malawi remained without any secondary school for about 65 years. The first secondary school was opened in Malawi in 1940, during the colonial era by the protestant missions in Blantyre (Chirwa, 2013). This marked the birth of secondary education in Malawi. Only Europeans then taught in secondary schools in an examination oriented approach. The government established Blantyre secondary school in 1941, Dedza in 1951, and Mzuzu Government in 1959. Catholic secondary school which opened in 1943 was the second to be established by missionaries (Maravi Post, 2017). As could be noted from the discussion, there was a wide gap between primary and secondary school levels by the time Malawi attained its independence. This made it difficult for many to access secondary education except the elite. As noted, the slow and late development of secondary education in Malawi implies that very little effort was put on its introduction as it was with the primary education during the colonial era. However, the secondary school system in Malawi continues to serve “economic demands rather than social demands” (Kunje & Chimombo, 1999 p. 10). This attaches the development of secondary school system to the expansion of the labour market and tertiary education barring its growth as compared to primary schools thus, limiting people’s access to

secondary education. Again, by 1964, Malawi with a population of 3 million people had about 360, 000 primary school students with only 6, 000 in secondary school (Maravi Post, 2017). This wide gap made it impossible for secondary school education to develop as the primary school education had done (Table 2). It was for this space and the people's limited access to secondary education that after independence Malawi introduced distance education for the secondary school level to increase access and response to labour market needs.

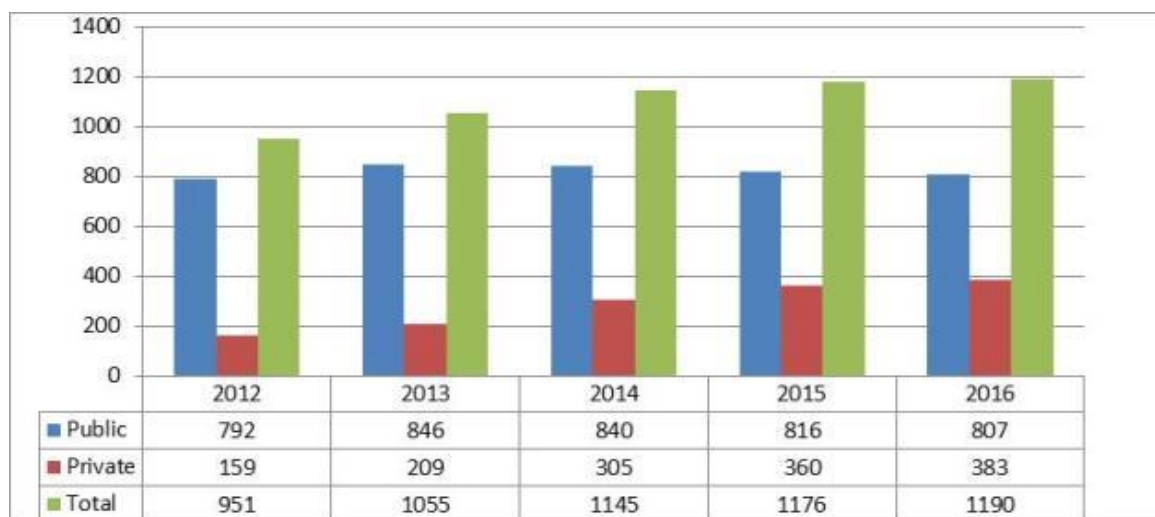
Space challenges in traditional schools can thus be traced back to the missionary era when station schools which were regarded as institutions of higher learning were characterised by highly competed selection. The traditional mode's reliance on instructor-student face-to-face contact makes it accessible only to the elite. The traditional mode uses brick and mortar (McGhee, 2017) to provide education to students at a fixed learning environment where everybody has to be present to benefit from the teacher's word of mouth. Distance education, however, offers education at the student's door step through media as the carrier of instructions. Distance education is a second chance to those who fail to make it to public traditional schools and or drop out of the traditional system due to one reason or another (Malawi Government, 2017). The Malawi government initiated distance secondary education through the Ministry of Education by introducing the Malawi Correspondence College and the Schools Broadcasting Unit in 1965. This aimed at expanding secondary education and upgrading primary school teachers from T3 professional grade for those holding a junior secondary school certificate to T2 grade after getting the Malawi School Certificate. The mission for the Malawi Correspondence College was to:

...provide education and training through correspondence learning methods...the correspondence Schools Broadcasting Unit ...to provide learner support through radio education programming. The programmes were to complement and supplement primary, secondary and teacher education courses (Malawi Government, 2017, p. 9).

The Correspondence College used correspondence centres during day and Night Secondary Schools in the evening as study centres for registered learners supervised by qualified primary school teachers. Correspondence centres and traditional secondary schools were both dual mode (to be discussed later) as they hosted night schools to accommodate those who could not make it during the normal school hours. The College evolved to Malawi College of Distance Education (MCDE) in 1987 (Malawi Government, 2017). Following the proceeding, MCDE followed ODE flexible modes, principles, policies, and practices. MCDE offers education through industrially developed and produced print conversational self-

learning materials complemented by radio, audio cassettes and face-to-face with regional centres in the Northern, Central and Southern Malawi. Further evolution includes upgrading of correspondence centres into Community Day Secondary Schools (CDSS) and turning night schools into Open Secondary Schools (OSSs) in 2002 (Modesto & Gregorioso, 2016). As was the case with upgrading of village schools to full primary schools in the colonial era, the development of CDSSs is shouldered by communities. Correspondence centres' supervisors though under qualified to teach at secondary school level, were entrusted with delivery of instructions in CDSS without further training (Malawi Government, 2017). Traditionally, secondary education is offered in two broad categories of public and private or independent schools as illustrated in figure 2.

Figure 2 Traditional secondary schools in Malawi:2011-2016

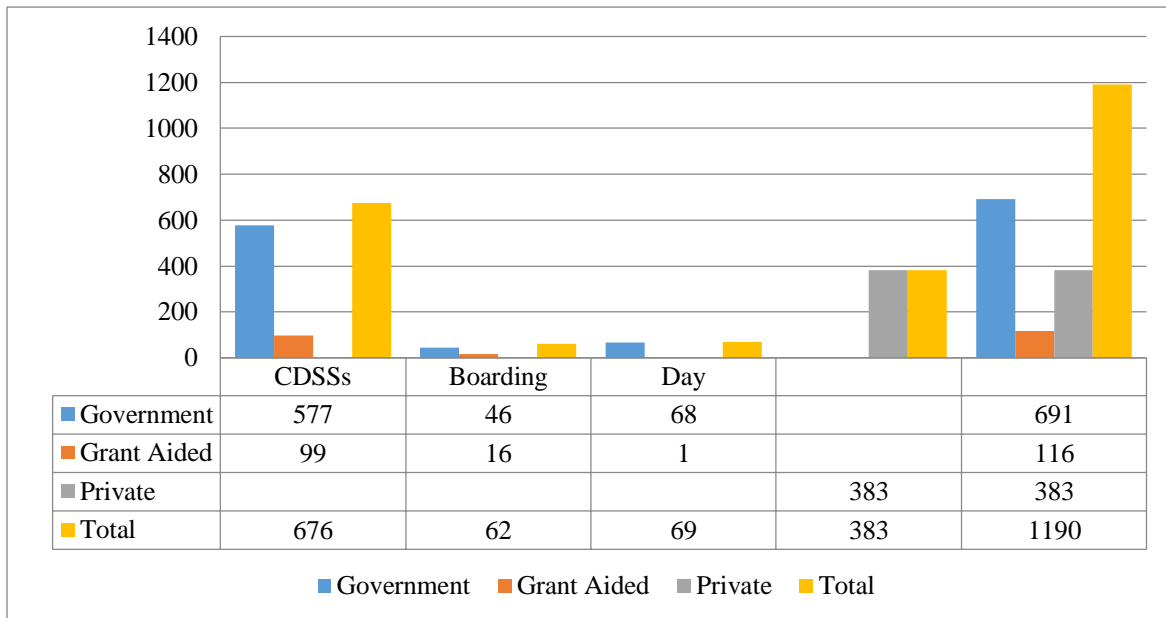


Source: Adapted from Malawi education statistics (Malawi Government, 2016, p. 61)

Public schools comprise government, grant aided (day and boarding) and CDSSs. Private or independent schools encompass designated and ordinary private schools. Generally, therefore, traditional secondary schools are divided into three broad categories of Government schools embracing national and district schools owned and funded by the government; Grant Aided schools owned by missionaries but partially funded and controlled by the government. The named school categories are allocated into boarding, day and CDSSs. Private secondary schools are a third category whose proprietorship is purely private. Public secondary schools increased in number by 6.8 % from 792 in 2012 to 846 in 2013, but decreased from 846 in 2013 to 807 by 2016 representing 4.6 % (Malawi Government, 2016). The decrease substantiates earlier claims of slow growth of secondary schools. Some missionaries turned grant-aided secondary schools into private schools. As discussed, the

increase in number of secondary schools and primary school enrolment expanded the secondary school enrolment by 35.2%, from 260,064 in 2012 to 351,651 in 2016.

Figure 3: Total number of secondary schools in Malawi by type and ownership by 2016



Adapted from Malawi education statistics (**Malawi Government, 2016, p. 109**)

As shown in Figure 3 above, the number of community day secondary schools surpasses by far the government and grant aided schools. However, this is regardless of such schools being deprived of libraries, classrooms, laboratories and human resource. CDSSs are mostly taught by unde-qualified (some of whom are studying through the distance mode) and or unqualified teachers whose qualifications are not in education but other professions. The 2016 Ministry of Education, Management Information System (EMIS) statistics indicates 3, 677 CDSS untrained teachers with 3, 317 for private schools compared to 56 and 100 for boarding and day secondary schools respectively. Regardless of being rich in both physical and human resources, designated schools are accessed by economically rich persons who can afford high school fees. Mere private schools which are of lower standards than designated schools are owned by individuals or non-governmental organisations. Such schools commonly known as private schools are either adequately resourced if certified by the government or inadequately resourced if run illegally. The government of Malawi through the Ministry of Education inspects and certifies private schools which meet set standards and reject or close down those not meeting the standards. The rejected schools are sometimes run illegally and are attended by underprivileged students as they are fairly cheap. These negatively affect quality of

education in the country as they employ poor quality infrastructures, teaching personnel, instructional materials and teaching methodologies. However, all the five (5) types of traditional secondary schools exist both in urban and rural areas with most of the CDSSs located in the rural areas while expanding secondary education. Malawi depends more on these community day schools due to their numbers as displayed in Figure 3 which are developed by communities through government's approval and as discussed, patronised by the underprivileged. Such schools originate from distance education centres converted to traditional institutions and managed by underqualified teachers while also entrusting surrounding communities to develop and own them.

Both traditional and distance students use the same curriculum, same teachers, same classrooms, sit for the same national examinations set and marked by the Malawi National Examinations Board (MANEB). This implies a one-size-fits-all philosophy to the adoption of distance education by letting the two different modes and schools regardless of their nature and capabilities get the same learning and examination treatment. However, students in designated schools sit for MANEB examinations if following the Malawi national curriculum or the general certificate of secondary education for the international or United Kingdom (UK) curriculum. As shown in the proceeding, not all potential primary school graduates can be absorbed by the government and grant-aided schools as they are few, consequently not even the CDSSs can take in the rest. The increased enrolment in primary and secondary schools and the hasty increase in the number of conventional secondary schools as discussed, gave pressure to tertiary education, teacher education in particular as discussed next.

Secondary teacher training

Teacher training or education is the process of instilling in the student teachers, professional knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary for the teaching profession (Gabona, 2011; Namunga & Otunga, 2012). This takes the form of pre-service and or in-service education programmes offered by recommended institutions of higher learning. Such programmes lead to certification as proof that the graduates have qualified as professional teachers. The provision of teacher education and training to targeted secondary school student teachers using the distance education mode is what is referred to in this study as distance secondary teacher training. Teacher education has proven essential in all circles of life as qualified teachers are a base for an effective education system, a tool to cultural preservation, agents of societal transformation and disseminators of relevant education (Kafu, 2011). Teachers'

professional know-how has sometimes been instilled in them through Continuous Professional Development for lifelong education to maintain teachers' usefulness in society. These CPDs refresh teachers' knowledge, skills and professional attitude and keep them abreast with emerging curriculum related and administrative issues making them fit for the levels they are teaching (Kafu, 2011). Distance education provides innovative and technological teacher education and training methodologies which take education and continuous professional development closer to the students regardless of their remoteness thereby educating masses.

Regardless of the prior discussion, enrolment for teacher training in Malawi developed slowly to the extent that by 1964 the primary school teacher colleges had an enrolment of only 1, 368 students, and 381 in Technical colleges (Maravi Post, 2017) with 90 in the university (Kotecha, Strydon, & Fongwa, 2012). Teachers training in Malawi are currently classified into two diverse sets. First, is the Primary Teacher training, regulated by the Malawi government through the Ministry of Education. Second, is the concern of this study, which is the Secondary School Teacher Training, regulated by the National Council for Higher Education with upgrading courses organised by the Ministry of Education. Until 2011 when the council was established by the act of parliament No. 15 of 2011, the secondary school teacher training was under the University of Malawi. The council is empowered to register and accredit higher education institutions and identify unregistered and devious providers of higher education (National Council for Higher Education, 2018).

As was the case with secondary education, secondary teacher education in Malawi started late and slowly with the establishment of the University of Malawi in 1964 whose operations started in 1965. The University of Malawi (2012) indicates that the university which started with Soche Hill College of Education and Mpemba College of Public Administration in Blantyre later moved to Zomba district. The expansion of the University was in its creation of other constituent colleges such as the Polytechnic in Blantyre and Bunda in Lilongwe and the merging of the college of Public Administration and Education in 1973 (University of Malawi, 2012). The development extended to the shift of the university from Blantyre to Zomba district while with a change in name to Chancellor College, leaving the Polytechnic and Bunda College untouched. The University of Malawi remained as a single university in the whole country, Malawi but kept on expanding such that in 1979, it opened the Kamuzu College of Nursing, Lilongwe campus and college of Medicine, Blantyre campus in 1991

(Kotecha, Strydon, & Fongwa, 2012). As a way to expand secondary teacher education, the Malawi Government converted Domasi Primary Teachers' Training College to a Secondary Teachers' Training College known as Domasi College of Education (DCE) in 1993 and became operational in 1994. As a fulfilment to the University's 2012-2017 strategic plan, DCE was incorporated into the University of Malawi in 2012 while Bunda College was delinked from the University. This development gave birth to a new and third public university in Malawi, the Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural resources born from the merging of Bunda College of Agriculture with the Natural Resources College (University of Malawi, 2012). Similar to DCE, Mzuzu Primary Teachers' College was turned into a second public university comprising an education faculty to train secondary school teachers in 1997 (Chawinga & Zozie, 2016).

The expansion through the inclusion of other colleges while shrinking by delinking other colleges further expanded the Secondary Teacher Education as education colleges increased in numbers. With the University of Malawi training teachers at Polytechnic, Domasi College, and Chancellor College constituent colleges complemented by the Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources, and Mzuzu University. Private universities like the Catholic university of Malawi, African Bible College and University of Livingstonia also offer teacher education programmes and award teachers with professional qualifications ranging from diploma in education to doctoral degrees. Out of the named colleges, only Mzuzu University and Chancellor College offer professional development qualifications to unqualified teachers in the form of university certificate of education (UCE). Further Malawi Government efforts to expand university education bred the Malawi University of Science and Technology (MUST) in 2012 adding the number of public universities in Malawi to four. The expansion of university education has not significantly addressed the qualified secondary teacher shortage in Malawi, (Table 2) as Domasi College and Mzuzu University remain the only providers of distance secondary teacher education. This interprets the students' psychological distance to the physical distance due to implications of their long distance travels to and from educating institutions for face-to-face orientation may bring on their learning experiences.

Distance secondary teacher education in Malawi

Being an economically ailing country, the Government of Malawi relied on financial and technical support from Commonwealth of Learning and the Canadian International

Development Agency to introduce distance secondary teacher training at Domasi College of Education in 2000. Domasi followed an industrial model of education by predeveloping instructional materials for the training with technical support from the Commonwealth of Learning funded by the Canadian International Development Agency. The Government of Malawi and its support agencies through the Secondary School Teacher Education Project hoped to raise the quality of education in Malawi by reducing the qualified teacher gap and gender disparities. The distance training positively impacted on the output as the college managed to produce 1, 200 diploma teachers by the year 2005 from 4 cohorts of about 300 student teachers each year. This portrays 100% retention and completion rate with no reported cases of dropout while also focusing on the expansion of its programmes to include traditional training of Primary Teacher Training tutors to degree level (Malawi Government, 2006).

As it still stands (Table 2), the qualified secondary teacher gap attracted yet the introduction of distance training for secondary school teachers at Mzuzu University in 2011 (Mzuzu University, 2010). Despite Mzuzu university being set by Act of parliament in 1997 and operational in 1999, the Malawi government's donor dependency syndrome infringed on its adoption of distance education until it got support from the World Bank (Chawinga & Zozie, 2016). Recently, the newly established Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resource introduced distance education which is not part of this study as it just started thereby giving hope to the nation's need of addressing educational hunger. Again, this sets a model to other existing universities that promote external or international programmes than the courses they offer thus, leaving Mzuzu University and Domasi College of Education as the only dual mode institutions offering both traditional and distance education under one roof.

As discussed, Malawi continues to face qualified teacher adequacy and retention challenges at both primary and secondary school levels especially in rural traditional secondary schools (Malawi Government, 2016). Inadequacy for campus-based education in terms of capacity to cater for the required numbers defeats government's efforts of achieving its educational pillars of equity and access, quality and relevance.

Unlike Domasi College of Education which targets primary school teachers teaching in secondary schools as under-qualified teachers, Mzuzu University opens doors to all eligible citizens regardless of their professional prominence. However, reduction of educational

disparities as stressed at Domasi College remains a constant variable for both Domasi College and Mzuzu University. The major goal for the distance secondary teacher training was to bridge the qualified teacher gap by training primary school teachers known as under-qualified teachers in this study, teaching in CDSSs (Malawi Government, 2007). Since these teachers attained a certificate to teach the primary school curriculum, they need further training to qualify for secondary school curriculum delivery.

Rationale for the distance secondary teacher training in Malawi

Given the issues highlighted, it was not surprising that Malawi introduced distance education for secondary school in 1965 and for secondary teacher training in 2000. Malawi as is the case with all other developing nations is still striving to make education accessible to all regardless of the adoption of distance education. As highlighted, Malawi is not an exception in the region and globally as it shares equity and access challenges due to the basic education enrolment boom pressing for space in secondary and higher traditional institutions. Thus the adoption and mainstreaming of the distance secondary teacher training in Malawi relays from enrolment boom at basic educational levels which also pushed for an abrupt convention of about 520 distance education centres to community day secondary schools (CDSSs) in 1998. This strategy engaged primary school teachers without further training in these newly created secondary schools thereby raising quantity of teachers in schools at the expense of quality and relevance. No wonder, Malawi for the past 16 years, has sought to reduce this number of under-qualified and unqualified teachers teaching in secondary schools without proper credentials generally (Nyoni, 2012; Mhishi, Bhukuvhani, & Sana, 2012; Simango, 2016) through the distance mode. Further, as a developing country, Malawi is economically handicapped with poor infrastructures thus, contributing to its struggle to offer equitable education access to all its citizens through the traditional mode. The mushrooming of independent schools requiring the same existing qualified teachers (Table 2, Figure 2 and 3) inflates the qualified teacher challenge in Malawi. Several research studies have shown that developing countries are hit by a critical shortage of qualified teachers at basic educational levels more especially in rural areas (Basanza, Milman, & Wright, 2010; Mhishi, Bhukuvhani, & Sana, 2012; Simango, 2016).

The adoption of distance education meant to supplement efforts while also taking care of shortfalls of the traditional mode such as rigid learning environment and resource inadequacy that includes space. Distance education as an innovative strategy of combatting teacher

shortage depends on its institutional organisation as a learning environment to yield positive learning experiences. It hence differs from traditional practices of confining students to a physical classroom by requiring a shift to a new environment, use of emerging technologies, reorganising structures, developing policies, and new vision (Simango, 2016). With the distance training hosted at Domasi College of Education and Mzuzu University traditional institutions as dual modes, (Chawinga & Zozie, 2016; Msiska, 2013) the Malawi distance training paths several other countries such as Zambia and Nigeria (Ipaye, 2015; Simango, 2016). These countries follow the one-size-fits-all philosophy embedded in the industrial nature of institutional organisation but with precisely set distance education systems while also enjoying some autonomy from the government on expansion and pedagogic innovations. Limited understanding of distance education institutional organisation may result in institutions entirely adopting traditional practices as done in most countries including South Africa (Minnaar, 2013).

The rationale for the distance secondary teacher training was to expand access to teacher education and reduce inequalities between male and female students. Malawi trails other countries like Nigeria (Ipaye, 2015), Zimbabwe (Kangai & Bukaliya, 2011; Musingafi, Mapulanga, Chiwanza, & Zebron, 2015), Zambia (Simango, 2016) in trying to make education accessible to all regardless of gender and physical disabilities. Distance training as introduced at Domasi College thus, targeted upgrading under qualified or primary school teachers teaching in community day secondary schools (Malawi Government, 2006). As a college of education and a constituent college of the University of Malawi, Domasi College only offers education programmes with courses aligned to secondary school curriculum and subjects to effectively bridge the qualified teacher gap.

Before the introduction of distance education for secondary school teacher training in 2000, teachers were only trained through the traditional mode using traditional practices. This could be one of the reasons that Malawi, as is the case with all developing countries, continues to face challenges in trying to provide education to all citizens, teachers in particular, through the traditional mode (Kangai & Bukaliya, 2011; Mhishi, et al. 2012; Chawinga & Zozie, 2016). The traditional mode of confining students to the four walls of the classroom has constraints over budget (Sullivan, 2016). Regardless of various achievements, deficiencies of the traditional mode is shown through

...shortage of qualified teachers; inadequate and inferior physical learning infrastructures... inadequate teaching and learning resources such as libraries; laboratories and computers... limited human capacity (Malawi Government , 2011, p. 42).

It is for this reason that many nations have adopted distance education to overcome the identified challenges. Distance education reduces space, distance and time barriers as students are separated in time and space for most of their study period. The continued shortage of qualified secondary school teachers in the rural areas of Malawi (Campain for Female Education, 2015; Malawi Government, 2016), renders traditional ways of teacher training redundant and inadequate. Traditional approaches require that the instructor be physically available and teach in a face-to-face situation within the four walls of the classroom. This approach regards the instructor as the disseminator of knowledge with students as passive recipients. Educators teaching in the traditional mode try to be a jack of all trades by being experts in content, communication, course and curriculum designing, course development and facilitation as part of specialisation (Minnaar, 2013).

Distance education institutional organisation

Institutional organisation is not clearly conceptualised in literature. Understanding of distance institutional organisation in this study is generally a direction in which the adoption of distance education is organised world over. Institutional organisation is a strategy of setting the distance system which countries and institutions put in place to facilitate organisation of open and distance education in a set environment. Dzimbiri (2015, p. 1) defines an education institution as an “organisation with a socialisation purpose” whose perfection and efficacy relies on its specificity of purpose, work specialisation and division of labour. The definition of an institutional organisation is mostly not done in studies as researchers tend to explain what it involves rather than what it is. Some of the scholars who have attempted to describe institutional organisation are Moore and Kearsley (2012) and Ipaye (2015). Ipaye (2015) argues that “organisational pattern and operating practices of ODL institutions depend on...philosophy underlying the establishment of the institution, economic restrictions, societal demands, political dictates and institutional control” (Ipaye, 2015, p.2). Therefore, in changing the institutional design or the mode of instruction, the institution’s organisation is affected as it re-arranges or transforms its organisational structures to enable and effectuate changes (Moore, 1983). The divergence of distance education from traditional education is in institutional and resource organisation, students learning and course design demanding

educators to have divergent organisational, professional and academic skills (Beaudoin, 2009).

Institutional organisation is perhaps the most important aspect of distance education enactment and the probable source of positive learning implications (Moore & Kearsley, 2012). This is because institutional organisation sets a clear boundary between the traditional mode and distance mode, specifies different constituents and allocates distinct activities to be achieved in a coordinative manner. It is through this organisation that planning plays a vital role in directing the setting of constituents and activities based on set vision, mission and mandate of the distance education system. For the separate constituents or systems to effectively operate, they require coordinative efforts from each through incessant communication to help set the distance learning environment. It is clear that there is no consensus on a specific strategy to the organisation of distance education at an institution, but the consensus lies in the need for an institutional organisation to effect learning and learning support. For example, while others prefer the holistic strategy (Perraton, 1981) to organising distance education some go for the transactional engagement (Asameroff, 2009) and yet others choose the systems strategy (Moore & Kearsley, 2012) while all target students' satisfaction.

This study aimed at finding out the nature of institutional organisation of the distance secondary teacher training in Malawi and establishes the learning implications the organisation brings on student teachers' learning experiences. The holistic and transactional strategies are described briefly to show how they were not fit for this study before discussing the systems strategy as the best approach to exploration of institutional organisation in this thesis. `

The holistic strategy - advocates use of media that are effectively produced and with similar teaching effectiveness. This is drawn from the conclusion that, instructions in learning materials need to be clearly presented with relevant content and interactivity to arouse learners' interest to learn. Perraton (1981) illustrates fourteen requirements of the holistic perspective analysis of the distance institution as follows: equity of all education media in efficacy, changing staff ratios, changing roles of a teacher, cost-effective production of results, exposal of diverse media for students to choose, multimedia employment, multimedia to maximise the system, reaching out to new audience through effective teaching approaches, certifying feedback, endorsing participatory learning, using real interaction to reduce costs,

using group learning, encouraging dialogue for suitable audiences to improve education and societal interactions (Rumble, n.d). However, the strategy fails to guide on the constituents building the distance institution and how production of effective media can be done in the holistically organised institution.

According to Rosdian (2019), in 2001 Wilkinson, Turrentine and Scheer conducted a study at the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University in America on institutional organisation based on the holistic strategy. The study used six elements totally different from the original aspects. The study used institutional commitment, effective organisational arrangement, engaged and supported faculty, programs of interest and value, appropriate technological infrastructures, and appropriate student support services. The study revealed evidence of institutional commitment measured by the institution's resource base and its obligation to refurbish distance learning and students' experiences in the institution. Effectiveness of the organisational structure was dignified by the inclusion of distance learning in the institution's strategic plan. Engagement and support of faculty was based on the provision of staff development to improve staff skills. The institution was further rated based on whether its programmes responded to students' and societal needs and possibility of growth through course expansion. The analysis also looked at the appropriateness of the technological infrastructure in terms of interactivity and suitability. Finally, student support, the key to quality distance education was also scrutinised to verify its administration, online faculty services and available student affairs. Studies further found the holistic perspective mean due to resource constraints, lack of effectual data base for online students and unequal online expertise among staff as experienced at Virginia Polytechnic. According to the study's findings, dissimilarities in staff expertise led to inequalities in instructional and student support delivery (Rosdian, 2019). With the economically ailing Malawi, the institutions under study can hardly employ the holistic strategy making it not fit for this study.

The transactional strategy – consider transactions as omnipresent in the universe as reciprocal shaping of everyone and everything result from unlimited interactions with the environment leading to relationships (Asameroff, 2009). This strategy advocates use of materials and varied existing human relations such as producers/developers, students, students' governance, and management, tutors, tutor management and counsellor management (Asameroff, 2009). The transactions in this case include teachers' roles of teaching, assessment, monitoring students' progress, advisory services and managerial issues

for learning efficacy. The transactional strategy of organising distance institutions promotes students' independence by allowing them to have control over their learning necessitating the design and production of interactive media thereby avoiding preplanned instructions. The strategy which is not fit for this study as it does not embrace preplanned curriculum, does not clearly divulge the imperceptible students' activities and logistics as displayed by the systems approach. Failure to show actual students transactions as they are not predetermined and the emphasis on replication of face-to-face as a source of real communication is regarded as a shortfall as impersonating real communication through arbitration alters content (Saba, 2012).

As discussed, the holistic and transactional strategies were not fit for this study as none of them clearly indicates expected constituents of the distance unit and their specific activities. Further, students' transactions in the two strategies are not predetermined as done in the systems strategy making it unfit for resource constrained nations which cannot do without preplanned instructions. The argument is that, resource constrained nations like Malawi depends on print instructions as primary medium of instructions and thus, cannot run away from predetermined and developed instructional materials (Chimpololo, 2010; Chawinga & Zozie, 2016).

The systems strategy is the splitting of the core activities of distance education into interrelated constituents to be coordinately recognised by the distance institution or unit. This strategy is paramount to understanding of distance education and key to best practice as through a system with its sub-systems together produce effective teaching and learning experiences (Moore & Anderson, 2003; Moore & Kearsley, 2012; Saba, 2012). This implies that distance education is a system comprising different component processes that operate when teaching and learning occur at a distance that includes learning, teaching, communication, design, and management.

The origin of the application of systems approach to distance education traces to Otto Peters, the first Vice-Chancellor (or Rector) of the Distance Teaching University in West Germany. Otto Peters 1973 interpreted distance study as an industrialised form of teaching and learning and conceptualised industrial organisational approach to distance education (Keegan, 2013). Established the concepts of division of labour and specialisation as the genesis of systems where instructors could specialise within the system. He promoted the establishment of entirely new and distinct distance education entity based on an industrial model as was the case with British Open University, instead of trying to transform the existing institution

(Keegan, 2013). Industrially, the basic education systems would be the ‘material’ and the ‘student’ sub- systems as systems, where the material sub-system ensures design, production by different expertise and distribution of instructional materials to students. With the conception of systems within a system and the use of varying expertise, the approach harnesses establishment of systems, specialisation and division of labour. This requires that distance education be detached from the traditional institution or be allocated a department in the prevailing institution with new systems and policies as discussed in chapter 10.

The systems strategy prevents “learning at work being informal and natural, the trend is towards an explicit and relatively structured activity clearly organised and described through systems” (Delgaty, 2012, p. 136). This implies that the strategy requires that all the existing sub-systems of the distance unit and their existing interrelationships be exposed and be known by all educators and students. It also recognises the significance of the quasi-industrial nature of distance education embedded in the production and distribution of materials linked to specialisation and division of labour. The systems strategy to distance education institutional organisation has been commended for allowing institutions to forecast the use of the internet to individualise learning, however, the approach has its shortfalls as shown below. It has been observed that dual-mode institutions employ the systems approach to institutional organisation as they mostly rely on print as their primary medium of instruction (Moore & Kearsley, 2012; Saba, 2012).

The systems strategy is perhaps the best approach for organising distance education institutions especially on dual mode institutions to draw a precise demarcation between distance and traditional education. Further, most of the dual mode models operate on preplanned curriculum with predetermined objective requiring well set systems to produce effectual teaching, leaning and learning support. This study aimed at exploring the nature of institutional organisation of the distance secondary teacher training and the implications it brings on student teachers’ learning experiences. With the resource constrained country, Malawi, as the context of the study, use of dual mode model and the systems strategy could help distance education to take advantage of existing resources to start. The use of predetermined curriculum could help institutions to reach out to many students in their remote localities where such instructions are the only source of content as the country has poor technological infrastructure (Chimpololo, 2010). Other studies done in Malawi by Msiska (2013) and Chawinga and Zozie (2016) revealed that the distance secondary teacher

training in Malawi relies on print media for instructional delivery. This implies that Malawi employs preplanned instructions which are an element of industrial education. The argument is that, as a technologically underprivileged nation, Malawi relies on predetermined instructions and thus, requires the systems strategy to explore its distance education institutional organisation.

Challenges of the systems approach to institutional organisation

- Its reliance on one-size-fits-all course structures inhibits students' and instructors' flexibility. Offers pre-planned and pre-packaged learning materials which are anticipated to suit each and every student. The content is standardised, following prearranged objectives as done in industrial production of goods and services where production follows a standardised format.
- Offers a “one-size-fits-all” curriculum with the belief that students need to learn in entire separation from instructors. It lacks important affordances of a complete educational experience, especially the interaction between the learner and the teacher, and among learners.
- Totally ignores learning support by separating the material from the student. This simply describes the separation between the teaching and learning activities. This approach detaches these two important components taking them as separate entities linked together through coordination.
- The provision of fixed programmes is expensive as it prevents the higher education system from responding better to diverse needs of students as such, the institution may die slowly.
- Its application on the British Open University can confusingly mean that it is fit for single mode distance education institutions which are autonomous and not the dual and mixed mode models.
- Although the systems approach seems argumentatively affordable to underprivileged countries such as developing countries, its application may not yield same results. Some institutions may not harmonisely align all the sub-systems and or operations of the entire system to come up with an effective distance education system (Moore & Kearsley, 2012; Saba, 2012; Nyoni, 2012; Simango, 2016).

As is the case with distance secondary education, distance teacher training in Malawi is hosted on existing traditional institutions requiring understanding of open and distance education, and roles of educators as shall be mirrored in chapters 6. The nature of institutional organisation of the Malawi distance secondary teacher training which is hosted on traditional institutions shall be reflected in chapter 7. The enactment of the distance secondary teacher training is presented and discussed in chapter 8. Learning implications of

the designed institutional organisation on students' learning is discussed in chapter 9, in which the teaching, learning and learning support is fully explored. The emphasis on setting of systems implies that successful distance education specialisation can be achieved through a system where teachers are specialists within a system. However, lack of understanding on what distance education is and how it can be organised for effective and quality learning to be discussed in chapter 10, remains a mystery. Generally, the adoption of distance education is just in the name and not in practice as educators think that just the use of media in traditional pedagogies and structures yield distance education (Moore & Kearsley, 2012). The authors emphasise on the organisation and enactment of distance education in a way different from the traditional practice by setting a special distance education unit with properly interlinked subunits. The Malawi distance secondary teacher training may have challenges similar to other institutions hosted by traditional institutions.

Chapter conclusion

Chapter 2 has provided an overview of the education system and teacher training in Malawi and explained that distance secondary teacher training was introduced in Malawian to increase access to teacher education and reduce gender disparities. It is argued in this chapter that, the slow growth of secondary education in Malawi facilitated the adoption of distance education at secondary school level while its abrupt expansion called for secondary teacher distance training. The chapter further defined institutional organisation before describing the holistic, transactional and systems as commonly employed strategies in exploring distance education institutional organisation. The chapter has justified the use of the systems strategy in exploring the nature of institutional organisation and precisely pointed out one of the major shortfall of the strategy as ignoring learning support.

CHAPTER 3

DUAL MODE MODELS AND INSTITUTIONAL ORGANISATION

Introduction

The purpose of this literature review is to glean studies related to the topic under study. The issues viewed in this chapter include institutional organisation of distance education and learning experiences in dual mode institutions of higher learning in the world. The review of related literature was important as it enabled the researcher to ask relevant key questions during the in-depth semi-structured interviews and scrutiny of documents and place the findings and interviewee's responses into context.

In order to bring about teaching, learning and learning support to distance students, effectual dual mode institutions have normally organised distance education through a distinct system or unit. Simango (2016, p. 52) explains that there are two designs of dual mode institutions which are 'centralised' and 'decentralised' systems. Decentralised dual mode model is devoted to faculties and schools and generally register declined activities than a centralised system except in profit oriented or probable major revenue generation for the faculty. The centralised dual mode uses a special unit with other related units within it while a decentralised dual mode attaches distance education to existing faculties or schools. According to Simango (2016) one of the implications of decentralising distance education in individual faculties is that both distance and traditional students are expected to use same resources including instructors. Contrary to the expectation, in some cases the faculties use instructors whose experiences and qualifications do not suit some of the courses they teach. The unit which is the base of distance education acts as a source of knowledge and practice of distance education and normally includes diverse specialists in instructional material design and development and students support service. Generally, the set distinct unit is administratively responsible for the welfare of distance education at an institution (Simango, 2016).

As discussed earlier, the systems strategy advocates breaking of diverse skills and specialisation into various sub-systems with different functionalities forming the distance system. Setting a special unit for distance education and its coordinative efforts brings the sub-systems together for effectual teaching, learning and learning support to possibly yield

positive students' learning experiences. Moore and Kearsley (2012) argue that a distance education system can among other things comprise student support, material production and distribution, finance management, human resource, policy, and the monitoring and evaluation systems. The student support system as the heart of open and distance education ensures that the needs of student are satisfied from admission to course completion. The material sub-system consists of experts that develop, design, produce and distribute programmes to affect teaching, learning and learning support. The financial management sub-system prepares a dynamic and achievable budget by estimating revenues and expenses based on the institution's goals and control of its expenditure. The human resource consists of an important asset of the institution; people who make up the work culture of the institution. It is argued that distance education staff is heterogeneous as it seeks expertise from different personnel on both part-time and full-time conditions while the policy systems draw policies for all the other systems (Moore & Kearsley, 2012; Minnaar, 2013). It is argued that distance education operates on predetermined decisions from the macro (national) levels which "reflect the culture and mission of the organisation, its structure, its funding, and the views and experience of its faculty" (Moore & Kearsley, 2012, p. 11) and later influenced and determined by institutional policy.

According to Minnaar (2013) the policies align all the units, strategies and processes and guide the goals. The monitoring and evaluation sub-system is responsible for evaluation of other sub-systems and or the whole distance education system. Effectiveness of learning materials for example; can be tried out to ex-students and experts at draft and final stages for feedback and error correction. Monitoring and evaluation includes the management information system which ensures proper flow of information in all the stages and sub-systems of the institution for realistic planning and inputs-outputs flow control. The management information systems ensure proper flow of information to reduce errors and wastage of resources. It promotes controlled admission to control costs and match procurement of raw materials with the production and distribution of learning materials and the provision of student support. However, it has been noted as a big challenge for legislatures and university senates to adopt policies that can facilitate education institutions' change espousing "from a craft approach to a systems approach" (Moore & Kearsley, 2012, p. 13). According to Moore and Kearsley (2012), the change requires that administrators redistribute the human and capital resources into the whole system and that instructors be retrained to work as specialists within a system. The argument is that, the establishment of a

special system with supporting distance education systems ensures effective institutional organisation that yield effective distance education and positive learning implications. Institutional organisation of distance education involves planning and organising the course and its content with diverse specialisations and division of labour to yield mass production of instructions. Chawinga and Zozie (2016) argue that distance education offers ample chance for diverse groups of people to diversely access education while also guiding on the unique nature of distance students. This organisation permits study flexibility and affordability thus, allowing students to study while working and taking care of families and course designers taking care of students regardless of their remoteness. Course production follows course design. Most institutions involve course teams such as writers, reviewers, editors, electronic media specialists and graphic designers in course design and instructional material development. The delivery of the curriculum through open and distance education systems requires pedagogical change in the way instructions are delivered and embraced by students. This brings substantial ways of students' approach and interactions with instructional materials and peers.

Introducing distance education in an institution means great change requiring all concerned to participate in the transformation process. For example; Moore and Kearsley (2012) cite diverse technologies, teaching and learning approaches and heterogeneous students in ODE as a departure from the traditional mode requiring a change in organisation and enactment practices. In open and distance education, planning is a process of change requiring implementors to adapt innovative teaching approaches which are dissimilar to the traditional practices. Planning comprises strategies such as formulation of a strategic plan, policies, systems and challenges while also considering the impact challenges may bring to the institution. Moore and Kearsley (2012, p. 21) argue that, in a high-quality distance education system, after deciding what is to be taught and learnt, considerable expertise and time is devoted to analysing the educational messages to determine the ideal combination of media and technologies that would best deliver that content. The growth of distance education implies a transformation in institutional culture of training institutions leading to constant recognisable rise in the quality of distance education. Quality and accountability in distance education is a requirement as the courses delivered by mediated programmes are easily accessed and open to scrutiny by the general public to which the instructions are offered (Nyoni, 2012; Simango, 2016).

One of the key features to the ever-changing distance education is the provision of effectual learning support to distance students. This is a critical constituent of the distance system that accelerates students' learning and drives their success through the study journey which is not without encounters (Chinwe, 2009; Chimpololo, 2010; Gupte, 2015; Chawinga & Zozie, 2016).

Conceptualising distance education and lived experiences

This section of the thesis reviews some of the most common definitions of distance education and how these differ in the way they impact on distance education enactment and students' learning experiences.

The discussion on distance teaching, learning and training conceptualises distance education and students' lived experiences thereby demystifying the concepts while also uncovering the components of distance education. Distance teaching, learning, training and learning support are all part of distance education whose aim is to bring about learning.

Distance education definitions still remain elusive. Some define distance education as separation in time and locality while others look at technology use (Modesto & Gregorioso, 2016). It is evident that distance education and technologies are inseparable because in order to reach a student at a distance locale, one must use certain media or technologies. Keegan (1980) describes distance education as learning and method of instruction characterised by separation of the instructor and learner. However, within a distance education system, information and communication are exchanged using print or electronic communications media through different approaches and models (Keegan, On defining distance education, 1980). Conversely Moore (1983) argues that distance in education is a social and psychological phenomenon and the distance between the instructor and learner in this case is determined by the dialogue between them. According to Moore and Kersley (2012) distance education is a system of constituent processes such as teaching, learning, communication, design and management operating through teaching and learning done at a distance.

There are debates about interaction of learners with learning materials as one type of interactivity in distance education; instructor-learner, and learner-learner. The interactivity is also necessary to create the optimal conditions of learning while offering the desirable level of transactional distance between the learner and the instructor. Hence, dynamic learning

systems, which provide differential responses to individual learners, offer the condition in which emergent learning behaviours can manifest themselves while accommodating predetermined learning objectives. This shows that the novice student requires a high level of structure, and as their expertise increases, they would also become more self-reliant (Saba, 2012).

Distance learning versus distance education

The terms distance learning and distance education are used interchangeably to mean student interaction at a distant locale (Moore & Kearsley, 2012). The term distance according to Moore (2013), relates not only to time and space separation between the instructor and the student, but also the level of structure and interaction amid them. In this case, distance is defined in terms of instructive and not physical separation (Moore & Kearsley, 2012). This further denotes the psychological gap experienced by the students due to their separation from the physical instructor. Increased levels of the required interaction or dialogue mean a decrease in structure and distance (Moore, 1983) which Grooms (2015) considers as a signal that interaction is vital in distance learning. Further, Holmberg (2003) defines the interaction in distance learning not in terms of dialogue and structure as discussed, but dialogue regarded as conversation leading to active students' participation. However, Moore and Kearsley (2012) argue that the best construct to encompass teaching and learning processes depicting the pedagogic and or andragogic teacher-student relationship at a distance, is distance education and not distance learning. This argument implies that processes of teaching and learning if effectively wedded make up education. This definition of education implies that distance education is the teaching and learning achieved while the instructor and the students are mostly separated in time and space.

Distance education is the education which therefore delivers instructions through technologies with students irregular or no physical visits to the physical schools/colleges (Kentnor, 2015). The commonly employed media being pre-planned and pre-arranged instructions pre-packaged in print, radio and television broadcasts, computers, telecommunications, and video, and audio cassettes (Chinwe, 2009; Kentnor, 2015; Chawinga & Zozie, 2016) yielding industrial education. Distance education institutions employ either single medium or multiple media (multimedia) to instructional delivery. The Open University of China, the Open University of the United Kingdom and the University of South Africa are good examples of multimedia institutions. The Open University of China for

example; uses the radio, audio-visual materials, television, and print as instructional and student support media (Open University of China, 2012). In such developed countries, distance education institutions employ advanced electronic media for course and support delivery. In some cases students even choose the suitable media, the place of study (work place, home or campus) and time to complete their studies (pace). Some developing countries, Mexico and India inclusive, manage to use satellite television to support students even at secondary school level (Gatsha, 2010). However, to such countries and some developed countries, print remains the primary medium of instruction denoting engagement of industrial education predominantly signaled in mass production of pre-planned and pre-packaged instructional materials.

Moore and Kearsley (2012, p. 12) explain that online learning and electronic learning (e-learning) are forms of distance education in which teaching and learning banks on the internet. According to Moore and Kearsley, distributed learning takes place anywhere and anytime as done in home study and asynchronous learning done at different times through the internet as other forms of distance education. Distance education embraces synchronous and asynchronous learning with synchronous and asynchronous technologies. Synchronous technologies as media that support all the students at the same time and or place for example; synchronously, the distance students supported at the same time and space by means of workshops, seminars and tutorials in study centres. Again, the students can further be synchronously supported in their remote locale while being guided by the timetable with facilitation from direct-broadcast satellite such as the web, audio, video, conferencing and internet radio. Mutual support to students can be achieved while students are far apart in different places but connected through television, video or audio with one way or two way communication, radio, and telephone. Asynchronous technologies like print, fax and electronic mail (e-mail), recordings of direct broadcasts as done in computer conferencing are used to support students at different times and places (Kentnor, 2015). As argued, students belonging to the same class can be supported individually or as a group thus, determining the distance and openness of the distance education provision (Danaher & Umar, 2010).

The teaching human resource in a distance education institution also known as instructors, facilitate instructional materials design, production and distribution through technology for mass students involving varying expertise. It is further argued that more flexible and interactive instructions in distance learning is obtained through different forms of e-learning

like interactive radio instructions, interactive audio instructions, online virtual games, webinars, and or webcasts. Internet use and its support for texts, audio and video formats expedite technological progression in distance education (Siaciwena & Lubinda, 2008; Danaher & Umar, 2010; Moore & Kearsley, 2012). Msiska (2013) and Chawinga and Zozie (2016), report on Malawi's reliance on print or modules asynchronous technology for secondary and primary distance teacher training with 30 minutes per week radio synchronous administrative and academic communication to primary school teachers. The primary student teachers are communicated on teaching philosophies, strategies and assignments submission and feedback by the Malawi College of Distance Education's Tikwere radio programmes aired on public radio stations (Malawi Government, 2007). The concept distance teacher education therefore encompasses both teaching and learning practices.

As alluded to in De Houwer, Barnes-Holmes and Moore (2013) the functional definition of learning, ambiguities exist in the definitions of learning. For example, learning is regarded functionally "as changes in behaviour subsequent of experience or mechanically as changes in the organism emerging from experience" (De Houwer et al., 2013, p. 2). According to De Houwer et al. not all changes in behaviour sprout from experience for example; temporal changes in behaviour due to anxiety or inspiration cannot be part of the learning definition. The preferred definition attaches learning to an organism's contact with and inherent adaptation to the milieu. In traditional education, students rely on face-to-face contact with the teachers for learning to take place while in distance education learning entails students' interaction with content, instructors and peers (Groom, 2015). It is possible, for example; to indulge in the process of teaching in the absence of learning. For instance, the instructor may produce none interactive or irrelevant instructional materials thereby hindering students' contact with content and intended learning occurrence as is mostly expected in industrialised teaching. A distance learning institution that does not provide interactive instructions does not benefit the students. Similarly, institutions that solely depend on instructional materials produced and distributed based on the industrial processes as a sole source of student interactivity mostly yields incomplete educational experiences (Saba, 2012). This is due to lack of emphasis on real conversational presence between the student and the instructor and among students. Anderson, Lorne, Jon and Judi (2015) for example; argue that the teaching presence in industrialised instructions and assessments may produce learning, while lacking in its absence of students' discussions and face-to-face sessions to help identify students' challenges. Similarly, Saba (2012), argues that ideal learning is achieved when students

interact with both instructional materials for students to construct meaning of the world around them, and peers and instructors to reduce the psychological gap amongst them.

The functional definition of learning considers “learning as changes in behaviour of an organism” (De Houwer et al, 2013, p. 2) in relation to expectations and milieu of the organism. This means that administrators in distance mode and training institutions should organise their resources differently from the traditional mode to enable teachers design courses and interact with students through technology (Moore & Kearsley, 2012). To increase dialogue, reduce the distance and effect conversation in a distance learning environment, students require diverse support necessitating their knowledge of how to study and converse via technology. Students’ interaction with the learning materials is a source of interactivity (Saba, 2012) in home and work environments coupled with peer and student-instructor conversation conducted in other settings. This simply means that interactivity is a requirement in distance education either through simulation and or real conversation (Holmberg, 2003) through student-instructor and student-peer communication and or gatherings. This further indicates that learning in education can be intentional and or unintentional. For example; someone may intentionally or purposely acquire knowledge, skills and attitudes as designed by education experts and stipulated by the curriculum. Consequently, one may learn something accidentally and unintended. It is possible for example; for change in behaviour to occur outside the intended curriculum or set curriculum or the education setting. In education, learning is “planned; as the path to learning is designed by an expert or experts” (Moore & Kearsley, 2012, p. 2). While browsing on the internet for example; one may learn something but what is learnt if not designed by the instructor then, it is outside the instructive practice.

However, in distance education a prospective student’s dire need to learn aggravates instructors’ strategies and support to accomplish learning in the student and complete the education process. For example; identification of prospective students’ needs in distance education leads to the design and development of courses that would respond to those existing needs. Challenges and societal or national needs force education institutions to evolve in an attempt to offer appropriate courses to address the needs. In Malawi, for example; the increased shortage of qualified secondary school teachers prompted the government through Domasi College and Mzuzu University public institutions to introduce distance secondary school teacher training.

Distance education and training

In institutions of higher learning, education and training are used interchangeably to mean education. Similarly, teacher and instructor are matching terms employed alternatively in education as is the case with teaching and instruction. Training is a part within the education segment meant to impart practical skills to students. In this case, students learn practical skills relating to their profession. For example, student teachers are exposed to the teaching know-how of their inspired profession. The teachers learn both theory through content coverage and practical work (Ipaye, 2015) through peer or micro-teaching and teaching practice pertaining to the pursued teaching career. In response to terminological ambiguities, philosophers of education have come up with reliable modes of learning coupled with approaches of institutional organisation to yield learning and positive learning experiences (Nyoni, 2012; Simango, 2016).

Learning and lived experiences

The term ‘experience’ refers to positive or negative emotional or psychological feelings one has towards something (Gatsha, 2010). The term experience phenomenologically concerns the future, hence necessitating “openness, choice... reflective action and voluntary commitment” (van Manen, 1995). Originating from the German noun ‘Erlebnis’ (experience) comes from the verb ‘Erleben’ meaning ‘to relive’ or “to still be alive when something happens”(van Manen, p. 217) It is argued that this form of experience adds to our knowledge of the phenomenon. Experience is further explicated as to “acquire knowledge or skills during a period of practical involvement in something especially experience gained in a particular profession, an event or occurrence, which leaves an impression on someone; to encounter, to undergo, to feel” (Rooyen, 2015, p. 22). The experience can hence be negative or positive depending on whether it brings lethal or optimistic impacts. According to this study ‘lived experiences relate to positive and or negative feelings teachers trained at Mzuzu University and Domasi College of Education may have towards the programme and educators. The lived experiences extend to instructors and administrators (educators) technical know-how and their perceptions of the distance programme. The teachers under study have hands-on experiences as participants of the secondary teacher distance programme, as such have perceptions, perspectives and diverse but shared understanding of the phenomenon, distance programme. The lived experiences expose returns and challenges of open and distance education in relation to student teachers, educators and the nation. The

positive experiences embrace returns of distance education while negative experiences denote challenges of the distance training as institutionally organised and experienced. The experiences thus, embrace the nature of teaching, learning or training and learning support processes the students went through in their acquisition of theoretical and practical knowledge, skills and attitudes.

Studies in distance education indicate some similarities in students' experiences of distance learning (Gupte, 2015; Musingafi, Mapulanga, Chiwanza, & Zebron, 2015). Such experiences are also noticed in the way the tutors or lecturers perceive the delivery of instructions at a distance. As recommended by Kim (2015), I reviewed studies by Gupte (2015) and Musingafi et al. (2015) to situate this study and avoid unnecessary repetition of same study or incidental plagiarism. Through the review, I related and compared the findings with that of the learning implications of the distance secondary school teacher training in Malawi hence sharpening the focus of this thesis.

Gupte (2015) conducted a study at Maharashtra in India whose purpose was to examine students' perceptions of Indira Gandhi National Open University, gauge their achievements, challenges faced and how they overcame them. This study showed instructors' positive experiences of enjoyment offering counselling and tutorials to student teachers though it meant, sacrificing their vacation. The study indicates that working with experienced adults who are also teachers, was easy. It is also reported that contacts with many student teachers made it possible for the college to reach out to mass rural school going children where the students were attached. The lived experiences indicated the primary school teachers' happiness with the bachelors' degree offered by Indira Gandhi National Open University as motivated by:

Getting a higher qualification (a degree in teaching), gaining knowledge on how to teach and getting a promotion after graduation and a salary hike. The degree programme reported to have created teachers' recognition in the society and their opportunities for further studies in education (Gupte, 2015, p. 5).

Students' positive experiences were drawn from their satisfaction with the programme's intensive practical schedules and application oriented assignments which they said, promoted their critical thinking. On student support, the study indicated that the student teachers got emotional, mental, moral and physical support from different sources which includes; family

members, colleagues, former students, counsellors and study materials. The findings indicate students' satisfaction with the learning materials' availability but complained that:

English as a medium of instruction was difficult for them to understand as they previously learnt in vernacular hence expected materials to use local languages. Accommodation and travel distances to face-to-face sessions were a limitation (Gupte, 2015, p. 5).

According to the study, the educating institution, Indira Gandhi National Open University responded to students' complaints by sometimes providing accommodation in hostels at an affordable fee and using local languages during counselling sessions and teaching practice. However, the study reports that students' personal challenges were handled by the students themselves and their families through determination and persistence.

A study on challenges for open and distance learning students trained by the Zimbabwe Open University done by Musingafi et al. (2015) disclosed negative student experiences in the form of challenges faced. The study established individual related challenges as lack of sufficient time for study, access and use of information communication technology, financial constraints, lack of support from employers and travel obstacles related to distance between home and regional centres. Instructional related challenges include ineffective and delayed feedback on assignments and examinations, lost scripts and unrecorded grades. The study reported that instructional challenges derailed students' progress to next content. Institutional related challenges identified include "delayed and lack of study materials, lack of counselling and guidance, inadequate academic and administrative student support. The study suggested that the institutions should impart information communication and technology, and self-study skills in the students, recruit competent and self-motivated instructors, produce and distribute adequate learning materials and provide counselling and guidance to students.

The present study focused on the exploration of learning implications of the distance secondary teacher training in Malawi. This link is missing in the studies above, and therefore the present study fills that research gap.

Teaching, learning and Student Support

As discussed, student support is the core of distance education if students' goals of learning through the distance are to be achieved. The terms 'student support' (Ramdas & Masithulela, 2016; Kangai, Rupande, & Rugonye, 2011), learning support (Gatsha, 2010), academic support (Chawinga & Zozie, 2016) are used interchangeably to mean the same. Khrishnan

(2012) and Kangai, Rupande, & Rugonye (2011) used the term student or learner support to mean various help given to students learning outside the four walls of the classroom while Gatsha (2010) refers to it as learning support. Again, literature establishes that properly planned, coordinated and implemented learning support safeguards success of the distance education institution (Isman, Aydin, & Simsek, 2014). With constant communication or conversation, student support acts as a distributor of pre-packaged instructions and a source of interactivity between the teacher and the student and among students as peers (Khrishnan, 2012). Tireless conversation amongst the peers and, or between the distance the teacher and the student divulges conversational learning whose provision is done differently by different distance institutions dependent on resource availability, level of commitment and creativity. In distance education learning support is done correspondingly with teaching and learning hence achieved through student teachers face-to-face situations or incorporated in instructional materials.

The aspect of face-to-face interaction between the student and the instructor as well as amongst students as peers, also known as real conversation, is an important component of open distance learning. As a tenet of conversational learning theory, (Holmberg, 2003) asserts that real interaction is achieved by instructor's physical interaction with the students and or student contact with peers. Mnyanyi and Mbwete (2009) consider face-to-face session as a vibrant tool even in situations where electronic platforms such as the modular object-oriented dynamic learning environment are employed. In their study on open and distance learning in developing countries; Mnyanyi and Mbwete exposed the need for physical instructor-student contact as essential in information and communication technology distance training. It is deliberated in literature that orientation whether direct or online is a source of face-to-face interaction and is favoured by distance students (Mnyanyi & Mbwete, 2009). However, literature reveal that "there is no online orientation at Mzuzu University because of poor infrastructure in Malawi" (Chawinga & Zozie, 2016, p. 11). These researchers based their argument on Malawi, a developing country and United Kingdom, a developed country indicating that the economic differences between the countries justify why Malawi is technologically behind. However, this is dissimilar to other developing countries like Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania and Zambia discussed earlier that supplement print with radio, phones, SMS, electronic mail, internet inter alia (Muyinda, 2014; Kigotho, 2013; Danaher & Umar, 2010). As discussed, mediated and real conversation yield teaching, learning and support to distance students for positive learning implications and experiences.

Hope (2006, p. 18) provides a framework or a check list for good practices as a basis for planning and evaluation of dual mode programmes. Still, Hope explains that “the aspects of the quality of institution may vary dependent on the influence of various stakeholders in the learning enterprise”. The systematic provision of appropriate academic support for all learners is designed for every course and programme to provide:

- consistent quality outcomes of educational experience between modes;
- effective student support in the form of systematic interaction between teacher and learner is a requirement of all courses and is built into the design of course materials;
- accessible tutors to individual and groups of learners through synchronous and asynchronous technologies;
- feedback on assessment to all learners on a timely basis so as to inform their ongoing learning;
- distance mode to learners who have no access to the physical facilities (e.g. libraries, study space) and equipment that are necessary for their successful learning and appropriate training in their use;
- opportunities for peer interaction at both the course and institutional levels to promote a sense of belonging and encourage the development of learning and social communities within and across modes;
- all learners with access to counselling before and during their course or programme;
- precise, accurate and current information readily available for each course and programme and well publicised to all students concerning:
 - learning outcomes;
 - programme structure and requirements;
 - total costs;
 - financial support;
 - admission requirements;
 - assessment requirements and processes;
 - rules and regulations;
 - appeals procedures;

Systematic collection and analysis of student feedback is a core component of academic quality assurance mechanisms (Hope, 2006, p. 18).

Empirical evidence of dual mode models

This section of the thesis reviews some of the most common institutional organisation strategies in education institutions in the world with specific focus on the systems strategy. The reviewed countries discussed below were chosen because they are economically, culturally and geographically different from Malawi.

Many institutions world-wide, particularly North America, Canada, United States of America, Australia, United Kingdom, New Zealand and several other European countries have taken an early lead in investing heavily in dual mode institutions of higher learning, especially online universities (Daniel, 2012).

As discussed earlier in chapter 2 and in the previous section, the introduction of distance education at a traditional institution is a process of change requiring that all those partaking in the change be well informed to help bring in positive change. According to Simango (2016, p. 55) one of the key factors that deter growth of dual mode systems has been identified as “resistance from academic staff”. Simango reports resistance of academics associated with extra workload for the two educational modes, views of both distance and traditional students and minimal hopes of career growth in terms of instructional material development. Rienties (2014, p. 987) suggests that the “multidimensional and uncertainty towards change and the dual nature of student assessment can influence the effectiveness of organisational transitional processes and learning experiences”. Insecurity and tension amongst academics in their desire to offer personalised learning within the rigid predetermined instructional materials becomes another source of resistance (Hope, 2006). Academics thus, feel inferior and empty as they seem to lack advanced technological and curriculum expertise due to staff development space, under weighing distance education as inferior and inadequate as compared to traditional education. Lack of support from the institution on existing barriers to organisational change and absence of an administrative infrastructure to support academics and challenges may offset any incentives and possibly fuse the two modes.

To carefully and precisely draw a line between distance education and traditional education while hosted on the same institution, Hope (2006, p. 17) suggests the following:

- a clear mission statement with a vision to expose specific goals and philosophies to guide operations;

- a carefully set boundary between traditional and distance education through the establishment of a distinct distance system with related systems while clearly embracing the parity of the two in the mission statement;
- staff in both administrative and academic roles to demonstrate knowledge of continuous novel initiatives for growth in technology use for effectual teaching, learning and support
- creation of staff development structures;
- responsible initiation of change by management from the very senior levels of the institution;
- management information system to take in all the aspects of distance and traditional students and adhere to their timeliness, reliability and accessibility requirements;
- support of both traditional and distance teaching faculty by administrative structures while also constantly supporting distance students;
- equally certify both distance and traditional students.

According to Tony (2008) this implies informed planning starting with the analysis of the institution's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats generally known by the acronym, SWOT. It is important that the institution analyses its capabilities or strengths such as offering competitive salaries and benefits to staff members and offer marketable programmes. The institution should be aware of its weaknesses which among other things include failure to successfully motivate staff, offer attractive courses and properly manage the institution. SWOT analysis empowers the institution to work on sustaining capabilities, mend flaws and market its services to attract more clients or students and gain economies of scale. It is further argued that to "obtain economies of scale, it is increasingly common to link up with other institutions and share the market, a process requiring unusual foresight and diplomacy on the part of senior managers" (Moore & Kearsley, 2012 p. 9). Retaining existing opportunities opens doors to more opportunities leading not only to survival but also growth and success of the system while set policies align all the systems, strategies and processes and guide the goals.

Hope (2006) further argues for the need for education stakeholders, practitioners, policy makers, course designers and academics among others to theoretically and practically understand basic expectations and principles of open and distance education. The distance education assumptions include that:

- open and distance education is cost effective if offered to a large number of students as compared to traditional education;
- students must be supported personally, administratively and academically throughout the study for effective teaching, learning and learning support;
- uses novel technologies for technology mediated instructions and support to help bridge the psychological gap between instructors and the student while also optimally planning for physical material and human resources. In this case, a precise boundary between distance education and traditional education is marked leading to massive growth of higher education in such countries;
- the growth stems from emergent of new universities and colleges, and or the pronounced expansion of technological mediated open and distance learning;
- the blend of traditional with distance education systems under one roof has its own merits and demerits. Effectual blend of the two is expected to significantly address shortfalls of the other and benefit the society at large;
- dual provision of higher education enhances effectual learning experiences due to merged resources allowing administration, academia and trustees to expand.

Change and transformation has recently been part of the mostly addressed issues in literature related to education (Daniel, 2012; Nyoni, 2012). There seems to be a growing consensus within all walks of life with academics, policy makers and entrepreneurs are no exceptional on the prevalence of main changes affecting key areas of higher education in the recent decades (Nyoni, 2012; Simango, 2016). Conversely, responding or coping with such changes usually differs depending on varying perceptions of the impacts, scope, or direction of the changes, and on administrative, monetary, permissible and visionary competences of the institution's strategies for effecting innovation in dual-mode institutions with industrial or organisational aspects of planning, coordination, division of labour, specialisation and mass production. Thus, the principal organisational challenges in today's demanding world relates to identification of long term vision, mission and strategies that can systematically and effectually combat the changes through planned best practices. The systematic strategy is the system comprising interconnected, comprehensive, codependent and internally consistent constituents. According to Moore and Kearsley (2012, p. 22) the systems strategy is key to understanding and practice of distance education as follows:

- impact on teachers, learners, administrators, and policy makers to yield significant changes in the way that education is conceptualized, funded, designed, and enacted. Not least will be the opening of access and improvements in quality;
- includes the sub-systems of knowledge sources, design, delivery, interaction, learning, and management. In practice the better these are integrated, the greater will be the effectiveness of the distance education organisation (Moore & Kearsley, 2012, p. 11).

The industrial aspect of education as founded by Otto Peters (1973) has for the past decades made tremendous contributions to the concept of distance education (Saba, 2014). According to Saba (2014) Peters' application of business management concepts of planning, division of labour, organisation or coordination and mass production among other aspects yield predetermined instructions. These aspects are key to identification of organisational constituents that are necessary for distance teaching and learning enactment and the production of learning experiences.

Saba (2012) conducted a study in the United States on “a systems approach to the future of distance education in colleges and universities: Research, development, and implementation” (Saba, 2012, p. 30). The study specifically sought to view a dynamic systems approach to distance education to “determine the role distance education will play in the future of higher education, whether or not the decision-makers, stakeholders, lawmakers, educational administrators, academic senates, and other governing bodies can learn to adjust and coordinate institutional policies with information technology” (Saba, 2012, p. 36). The study showed that most institutions of higher learning adopted the systems approach with application of creativity and innovations to predetermined content yielding better results. The study further indicated that distance education organisation and procedures will define the extent of faculty-administrative culture, offer differential staffing and operating funds to satisfy individual students' needs for relevant and cost effective programmes.

Though touching on creation of systems for an industrial organisation, the present study is different in that the focus is on learning implications for the nature of the distance secondary teacher training and not just higher education in general. While employing industrial aspects of institutional organisation, the study leans on conversational learning to yield learning and learning support whose understanding requires phenomenological aspects. Much as the standard curriculum positively yields good results, it also registers some deficits of;

- ignoring student support which is the key and heart of effective distance learning thereby hindering students' creativity and independence. They are forced to accept predetermined learning experience and fail to connect to their existing experiences, explore and generate knowledge;
- mean as it offers just a piecemeal of students' experiences due to lack of educator-students and or students-peer interaction and as the rigidity hinders students' selection of learning and interaction styles;
- provides inflexible curriculum evidenced by uniform and fixed instructional materials thus, blocking institutional growth. The habit of espousing a one-size-fits-all approach to curriculum result in institutions disregarding planning for innovative pedagogy and or andragogy hence diminutive growth and economised cost of education.;
- lacks human element to respond to emerging and contemporary issues in a two way communication;
- the adaptation of courses to facilitate students' independent study through the internet does not change the rigidity of the curriculum as it remains predetermined;
- the development of instructional materials faces financial challenges because it is generally not factored in the budget due to limited provision of grants and dependency on the traditional budget. This further requires policy makers' commitment at both micro (institutional) and macro (national) levels to carefully plan and effectively implement the plan while taking resource mobilisation as a central part of management (Saba, 2012; Ipaye, 2015; Simango, 2016).

The study on “challenges for successful planning of open and distance learning (ODL) in a technology enhanced environment - A template analysis” by Minnaar (2013) was done in South Africa. The study aimed at analysing literature on ODL planning and implementation to develop a template for ODL planners. The study carried this broad question: “What needs to be considered in higher education institutions embarking on planning an ODL facility?” (Minnaar, 2013, p. 84). The findings of the study embraced a template to guide in planning for open and distance education. The results further exposed precisely that “planning and implementation of ODL needs to be careful and systematic to ensure success” (Minnaar, 2013, p. 102). A lot of thought should go into planning and analysis of markets as shall be discussed later in chapter 10.

The present study is different in that the focus is on learning implications of the nature of the distance institutional organisation and not just challenges for successful planning. In addition, the present study embraced planning to gauge ODE institutional organisation while the above study just concentrated on ODL planning.

Trends of open and distance education in Europe

The understanding of a trend in this study is normally a direction in which something is transforming or changing over time. In this case, the thesis is looking at transformations in terms of institutional designs and organisations that countries and institutions have put in place to facilitate learning experiences.

Although literature provides adequate information on institutional designs, very little literature exists regarding institutional organisation of distance education that countries and institutions have put in place to facilitate learning experience where ODE is hosted at a tradition institution. As discussed, the designs or models offer some insights into the actual and suggested institutional organisation.

Distance education relays back to the early biblical writings of St Pauls epistles or correspondence communications adept in the first generation distance education. The early bible teachings were done through letters sent to targeted groups of people and not usually on face-to-face contacts. Although this was not linked to education then, the practice relevantly outfits learning in the absence of the educator's face-to-face contact, thus, a one-way traffic with no immediate feedback. Kentnor (2015, p. 23) relates the birth of distance education to Sir Isaac Pitman's 1840s shorthand correspondence texts written on postcards and mailed to students across England. Some universities began to offer distance education alongside traditional education starting from the time the Phonographic Correspondence Society was established in 1843 marking the beginning of dual mode institutions. The dual mode in this case, offered education on a mixed mode basis. The University of London, founded in 1888 opened the door to the provision of correspondence degrees in conjunction with the University of London colleges thus, opening education access to working men. This prompted the generation of night schools, technical and vocational institutions and private correspondence colleges. The university trained mine inspectors whose enrolment grew from 2,500 in 1894 to 72,000 in 1895. The numbers continued to increase to 90, 000 in 1906 due to

an improvement in instructional delivery from the distribution of a single lesson as a carrier of instructions to a book full of lessons.

Daniel (2012, pp. 2- 4) explains that “the further growth of open and distance education in the continent is expected to inject life into the dual mode model”. The Open Education Resource (OER) is the innovation currently being explored by a group of public universities from several countries searching public-private partnerships to improve the dual mode design. This has come after discovering that victory claimed on dual mode model was done prematurely. The Open Education Resource (OER) University is expected to be the best disruptive element that would impact on electronic learning (e-Learning) in higher education. The OER is expected to widen access in the following ways:

- Give dual mode a new relevance by cutting costs as course curricular may be produced at one eUniversity and allow other universities to adapt the good quality OER from web to their needs. This is expected to cut instructors’ reinvention of the wheel for each course. For example, eAsia university may develop course curricular while Athabasca University may only approve the development of the course after proposers have thoroughly searched for relevant open materials to be repurposed;
- As deliberated in the February 2011 New Zealand Open and Education Resource Foundation meeting to operationalize the concept of OERU, students shall have an opportunity to explore content OER;
- Students access to tutorials from the global network of volunteers and get assessed at a fee and earn a credible qualification from an umbrella organisation;
- Higher education will generally no longer present content through lectures or learning materials as content will be anywhere but public institutions will have to compete through the services they offer;
- Social software is greatly enriching the possibilities for student support and interaction. Students will be supported through a community of scholars and to some extent buy support on a pay-as-you-go basis to sustain the model (Daniel, 2012, pp. 2-4).

According to Daniel (2012), the concept of OER trails the University of London External System’s 150 years ago innovation which was examination oriented rather than knowledge acquisition orientation. However, it is feared that OER on profit making institutions may lock the virtual learning environments and materials in their patented framework. In this case, the for-profit institutions may have to choose between the chance to be cost effective and the

onus to run more flexibly. Most importantly, the for-profits institutions may have an opportunity to run efficiently through the existing high quality open access materials they can adapt at will. Daniel (2012) gives an example of the Open University of UK that placed the Non-Commercial terms on their common licenses of the early OER materials as a way of limiting access. However, it is recommended in this discussion that OER re-users acknowledge the source of the materials and put their new version back into the OER. The next discussion is on trends of open and distance education in Asia and the Pacific.

Trends of open and distance education in Asia and the Pacific

In Australia, the first Department of Correspondence Studies introduced in 1911 at Queensland University (Daniel, 2012). Most of the Universities and Colleges thus introduced correspondence and external studies as a response not only to large territories but also to the geographically dispersed population. The development meant that institutions of higher learning for example, in Australia, use same staff for both traditional and external students, and administer similar examinations and awards. For the past three decades Australian dual mode institutions have gained fame due to quality education achieved through a one-size-fits-all philosophy based on an integrated organisation of instructional material production, academics and qualifications.

Literature shows that there are several single mode open universities in the world with the Open University of the United Kingdom (UKOU), the Radio and Television University of China and the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) in India as good examples (Gaba & Li, 2015). Single mode institutions are organised under the distance education council which regulates the institutions operations and ensures that quality education and lifelong learning is achieved in the process of democratising education (World Bank, n.d).

In spite of remarkable efforts on the universities and colleges, correspondence and external programmes were lowly rated as people considered them second best to traditional on-campus courses (Hope, 2006). Adoption of innovative technologies in a multimedia approach with print, audio, video, stand-alone-computers and word of mouth as media of instruction slowly led to mainstreaming of distance education. Multiplication of open universities in the early 1970s expanded the number of students attending university education making a significant contribution to widening access. Daniel (2012, p. 2) describes the two approaches to distance education as conducted by individual academics parallel to traditional classes on

small scale enrolment which was not only costly but further with doubtful continuity of the provision. With lack of economies of scale, the open universities could not sustain their provision of education to the small numbers. It was only with the provision of education to specialised groups of students they could charge higher fees that dual mode institutions attracted a reasonable enrolment both locally and internationally and are successful.

Regardless of being housed within the traditional jurisdictions, distance education is allocated specific resources with systematic ways of learning support to all students studying away from the institutions. The traditional and distance education are two modes of study that do not reflect on students as they are allowed to switch between the modes of instructional delivery based on convenience. This flexibility in the Australian context relates to socio-economic changes in higher education pushing universities to compete for income for their operation. With a fixed market, universities in Australia pursue international opportunities especially in South East Asia thus, developed resource-based teaching and online learning to satisfy off-shore markets. The coming in of the internet has gradually transformed the provision of distance education as it has led to online learning that has eased communication between academic staff and distance students. Internet allows easy interaction of instructors and students through electronic mail (e-mail) and other web based tools while also providing printing of documents and recording of audio-visual programmes. This threatens the survival of single mode institutions as in dual mode, distance learning seem to have properly been integrated with traditional learning.

Most of the teachers who enrolled to further their studies through distance education aimed at upgrading their credentials in order to overcome salary barrier or cross over from primary school teacher to secondary school teacher status. Primary school teacher graduates were exposed to further training that equipped them with pedagogical and classroom management skills (Simango, 2016).

According to Simango (2016), in China, open and distance education is rapidly growing. The government and institutions embrace distance education as an innovative strategy supplementing traditional education. Through the 11th Five- Year Plan, China is reminded of its need to develop technologically for the government to expand its financial muscle on education. The ministry of education encouraged 68 top universities to offer distance education degrees to help produce skilled manpower as a response to the mushrooming economy. Through the 2000 operation 'All Schools Connected' launch, China designed to

equip all its 550, 871K-12 schools with distance learning systems by the year 2010. With the 11th Five year plan calling on science and technology to speed up developments, distance education industry became the top priority in China. Technology and education prominence yielded over 111,000,000 internet users between 2000 and 2005 desirably 393.3%. The Radio and Television University for example; has a school for continuing education where lifelong professional development on non-degree courses is offered.

The Open University of China (2012) reports the assurance of quality instructions and learning support provision through the monitoring and evaluation department. The department aids in supervision of instructors and counsellors, and facilitates the institution's engagement in research coupled with sharing of experiences while running on yearly working budget to guide its operations. The way Chinese distance education is growing sets global standards for open and distance education and expands entrepreneurial opportunities for the United States education services. In economic terms, distance education in China is expanding at about 1.45 billion dollar market with the government spending more than 50 billion dollars on education.

In this region as is the case with all other regions world-wide, education institution employ arrange of institutional designs or models from single mode to consortia model. For example, the Open University of Hong Kong is a consortia mode offering local and off-shore distance education through partnership with other countries. The Open University of China also takes tactical partnerships and joint activities with ministries, industries and entrepreneurs to successfully set and fulfil lifelong edification projects (Open University of China, 2012). Other consortia models are named after their countries of origin. For example; Australia has an Australian model known as the Deakin-dual-mode. The Australian open and distance learning comprises the open university of Hong Kong, United States, China, Canada, Macau and Ireland courses. Malaysia has a Malaysian model and India has an Indian model irrespective of minor deviations experienced in some country's institutions (Danaher & Umar, 2010). Trends in open and distance education in America is the next discussion.

Trends of open and distance education in America

In America, about three quarters of the population lived in rural areas by 1920 deeming correspondence programmes the sole flexible solution to reaching out to all. Daniel (2012, p. 1) explains that, "some universities have offered distance learning programmes alongside

traditional programmes for a century”. For example, the Queens University in Canada introduced External Studies in 1888 with the United University of Wisconsin trailing with the same in 1908.

In the United States of America, distance education was adopted as a means to the democratization of education which was generally accessed by the elite leaving out the disadvantaged. Caruth and Caruth (2013, p. 124) explain that “the evolution of distance education has assumed a variety of formats and escalating prominences. Starting as correspondence courses trailing Isaac Pittman’s 1840 shorthand course in 1873 bred the Society to Encourage Studies at Home founded by Anna Eliot Ticknor renamed the ‘silent university’ by Eliza Cary Agassiz”. According to Caruth and Caruth (2013), the Ticknor’s society opened access to women evidenced by the enrolment of 7000 women and 100 million Americans studying through distance courses by 1890 with the aim to develop agricultural and professional skills.

Universities started offering radio courses from 1920 to 1930 and in 1960 television courses were introduced. Public Broadcasting Services (PBS) and Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) were established for urban children deprived of education with the Sesame Street programme reaching out to millions of pre-school children. Some famous individuals like Franklin D. Roosevelt, Walter P. Chrysler, Walter Cronkite, Berry Goldwater, and Charles Schutz (Criscito), creator of the comic strip Peanuts benefited from distance learning.

Technology-based distance education in the United States of America has become an increasingly major part of American higher education. For example, the Western Governors University (WGU) made up of several governors of the western states in the United States is a ‘virtual university’ has no campus, only depends on technology. WGU collectively organises resources to globally provide credentials to students.

Regardless of the transformation from correspondence education to technology-based distance education, correspondence education aspects have to be carried over as follows:

- Adaptable institutions with a vision, dedicated to service, with expertise in handling the political issues;
- Institutions must aggressively pursue un-served students;

- Commitment to instructional quality;
- Sensitive to potential disagreements between face-to-face and online faculty (Caruth & Caruth, 2013).

Online education has gone through visible institutions offering online education, the increase of education over internet, growth of internet-based academic writing and expanded marketing for online education. Online education is thus, an integral part of the development of higher education in USA forcing educators to handle diverse technological changes and the impact of distance education (Caruth & Caruth, 2013, p. 125).

In Jamaica, the University of West Indies (UWI) established in 1948 as a constituent college of the University of London got university status and academic independence in 1962 (Hartman, 2014). As is the case with most universities, UWI attempts to integrate the traditional and distance modes as a strategy to address the needs of prospective students failing to enroll in the three physical campuses. Kuboni (2017, p. 266) pointed out that “UWI as the region’s primary tertiary education provider, in its 1997-2005 strategic plan set to expand and systematise distance education programmes to enlarge its catchment area. UWI met a lot of threats from its off-shore and private competitors penetrating to the region’s higher education market”. These competitors’ success was in their exploitation of distance education potential as sources of revenue and provision of flexible and accessible programmes as compared to UWI inflexible programmes and admission terms. Next is the review on trends of open and distance education in Africa.

Trends of open and distance education in Africa

According to Moore and Kearsley (2012), understanding of distance education and its successful practice can only be done through its systems. It is important that the distance system ensures that distance students are carefully and systematically drawn closer to the educating institution so as to break their feeling of isolation from educators. With the establishment of systems within systems which are also properly coordinated whilst harnessing specialisation and division of labour, effective enactment of distance education can be assured.

The inclusion of an operational and responsive learning support system amidst the systems and within the distinct distance education structure keeps the students abreast with existing

courses, application and fees requirements, guidance on course progression, completion, examination results, and career guidance (Kangai, Rupande, & Rugonye, 2011). This suggests that continuous student support be provided to students as an essential tool to addressing emerging and contemporary students' and societal needs which pre-planned and pre-packaged learning materials cannot handle. Student support is hence all activities and services provided to distance students throughout and after their study on real or mediated basis. This requires that the distance education institution provides students with adequate academic, administrative and personal support in the absence of regular face-to face contacts. The need for continuous support demands total commitment from distance institutions in developing a student support policy to ensure that students' needs are satisfied for the success of both the students and the institution.

Currently, students, administrators, educators, the government and other education supporting agents need to be informed on existing opportunities and the direction of the distance system and the host institution at large.

It should be acknowledged that although open and distance education has been a widely accepted and mainstreamed terminology, its imperious philosophies may not be easily applied to its enactment. This implication is made to clarify the point that distance education hosted by traditional institutions if properly planned and coordinated yield effectual one-size-fits-all operations while disorganised integration yield unimpressive distance education. Moore and Kearsley (2012, p. 4) explain that "the special distance education unit promotes division of labour and specialisation as crucial constituents of the institution". The absence of such components may force the operations and funding of distance education to solely count on the traditional resources thus limiting growth of distance education.

Soundly designed instructions for students independent or autonomous learning gives students an opportunity to interact with content and make meaningful connections of their world outside the classroom environment. The talking content helps students to develop independent learning skills and become self-directed, self-motivated and capable of learning in the absence of the instructor (Simango, 2016). However, this does not totally replace the instructor, as the student requires occasional interaction with the physical teacher and peers for probable positive learning experiences. The physical interaction with the human element further gives chance to students to share their experiences from their lived world of their

studying away from instructors and peers thus, bringing solutions to emerging and contemporary issues

Within the distance education environment, there are four generally employed modes or models of educational provision which are: single mode institutions, dual mode institutions, mixed mode institutions and consortia.

Single-mode model

A single mode model is a distance education institution founded solely for the purpose of offering programmes through the distance mode. It is single mode in its pedagogic purpose of teaching and supporting distance students at an autonomous institution, away from the traditional practices. A single mode institution entirely dedicates its operations to the distance mode while camouflaging traditional teachers to distance tutors, course designers, counsellors and facilitators inter alia (Gaba & Li, 2015). In Africa single mode models include the Malawi College of Distance Education and the University of South Africa.

Dual mode model

A dual-mode model is an institution that adds distance education to its existing traditional establishments by establishing a special unit for distance education or attaching open and distance education to a faculty or school. This unit normally has administrative staff, instructional designers, and technical specialists whose responsibilities are distance education. It rarely has its own faculty, most of such units call on faculty of the parent body to provide subject expertise. The regular on-campus faculty usually does the teaching, often with support from part time faculty. Daniel (2012) regards dual mode distance education as “a strategy for the expansion of traditional institutions” while Ipaye (2015, p. 2) argues that other universities run “a distance teaching unit under the university’s consultancy outfit ... to generate revenue and thus it is for profit”. Dual mode models in Africa include: University of Lagos, University of Abuja, University of Ibadan, Obafemi Awolowo University in Nigeria, Mzuzu University and Domasi College of Education in Malawi, University of Zambia, University of Botswana, University of Nairobi in Kenya, University of Western Cape and University of Fort Hare in South Africa.

Simango (2016, p. 67) explains that “the University of Nairobi in Kenya has expanded rapidly and leads in the supply of graduate teachers to the extent of extensively reducing the qualified secondary school teacher gap”. The University which has a long experience of both, teacher training and distance education, introduced the degree programme for experienced undergraduate secondary school teachers in 1986. These teachers get the same course content as school leavers with similar qualifications. Similarly, the University of Lagos as a bimodal established the distance education unit in 1974 to respond to national educational needs specifically the shortage of science teachers in secondary schools. Distance education has since been using a combination of broadcasts, occasional face-to-face sessions with tape recorded instructions on residential six weeks’ duration per year and distance learning.

Ipaye (2015) conducted a study in Nigeria on “organisation of dual mode distance education in Nigeria” (p. 1). The study focused on organisational pattern and operating practices of open and distance learning institutions. The study’s findings indicate that dual mode models in Nigeria have not yet gone completely on-line, pedagogic approaches simulate the traditional pattern whilst the director also reports directly to the vice Chancellor and to the university senate. This implies resource overstretching as the two modes depend on a single pool of resources meant for traditional education leading to inadequacy in operations and provision of education. Ipaye (2015) argues that there is no standard approach or practices to organisation of dual mode institutions in Nigeria.

Ipaye’s study revealed that, “in each university, the decision to go dual and introduce distance education unit was taken by Senate. A unit was designated to house the distance education programme which was empowered to liaise with interested faculties and departments. Programmes of such faculties and departments are then carefully studied to see if they are amenable to distance learning. The distance education unit is “empowered to bring on board any department that opts to join distance education programmes” (Ipaye, 2015, p. 3). For example at the university of Ibadan, while virtually all the departments in the faculty of Agriculture had made their programmes available for distance education, only the department of Statistics had opted for distance education in the faculty of Science, only four departments in the faculty of Arts and three departments in the faculty of Social Sciences. Usually, the distance education unit appoints a coordinator from the participating faculty to coordinate programmes from that faculty in the distance education offerings. Such coordinators become automatic members of the Board of the distance education. The unit itself is organised into

departments and sub-units to oversee different functions and activities. The Vice-Chancellor appoints a director, while the registry deploys a senior administrative officer to the unit to oversee administrative functions and senior bursary staff is deployed to head the finance section. According to the author, “one of the implications of allowing departments to opt for DE is that such departments ... expected to ensure that same lecturers teach both on-campus and off-campus students” (Ipaye, 2015, p. 3).

The distance secondary teacher training in Malawi has been influenced by experiences of dual-mode models practiced in developing countries internationally and hence may have similar problems. The problems have been observed in organising dual-mode institutions as adopted, for example from Zambia. Some of the problems are highlighted below.

- Some organisational philosophy and policy absence hinders total mainstreaming and development of dual- mode colleges of education.
- Absence of a national open and distance learning policy to guide the development and enactment of programmes at national and institutional levels despite some policy provisions in various government documents.
- Many educational policy-makers, planners, and managers doubt the legitimacy and quality of open and distance learning provisions thinking it can hardly offer quality education as offered by the traditional mode (Simango, 2016).

Mixed-mode model

Mixed mode models are educational institutions that offer extension programmes in addition to their own generic programmes. Mixed-mode institutions encompass (a) independent study divisions of extension colleges (these exist mostly in the United States and Canada); (b) consultation systems, in which students are assigned both to a distant university or college, from which they receive their degree, and to a nearby “consultation” institution, from which they receive instructional services (these systems exist mostly in Europe); and (c) integrated systems, in which an academic department, supported by administrative staff, provides the same curriculum to both on-campus, and remote students (these were first established in Australia) (Moore & Anderson, 2013, p 5). Mixed mode teaching may occur in dual-mode institutions with some of the courses designed, delivered, and administered by distance education departments while others are offered by a traditional department. Mixed mode models include: The University of Malawi (Polytechnic and Chancellor College), The

Malawi College of Accountancy, University of Mauritius, the Zimbabwe Integrated National Teacher Education Course (ZINTEC) and the Witwatersrand and Pretoria in RSA.

Consortia mode model

Moore & Kearsley (2012, p. 5) define a consortium institution as “an organisation of multiple institutions banded together to extend the reach of each. Consortia-mode institutions are clusters of institutions joined with other independent institutions or companies to offer distance education with combined efforts, expertise, and resources so as to achieve challenging goals”. Africa has also successfully used the consortia-mode with the Confederation of Open Learning Institutions of South Africa and the African virtual University as good examples. The collaborative efforts of the institution to extend the reach of each (Moore & Kearsley, 2012, p. 5) can be beneficial in covering up shortfalls of each of the institutions in the conglomerate.

University of Lagos, University of Abuja, University of Ibadan, Obafemi Awolowo University in Nigeria, Mzuzu University and Domasi College of Education in Malawi, University of Zambia, University of Botswana, University of Nairobi in Kenya, University of Western Cape and University of Fort Hare in South Africa among others; offer dual mode pedagogy in the African continent. Dual mode models as is the case with all other institutional models require effectual organisation to bring about positive learning experiences. Moore and Kearsley (2012) regard establishment of systems within the distance unit as the means to effective institutional organisation and successful distance education practice. Distance education institutional organisation embraces systems embedded in planning, coordination, specialisation, division of labour and mass production of instructions. Administrators and instructors should be informed on both theory and practice of distance education in terms of setting and coordinating systems while recognising diverse expertise to achieve mass production of instructions.

As pointed out by Schmidt (2016), consortia mode model is a solution to resource challenged countries where technology application for instructions is limited and conventional education cannot satisfy the demand for education. In Africa, enhancement of collaborative efforts on policy issues, sharing of resources and the development of systems can be drawn from the consortia practice. Nyoni (2012, p. 56) argues that “from the many initiatives, examples of

networking and collaborative establishments can be drawn from national and regional associations” such as:

- Training of Upper Primary and Junior Secondary Science; Technology and Mathematics Teachers in Africa by Distance. This programme is supported by the Commonwealth of Learning and countries included are Botswana, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe;
- Training for primary school principals, using print materials and Internet, coordinated by CIFFAD, the International Francophone Consortium of Distance and Open Learning Institutions. CIFFAD also has a project in Senegal, Guinea and the Côte di Voire to improve the teaching of French at the secondary level (Nyoni, 2012, p. 56).

This therefore requires that all categories of distance education establish suitable institutional systems for dual mode educational institutions.

Domasi College of Education and Mzuzu University

In Malawi, Domasi College of education, a constituent college of the University of Malawi and Mzuzu University are dual mode institutions as they both offer distance education alongside their main traditional courses. Most of the students are qualified primary school teachers trying to upgrade their credentials in pursuit of promotion and salary increase. Domasi College introduced distance education in the year 2000. Msiska (2013, p. 2) explains that “the establishment of distance education at Domasi College of Education was a response to the need for upgrading of primary school teachers teaching in Community Day Secondary Schools. Through the college, the Government of Malawi attempted to reduce qualified-teacher to pupil ratio from 1:90 to 1:60 by 2013”.

Domasi College of Education

As stipulated in its 2005-2015 strategic plan, “Domasi College of Education acts on orders from the government, Ministry of education science and technology to train secondary school teachers through the distance and traditional means” (Domasi College of Education, 2005, p. 1). This public institution has a vision and mission statements to guide achieving its goals. The institution analysed its environment as part of the institution’s plan through SWOT analysis. The institution identifies its strengths in terms of human resources; embraces highly

committed and self-motivated staff with cordial relations among them and with no vacancies for senior positions. The college indicates adequacy of physical resources such as land for physical infrastructures, adequate water and sanitation services with affordable tuition for students. As for programmes, the institution responds to changing needs of the education sector through diverse programmes, adequate quality control mechanisms such as the external examining partners. It also offers innovative courses on HIV/AIDS and gender with institutionalised distance education, adequate provision of teaching and learning resources and graduates the highest number of secondary school teachers in Malawi. As part of its organisational structure, the institution boasts to possessing a workable structure with management committee, calendar of activities, open day policy, and documented internal policies. The institution further claims to have good relations with other organisations. For example; University of Malawi and the surrounding community, gets support from JICA, World universities services of Canada and International Foundation for Education Self Help (Domasi College of Education, 2005, p. 11).

The institution exposes its weaknesses in human resource as high staff turnover, poor conditions of service due to non-competitive salary, under-qualified staff, inadequate professional development opportunities, delays in filling vacant positions and high faculty-student ratios. The institution indicates its inadequacy in physical resources revealed in facilities like classrooms, offices, staff and student accommodation with classes which are too large for the available space and with diverse sizes depending on departments. Inadequate financial resources were included denoting inadequate funding from government with little autonomy from University of Malawi and the Ministry of education while also enjoying fewer formal relations with institutions outside Malawi. On organisational structure, the college complains of overloaded institution's calendar with no adequate holidays for staff, too many college committees, with no gender and HIV work place policies. Lack of programme formalisation was also noticed in HIV/AIDS and gender curriculum as indicated in the strategic plan dated 2005-2010, p. 12.

Domasi College indicated in its strategic plan that it has the potential to invest in information technology so as to expand and revolutionise its programming while also attracting potential partners. The institution forecasts unremitting high demand for secondary and primary teachers ensuring future high demand of the College's services. It predicted its 2012 merging with the University of Malawi to become a constituent college as revealed by the 2000

Malawi Teacher Education and Development Review. The college expected to develop to a dual mode institution initiating continuous professional development (CPDs) for secondary reflecting the suggested role of the Malawi Institute of Education as indicated on page 13 of the 2005-2010 Strategic Plan.

The institution identifies human and financial resources, and relations with the Government and similar institutions as its major threats. The institution points out that HIV/AIDS pandemic negatively affects staff's active participation while at the same time facing threats from similar institutions that offer competitive conditions of service. The college bemoans the high inflation rate in Malawi as stretching its financial resources which are already affected by educational policies such as the free primary education policy. In references to relations with other institutions, the institution regards partners influence on programmes and direction for the college as a threat topped with other institutions better remunerations to staff (Domasi College of Education, 2005, pp. 13-14).

Domasi College is hence cognizant of its fortes, prospects, imperfections, primacies and pressures illustrated from pages 11-14 of the strategic plan to expose the fertile land for distance education enactment. This implies that the institution through SWOT analysis is informed about its capabilities, defies, fortes and fears hence operates on an informed direction. This echo the earlier arguments that SWOT analysis must precede strategic planning for institutions to plan remedial actions to the challenges and threats while capitalising on the existing strengths and opportunities (Wren, 2009; Moore & Kearsley, 2012; Polk State College , 2012; Minnaar, 2013; American University, 2014).

Mzuzu University

Mzuzu University's vision for traditional education is to be a premier provider of tertiary education, adaptive research and outreach in Malawi and the world with a mission to provide high quality education, training, research and complementary services to meet the technological, social and economic needs of individuals and communities in Malawi and the world. Mzuzu University's strategic plan sorely touches on traditional education with no consideration to open and distance education. As is the case with Domasi College of Education, Mzuzu University is a bimodal. The university combines open and distance education with traditional education sharing instructors. This Malawi government's institution has no mandate for the distance education existence at the institution except for the

vision and mission of the host system. This makes it difficult for this study to gauge the institution's planning and enactment practices for open and distance system.

Colleges of education in Malawi

Malawi has only two colleges of education which are dual modes. Domasi College and Mzuzu University are sole education colleges offering both traditional and distance education to secondary school student teachers. Currently, on 10th May, 2016 the Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources, through the Skills Development Project funded by World Bank inaugurated the establishment of open and distance education.

The Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources

The Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources, through the Skills Development Project inaugurated the establishment of open and distance education. The college is a new entrant on the dual-mode scene. Naturally, the university offered Agriculture and Natural resources programmes till 2004 when it introduced Development Studies, embracing among other courses, Agriculture Education and Development Communication (Nkhoma, 2016).

Malawi's conceptual view of open and distance education

Generally, the pyramidal structure of education and training provision in Malawi persists. The system continues to have large numbers of students at the bottom who are filtered and dropped as they progress upwards. In Malawi, distance education has been in existence since 1965 when the Malawi College of Education was established by the Malawi Government to offer secondary school education. In 1990 Malawi designed and enacted a three year distance primary school teacher training known as Malawi Special Teacher Education Programme (MASTEP) which ran parallel to the traditional programme from 1989 to 1993. The open and distance education programme generally known as ODL was introduced in 2006 to help train primary school teachers through the distance mode. In Malawi, distance education has been employed to solely address qualified teacher shortage and not to address the nation's hunger for education. This is regardless of the argument that Southern Africa universities, specifically Malawi are unable to admit all deserving individuals on a campus face-to-face or residential basis (Chawinga & Zozie, 2016, p. 2). University's ability to offer

education to all potential students ensures their survival and relevance hence the need to introduce open and distance education to help address the access need. Malawi's higher education harnesses distance education "as an affordable means of reaching more teachers more quickly...than traditional provision, to re-orient them to new teaching approaches and curricula" (UNESCO, 2009 p. 17). This is the reason distance education for secondary school teachers was established in 2000 and 2011 at Domasi College and Mzuzu University respectively.

Malawi employs asynchronous technology in the form of print with pre-planned and pre-packaged instructions for distance students to use on self-study in their distinct localities. The use of preplanned instructional materials implies that Malawi relies on one-size-fits-all approach to distance instructional delivery. It can hence be argued that Malawi's distance education is industrial in nature denoting the presence of industrial element of producing preplanned instructional materials in masses (Peters, 1973; Saba, 2012).

Msiska (2013) conducted a study on the use of distance education for Teacher Training and Development in Malawi. He focused on models employed, technologies used, and successes so far achieved. Another study by Chawinga and Zozie (2016) was on increasing access to higher education through open and distance learning in Malawi. The study focused on models, successes and challenges. This study is taking another dimension by focusing on learning implications conveyed by the nature of institutional organisation of the distance secondary teacher training in Malawi. It draws its vision on the gaps in the two studies cited above which were conducted in Malawi, and hopes to shed light on the learning implications of the nature of institutional organisation of the distance secondary teacher training. This study therefore is unique because it discusses learning implications in relation to institutional organisation, an aspect which is lacking in the cited studies.

The use of preplanned instructions requires that the institution establishes a distance education unit or system and supporting systems to carry differential expertise and operations that should also be properly coordinated. Thus, the need to explore the learning implications of the institutional organisation as it impacts on students' learning and reasons for such impact to help improve the distance organisation and enactment. These distance education providers need to understand that planning, coordination, specialisation, division of labour and mass production of instructions are essential for the success of an institution. Further, it should be known that real and mediated conversation bring about learning and learning

support as missing elements in the organisation of the institution revealed through shared lived experiences.

Challenges of higher education and secondary teacher training in Malawi

From 1965 to 2005, Malawi used to train secondary school teachers solely through the traditional mode. The introduction of distance education at Domasi College and Mzuzu University increased under qualified teachers' access to higher education and secondary teacher training in particular. Similar to developing nations, the Sub-Saharan Africa in particular, implementation of education in Malawi is a challenge due to access and equity, quality and relevance and governance and management issues (Basanza, Milman, & Wright, 2010; Mhishi, Bhukuvhani, & Sana, 2012; Musingafi, Mapulanga, Chiwanza, & Zebron, 2015; Ipaye, 2015; Chawinga & Zozie, 2016). As indicated in the prior chapter, the government of Malawi adopted the named issues as strategies to the attainment of improved education in Malawi. Each of the challenge is discussed in detail to promote understanding of the suggested improvements on the distance secondary teacher training discussed in chapters 9 and 10 for positive learning implications.

Governance and management challenges: The Ministry of education identifies lack of monitoring, documentation and enactment of throughput and dropout rates at higher education levels as shall be reported in chapter 7 to 9 deeming higher education expensive (Malawi Government, 2008). In reference to distance education, the problem is partly aggravated by educators' total adherence to traditional practices with incomprehensive exposure to ODE know-how through trainings limiting their understanding of ODE enactment and students retention. The total adherence to traditional practices stem from the national level where distance education is just incorporated within the traditional endeavors in a one-size-fits-all approach. Initiated by the Common Wealth of Learning and Canadian International Development Agency, the introduction of distance education for higher learning in Malawi was without long-term strategies to strengthen capacity edifice. It is argued in the 2008 to 2017 National Education Sector Plan that challenges in managerial system which includes imprecise regulations governing such systems like poorly defined structures affect access and equity to higher education.

The concern in the National Education Sector Plan (NESP) is solely on the traditional education mode whilst mentioning distance education as wholly incorporated in the

traditional practices as a mixture of the two systems. According to the Malawi Government (2008, pp. 23-24) there has been defies in management systems with the absence of precise guidelines, hiring and terms of contracts, and internal resource mobilisation compromising access, equity, relevance and quality of education. The Ministry for Education sets as a strategy for institutions of higher learning to improve quality and efficacy through the development and implementation of programmes they can fund through their own initiatives. Much as the deliberations hint on traditional education provision, the distance mode requires just the same which in both situations need informed planning and execution to properly set off and produce learning. Chawinga and Zozie (2016) in their study on increasing access to higher education through open and distance learning: Empirical findings from Mzuzu University, in Malawi, settled that, the adoption and implementation of ODE among other management and governance challenges faces poor communication between the distance system and departments, prolonged registration of students, poor remuneration of lecturers, poor provision of learning support, poor information technology infrastructure and instructors' inadequate expertise in distance education.

Quality and relevance challenges: The Ministry of Education further identifies governance problems in the education system like “poorly defined governance structures, lines of authority and delegation of powers” (Malawi Government, 2008, p. 25) as compromising quality and relevance of education offered in institutions of higher learning. Referring to distance education, lack of precise systems implies poor definition of the systems comprised by the distance system. Lines of authority and delegation of power wedds to centralised systems or lack of autonomy from the parent at national and institutional levels hindering growth of the distance system. It is argued in the National Education Sector Plan that quality of education in Malawi is further undermined by teaching and learning resources (computers, laboratories, libraries) dearth. As is the case with the traditional system, quality and relevance of distance education is compromised by instructors' and administrators' inadequate expertise and poor attitude towards the distance mode. Chawinga and Zozie (2016) found that, poor attitude towards open and distance education hinders effectual enactment of open and distance education. For example, they regard ODL students as under-trained due to their independent study and the value for traditional education as perceived by students, educators or the general public. This is similar to several other countries experiences such as Uganda and Zimbabwe (Musingafi, Mapulanga, Chiwanza, & Zebron, 2015; Basanza, Milman, & Wright, 2010) among other countries. In Uganda, Basanza et al. (2010) in their case study on

'the challenges of implementing distance education in Uganda' elaborated some implications of instructors' inadequate distance education expertise. The implications comprised lack of quality distance learning materials and lack of student support thus, frustrating students. The above studies further reveal delayed end of semester results and feedback on assignments, and students' failure to find supplementary information to enrich their studies. In addition, in Malawi, infrastructural development for distance education is non-existent as the country depends solely on print for instructional delivery while also not adequately ensuring capacity building as endorsed in the national education plan.

Access and equity challenges: As highlighted in the National Education Sector Plan, the notions access and equity in higher education are associated with renovations and expansion of educational institutions to facilitate higher intake and inclusive education (Kotecha, et al, 2012). As discussed in chapters 1 and 2, access to higher education in Malawi as offered by the traditional mode, has been a challenge due to inadequate space and poor inclusion of women and other vulnerable groups of the society. Open and distance education overcomes access and equity challenges as discussed in chapter 2 requiring effectual organisation to effect learning and positive experiences and implications. On the contrary, the National Education Sector Plan (NESP) 2007-2016 puts more stress on introduction of parallel programmes in teacher training institutions and upgrading of under qualified teachers/tutors/lecturers for facilitation efficiency. This implies limited use of distance education to help in educating masses. The plan mentions distance education but without specific interest on its execution.

Access to higher education is challenged with erratic funding of traditional education extended to distance education whose subvention is not significantly exposed in the National Education Sector Plan. It is argued that existing education policies in Malawi "have been biased towards the basic education levels, as evidenced by the introduction of fully government sponsored primary education with steadily diminishing subvention directed to the higher education sector when considered in real terms" (Dunga, 2013, pp. 184-185). Funding has proved to be at a decline despite flooding numbers against higher education demands and the need to train relevant and useful graduates to help develop Malawi. Funding discrepancies further block access and equity to higher education which is a common defy in Africa as subvention mismatch the need for expansion and quality attainment (Teferra, 2014). Erratic funding has thus led to compromised quality and relevance of education as the

inadequacy could not cater for all the required human and material resources. With the long distances the student-teachers travel for on campus sessions due to the fact that Malawi has only two providers of distance secondary teacher education, student-teacher are likely to meet heavy travel costs (refer to Figure 1).

As the government through the Ministry of Education plans for parallel programmes and other alternative strategies of massifying higher education as indicated in the NESP, student financing infringes on the plan. Students' loans which are also given to the few have proven inadequate as students are required to fend for themselves in terms of meals and lodging making higher education expensive. This further blocks access and equity to education regardless of the adoption of open and distance education as one of the strategies to bridge the access and equity gap.

Chapter conclusion

In chapter 3, I have reviewed literature related to the topic under study. Some of the issues reviewed are the growth of distance education in relation to dual mode institutions around the world. The discussion relates to the institutional organisation within the dual mode model. The contention is that accepting that institutional organisation is not a 'one-size-fits-all' provides grounds for an in-depth understanding of the learning implications of the Malawi distance secondary teacher training. Distance education institutional organisation sets grounds for education stakeholders to establish systems within their planning and divide labour according to specialisations while also coordinating tasks for effective mass production of instructional materials. Similarly, the organisation guides educators on the nature of instructor-student conversation and determines the nature of students' lived experiences of the training that may feed policy and practice.

CHATER 4

INTERPRETIVE PARADIGM AND THEORETICAL LENSES OF THE STUDY

Introduction

As noted, this thesis draws on the interpretive paradigm as the roadmap. Within the interpretive parameters, the study employs tenets of the industrial education, conversational learning and phenomenology in one framework. The blended theoretical lenses guided the exploration of the learning implications of the distance secondary teacher training in Malawi. In this thesis, the ideas of systems as embedded in planning, coordination, division of labour, specialisation and mass production presented by Peters (1973) are viewed as key in exposing the nature of institutional organisation of distance education within the teacher training institutions. Ideas of real and mediated conversation as instituted by Holmberg (2003) are considered essential in uncovering the interactive nature of the distance training and the instructional materials as carriers of instructions. Further, the notions of lived and shared experiences established by van Manen (1995) are viewed as a comprehensive source of learning implications. This implies that the nine ideas drawn from the three related theories of industrial education, conversational learning and phenomenology are viewed as complementary in exposing the learning implications of the distance secondary teacher training in Malawi. The chapter starts by defining a theoretical framework and opposing paradigms before discussing the interpretive paradigm as the most apt roadmap for this study. It is in this chapter that the study's theoretical framework is constructed from a blend of tenets from three theories, the industrial education, conversational learning and phenomenology. The argument is that, the exploration of learning implications of the distance secondary teacher training required a blend of tenets from the three theories: industrial education, conversational learning and phenomenology. The next section defines theoretical framework.

Definition of theoretical framework and a paradigm

Theoretical framework is regarded as “logically structured representation of concepts, variables and relationships involved in a scientific study with the purpose clearly identifying what will be explored, examined, measured or described” (Desjardins, 2010, p. 1). The theoretical framework is further described as a blue print for research which “serves as the

guide on which to build and support one's study, and provides the structure to define how you will philosophically, epistemologically, methodologically, and analytically approach the dissertation as a whole (Grant & Osanloo, 2014, p. 13). Theories making up the framework help in explaining, predicting, and understanding the phenomenon or even challenge and extend the existing knowledge within the limit of the critical boundary bounding the assumption (Swanson & Chermack, 2013). Theories further inform the research questions and methodology and show connections amidst philosophies and concepts. Anafara and Mertz (2014, p. 2) argue that frameworks are used in qualitative research to "connect parts and provide a lens through which to view the study...and understand certain aspects of the phenomenon as well as conceal other aspects". The study's framework comprise planning (systems), coordination, specialisation, division of labour, mass production, real and mediated conversation, lived and shared experiences drawn from three subsequent theories.

Nevertheless, a paradigm is defined as an outline or plan comprising suppositions, ideas, meanings and practices for defining and understanding occurrences and their distinct traits (Blaikie & Priest, 2017). Examples of paradigms are positivist inquiry; critical inquiry and interpretivist paradigm (Scotland, 2012; Bhattacharjee, 2012; Blaikie & Priest, 2017). According to Scotland (2012, p. 9) a "paradigm consists of the following components: ontology, epistemology, methodology, and, methods". Scientifically and epistemologically, paradigms comprise postulates, values and standards, epistemological, methodological and ontological assumptions (Bhattacharjee, 2012). Ontology is "the study of being" which seeks to reveal reality while epistemology is the study of knowledge and its beliefs as assumed that knowledge can be "created, acquired and communicated... what it means to know" (Scotland, 2012, p. 9). Axiology is the trustworthiness or value of knowledge which is further linked to research ethics. Methodology is the blue print for the selection and use of research methods to guide data collection and analysis. A paradigm differs from research methods in that methods are particular techniques and processes of research data collection and analysis (Bhattacharjee, 2012; Scotland, 2012). A paradigm hence influences the entire research as Kawulich contends:

...these paradigmatic aspects help to determine the assumptions and beliefs that frame the researcher's view of a research problem, how he/she goes about investigating it, and the methods he/she uses to answer the research questions (Kawulich, 2012, p. 1).

Per se, differences within opposing paradigms reflect their diverse epistemological, ontological, axiological, and methodological assumptions (Bhattacharjee, 2012; Kawulich,

2012; Scotland, 2012). As noted earlier, to answer research questions, researchers employ positivists, critical and or interpretive research paradigms whose uniqueness is revealed in their ontological, epistemological and axiological stances necessitating diverse research methodologies. The next discussion is on the positivist inquiry in comparison to the critical paradigm to show how as paradigms they are limited in answering research questions and guiding this study. Understanding the dissimilarities is important in establishing that the interpretive paradigm not only describes and interprets reality but further permits theory building grounded on the data (Bhattacharjee, 2012; Kawulich, 2012; Scotland, 2012).

The positivist paradigm

The positivist paradigm, whose focus is on hypothesis testing, is usually linked to quantitative research design that is impartially determined and centred on quantifying the reappearance of casual arrangements. Founded in the 19th century by the French philosopher and founder of sociology, Augustine Comte's, (1798-1857), positivism stresses on discovery of epistemological perspectives of positivism (Bourdeau, 2014; Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007). It is argued in literature that Augustine Comte's philosophies founded on realism ontology fusing rationality and realism was published in 1830-1842 (Bhattacharjee, 2012). Realism is the perception that things exist independent of the one who knows them; as such most positivists believe that our senses cannot generate reality (Bourdeau, 2014). This implies that reality is out there detached from the researcher and exists in the absence of the researcher's intervention.

Positivists' epistemology is naturally objectivism as demonstrated by its persistent promotion of experiments, stinginess in use of words, regulation of research tools and generalisation of findings as sources of true knowledge (Scotland, 2012). With the discussed ontology and epistemology, positivist axiological stance is that research is value free hence employ regulated research instruments as data generation tools to expose reality. In view of the foregoing positivists' "methodology is directed towards explaining relationships...attempt to identify causes which influence outcomes" (Scotland, 2012, p. 10) hence study the world disjointedly from the researcher. This is the reason why positivists methodologies question validity and reliability of the study while also targeting generalisation of research findings. Practically, positivists believe that reliable knowledge can be generated through experiments and observations hence desire certified evidence to support the presumption and guess hence dependent on inquiry as the principle investigation tool (Goldkuhl, 2012; Scotland, 2012).

Positivists stingily employ scientific ways of interpreting the phenomenon and depend on established relationships for predictions and regulation to help generalise research results (Shiraz, 2015). Positivists invent theories from the data but expect the theories to change in line with further evidence obtained on the constructed theory generalised and replicated research findings.

Positivism is not applicable to the exploration of the learning implications of the distance secondary teacher training in Malawi for a number of reasons. Firstly, positivists consider indirectly observable traits like feelings, experiences and purpose as less important and confusing as they “assume that reality is not mediated by our senses” (Scotland, 2012, p. 10). For example; distance students admission into a programme and their learning processes could be observed and quantified. But nature of institutional organisation and teachers’ purpose to pursue their training through distance education and meanings of teachers’ experiences could only be measured by a subjective and not an objective, positivist paradigm. Secondly, teachers’ lived experiences which include feelings, interests and or insights could not be quantified and wedded to positivism which only measures quantifiable trends. The parsimonious and determinant nature of positivism could further limit the discovery of social reality as viewed and experienced by student teachers. Positivist stingy use of words and research methods could not provide detailed descriptions and interpretations of meanings drawn for such experiences. In this thesis, I sought to explore knowledge as personally experienced and not as acquired or imposed by the outside world as believed by positivists. Student teachers’ narrations or sharing of their lived experiences could not fit in the positivists’ parsimonious approaches which do not also support shared knowledge creation and disconnects participants from incidences. Further, the interpretive analysis does not need scientific objectification as advocated by positivism. The next section discusses the critical paradigm which is considered by some researchers as a variant of the interpretive paradigm.

The critical paradigm

While positivism centres on generalisation of findings the critical paradigm allied to the Frankfurt school in Germany in 1930s, refined by various scholars including Marx, Hegel, Husserl, and Kant emphasises on emancipating knowledge. The evolution of the paradigm includes its improvement by the Germany sociologist and philosopher, Jurgen Habermas (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007) and its divisions into the objective radical structuralism and the subjective radical humanism epistemologies. The radical structuralism’s

epistemology is that the “world consists of radical changes” (Bourdeau, 2014 p.19) whose understanding requires an objective approach to participants involved.

Ontologically, the critical paradigm is practically historical realism hence interprets truth as bred by “social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic and gender values” (Scotland, 2012, p. 13) hence interrogates political stances. The critical paradigm’s axiological stance is that of interrogating values and suppositions while also revealing power, discrimination, societal organisational challenges and action engagement. The critical methodology definitely is political in nature and aims at emancipating the oppressed. With these views, “researchers embrace their ideology as they recognise that “no research methodology is value free” (Scotland, 2012, p. 13). Scotland argues that the critical researcher starts with presumptions, finds out for participants to know their situation (conscientisation) comprehends transformation through praxis (reflection) and collectively with participants deconstruct the situation. The critical paradigm hence stereotypes participants as marginalised and oppressed thus, attempts to craft a plan to change their circumstances and free them.

The radical human critical paradigm could not fit this study’s interest though sharing similar epistemological and ontological stances; this study is not bent towards political stances to free the oppressed. Furthermore, this thesis does not require “presumptions, conscientisation...” (Scotland, 2012, p. 6) as emphasised by the critical paradigm. In this study, I sought an in-depth understanding of the learning implications of the distance secondary school teacher training in Malawi allied to institutional organisation as the learning environment. As allowed by the interpretive paradigm, I intend to propose a suitable institutional organisation model for the Malawi’s distance teacher training to incorporate positive learning implications as dictated by the data. The sought elements in this research could not be obtained through the critical paradigm whose focus is on emancipation and power for transformation. The study focused on drawing a deep understanding of institutional organisation, how it affects student teachers’ learning and why it affects students-teachers’ learning experiences the way it does hence requiring an interpretive roadmap.

Interpretive paradigm

As an approach to understanding the research problem, the interpretive paradigm values “honest descriptions and interpretations of the phenomenon from diverse narrations to build up a general experience of a particular phenomenon” (Lin, 2013, p. 471). As indicated earlier,

the interpretive paradigm's epistemology is subjective, based on real objects or things existing in the real world with relativism ontology. Interpretivists view reality as individually perceived, diversely interpreted hence manifold truths. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) argued that interpretivism is concerned with

...accepting and seeking multiple perspectives, being open to change, practicing iterative and emergent data collection techniques, promoting participatory and holistic research, and going beyond the inductive and deductive approach (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007, p. 25).

As is the case with the critical paradigm, the interpretive axiological position is that research cannot be value free hence employ research methodology that facilitates the researcher's interactions and observations with the participants. This therefore empowers an interpretivist to verify knowledge by probing into unexplored areas to understand it and construct rich meanings shared from diverse viewpoints. Contrary to the critical paradigm which examines truth from cultural, historical and political stances, the interpretive truth is commonly shaped and literally situated while complying with philosophies without questioning. The critical paradigm tracks liberation while the interpretive paradigm hunts for the understanding of the phenomenon of interest. The critical and interpretive paradigms view social reality as perceived and experienced by an individual due to his or her interaction with the environment or situation leading to knowledge creation. They both share epistemological approach which is, that the researched is not independent of the researcher. For example; in this study, I am empowered by the interpretive approach to make sense of participants' experiences to expose the common understanding of the learning implications of the distance training. Clancy (2013, p. 12) argues that it is crucial for interpretivists to "undergo a process of reflexivity to provide credible and plausible explanation of participants' accounts and avoid assumptions". As a researcher, the interpretivist creates knowledge through reflexivity generally unfolding various descriptions and meanings of participants' experiences. Following the hermeneutics interpretation which calls for the researcher to bracket off his or her preconceived mind, I employed epoche to bracket off my own experiences of distance education.

An interpretivist "opposes positivism due to its objectivity and relativity" (Dokuzoglu, 2011, p. 107). Though both interpretivists and critical philosophers intend to understand the phenomenon, the critical paradigm seeks to emancipate. The interpretive paradigm's epistemology allows interpretation of participants' meanings of the phenomenon based on varying data collection tools and reconciles participants' diverse responses using participants'

own perspectives, experiences and perceptions. I found the interpretive paradigm appealing in that; this study involved experts or direct participants of the experience (co-researchers) to unveil their experiences opposing the critical paradigm which includes even non-participants. Contrary to the critical paradigm which proposes collective or drastic change, I sought to interpret numerous subjective meanings drawn and constructed by participants' narratives to uncover social realities. Since the interpretive paradigm works with and understands existing experiences for theory building, this study requires the same to produce valid subjective realities to improve the Malawi distance secondary teacher system.

The study required an in-depth understanding of the distance secondary teacher training and its learning implications whose narratives could best be handled interpretively. While within the interpretive paradigm, the study drew on a blend of tenets from the industrial education (Peters, 1973), conversational learning (Holmberg, 2003) and phenomenology (van Manen, 1995) theories to better explore the learning implications of the distance secondary teacher training in Malawi.

Industrial education

The philosophy of industrial education is generally linked to classical management philosophy advocated by Max Weber, Henri Fayol and Taylor during the industrial revolution. As discussed in chapter 2, Otto Peters instituted the industrial teaching theory in 1973 as interpreted in his 1994 writings. Peters was the first Vice-Chancellor or Rector of the distance teaching university in West Germany, the Fern Universität from 1975 to 1984. Otto Peters "analysed distance education through the lenses of operations management, and suggested the application of methodologies such as division of labour, mass production, economies of scale, and unit cost (Ramdas & Masithulela, 2016, p. 7). The authors hint that despite being influential in the British Open University (BOU) organisation in the 1970's, Otto Peters' foci extended to operational strategy of distance education. Otto Peters is generally regarded as "one of the first philosophers to make important contributions to distance education theory" by referring distance education to "industrialisation of education" or industrial teaching (Moore, 2013, p. 521). It was his experience that made him crave for a better definition, organisation and operations of distance education that bled the systems approaches to distance education (Ramdas & Masithulela, 2016).

As argued, Peters and others have often chosen to establish entirely new and distinct distance education entities based on an industrial model. The authors equate this industrial philosophy of education to entrepreneurial, requiring marketing, management and quality control as done in operations of a business entity. It is from the foregoing that Peters set systematic planning, specialisation, division of labour, coordination, mass production, economies of scale and unit costs as bases for distance education investigations. Peter's description of distance teaching and learning as industrial education marked the birth of distance teaching replacing correspondence education whose enactment excluded the identified industrial elements.

The industrial teaching theory (1973) underscores organisational issues like the establishment of systems and specificity of purpose enclosed in the institution's vision and mission which are further embedded in planning. As discussed, setting of systems through planning as discussed in chapter 10 helps to keep stakeholders informed while also guiding the practices to follow the plans for efficacy. Moore (2013, p. 74) argues that "most of what is happening in the name of distance education is simply traditional pedagogy and traditional structures of higher education with the addition of new technology". This argument is based on the claim that although delivery of higher quality education is possible, it is not being achieved, partly because people do not understand what is needed and do not know what distance education really is. Informed stakeholders ensure proper setting of, and functioning of the distance education system and sub-systems as discussed in chapter 10. The theory further embraces specialisation of the workforce in terms of different expertise and technical know-how in their distinct sub-systems and instructors and course teams areas of specialisation. Minnaar (2013, p. 102) argues that "for ODL to be successful, it is important to move to a system where teachers are specialists within a system".

As is the case in correspondence education, industrial education offers knowledge to students on a one-way communication genre through massively printed traditional notes sent by post (Cleveland-Innes & Garrison, 2010). In this study, five tenets of industrial education guided data collection and analysis. For example, planning for distance secondary teacher training was gauged through:

- The presence of a distinct distance education system or unit with supporting systems.
- Availability of documented plans or guidelines for distance education at national and institutional levels.
- Educators' knowledge of distance education institutional organisation and enactment.

- Presence of vision, mission, contingency and developmental plans for the distance training.
- Existence of resource mobilisation strategies for growth of distance education.
- Constant staff trainings.

Division of labour in distance teaching and learning processes was assessed through the availability of systems within systems to show the split of work into several complete activities or units. Further, the use of personnel with diverse expertise to develop instructional materials and support students at a distance signals division of labour. Specialisation is a product of division of labour because the split of work into different pieces requires different expertise. Specialisation in this study was sought from the existence of systems in the distance system and differing expertise acknowledged for their participation in the development of instructional materials. Coordination on the other hand, was assessed in the systems interconnectedness in coming up with instructional materials and the coordinative nature of educators to yield effectual learning and learning support. Mass production was assessed from the distance education's ability to produce preplanned instructional materials for all registered students to use while away from the teaching institution.

The industrial education perspective of defining distance education if evident relates to the production and distribution of instructional materials for students use while totally separated from the teaching institution and instructors. The absence of further pedagogic (teaching and learning methodologies), heutagogic (students' determination to learn) or andragogic (adult learning) support to distance students is further connoted as an industrial trait where customers just buy products without meeting the producer.

Much as the industrial education theory sets a clear demarcation between on campus and teaching outside the classroom walls, its shortfalls include the disregard for differences in students' pedagogy, heutagogy and andragogy (Ramdas & Masithulela, 2016).

Conversational learning

The conversational learning theory which shares the root with industrial education originates from an influential distance education developer's ideologies, Börje Holmberg's (1983) theory of 'guided didactic conversation'. Holmberg alleged that in the learning environment students learn through instructors' guided didactic conversation where instructors guide the students by correcting, clarifying and redirecting their views. According to Holmberg,

instructor-student or student-student direct conversation is a vital learning attribute which is a motivator to the student and facilitator of positive learning outcomes. Guided conversation promotes a personal instructor-student, student-peer rapport.

As is the case with industrial education, conversational learning relates to andragogy with teaching done in written form hence the theory's emphasis on 'guided didactic' conversation. The conversational learning theory (Holmberg, 2003) evolved in 2003 from 'guided didactic' while retaining its gist due to technological advancement after critiques that it was somehow authoritarian. The theory's evolution meant to promote the development of personal rapport and a sense of empathy between the learner and the educator. Contrary to the theory of industrial education, this theory stresses on the need for regular non-contiguous facilitated communication between the educator (writers, tutors, and editors) and its students augmented by peer interaction. The conversation theory promotes simulated or one-way communication which is in-built in pre-packaged instructions and two-way or real communication offered in face-to-face sessions, electronic mail, telefax, personal tutoring and counselling (Gatsha, 2010). Holmberg's (2003) description of empathy as a feeling of personal relations is achieved through instructional materials presence of human element to bring about mediated conversation and in assignment processes.

The theory emphasises on a natural conversation to increase learners' understanding and retention of concepts. This helps learners to easily translate instructional materials, breaks the wall of isolation between the distance learner and the educator and motivates the learner hence learner satisfaction (Thawani, 2012; Gatsha, 2010; Makhanane, 2007). Further, Holmberg (2003) defines interaction in distance learning as conversational in nature leading to active learner participation to break the psychological gap and bring the students closer to the educating institution. Holmberg thus, views face-to-face communication as real conversation while regarding interactivity in written materials as mediated conversation. The real conversation in real interaction and mediated conversation in the modules (Holmberg, 2003) as tenets of the study's framework pronounce distance education as "a friendly conversation that is fostered through well-developed self-instructional materials that enable a personal relation during study," (Ramdas & Masithulela, 2016, p. 8). This implies that unless the instructional media is soundly designed, student-content interaction which is omnipresent in conversational self-instructional materials cannot be achieved.

I found the theory appealing due to its focus on friendly dialogue which is critical to students' independence, successful course completion and institutional growth through education massification. In this regard, conversational presence is a vehicle to student motivation as it brings in the students a sense of belonging to the education institution as supported by Ramdass and Masithulela (2016). The theory provides a clue to the scrutiny of self-learning materials produced and distributed not only at Mzuzu University and Domasi College of Education but to all distance institutions in Malawi and elsewhere. The industrial education and conversational learning theories are similar in that they allow change in instructors' roles from the traditional norms to distance approaches. Since 'mediated' and 'real' conversation (Holmberg, 2003) as tenets of the study's framework suggests that students be exposed to human and content interaction, the instructor has to adopt new roles of fulfilling this requirement (Holmberg, 2003). The other two tenets, 'specialisation' and 'division of labour' emphasise that instructors play varying roles to support designing, development and dissemination of instructional materials and feedback provision to students inter alia. Schmidt (2016, p. 73) referred this change to 'creation of a context of learning' as instructors shift from their norm in terms of function of being disseminators of knowledge to new roles of designing, developing, facilitating and instructing. The presence or absence of industrial and conversational elements in the learning materials steers the possibility of positive and or negative student teachers learning experiences which can be exposed phenomenologically.

Phenomenology

Phenomenology (van Manen, 1995) is rooted in philosophy and psychology linked to 20th century philosopher, Edmund Husserl's (1936/1970) philosophy of consciousness and the essence of the shared reality of the world as perceived by individuals (van Manen, 1995; 2007). Phenomenology evolved as it was further developed by other philosophers such as Heidegger (1927/1962) (Finlay, 2008). The theory is grounded in the assumption that there is an essence or essences to shared experiences which can be uncovered (Perlin & Soner, 2015). Husserlian phenomenologists hence focus on 'consciousness and the essence of the phenomena which is revealed through individuals' sharing of their own lived experiences. To spine the assumption, Scotland (Scotland, 2012, p. 12) argues that phenomenology is "the study of direct experience without allowing the interference of existing preconceptions". As such, studies are carried out with the researchers' free mind of the experience to investigate participants' intrinsic kernels and their gratitude to their experiences and interrelated issues.

The researcher banks on participants' narratives of their experiences to develop the "what happened" and "how it happened" or "what-how" narratives to get the meaning of the phenomenon (Perlin & Soner, 2015). Phenomenology commands that the researcher conducts a study with a mind free of assumptions by focusing first, on just describing the phenomenon before clarifying it. Heideggerian's phenomenologist focus on onto-theology averting metaphysics and scientific understanding of reality and analysis of the phenomenon (van Manen, 2007, p. 19). This contributes to the understanding of the phenomenon (through its descriptions and interpretations) deems phenomenology the process of describing and interpreting meanings of people's lived experiences (Perlin & Soner, 2015). In this case, the truth is discovered through peoples' own descriptions of their experiences and feelings. Descriptions and interpretations generate a comprehensive understanding of episodes drawn through phenomenological reductions while linking people and the world. Reduction in phenomenology involves two very crucial elements of epoche and eidetic. Epoche helps the researcher to set aside what s/he already knows about the phenomenon while eidetic allows the researcher to go beyond the usual thinking in meaning building (Finlay, 2008).

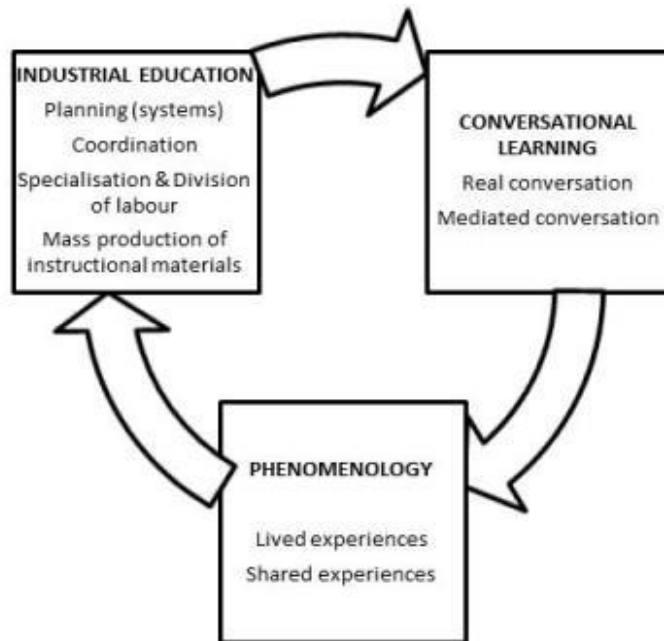
As indicated, phenomenological evolution led to major deviances like the transcendental, existential, and hermeneutic beliefs discussed briefly here: Originating from Edmund Husserl's phenomenological perspective is the transcendental philosophy boosted by Moustaka (1994). When studying individuals' experiences, transcendental philosophers focus on descriptions of the experiences from the outsider's perspective while shedding off pre-assumptions and conceptions. Existential philosophy as advocated by Heidegger (1962) emphasises on understanding the phenomenon by unfolding people's lived experiences from an 'insider's viewpoint' where one scrutinises his or her own experiences. Hermeneutic philosophy advocated by van Manen (1995) rooted in Heidegger's philosophical framework promotes best explanations and explanations of people's lived experiences from compound sources of data (Langdridge, 2013).

The hermeneutic philosophy was important for this thesis due to its emphasis on descriptions and interpretations of phenomena for an in-depth understanding and its employment of compound sources of narrations. Participants' shared experiences of the nature of distance education institutional organisation at Mzuzu University and Domasi College of Education could be best interpreted hermeneutically uncovering the organisation's implications on student teachers' learning experiences. In this study, phenomenology was instrumental in

uncovering student teachers' 'essence' of being participants of the distance education programme and their learning experiences. Similarly, instructors and administrators shared their experiences of being educators for the distance teacher training revealing their understanding of distance education and the uniqueness of the distance students. As advocated by van Manen (2007, p. 54), I first "bracketed, analysed, and compared" research participants' diverse experiences before their synthesis to dig up essences of the student teachers' distance learning and its implications. This first, involved drawing broad categories of the lived and shared experiences of student teachers, instructors and administrators, carefully studying them and making comparisons. In this case, the 'lived experiences' of secondary school teachers trained through distance education were uncovered, interpreted and understood. The analysis of phenomenological data followed the Moustaka (1994) phenomenological data analysis thus, applying both Heidegger's and Husserl's philosophies in this single study.

I found the tenets of phenomenology, "lived" and "shared experiences" important in guiding the discovery of student teachers, instructors' and administrators' experiences of the distance teacher training. Participants' narrations of their lived experiences were a rich source of data for the exposure of the nature of the distance teacher training institutional organisation, its impact on student teachers' learning and why such impact. Further, phenomenology was the main source of data that would call for improvement of the distance teacher training provision at Mzuzu University and Domasi College. Figure 4 presents the diagrammatical theoretical framework of the study.

Figure 4: Theoretical framework of the study



Tenets of this study's theoretical framework are: planning that embrace systems, coordination, specialisation and division of labour, mass production, real and mediated conversation and shared and lived experiences. The establishment of a specific system and sub-systems with proper coordination of operations yield effective real conversation and mediated mass production of instructional materials. For mass production and empathy to be achieved, specialisation and division of labour have to be well engaged coupled with continued coordination of all sub-systems and their setups. Massive production of interactive instructional materials requires input from varying human skills to contribute to inclusion of empathy in the materials to yield mediated instructions. Similarly, real conversation needs proper coordination of the systems with varying human skills and specialities achieved through various set sections or faculties of the distance unit. This means that the presentation of empathy through the provision of both real and mediated conversation also calls for contributory efforts from varying human knowledge, attitudes and skills. The argument here is that, distance education efficacy relies on appropriate institutional organisation to yield effective interactive learning and positive learning experiences.

Proper setting of the sub-systems through planning and efficient coordination of mass production of mediated instructional materials and the presence of real conversation may

produce positive learning implications. This means that inept organisation of the sub-systems indicates planning deficiency hence mass production and empathy deficit resulting in negative students experiences. A disrupt or deficit in systems, coordination, division of labour and specialisation may negatively affect mass production of mediated instructional materials and provision of real conversation. Additionally, systems, coordination, division of labour and specialisation, mass production, mediated and real conversation make up the distance learning environment embedded in institutional organisation. Defies in any of the named tenets may yield negative lived experiences and negative learning implications whose sharing may offer feedback for the improvement of the entire ODE system. The next section concludes this chapter.

Chapter conclusion

In chapter 4, I have presented the positivist and critical paradigms before asserting the interpretive paradigm as a guide for this study. It has been argued in the chapter that positivism is parsimonious in knowledge generation with over dependency on scientific sources while the critical approach interrogates for emancipatory purposes. I have further, presented a blend of tenets from the industrial education, conversational learning and phenomenology theories within the interpretive position as fit for the exploration of the learning implications of the distance teacher training. It is shown in this chapter that, tenets of each of the three theories are not rigorous enough to inform the thesis. It is thus, argued that the industrial education theory is mean in effecting learning and learning support to students, the conversational learning theory cannot expose organisational issues while phenomenology is fit only for sharing of lived experiences. I further argue that a blend of tenets from industrial education, conversational learning and phenomenology theories can ably expose the learning implications of the distance secondary school teacher training.

CHAPTER 5

RESEARCH PROCEDURE

Introduction

To explore the learning implications of the distance secondary teacher training in Malawi this thesis employed qualitative design grounded in interpretive paradigm. The qualitative methodology in this study shall be discussed from the interpretive stance of exhaustive descriptions and understanding of the phenomenon other than the critical stance of interrogating for emancipation the disempowered (Scotland, 2012; Bhattacharjee, 2012). This chapter defines and positions qualitative research exploration by explaining the interpretive-qualitative design, case study methodology, the role of reflexivity and epoche, questing of research participants, -data collection and analysis methods, research trustworthiness and the study's ethical issues. The research methodology is discussed next.

Research methodology and design

As discussed, different paradigms convey different ontological, axiological and epistemological views which are also reflected in their research methodology, methods and design (Scotland, 2012). Research methodology is defined as a theoretically informed technique of collecting data for research purposes (Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, 2008). Since the interpretive approach allows the use of subjective and diverse techniques, document analysis, observation, questionnaires, and interviews could be the best tools to be employed to yield truth from multiple realities. Methodology which is regarded as “a strategy or plan of action which lies behind the choice and use of particular methods” (Scotland, 2012, p. 9), is argued by the author to be concerned with “why, what, from where, when and how” data collection and analysis procedures occur. As discussed in the prior chapter, the questions ‘what’ and ‘how’ yield comprehensive interpretations for in-depth understanding of the phenomenon. Since the interpretive method of data collection allows the use of subjective and diverse techniques such as document analysis, observation, questionnaires, and interviews to yield truth from multiple realities. In line with research methodology is the research design which is defined as:

...a comprehensive plan for data collection in an empirical research project. It is a “blueprint” for empirical research aimed at answering specific research questions

or testing specific hypotheses, and must specify at least three processes: (1) the data collection process, (2) the instrument development process, and (3) the sampling process... (Bhattacharjee, 2012, p. 35).

Though research designs are many (Bhattacharjee, 2012; Scotland, 2012; Kawulich, 2012), researchers mostly use qualitative and or quantitative designs. As discussed in chapter 4, paradigms inter alia, entail the choice of methodology and methods, in attempt to get trustworthy conclusions from the answers to the research question; I chose the case study methodology centred on the qualitative design as grounded in the interpretive paradigm. The next section outlines and positions the interpretive qualitative research.

Outlining and placing interpretive qualitative research

There are contestations in the definitions of qualitative research implying a canopy word wrapping varying approaches and methods, research focus and assumptions around ontologies and epistemologies and their role (Forrester, 2010). Regardless of their multiplicity, all qualitative research are grounded in interpretivist's stances focusing on interpretation and in-depth understanding of the phenomenon as experienced, shaped and or founded (Goldkuhl, 2012). Qualitative studies are also investigative based on critical stances as they holistically take in the study's density, specifics and context, and reference are based on flexible, social and sensible contexts. When the critical stances are used in qualitative design the foci is beyond mere descriptions and interpretations of the problem under study but goes further to emancipate and bring transformation (Scotland, 2012).

A qualitative study responds to "what", "how" and "why" (Yilmaz, 2013, p. 317) questions and is a reflexive process occurring throughout the study to yield in-depth understanding and interpretation of the phenomenon. It is argued in this thesis that, qualitative design follows the interpretive or critical paradigm with the interpretive laying foundations for the critical paradigm to take off. In this study, I engaged the interpretive paradigm to get a deep understanding of the learning implications of the distance secondary teacher training while giving room to suggestions for improvement of its enactment. The study meant to expose distance education existing structures, their implications for learning and reasons for such organisation while taking in suggestions for improvement for the Malawi model as revealed by the data without emancipating institutions or participants. In this qualitative-interpretive study, the critical questions carries 'what' and 'how' questions. For example; this study carries the following question; what is the nature of institutional organisation of the distance

secondary school teacher training at Mzuzu University and Domasi College? How does the institutional organisation of the distance secondary school teacher training at Mzuzu University and Domasi College affect student teachers' learning? Why does the institutional organisation of the distance secondary school teacher training at Mzuzu University and Domasi College affect student teachers' learning experiences that way?

As an interpretivist my concern was on meaning production based on detailed descriptions and interpretations of the institutional organisation, the learning implications and the sources of those implications. As discussed in chapter 4, an interpretivist ontological locus is relativism with "constructivist ontology" (Goldkuhl, 2012, p. 5). This study rests on the ontology that reality is personally and socially constructed through interactions, and is subjective and differs from one individual to another (Bhattacharjee, 2012; Scotland, 2012) hence manifold realities. Since ontologically, institutional organisation is not imposed, but constructed and armored by people's actions and relations, I sought participants' own voice of the nature of institutional organisation and learning experiences (Rooyen, 2015). In this case, planning (systems), coordination, mass production, specialisation and division of labour, real and mediated conversation and lived and shared experiences as tenets of the study's theoretical framework present the social world features.

I sought socially constructed meanings from participants' own experiences not as acquired or imposed by the outside world (Bourdieu, 2014) as assumed by positivists. As argued by Wesley (2010, p. 4) "all reality is socially constructed" with the perception and focus on the phenomenon. Since it is allowed in qualitative research to construct meaning from multiple sources, I hence employed a combination of document analysis and in-depth semi-structured interviews with phenomenological reflections as data collection instruments for this thesis (Sutton & Austin, 2014). Qualitative design grounded in interpretive paradigm suits this study's purpose of drawing an in-depth knowledge production and understanding of the learning implications of the secondary teacher distance training in Malawi. This study follows the case study methodology for easy analysis and interpretation of the findings. For example; I had to study the two institutions; Mzuzu University and Domasi College as sole public distance secondary school teacher trainers in Malawi. I expected the two institutions to have some common traits as they belong to one parent, the government need to study them as one. My assumption was that the case study would drive my focus of understanding the

dynamics present in the institutional organisation of secondary school teachers' distance education in Malawi.

I thus chose the qualitative research design to focus on probing the nature of institutional organisation of the Mzuzu University based on participants' own voice with the assumption that human beings construct perceptions of the world they coincide with (Perlin & Soner, 2015). In qualitative research design participants' behaviour, experiences and social situations lead to knowledge construction. This is contrary to quantitative epistemology which disregards human intentions, feelings, experiences and insights and considers scientific knowledge as the sole source of truth and valid knowledge. The next section outlines a case study.

Outlining a case study

A case study as contended by Creswell (2008) is a popular strategy in educational research which is appended by Johnson and Christensen (2012, p. 395) as a "research that provides detailed account and analysis of one or more cases". Bhattacharjee (2012, p. 93) describes a case study as an "in-depth investigation of a problem in one or more real-life settings (case sites) over an extended period of time." As indicated, the two sites, Mzuzu University and Domasi College of education as lone public institutions of higher learning offering distance secondary school teacher training constitute this research's case study. Further, Yin (2010) indicates that, case studies are suitable when, how and why questions are under investigations. In this study the questions "what", "how" and "why" were pivotal in exposing the built up of the secondary teacher distance education in Malawi, its enactment, motives for such enactment and how it impacts on students' learning and experiences. This meant to draw an in-depth understanding of the learning implications the distance institutional organisation conveys on student teachers' learning and their experiences.

Both qualitative and quantitative studies employ case study strategy thus directing both the interpretivist and positivist to follow suit. However, the basis for the researcher's choice of research amidst other approaches is of great importance. The positivist aims at testing the hypothesis while the interpretivist targets in-depth understanding of the phenomenon for knowledge construction and inductive theory building. In this qualitative-interpretive research the case study was appropriate in two ways; first in revealing the nature of distance education organisation for secondary teacher training at Mzuzu University and Domasi

College of Education and its learning implications. Second, in collecting rich data from the two sites constituting the case study to enrich the findings and “to explore or describe the data in real-life environment, ... explain the complexities of real life situations which may not be captured through experimental or survey research” (Zainal, 2017, p. 4). According to Zainal, the interpretive case study allows the researcher to interpret data through construction of theoretical groups in support or against predetermined suppositions. In this event, the case study would finally inform theory, meaning and knowledge construction in the current study. Being an interpretive focused study, meaning production involved subjective data collection methods such as document analysis and in-depth semi-structured interviews which also comprised phenomenological reflections. Such data provided a true picture of the nature of distance institutional organisation of the secondary school teacher training and its implications on student teachers’ learning and experiences in Malawi. The next section outlines reflexivity and epoche’s roles in a qualitative-interpretive study.

Reflexivity and epoche’s role in a qualitative-interpretive research

Reflexivity in a qualitative-interpretive study is the researcher’s continuous process of self-awareness and realisation of their held preconceptions and how they may distort understanding of the phenomenon (Clancy, 2013). This embraces interrogating one’s stances, opinions, reactions and practices to gauge understanding of others (Finlay, 2008). In this study, reflexivity was essential, in both data collection and analysis processes. As a researcher, I had to distance myself from what I already know about distance education organisation and enactment. I applied reflexivity throughout the study starting from the administration of semi-structured interviews with distance education administrators and instructors, document analysis up to the analysis and discussion of the research findings. I had to gauge my interactivity and immensity with the research and its participants, and where possible draw a limit of my familiarity with distance education organisation and enactment. I reminded myself that my preconceived beliefs, practices, and knowledge stemming from being a distance education tutor at the Malawi College of Distance Education (MCDE) for 4 years had nothing to do with this study. I had to mirror my position as a distance education practitioner, hold my assumptions and understand that my preconceptions would affect participants and influence the study. I had to weigh properly how the participants and I could positively or adversely impact on each other in the course of the study and therefore avoided situations and questions that would lead participants to research responses.

In generating and analysing phenomenological data I used epoche which works in a similar way to reflexivity. The construct epoche is derived from a Greek word meaning “to stay away or abstain from presupposition or judgments about the phenomena under investigation” (Finlay, 2008; Perlin & Soner, 2015, p. 6). In interpreting phenomenological data from administrators and instructors experiences and student teachers’ reflections, I had to take a new turn by bracketing off my pre-understanding of distance education enactment. I achieved this by taking non-judgemental position while purposefully expending the preconceptions to create new understanding. I attempted to set aside my lived experiences of being a distance student at both secondary school and tertiary levels and my preconceptions pertaining to diverse learning situations and how they personally affected my learning. I did this to better understand others and learn from their experiences. Epoche helped me to sharpen the study’s focus of getting deep into the understanding of the nature of institutional organisation and its implications on student teachers learning experiences with reduced prejudices. This further tells why the study had no hypothesis as is the case with quantitative research which builds on presumptions.

Reflexivity and epoche are hence bias control measures and sources of inventive prominences in research hence vital for in-depth understanding of the situation and knowledge production. Clancy (2010, p. 15) regards reflexivity as a tool to the discovery of “external forces that shape the study, such as culture, history, politics, the researcher and participants, and their social interaction.” Reflexivity and epoche played a vital role of making this study credible and trustworthy as they permitted the production of reliable and sound descriptions and interpretations of participants’ realities and conventions. I constantly engaged the two tools in this study to safeguard the research data from being contaminated with my presumptions and experiences which could otherwise have distorted research findings.

As stated earlier, the interpretive paradigm is characterised by descriptions and interpretations (Magrini, 2012). An interpretivist therefore describes and understands the phenomenon based on multiple truths while probing into the research for an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon. Interpretivists value genuine descriptions and interpretations of the phenomenon from different narrations to build up a general experience of the single phenomenon (Lin, 2013). Through reflexivity and epoche, I sought comprehensive descriptions and interpretations of the secondary distance teacher training in Malawi from multiple sources of experiences yielding qualitative data. This led to deep understanding of

the training's enactment, how it impacts on teachers' learning and experiences and why it is enacted in that manner. As indicated, an interpretive paradigm is anti-positivism in nature and rests on phenomenological ontology hence emphasises on: Social reality as viewed and interpreted by an individual based on the philosophies that the individual holds. Knowledge is personally experienced and not acquired or imposed by the outside world. The anti-positivists or post-positivists therefore harness multiple interpretations of a single phenomenon to breed multi-layered reality (Finlay, 2008). In view of the above, I interpreted the instructional materials and other guiding documents, participants' phenomenological narratives and responses for an in-depth understanding of the institutional organisation and distance education enactment. I was legitimately empowered by the interpretive paradigm to have an in-depth understanding of the distance secondary teacher training in Malawi as offered by public institutions. Further, reflexivity and epoche gave chance to the manifestation of new knowledge from diverse participants' descriptions and meanings of their experiences that would call for an improvement in the organisation and enactment of the distance teacher training. The population of the study is discussed next.

Population of the study

In this study, I involved fourteen (14) participants in total. The envisioned number of participants was twelve (12), with six from Mzuzu University and another six from Domasi College of education. However, during data collection, 14 participants in total were involved as Mzuzu University offers 5 years programme for distance training requiring 5 students to participate in the study. Again, in some cases I involved more than one student teacher from the same class or level due to snowballing and then I still needed to fill the gap for the unrepresented level or year of study. Total population comprised 2 administrators and 2 instructors, one from each of the 2 sampled institutions and 5 student teachers for each institution. The two administrators represented the management of distance education system while the 2 instructors were those directly involved in instructional material production, delivery and support to distance students. The study planned to have a total of 8 student teachers with a representation of 4 from each training institution. The number of four per institution was for quality control and data worthiness. I planned to involve a representative from all levels of the distance education programme from first year to the final year. Sampling of research participants is discussed next.

Sampling of research participants

Every study emphasises on the importance of selecting the appropriate candidates for data generation. In this study, I employed purposive or judgemental and snowball sampling techniques. Participants were purposively included depending on judgement while reflecting on the purpose of the study (Oliver, 2013).

I therefore, purposively selected participants with knowledge that could lead to the institutional organisation of the distance secondary school teacher training at Mzuzu University and Domasi College of Education. The administrators and instructors were identified due to their knowledge and hands-on experience on the distance teacher training as they are both involved in the designing and development of instructional materials. Again, administrators who are also instructors are entrusted with the management of distance education which includes student support among other things. Administrators and instructors were sources of rich data on institutional organisation in as far as planning (systems), coordination, specialisation and division of labour, mediated and real conversation and mass production are concerned. I further identified student teachers of Mzuzu University and Domasi College of education as inner participants in the distance secondary school teacher training using snowball sampling. Snowballing was useful in this study as it aided in finding distance student teachers who are hard to find and had no sampling framework. The student teachers in this study are serving teachers deployed to teach across the country, Malawi, where they mix with other teachers making snowball the most appropriate sampling technique. Snowball helped in identifying participants through classmates and workmates leading to 10 student teachers, 5 for Domasi College of education and another 5 for Mzuzu University. The number of participating student teachers at the two institutions grew as the initial identified participants suggested someone who might participate. Domasi College of Education research population is presented next.

Domasi College of Education research population

At Domasi College of Education, I collected data from the Acting Director of distance education and a lecturer in Theology and Religious studies in the faculty of humanities in addition to five (5) students-teachers.

I chose Domasi College of Education because it is the pioneer and well experienced public secondary distance teacher training institution in Malawi. As a constituency college of the University of Malawi, Domasi College of Education is a dual mode institution for secondary school teacher training offering both traditional and distance modes. I considered interviewing the Acting Director of distance education valid in exploring the nature of institutional organisation for distance education at the institution. The Acting Director is the overall boss at Domasi College of Education in as far as secondary teacher distance training is concerned. He is the overseer of all operations and human resource and ensures that distance education is implemented at the institution. Further, the instructor is directly involved with the actual enactment of the programme, participates in curriculum development and enactment. As noticed during the administration of the study's interviews, both the administrator and the instructor were reviewing the curriculum at Mandevu farm where I met and interviewed them. This justifies their aptness for the purpose. The instructor trains and supports the students and as a head of section he also manages related issues therefore was an appropriate source of data on distance education organisation and enactment. The engagement of the Acting Director and the instructor directed the generation of rich data for the exploration of the nature of institutional organisation and its implications on student teachers' learning experiences.

Furthermore, I involved 5 distance student teachers for Domasi College of Education as valid sources of data. The students' sample size was meant to include all levels of study for a bachelor's degree from year 1 to 4 and or final year. However, during data collection I learnt that by the time data was collected, Domasi College of Education had not yet expanded its distance programme to degree level hence offered distance training only at diploma level. The study therefore took a new dimension by taking the available student teachers teaching in various secondary schools in the country, Malawi regardless of their year of study. These student teachers were chosen because they had hands-on experience on the distance programme as offered and enacted at Domasi College of Education. The number of teachers grew as initial participants suggested those who could participate next. The increase acted as a cushion to the enrichment and accumulation of data for detailed descriptions and interpretation of the research findings. I considered student teachers as reliable sources of phenomenological data drawn from lived experiences through phenomenological reflections of the distance training. Student teachers' narrations were essential in gauging learning

implications of the distance training programme the student teacher were partaking. Research population for Mzuzu University is discussed next.

Mzuzu university research population

At Mzuzu University, I collected data from the Student Support Manager, an English lecturer or instructor, and 5 student teachers.

I chose to include Mzuzu University in the case study because as indicated, it is the second and newly established public institution of higher learning offering secondary school teacher distance training following Domasi College of education. As stated earlier in the thesis the two institutions are the lone public providers of distance secondary teacher education in Malawi. Interviewing the director for distance learning was appropriate but then I was directed to the student support manager for the purpose. This was not a bad idea either because the Student Support Manager is directly involved in the planning, management and enactment of the distance learning programme. The manager was hence the appropriate source of data for exploring the nature of institutional organisation as well as the actual enactment of distance education. Data collected from the manager guided the exploration of the learning implications of the nature of institutional organisation of distance secondary teacher training in Malawi. Further, the lecturer is directly involved in the actual teaching and learning and development of instructional materials for students' learning at a distance hence it was wise and proper to consult him. A lecturer instructs and supports the students and manages related issues making him an appropriate source of data on distance education execution.

Phenomenological data was collected from all the sources with 5 student teachers from each institution providing most of the phenomenological reflections. Contrary to the plan of getting a student from each level of education, some of the available students were at the same level or year of study. At Mzuzu University for example; distance students take 5 years to graduate with a bachelor's degree while the traditional students take only 4 years. I craved to include each level or year of study hence the increase in the number of students-participants from 4 to 5 though not exactly from distinct levels as planned. These student teachers had hands-on-experiences of the distance training as offered to them by Mzuzu University. These student teachers were reliable sources of their lived experiences and provided detailed narrations leading to a better exploration of the nature of institutional

organisation the implications it has on student teachers' learning experiences and Malawi as a country. Finding research participants is discussed next.

Finding research participants

Face-to-face interviews as formal conversation provide a rapport between the interviewer and the interviewee (Woods, 2011) to yield study access and valid data. Data from administrators and instructors were collected through visits to participants' work places while the plan to visit each and every student teacher failed as the participants resorted to meet me at a convenient locality. I invited the student teachers to participate in the study through phone calls and later I met them at a specific place of their choice for face-to-face conversations. This dialogue meant to offer formal and flexible interactions ensuing directly sought participants' consents to participate in the study. I sent semi-structured interview guides through electronic mail to administrators and instructors prior to the interviews. The sending of interview guides few days before the actual interview days was to prepare participants for the interviews and to yield effective knowledge production and valid data. I further offered letters to participants on a face-to-face contact requesting them to participate in the study.

Upon reading invitation letters, participants filled and signed consent forms using their real names and professional titles in agreement to the stated activity. The prompt signing of consent forms facilitated the communication process thereby reducing delays that could have occurred if the letters were sent prior to interviews through the post, which is a very slow process in Malawi. Personal contacts with research participants accelerated the data collection process. For example, semi-structured interviews provided some structures based on the study to create room for participants' natural explanations and interpretations through probing and existence of minimal interruptions. Face-to-face interaction with participants fulfilled the interpretive stance assumption that "human beings construct their perceptions of the world" (Perlin & Soner, 2015, p. 7).

In case of student teachers, meeting them at a specified locale not only reduced time consumption for data collection, but further, increased their concentration in a disturbance free environment. That is to say, if they were in their duty stations, disturbances were likely to occur in one way or the other due to the nature of their job. This could have distorted the written phenomenological reflections as interruptions would distort student teachers' narrations. Again, student teachers from Mzuzu University were not readily available in their

places of work by the time I called each of them. They had busy schedules as they had self-organised students meetings in various localities for peer interactions hence suggested we meet at my office on their way from the assemblage. As for Domasi College student teachers, they told me they will inform me when they are free. However they called each other and informed me while on their way to my office. I complied and in turn, reimbursed transport costs to all the ten (10) participating students-teachers basing the rate on their destinations or places of residence regardless of the fact that they were already around for their own engagements.

Although proper arrangements were made and dates agreed for interviews, abrupt changes on dates and in some cases even the venues were made due to administrators' and lecturers' busy schedules. I had to meet the Acting Director and instructor for Domasi College of education at Mandevu Village in Machinga district instead of Zomba district (figure 1) as they were reviewing the college's curriculum. Though travelling from Blantyre, my home to Machinga was expensive, I had to travel because this was the only solution to meeting the officers who were always and mostly out of office. It was only during follow-ups that I met them in college. Similarly, Mzuzu University director for distance education had to reschedule the meeting twice and the third time he gave an excuse while I had already arrived at the institution. The targeted administrator for Mzuzu University therefore, had to entrust the Student Support Manager unawares as he himself was reportedly very busy in the office. Regardless of the shifts in dates for interviews and change of participants as indicated earlier, 14 participants were interviewed instead of the planned 12 and electronic communication through electronic mails, and social media such as WhatsApp were employed for further probing and clarity. Data collection methods are discussed next.

Semi-structured interviews and document analysis

In studying the learning implications of the secondary distance teacher training in Malawi I blended data collection methods as empowered by the interpretive ontological perspective of harnessing multiple sources of truth (Rooyen, 2015). My decision to blend methodologies was based on the study's focus which was on the nature of institutional organisation and its implications on teachers' learning experiences requiring digging of teachers' lived experiences. Again, I chose interpretive research methods to "yield insight and understandings of behavior; explain actions from the participant's perspective, and not to dominate the participants" (Scotland, 2012, p. 12). In this case, I engaged semi-structured in-

depth interviews encompassing phenomenological questions for administrators, instructors and student teachers while also including document analysis to beef up interview data (Owen, 2014). I employed semi-structured in-depth interviews and document analysis as interpretive-qualitative data collection techniques desired to generate comprehensive interpretations of the learning implications of the distance institutional organisation from a reduced sample (Rooyen, 2015). Semi-structured in-depth interview as a data collection method is presented next.

Semi-structured in-depth interview;

Woods (2013, p. 1) described an interview as “a conversation with a purpose” where the researcher asks questions with the aim of getting answers from research participants. Interviews provides the interviewer with access to people’s feelings, thoughts, interpretations, behaviours, meanings, ideas, and memories (Creswell, 2008) in their own words leading to clarifications and discussions. Through interviews, the researcher clearly notices the attitude of participants and that’s where the data analysis starts to take shape (Rooyen, 2015). Interviews take two key directions; the structured or directive interviews and unstructured or non-directive interviews. Unstructured interviews are considered to be those whose questions are open-ended while structured interviews consist of closed-ended questions. Unstructured interviews are known to provide in-depth understanding of personal data, supplement and extend people’s knowledge and offer flexibility to participants (Woods, 2011; Perlin & Soner, 2015).

In this study, my preference was a semi-structured stance with the more flexible element and pre-determined open-ended questions to provoke discussions while probing to explore for thick data. I took the semi-structured in-depth interviews to personally engage with participants in a formal open up conversation involving few participants while being guided by a pre-planned interview schedule. I purposefully chose the semi-structured in-depth interviews to permit responsive probing while creating a favourable environment for participants to freely air out their perceptions, expectations, feelings and experiences. I was steered by Woods’ (2011) guide of a research interview which asserts natural flow of research questions depending on responses from participants and with reference to pre-planned interview schedule. At Mzuzu University and Domasi College of Education for example; I could not ask specific questions as planned and some questions were omitted in the process as dictated by the flow of the conversation. Research participants in some cases

could explain outside the questions parameters thereby touching other areas of the study or even beyond. I allowed this to happen so as to guide my clarification of issues, probe for more information and or, pose follow-up questions as argued by Bhattacharjee (2012).

The interview guide was a useful tool to this study as it provided me with clear instructions and reliable and comparable qualitative data. Although the use of telephone or videophones is allowed in conducting semi-structured interviews, I favoured the face-to-face mode of interviewing for an in-depth understanding of participants' feelings, body language and clarity of responses (Perlin & Soner, 2015). In this regard, I used three interview techniques: 'main questions, follow-up questions and probes to focus on the study purpose, for in-depth exploration leading to thick and rich data. I prepared an interview guide carrying main research questions for checks and balances of the research focus while follow-ups and probes led me to novel and comprehensive data.

Regardless of their demerits of time consuming, requiring interviewing skills and deeming the researcher, a research instrument (Bhattacharjee, 2012), I found interviews as a source of qualitative data aiding in explaining difficult scenarios. For example; just studying related documents without actually talking to those designers and the users could be meaningless. In this study, I interviewed designers of instructional materials in this case, administrators and instructors, to find out how they develop the modules, who is involved and how they ensure relevance of the content. The users or student teachers were indirectly asked through phenomenological questions on the instructional materials efficacy. I considered in-depth semi-structured interviews a source of detailed information about participants' thoughts, experiences and or emerging issues thereby revealing the whole picture of the Malawi secondary distance teacher training.

Probing was inevitable as it is part of the research process and is the main characteristic of semi-structured interviews leading to in-depth data gathering. I therefore developed additional open-ended questions based on interviewees' responses (Johnson & Christensen, 2012). The face-to-face interviews were administered once but probing continued with the participants through electronic mail, phone calls and social media such as WhatsApp. This meant to beef-up and seek clarity on the written responses given during the interviews. As argued by Bhattacharjee (2012), I chose semi-structured in-depth and not structured in-depth interviews to strengthen and dig interviewees' responses. I allowed participants to use any of the two Malawi's official languages; English or Chichewa, to freely express their views,

perceptions and experiences. However, none provided responses purely in vernacular, Chichewa; they all responded in English except in rare cases where there was a mix of the two.

I sought participants' understanding of open and distance education with the aim of soliciting detailed information on their knowledge and attitudes concerning open and distance education. I felt it necessary to find out if the participants had a clear picture of what open and distance education is so that I could ably understand and interpret their further responses. I asked educators, instructors in particular, to clearly stipulate the role they play in distance teacher training and the experience they have in handling distance students. I further sought some verification from these instructors concerning the uniqueness of distance students so as to relate to what these educators know about the distance education mode as compared to the traditional mode they are used to. I engaged the study's tenets to gauge educators' knowledge of institutional organisation of the distance teacher training in relation to planning (systems), coordination, division of labour, specialisation and mass production of instructional modules. Finally, on enactment of the training, I explored the actual process of the training, learning support offered to students and the impact the institutional organisation has on students' learning experiences. I audio-recorded the interviews for administrators and instructors to effectively capture responses from interviewees and later transcribed verbatim for analysis. I tape recorded the interviews with interviewees' consent while also taking down notes on critical issues for future references and to avoid missing out some responses. Field notes included vital gestures or body language, mannerism, comments and any other observable trends displayed as a response to research interviews. The phenomenological data collection was done as discussed next.

Phenomenological reflections

The semi-structured in-depth interviews included phenomenological questions for two (2) administrators and two (2) instructors focusing specially on the practitioners' experiences of the distance teacher training (Appendix 6 and 7). The semi-structured questions as was the case with all other semi-structured interview questions were administered orally in the process described above. However, the ten (10) students had their own specific questions focusing on their lived experiences of their being distance students at Mzuzu University and Domasi College of Education (Appendix 7). In this study, I have named the unique process I used to generate data from student teachers 'phenomenological reflections'.

Phenomenological reflections involved posing questions to the student teachers (Appendix 8) in a face-to-face situation, giving chance for learning experience reflections before asking the student teachers to respond in writing to each individual broad question. I had a group of students from Mzuzu University and Domasi College of education, offered them invitation letters and a consent form asking them to participate in the study. I reassured them that the interviews were solely for education purposes and that their identity would be concealed. Upon reading and agreeing with the letter's content, the student teachers individually signed the consent form which I attached to the invitation letter. I then, provided the writing materials to the students in a comfortably set room before briefing them on the process and requirements of the interview they had come for. I explained to student teachers that I would pose a question to which they would respond in writing using any of Malawi's official languages, Chichewa or English. I stressed to the student teachers that they should only answer the questions after detailed reflections on their experiences of being a distance student at Domasi College of Education or Mzuzu University. I provided the posed question one at a time to each student teacher for reference when giving written narrations of the questions and asked them to take their time before responding.

Generally, I asked student-teachers to give narrations of their being participants of the distance teacher training after their perceived definitions of open and distance education. Their narration touched on their reasons to train through the distance mode, expectations of the distance training, lived experiences of the training with examples of situations that affected them with suggestions for improvement of the training areas.

Both Domasi College and Mzuzu University student teachers took about one hour thirty minutes in total to write down detailed phenomenological narratives of their reflections. As much as probing is allowed in phenomenology, in this study, probing could not be done immediately, but after I had gone through all the written narratives and noticed some gaps, I found phenomenological reflection to data generation liberating participants to fully mirror or echo comprehensive experiences. Again, allowing participants to write down their reflections in the language of their choice from the known official languages was a bet for the participants to bring forth all lived experiences. Language was no longer a barrier for them hence they wrote as much as they could in response to each of the 5 questions posed one at a time to them in this face-to-face interaction. This further reduced some probable errors I could have made during transcriptions of the interviews if the student teachers were to each

provide oral responses. Written phenomenological reflections reduced time spent on interview transcriptions as I went straight to horizontalising the data to remove unnecessary statements instead of repeatedly listening to interviews for valid transcriptions. Phenomenological reflections are an innovative research method and my contribution to the interpretive-qualitative data collection that shall apply to various qualitative studies not only in education but in diverse fields. Document analysis as a data collection tool is discussed next.

Document analysis

As indicated, document analysis was one of the data generation tools for this study. I scrutinised instructional materials and strategic plans for Domasi College of education and Mzuzu University to obtain data which would reveal the nature of institutional organisation and its impact on student learning and experiences.

I craved to analyse modules as instructional materials to depict: social production of the document, social organisation of the document, direct analysis of the document and application of the document to industrial education and conversational learning theories. Social production of the document in this study embraced relevance of the instructional material to students' learning needs in terms of update or life span from the production date. Social production further linked to institutional organisation or sub-systems in terms of participation in material design and production so as to expose coordinative nature of the distance system and the presence of course teams. Social organisation of the module included writers and the actual writing process exposed through the language used in the document, readability, interactivity, inbuilt assessment and feedback. Direct analysis or semiotics of the document involved the teaching narratives used to help bring in effectual mediated teaching, learning and learning support. Application of the document to theories involved the document's response to tenets of the study's theoretical lens through the social production, social organisation and semiotics. For example, a list of names of instructional material designers and production team incorporated in the acknowledgement page or any of the fore pages and the participating systems was a signal to planning, coordination, division of labour and specialisation. Further, use of simple, clear, active voice and personalised language, inbuilt assessments, suggested answers and glossaries were key to identification of mediated conversation that could allow students' interaction with the content. Mediated conversation

was further tracked through comprehensiveness and legibility of the content as well as inclusion and attractiveness of illustrations.

Through scrutiny of the institutions' open and distance education strategic plans, I sought for planning to reveal existing systems and sub-systems reflected in the distance education plans while hosted within traditional settings. The strategic plan was vital in exposing the distance trainings' purpose, vision, mission, analysis of internal and external environment and formulation of strategic issues, goals, objectives, and action plans (Polk State College, 2012; Minnaar, 2013; Shivaj University, 2013). Though the two institutions lacked input and output lists, Mzuzu University's administrator ably dictated the total annual statistics from its database. Domasi College of Education failed to provide such information even after follow-up visits to the institution and regardless of promises made. The college only managed to send a teacher-learner handbook and study circle guidelines three (3) months after the interviews. Both semi-structured interviews and documents were used as main sources of data collection and analysis with field notes enriching and validating interview data. Use of the three sources of data was pertinent to this study because the three enriched each other as the documents also revealed information that interviewees could otherwise not share during interviews (Owen, 2014). For example; when one administrator was asked to describe the procedure for instructional material development and production at the institution, he referred me to the existing documents. The data from the three sources was then put together to institute emerging themes. The next section presents the study's data analysis process.

Data analysis

Following the interpretive paradigm with a blend of industrial education, conversational learning and phenomenology as guiding analytical tenets, data analysis took a holistic viewpoint of understanding the learning implications (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007; Scotland, 2012; Lin, 2013). This meant not just looking at distance education and learning implications, but looking at participants' knowledge of distance education, institutional organisation and the training's enactment to expose the learning implications. Subsequently, working from an interpretive stance, data were collected and analysed with the researcher's constant reflexivity and bracketing to allow creation of knowledge as participants' multiple descriptions and meanings unfolded (Clancy, 2013). Data analysis attempted to explore the learning implications of the distance secondary teacher training in Malawi for an in-depth

understanding while recognising emerging suggestions for improving the training's organisation and enactment.

As stated earlier, this study employed the qualitative research design guided by the interpretive research technique following a case study method. In qualitative research, data analysis is done concurrently with the data collection process and not as separate entities of data collection, processing and analysis as done in quantitative data processing (Bhattacharjee, 2012). In this study, I simultaneously and iteratively generated and analysed data with data analysis starting with the initial data collected. I re-examined data in response to additional emerging questions. I made data analysis an ongoing process which in turn provided concentrated data and reduced unnecessary repetition (Merriam, 2009).

I used interpretive interpretations focusing on language, signs and meanings from participants' views to yield an exhaustive and relative analysis as advocated by Yin, (2010). This destined at probing Domasi College and Mzuzu University's knack to lead distance sub-systems and the external environment towards institutions' objectives and setting of an effectual distance student learning environment. Theoretical lenses of planning (systems), coordination, mass production, specialisation and division of labour, real and mediated conversation and shared and lived experiences led the analysis. The argument is that a well-organised distance system is built on informed planning to yield properly mediated mass produced instructional materials and real conversation achieved through division of labour and specialisation. Theoretical lenses of the study extended the argument further to say, a commendably planned distance education system continuously directs all its sub-systems towards achieving students' positive learning experiences and implications.

The production of mass mediated instructional materials is an indication that distance education in Malawi is reliant on pre-planned and pre-produced instructions with students following the pre-determined curriculum. The intertwined tenets directed the detection of relationships amongst sub-systems and processes present at Domasi College and Mzuzu University distance teacher training and their effect on student teachers' learning experiences (Shiraz, 2015). I used the named interrelated tenets to explore the nature of institutional organisation in the two institutions under study and later connected to empathy presence in mass produced instructional materials. Mediation in instructional materials and the provision of real conversation through instructor-student or student-peers interaction necessitates planning, coordination of all the sub-systems and operations, division of labour and diverse

human skills. The argument is that, any discrepancy in the systems' planning, coordination, division of labour and specialisation may affect learning achieved through real interaction and mass produced and distributed mediated instructions.

Learning efficacies and or deficiencies may yield positive and or negative student lived experiences which when shared may notify the ODE system and provoke action. The nature of face-to-face sessions offered to students learning at a distance, and the way the modules spoke to students, uncovered mediation and real conversational presence or learning support provided to student teachers. Mediation presence through the 'tell and test', 'tutorial' and 'reflective action guide' (Gatsha, 2010; Malawi Government, 2017) guided the analysis of conversational presence in learning materials. I also interpretively analysed phenomenological data to unveil subjective interpretations of distance education offered by Domasi College and Mzuzu University from the student teachers and educators' perspectives. Student teachers' meanings of their lived experiences and perceptions which included diverse definitions of ODL, reasons for their study through ODL, suggestions, feelings, and insights regarding their distance learning were phenomenologically interpreted. Again, instructors and administrators meanings of their experiences and observations on the nature of distance students and their learning process drew a line between traditional and distance students. I tagged the study's participants with letters D and M as shown below.

| Tag name | Portfolio | Institution |
|-----------------|------------------|--------------------|
| D2 | Student teacher | Domasi College |
| D2 | Student teacher | Domasi College |
| D3 | Student teacher | Domasi College |
| D4 | Student teacher | Domasi College |
| D5 | Student teacher | Domasi College |
| M1 | Student teacher | Mzuzu University |
| M2 | Student teacher | Mzuzu University |
| M3 | Student teacher | Mzuzu University |
| M4 | Student teacher | Mzuzu University |
| M5 | Student teacher | Mzuzu University |

I used the tags D1, D2, D3, D4, D5 and M1, M2, M3, M4, M5 to represent student teachers' name. The tags were solely used for data analysis to help yield trustworthy research results. Administrators were tagged as below.

| Tag name | Portfolio | Institution |
|-----------------|------------------|--------------------|
| DA | Adminstrator | Domasi College |
| DI | Instructor | Domasi college |
| MA | Adminstrator | Mzuzu University |
| MI | Instructor | Mzuzu University |

As shown above, the tags DA, MA, DI, MI were used for administrators and instructors. In my presentation and discussion of research findings I used the terms: Administrator, instructor and student teachers as indicated in the second column of the two tables without mentioning actual names. The study incessantly drew on the terms ‘student teachers’ to mean participants trained through the distance mode and ‘educators’ for both, instructors and administrators as they are both instructors by profession. The use of tags or letters and portfolios such as administrator, educator, and student teacher in place of participants’ names further promoted participants’ safety, confidentiality and anonymity. The issue of gender was not of focus in this study hence omitted in the table but the study participants comprised 4 (100%) male educators (2 administrators and 2 instructors) with 6 (60%) male student teachers and 4 (40%) female student teachers.

I attempted to understand and get meaning of the nature of distance education institutional organisation in relation to educators’ and student teachers’ experiences. For example, using the study’s theoretical lenses, I employed the Miles and Huberman (1994) framework of qualitative data analysis to analyse semi-structured in-depth interview data and document analysis. I followed the Miles and Huberman framework all though starting with data reduction, data display, conclusion drawing or verification to get an in-depth understanding and draw meanings from research questions as illustrated in the framework.

Semi-structured in-depth interview data analysis

As discussed, the semi-structured in-depth interviews comprised two types of questions yielding two groups of data. The first set of questions was based on general episodes while the second set had phenomenological questions. The general episodes comprised general occurrences surrounding the secondary school teacher training in the two institutions under study while the phenomenological questions were directed towards instructors’ and administrators’ direct lived experiences. In analysing the general episodes form the interview data, I was guided by the Miles and Huberman framework for qualitative data analysis

(Punch, 2013; Miles & Huberman, 1994) and the tenets of the thesis' theoretical framework. While in analysing phenomenological data, I used the Moustakas (1994) psychological phenomenological data analysis procedure.

I used the Miles and Huberman framework of qualitative data analysis to draw meanings of data from interview research questions for an in-depth understanding of institutional organisation of the Domasi College of Education and Mzuzu University's distance training practices. In making meaning of the data collected, I utilised the two important intellectual tools of abstracting and comparison as stressed by Punch (2013, p. 13). The section below explains the Miles and Huberman framework for qualitative data analysis employed in this study.

I chose the Miles and Huberman framework of qualitative data analysis to assist me in organising qualitative data by clustering its units into themes to generate meaning out of it (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The framework consists of three phases: data reduction, data display and conclusion drawing while embracing coding, memoing and verification activities (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Punch, 2013). I employed some intellectual tools of abstracting and comparing for research conclusion drawing to comply with the qualitative nature of the study's data. Abstraction as an intellectual tool denotes presentation of concepts from concrete to abstract whereas comparison refers to comparing varying data indicators to get abstract concepts (Punch, 2013). In abstracting, I was required to develop new concepts from the existing ones. The next section describes data reduction, data display and conclusion drawing before indicating how I engaged the Miles and Huberman (1994) framework for qualitative data analysis in this study.

Data reduction is an incessant process of data analysis comprising vigilant shrinking of the collected research data. The procedure starts with editing, categorising and summarising data and continues with coding (tagging data) and memoing (theorising write-up). The process leads to identification of themes, clusters, and pattern from transcribed data. Data reduction involves conceptualising, explaining or abstracting by the researcher and disposing while securely storing irrelevant data (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Punch, 2013).

Data display is a repeated and continuous phase of data analysis involving organising condensed and gathered data into graphic forms such as charts, tables and or networks (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Punch, 2013).

Conclusion drawing is the proof of preliminary conclusions made on the study by denoting to and from the prevailing data (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Punch, 2013, p.7). This stage of analysis occurs alongside data reduction and data display and involves collection of more data and development of suggestions.

In this study, the analysis of interview transcriptions for distance education administrators and instructors was done using the described framework. The semi-structured in-depth interviews were transcribed before the initial application of the framework. As a means to data reduction, editing of transcripts while checking spellings and repeatedly listening to interviews verified interviewees' responses. At this stage, data splitting up and summarisation was done by separately categorising data such that administrators and instructors responses were grouped separately. Data reduction was done as shown in the excerpts below.

| Origin response | cleaned response | Theme |
|---|--|---|
| MA: “Am saying, we have the institutional improvement plan as well as the strategic plan and these two documents, of course they are two documents but they are talking of the same thing. But the unfortunate part of it is that we don't have an Open policy yet. That's the unfortunate part of it”. | ... But the unfortunate part of it is that we do not have an open policy yet...we have the institutional improvement plan as well as the strategic plan and these...are two documents but they are talking of the same thing. | Documented plans for distance education <u>Sub-theme</u> |
| DI: “Aah, we have got the <i>strategic plan</i> that guide as on how aah distance education is supposed to be aah delivered. However, we have got other supporting docu, documents; for instance, we have got another policy document, distance education document which also support the strategic plan. And finally, you find that we have a <i>hand book for distance education</i> . Again, that one also really stipulates on how distance education is supposed to be done... Yaah the strategic plan is for the whole institution not just distance education.” | ...we have got the Strategic Plan that guides us on how distance education is supposed to be delivered. However, we have got other supporting documents; for instance, we have got another policy distance education document which also supports the strategic plan. And finally, you find that we have a handbook for distance education. Again, that one also really stipulates on how distance education is supposed to be done... the strategic plan is for the whole institution not just distance education | <i>ODE policy and strategic plan.</i> Absence of ODE policy Strategic plan, handbook for distance education |

| | | |
|---|---|--|
| <p>DA: "...strategic plan, aaaah, that's the main document but besides that we have guidelines for programmes, for distance education programm at (name of institution).Aaah, these guidelines are for aah facilitation, we have guidelines for assessment, aah both college-based assessments and aah aah field-based assessments at (mentions the institution's name). And so aah, there those, we have the strategic plan, we have guidelines for facilitation, we have guidelines for assessment, and the general rules for conduct of any student of (name of institution). our strategic plan aaaah, finished its term of existence, operation I think its 20... 10? Yes, 2010 and this year we are planning to review the plan, to develop another strategic plan so as, until then, it's hard to say the exact plan because it's not yet there but, however, we are envisaging a very vibrant distance programme for the country. Aaah, we are likely tooo bring in new, aah aah, aah approaches, new ways of doing things, ways of assessment, because education is growing, education is developing, distance education too is becoming very popular".</p> | <p>...strategic plan, that's the main document but besides that we have guidelines...for distance education programmes...for facilitation...for assessment, both college-based assessments and field-based assessments. ...we have the strategic plan, guidelines for facilitation, for assessment, and the general rules for conduct of any student...Our strategic plan finished its term of existence in 2010 and this year we are planning to review the plan, to develop another strategic plan, until then, it's hard to say the exact plan because it's not yet there but, however, we are envisaging a very vibrant distance programme for the country. We are likely to bring in new approaches, new ways of doing things, ways of assessment, because education is growing, education is developing, and distance education too is becoming very popular...</p> | <p>Obsolete strategic plan (expired 5 years ago)</p> <p>Guidelines : facilitation, assessment, students rules and conduct</p> <p>Hard to tell exact plans for the institution's ODE.</p> |
|---|---|--|

As shown above, all the data from all data collection sources were cleaned to make sure that only data responding to research questions and or bringing in the study emerging issues were properly used.

Data reduction continued with repeated manual coding of data based on research questions focusing on exploring learning implications of the distance training as offered by the two institutions, Domasi College and Mzuzu University.

I coded the data besides the development of memos to help in indicating field experiences, emerging patterns and investigative explanations. I grouped similar data from the administrators and instructors to come up with themes. I then, display the data by tabulating issues under one broad category: The nature of institutional organisation of the distance teacher training. This category carried three broad themes as follows: distance education systems, their functions and coordination, documented plans for distance education, and production of instructional materials. The data is displayed in Table 3 shown next.

Table 3: General manifestations of institutional organisation of the Malawi distance teacher training

| The nature of institutional organisation of the Malawi distance secondary school teacher training | |
|--|--|
| Distance systems, their functions and coordination | <i>Distance education systems</i> |
| | <i>Functions and coordination of the distance education system</i> |
| Documented plans for distance education | <i>Open and distance education policy and strategic plan</i> |
| | <i>Developmental plans and resource mobilisation strategies</i> |
| Production of instructional materials | <i>Pre-planned instructional materials</i> |
| | <i>Production of pre-planned instructional materials</i> |

Tabulation of issues in Table 3 follows the ‘nature of institutional organisation of the distance secondary teacher training’ presented and discussed in chapter 7 as the main topic. This broad theme carried common manifestations from all participants and documents revealing the nature of the distance institutional organisation. As indicated afore, I used intellectual tools of abstraction and comparison from data reduction through data display to help in drawing conclusions and propositions. For example, through abstraction I conceptualised the terms planning, one-size-fits-all and study circle. Comparison of research data under diverse themes helped in interpretation of the findings or drawing meaning or concluding from the findings.

Phenomenological data analysis

I sought participants understanding of distance training and its enactment practices based on their hands-on experiences as distance education practitioners and students. I generated more

phenomenological data from student teachers' lived experiences of the distance learning at Mzuzu University and Domasi College of Education shared through phenomenological reflections. As discussed earlier, I interpretively analysed phenomenological data based on hermeneutics phenomenology while using the psychological phenomenological data analysis procedure (Moustakas, 1994). This helped in the interpretation of participants' subjective meanings of their lived experiences of the distance learning programme. Bhattacharjee (2012, p. 116) argues that hermeneutic analysis is the "truly interpretive technique for qualitative data analysis". This is a special content analysis which is done holistically and contextually focusing on language and meanings from participants' descriptions and interpretations of their lived experiences (Goldkuhl, 2012).

Bhattacharjee (2012) further, contend that written narratives (texts) provide the author's experiences of a phenomenon. Phenomenological data discloses affective, emotional and deep human experiences (Clancy, 2013). Hermeneutic phenomenology to be specific emphasises on development of reliable descriptions and interpretations of the phenomenon from multiple sources including texts, oral records and artefacts. As per phenomenological requirement, I employed epoche and eidetic reduction as the key conceptual task (Woods, 2011; Owen, 2014). Epoche forced me to bracket off my natural attitude and experiences I have about distance education organisation and enactment. As a researcher, in this study I had a preconceived mind of distance learning due to my experience as a distance education student and tutor. The description rule accentuates that I provide a concrete and immediate impression of the learning implications of the distance secondary school teacher training by describing and not interpreting (Owen, 2014). At the same time, I could not totally ignore my personal experiences and perceptions but I managed to control them through reflexivity and epoche practices. The self-examination or epoche banned me from polluting the data with my individualities, biases and prejudgments (Woods, 2011; Owen, 2014). In phenomenological research bracketing starts with the designing of phenomenological questions which are non-directive but encourage participants to fully describe their experiences. As is done in semi-structured interviews, in phenomenological data collection, bracketing allowed me to seek clarifications and further descriptions where necessary without suggesting what I wanted or was looking for.

As discussed, the analysis was guided by the phenomenological data procedure founded by Moustakas (1994). Perlin and Soner (2015) label the psychological phenomenological data

analysis procedure as comprising data preparation, data reduction, imaginative variation, and exposure of the essence of the experience. Being a continuous process, epoche also leads the phenomenological data analysis. In respect of this, I put aside my previous experiences of once participating in distance learning programmes to create room for a better understand of the existing phenomenon. In this case, I set aside my prejudgements and prepositions towards the distance education organisation and the learning implications I once experienced. I considered epoche a continuous process which I followed throughout this study starting from writing of descriptions to teachers' experiences of the distance programme. Here, I employed two important rules of 'description' and 'horizontalisation' (Bhattacharjee, 2012, p. 14) whose 8 steps formula for organising and examining data is discussed next.

1. Horizontalising is a continuous process of research data cleaning meant to remove unnecessary statements of the problem under study to come up with the study's horizons. In this case, all responses are regarded as equal but monotonous and overlapping statements are omitted or erasing. The construct 'horizon', in phenomenological data analysis refers to verbatim, cleaned data or textual meaning.
2. Phenomenological reduction as the second step in phenomenological analysis concerns reduction of experiences to persistent horizons which are formed through clustering of clean data into themes attached to exact meanings. This is directed towards having a particular meaning for each theme so as to yield descriptions of the phenomenon verbatim or in textual language.
3. Thematic clustering is the third step of phenomenological analysis which involves construction of clusters and theme components under the horizons or principal themes of the experience.
4. Validation is the next step of phenomenological analysis. At this stage, data from numerous sources is compared for verification of their horizons for accuracy and trustworthy.
5. Textural description follows next. At this stage a researcher gives an account of descriptions of participants' views. In other words, the researcher narrates exact extractions of descriptions and clarifications of participants' sentiments of the phenomenon for a better understanding of participants' experiences.
6. Construction of individual structural descriptions is another step in the analysis. This involves creative imaginations of how the experience occurred with distinct and textural descriptions as a basis for structural construction.

7. Writing of amalgamated structural description is another step in phenomenological data analysis. This stage embraces creation of textural descriptions for each co-researcher and integration of descriptions for a better understanding of the co-researchers' experience explanation of how the experience occurred. In this case, structures are set at every paragraph as structural descriptions.
8. The final step is the fusing of texture and structure into expressions. At this stage, two narratives are placed for each co-researcher. These include the textural or “what” exactly happened and structural or “how” did it happen? Here the researcher attaches meaning entities for each participant, construct mutual meaning entities by disregarding individual meanings to get the essence of the phenomenon. The process continues with merged descriptions for all participants while merging the descriptions of how the experience happened into fused description of what exactly happened. This brings in a comprehensive description of the experiences leading the study to the core of the experience of the phenomenon (Perlin & Soner, 2015 p. 10-11). In this case the descriptions refer to accounts or explanations of the co-researcher’s experience.

In this thesis, I transcribed verbatim phenomenological interviews for instructors and administrators into a written document and combined with student teachers’ written narratives to yield phenomenological data. As was the case with the general manifestations, horizontalisation and reduction of phenomenological data was done by preparing and cleaning the data to remove unnecessary repetitions and statements. This process is similar to Huberman’s data reduction phase. For example, one of the administrator’s responses was cleaned as follows:

| Original response | Cleaned response |
|--|--|
| we give them a minimum of two assignments per course of course per semester, written at home but they are sent to centre then to the lecturers then they mark, they provide feedback | We give them a minimum of 2 assignments per course...per semester, written home...sent...lecturers...provide feedback. |

Interview data and written narratives from participants were reduced to significant quotes which were later combined into themes (Bhattacharjee, 2012) with meanings attached to each theme for textural language descriptions.

Tabulation of phenomenological issues were organised into Three (3) major horizons namely; participants’ understanding of open and distance education discussed in chapter 6

and the enactment and learning implications of the distance secondary teacher training discussed in chapter 8 and 9 respectively. Thematic clustering was done by creating clusters and theme components under the horizons. For example; participants’ understanding of ODE was split into: students’ perceptions of defining open and distance education, reasons for training through the distance mode, and instructors’ understanding of their roles and nature of distance students. Students perceptions of defining open and distance education was allied to among other things; distance learning using print or electronic media, a combined image of distance learning and flexible education. Reasons for training through the distance mode included upgrading credentials, promotional reasons and policy, flexibility of the distance mode and one-size-fits-all mindset. Instructors understanding of their roles and nature of distance students embraced instructors understanding of being a distance instructor, instructors understanding of being a distance administrator, traditional roles of a distance instructor, instructors’ understanding of the nature and learning behaviour of distance students and uniqueness of distance students. Tabulation of these aspects is displayed in Tables 4 and 5 below.

Table 4: Participants’ phenomenological perspectives of open and distance education

| Participants’ understanding of open and distance education | |
|---|--|
| Students’ perceptions of defining open and distance education | <i>Distance learning using print and electronic media</i> |
| | <i>A combined image of distance learning and flexible education</i> |
| | <i>Instructors as facilitators of learning</i> |
| | <i>Students’ understanding of their own uniqueness</i> |
| Reasons for studying through the distance mode | <i>Upgrading credentials, promotional reasons and policy</i> |
| | <i>Flexibility of the distance mode</i> |
| | <i>One-size-fits-all mindset</i> |
| | <i>Upgrading credentials, promotional reasons and policy</i> |
| Instructors’ understanding of their roles and nature of distance students | <i>Instructors’ understanding of being distance instructors</i> |
| | <i>Instructors’ understanding of being distance administrators</i> |
| | <i>Traditional roles of a distance education instructor</i> |
| | <i>Instructors’ understanding of the nature of distance students</i> |
| | <i>Uniqueness of distance students and recruitment</i> |

The third horizon was the ‘enactment of the distance teacher training whose tabulation is displayed in Table 5.

Table 5: The distance secondary teacher training

| Enactment of the distance secondary teacher training | |
|--|--|
| Distance teaching, learning and learning support | |
| Residential teaching, learning and learning support | <i>Participants’ perceptions on the role of orientation sessions</i> |
| Off campus teaching, learning and learning support | <i>Study circle learning and learning support</i> |
| | <i>Field facilitation and learning support</i> |
| | <i>Adequacy of learning support offered to students</i> |
| Teaching, learning and learning support through modules | <i>Structure of the module</i> |
| | <i>Personalised and active voice (language) used in the module</i> |
| | <i>Relevance and sustainability of the module</i> |
| | <i>The electronic module used in distance secondary teacher</i> |
| | <i>Social organisation and production of the module</i> |
| Mismatch between students’ expectations and lived experiences | |
| <i>Pressure of work and conflict between work and academic demands</i> | |
| <i>Partial lecturers with reduced orientation time</i> | |
| <i>Financial hurdles of students</i> | |
| <i>Inadequate instructional resources</i> | |
| <i>Unprofessionalism of instructors</i> | |
| <i>Personal experiences of students</i> | |
| <i>Erroneous modules</i> | |
| The impact of the distance teacher training | |
| <i>Benefits of the distance teacher training on the nation</i> | |
| <i>The impact of the distance teacher training on instructors’ experiences</i> | |
| <i>The impact of the distance teacher training on students</i> | |

To come up with the horizons and the cluster of themes, I validated their accuracy by comparing data from interviews with student teachers’ written narratives and document analysis. I further made textual descriptions and clarifications of participants’ reflections. This involved narrative explanations of the meaning of distance education based on student teachers and educators perceptions for a better understanding of the experiences. The descriptions of what each student teacher and educator experienced were merged to an explanation of how the distance learning was experienced by each one of them. The inclusion of written structures at the edge of every passage to indicate how the distance training was experienced brought in an in-depth-understanding of the student teachers’ distance learning experiences. The textual and structural descriptions were then grouped into two descriptions:

“what” happened during student teachers’ distance learning and “how” distance learning happened as shown below.

| | |
|------------------------|--|
| Textural description | ...The support at a distance is only through modules but sometimes they could have an issue with a lecturer, sometimes they could use the usual SMS or they could call me (but it’s something which is not usual but it happens). SMS and sometimes the email, they can be done directly between the lecturer and the student but that I have no control, I cannot say much on that... |
| Structural description | There was inadequate support for distance student teachers as they only relied on modules with erratic uninstitutionalised SMS or email communication with instructors. |

This process was literately done between specific interpretations and coexisting interpretations to yield an exhaustive and complete understanding of teachers’ meanings of their experiences as stressed by Heidegger’s hermeneutic cycle.

The last horizon in this thesis was on ‘learning implications of the distance teacher training’. Issues tabulated for this horizon as shown in Table 6, were drawn from the other discussed horizons: participants’ understanding of open and distance education, the nature of institutional organisation and the enactment of the distance teacher training. In this case, consequences of participants understanding, nature of institutional organisation and enactment of the training were drawn from all the types of data while also embracing suggestions for improvement of the training enactment.

Table 6: Learning implications of the distance secondary teacher training in Malawi

| | |
|---|--|
| Learning implications of the distance secondary teacher training | |
| <i>Learning implications of participants' understanding of ODE</i> | |
| Learning implications of the nature of institutional organisation of the distance secondary teacher training | <i>Lack of autonomy of the distance education system</i> |
| | <i>Lack of rigorous staff training</i> |
| | <i>Obsolete trainings of ODE instructors</i> |
| | <i>Resistance to change</i> |
| | <i>Inadequate learning support</i> |
| Learning implications of the enactment of the distance secondary teacher training | <i>Overwhelmed instructors</i> |
| | <i>Effects of delayed feedback on assignments and examinations</i> |
| | <i>Students' under learning</i> |
| | <i>High dropout rate</i> |
| | <i>Upholding students' retention versus high dropout rate</i> |
| Participants' suggestions for improvement of the distance training | <i>Management of the open and distance education programme</i> |
| | <i>Instructors and instructional delivery: Instructional materials</i> |
| | <i>Student support: Support through advanced technology</i> |
| | <i>The general programme</i> |

Document analysis

As discussed, I employed document analysis as another primary source of data enriching the semi-structured interviews and phenomenological reflections. The semi-structured interviews were transcribed and turned into written form or documents (Owen, 2014) while the phenomenological responses were already in written form. I longed to analyse any other existing documents that expedite and direct the distance education enactment such as instructional or learning materials, material development and distribution, student support and assessment plans.

Table 7: Documents analysed

| <i>Name of document</i> | | <i>Nature of document</i> |
|-------------------------|---|---------------------------|
| 1. | Strategic plan | Administrative |
| 2. | Distance education teacher-learner handbook | Administrative |
| 3. | Study circle guidelines | Administrative |
| 4. | Introduction to phonetics and phonology: Linguistics and African Languages | Instructional |
| 5. | Education Module 2: General Teaching Methods: version 1.1 | Instructional |
| 6. | Agriculture Module 12: version 1.1 | Instructional |
| 7. | Introduction to Philosophy of Education | Instructional |
| 8. | Modern African History 2 | Instructional |
| 9. | Modern African History 1 | Instructional |
| 10. | Communication Module 1: first edition | Instructional |
| 11. | Introduction to Educational Administration and Management | Instructional |

As tabulated, I scrutinised strategic plans, distance education teacher-learner handbook, study circle guidelines and the following instructional materials: Introduction to phonetics and phonology: Linguistics and African Languages; Education Module 2: General Teaching Methods: version 1.1, Agriculture Module 12: version 1.1, Introduction to Philosophy of Education, Introduction to Educational Administration and Management for Domasi College of education. Modern African History 1 and 2 and Language and Communication Module 1: first edition for Mzuzu University.

The two institutions provided me with their strategic plans which I analysed by looking at their relevance to open and distance education in terms of mission, vision, mandate and lifetime. I targeted the strategic plan as key to planning and enactment of the distance secondary school teacher training and instructional materials as carriers and disseminators of content. These plans were further checked for the distance education's strengths, challenges, opportunities and threats that guide effectual enactment to yield positive teaching, learning experiences and support. Again, Domasi College provided the 'Distance education programme

teacher-learner handbook' and study circle guidelines to serve the purpose of the required guidelines.

I followed characteristics of the Miles and Huberman qualitative data analysis approaches described above but with few distinctive themes (Punch, 2013) while analysing text content, and coding into themes as done in interview transcription. This was done to all the relevant documents collected for the study except that more details were obtained in modules known as instructional materials in this study, than administrative documents. This meant to convey an in-depth understanding and interpretation of the documents. I adapted Punch's (2013) guidelines for document analysis and developed the self-learning material analysis worksheet which I used (appendix 8). The format of the instructional material worksheet dictated the data categories to be used for the final data analysis as shown below.

The first category encompassed social production of the learning materials known as modules in this thesis, to uncover human activities and convey how the modules are made. This revealed division of labour and specialisation presence in the production of learning materials at Domasi College of Education and Mzuzu University. The second category focused on the social organisation of documents looking at how the documents are written, by whom, purpose, and target group. The third theme which is a more direct analysis of text for meaning, checked for errors and truth for in-depth interpretive understanding of how the documents are developed (approaches or semiotics). The direct analysis category was a guide to the discovery of learning support embedded in the instructional materials and linked to interactivity, language used, and readability, examples used, in built assessments, and feedback as pursued traits to mediated conversation. I ensured that valid results were obtained through subjective evaluation and interpretation of self-learning materials produced by the two institutions as recommended by Wesley (2010). The fourth theme was based on the theoretical framework guiding this thesis. The tenets of the study's framework such as systems embedded in planning, coordination, specialisation, division of labour and mass production were divulged through the modules' design, content adequacy, writing style, and human activities shown through acknowledgements. Systems as a tenet of the study's theoretical framework was further sought in the inclusion or exclusion of distance education in the institutions' strategic plans reflected in their mission, vision, mandate and operations to expose the systems. The teacher-learner handbook and study circle guidelines were continuously referred to for systems (planning), coordination, and mediated conversation in the form of assignments and

examinations' feedback and real conversation in the provision of face-to-face interaction within and out of campus.

In support of Owen's (2014) argument that documents are socially constructed for a purpose and a target group hence prone to change and their production connected to utility and relevance of the content, I sought the relevance of the instructional materials and the strategic plans by checking on the dates they were produced. I considered this very important in gauging how the documents responded to student needs and those of the nation to bring in positive implications. In view of the forgoing this study's document analysis is focused on production which includes: the human element, purpose, theories, and taken for granted principles (Punch, 2013) like relevance, and language. Because documents are socially constructed, I longed for current documents for applicability of the purpose designed for. I adapted the rubric checklists used to rate and score documents from Punch (2013) and the self-learning materials and the guidelines aided in the collection of the hunted data from the relevant documents. The documents were sampled and selected for analysis from the available texts, for example; I planned to have one module from each of the following faculties: sciences, languages, humanities and education. However, this was not possible because the available instructional materials at the time of the study were from all the other sections except for humanities in case of Domasi College while Mzuzu University had a representation of humanities and languages. I analysed enrolment and graduation lists for the programmes' existence in the two institutions to help in understanding the extent to which the programme is responding to secondary school teacher training needs and massification. The data categories from document analysis were merged to data on general occurrences from semi-structured in-depth interviews for final analysis. I analysed the data collected from the documents and written transcriptions on general occurrences using the Miles and Huberman framework of analysing qualitative data analysis as discussed earlier on document analysis.

Analysed data from all the sources with the diverse themes drawn and as displayed in Tables 3, 4, 5 and 6 were presented and discussed in chapters 6, 7, 8 and 9 respectively. Trustworthiness of the research is discussed next.

Ensuring trustworthiness of the research

Issues of validity and reliability in research largely depend on the chosen research design and paradigm. In view of the argument, this thesis adherence to interpretive approaches

pronounces issues of validity and reliability diversely from the critical and positivist approaches (Yilmaz, 2013). Farrelly (2013) argues that although the issues of validity and reliability are linked to quantitative and trustworthiness to qualitative research design, validity and reliability are criteria for judging trustworthiness of research findings. In essence, all types of research whether based on qualitative or quantitative data involve systematic analysis, comparison and inferences to ensure trustworthiness of the analysis, yield valid conclusions and avoid errors (Holloway & Wheeler, 2009). The discussion shows that reliability and validity are elements of research trustworthiness employed to yield valid and reliable research findings. As argued earlier, the terms validity and reliability originate from quantitative (positivism) and are adapted to qualitative studies. It is argued that:

...quantitative researchers take into consideration the reliability, objectivity and validity (i.e. internal and external) to ensure the trustworthiness of the inquiry findings.... In contrast, qualitative researchers consider that dependability, credibility, transferability and confirmability as trustworthiness criteria ensure the rigour of qualitative findings... (Anney, 2014, p. 272).

Dependability or auditability in qualitative research is compared to reliability used in quantitative study though not equalised, meaning consistency of research process in withstanding the test of time across diverse researchers and methods (Yilmaz, 2013). The notion dependability is used interchangeably with auditability because it is proven “using an audit trail, a code-recode strategy, stepwise replication” (Anney, 2014, p. 278) verifying stability of research results over time. In this study dependability was achieved through peer review (Yilmaz, 2013) where the thesis was given to colleagues in the field of education to verify the results. Dependability according to Anney (2014) embroils evaluation of the research results, interpretations and recommendations to ensure their coherence with research participants’ data. I constantly sought guidance from the supervisor, peers and colleagues on research methods and data collection instruments to ensure accuracy. The research instruments and results were read, reviewed, proof read and commented on by the supervisor, other lecturers, and fellow PhD students.

Credibility used in qualitative research is comparable to internal validity in quantitative research verified through truth value (Yilmaz, 2013) and is defined as the assurance attached to reality of the research results (Holloway & Wheeler, 2009). It is argued that credibility in research constitutes trustworthiness of results drawn from participants’ original data and accurate interpretation of their opinions (Anney, 2014). This study achieved credibility

through the use of semi-structured in-depth interviews which helped in drawing comprehensive data, whose breath and depth extended through follow-up and probing questions. The introduction of an innovative strategy I have named 'phenomenological reflection' further brought in detailed and deep written narratives of participants' experiences which could be referred to throughout the study. I constantly referred to the interviews and the transcriptions to reflect on how and what type of data and responses were collected to effectively respond to research questions. Through reflexivity and bracketing, I had to reflect on what happened in the field during data collection and set back to my experiences and background as a distance student and practitioner. Reflexivity and bracketing were followed to avoid contaminating the study with preconceptions I had from my experiences and to allow the study to unfold without predictions and establish the study's rigor.

Transferability which in quantitative research is referred to as generalisation whose most sought aspect is applicability of research findings is "the degree to which the results of qualitative research can be transferred to other contexts with other participants" (Anney, 2014, p. 277). In this study transferability was ensured through thick descriptions which were attached to phenomenological data collected through written phenomenological questions and in-depth semi-structured interviews which exhumed rich data in both depth and breath. The potential users' transferability judgement was further facilitated through purposeful sampling of administrators and instructors as implementors of the distance teacher training in Malawi.

Qualitative research is said to have attained confirmability if other researchers can establish or verify that the data and interpretation of results are drawn from the data and not fabricated by the researcher (Anney, 2014). Confirmability as used in qualitative research is similar to objectivity used in quantitative research as both look for neutrality of the study (Yilmaz, 2013). As such, trustworthiness in this study has been achieved through dependability, credibility, transferability and confirmability to yield valid and reliable results. Through reflexivity and bracketing, I reduced data contamination as I handled the data as an informed researcher knowing that I needed to put aside what I knew about distance education and listen to participants' voice. I further, actively coded transcripts to draw out themes, patterns and conclusions based on Miles and Huberman's framework for qualitative data analysis and attached explanations to descriptions following Moustaka's phenomenological data analysis. I employed 'comparison' from Huberman and Miles (1994) framework of qualitative data analysis and 'validation' from phenomenological analysis to compare data from all the

sources for accuracy and trustworthy. The use of multiple data collection methods to enrich and verify the findings while also eliminating errors associated with one specific method is known as triangulation (Yilmaz, 2013). In this study triangulation was achieved through a mix of in-depth semi-structured interviews, document analysis and phenomenological reflections to guarantee valid and reliable research results.

Ethical Issues

Qualitative research in social sciences studies people in their natural settings thereby making interactivity between the researcher and the participants inevitable as the researcher is expected to dip oneself in the “participants’ world” (Yilmaz, 2013; Anney, 2014, p. 276). In this case, qualitative educational studies oblige compliance to ethical considerations to ensure research participants’ safety throughout the study and after the study’s results (Yilmaz, 2013). According to Thomas and Hodges (2010) research ethics are professional principles of the researcher’s expected conduct in dealing with all the participants of the study. According to Heppner, Wampold and Kivlighan (2008, p. 107) “ethics are not simply proper etiquette but rather they are expressions of our values and a guide for achieving them”. It is along these lines that Merriam (2009) recognised the importance of research ethics as to provide moral values to guide research processes in which human participants are a requirement. Thomas and Hodge (2010) further stresses on the need for the researcher to design and conduct safe, fair and corrupt free studies through adherence to ethics to ensure that participants are not hurt during and after research results.

Exploring learning implications of the secondary distance teacher training in Malawi involved higher learning institutions and people of different calibers and eminences requiring appropriate channels and strategies of meeting them. The study thus, required total adherence to research ethics. As a consequence, erstwhile to conducting the study, I sought ethical clearance from the University of KwaZulu-Natal Humanities and Social Sciences Ethics Committee and conformed to the University’s research ethics policy following the approval of the study’s proposal. Letters of introduction from gatekeepers helped me to access the gates of the two institutions and the student teachers. In this study, I identified two major challenges requiring proper handling as: tension of both participants and the researcher and misrepresentation of participants’ views (Allmark, et al., 2014).

Allmark, et al. (2014) warned that the use of in-depth interviews can bring in tension in both the interviewee and the interviewer. Since this thesis employed in-depth semi-structured interviews, tension was probable due to: first, as argued by Allmark, et al. (2014) the one-to-one interaction, and, second, the power imbalance between the researcher and the participant, third, the sensitivity of some questions, third, the probing nature of interviews , and, fourth, the exploration of participants' own practices and experiences. To reduce these challenges or threats, I ensured confidentiality of the participants in that, they were not named. As noted earlier on, I sent the interview schedule to participants prior to interviews to prepare them for the task and make them feel at ease for the process

I sought informed consent upon ensuring that all participants adequately read the comprehensive letter giving details of the nature of the research and assured them that participation was voluntary (refer Appendix 2). Since participants sometimes question the reasons for the study and tend to comply with or rebel against the presumed outcome (Heppner, Wampold, & Kivlighan, 2008), I verbally explained and justified the objective of the research and attached acquired permission from authorities and gate keepers (Heppner, Wampold, & Kivlighan, 2008; Scotland, 2012; Rooyen, 2015) to the letters. The participants were assured that the information they provided would only be accessed by the researcher and the supervisor. As volunteers, participants confirmed their participation in the study by signing a written consent. Furthermore, the research discussions were kept confidential.

Allmark, et al. (2014) noted that power imbalance can result in tension. As noted, in this study, the researcher was superior to student teachers, similarly administrators to instructors. Furthermore, I ensured that administrators offered me access to instructor participation to the study. I also avoided coercing participants to give responses but accorded them due respect while also avoiding discriminatory languages.

As noted in this study, tension about misrepresentation of participants' thoughts is considered as a risk. This was evident in the way some participants repetitively mentioned an idea to make sure they are well understood. More so, some participants pleaded that the recorder be put off at some point so that their voice is not recorded while they give comprehensive and sensitive responses and switched to vernacular language to make sure the response is properly captured. In some instances, the participant asked if I could thoroughly edit the responses to make it purer than they did. This applied only to sensitive responses especially on questions that would expose failure of the practice. The risk was taken care of by

reassuring participants of confidentiality, anonymity and privacy as a repeat of prior communication done through electronic mails, telephone calls and invitation letters. Furthermore, as an interpretive researcher, I had a responsibility to “present proper interpretations of findings” as the data in this study had “multiple interpretations” (Heppner, Wampold, & Kivlighan, 2008, p. 115). I thus, triangulated the data from multiple sources through comparison and validation tools advocated by Miles and Huberman (1994) and Moustakas (1994) as is required by the interpretive-qualitative study. This helped me to get themes, patterns and conclusions after comprehensible and rigorous coding of the transcriptions to avoid misrepresentation of participants’ views. I constantly employed reflexivity and epoche to remind myself that I needed to bracket off my prior experiences of distance education to better understand other peoples’ experiences. Exploring beyond learning implications exposed in detail the process of ODE planning in which ‘systems’ are embedded, with study circles as an innovative sub-system discussed in chapter 10. Member checking and or peer reviewing of transcripts were not important as the misconception was cleared. The use of written phenomenological reflections further reduced the need for verification of the data and interpretations as responses from ten out of the fourteen participants were presented in written form.

To maintain the confidentiality, I solely transcribed the data and replaced participants’ names with codes. Following the requirements of the University of KwaZulu-Natal, and the purpose of the study, interview transcript and written phenomenological narratives would be kept for a maximum of five years. This shall assist in the production of academic articles and conference presentation as well as allow other qualified researchers to inspect the results after the thesis’ publication.

Chapter conclusion

In chapter 5, I have positioned the interpretive paradigm in the qualitative research design. The argument presented is that the use of the interpretive paradigm enabled the researcher to draw a holistic and deep understanding of the learning implications of the distance secondary teacher training and embrace participants’ suggestions on improvement of the distance teacher training in Malawi. I further, described the study’s population, data collection methods and analysis and ethical issues. The chapter mentions that, chapters 6 to 8 present analyses on data while chapter 9 draws on data and the findings to expose consequences of the distance training enactment with participants’ suggestions for improvement.

CHAPTER 6

PARTICIPANTS' UNDERSTANDING OF DISTANCE EDUCATION

Introduction

In this chapter I present the results on the Malawi distance secondary teacher participants' understanding of open and distance education. Results are presented and discussed using three broad themes that emerged from the data: students' perceptions of defining open and distance education, students' reasons for training through open and distance education and instructors understanding of their roles and the nature of distance students.

To examine the learning implications of the distance teacher training, it was important to begin by engaging participants' own understanding of the notion of open and distance education. This was important because for students to learn effectively they need to understand the mode in which learning is taking place – in this case the distance education delivery. The argument presented is that based on views provided, participants have a good understanding of open and distance education by definition, reasons for training through distance education, instructors' roles and nature of distance students.

Participants' views on their understanding of open and distance education are grouped as follows: students' perceptions of defining open and distance education, reasons for training through the distance mode, educators' roles and experiences of the distance training and uniqueness of distance students.

Students' perceptions of defining open and distance education

Students' perceptions of defining open and distance education are convened as follows: distance learning using instructional print and or electronic media, a combined image of distance learning and flexible education and learning with instructors as facilitators of learning.

Distance learning using print and or electronic media

Some student teachers perceived open and distance learning as learning at a distance using print and or electronic materials. One student teacher argued:

Distanced education is learning that takes place through modules or e-learning. It may take another form like short residence learning at an institution.

Other two student teachers extended the above opinion. The first expounded:

Open and distance learning means pursuing a course with an institution without attending regular classes and not for the same period as the normal learners. It means the learner gets tuition materials and writes examinations from the institution that is offering the open and distance learning programme. There could be a few arranged times of face-to-face interaction between students and the teachers. Most of the time, the students are left to study, do assignments and other academic activities on their own in the comfort of their homes and whilst they carry on with their daily routines such as work, business and other social engagements... If the student is facing some academic challenges, he or she can contact the lecturer(s) concerned physically, telephonically or by e-mail... Finally, the students are required to write examinations set and marked by the institution offering the open and distance learning programme.

The other student teacher while concurring with the rest linked the definition to learning support and supposed:

This is a model of learning whereby student teachers undergo teacher training through an open and distance programme that is, they learn through off campus delivery study as stipulated by the institution where you are studying in terms of programme management, instructors, instructional delivery and student support.

A combined image of distance learning and flexible education

Most student teachers defined ODE with a combined image of distance in space and time between the educator and the student or the educating institution, flexibility and inclusion of assessment. While acknowledging media employment in distance education one student teacher averred:

Open and distance learning is a mode of delivering instructions through modules and little contact with instructors. The students learn through reading materials provided by the instructor. Little time is spent interacting with the teacher. Most of the time is spent teaching oneself and group discussions as well as writing assignments. Feedback from assignments is crucial in this mode of delivery...

Another student teacher further hinted on the aspect of 'distance' marking the physical separation between the student and the educating institution while also recognising assessment as an integral part. The student teacher claimed:

Open and distance learning is a type of learning whereby most of the learning/studies are conducted outside or at home with the aid of modules. It can also be defined as education of students who may not be always physically present at a school. Courses that are conducted basically rely on instructions. This learning involves a lot of assignments done at home.

While agreeing with the other participants on 'learning at a distance', some student teachers perceived open and distance education as a flexible type of learning. One student teacher claimed that:

Open and distance learning is a type of learning whereby students are offered learning instructions through distance learning while pursuing other related engagements. Students...are given instructional materials for their own study while at home. The materials such as modules and handouts assist learners to excel in their learning. Learners are called at the end of a semester to write examinations for that particular period. Orientation is also done during the same period after exams have been finalised. Orientation period mostly is for four weeks and after that learners are allowed to break for a study period. It is during this period that learners are given assignments to work on them during the study period which lasts for almost sixteen weeks. Students write their assignments under their own supervision but may seek clarification from their lecturers if they are stuck.

Instructors as facilitators of learning

Apart from students' perceptions that showed that they understand distance education, some student teachers expanded their views to facilitation roles of instructors. One student teacher explained:

Open and distance learning means receiving education from teachers or lecturers at a short period of time than the face-to-face students. The role of the teacher is not actually to teach but to just orient or facilitate the students on what should be covered while at their respective homes.

Another student teacher supported the above definition by relating instructors to their orientation and developer of modules and averred:

Open and distance learning is a type of learning where most of teaching and learning is done outside school campus. Instructors only provide orientation on how to handle instructional materials but most of the work is done while at home. In addition, the school prepares modules that acted as a guide where references are provided for further reading.

Students' understanding of their own uniqueness

Students' reflections further exposed understanding of their own unique traits as distance students. One student teacher reflected:

One needs to prepare him/herself both financially and mentally. The fees is at K 180 000.00 per year, buying of stationery, sending of assignments, and searching for information from various cafes need money. In addition to accommodation, transport and food ... At home, most of the developments stopped. Is a challenge to those students having children who are at secondary and college level? Needs a person who is able to balance up things and mentally matured...

Another student teacher considered learning through the distance mode as a great challenge due to diverse responsibility. The student complained:

To be a distance student undergoing teacher training is a great challenge: you study while working; you are tied because you have to fulfil both of the engagements. I have to attend to my family issues including those of my relatives. Number of challenges such as fees payment, missing assignments and administrative...

The other student teachers while accepting that studying through distance education was tough going also indicated that it was an exciting experience. The student teacher reflected:

It is an exciting experience yet a tough one. One has to concentrate on a number of roles at the same time. For example; I could be busy with household chores while assignments dates are due. This was due to the fact that a lot of work had to be covered in the shortest period, which led to an overload of work to carry home. For instance, work for one full semester (15 weeks) was carried out in 4 weeks only, with 30 assignments to carry home. This could lead to failure to complete assignments in time.

According to the responses it shows that student teachers largely understand the notion of open and distance education. For example, student teachers' responses captured the main issues in open and distance education that teaching and learning in this mode is achieved through the employment of technology or media (Aluko & Hendriz, 2012; Moore, 2013; Malawi Government, 2015). The use of modules as revealed in the definitions brings about what researchers like Chawinga and Zozie (2016) and Msiska (2013) revealed in their studies that distance student teachers in Malawi learn through print media, which in this study is referred to as modules. The views align ODE to use of not only print as a medium of instructions but also electronic media. The element of e-learning in the first definition repeats the argument in chapter 2 by Moore and Kearsley (2012) that e-learning is part of distance learning. However, as noted by the first participant's views, the context in which e-learning is attached to distance learning is not clarified. For example, and as demanded by Moore and Kearsley (2012), only if teaching and learning is dependent on the internet, that is distance learning and not when e-learning supplements face-to-face. It is interesting to note that there is a consensus amongst student teachers' responses indicating that instructions in open and distance education are delivered through media while students occasionally meet with instructors. Students' mention of examinations, assignments and feedback further signified their understanding that assessment is an integral part of open and distance education. The views further revealed student teachers' understanding that in distance education instructors play the role of facilitators among other diverse roles. The findings showed that student teachers know that they diverge from their traditional counterparts. In their reflections of

being distance students as presented earlier, student teachers displayed their knowledge of being adults with diverse commitments that include financial and social responsibilities requiring a balance. Student teachers' reflections revealed their experience of being distance learners as demanding, tough, challenging and exciting.

Generally, students' perceptions of defining open and distance education bent towards technology use, distance and flexibility, and instructors' facilitation of learning. As discussed, the enlisted aspects generally portray diverse perceptions of defining distance education as reviewed in chapter 3.

Reasons for training through the distance mode

In gauging students' understanding of open and distance education, it was important that the reasons for their training through open and distance education be explored. The reasons for their study through distance training add to the way they perceive open and distance education and the implications it brings to their learning. The argument is that the reasons for students to study through the distance mode help them to persevere through the training journey and achieve their set goal.

Student teachers reasons for training through the distance mode are grouped as follows: upgrading credentials, promotional reasons and policy, flexibility of the distance mode and one-size-fits-all mindset.

Upgrading credentials, promotional reasons and policy

Some student teachers attached their training through the distance mode to upgrading their credential, promotional reasons and on-the-job training policy. One student teacher contended:

During the period I was taken for distance learning were the years that they were taking teachers from community day secondary schools to go and study through the distance programme. Though I knew it was a tough going course I chose this programme in order to develop myself in my career and be at a good position.

Another student teacher while eyeing upgrading of credentials attached delayed promotions and on the job-training policy as drives to training through the distance mode. The student teacher averred:

As an open distance student I am also supposed to teach during the sixteen weeks period. While doing activities demanded by the school programme open and distance learning at ... takes five years for degree while diploma takes three years. The motivation that made me to pursue in this programme of open and distance education is of upgrading myself since normal promotions through government takes longer time to be conducted. In addition, I used the policy of upgrading while working to secure salary. Lastly, I thought that this mode of learning would give me time to look after my family since I will be available throughout the programme until I finish. My motivation to pursue teacher Training through an open and distance education programme were: to obtain diploma in education; to be trained for secondary school teaching curriculum; to be trained during the holiday and to be trained through modules.

Another student teacher was in support of on-the-job-training policy as a drive to upgrading through open and distance education among other reasons. One student teacher said:

My training through ODL education programme was to stay in line with the education policy as a civil servant (teacher). It is recommended that the one who want to pursue studies for upgrading purposes should enrol using the open and distance mode of delivery not normal one. This is so in that the employee is able to work and study at the same time. It is also important to note that the one who wants to study should not change his/her professional job as this may result to termination of benefits from the employer (government). Once a person is trained as a teacher, he or she should continue working in the same department, but switching to medical profession would mean leaving your job and start afresh in another professional job. It means the person loses all the benefits for the previous employer. This open and distance education programme was an opener for myself to reach greater heights just because I understood that life is a journey. And a journey is pre-occupied by a number of factors. This made me to prepare for that journey up to my last destination. ODL study programme was the only suit to be worn by myself to avoid consequences from my employer. This is so in that if one enrolls with an institution on normal entry his/her job is left in jeopardy.

Flexibility of the distance mode

Another student teacher stated to have been compelled to distance training by the flexible nature of the distance mode saying:

I was motivated to pursue the teacher training through an open and distance education programme since I needed to kill two birds with one stone. Teaching and learning at the same time that is to assist the learners and upgrading myself so that there should be mutualism between the learners and myself considering that the accommodation at the learning institution ... was limited that could not cater for large numbers. So I was comfortable to study at home and later go back to school for orientation and examinations.

Another student teacher cemented the above views while combining reasons for studying through distance education and explained:

My motivation to pursue teacher training through an open and distance education programme was due to the desire to work and learn at the same time. It was the

convenient programme that could allow me to look after my family and young children, while acquiring higher education at the same time. This is because I could be found at home most of the time, while learning and working at the same time.

One student teacher linked flexibility of open and distance education to provision of second chance. The student teacher argued:

To pursue my teacher training through open and distance learning it was not my plan. I applied... University ODL programme after I was dropped, I was not selected to pursue my studies through generic face-to-face mode. The good thing is that we are allowed to pay the fees in instalments. We can pay even in five instalments in a semester.

One-size-fits-all mindset

Some student teachers undermined the capabilities of distance education and held a one-size-fits-all mindset as one student claimed:

...In addition, the lecturers involved are the same lecturers that also teach regular students... another motivating factor. Therefore I am convinced that I am being assisted by qualified and experienced lecturers that can help me well.

Another student teacher approved the above opinion saying:

...Furthermore, to realize that the certificate shall not indicate that I did my degree via open and distance learning also motivated me. This means, my qualification shall not be discriminated against. It shall be considered in employment opportunities just like any other regular degree.

According to the responses, student teachers were basically motivated to train through open and distance education while fully knowledgeable of what it means to be a distance student. Their responses apprehend the main reasons people get trained through the distance mode as discussed in chapter 3 (Ofoegbu, 2009; Mhishi, Bhukuvhani, & Sana, 2012; Gupte, 2015). The first student's determination to succeed reflects understanding of what learning through the distance mode is and application of this knowledge to their learning. As discussed in chapter 2, distance students join the distance mode with a goal in mind and work towards attaining the goal. Again, as shown in the data, individual student teachers have diverse reasons to learning through the distance mode. For example; while other student teachers are motivated to engage in distance learning to upgrading their credentials and get a promotion, some student teachers look for flexibility of the programme.

As can be deduced from the student teachers' responses the flexibility of distance education mode allows student teachers to combine work with training, personal endeavours and open

access to higher education through second chance. In relation to flexibility of the distance mode, data further indicates that student teachers are driven by the employer's policy to train through open and distance education. This reason is well supported by Chawinga and Zozie's (2016) findings on the benefits of open and distance learning attached to Malawi Government, Ministry of Education Science and Technology's training policy. These researchers indicated that the Malawi Government 'would not want its employees away from work for a long period of time' and desecration of the directive would end into the employee's 'discipline or dismissal' (Chawinga & Zozie, 2016, p. 12). This policy appears negative in nature, but is a blessing in disguise as it offers treble benefits to students through a salary, attending to family matters, and attaining a higher qualification. The same serves to retain the teachers in schools as learners are not left without teachers while the training progresses. The policy benefits an individual at micro level and the nation at large. The individual student teacher plays all the roles attached to him or her as erstwhile elucidated while also putting theory into practice as discussed in chapter 2. This nature of training incorporates women and girls who could otherwise not have any chance of getting further education due to restrictions indicated in chapter 3.

Student teachers sentiments are an indication that they understand that open and distance education provides equitable access to education opportunities. This reveals that some student teachers' choice of studying through the distance mode was not by design but by default after they were left out of the traditional university selection. This view goes together with distance education's ability to widen access to the marginalised population or the disadvantaged groups of people as indicated in chapter 3. This argument implies that those who are not selected to different traditional universities have a second chance to apply for the programme and still have a qualification through the distance mode. This view portrays inadequate resources which includes space in traditional campuses to train all teachers through the traditional mode. The argument presented afore encompasses lack of space in traditional campuses to take in all eligible students discussed in chapter 2 pushing them to learning through the distance mode.

The views expose some student teachers excitement in the fact that the same instructors handling traditional students also handle distance students. The pleasure extends to the sense that the certificate they obtain does not mention the education mode one went through. The views in this case show that students undermine the capabilities of distance education and

hold a one-size-fits-all philosophy discussed in chapter 2 and 3. In reference to this thinking, it can be argued that the student teachers regard the traditional mode as superior to the distance mode. This can be interpreted as ‘poor attitude towards ODE’ as the students may feel that traditional content, instructors and techniques inter alia, are superior to those of the distance mode. This extends to student teacher’s attachment of validity of the qualification to the use of same instructors for both the distance and traditional mode stressing uniformity between the two modes. The attitude may also imply students’ immaturity to study through the distance mode and misconception about the mode since it is still at its infancy stage at the higher education levels in Malawi as discussed in chapters 8 and 10.

Instructors’ understanding of their roles and distance students

To determine participants’ understanding of open and distance education, it was important that educators’ understanding of their roles and the nature of distance students be explored. Instructors’ shared experiences of being instructors and their understanding of the unique nature of distance students adds to the way they perceive open and distance education and its learning implications. The argument is that distance instructors understand their roles and nature of distance students and use the knowledge to effectively facilitate students’ learning. It can further be argued that distance students understand their uniqueness and strive to attain their goals.

Instructors’ understanding of their roles and the nature of distance students are discussed as follows: instructors’ understanding of being a distance instructor, instructors’ understanding of being a distance administrator, traditional roles of a distance instructor and instructors’ understanding of the nature and learning behaviour of distance students.

Instructors’ understanding of being a distance instructor

Instructors described their roles of being distance education instructors in relation to facilitation of learning and being a guide to students. One instructor explained:

To be an instructor of distance education means a facilitator of distance learners who is there to guide the students on how they can do their distance learning. Not only that, but also to assist them as they go through their training. So it’s a combination of being a facilitator and an assessor. I also lecture to the generic students; I am also there to coordinate the activities for the faculty because currently am the dean for humanities so I coordinate all the activities within the faculty. I am also involved in the curriculum

development for both distance and generic programmes. Not only that, am also involved in the administration of the institution.

Another instructor supported the above sentiments and averred:

...Students learn far away from the instructor using various strategies. Someone who direct or guides students to go through the learning instructional materials...

Instructors' understanding of being a distance administrator

Instructors holding administrative positions in the distance education system indicated the various administrative positions existing in their institutions in relations to their combined roles. The administrator contended:

...my duty and responsibility ... is to manage not only the personnel, to manage resources, to manage the students. But there are also other officers that directly...when they bring their assignments they do not bring the assignments to the office of the director. They are brought to the office of the Teacher-manager. Teacher-manager is the one that receives assignments...we have also the office of distance learning manager...with machinery and printing where we develop materials. So the director ... manages resources, the people and the system... people...

Another administrator from the other institution while broadly singling out 'teacher training' as their core responsibility, established the above views and indicated:

...The director is there as...the overall administrator of the centre for distance learning... the deputy is responsible for the academic part of it while the director is generally responsible for administrative aspect of the centre...Our core responsibility as a teacher provider is ... to train secondary school teachers through open and distance learning...function of this office is to make sure that we have... student...academic records and administrative records ... and I always make sure that this data is up to date...students are in constant contact with their lecturers... may be any other student support related activity ... from pre-admission to the day the student graduates.

Traditional roles of a distance instructor

As shown earlier on administrators' traditional roles and shall be shown in this section, educators exposed their traditional roles in the distance training as being liquid and not fixed.

One instructor explained:

...the traditional roles are to facilitate learning that's taking the student through the modules. Because normally they, we bring them to the institution for a period of 8 weeks until that particular time, that's when we take them through the modules. As we are taking them through, we also give them the support wherever they are not actually or wherever they are having problems with the modules themselves they come and I assist them, not only that, but even when they are outside, off campus, I also correspond with

them giving them the support they need. As learners who are off campus, they still need assistance from the instructor.

Another instructor while supporting the above views elaborated:

...guide learners go through modules and assess them, guide and direct learners on how to go through modules and learn using different ways and assess them... Maybe the self-imposed advisor, I always advise learners, because most of them come as old as you are (pointing at the interviewer) but they are in level one and they are taught by very young lecturers so someone need to be advised that it's nothing new, when you come here this time know that...something happened that time that you didn't come to the university... So do not think about it too much...

The latter hinted on the importance of the varied roles he played in the distance teacher training and mentioned:

...most of them have ended up coming back to me and say I would have withdrawn...I couldn't cope. So I was giving them advice and trying to help them get organised... since 6 years ago I have been coming up with groups that each and every one has adopted. For example; ... I said...come up with a group... they meet as a group and ask questions ...I could answer the phone...they put it on loud... That has been very helpful and I can't say for myself, you can ask some of the learners...they really feel part and parcel of the family. ...it takes different strategies to put them in groups. So it is a very difficult task ... because of age or other reasons, they can't come out in the open to say, I did not follow what you teach so when you are assessing or marking that's when you discover that they didn't understand the concept...So counselling is very important so it was a self-imposed counselling but now we have somebody that they can go to ... it helped them also to come up with group, let's say, WhatsApp! Group email message...

Instructors' understanding of the nature of distance students

To further gauge participants' understanding of open and distance education, it was imperative that educators' understanding of open and distance education be explored in relation to distance students' uniqueness. Student teachers' life experiences of being a distance student were sought through their own phenomenological reflections to help bring an in-depth understanding of how they experienced learning at a distance. Instructors' life experiences were important because for educators to effect learning and appropriate support to the distance students, they need to understand students' unique characteristics and their learning behaviour. Again, understanding of the nature of distance students is essential in setting conditions for their recruitment into the programme.

Instructors' responses indicate that their hands-on experience of training distance students have helped them to understand the nature of distance students and their learning patterns.

Instructors consensually described heterogeneous traits of distance students. One instructor described distance students as adults compared to traditional students. The instructor averred:

There is a difference between distance learning and this in quotes “normal learning”. Firstly, distance learners are adult learners and they’ve got their own specific ways of learning as compared to the normal students. So as someone who have facilitated for some time, I have come to learn that there are individuals who can perform but they need thorough assistance because they have got several roles to play within the society as compared to the normal students... The pace at which they learn, they have got their own pace as compared to these normal learners because they are also people of responsibility, they are mature and they know what they are doing. Distance learners can actually perform in a classroom remember if given the support, they hardworking ... focused and ...need more support for them to excel.

The instructor expanded his views on distance students’ learning behaviour in terms of the pace and retention of concepts as compared to traditional students. The instructor said:

... you cannot actually compare them with the normal learners as a result; it is a matter of understanding and giving them the support that they need...distance learners can actually perform in a classroom, remember, the way I teach the normal students or the courses I offer to normal students and distance learners, they are almost the same but I can assure you that, some distance students have performed, you know, as compared to some normal students...if given the support, they are likely to do well but if the support is not there because of the nature of their programme, they face a lot of problems..... another interesting thing is that the moment they have understood the concept, it sinks into their mind as compared to the normal students who can actually get it today, tomorrow they forget, not with distance learners, the moment it sinks in them, it remains...I think, it’s maturity...they know what they are doing as compared to the generic students...

Another instructor from the other institution approved the above opinion while regarding distance students as people with responsibilities requiring diverse strategies. The instructor explicated:

...Different learners and increase in numbers means different challenges and capabilities requiring instructors to develop different approaches of support students. Distance students are heterogeneous in terms of age, socio-economic and marital status, intellectual capabilities, family and social backgrounds etc. Students struggle to grasp some concepts than the conventional ones hence need varying strategies to successfully handle them (grouping them according to districts assists them in sharing ideas)...

Uniqueness of distance students and recruitment

Administrators’ views on recruitment revealed distance education flexibility to open access to prospective students as a second chance. This is in agreement with the above student teacher’s opinion. One administrator explained:

...We turn to be as much accessible and flexible as possible while following university standards of 6 credits including English for any eligible citizens (military, teachers, police and school leavers)...

An instructor from the same institution with the administrator cemented the above views and averred:

...Accessible and flexible as possible. Though of course, we also look at issues of quality but we turn to follow the university standards. Then first of all for somebody to be admitted in the university they should have a minimum of a credit in 6 subjects including English... So as long as they have 6 credits... good in English, we take them on board. The young men who are just coming from secondary school, those working in primary schools already even those who are just working, because we have others who are not teachers...

An administrator from the other institution the above views and explained:

ODL is still a catalyst of national development as people attain higher education... At least 5 credits including English and usually, they must have a certain aggregate in terms of total number of points at MSCE... that was what we have been looking for in our candidates or in our students for the past programmes until we also wanted to begin to look at the requirements of distance saying; we want to increase access then we need to look softer. So once we look for 6 credits, we are very serious with face-to-face but distance...

Instructors consistently not just talked of guiding students on how to go about their studies but precisely mentioned the guide through the carriers of instruction, the instructional materials. Administrators' sentiments include instructors' roles as managers and directors of different secondary teacher open and distance education activities. The sentiments show that these educators are adequately experienced to understand open and distance education though with no stress on the provision of constant face-to-face or real contacts with students. For example, while one administrator mentioned the need for student-instructor constant interaction, the other hinted more on administrative issues. Again, one instructor did not reveal any real conversational activities while the other emphasised on being 'an imposed advisor'. This reveals a gap in educators' knowledge and understanding of open and distance education to their practice on the ground as one instructor mentioned the roles he personally and voluntarily performed. This instructor's doubt of his other roles by saying; 'may be self-imposed advisor...' revealed the absence of such an important distance education activity in the institution. The participant's views expose a gap in the way distance students are supported in the institution as a whole. This can be interpreted as learning support space as it is not institutionalised but offered at instructor's will and knowledge.

The imposed advisor's sentiments while acknowledging counselling as an important aspect of student support commends WhatsApp and electronic mail group messages as an alternative to face-to-face session. This implies that the instructor is aware of the new roles and responsibilities dissimilar to the traditional endeavours he is accustomed to. The instructor's sentiments are a good example of learning support inadequacy to be discussed in chapter 8 and a signal to instructors' readiness to embracing change advocated in chapters 3 and 10. The instructor argued that it was not easy for an instructor to come up with student support strategies due to diverse nature of distance students. This implies that it is a requirement in distance education that learning support be planned and institutionalised as discussed in chapters 2, 3 and 8. Individual instructor's arrangements cannot be a reliable source of learning support as one instructor can hardly reach out to all students thus; the support is inadequate and unsustainable. The instructor appreciates the positive impact his self-imposed advisory role plays in bridging the psychological gap between students and the educating institution. It can be argued, thus, that while the instructor effectively used the ODE understanding to distance teaching, there seems to be a challenge in institutional organisation and student support.

Instructors concurrently cemented student teachers' views that distance students are adult, responsible and mature learners requiring ample support for them to perform. The above sentiments reflect instructors' deep understanding of distance students and their capabilities which is essential if students' needs are to be satisfied. Generally, all the instructors indicated knowledge of open and distance education in relation to unique traits distance students possess. The instructors' sentiments reveal instructors' knowledge of distance student's learning styles dissimilar to traditional practices to which instructors are accustomed to. One instructor recognised his life experience as a tool to his deep understanding of distance students' uniqueness and understanding of their learning performance. The instructor referred to his own teaching of both traditional and distance mode to gauge the differences between the students of these two modes. However, the instructor erroneously used the term 'normal learning' to refer to traditional learning thus, implying a misconception as it may mean that distance learning is an 'abnormal type of learning'.

While reflecting on understanding of distance students' uniqueness, instructors further indicated that distance students have increased retention of content learnt than the traditional students. One instructor argued that distance students retain concepts than conventional

students as the distance students are pushed to the distance mode by different reasons as discussed in chapter 3 and deliberated in the prior section of this chapter. This implies that, distance students retain concepts because they are focused and work towards achievement of set goals. This further reveals that distance instructors' experience of the distance training has shaped their understanding of the nature of distance students and their learning behaviours and retention of content.

Instructors established that distance students are adult learners with diverse commitments driven by maturity to attain their goals. The unique traits of distance students distinguish them from traditional students who are mostly young and dependent on unceasing face-to-face interaction with instructors for their success. This is why another instructor attached distance students uniqueness to the pace at which they learn in relation to the diverse roles they play in the community and families. The last instructor argues that distance education students should not be compared with traditional students but be understood and given the required and apt support for them to excel in their studies. The sentiments provided by the instructor show the need for planning as discussed in chapters 3, 7 and 10 to bring about the required systems for teaching, learning and student support. One instructor's mention of 'support' further indicates knowledge he processes about distance teaching and effective students' learning and learning support. While associating students' probable failure with lack of support as necessitated by the nature of the distance programme, the instructor further argues that distance students perform as traditional students do.

Furthermore, educators contested on the conditions for recruiting distance students into the programme. Views from one institution's educators indicated rigid conditions of sticking to six (6) credits of their Malawi School Certificate of Examinations while the other institution offered flexibility accepting 5 credits. These contestations imply that institutions differ in their flexibility to recruitment of students especially where the programme is open to all eligible citizens and not only the on-demand serving teachers.

Following the above sentiments, it can be argued that participants of the distance secondary school teacher training in Malawi, understand what distance education is in relation to students' traits. Instructors' understanding is further shown in the linking circumstances of distance students especially their need for more than just the content in any media to interact with. All participants unanimously established that distance students are unique and thus, require diverse approaches to their learning. The chapter argues that participants of the

distance secondary teacher training in Malawi understand what distance education is and use the knowledge to facilitate learning.

Chapter conclusion

In chapter 6, I have presented participants' understanding of open and distance education and why they need to understand it. The chapter argues that participants of the distance secondary teacher training understand ODE as noticed through students' definitions of ODE, reasons for their training through the distance mode and their uniqueness. Student teachers revealed key elements of ODE, thus, exposing their understanding and that the Ministry of Education's on-the-job teacher training policy in Malawi pushes prospective student teachers to get trained through the distance mode. An analysis of these views revealed that as is the case with students, instructors understand what open and distance education is, making them well informed to bring around effective learning and learning support. Irrespective of their traditional background instructors understand what distance education is and to some extent, use the knowledge to facilitate learning. In the next chapter, I present and discuss the nature of institutional organisation of the distance secondary teacher training as the distance learning environment.

CHAPTER 7

NATURE OF INSTITUTIONAL ORGANISATION OF THE DISTANCE SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHER TRAINING

Introduction

To explore learning implications of distance secondary school teacher training, it was necessary that I engage with participants' own understanding of the way the distance teacher training is institutionally organised. This was important because, for students to learn effectively at a distance they require that the educating institution be properly organised or planned. This institutional organisation sets the learning environment for distance students who as discussed earlier, are psychologically isolated from peers and educating institutions. The views were drawn from in-depth interviews, document analysis and phenomenological reflections to establish the nature of the distance education institutional organisation and the impact it has on student teachers' learning. In this chapter, I argue that distance institutional organisation of the secondary school teacher training in Malawi shows that the country has adopted one-size-fits-all philosophy, which negatively affects planning of the distance mode. Institutional organisation of the distance secondary teacher training is categorised into three as follows: distance education systems and their functions, documented plans for distance education and production of instructional materials.

Distance education systems, their functions and coordination

To examine the learning implications of the distance teacher training, it was important to consider participants' knowledge of the notion of distance education systems, their functions and coordination. This was important because for students to learn effectively at a distance, educators need to understand the systems, their functions and coordination as the foundation to a favourable learning environment. Participants' responses on distance education systems, their functions and coordination are explained as follows: distance education systems, and functions and coordination of distance education systems.

Distance education systems

Educators' views on existence of a distance system or unit in the two institutions were similar. In one institution the administrator perceived distance systems as established:

But the manager coordinates distance education...we have 5 departments ... sub-systems as you put it... Aaaa, what...? Guidance and counselling sub-system which are functional at the moment, so we have the administrative, academic, library and guidance and counselling...of course, we have the fifth one, the infrastructural sub-system. Administrative sub-system...sees the overall running...of ODE...academic is for overall functioning of the ODE and this comprises the office of the university registrar and centre of open and distance learning...

While connoting the same as the above opinion, in the succeeding institution the administrator viewed the distance unit as a centre for distance activities. The administrator elaborated:

Let me say that in terms of structures we have one structure that was constructed specifically for this purpose and that's where all activities of distance education are managed...we have the centre that manages distance...we have the director; the overseer of distance education... teacher education manager...manages... coordinates distance education...the centre...have got several offices. For instance, the director am talking about, resides in that particular building, the teacher manager, resides in the same building...we have the printing section where now the modules are printed, another section where we keep resources or the assignments because...they write assignments when they are off campus and so it's like they, send their assignments through that particular office that is responsible for handling those assignments...once the specific lecturers mark the assignments, they take them back to distance office for them to take them back to the students...

Functions and coordination of distance education systems

Educators' views disclosed imprecise functions and coordination of the distance education systems. One administrator's views on functions and coordinative nature of the identified sub-systems were as follows:

...coordination of all these systems so that they run co-ordinately, they run harmoniously...we have the academic...who do provide tutorials, who teach the students and...guidance and counselling which is normally done by ...the centre for distance learning personnel as academic members of staff. These together do provide that kind of support to make sure that the students get what they are supposed to get by the end of the day... we have the library which provides the reference materials, reading materials, print materials as well as online materials... the infrastructural element or sub-system which talks of the physical facilities that we have at the campus like the classrooms, the lecture theatres ... students access especially when they are on campus for their group discussions...

The instructor from the same institution disputed above views by confusingly mentioning traditional departments within the faculty of education as sub-systems of the distance training system. The instructor established:

...So far all departments within the faculty of education contribute to courses that our students are taking. I belong to Language department, there is also Mathematics, there is

History department, there is Geography department, Theology and religious studies department and ETS department that's where we have Foundation Studies...

Similarly, in the subsequent institution the administrator pieced distance sub-systems with traditional faculties and functions. The administrator elucidated:

...we have 3 (three) faculties... faculty of education, faculty of sciences and faculty of humanities. So, our programmes, our courses rather, are offered currently by these three faculties...being college of education that's why we have the faculty of education, but the faculty of science looks at the training of science teachers whilst humanities is taken on board by the faculty of humanities... Now when we begin to talk about the distance programme ... we are calling it programme, let's call it specifically to say it's a mode... of training ... Being fully funded by the Malawi Government it means the activities are fully supported by the Malawi Government. And so, when doing our annual budget we factor in the distance education...

Administrators' responses establish the availability of pre-set distance education structures or systems in the two institutions under study. The mention of a structure specifically made for open and distance education implies that educators understand that the distance mode requires specific amenities as discussed in chapter 3. One administrator's explanation that all distance education activities are done in the specifically set unit is an indication that regardless of being hosted by the traditional institution, distance education is a standalone mode. This is the trend in the two institutions as the other also mentioned the existence of a 'centre for distance learning' within descriptions of the sub-systems and administrators' roles and responsibilities. The findings are in line with the argument made in chapter 3 that distance education regardless of institutional mode requires a distinct unit (Moore & Kearsley, 2012; Minnaar, 2013; Moore, 2013). Educators' views on the question that focused on the sub-systems of the distance education system or unit were dissimilar. The question which was rephrased to capture sub-systems or departments forming the distance education unit drew either unclear composition or a blend of traditional with distance departments.

Data on the composition of the distance education system or unit implies that the two institutions had not copiously adopted the systems or any of the institutional organisation approaches discussed in chapter 3 permitting an uncertain system. This is irrespective of literature illustrating that as part of planning, "systems for ODL delivery must be well developed before ODL can be implemented" (Minnaar, 2013, p. 81). As seen from the responses, one administrator hesitated to mention the sub-systems thus, signalled a flaw in knowledge of the composition of the distance education system. The administrator was frank enough to reveal that only the guidance and counselling sub-system was functional but

continued to mention the supposed sub-systems such as library, academics and the administration. The administrator further explained the functions of the named sub-systems which paralleled the distance mode's setups to be recommended in chapter 10. The limited application of educators' knowledge and or lack of knowledge on establishment of systems within systems for ODE seem to have the potential of stagnating growth of the distance mode.

The other administrator linked the sub-systems to traditional faculties and functions. For example, the administrator explained that the distance education unit consists of the faculty of education because it is in the college of education with the faculty of science training science teachers and the faculty of humanities taking on board, humanity students. As argued by the administrator, the secondary teacher distance education is a mode of instructional delivery and not a programme. This validation implies that there is no need for distance education to be given special attention as it is within the traditional practices' confines. The educator proudly justified the views by indicating that the distance mode is factored in the institution's yearly budget whose funding comes from the government through the Malawi Government. With regards to requirements for open and distance education establishment at any mode of institution discussed in chapter 3, and within the planning specifications to be discussed in chapter 10, the sentiment is a flaw. It is interesting to note that while one administrator mentioned traditional faculties as distance education sub-systems, the other administrator's views likewise indicated strong adherence to traditional practices. The practice departs from the argument made in chapter 3 that attaching distance education to a traditional faculty is another form of dual mode model (Simango, 2016). This because, even in such situation, well known sub-systems are required to produce effective teaching, learning and learning support for positive learning experiences.

Identification of student support in the absence of the material production sub-systems as indicated by one administrator implies the administrator's knowledge of the distance mode. The mention of activities being divided into sub-components by the administrator implies the existence of systems whose users cannot clearly describe. For example; the sentiments could have inter alia included, the material and student support sub-systems (Moore & Kearsley, 2012; Minnaar, 2013) basing on the available tasks and responsible officers as argued in chapter 2 and 3. Educators' failure to identify existing distance education sub-systems and their assigned roles challenges the running and coordination of such important structures.

This departs from the norms discussed in chapters 2 and suggested in chapter 10 that distance education as a system has to comprise several other autonomous sub-systems or subunits.

In reference to coordination of the sub-systems to yield effective teaching, students' learning and the provision of learning support, educators again, could not tell how it's done or how connected the sub-systems were to each other. The administrator's mention of tutorial, guidance and counselling as providers of student support is a clue to the existence of some invisible structures or systems whose users can hardly identify. Such lack of solemnity and or inadequate knowledge of distance education system and sub-systems infers uncertain institutional organisation whose running bends profoundly on traditional practices. This departs from the nature of planning revealed in chapter 2 which calls for the establishment of precise systems within systems (Moore & Kearsley, 2012; Minnaar, 2013, Shivaj University, 2013) to effectively attain the envisioned targets. The unclear organisation further implies that one of the institutions initiated open and distance education without clearly attaching supporting sub-systems as discussed earlier. This may also mean that educators can hardly separate open and distance education from the traditional systems due to the one-size-fits-all mindset. Participants' failure to precisely name ODE sub-systems is in contrast to the suggestion that the ODE unit should be systematised into 'departments and sub-units... different functions and activities' (Ipaye, 2015, p. 3).

Documented plans for distance education

Educators' perceptions unanimously revealed obsolete and lack of guiding documents as well as developmental plans for the distance secondary teacher training in Malawi. Analysis of the available distance education guiding documents was important because the documents clearly showed the nature of planning done for distance education and how this affects students' learning experiences. Aspects of documented plans for distance education are discussed as follows: open and distance education policy and strategic plan and distance education developmental plans and resource mobilisation strategies.

Open and distance education policy and strategic plan

Participants' responses on the availability of documents guiding the distance education system in the two institutions revealed the absence of ODE policy and strategic plans. One

administrator clearly endorsed the absence of open and distance education policy and averred:

... But the unfortunate part of it is that we do not have an open policy yet...we have the institutional improvement plan as well as the strategic plan and these... are two documents but they are talking of the same thing.

Educators' views mentioned the existence of strategic plans for the two institutions. One administrator explained:

...we have got the *Strategic Plan* that guides us on how distance education is supposed to be delivered. However, we have got other supporting documents; for instance, we have got another policy distance education document which also supports the strategic plan. And finally, you find that we have a *handbook for distance education*. Again, that one also really stipulates on how distance education is supposed to be done... the strategic plan is for the whole institution not just distance education...

The other administrator from the same institution established the above sentiments and declared:

...strategic plan, that's the main document but besides that we have guidelines...for distance education programmes...for facilitation...for assessment, both college-based assessments and field-based assessments. ...we have the strategic plan, guidelines for facilitation, for assessment, and the general rules for conduct of any student...Our strategic plan finished its term of existence in 2010 and this year we are planning to review the plan, to develop another strategic plan, until then, it's hard to say the exact plan because it's not yet there but, however, we are envisaging a very vibrant distance programme for the country. We are likely to bring in new approaches, new ways of doing things, ways of assessment, because education is growing, education is developing, and distance education too is becoming very popular...

Data on documented plans for distance education from interviews and document analysis revealed some inconsistencies in planning for open and distance education between the two institutions. The data exposed the presence of a strategic plan for both open and distance education and action plans in the form of a handbook in one institution. In this single institution comprehensive planning for distance education activities such as assessment, instructions, learning strategies and students' conduct were set in the teacher-learner handbook. Analysis of the handbook revealed that all plans were outdated though provided comprehensive guidelines for distance learning and learning support. Scrutiny of the obsolete strategic plan for the institution confirmed administrator's claim that the distance mode is budgeted for within the singular corporate plan signifying the one-size-fits-all philosophy.

The administrator's mention of 2010 as the expiration of the strategic plan implies negligence of the institution in reviewing this important document and over reliance on the traditional education practices. The six (6) years the institution has operated without the strategic plan for both traditional and open and distance education implies the institution's lack of direction as educators operated in a 'routinely' way. The argument is that lack of a Strategic Plan indicates lack of direction and the institution's failure to respond to students' and national emerging and contemporary issues. The vibrant distance programme and new approaches included in the administrator's views are being delayed by the absence of the vision and mission statement to be discussed in chapters 9 and 10. As argued in chapter 2, plans are living documents, socially constructed for a purpose and target groups requiring constant review to match the audience and respond to emerging needs (Owen, 2014). However, the existing plans and related documents have out lived their purpose and relevance since the strategic plan expired in 2010 and the handbook had lived for eleven years without review.

Data for the other institution was in contrast with the prior discussion. For example, the institution's strategic plan was not only solely for traditional education but also obsolete. In this institution the administrator's response on a strategic plan for ODE contradicted what was there on the ground. The purportedly ODE guidelines (strategic and improvement plans) were not put forward for scrutiny except for the named obsolete strategic plan. This implies lack of planning for open and distance education. The findings translated to lack of planning as outdated plans can hardly respond to contemporary and emerging issues. Obsolescence of planning documents defeats suggestions made earlier in chapter 2 that planning should be constantly done as it is a continuous process (Tony, 2008; Wren, 2009; Shivaj University, 2013). The tendency for the institution to implement open and distance education without any guidelines reflects lack of planning; coordination and consequently effectual division of labour hence an uncertain system. In this case, the distance teacher training at this institution lacked educators' application of open and distance education knowledge. This diverted arguments made in chapter 2, mandating distance education institutions to develop and document strategic plans embracing goal, vision, mission, SWOT analysis among other issues (Polk State College, 2012; Minnaar, 2013). The precise declaration of the administrator that the institution lacked ODE policy settled lack of planning. This implies that the running of open and distance education in the institution totally leaned on the tradition system, thus, exposing a one-size-fits-all mindset. As argued in chapter 2, total one-size-fits-

all practice is against the odds, as it hinders educators' innovativeness and the system's growth due to total dependency on existing traditional amenities (Moore & Kearsley, 2012).

Developmental plans and resource mobilisation strategies

Responses revealed the absence of the distance system or the host institution's involvement in resource mobilisation strategies to help improve distance education services and promote growth of the institution. The administrators unanimously disclosed lack of such undertakings. One administrator asserted the following:

...on the development of the college, technologically because we can't say, ok will be using tele-conferencing, the college does not have any tele-conference facility but that's what we desire, that's what we would like to have. ...there was a programme by the government of Japan, JICA wanting to improve the infrastructure of the college and we believe when that comes, we should be able to go in those lines as well ... should that happen, obviously, they said distance education is part and parcel of the programme to embrace those new developments...I can't say it will happen tomorrow or it will happen the day after tomorrow. Some of those plans would have been already implemented by now but the change in the programme as I said before ... was supposed to be done in liaison with the Malawi Government so it's not just JICA's decision.

The other institution tracks the same mindset with comparable challenges of continually awaiting donor funding. The administrator for the other institution stated the following:

We are planning to have four satellite centres ... because we do not use our own teleconferencing centre here ... in those centres will be fitted with video teleconferencing facilities. So our plan is that we have a teacher facilitating here then all these places will be connected and they should be able to listen and attend that particular lecture in Mulanje, Balaka, Lilongwe and in Karonga... If technologically that happens to be a challenge ... we may dispatch lecturers to Lilongwe, Balaka and Karonga to attend to the students and then come...We have been privileged at the moment, we have, had a grant from World Bank. They call it Skills Development Project (SDP) which the Malawi government has received from the World Bank...which has enabled us expand in terms of infrastructure. So it's that kind of grant that has enabled us to build the satellite centres. But here on campus as well, we are doing the office complex ... main centre. We will be feeding these satellite centres...But this main centre is being funded by ADB, the project, it's the...African Development Bank while the satellite centres are the World Bank...

The administrator expanded the response and disclosed the following:

...we have activities that increase our pockets at the end of the day...I mean these have to be done within the prescribed limits as a government institution, yes, we value that we enact upon government policies and so, we can't go against government policy and so, we support government. ...it means our core business is not necessarily to make money out of the programme but it is to support the nation...So we are not running it as a business.

Participants' views revealed that all institutions under study wholly depend on external financial support while ignoring resource mobilisation inventiveness. The data showed donor dependency promoted by the absence of technologically advanced facilities, dependency syndrome and lack of open and distance education contingency planning hence hindering effectual learning experiences. These issues generally show the lack of planning for the Malawi distance secondary teacher training characterised by uncertain institutional organisation discussed in this chapter. The absence of technologically advanced facilities in public institutions of higher learning seems to deepen dependency on external financial support as compared to own resource mobilisation initiatives topped with grants. As noted, one administrator highlighted the institution's desire to have advanced facilities whose actualisation failed due to being technologically handicapped to offer programmes through tele-conferencing. The deficiency in technological advancement noticed in Malawi especially in the dual mode institutions offering distance teacher training yield dependency syndrome especially on infrastructural development. The administrator expressed hope in Japanese government's long term plans which he anticipated to include distance education which according to him is part and parcel of the parent system. It is surprising to note that the actual time for the JICA programme to start is not known even to the administrator who clearly indicated some doubts to when the developments would take place considering the registered delays in enactment of the same. Overdependence on the macro system, the Malawi Government depicts lack of distance education autonomy and delayed developments. The tendency shows adherence to the one-size-fits-all philosophy and dependency syndrome barring open and distance education independence as educators just follow what is dictated to them. However, this is a good development that if achieved can solve learning support provision in the country and help the institution reach out to masses. Nevertheless, the institution through review of the plans should also have its own resource mobilisation activities to sustain not only the project but to also initiate its future innovations.

The participants' views create hope in the mind of the reader in that accomplishment of donor plans shall aid in the provision of learning support to students and reaching out to many in their diverse locations. The administrator's unwritten plans as asserted in chapter 2, includes a contingency plan saying, if one option fails, the other would pop in. However, total dependency on donors up to the point of throwing down tools, like strategic plans and related documents, is a flaw on the part of management. The sentiments imply lack of inventiveness and vision clipping from lack of planning for open and distance education breeding

dependency syndrome. The absence of documented plans to explain the same deviates from the norm befitting management and administration of an institution discussed in chapter 10. This is in line with what has already been identified as a management and governance challenge of higher education discussed in chapter 2 (Malawi Government, 2008).

The mention of money making through resource mobilisation strategies reveals inadequacy in the administrator's knowledge of planning confirming the absence of ODE strategic plan to remind educators as discussed in chapter 2. This tendency as argued earlier, results in ineffectual and unsustainable interventions (Minnaar, 2013). The sentiments contrasts the arguments made in chapter 2 and 10 that resource mobilisation is a central part of management, a component of planning (Malawi Government, 2008; Polk State College, 2012). The administrator's fears of violating government policy if the institution is involved in resource mobilisation controverts government's plans. The government of Malawi through its National Education Sector Plan empowers universities to "develop and implement other programmes to improve quality and efficiency, funded by themselves from their own resources" (Malawi Government, 2008, p. 24). As discussed in chapter 3, resource mobilisation which includes government grants is an integral part of the management and governance education pillar set as a strategy to overcoming management and governance challenges. The fears are thus, a misconception stemming from limited understanding of distance education enactment and its learning implications leads to planning challenges.

Production of instructional materials

To explore the learning implications of the distance secondary teacher training, it was essential that I engage educators' own knowledge of production of instructional materials. This was important because for students to learn effectively at a distance locale they require that instructors develop instructional materials or use media to facilitate students learning.

The responses on production of instructional materials to reach out to students in their localities and yield learning are discussed as follows: preplanned instructional materials and production of preplanned instructional materials.

Preplanned instructional materials

Educators' responses revealed mass production of instructional materials to help students learn at a distance confirming pre-planning of such materials. One instructor explained:

...I do not think that distance education in developing countries like Malawi can materialise without pre-planning... because prior to the recruitment of these students we have to produce modules enough...Developing and producing modules, so before we start offering a course, first of all we need to develop modules for that particular course, there after, that's when we can recruit.

Another instructor approved the above sentiments and said:

...For instance ... how many students are we taking in this particular area and that number also be determined by the resources that we have because before getting the students we have to produce modules enough for each of the candidate we are actually recruiting and we are not talking of 1 (one) or 2 (two) modules, you can really be surprised to note that each course has got a module meaning to say, when a student is first year, is supposed to receive all the modules for the first year so without planning, you can see that they cannot actually get any because they will be using these modules when they are off campus.

Production of preplanned instructional materials

Data from interviews and instructional materials' analysis revealed that the production of instructional materials is done by instructors themselves with no any nature of outsourcing or course team strategy. One instructor explained:

...members of staff from the department of education are requested to come up with modules in their areas of professionalisation. So I happen to be one of those who also requested to write some modules. So after writing modules even if I am not there, any other member of staff can facilitate that particular module as long as he is conversant with that particular topic. So members of staff were requested... we signed contract...with the open and distance learning, then we wrote the modules, and then they were edited, I understand by our colleagues from other universities like Chancellor College then later on, changes made and modules produced. So once modules are produced, either the one who wrote the module can facilitate or someone else...

Another instructor while doubting the involvement of outsiders for instructional material development expertise settled the above views and averred:

... in the development of modules? Maybe for refining... Just to check the quality of the modules but not the actual development. If anything, maybe once we do not have enough personnel in some other areas, that's when we can outsource. For instance, I remember, when we were developing modules for Agriculture, we had to consult colleagues from Bunda college of Agriculture to assist us in that particular area. But we have got enough

lecturers we produce, we develop the modules on their own but we can actually send them for expert judging to other specialists...

Data indicated that the distance secondary teacher training uses pre-packaged instructional materials made prior to student teachers' recruitment into the programme. According to one instructor's views, preplanned instructions are inevitable not only in Malawi but in developing nations. This wedds well to what most authors argued in literature as discussed in chapter 2 that developing nations including Malawi depend on print materials as their primary medium of instructions (Mhishi, Bhukuvhani, & Sana, 2012; Saba, 2012; Chawinga & Zozie, 2016). Preplanned instructions relates to industrialised products and services which even developed nations cherish and still value as they are in the process of adopting innovative techniques of distance teaching. It can be argued that regardless of the uncertain system, ODE institutions in Malawi still achieve interactive mass production of instructional materials as carriers of instructions for students who are mostly studying at a distance. Participants showed that instructors for individual institutions develop instructional materials in their areas of specialisation with outsourcing for scarce skills only. However, scrutiny of the teaching and learning documents exposed poor quality instructional material claimed to be developed by an outsourced expert. Again, the other modules showed lack of course teams in the development procedure as only in rare cases that other expertise other than instructors were mentioned in the acknowledgement.

The students' negative experiences coincide with Musingafi et al., (2015) findings which revealed instructors' unpreparedness and therefore their inefficiency resulting in their dithering about 'without saying anything meaningful" to students (p. 64). This infers lack of professionalism amongst educators which inter alia stem from lack or inadequate training, and or poor attitude towards distance education as argued in chapter 3. This coincides with several other studies in developing countries that established that most ODL instructors lack experience and expertise to instruct and fully support distance students (Musingafi, Mapulanga, Chiwanza, & Zebron, 2015) (Mnyanyi & Mbwete, 2009; Basanza et al., 2010; Musingafi et al., 2015). This study hence adopts the argument that most open and distance education educators are products of traditional mode of education requiring retraining to successfully understand ODE requirements. Unprofessionalism revealed in the study further fulfil the argument made in chapter 2 that total immersion of distance education in the traditional practices stemming from the national level hinders the nation from attaining the three educational pillars.

This means that all lecturers by virtue of being instructors in the traditional mode can teach in the distance mode. Instructors are not properly informed on handling of distance students hence defies noted earlier as the instructors may not even know that distance students have unique traits and learning styles. The involvement of all traditional instructors in the distance mode without training them is a flaw in distance education enactment. For example, instructors may get annoyed if distance students take time to grasp content during orientation and produce demotivating remarks without linking the nature of the students to the approach used. However, it is interesting to note that instructors in this study seemed knowledgeable of their roles and unique traits of distance students but were mean in institutional organisation of ODE.

Since “poor success is shaped by unprepared staff and students, and professionalisation of facilitators” (Rooyen, 2015, p. 9) *inter alia*, sensitisation and exposure of ODE staff to open and distance approaches is vital for their change of outlook (Basanza et al., 2010). It is for this reason that Minnaar (2013) entices instructors to get the required training to absolutely deliver instructions and support students at a distance. The findings denote the need for the distance education system to have a sub-system which could be responsible for recruitment and training of instructors who mostly come from the traditional background. This is in contrast to Ramdass and Masithulela’s (2016) suggestion that “the human resources department needs to ensure that further appointments in academia should be lecturers with teaching experience in an ODL environment” (p. 11). However, recruitment of instructors with open and distance education know-how is not valid for this study’s context as instructors are picked from the traditional mode hence requiring deskilling and reskilling to fit ODE. It is thus a must for such instructors to “receive training in on-campus and distance instructional methods and learning strategies...this should be done as a job requirement...and get a certificate” (Basanza et al., 2010, p. 89). The findings suggest inadequate staff training contrary to Minnaar’s (2013) suggestion that staffing or human resource systems should ensure “staff development” and that “opportunities for training are in place” (p. 86) for ODL staff. Both academic and administrative staff requires continuous trainings starting from the initial stage of distance education, promotions, and change in remunerations in line with set policies.

Distance secondary teacher training in Malawi not only suffers from lack of planning but is dependent on the parent institution hence lacks autonomy as shown in the earlier discussion.

For example; the Malawi secondary distance teacher training suffers from the absence of ODE policy, obsolete guidelines plus educators' reliance on total replication of traditional practices. This practice impedes planning and effective students' learning experiences as administrators see no value in training staff to benefit the new mode. Despite lack of plans for distance education, student teachers are still being trained through the distance mode. It seems that, the distance education unit and the director are there just for formality sake as all the necessary activities attached to open and distance education are controlled by the traditional management. The administrator knows that it is possible for a distance education system to be independent from the host institution's decisions and management regardless of being housed in the traditional institution. These sentiments give hope to the future adoption of change when the Malawi open and distance education would be allowed to operate in the dual mode model in a decentralised manner. The sentiments reveal some common trends amongst institutions in the organisation of distance education in dual-mode institutions which is also a mismatch of practices with Nigerian dual-mode institutions discussed in chapter 3. The administrator's views are within the argument made in chapter 2 that proper planning within the one-size-fits-all approach can produce effective distance teaching, learning and learning support. Without proper planning, the approach deprives students of their right to better education as instructors lack direction hence ineffective enactment of the training. This implies that educators lack the right fora for checks and balances of the distance training enactment due to the absence of the exact sub-systems to facilitate such important activities. This study makes an argument that setting of essential distance education sub-systems yields a healthier learning environment; promote students' retention and educators' adoption of innovative approaches in response to existing gaps.

Chapter conclusion

In chapter 7, I have presented participants' views in relation to data from document analysis on the nature of the distance secondary teacher training's institutional organisation in Malawi to reveal the established distance learning environment. The data revealed an uncertain institutional organisation or system yielding a blend of traditional with distance experiences tailing ineffectual one-size-fits-all philosophy. The general argument presented is that, distance institutional organisation of the secondary teacher training in Malawi shows that the country has adopted one-size-fits-all philosophy, which negatively affects planning of the distance mode. Enactment of the distance secondary teacher training as experienced and

documented are conversed in the next chapter with extracts from interviews and documents to interrogate views in relation to existing literature.

CHAPTER 8

ENACTMENT OF THE DISTANCE TEACHER TRAINING

Introduction

To explore learning implications of the distance secondary teacher training, it was necessary to assess the actual enactment of the training as experienced in the participants' life world. It was a requirement that the teaching, learning and learning support be examined through student teachers' expectations against their lived experience in relation to instructors' own practices. This was essential because learning implications are a product of students' expectations, their experiences and instructors' practice that yield teaching, learning and learning support. In this chapter I argue that, regardless of the adoption and mainstreaming of distance education in Malawi, the system exhibits limited understanding of the enactment of the open and distance education.

Participants' views and document analysis on the distance secondary teacher training enactment are grouped as follows: distance teaching, learning and learning support, distance teaching, learning and learning support through modules, participants' perceptions of orientation sessions, participants' dissatisfaction with the learning support offered, mismatch between students' expectations and experiences of distance training, and the impact of the distance teacher training at micro and macro levels.

Distance teaching, learning and learning support

To explore the learning implications of the distance teacher training, it was important that the actual teaching, learning and learning support be examined as enacted. This was central as learning implications cannot be drawn outside the teaching, learning and learning support processes. It was thus, important because for the impact of the institutional organisation on students' learning and experiences could only be understood through the distance training enactment. Distance education or training integrates teaching, learning and learning support as one. Participants' perceptions and experiences of the distance teaching, learning and learning support are conversed as follows: residential teaching, learning and learning support, and off campus teaching, learning and learning support.

Residential teaching, learning and learning support

All participants unanimously settled that the distance secondary teacher training in Malawi incorporates occasional residential or on campus trainings. One administrator stated:

...4 weeks they cover on campus that's the residential period specifically for orientation, they are oriented for 4 weeks... but sometimes they stay longer but when am saying they stay longer, the other period is...reading week and writing examinations. Sometimes we do not allow them to go and come back, so sometimes when they come they spend 2 months here, the whole 2 months is not meant for orientation, the first 4 weeks are preparation for examinations, 1 week, 2 following weeks they sit for exams and then the remaining, the last 4 week that's when they do orientation. That's why I didn't mention these others, that's why I just mentioned the 4 weeks because that's what is meant for them being oriented to the instructional materials, to the content...

While establishing the above annotations an instructor from the other institution averred:

...Once they have been recruited in the first year they are actually asked to be on campus for 8 weeks, those 8 weeks are for facilitation. Once we have facilitated to them and we have given them assignments for that particular semester, they go to study on their own and they write the assignments... send them...Then they come for 3 weeks...for the first semester exam... the first week is for grace period or reading week...the other 2 weeks are for the exams...they go and this time around they concentrate on the second semester's modules and the assignments because they are told that these modules are for the first semester and these modules are for the second semester...They write the assignments...submit and at the end of the second semester they come for second semester exams...

As discussed in chapter 6, student teachers inclusion of occasional residential contacts in their definitions of open and distance education are enlarged in this chapter. One student teacher averred:

...orientation takes four weeks, examinations two weeks and self-study sixteen weeks. As an open and distance student am also supposed to teach during the sixteen weeks period. While doing activities demanded by the school programme...

Participants' perceptions on the role of orientation sessions

There are contestations on the role of orientation sessions offered to student teachers during the distance teacher trainings. As some student teachers expressed dissatisfaction with sketchy orientation sessions offered in their respective institutions while instructors cleared the mist. One student teacher lamented:

I expected that there could be thorough teaching during the face-to-face sessions but it turned to be such sketchy sessions where facts (concepts) were not explained in details. This was due to the fact that a lot of wok had to be covered in the shortest period, which

led to an overload of work to carry home. For instance, work for one full semester (15 weeks) was carried out in 4 weeks only, with 30 assignments to carry home. This resulted into failure to complete other assignments in time.

Some student teachers from the other institution expected that they be provided with accommodation during the orientation sessions. One student teacher explained:

...As a distance education student... I expected that; the university provides accommodation for students, teach students like the generic ones by providing the necessary instructional materials. Distance education at Mzuzu University does not provide accommodation even if the full time students are not there but instead, students look for their accommodation on their own. Students who reside far from the campus...

Instructors cleared the mist by clarifying the role of orientation sessions as to guide students through instructional materials. One instructor explained:

...for example; if they come in July, they take the modules and go in class so that we can take them through the module so that they become conversant with what is the content of the module. It's not really teaching each and every topic, you cannot manage in 4 hours or so...

Responses revealed that distance secondary teacher training is enacted through residential sessions as students' orientation to the distance training journey. As discussed, the orientation duration is similar for the two institutions except that one orients students once for 8 weeks per year while the other splits the 8 weeks into two. The student teachers therefore get oriented each semester and travel twice to and from the educating institution while their counterparts from the other institution only travelled once a year. The views indicated that the orientation focus on introducing the distance students to the instructional materials, modules they need to use while away from instructors. Participants confirmed that these instructional materials are distributed to the students during orientation together with about 30 assignments to keep the students on track as they study in their homes. It is during orientation time that examinations are administered to distance students. The orientation process therefore, can be interpreted as the initial face-to-face interaction between students and instructors. Face-to-face instructor-student interaction entails learning support which is well supported in literature and endorsed as the heart of distance learning (Kangai, Rupande & Rugonye, 2011; Rooyen, 2015; Chawinga & Zozie, 2016).

Regardless of playing its part of allowing students to interact with instructors and the educating institutions, some student teachers felt that the orientation process did not meet their expectations. The students expected thorough or comprehensive teaching and learning

during orientation with adequate clarifications of concepts. As shall be discussed later in this chapter, the student teacher's expectation of thorough teaching during face-to-face sessions is twin faced. First, the student teacher may have a misconception of distance learning expecting full time face-to-face contact with instructors. Second, these reflections could be revealing partial lecturers and instructors' failure to precisely deliver instructions and clarify difficult concepts to prepare the distance students for learning at a distance. The mention of full time students being off campus as the distance students lack accommodation can be interpreted as institution's failure to exploit the existing resources. As lamented by the students, in one of the institutions the hostels for example; were not let out even at low cost to distance students during orientation to draw some income and promote students feeling of belonging to the institution.

Off campus teaching, learning and learning support

Participants' responses solidly convened that distance secondary student teachers are largely trained off campus. Participants' views revealed that off campus teaching, learning and learning support was achieved through modules as primary media of instructions supplemented by study circles and field facilitation. One student teacher narrated:

...Another good part is that some lecture notes are given to us in form of recorded voices accompanied with written work that we have to access using DVDs or smart phones or computers. Unfortunately, not everybody has a smart phone or a laptop to access the recorded notes. Therefore, some students prefer printed notes in form of a module while others who also have access to the recorded material may be at an advantage. Therefore, as much as a variety of teaching and learning methods is used, students in open and distance learning may not have access to the material they should study due to circumstances beyond their control...

Student teachers expounded the role of orientation in the distance teacher training. One student teacher elaborated:

...Instructors only provide orientation on how to handle instructional materials but most of the work is done while at home. In addition, the school prepares modules that acted as a guide where references are provided for further reading...

Study circle learning and learning support

Participants from one institution disclosed that apart from residential sessions, the distance training in their institution also used study circle as a source of off campus support for distance students. One instructor explained:

...we structured our distance education in such a way that “no student should be perceived as an island. These supervisors have been actually given districts, we started with 18 and if am not mistaken, we are remaining with 15 but the 28 districts in Malawi have been shared amongst these supervisors and normally what we do is, we give them necessary facilities to enable them to visit the students wherever they are. So we created cluster centres where the students meet fortnightly, to discuss issues pertaining to their education and also to conduct study circles. Whenever they are doing that, this field supervisor visits them... rotationally, so with that kind of structure, students are really assisted...

The administrator proudly revealed the presence of groups for student-student interaction as a mechanism for learning. The administrator explained:

...we have a support mechanism in our ODL that when students get out to their respective duty stations they are supported by designated men and women called supervisors. And these supervisors are registered by the Ministry of Education...get their salaries from the Ministry of Education and their core responsibilities are: To support teacher-learners, we call them teacher-learners or students but we call them teacher-learners. So the core responsibility is to support teacher-learners. You know studying on your own has several challenges and challenges of technology in Malawi is not easy for them to access their lecturers, ... a field supervisor has a cluster within which she or he operates and students belonging to that cluster are under that specific Field supervisor...also monitors learning and performance of the learner, ODL learner... assesses, ...we have our mode of assessment using specific forms and field supervisors are supposed to observe how these teacher-learner are teaching and evaluate their lessons...

Student teachers elaborated the structure of study circles and their importance. One student teacher extended the instructor’s views and averred:

Study circles were according to subject of study. Group study was very important because that is where errors were corrected. It is expensive to have a discussion via the telephone. The lecturer may need to prepare in order to give the required response that can be time consuming and frustrating to the student...

The administrator’s views provide full details of the constant learning support provided to distance students in the institution that embraces study circle innovations which is in contrast to the other institution’s practice. The arrangement implies that the open and distance education former institution has a well-founded support mechanism to push students learning that further helps retain student teachers as shall be discussed in chapter 9. The mention of supervisors recruitment as done by the Ministry of Education, use of clusters and as confirmed in the institution’s handbook for learners indicates that the study circles are planned. While supporting the administrator’s sentiments the instructor illustrated further sources of real conversation. From the participant who is also an insider in the provision of learning support, it is established that the distance teacher training offers occasional but constant learning support opposing the other institution’s practice. The study circles discussed in chapter 10 are

commended for their efficacy in correcting errors through increased interaction. The student teachers while appraising the study circle's ability to bring the students together, ease their learning, they further confirmed the grouping allowed them to excel in their studies. Student teachers explained important roles study circles played in bringing peer interaction as vital in clarification of difficult concepts.

Field facilitation and learning support

Similar to the study circle component, participants in the latter institution mentioned field facilitation as a source of off campus support for student teachers. One administrator elaborated:

...we are talking of the academic support here, because we are talking of the lecturing, we are talking of the lecturers. So at learner support we noted that we had problems in terms of performance of the science students. So...we made a deliberate effort to come up with what we call field facilitation...done only to science... in the areas where they live, we give an opportunity to identify lecturers, to identify secondary school teachers who are already qualified secondary school teachers from other universities and are good in sciences to help them in tutorials.

One instructor concurred with the above views and explained:

...Because we experienced that science students were having tough time during examinations they were failing, we had a large number of failure, failure rates so we thought of coming up with that kind of intervention...field facilitation...to help ODL science students right there in the field to assist them in the areas they face challenges or difficulties...

Students echoed educators' philosophy of supporting science students more than the rest of the students. One student teacher elaborated:

... Lecturers have been saying that science students have to be added a single or two weeks on top of the four official weeks for orientation. They say (and it is true) it is very difficult for science students to just get the module and go home for self-study. Each and every part of the module has to be at least tackled by lecturers... Field facilitation for science students just started and then stopped because the institution failed to support the facilitators in terms of accommodation and facilitation fee. There were some conflicts again with the subject lecturers who thought they were the right people to facilitate and not the field facilitators. They did not want the facilitators to get the allowances but them.

Adequacy of learning support offered to students

Participants indicated dissatisfaction with the way they supported the students at a distance. One instructor averred|:

...We are average. Am saying so because of those challenges ...some students being very far away in the remote areas where they cannot access the e-materials for those I think, we are not doing a good job... So such kind of grouping is marginalised...

Another instructor while in agreement with the above views elaborated:

...The word adequate would be dangerous, in the module there are suggested learning activities ... and students are satisfied. However, supplementary and reference materials cannot be found in Library hence limited source of information...

Student teachers praised the role played by the face-to-face support while also amplifying the difficulty element of science subjects. One student teacher commented:

...Face-to-face given during the holidays should continue to help students and this makes the difficult parts of the subject areas to be understood especially Mathematics and practical subjects like Biology, Physical Science and Home Economics...

Responses indicated that after initiating the students into the distance mode through face-to-face orientation discussed earlier, student teachers study off campus. According to the above views, the teaching, learning and learning support is offered off campus through preplanned instructions in modules or DVDs and assignments. In reference to print instructional materials, modules, participants' views showed that the distance secondary teacher training relies on print instructions as mentioned earlier and discussed in chapter 7. The views show that the modules contained suggested learning activities to help the student teachers get through the learning and learning support processes. Again, participants' views revealed the effort by the institutions to adopt students' learning enhancement strategies such as study circles and field facilitation. According to the above views, the institution which offered study circle innovations off campus or in local centres utilised the groups for student-student interaction and student-supervisor interaction. Both students and instructors settled that orientation in the discussed institution is augmented with study circles and local supervision that bring students together. The administrator proudly revealed the presence of groups for student-student interaction as a mechanism for learning. The arrangement implies that the open and distance education institution had a well-founded support mechanism to push students learning that further help retain student teachers as shall be discussed in chapter 9. Students' sentiments commended study circles for being beneficial to their learning. The mention of supervisors' registration as done by the Ministry of Education, use of clusters and as confirmed in the institution's handbook for learners indicated that the study circles are strategically set (Malawi Government, 2006; Shirin, Islam, Mohammad, & Islam, 2014 ;

Malawi Government, 2017). Responses from the other institution revealed an attempt to trail the study circle strategy in the name of field facilitation whose sustainability was abortive.

However, the futility of field facilitation implies lack of commitment and planning for such an important activity. This further means that the institution with study circles offered students an opportunity of getting ample learning support from local educators and peers. Again, study circles were inclusive in nature as they incorporated all students regardless of subject areas while field facilitation was only for science subjects denoting learning support inadequacy. Segregation of other students from accessing field facilitation stereotypes science subjects as difficult in nature thereby sending prospective students away from sciences. The forgoing and participants' dissatisfaction with the adequacy of support offered to students expose learning support inadequacy. Participants cited unavailability of reference materials to supplement modules and marginalising the rural setting in the way students were supported as a hiccup in off campus student learning experiences.

Teaching, learning and learning support through modules

To explore the learning implications of the distance teacher training, it was important that the nature of teaching, learning and learning support through modules be examined. This was important because for students to learn at a distance they depend on the modules as carriers of instructions and learning support. This implies that the modules mediate teachers or instructors' lessons and bring in teaching, learning and learning support.

Participants' views and experiences of the way teaching, learning and learning support is done in the distance teacher training are discussed as follows: structure of the module, language used in the module and relevance and sustainability of the module.

Structure of the module

Participants' views indicated that teaching, learning and learning support in distance secondary teacher training is achieved through the structure of the module. One instructor enlightened:

...the module is structured in such a way that it has a number of self-assessment activities, self-assessment quizzes inside so that when they are doing, when they are reading on their own, they are able to attend to some other tasks within the module either responding and maybe going back to see whether they have done a good job or not.

Because at the end of the module there are some possible answers provided so if they see that they have done a good job then they know they are inline, then, they move on...the module is structured in small chunks but with a lot of tasks and assessment activities to make sure that they progress...

Instructors described the structure of the module in relation to content dilution. One instructor while supporting the above views explained:

...most of the modules that we have written end up in the hands of face-to-face students. They've found the modules more beneficial and it's now hot cake, they are in the hunt for these modules, so it therefore means that information in the modules are well diluted such that students even on face-to-face benefit from the same, so if students from face-to-face should benefit from these modules, then I should believe that the ODL students should also benefit in the same way, should have the same content. What we want is that students from the face-o-face and ODL should have the same content...

Data revealed that the modules as instructional materials were structured in the way that they ably talked to student teachers as they studied away from instructors. The instructor's mention of assessment activities and possible answers as composed in the module imply that students constantly assess themselves and get feedback through the same module. However, the use of the word 'diluted' by one instructor may refer to the module's inadequacy in terms of content coverage or its simplicity in structure which attracts also traditional students. All the modules I scrutinised, except one were talking to students consequently portraying the presence of teaching and signalling the probability of students' learning and learning support. Merely a single module was non-talking and its content could not effectively communicate to students as was presented in the form of classroom notes to be given to a traditional class. The non-talking nature of the module extends the psychological gap experienced by student teachers studying mostly outside the classroom walls and in the absence of face-to-face instructions. The talking nature of the modules promotes student-content interaction thereby bringing in teaching, learning and learning support processes.

Personalised and active language used in the module

Analysis of the modules revealed that they used personalised language. For example, an extract from one module was as follows:

Finally, you may also vary your use of language because of tenor. This means the relationship...for example; refer back to the example we gave you... you will realise that ... the closer you are... We can see that language is at the centre of our activities...you must be wondering then...

Personalised language continued in all the modules from the two institutions except one module that was different from the rest and was non-interactive as discussed earlier. Another extract on personalised language from a different module read:

... You may agree that knowledge of people's history helps...This is because history helps us...

The modules used active and not passive voice to make sure they relevantly communicated to distance students. For example, one of the extractions read:

...Mutesa succeeded Suna 11 and he ruled between 1856 and 1884... or ...the teacher should decide the topic or problem...

Data revealed that the instructional materials used 'simple and clear' language rendering them user-friendly as they are easy for distance students to use in the absence of instructors. The modules also use active and not passive verbs to cultivate interest in students to read and follow the content with ease. For example, the extract above consists of an active verb 'succeeded' which brings life to the content making the instruction to be straight forward rather than using the passive verb 'was succeeded'. Again the use of 'should decide' in this case, instead of 'should be decided by' played a similar role of straight forwardness. I further noticed that the majority of the modules were legible with only one exception comprising numerous errors and very long units. For example; a single unit ran from page 8 to page 122 and left gaps for illustrations... from figure 58 to 84, 100 to 121. In some cases poor illustrations were detected like on page 143 where the green house was portrayed as a black house due to dark illustrations presented on the page. This was despite most of the modules being interactive as developers talked to students imitating a face-to-face situation using 'you' or 'your' for students and 'we' or 'us' for instructors or both students and instructors. The use of personalised as well as active language allows an active and live flow of communication of the content to students as if in a face-to-face contact with the instructor.

Relevance and sustainability of the modules

Instructors' views indicated that they ensured that the modules relevantly responded to students' needs. One instructor averred:

...modules get periodical review... to make sure that the topics are current and meet latest learning needs...

Another instructor doubted the sustainability of print modules and lamented:

... How sustainable is print materials in delivering the programme? It becomes very expensive as you may know and we are saying, we could improve on that...using existing technology to deliver the distance education programme.

Analyses of the modules exposed obsolescence of instructional materials regardless of administrators' response on the relevance of modules to students' needs and learning. Contrary to one instructor's response that the instructional materials are termly reviewed, analysis of the modules exposed that all were either archaic or about to expire. Four (4) out of the eight (8) analysed modules were between 14 and 16 years old. This implies that the four instructional materials are outdated while the fifth has no date of publication and the other three (3) were 7 years old. This is contrary to expectations of such living documents which require regular review to remain relevant and respond to emerging and contemporary issues (Makhanane, 2007). The module which has no date of publication was also not interactive in nature, similar to correspondence or industrialised materials (Saba, 2012). The odd instructional material had no learning objectives to reveal learning points and with no indication of specialities and division of labour. The module had no specific names of authors, no acknowledgement to disclose the coordinative element or team work and lacked evidence of planning due to an unorganised content. This implies lack of teaching element in the module similar to correspondence learning materials written in the form of classroom notes.

As much as interactive print instructional materials are commended for providing students' interaction with content to produce learning in the absence of the actual instructors, one administrator questioned its sustainability. It is interesting to note that, while appreciating that sustainability of print instructions is expensive, the administrator suggested an improvement in media using existing technologies. The administrator tried to describe the quality of instructions offered through print modules which he appreciated as good. Following the administrator's sentiments, it can be argued, hence that, while instructional materials are produced in masses, the production still targets a few, thus, making it expensive. To augment this argument, is the discussion in chapter 10 that open and distance education is cost effective only if the courses are properly marketed based on the set planning to have more students and gain economies of scale. The administrator's sentiment further reveals the negative impact of lack of planning as limiting educators' understanding of the impact of offering ODE to very few people.

The electronic module used in the distance secondary teacher training

Educators' views indicated that the distance secondary teacher training also used electronic modules with matching designs with the print module. One instructor explained:

...let me mention this as well, when I am talking of instructional materials, this time we are quite diversified indeed. I have talked of the print module but we are not only print we are both print and e...We have what we call the e-modules as well as the print modules...of course the higher levels now at semester 7 and semester 8...we have 2 levels of instructional materials the e- and then the print. But we are trying to, we are coming down to have every instructional material 2 versions, the print instructional materials and then the e-version...these e-materials at the mean time they are produced, they are in audio-visual format and they have been on CDs, DVDs, and then they are distributed to students. So the students can have the whole collection of instructional materials which are in print mode and in e-mode as well...

One instructor extended the above views to include availability of library electronic books.

The instructor explicated:

...in the absence of the library, it means now totally relying on the books which are in the departments so with these numbers of students, I do not think that can be a good thing. Of course we have what we call the e-granary...where they can access those books which are in the library house they can access using the internet. They can download but the challenges are those with such gadgets, it's a challenge...

While claiming to have electronic media ready for student teachers to use, one instructor asserted:

...our students have no access to internet. A thing of which I feel like this institution would have done something to make sure that apart from the print, our students should also be exposed to internet as another source of information...

The sentiments above clearly revealed that use of electronic media in the distance teacher training was a challenge. The views indicated that the students failed to access the granary citing the necessary gadgets to use in downloading the e-books as a challenge. The instructors' views added-on to students' fears which are not just on gadgets but also lack of students' exposure to internet or Wi-Fi which also attracts costs to be discussed later. This implies that the use of e-modules and books for distance secondary teacher training in Malawi has not yet materialised. Scrutiny of the e-module revealed that it carried the exact features of the print module meaning that the e-module was a replica of the printed one. This is an unnecessary duplication because the e-module is not supplementing or complementing the print module in any way and students' failure to access the e-module has no impact on learning experiences. In this case, the e-module is just an unprinted preplanned and packaged

module. Failure to access or use electronic gadgets and constant reliance on print fulfils sentiments made in chapters 2 and 3 that distance education in Malawi lacks proper infrastructure to adopt advanced technologies (Chimpololo, 2010; Chawinga & Zozie, 2016).

Social organisation and production of the module

Scrutiny of the modules as instructional materials revealed similarities in the social organisation and production of the modules from the two institutions. The social organisation of the modules was not that bad because all except one module had in-built assessment to allow students develop their own constructs, assess themselves and get motivated to learn. However, only half of the modules provided students with feedback on assessment or self-check exercises. Worse still, the bizarre module lacked interaction and assessment activities as it only included unit 4 and 5 revision questions. But all in all, the modules minus the one with a lot of errors amply presented content while also comprehensively and logically covering outcomes and self-evaluation activities to keep students going. I further checked for the presence of social or team production of instructional materials to draw a picture of the relevance of the instructional materials, target group and coordinative efforts applied in the production process. The findings revealed that most of the modules were written by lecturers from related departments with the same lecturers reviewing the instructional materials. This implies lack of module's exposure to expert review and thus, blocking critique and correction of the modules by a second eye which might differently assess the content. The element of social production of the module constitute date of publication and institutional setting in terms of course or production teams such as editing, typing, typesetting, publisher, writers inter alia. Conversely, half of the modules had outlived their purpose and were obsolete. Furthermore, five of the modules had learning objectives, use of team work, editing, typesetting and typing only two lacked objectives while resonating to all the other characteristics of the five modules.

Data on teaching, learning and learning support through the module discussed in this section could be interpreted as relatively good. Production of instructional materials in this study though mostly designed and developed by instructors as professionals in their subjects, present well organised structure and flow of content. The structure of the module described in the findings of this study allows students to interaction with content thereby playing a teaching role and yield learning and learning support. The use of personalised and active language validates that instructional materials relevantly communicated to students to bring

in the required interaction. The use of ‘you, your, we, us’ coupled with active voice and in-built assessments with feedback relates to the ‘tell-and-test’, ‘tutorial’, and ‘reflective action guide’ approaches discussed in chapter 5. The institutions under study managed to produce interactive mass produced instructional materials in an uncertain institutional organisation whose planning is either obsolete or absent. Still, lack of planning was shown in the materials partial social organisation and production.

As discussed in chapter 7, the distance teacher training in Malawi lacks technologically advanced facilities, drive to plan and hunt resources hindering its growth. Otherwise, the use of print instructional materials in Malawi as established in several studies done within the country and in the same context indicates that Malawi can adopt supplementary readily available media. For example; Chawinga and Zozie (2016) indicated that Malawi heavily depends on print “developed based on the existing school curricula” (Msiska, 2013, p. 7). The reports that Malawi “has not yet adopted electronic technologies” (Chawinga & Zozie, 2016, p. 10) suggests that open and distance education in Malawi is dependent on uniform print instructions.

Mismatch between students’ expectations and lived experiences

Student teachers’ experiences seemed not to match with most of their expectations. The student teachers views on expectations and lived experiences are discussed as follows: pressure of work and conflicts between work and academic demands, partial lectures with reduced orientation time, financial hurdles, inadequate instructional resources, unprofessionalism of instructors, instructors’ personal experiences of students and erroneous modules.

Pressure of work and conflicts between work and academic demands

Student teachers complained of how pressure of work affected their learning. One student teacher averred:

Pressure of work resulted in sleepless nights and tiredness to all sorts of activities and deadlines are met at work. But at the same time being mindful in fulfilling the work assigned to you by lecturers e.g. submission of assignments in time. At the same time fulfilling study engagements at all cost... This also caused a burden in as far as my studies are concerned.

While agreeing with the above sentiments another student teacher explained:

...One has to concentrate on a number of roles at the same time. For example; I could be busy with household chores while assignments dates are due. This could lead to failure to complete assignments in time.

Another student teacher among other issues complained of pressure of work being in conflict with academic demands. The student teacher complained:

Another situation which affected the studies is pressure of work. While at self-study we are supposed to perform our duties as teachers in our institutions. Due to other misunderstanding with school management we found ourselves colliding with their demands. For instance, I need to have light load, at least two off duty days in order to meet my friends for group discussions and writing assignments. If the management fails to allow me to have these resulted into affecting the studies...

Students' views disclosed their conflicting roles of studying and teaching in their various schools as giving them pressure. Much as the student teachers understood what learning at a distance meant as discussed in chapter 3, work overloads infringed on their study time thus, sleepless nights and failure to complete assignments. Student teachers' sustainability of their studies can thus be interpreted as leaning on their reasons for studying through distance education and their expectations drove their interest and perseverance through the distance learning hurdles. This is similar to several other studies discussed in chapter 3 (Kangai & Bukaliya, 2011; Gupte, 2015; Chawinga & Zozie, 2016).

Partial lectures with reduced orientation time

Student teachers' reflections revealed partial lectures with lots of assignments. One student teacher indicated:

You expect tough times throughout the course. Within a period of a month we were given partial lectures and more of the assignments about 30-35 per year to be done at home while teaching (working) and looking and taking care of the family. These were pulling factors.

Student teachers' experiences revealed partial lectures allied to facilitation of modules and orientation time. One student teacher explained:

...Two or three modules being covered in a day. This was hard time to grasp materials from the modules/instructors. Distance learning requires more time of covering materials from the designed modules. Lack of reference materials... Distance learning requires more areas to study, not only depending on the modules only...

Another student teacher despite acknowledging the provision of instructional materials to keep them going also concurred with the former views and asserted:

Another effect was orientation process which is done manually. This process takes about a week which means no learning takes place and we are talking of one week without being in class. This one week is part of the four weeks orientation which means that the weeks for learning is three but the time table shows four weeks.

Students' narrations showed partial lectures exposed through sketchy teaching and learning during orientation regardless of the fact that student teachers had minimal time for face-to-face contacts with instructors and peers. The student teacher lamented that sketchy teaching and work overload was due to instructions being covered for a short period of time due to educators' disorganisation hence negatively affecting students learning and attainment. For example; the mention of 'two or three modules being covered in a day' and that registration period consuming one whole week of orientation further confirms inadequacy of the orientation period. As precisely indicated by the students it was hard for them to grasp content from the modules or instructors in the remaining three weeks of their stay on campus. The students' sentiments are double edged. The reflections can be interpreted as instructors' adherence to one-size-fits-all philosophy by trying to teach all the content meant for students to learn in a period of fifteen (15) weeks squeezed to four (4) weeks face-to-face sessions. The same may imply that the student teachers looked forward to learning all the content meant for fifteen (15) weeks in the specified four (4) weeks period, thus a misconception.

Financial hurdles of students

The data on student teachers' life experiences of the distance training revealed financial hiccups the students faced in the course of their training. One student teacher explained:

...Inadequate financial resources: The financial status was also a problem in that to take care of the family, and fulfilling the needs of open and distance learning was somehow a challenge. The programme fees is K180 000. 00/year but this does not include accommodation, transport and stationary. This meant that other developments at family level stopped.

Another student teacher agreed with the other two views above and said:

... enough money is needed for one to pursue this teacher training through open and distance education. A school fee is a major problem which affects my studies... As a civil servant and a parent I find myself, my daughter whose is at Lilongwe University for Agriculture and Natural Resources, and other two children who are at secondary school level. Due to this situation I found myself in credits. Sometimes I found myself in a situation of being not allowed to sit for examinations because the school set a limit on amount one should pay in order to write examinations.

Phenomenological reflections further revealed students financial hurdles due to their different roles and responsibilities they had to fulfil as distance students and parents. Although student teachers expected and understood their diverse responsibilities as discussed in chapter 6, their experiences show that it was not easy for them to successfully go through the distance training. The shared experiences indicated that student teachers had to not only take care of their families but, meet several other costs like transport, accommodation, stationery with tuition fees being the most challenging cost. The mention of a situation where the daughter was also studying at a higher education level and with the father as the bread winner in the house indicates that the student teacher had to struggle to let ends meet. This implies that distance student teachers persevere to attain their goals. The argument presented by the participants is that an informed distance student trails the reasons and expectations for training through the distance mode to certainly obtain intended qualifications or goals. This is similar to what is in literature as discussed in chapters 2 and 3.

Inadequate instructional resources

Student teachers lived experiences further indicated that the students were affected by inadequate instructional resources. One student teacher associated resource inadequacy to the rural setting and explained:

Another challenge is the shortage of instructional materials for further reading in rural area where I stayed. On this I am referring to books (library) internet services. For instance, for further reading I depend on Blantyre library where books are found. Internet needs money since I used to travel from Chileka to Blantyre city in order to have the services. Access to computer or laptop is also a challenge since am failing to have one which will assist in typing and finding information on internet. Lacking of these essential materials also affect my learning...

While agreeing with the above views another student teacher linked resource inadequacy to the teaching and learning of practical subjects and elaborated:

The programme I was studying, Human Ecology with Geography you have an assignment of dress making you need the machines and other materials like pins, tape measure, other things. At home you do not have. These materials you need to buy them that is expensive. If it were that you were doing this in college... With Home Economics nutrition part or may be methods of cooking you will need to buy equipment. Then you need to take pictures...of what you have done away from your lecturer...Geography needed also some pictures from stage one up to the end...You may need a laboratory which is not found at home you will move at a distance to find a lab. Learning in college is easy because everything you need is available.

While cementing the above student teachers' views the instructor clarified:

The word adequate would be dangerous, in the module there are suggested learning and students are satisfied. However, supplementary and reference materials cannot be found in Library hence limited source of information.

Student teachers' life world showed inadequacy of instructional resources outside the training institution's campus. Student teachers cited lack of personal computers to aid in typing of assignments and searching of further content on the internet, books and libraries for further knowledge exploration and laboratories and other equipment. This wedd well to the prior discussion where participants lamented for lack of electronic gadgets to aid students search for electronic copies of information. Since most of the resources needed in this section required that the educating institution arrange for students effectual learning, the complaint can be interpreted as lack of learning support. The distance students are already separated from the instructors in time and space thus, requiring that institutions plan for their further learning and support outside the institution. Although, and as discussed in chapter 6, distance students work towards achieving peculiar goals and are determined regardless of the financial hurdles to excel, they still need a hand where possible. The sentiments can further be interpreted as a misconception on the part of instructors and the educating institution because the above enlisted resources except personal computers could be arranged by the institution. The misconceptions extends from prior discussions on one institution's expectation that distance students should fetch for resources on their own and get instructions in the same way traditional students do. In this case; students expected the institution to provide them with accommodation during the orientation period but they were disappointed as nothing of that nature came out. This is similar to challenges faced by distance students discussed in chapter 3 (Musingafi, Mapulanga, Chiwanza, & Zebron, 2015; Gupte, 2015).

Unprofessionalism of instructors

Student teachers' views further disclosed unprofessional acts of instructors in handling students during orientation or face-to-face sessions. One student teacher averred:

Large classes... For science students, classes are at least medium-sized, but for our colleagues doing Arts and languages the classes are extremely large up to at least 500 students in one class. So the problem is that there are other courses that are offered to both Arts and Science students, i.e. Education courses. When it is time for education courses, both Arts and Science students are taught by one lecturer in one classroom, and it is not a classroom but a hall. The probability that at least half of the class hear what the lecturer teaches is almost zero.

Besides mishandling of large classes instructors' unprofessionalism extended to the words they uttered to students. One of the student teacher clarified:

Some lecturers could always shout at us for example; "ndinu ma yearo inu pano (you are just year ones here)" and even tell us that, by the end of this semester half of the group will run away or drop or even weeded from the institution. Instead of encouraging students they discourage.

Another student teacher associated instructors' unprofessionalism to lack of clarity of concepts and said:

There were situations where lecturers were unable to describe or explain concepts fully to students. This led to sketchy knowledge of the subject content which resulted in failure to explain the same during examinations... Also study circles were not fully utilised, sometimes, you could go to a study centre and find only 2 people hence ineffective study resulted. Sometimes, you could find that you are alone. This was discouraging.

Phenomenological reflections indicated some unprofessional behaviours displayed by instructors in handling large classes and what instructors say to students and how they facilitate content. Instructors exposed their lack of expertise as discussed in chapter 7 due to lack of training on open and distance education practices. In this case, educators' lack of expertise can be interpreted as lack of knowledge in the given courses, unpreparedness and or unprofessionalism. Unprofessionalism of instructors was also reflected as student teachers complained of large classes whose instructors never minded of students' learning as one student rightly said that 'the probability of half of the class to hear the instructor was zero'. Again, the mention of uncalled for behaviours of some instructors who the student teachers said could shout demotivating words at them is interpreted in this thesis as unprofessional. The views exposed instructors' unprofessionalism as they flung threats on students that they will be withdrawn from the programme saying 'ndinu mayaroo inu ...'. Furthermore, a description of the situation in which some instructors failed to explain concepts or mark assignments wedded to inadequately monitored study circles (to be discussed in chapter 10) is unprofessional. Non-use of teaching and learning resources to enhance students' understanding of new concepts signifies instructors' unpreparedness hence ineffectual learning. Analysis of instructional materials further confirmed lack of essential illustrations to help clarify difficult concepts and aid in students understanding of content in some modules. Educators settled that any instructor recruited for the traditional mode can ably deliver at a distance. The views imply that no experience or training is required for one to join the distance education crew of educators since anyone from the traditional mode can

instruct distance students with or without training as discussed in chapter 7. It is interesting to note that students understand that distance learning involves students' creation of own knowledge through exploration of content with guidance from instructors during occasional real interaction.

Personal experiences of students

Much as the training enactment could not totally meet students' expectations, the students had also their personal encounters that affected their learning. One student teacher averred:

...family engagements also affect my studies. The family members sometimes affect my studies through their activities for instance, semester two of year one I failed to attend orientation since I was supposed to attend the funeral of my brother who died in South Africa.

While referring to a separate but similar situation with the above, another student teacher was affected as narrated:

There were several situations that affected my learning. My father was admitted at QECH a few months before my final examinations. I could not fully care for him in hospital. I could spend some nights there as culture forces you to but my studies were negatively affected. He stayed in the hospital for 3 weeks I could not meet my deadlines for sending assignments. With the pressure of work, concentration was lost. He died when I was sitting for my final examinations. This made me to defer some papers. My final grade was affected. Some of my children got sick for sometimes. I could not concentrate fully on my studies and assignments.

As much as the student teachers expected more from their educating institutions, the students had their own personal experiences that affected their learning and were likely to bring in some implications. Student teachers mentioned family engagements as a pull from their studies. The distance students cited illnesses and death of family members as situations that affected their learning experiences. As expressed by one of the student teachers, socio-cultural engagements are inevitable in African culture as such the student teachers could not run away from them. This is exactly what student teachers attached to their different perceptions of defining open and distance education as discussed in chapter 6 and weds well to literature reviewed in chapter 3.

Erroneous modules

Students' phenomenological reflections only expose one view on erroneous modules. One student disclosed:

Modules- most of the modules had lots of mistakes which were identified during the learning. These would mislead us. Some instructors took the programme not seriously. This demotivated learners to be active during the training and lose hope of obtaining a diploma.

Although data showed that only one student teacher identified some errors in the modules, a lot more student teachers expressed the need for modules to improve in one way or the other to be discussed in chapter 9. The fact that only one student protested about the erroneous instructional materials or module implies that the instructional materials in the two institutions are well structured or properly written. Analysis of instructional materials confirmed that most of the modules were properly written except for a single module which was full of unexplainable errors. This suggests that the authors of such important documents considered the fact that distance students learn while away from instructors thus, require well-presented self-instructional materials with minimal errors. This is similar to what is discussed in literature that instructional materials for teacher training in one of the institution's under study were flexible with few errors (Chawinga & Zozie, 2016, p. 14). This is contrary to the Zimbabwean case where most of the participants complained of poor instructional materials that affected their learning (Musingafi, Mapulanga, Chiwanza, & Zebron, 2015).

There are contestations on student teachers' expectations and lived experiences of the distance training. Student teachers' views show that their expectations of the distance training in most cases deviated from their actual experiences thereby bringing in a blend of learning experiences. There seems to be a mismatch between students' expectations and their lived experiences of the distance training.

The impact of the distance teacher training

To explore the learning implications of the distance teacher training, it was important that the impact of the distance secondary teacher training be explored. This was important because it would reveal the effect of the nature of the learning environment, discussed in chapter 7 and the training enactment to students' learning experiences.

The impact of the distance teacher training is argued as follows: benefits of the distance secondary teacher training to the nation, the impact of the distance teacher training on instructors' experiences and the impact of the distance teacher training on student teachers.

Benefits of the distance teacher training to the nation

Participants' views revealed the impact of the distance secondary teacher training in relation to its benefits to the nation. One instructor averred:

...to the nation, it's something that a nation is proud of because through distance education our nation is able to address the issue of teacher shortage in community day secondary schools.....this kind of education does not deprive our schools of teachers, because whenever they are needed in a classroom, they are always there, and they just visit us whenever they are on holiday. So we are not there to disturb the system as compared to the residential kind of programme whereby when the teachers needed in the classroom, they are now at the college...

While supporting the above views, the instructor who is also responsible for other administrative roles in the distance system explained:

...We are contributing towards the Malawi Government, developmental goals...related to increasing access and equity to higher education and the distance mode, provides or trains teachers in a way that meets their demands in such a way, teachers do not leave their institutions. They come to college when we need them to come during break time. It means that does not interfere with their teaching...Unlike the face-to-face that they have to leave their duty station to come to college and forget about their aching and focus on...lactating mothers...we accept them. When they come to college during their residential period, they bring their nannies, they bring their children...

Another administrator and instructor further extended the above two sentiments and said:

.....the distance is a vibrant way. And they actually combine theory and practice. They read about something they immediately practice it in class. And so, even the time they graduate, they have been running theory and practice, putting theory into practice on day-to-day basis... that's enrichment on its own...

Participants commended distance education for its ability to train teachers whilst retaining them in the system, teaching and balancing work with upgrading as discussed in chapters 2 and 3 of this thesis. The instructor's sentiments show that distance education is advantageous over traditional education in training people on the job and that the instructor is knowledgeable of why distance education is employed for the purpose. The instructor's mention of teacher shortages echoes Malawi's drive to open and distance education discussed in chapters 1 and 2. As discussed in chapters 2 and 6, distance education outfits the training and retention of teachers in schools especially in rural teachers' original homes compelling teacher trainers to open upgrading access conditions befitting them. For example; as discussed, the Malawi community day secondary school teachers were primary school teachers with primary teaching qualifications requiring upgrading to secondary teaching

qualifications. The views further convey an argument that open and distance education in Malawi contribute to development goals which mandate the education system to provide equitable access to higher education. Educators' sentiments revealed the provision of need-based training to help retain student teachers in their duty stations and to allow their immediate practice of their lessons in their classroom teaching. The views further explain that distance education adapts to the needs of students referring to incorporation of women especial lactating mothers marginalised by the traditional mode. The instructor's sentiments implies that open and distance education in Malawi offers inclusive education as women are given chance to access higher education with flexible terms. This is beneficial to the nation if the most talked about 50:50 gender policy is to be achieved.

The impact of the distance teacher training on instructors' experiences

Participants' opinions further regarded the impact of the distance secondary teacher training in terms on instructors' experiences. One instructor claimed:

...for lecturers it's an experience worth enjoying because, seeing someone who has spent much of his or her time teaching at primary school and is actually... to become a secondary school teacher, is quite an achievement. Secondly, teaching someone through distance education is a thing which lecturers are not used to...

Another instructor conformed to the above instructor's experiences and supposed:

...But it gives us also joy that a good number of our students that that begun the programme, that have gone through the programme, some are even lecturers at ... college, some....it means we open doors to career path, because of career growth in people's lives...

One student teacher concurred with instructors on their job of educating students at a distance by acknowledging the availability of modules at student teachers' disposal to produce learning. The student teacher averred:

...Another good thing is that we are given modules to study which have fairly enough material to keep us going. However, some are not comprehensive enough. It is still important to supplement the module material with other reference materials. Unfortunately, books can be quite a challenge to obtain away from the university campus. The other national libraries may not contain books relevant to the courses we are studying. In addition, though we can download stuff online to supplement the modules, network can be a problem in some parts where we live. At the same time, it is expensive to download stuff online using a dongle. It requires one to have money all the time to download as free Wi-Fi is not readily available in many parts of Malawi...

The views disclosed the benefits of the distance secondary teacher training in relation to instructors' experiences. Instructors felt that it was an achievement for them to produce a secondary school teacher or college lecturer through the distance mode. The views showed that instructors were excited to have trained the teachers at a distance from primary school qualification to a higher level. Although students' experiences were in agreement with instructors' views, there were some contestations. Instructors indicated that student teachers had an opening to higher education through the distance mode to which the student teachers agreed through their recommendation of the modules instructors developed. Through the modules, instructors taught the students in their homes and this was really an achievement. But, it was interesting to notice that student teachers understood that the modules were not comprehensive enough for them to wholly rely on them for their completion of the training as discussed earlier in the chapter. The student teacher's experiences further indicated the need for other supplementary resources to help students explore more on the content provided in the modules. The views show that students only had print instructional materials as sources of their learning and support which were considered inadequate. Scrutiny of the instructional materials revealed that although the content seemed detailed, it was not comprehensive enough to solely suffice student teachers' learning in the absence of reference materials. This wedd well to instructors fears discussed earlier in the chapter that students lacked access to internet and related gadgets to help them in downloading additional materials thereby limiting their exploration.

The impact of the distance teacher training on the students

Participants settled that student teachers also benefited from the distance training. One instructor explained:

...to the students I feel it's a window of opportunity because could not think of getting a diploma in education. But with this they are able to get trained while still working... As already said, to the students is a window of opportunity. Because they could not think of getting a diploma in education, but with this kind of a programme, they are able to get trained while they are still working and supporting their families...

Another student teacher regarded work overload as a motivator to effectual learning. The student teacher explained:

...For instance, positive influence due to overload of work given to be completed within a given period of time. This taught me to be focused and divide my time accordingly in

order to meet targets. I learnt to be a hard-worker as the distance education demands a lot of reading and writing, while attending to my job and family at the same time...

Another student teacher extended the above views to include:

One can study with the university while at home. The advantage for this is that, people have privileges of being at the university learning the same materials like of those who are learning full time at the university. Even the degree will be the same at ... University. The only difference is the mode of delivery. The mode of delivery is suitable to the people who are at work or doing other businesses. People have time to go for their different duties because they go to the University only for a short time whereby they can apply for holiday. For those who were not selected to different universities, they have a chance to apply for the programme and still have a degree of what they wanted.

Much as other student teachers mentioned that work overload negatively affected their learning as discussed earlier in this chapter, it pushed other students forward and made them work hard to attain their goal. The positive sentiments revealed the positive mind set the student had towards open and distance learning indicating understanding of what distance education is and that it requires self-motivation and independence. The response further connects to students' motivation established in this study that they prefer studying through the distance mode so as to concurrently work, take care of families and study. This implies that the other students combined elements of poor attitude towards distance education while also putting it at par with traditional education denoting one-size-fits-all mindset.

Chapter conclusion

In chapter 8, I have presented participants' views and results from analysed documents on the enactment of the distance teacher training based on the uncertain distance learning environment discussed in chapter 7. The data revealed a mismatch between student teachers' expectations and lived experiences in terms of face-to-face learning support while achieving learning and support through the print module. The argument presented in this chapter is that, regardless of the adoption and mainstreaming of distance education in Malawi, the system displays limited understanding of the enactment of the open and distance education. However, regardless of the mismatch in most of the student teachers' expectations against their lived experiences, the distance teacher training exhibits some traces of positive impacts on students, instructors and the nation. Learning implications drawn from participants' understanding of ODE, institutional organisation and enactment of the teacher training discussed in chapter 6, 7 and 8 are discussed next in relation to theoretical lens.

CHAPTER 9

LEARNING IMPLICATIONS OF THE DISTANCE TRAINING

Introduction

In the preceding chapters, I looked at participants' understanding of open and distance education, the nature of institutional organisation of the distance teacher training and the enactment of the training in Malawi. Drawing on these aspects, in this chapter I discuss the learning implications of the distance secondary teacher training. At this level, I also draw on my theoretical lens. The discussion connects to the main research questions which are:

1. What is the nature of institutional organisation of the distance secondary school teacher training at Domasi College of Education and Mzuzu University?
2. How does the institutional organisation of the distance secondary school teacher training at Domasi College of Education and Mzuzu University affect student teachers' learning experiences?
3. Why does the institutional organisation of the distance secondary school teacher training at Domasi College of Education and Mzuzu University affect student teachers' learning experiences in the way it does?

In this chapter, I argue that participants understand the notion of open and distance education by definition, reasons for training through distance education, instructors' roles and nature of distance students. I further argue that distance institutional organisation of the distance secondary teacher training in Malawi shows that the country has adopted one-size-fits-all philosophy, which negatively affects planning of the distance mode. Again, that regardless of the adoption and mainstreaming of distance education in Malawi, the system exhibits limited understanding of the enactment of open and distance education. Finally, that a thorough understanding of the ODE enactment even within the one-size-fits-all approach could impact student teachers' learning positively and improve retention.

The learning implications of the distance teacher training are discussed as follows: implications of participants' understanding of open and distance education, implications of the nature of institutional organisation and implications of the enactment of the distance secondary teacher training.

In chapter 6, I talked about participants' understanding of open and distance education. Participants' understanding of open and distance education has several implications on institutional organisation and the enactment of the training and yield effectual students' learning experiences. Informed distance students are likely to:

- hold to their understanding of training through the distance mode and certainly obtain intended qualifications or goals;
- clearly separate distance from traditional practices;
- freely share their lived experiences to help improve the distance system.

Implications of participants' understanding of distance education institutional organisation are several. Educators have an opportunity to:

- establish a system with properly and clearly set supporting systems or sub-systems that are also properly coordinated to yield effective teaching, learning and learning support;
- develop a singular strategic plan for distance education and work in an informed manner towards achievement of a central goal as set in the strategic plan;
- effectively communicate and share experiences for good practices and or improvement of the system;
- make themselves and others properly informed to respond to any distance education questions with an informed mind;
- reduce mere tailing of the one-size-fits-all philosophy and over reliance on the parent institution and autonomy from traditional practices;
- develop their knowledge through professional development activities ;
- improve the institution through the improvement plan.

Learning implications of participants' understanding of ODE

Student teachers in this study had a chance to study as informed learners and trail their goals with a purpose and perseverance while away from instructors as discussed in chapter 6. Students' understanding of ODE was an opportunity for them to identify shortfalls in the enactment of the training and propose improvements as discussed later in this chapter and in chapter 10. For example, in their perceptions of defining ODE student teachers exposed occasional contacts with instructors for clarification of difficult concepts and instructors' facilitation of learning as an element of distance education. According to the views, it is this

element of occasional ‘student-instructor contact’ and the ‘limitless age range’ that signify the flexible nature of open and distance education.

As emphasised by one administrator that distance students need constant contact with educators from pre-admission to graduation. If viewed through the study’s lenses drawn from conversational learning, this description of instructors’ role signifies the need for instructor-student’s real conversation embraced in learning support discussed in chapter 4. This implies that the student teachers ably place a line between traditional and distance education and competently shared their lived experiences of the distance training as informed learners to help improve the system. Although students’ reasons to train through the distance mode were dissimilar, the implication is consequently, their perseverance and motivation to accomplish the set goals. In this case, student’s knowledge of open and distance education and obligations push them to work hard in their studies to fulfil their goals for studying through the distance mode.

Interpreted through the study’s theoretical lenses educators in this study were not certain of how to bring about effectual teaching, learning and learning support for effective student learning. Instructors differed from administrators in the way they perceived and experienced open and distance teacher training in the two institutions. For example, instructors’ experiences exposed their understanding of the need for constant support to students that include assessment as reckoning real and mediated conversation tenets of conversational learning. Instructors’ mention of machinery for instructional material development and printing entails understanding of the industrial nature of open and distance education which yields mass production, a tenet of industrial education. Both instructors and student teachers understood that the heterogeneity of distance students required that they be fully supported to promote their learning at a distance. The instructor’s effort to support students though at will, wed well to Holmberg’s (2003) conversational acclamation that students be connected to educators so as to motivate and promote their study (Holmberg, 2003; Rooyen, 2015).

The probability of educators handling distance students in an informed manner was one-sided as only instructors and not administrators fully showed commitment to the provision of constant support to students. As discussed earlier in chapter 6, instructors through their lived experiences displayed understanding of their distance roles as to guide and support students. Examples of the support given to students at a distance if interpreted through the theoretical lenses of this study indicated that the provision of real conversation to student teachers

through guidance and counselling. Instructors' guidance offered to students through the modules revealed the availability of instructional materials at the students' disposal. However, instructors' understanding exposed a gap in that the learning support is offered to distance students at the instructors' will and effort and not that it is institutionalised or established. The other instructors' failure to pronounce any face-to-face learning support he offers to students excluding orientation processes validates learning support inadequacy.

Administrators mentioned administrative roles while also conceding mediated support in assignments but not on real conversational structures. Lack of formalisation of learning support as attached to instructors' roles denoted an industrial flaw as it showed that there were no clear systems for learning support thus, planning defy. Again, this could imply that the educators in the two institutions do not value or understand the importance of occasional real conversation. However, in a different question, an instructor whose roles lacked instructor-student real conversation disclosed the existence of study circle system offering student-student and student-supervisor interaction.

The learning implication in this section responds to the third question: why the institutional organisation of the distance secondary school teacher training at Domasi College of Education and Mzuzu University affected student teachers' learning experiences in the way it did.

Learning implications of distance education institutional organisation

In chapter 7, I explained the uncertain nature of distance institutional organisation founding the learning environment endorsed by unknown systems and absence of planning while coincidentally achieving mass production of interactive modules. The unclear distance systems founded on educators' partial application of their knowledge as well as limited understanding of open and distance education establishment yielding the following implications: lack of autonomy of the distance system, lack of rigorous training for staff and obsolete training of ODE instructors.

This section responds to the first and third main research questions:

1. What is the nature of institutional organisation of the distance secondary school teacher training at Domasi College of Education and Mzuzu University?

2. Why does the institutional organisation of the distance secondary school teacher training at Domasi College of Education and Mzuzu University affect student teachers' learning experiences in the way it does?

The uncertain institutional organisation of the distance secondary school teacher training at Domasi College of Education and Mzuzu University affects student teachers' learning experiences in various ways as discussed next.

Lack of autonomy of the distance education system

Participants' responses indicated that the way the distance education training was organised led to the systems or unit's lack of autonomy. One administrator lamented:

...the administration of ODL is more centralised, it's not that decentralized...if we talk of the management of the finances, recruitment, even the overall leadership of the centre, oh, yes we have the director, but it's done centrally by the, the office of the vice chancellor and the deputy vice chancellor, director of finance there, and even the office of the university registrar is highly centralised it's not decentralised...

Another administrator supported the above views with a detailed example of lack of autonomy of the two institutions. The administrator explained:

...is a government institution and as such is not autonomous. And also it has to rely upon policies of the government and like the previous two years the example I would give is that we did not recruit not because we did not want to recruit, but simply a directive came...we already selected some...students but we were told that no, no distance. At the beginning they told us to reduce numbers and we did...eventually, were told that no distance so we couldn't run a distance programme...sometimes we are ready, we are prepared, we are geared, lots of energy, lots of zeal but ah ...our efforts are jeopardized by sometimes...

One instructor wished the distance teacher training was a standalone in terms of instructors.

The instructor averred:

Centralisation... All the lecturers involved in face-to-face are the same lecturers involved in distance learning. We do not have specific lecturers for open and distance learners... as long as you are a lecturer, you teach, because at the moment ODL is offering programmes that are in the faculty of education so, as long as they teach in the faculty of education they can as well teach in ODL. Because ODL is offering programmes that are run by the faculty of education, as well as those lecturers teach and they are accepted and they teach in the faculty of education face-to-face, they can as well teach in distance education...

The sentiments revealed that the distance system is totally immersed in traditional practices such that every activity is controlled by the host institution and management. Some

dependency on the host institution is good, but over dependency may deprive the distance mode of the chance to plan for other essential sub-systems and activities as discussed in chapter 7. As discussed in chapter 3, open and distance education organisation and enactment is not planned for at the national education levels. As discussed in chapters 3 and 10, planning stems from national policies requiring that the open and distance education institution strategises its organisation in terms of required systems and sub-systems. This implies that a distance education institution has to do needs assessment and set goals they plan to achieve before designing specific sub-systems so as to respond fully to students and societal needs (Watkin, Kaufman, & Odunlam, 2013). This suggestion of setting systems espouses well to planning described in chapter 7 requiring that institutions set need and situation based strategies with broadly defined future courses of action (Shivaj University, 2013). This argument calls for the need for a strategic plan to guide formulation of policies and setting of systems and supporting systems alluded to in chapter 2 and 7 to yield quality distance education, promote student success and course completion. It can be argued that for an ODE system to satisfactorily meet its set objectives, purpose, mission or vision, proper coordination of supporting sub-systems through monitoring and effective flow of communication is paramount. The findings further depart from what Moore and Kearsley (2012) established that “a systems is key to understanding distance education as well as to successful practices” (p. 4). Again, the uncertain system is unrelated to the argument that the systems strategy linked to the use of improved procedures allows “institutions to look into the future and enable them to use distance education in the era of the internet to individualise instructions and personalise the academic experience of learners” (Saba, 2012, p. 37).

Lack of rigorous staff training

Educators’ views exposed lack of rigorous training on open and distance education and distance teacher training. One instructor averred:

There was a training that was conducted. But not a rigorous one, but perhaps we were oriented on the expectations of these modules and we were also given ... the house--style of that particular module saying our modules should have A B C D features that....writing...

The administrator from the same institution with the instructor cemented the above views and explained:

...in the past before the first set of the materials were produced, the individuals were trained in the production of the instructional materials, in the production of the print modules. So the process of the training involved everybody...

Another instructor for the other institution offered nothing different as he just confirmed the above two sentiments and said:

Yes, they got training in the early 2000 and the college organises orientation to equip new comers with the required skills...

As revealed in this section, educators in this study not only lacked training but those who got trained described the trainings as not being rigorous enough to suffice the need. This is drawn from the educators' responses showing that they got training only in instructional material development. Again, the fact that those involved in this study missed the trainings regardless of their being in the two institutions for five to twelve years exposes absence and inconsistency of such trainings. Uncertainty on who trained and funded the trainings further confirms the above interpretation. As can be deduced from the educator's views, this particular training was an orientation to house style of the instructional materials aimed at imparting in the educators expected features of the module in relation to specific subjects. The instructor's elaboration of the nature of training as 'not a rigorous one' and the foci on just house style of instructional material design reveals deficiency in the way the training was handled. The foci on instructional material development imply a defy as trainings only targeted academia regardless of the fact that all staff members need transformation to open and distance education experiences. As discussed in chapter 10, this attitude of exposing only academia to open and distance education know-how portrays training inadequacy as the nature of ODE demands support from all members of staff to help boost student learning.

Obsolete trainings of ODE instructors

The views revealed that educators were not even certain of who exactly funded and trained the staff in the two institutions on open and distance education knowhow. One administrator stated:

...A training that was arranged by UNESCO as well as Commonwealth of Learning...we had facilitators from Open University of Botswana...So they came and trained the lecturers here who are involved in ODL on how to deal with the instructional materials. Of course, that was before I came here but that's what I hear... I think BOCODOL was under UNESCO I think... BOCODOL simply sent specialists but were funded by UNESCO"... Then there was this other one, I do not know ...but there was another training which was funded by Commonwealth of learning.

Educators' responses further exposed training inadequately. One instructor indicated:

... Lecturers are not fully trained in both instructing, handling of students and development of modules. We face a lot of challenges in the sense that sometimes modules delay and students start (orientation) without learning materials.

One administrator confirmed the above perception and indicated that it was the major challenge of the secondary teacher distance education organisation. The administrator argued:

...Organisational challenges are there...we are talking of the managers, the administrators running or managing open distance learning without training in open distance learning. That's the main challenge...

The instructor's uncertainty on the exact content of the training implies lack of information disclosing a gap in staff development and distance education skills, knowledge and attitudes. If the instructor forgets what actually happened during the training and when and how it was done, then, the training becomes obsolete and can be rendered null and void. In this case, even if the training was thorough, the frequency of the trainings reveal some gaps as those joining the institution after the initial training may have missed completely. Industrially and as discussed earlier in chapter 7, the organisation of the distance secondary teacher training lacks planning for it to have its own systems within systems. This is the reason why distance systems in the institutions understudy only achieved mass production of instructional materials amongst the other industrial education tenets. The use of the term 'past' in the administrator's response ratifies obsolescence of the trainings and that they were inconstantly done while the use of 'probably' in the instructor's views indicate uncertainty. The use of the word 'they' to mean 'instructors' or 'educators' implies that the training was done at the time the participant was not yet recruited or working at the institution. This is regardless of the data revealing that the instructor had worked at this same institution for about 10 years and that trainings are still being conducted in the two institutions with instructors sharing experiences. The argument presented here is that effective institutional organisation of distance education necessitates that all members of staff embrace change through imposed or self-mind set change enhanced by trainings.

Resistance to change

The responses included views on educators' resistance to change as infringing on innovative ideas set for open and distance education. The administrator averred:

...and when those who have the knowledge the know-how on how to manage ODL there is that kind of resistance, even if we try to advise, there is that kind of resistance to receive that kind of advice from those who are well versed...

One instructor while in accord with the above views explained:

...initial mandate is face-to-face training. In most cases they are externalised they do not take them as part of...even if you try to tell them, to force it on them that now this is part of the university, the staff and the university will normally externalise ODL programme.

Inadequate learning support

Responses revealed inadequacy of the learning support offered to distance students by one of the institutions. One administrator mentioned of the existence of an office to handle learning support issues as follows:

So we have the office ... providing guidance and counselling, also we have the academic offices providing that kind of academic support, teaching or lecturing to the students. But at the same time we have the library which does provide the reference materials, reading materials, print materials as well as online materials, online resources.

An instructor from the same institution with the above administrator extended the above views and elaborated:

...so I do come in case of guidance and counselling. I do guide them over and over in terms of choice of courses and the like, that the registration process. The actual process of learning, they are registered, they have gone into the class, they have been given instructional materials,... they have been assisted by lecturers academically but when students do have some complaints in terms of maybe inadequate support from lecturers they come to me...

The instructor further clarified their institution's reliance on modules as primary sources of teaching, learning and learning support. The instructor precisely indicated:

...The support at a distance is only through modules but sometimes they could have an issue with a lecturer, sometimes they could use the usual SMS or they could call me (but it's something which is not usual but is happens). SMS and sometimes the email, they can be done directly between the lecturer and the student but that I have no control, I cannot say much on that...

Participants' views disclosed that the uncertain nature of the distance institutional organisation lacked planning which resulted in lack of autonomy of the distance system, lack of rigorous staff training, obsolete training of ODE instructors, resistance to change and inadequate learning support. The unplanned and uncertain distance system according to the data may have the following learning implications:

- Handle development of instructional materials and students unprofessionally.
- Hinder instructors' innovative efforts to adapt instructions to suit individual students' learning needs.
- Instructors may rely on the dictates of the parent system for plans and their enactment. It is for this reason probably that institutions in this study managed to produce mass preplanned instructional materials which are in one-size-fits-all form.
- Hold to pre-packaged instructional materials that allow students to study while in the comfort of their homes regardless of internet challenges while not responding to their individual needs.
- Offer inadequate learning support to students due to disorganisation and unprofessionalism or negative attitude towards open and distance education.

Interpreted within the study's framework, the unclear organisation reveals a gap in planning, coordination, specialisation and division of labour for ODE contrary to requirements of a distance system discussed in chapter 4. However, mass production as a tenet of the study's framework and as a requirement of the industrial education (Peters, 1973) discussed in chapter 4, is present in the two institutions. This is regardless of the unclear nature of the institutional organisation. Still on planning, coordination, division of labour and specialisation, the implications reveal lack of vision and mission due to the absence of planning for ODE, evident in the absence of ODE strategic plans and other operating and institutional growth guidelines. The study registers minimal specialisation and division of labour with absence of coordination due to the absence of sub-systems to verify the same. For example; educators' failure to clearly mention responsible systems that serve distance education with their functions implies lack of splitting of functions into constituents and diverse expertise to coordinately yield effective distance teaching and students' learning experiences. Lack of rigorous staff training and staff's resistance to change confirms the absence of planning and implementation of ODE staff development plans to ensure that the system operates with well versed staff in distance education theory and practice. Even in cases where ODE is attached to a faculty (Simango, 2016) distinct component or distance unit with sub-units need to be visible for quality of distance education to be achieved.

Learning implications of the enactment of the distance training

In chapter 8, I talked about the enactment of the distance secondary teacher training exposing the mismatch between what students expected and their actual experiences. Since the training took place in the uncertain institutional organisation discussed in chapter 7, the supposed implications include: overwhelmed instructors, delayed feedback on assignments and examinations and students' under learning, high dropout rate with one institution upholding students' retention.

This section responds to the second main research question:

How does the institutional organisation of the distance secondary school teacher training at Domasi College of Education and Mzuzu University affect student teachers' learning experiences?

Overwhelmed instructors

Lack of a breather on the part of instructors seems to contribute negatively to students' learning and experiences especially in these dual mode institutions. One administrator stated the following:

... Because they are overwhelmed, because they are handling double load with the face-to-face, feedback in most cases delay. They will give feedback sometimes when the students are already back on campus preparing for end of semester exams, it's too late... we cannot recruit as a centre so the university, as faculty of education where the programme is housed is going to recruit more staff, more academic staff to beef up to the existing members of staff who are struggling and overwhelmed with work load at the moment.

One instructor concurred with the above views and complained:

It becomes a problem, because I am expected to handle courses for face-to face students and then courses for open and distance education, only a few instructors... It is very difficult because practically, you do not have a holiday. Throughout the year we are teaching! Because when we are supposed to observe a holiday, that's when open and distance students come in...lecturers be in class throughout the year, no time to rest, if you are not teaching then, you are marking... Look at this! (Pointing at a large pile of assignments) to be marked by one person. So, it's not an easy thing so to say and in situations like humanities for example; we have huge numbers. We are encouraging Mathematics but students are running away from Mathematics because of the problems that they face...So, it's not easy! We are going to break down soon or later...ODL should have its own members of staff if not all of them, but a few and we should just be supporting rather than running two schools at the same time.

Another instructor from the other institution disagreed with the above views. The instructor elaborated:

... It's something to do with planning... if the planning is well done, you find that you are able to assist all the groups of people ... but it's something that one has to feel that its part and parcel of her if we are there to address issues of teacher shortage. ... I have said, these two groups of students do not meet each other... Maybe in terms of marking...but this cannot be registered as a problem because in terms of assignments it's like you are giving assignments to generic and you are actually receiving assignments from your distance learners. And for marking, maybe if you have got very large classes for both generic and distance learners, you can be at a panic in terms of marking. But I for one, I do not feel any problem with such kind of arrangement...

The administrator reported delayed feedback on students' assignment as stemming from pressure placed on instructors as a result of working for the two different education modes and inadequacy of staff. Delayed feedback from instructors is an element that is likely to affect students' performance and course completion. The sentiments further show that it is impossible for the Malawi ODE system to recruit additional staff even if it sees need for that due to centralised management for both traditional and distance systems. The instructor mentioned a situation where instructors are in conflicting roles of handling traditional as well as distance students. The participants even pointed at a big pile of assignments expressing the fear he had of breaking down due to work overload for what he called two schools. All this is as a result of adopting the one-size-fits-all approach in totality rendering open and distance education dependent or non-autonomous as all decisions are made by the central office. The belief that same instructors, same strategies, same content, same structures can address the needs of two diverse modes of education, in this case, distance and traditional education, exalt pressure on instructors leading to inefficiency. The instructor makes the argument that the inclination to both distance and traditional education as two schools run by same personnel produce overwhelmed workforce. While accepting the challenge, the other instructor describes total dipping of the distance system into the traditional system as resulting from a challenge in planning. The instructor mentioned not just planning, but planning which is well done as a solution to the reduction of workload and instructors' burn-out. The participant further explained that deficiencies in planning bring in some conflicts in the way students are taught and supported leading to inadequate learning support. The instructor argues that a well-planned one-size-fits-all approach to distance education enactment effect learning and learning support efficacy which is beneficial to both traditional and distance students' experiences. The instructor further links instructors' lack of rest to absence of space between the instructors' support of the two groups.

While disclosing that student run away from Mathematics the instructor gave no further explanation as to why the students run away from mathematics and challenges students face. Lack of detailed information on what pulls students from Mathematics as revealed by the instructor is interpreted as deficiency of research and monitoring and evaluation activities to review the programme's efficacy. Reduction in the number of mathematics students echoed findings of the study that indicated that 'very few students opt for education science and mathematics programme, as well as other science-related courses, in their choices' (Nampota, 2016, p. 6). Nampota, indicated that most students' university choices are biased towards humanities regardless of whether its education or general humanities. However, this study's situation seemed to be slightly different from Napota's as the students seemed to run away from the challenges faced and not that they did not choose science or Mathematics. Lack of learning support from overwhelmed instructors can be a response to why humanities carried very large classes and marking associated with huge piles of assignments as mentioned by the instructor.

Effect of delayed feedback on assignments and examination

In the prior discussed section, delayed feedback stemmed from overwhelmed instructors. In this section, responses exposed some challenges in the way feedback on assessment was being handled. One student teacher complained:

...Submitting assignments can be quite a challenge. It is expensive to send the typed work via express mail and slow and unreliable by post. Assignments are sent to the wrong lecturer by mistake within the distance learning centre re re-submission which is expensive to print again, frustrating and time consuming. The assignment saga is faced when the students have gone to write end of semester examination...

Another student teacher agreed with the above views and alleged:

...Failure to provide feedback by some lecturers also affected my learning. When one is given feedback, she is able to know where to put in extra effort in order to improve. Other lecturers seem not to have even marked the scripts, despite the whole effort we put into writing the assignment. This is discouraging and negatively affected learning...

Another student teacher further expounded the views above and explained:

...a semester started even though you do not know your results for the previous semester which is too bad...

Student teachers complained that delayed feedback and any other feedback drawback on assessment negatively affected their learning. Students lamented that it was not only

expensive but also frustrating and time consuming for them to resubmit lost assignments which they only knew about the time they went for examinations. The sentiments further indicate that in some cases, instructors could not mark the assignments regardless of the students' effort to write and submit. Responses further claimed that sometimes they got into a new semester without accessing their examination results. Interpreted through the lenses of this study, instructors' failure to provide timely feedback to students denotes absence of mediated learning support. The students are denied a chance to gauge their capabilities and forge forward with their studies while away from instructors. Feedback on assessment is an integral part of conversational learning with written feedback on assessment as mediated conversation which is a tenet of the theoretical frames.

Students' under learning

The students mentioned awkward delivery times of instructions by some instructors as being unfruitful and impacting negatively on students' learning as highlighted by one student teacher as follows:

Some instructors do not teach even a single day but gives tough time to students if we are approaching to go home by arranging for make-up classes at night which brings in learning difficulties.

Students further attached under learning to minimised facilitation period as follows:

...sometimes we are oriented for only two weeks. The reasons include: late submission of timetables to heads of departments to identify responsible lecturers to facilitate courses...

Another student teacher while in agreement with the former extends the concern saying:

...It is rewarding to know that open and distance learners are exposed to the same material as the regular face-to-face learners. However, due to face-to-face time constraints, some courses are not done at the time they are supposed to. They are pushed forward to another semester. As such, the open and distance programme is elongated. It takes five to six years to obtain a degree unlike the four years in the regular face-to-face programme.

The student's narration included learning difficulties as a sign of under learning resulting from lack of planning and coordination of distance education in Malawi's distance secondary school teacher training limiting students' learning. Failure to achieve instructor-students face-to-face facilitation is another example of unprofessionalism discussed earlier stimulated by inadequate or lack of training and burn-out of instructors yielding teaching inefficacy. As discussed earlier, ill-timed instructions are ineffective and yield zero learning as indicated in

the student's sentiment that with such arrangements, learning becomes a challenge or impossible. Facilitating during odd hours and when students are tired is another example of students' under-learning and the sign of unpreparedness and lack of seriousness on the part of educators. This tendency showed not only lack of understanding of distance education enactment but also failure to do the right thing regardless of the revealed instructors' available knowledge of their roles. This mishandling of distance students in terms of inadequacy of content delivery to yield effective learning can be linked to what Chawinga and Zozie (2016) cited in their study as 'bad perception of Open and Distance Learning (ODL) programme' (p. 13). Although the authors linked this perception to the reason that distance students study outside the four walls of the classroom, the people's thinking may also be connected to teaching, learning and learning support inadequacy discussed in chapter 8. Piling work on students through makeup classes and swift delivery without considering students' understanding of concepts as revealed in this study, may lead to people's fears, "half-baked students" (Chawinga & Zozie, 2016, p. 13). Unprofessionalism of instructors in dealing with distance students as noticed in this study depicts educators' unpreparedness due to lack of training or their adherence to traditional philosophies obstructing their mindset change. In reference to periodic review of higher education curricula (5 years) as a strategy to quality and relevance, the challenge still stands as the distance secondary teacher training in Malawi employs obsolete instructional materials.

High dropout rate

Participants' views revealed that the total adherence to traditional practices due to limited application of open and distance education understanding to planning and enactment impedes students' retention. One administrator averred:

In terms of enrolment, for ODL...the first students were admitted in 2011. But all those years... but I came in 2014...the first ODL in-take was in 2011, ... this group was so small, they started with 34 students... and those people have now graduated with a diploma but they haven't yet graduated with a degree...out of these 34 we have 15 remaining pursuing bachelors...16 graduated with diplomas. Out of 34, only 16 graduated with diplomas and out the 16, it's only one (1) who has dropped...15 are still continuing with the bachelors... 2012 we had 150, an increase and then 2014 we had 500 recruits and then 2015, just last year, we had almost 800 recruited...Out of 150 we have 85, you see and then for this cohort 3 they have done, they are now in year 3 now and they are going for TP in September. We recruited 500 but now on the ground we have around 369, out of the 500. For those who were admitted.

The administrator could not explain the cause of such dropout and wondered:

I do not have a clue... Unless maybe a research is done so that we could see what is it that is making us to have that problem of retention. What is it that we don't; we are failing to retain the students.

In trying to justify to why the institution kept on enrolling more students regardless of the high dropout rate the instructor explained:

So our minimum at the moment if we have to be assisted by this donor is that we have to recruit a minimum of 600. But that's why we are talking of 800 because we know that even if we recruit 800 some will dropout then we will still go near to what is required by the donor.

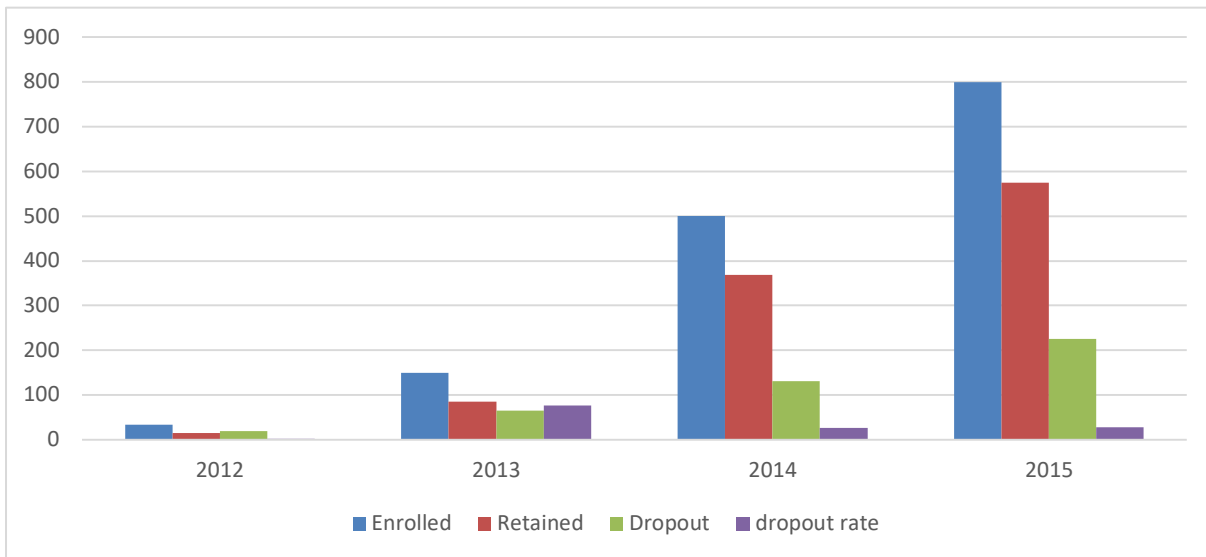
As discussed, regardless of massive production and distribution of mediated instructional materials and the efforts to open education access to eligible students, high dropout rate was registered in one of the institution. The administrator cited the institutions growth in enrolment without taking into consideration that the numbers increased and dropped massively as presented diagrammatically in Table 8 and Figure 5, carrying the administrator's views.

Table 8: High dropout rate for institution Mzuzu University

| Year | Enrolment | Retained | Dropout | Dropout rate |
|-------------|------------------|-----------------|----------------|---------------------|
| 2012 | 34 | 15 | 19 | 55.9 % |
| 2013 | 150 | 85 | 69 | 76.5 % |
| 2014 | 500 | 369 | 131 | 26% |
| 2015 | 800 | 575 | 225 | 28% |

The participant views showed that the first intake of 2011 enrolled 34 students, 16 obtained their diploma in education qualification, 15 are continuing with their studies towards a bachelor's degree with 18 initial dropouts and one (1) additional dropout after diploma. The second cohort of 2012 had 150 students but 85 are proceeding with 65 dropouts. In 2014, the third cohort has managed to retain 369 out of the 500 enrolled students dropping 131. Finally, the fourth cohort of 2015 enrolled 800 students has retained 575 by the time the study was carried out with 225 already dropped out. The dropout rate is further graphically displayed in figure 5 below.

Figure 5: High dropout rate for Mzuzu University



The participant attached high dropout to lack of training on the part of administrators while also signifying ignorance of the remedy to such failure to sustain student retention and successful course completion. The participant echoed application of limited ODE knowledge to enactment coupled with dependency on the traditional institution for the operation of the distance training. The administrator was at a loss to what is causing students to run away from the training but thought of a research as a probable answer to the challenge. The administrator's ignorance of the grounds for failure to retain distance students reflects lack of planning that yields uncertain institutional organisation which hinders effective application of ODE understanding to its enactment. The data showed that the distance training system registered high dropout due to lack of monitoring and evaluation sub-system or mechanisms to expose deficiencies in any of the systems and sub-system for timely action. The administrator further indicated that the institution increased student teachers' enrolment regardless of not sustaining or retaining those who are enrolled due to increase in demand for higher education. Probing into the administrator's response to what motivates the institution to increase its enrolment besides high dropout, yielded lack of autonomy and dependency on donors. There was an indication of indecisiveness as the administrator revealed that they protect financial support or donor funding. The increase in enrolment is explained as to meet the donor's demand and not to respond to the national need for qualified secondary school teachers or to satisfactorily satisfy students' needs and goals. In this case, the dropout is not taken care off as the system enrolls more to be nearer to the target when others dropout.

Upholding students' retention versus high dropout rate

As discussed in the prior section, the institution that never planned for distance education in terms of strategic plan or any guiding documents as discussed in chapter 7 experienced high dropouts. The same institution failed to sustain field facilitation though offered to science students only and denied distance students access to hostel accommodation during their occasional face-to-face sessions with instructors or orientation period. In the same institution, students complained of among other things high tuition fees, high transport and assignment submission costs topped with unprofessionalism of some instructors. On the contrary, the other institution though with its own defies, set up and sustained study circles as an off campus learning and learning support strategy for student-student and student-supervisor interaction. This institution as discussed in chapters 7 and 8, planned for distance education in terms of strategic plan and several other guidelines though obsolete while offering off campus learning support.

Interpreting the findings through the lenses of the study's theoretical framework, the learning implications of the distance training's enactment exposes lack of planning for open and distance education. This conclusion has been made in relation to the study's findings that reveal one institution's lack of knowledge to why it is registering high dropout rate while it continues to enrol additional students. This implies lack of proper systems that would carefully take care of monitoring and evaluation of the systems and their operations so as to feed the main system with existing flaws and possible solutions. The distance training seems to be disjointed or lacking coordination that would inform individual systems of any defies in one system to timely rectify the challenge. This further indicates that information and communication services are not a priority in the distance education system and in this dual mode institution. Students' mention of late submission of time tables and courses pushed to another semester revealed reduction of instructor-student contact time exposing inadequate learning and learning support.. Delayed time tables delayed orientation hence reduced facilitation time. Similarly, pushing course work to another semester yields less learning and reduces even the probability of the facilitation of the pushed content to zero as work keeps on piling. All these are an industrial or organisational defy stemming from lack of planning, coordination of activities and personnel as well as lack of sharing of responsibilities to maximise existing expertise. This implies that the student teachers are denied a chance to

conversational learning as both ‘mediated’ in feedback on assessment and ‘real’ in orientation sessions are blocked by organisational defects.

However, in the other institution, student teachers through study circle peer interaction shared their lived experiences of the distance training and this led to peers helping one another in sorting out pedagogic or andragogic challenges. This, and occasional presence of supervisors in the study circle centres provided the students with real conversation thus, constant face-to-face sessions beefing up the once off annual orientation. The institution thus, satisfied five tenets of the study’s framework. First, offered student-content interaction in a ‘mediated’ way, second, allowed student-peer or student-supervisor interaction in a ‘real’ conversation, third, helped students to experience training at a distance, in study circles and on campus, and ‘share’ their 'lived' experiences as discussed in chapter 10 to promote learning. This implies that, though using obsolete plans and fails to properly monitor study circles; the institution has set off campus structures for learning supports.

The findings thus, reveal inadequate learning support in both institutions but severe in the institution where instructional materials are regarded as a lone source of learning support ensuing lack of constant face-to-face sessions. As discussed earlier, constant provision of learning support through properly established systems yield positive learning experiences. The findings hence expose high dropout rate in cases where minimal real and mediate conversation was offered with upholding students’ retention in the other institution where support though inadequate was available. High dropout and student retention are hence two major learning implications of this distance secondary teacher training enactment.

Participants’ suggestions for improvement of the distance training

In reference to the way the open and distance education programme is organised and enacted participants made suggestions for improvement. The major proposed improvements were based on management of the training, instructors and instructional delivery, students support and the general programme. These issues were viewed by participants as vital in effective management of the distance secondary teacher training in Malawi.

Management of open and distance education programme

For proper organisation and enactment of the distance secondary teacher training and innovative ways of reaching out to all students regardless of the distance, participants contributed different views. One student-teacher held the following:

Programme management should be looked into thoroughly mainly the end of semester exams should be done during holidays only and should not be combined with orientation for next semester for example...the end of semester ... is done in January to March. This affects those people who are working and people face a lot of problems at their working place e.g. at the DEM's office. The programme should release the end of semester exams before the other. ... A semester started even though you do not know your results for the previous semester which is too bad.

Another student-teacher has the following suggestion:

The responsible people for ODL students should make sure that they have met the heads of departments in the nick of time before our arrival to decide on lecturers that will be facilitating the courses. They have also to prepare in advance the production of modules because most of the times lecturers resist to teach us when we do not have the modules. We wonder why the production of modules occurs when we are there. What do they do when we are at home for self-study?

Another student reflected as follows:

...well conversant program managers need to manage the programme so that they are able to tell students what is expected of them as learners and what they should expect from the programme...The strengths and weaknesses of the programme need to be well communicated to students so that they know what to expect and are well prepared for the exercise...Enough supervisors should be available throughout the country, within the reach of the students so that students do not walk long distance to deliver assignments or meet the supervisor for any communication. Study circles (centres) need to be well structured so that learners can meet and share information.

Both student-teachers and instructors were of the view that the interval for instructor-student interaction should be extended as one averred as follows:

I think there is still a room for improvement like the intervals at which we visit our students; I feel if a chance can be there, we need to increase the interval. As I have already said, they stay with us for 8 weeks and they are alone in the field for 10 months, but in terms of the frequency. You may find that we may visit them once, ok, so they may have problems that can be accumulative waiting for the time we visit them. So if the interval of visiting them can be increased, that can really assist so much because most of the problems that can be encountered can be solved within a short period of time.

Instructors and instructional delivery

In reference to open and distance education instructors, instructional delivery and student support, the major proposed improvements are as follows: instructor' mastery of content and professionalism and pedagogical and andragogy skills. These issues were viewed by participants as important for instructors' improvement to effectively implement the distance secondary teacher training in Malawi. On instructors' mastery of content and professionalism, one student-teacher held the following:

Instructors need to be well conversant and trained on how to deliver in the training of ODL learners; they need to give feedback in time to motivate students as this is a hectic programme.

Fortunately, just very few students put forward such plea as the other student-teacher while supporting the view touched on other forms of support while elaborating in the orientation practice as follows:

... Should kindly assist students at all times, they should try their best to complete orientation stuff in good time to avoid disturbances during exam preparation week. Proper consultation on missing assignments should be thoroughly followed and proper guidance and way forward should be done in good faith. Missing grades should also be dealt with good in faith.

The issue of assignment was further explained by another student-teacher in relation to unprofessionalism of instructors saying as follows:

They need to handle the assignments properly in terms of grading. Assist students kindly whenever they need assistance. In addition, they need to finish their courses during orientation so that students should have no problems during self-study. It has been a challenge most of the time when instructors failed to finish their modules during examinations that resulted into many.

Instructional materials

The participants' views and suggestions tail the above sentiments as shown in another student-teacher proposal held as follows:

There must be more instructional materials so that the student-learners must access to fully benefit for the teacher training through an open and distance education programme. Books and learning materials must be available to ease challenges encountered by the student-teachers.

In reference to student support, participants exposed several suggestions for improvement in availability of instructional and supplementary materials as one generalised the support as follows:

...students must be fully supported in such a way that the student-teachers must achieve their intended learning outcomes. Individual assistance and learning materials must be accessible since most learners live in remote areas where communication is mostly difficult such as roads and technological materials in the ever changing world.

While extending the same views another participant suggested the following:

...Materials should be released to students before the orientation starts. A delay in giving study materials causes disturbances in finalising the orientation work. Prepare good quality modules despite the fact that previous ones were having problems.

Student support

The participant mentions orientation which another participant said has to improve as follows:

...if the large classes are there, means have to be found to make sure that each student understands what the lecturer says, for example; audio speakers and projector to be used by all lecturers.

Participants further suggested the provision of other resources and means as one way of supporting the distance students as one respond stated as follows:

...For instance, starting of a social grouping through WhatsApp. The school needs access instructional materials that need to be offered to the students at a cheaper price or through instalments. For example; laptops...

Support through advanced technology

A student-teacher from one of the institutions talked of the more advanced approach to supporting students saying;

There should be satellite centres across the country where students can submit assignments, access lecturers, books and other reference materials plus students can meet and have discussion groups in those centres. It will be cheaper and convenient to the students.

Another student-teacher from a different institution further incorporated stakeholders to suggest installation of satellite centres as follows:

The government in conjunction with the college should designate satellite learning centres to ease the distance so that the programme management should cater for all student-teachers residing far in nearby localities.

The general programme

On how the general programme should improve, participants gave various views. One student-teacher suggested the following:

The programme is good since it has created opportunities for those who failed to access higher education at the same time act as a tool of promoting oneself. On the other hand the programme needs to be taken seriously by the stakeholders who are involved in. For instance, the institution providing the programme needs to prepare enough in terms of producing enough instructional materials, should have enough classrooms and dormitories to accommodate students. To the part of the student he or she needs to prepare himself or herself in terms of financially and mentally for the smooth running of the programme.

The students' understanding of open and distance education in this study allows them to suggest improvements of the training as one student-teacher as follows:

The general programme needs total support from all stakeholders such as the government, schools, colleges and teacher learners for it to be effective. We all need to build a positive attitude and know that learning can be done at a distance. Enough modules (materials) should be given to institutions and schools for effective practice by teacher learners during the programme.

This suggestion fits one instructor's wish in to instructors' lack of rest discussed in chapter 8 as follows:

...I wish ODL should have its own members of staff if not all of them, but a few and we should just be supporting rather than running two schools at the same time...

Student-teachers' sentiments indicate understanding of open and distance education and the need for innovative ways of effecting teaching, learning and support. The inclusion of stakeholders in the explanation shows that the students are knowledgeable of the key players to the distance education enactment and improvement. The suggestion is important as they shall guide the improvements of the distance secondary teacher training in Malawi and promote effectual learning experiences with positive learning implications. Suggestions on the establishment of satellite support are vital as they expose the need for Malawi to engage in advanced technology and offer frequent instructor-student interaction than was the case in this study to consequently yield constant learning support as stressed by Holmberg (2003). The students' sentiments wed well to one institution's instructors' exposure of verbal

institutional plans of having four satellite centres with donor support as discussed in chapter 7.

Chapter conclusion

In this chapter, I have presented general implications of the distance secondary teacher training with much focus on learning implications of the training. Implications included lack of staff training looming from lack and or obsolete planning rooted in an uncertain institutional organisation as aggregating instructors' exhaustion. The administrator's views are within the argument made in chapter 2 that total adherence to traditional practices hinders effectual provision of learning and learning support. The chapter revealed high dropout rate and upholding student retention as major learning implications of the distance secondary teacher training in Malawi. In the next chapter, I conclude the thesis and make pertinent recommendations.

CHAPTER 10

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

In this chapter, I conclude the thesis with five purposes. First, provide a brief summary of the whole thesis in terms of the purpose of the study, its procedure and the conclusive answers to the three main questions. Second, I present academic contributions of this study. Third, I identify issues emerging from the study requiring further research. This relates to distance education activities such as organisation of distance education in institutions of higher learning in Malawi and its enactment. Fourth, strengths, methodologies and shortfalls of the employed research procedures are discussed. Fifth, reflections are made on the implications of this study on the enactment of the distance secondary teacher training in Malawi. Last, I make some policy recommendations in line with the findings of the research as part of the guidelines for policy principles.

Purpose of the study

The main aim of this study was to explore the learning implications of the distance secondary teacher training in Malawi, how and why it impacts on student teachers' learning in the way it does. In order to establish the enactment practices through the set learning environment or institutional organisation, I blended tenets of the Peters' 1973 industrial education (Peters, 1994), conversational learning (Holmberg, 2003) and phenomenology (van Manen, 1995). The purpose was to study and describe the distance institutional organisation and its learning implications and gauge stakeholders' adherence to anticipated open and distance education enactment practices. To establish some sense of what the study necessitates as the nature of institutional organisation, I reviewed trends in distance education and literature on the institutional models and teacher training traces.

The first main research question

What is the nature of institutional organisation of the distance secondary school teacher training at Mzuzu University?

The study found that regardless of educators' understanding of distance education there is limited application of the knowledge to practical enactment. The findings revealed an uncertain institutional organisation with a melange of traditional with distance systems and lack of planning yielding inadequate staff training, overwhelmed instructors, under-learning and donor dependency. Distance students get limited face-to-face opportunities due to unprofessional treatment from overwhelmed and inadequately trained or untrained instructors. The way the distance teacher training is organised institutionally limits students' access to both real and mediated conversation hence under-learning.

The second main research question

How does the institutional organisation of the distance secondary school teacher training at Domasi College of Education and Mzuzu University affect student teachers' learning experiences?

The study found that probable positive learning implications were blocked by inadequate application of open and distance education understanding to enactment ensuing total adherence to traditional practices or one-size-fits-all philosophy. As a result, there was a mismatch between students' expectations and lived experiences, inadequate use of electronic instructions and a blend of adequate and inadequate learning and learning support.

The uncertain nature of distance institutional organisation yielded adequate learning and learning support whilst upholding students' retention in one institution and inadequate learning and support with high dropout rate in the other. Distance teacher training impact positively on student teachers learning in a fertile learning environment that boosts mediated and real conversation while at the same time blocks effective learning and support in the other environment or institution.

The third main question

Why does the institutional organisation of the distance secondary school teacher training at Domasi College of Education and Mzuzu University affect student teachers' learning experiences in the way it does?

The study found that stakeholders' total adherence to one-size-fits all approach to distance education enactment negatively affected student teachers' learning and learning support. The institutions' lack of planning stemmed from lack of national policy and educators' inadequate application of distance education understanding to effective implementation. However, I am happy to ascertain that one of the institutions while adopting a similar institutional organisation philosophy still managed to adapt by attaching a study circle element as an extension to the enactment practices.

The two institutions differed in planning, adherence to traditional practices and retention of students whilst grounded on a similar learning environment, uncertain institutional organisation. The students thus, embraced different levels of face-to-face learning and learning support while mostly blocking real instructor-student, student-student conversation leading to negative learning implications such as high dropout rate. This obviously discloses a gap between the expected and the actual practice on the ground. Recommendations for improving the enactment of the distance secondary school teacher training and other related issues in general are suggested in succeeding sections of this chapter.

The significant and original contributions of this research to the field of distance education

The exploration of the learning implications of the distance secondary teacher training in Malawi has generated original insights relating to the suitability of the industrial education to the study of institutional organisation, the learning implications for Malawi and the distance education field. I shall discuss the study's contributions to knowledge in the following sub-sections.

Blending reframing of the industrial education, conversational learning and phenomenology tenets for use in Malawi and other resource constrained contexts

One of the aims of this study was to make a contribution to knowledge on exploration of learning implications of the nature of Mzuzu University and Domasi College's distance training institutional organisation. The study thus, provided for a reflection on how the industrial education, conversational learning and phenomenology can be adapted for use in exploring learning implication of an institutional organisation in resource constrained context rather than resource wealthy contexts where the theories originated. The findings on the suitability of tenets of the industrial education, conversational learning and phenomenology theories as theoretical frames in developing countries in general and Malawi in particular and how these theories can be adapted for their applicability in these resource constrained countries are presented next.

Appropriateness and deficiencies of the industrial education, conversational learning and phenomenology frameworks in the Malawi context for the institutional organisation and learning implications

This interpretive qualitative study has been established and founded on distance education studies with a blend of tenets of industrial education, conversational learning and phenomenology theories as discussed in the theoretical framework and literature review in chapters 3 and 4. As is the case with several other studies described in those chapters, this study used the industrial education theory and the systems approach in particular, to make a close study of a particular educational programme within its specific context.

This study has been unique in Malawi in terms of the approach followed. Four earlier studies that explored distance education for higher education were found in Malawi (Chakwera & Saiti, 2005; Chimpololo, 2010; Msiska, 2013; Chawinga & Zozie, 2016) but used none of the theories employed in this study. While three of the four studies focused just on distance education for higher education targeting specific institutions with one handling general issues for Malawi ODE, this study looked at two institutions' institutional organisation and learning implications through a blend of theoretical lenses. Tenets from the industrial education theory were chosen for their probity to guide evaluation of institutional organisation or setting in terms of planning, coordination, specialisation and division of labour, and mass production of instructional materials. With special attention is the systems tenet derived from the theory

embedded in planning that is key to this discussion. The blend of tenets from the industrial, conversational learning and phenomenology were in this study used to complementary guide my exploration through the institutional organisation and its learning implications. The industrial education theory in this framework is represented by more tenets, merging with tenets of conversational learning strengthens and extends the framework to scrutiny of interactivity in modules. This has an implication on mass production of instructional materials and face-to-face conversation as they were assessed for empathy presence to bring about mediated conversation. The institutional organisation was assessed further for its ability to constantly offer real conversation through the real human element. As stated in chapter 4, the in-built human element in the instructional materials and the physical instructor-student or student-student interaction could solely be measured through tenets of the conversational learning (Holmberg, 2003). Students' experiences in this study could only be gauged through phenomenology where the students were allowed to share their lived experiences. This confirmed the argument in chapter 4 that the study required this mix of tenets to fully produce valid results.

There was an attempt in this study, using the complementary framework to gauge learning and learning support interactivity between instructors and students or students and peers, and students and content, to yield learning at a distance. Another attempt was made using the same framework to determine student teachers' and instructors lived experiences and to determine their understanding of open and distance education through definitions of the same and descriptions of their roles. I managed to gauge participants' understanding of open and distance education and elucidate how they apply their understanding to enactment and learning through the use of this complementary framework. Prior to this study, no research was done to expound the learning implications of the distance secondary teacher training in Malawi and not even looking at institutional organisation as the distance learning environment. No other Malawian study was found that applied a blend of tenets from three theories to study the distance education learning environment embedded in institutional organisation. This implies that when tenets of the industrial education are combined with tenets of other theories like 'conversational learning' and 'phenomenology' it becomes a powerful tool for the exploration of the nature of distance education institutional organisation and how and why it impacts on student learning. Being an interpretive study, this mix of tenets from three theories in a single framework meant to aid in drawing a holistic and an in-depth understanding of the perceptions and experiences of instructors and students.

Using the blended theoretical framework guided by the interpretive stance to the exploration of institutional organisation and learning implications meant gathering data through multiple sources like more than one institution, a variety of both administrative (policies, guidelines) and academic documents (instructional materials) as the best and productive sources of comprehensive data. With this, the study's framework can be purposefully used in evaluating institutional organisation and its impact on the users in various contexts in Malawi and other developing countries. With the interpretive approach, the blended theoretical framework helped me to establish and conceptualise planning for distance education, one-size-fits-all and study circles in this chapter as main prayers in the study's establishment of the distance system as the learning environment. The study circle strategy thus, shall expand the suggested system for the Malawi distance secondary teacher training system. This study of learning implications of the institutional organisation exposed certain issues that could not have been otherwise identified in the current setting of a distance education system. For example; uncertain systems, inadequate staff training, under-learning, and inadequate learning support. It further helped me to identify the reasons for a mix of traditional and distance systems as a challenge in distance education institutional organisation. I engaged tenets from the three theories in a single framework because tenets of one theory would not wholly serve the purpose of exploring learning implications sought in this study.

As would be discussed in a later section of this chapter, planning incorporates the systems strategy demanding ODE institutions to organise systems with proper specialisation, division of labour, coordination of persons and operations to meet the specified purpose and mass production. The tenets clasped in this single sentence are a revelation that these tenets are fit for assessment of the nature of ODE institutional organisation and why it is organised that way. Again, real and mediated conversation could not respond to the setup of ODE structures but only interactivity of instructions in print, electronic and face-to-face. Similarly, phenomenology could not expose entirely the system's organisation and interactive learning though it brought out defies and applauses for both organisation and learning based on the lived experiences of participants. This implies that any of the theories where the tenets were drawn, were mean, necessitating the merging of all into a single harmonised and complete framework to fit the study.

The study's theoretical framework can apply to any other study in the distance education field and or teaching mode to explore, assess or evaluate the enactment and learning implications.

Analysis of the institutional organisation uses planning (systems), coordination, specialisation and division of labour tenets whose mass production of mediated conversation exposes interactive learning. Inclusion of real conversation to supplement interactive print or electronic media totally married tenets of the industrial education to conversational learning in one framework.

Critical appraisal of the industrial teaching theory

In the present study, I further introduce phenomenology in the Malawi distance education philosophies to extend the theories of industrial education (Peters, 1973) and conversational learning (Holmberg, 2003), generally used in distance education studies. The theories of industrial education and conversational learning are widely used in distance education but phenomenology has rarely been attached to this education mode and in the manner this study has incorporated it. The use of oral interviews to yield written narrations of participants' lived experiences as used in this study and as discussed in chapter 5, generates a data collection tool that contributes to existing knowledge in cases where lived experiences are to be shared. Using the lived experiences shared in this study through phenomenological reflections, I interpreted the varied students' meanings of distance training and experiences to understand the perceptions and experiences as lived and not acquired. Further extension of the framework to dig students' experiences of the distance education programme reveals some positive and negative perceptions which further fed the planning and other tenets of industrial education. In this study however, tenets of industrial education provides the institutional organisation which is the distance learning environment expected to produce learning through real and or mediated conversation. Students' and instructors' lived experiences of participating and being in the distance training programme if shared can be used as evidence of the institution's or learning environment's efficacy to effectively train students. The lived experiences can act as feedback to the institution on its organisation and enactment of open and distance education demanding the institution to build on its strengths and work on improving the weak areas. In this study, for example; learning support inadequacy as revealed through phenomenological reflections is conversational in nature but is as a result of an uncertain system lacking or having obsolete plans. The feedback from students will act as a wakeup call to the entire system as it demands a revisit of their plans, operations and logistics while positive feedback is a motivation for sustainability. The study's distance institutional organisation theoretical framework in chapter 4 is cyclic in nature, an indication

that each group of tenets provides feedback to the other and depends on each other to improve or perform satisfactorily.

Challenges of using industrial teaching theory and the proposed refinement

The use of the industrial theory in this study embraced several challenges. Based on the challenges, this study suggests refinement of the theory for it to be apt for use in exploring the learning implications of the distance secondary teacher training in Malawi and other countries other than Germany where it was conceived.

A major challenge in using the industrial teaching theory in this study has been that the theory just focuses on organisational issues and not pedagogy or andragogy and the curriculum. What this means is that the industrial teaching excludes the necessary condition for industrial teaching at a distance. One of such conditions is lack of learning support as it detaches itself from distance students by focusing on mass production and distribution of instructions. Learning support which is discussed fully in chapter 3 can be summarised as any form of help given to distance students to facilitate their study. The industrial approach to distance education provides teaching without further pedagogic, heutagogic (self-determined learning) or andragogic (adult learning) support. Ramdas and Masithulela (2016, p. 7), supports the argument indicating that, Peters and Keegan later in 1994, criticized the industrial approach objectification of the teaching process as “reducing forms of shared learning”. The industrial approach has thus been criticised of lacking instructor-student and student-student interaction thereby lacking complete educational experiences and there are several research in support of this (Basanza, Milman, & Wright, 2010; Kangai & Bukaliya, 2011; Ramdas & Masithulela, 2016). The use of the term ‘teaching’, instead of education, in the industrial teaching theory, is clear evidence that teaching is done without the consideration of whether learning is taking place or not. For this reason, conversational learning as proposed by Holmberg (2003) was used as a lens to introduce the sought interactivity in the industrial teaching to complete the educational experience cycle. In this connection, this study proposes that there is need to refine the industrial teaching framework to include real conversation and mediated conversation for use in Malawi and internationally.

Another challenge is that the industrial theory promotes lack of personalised instructions and learning discussed in detail in chapter 3 and 4, and it will suffice to summarise it here as how does what instructors’ teach respond to students’ individual needs. It has been known, for

example; that personalised instructions and learning yield creative thinking and autonomous learning (Saba, 2012) amongst distance students and offer two way communication (Ramdas & Masithulela, 2016). The industrial approach argues for formalisation and standardised pedagogic processes and curriculum which are achieved through predetermination. There is now growing body of studies questioning the claim (Saba, 2012; Ramdas & Masithulela, 2016) arguing lack of personalised instructions and learning offers a rigid curriculum which blocks students' freedom to choose what they want to learn and how they want to learn it. For this reason, real conversation as proposed by Holmberg (2003) was used as a lens to introduce the sought personalised distance instructions and learning. In this case, this study proposes that there is need to refine the industrial teaching framework to include real conversation as proposed by Holmberg for use in Malawi and internationally.

The other challenge in using the industrial theory is the differences in the use of technology between the context (German) in which the theory was conceived and this study's context (Malawi). The argument that to advance from print media and as a means to respond to students' diverse needs, information technology can be used to carry standardised instructions with standardised content and format. This claim has motioned questions as to 'why should information technology be used to offer one-size-fits-all courses to masses?' if the same can be achieved at a lower cost without such expensive infrastructure? (Saba, 2012). It is for this argument that developing nations got married to print instructional materials while embracing the one-size-fits-all philosophy evidenced by numerous studies (Gabona, 2011; Chawinga & Zozie, 2016; Ramdas & Masithulela, 2016). Again, the variance in resource availability between German and Malawi where this study was carried out calls for refinement of the industrial education theory to suit Malawi and other similar resource constrained nations. For example; the findings of the study show that Malawi is still constrained to adopt the use of the internet for distance education due to poor infrastructure discussed in chapters 2, 3 and 8, the findings are supported by earlier research studies from Malawi and internationally (Basanza, Milman, & Wright, 2010; Kangai & Bukaliya, 2011; Mhishi, Bhukuvhani, & Sana, 2012; Chawinga & Zozie, 2016). This challenge has been widely found in developing countries due to what researchers claim as the internet being at its infancy stage due to limited infrastructure and high costs. Based on the results of the study, no tangible solution has been suggested to bail the resource constrained nations from advanced technology deficiency except for Chawinga and Zozie's (2016), suggestion of seeking support from external partners. Again, proposed embracement of information technology for the rigid

curriculum to be re-examined, for example; in terms of offering ‘standardised’ instructions and ‘support’ in a standardised manner. In the Malawian context, use of information technology would mean engaging with local gadgets and distance centres which can hardly satisfy the required standardisation.

The other challenge of applying the industrial teaching theory in this study is that, the theory was first applied to the British Open University, in a resource rich context implying that the theory is fit for resource-rich based situations. This means that the British Open University being a single mode distance education institution, the theory is not fit for dual mode models which are mostly controlled by host institutions. It is along these lines that I propose refinement of the theory to suit resource constrained environments such as Malawi and distance education hosted in traditional institutions.

Challenges of using conversational learning and the proposed refinement

The major challenge encountered in using conversational learning in this study is that I longed to explore institutional organisation in totality that includes the instructional systems to generate an in-depth understanding of the whole learning environment. However, the conversational learning solely looks at learning and learning support, how the instructor and the student, student and student and or student and content are conversing and to what level. As discussed in chapter 4, the conversational learning is fit for the study of learning especially, the interactivity part of it for students’ retention, promotion of course completion and attainment of learning goals. This study suggests the use of conversational learning in studies focusing on learning only or lower level studies such as at bachelors’ level or institutional levels and not PhD level. In this study, for example; I analysed instructional materials and phenomenological narratives on how learning and learning support is achieved but the analysis and narratives could not elucidate sources of challenges or successes. This would imply that the initial research questions would have to be phrased in such a way that it would allow for a broader focus than is the case with this study.

Phenomenology and the proposed refinement of the theory

The use of phenomenology in the study involved a number of challenges. The major challenge in using phenomenology in this study has been that the theory just focuses on lived experiences which need to be shared and not directly on institutional organisation of the

distance education system. What this means is that phenomenology does not provide essential conditions for phenomenology in institutional organisation. One of such conditions is the “theory practice gap and dilemma regarding the issues of literature review and bracketing” (Chan, Fung, & Chien, 2013, p. 3). The concept bracketing, has been comprehensively covered in chapter 5, but it can be summarised here as an approach to the researcher’s provision of valid data collection and analysis process. It was impossible in this study and in practice to initiate the study without prior literature reviews hence the use of the other theories to lead the research.

It is generally not practical to skip literature review in the first place till data collection and analysis as it may provoke gatekeepers’ questioning of the justification for the study’s purpose and the general plan (Chan, Fung, & Chien, 2013). The nature of institutional organisation required a pre-review of the existing knowledge on systems and coordination of the distance learning environment to help assess the researched. In this case, phenomenology could not be used to analyse institutional organisation which is based on established industrial principles which also require prior exposure for effective research and comprehensive findings. This is similar to Finlay’s (2008) research findings in which failure by phenomenology to fully display analytical processes though giving hope that the brief obtainable quotes provided a flavour of what the analysis could demand. This challenge could also emerge from the phenomenological argument that ‘only a single object or event should be perceived or conceived at a time’ (Perlin & Soner, 2015). This study proposes refinement in phenomenology if it has to solely be used in institutional organisation analysis.

The other major challenge encountered in using phenomenology in this study is that data gathered to generate an in-depth understanding of the learning implications of the institutional organisation from participants’ lived experiences was extensive. This resulted in very lengthy narrations and too much data for the purpose while also missing some important element of the structural organisation that was covered-up by combined data collection tools. Again, phenomenological requirement of collecting data from a homogenous group of participants (Creswell, 2008) extended the challenge while also limiting my engagement with phenomenology as a sought data from heterogeneous groups. Educators and students experiences of distance education in this study were obviously, dissimilar.

The huge amount of data took a long time to analyse and process. In short, the greatest disadvantage of this methodology was that it was both time-consuming and relatively costly.

With this in mind, it is suggested that phenomenological studies be restricted to research at doctoral level, and possibly to research for full Master's dissertations. Where research reports of this particular nature are concerned, however, the approach needs to be adapted to take cognizance of time and cost constraints. It is thus recommended that, for such studies, data sources should maximally be for document analysis and a maximum of 5 phenomenological questions with a very small sample. Also in this type of research, for example; phenomenological data could be drawn from professional portfolios and reflective journals but this was not done as the documents were not readily available at the time. Phenomenology should also allow prior identification of some critical issues like the organisational principles to guide data collection for the participants to focus on them. This would also imply that the initial research questions would have to be phrased in such a way that it would allow for a more specific, narrower focus than is the case with this study.

Conceptualising planning, one-size-fits-all and study circle

In addition to making contributions to the field of distance education, to knowledge through the blending of tenets and generation of a phenomenological reflection data collection tool discussed earlier, this study further contributes to knowledge by conceptualising abstract notions.

As discussed earlier, the notion planning could be perceived differently in different situations. Theorisation of the concept planning with its associated features contributes to a better understanding and interpretation of the institutional organisation and learning implications of the open and distance education in Malawi and elsewhere (Moore & Kearsley, 2012; Polk State College, 2012; Minnaar, 2013; Shivaj University, 2013). The systems, coordination, specialisation, division of labour and mass production as the study's institutional organisation tenets are precisely positioned and discussed within the conceptual analysis of planning with learning support. The conceptualised term provides a guide to institutional organisation of open and distance education as the prospective systems and related aspects are clearly shown and explained in the abstraction. Furthermore, conceptualisation of the one-size-fits-all concept as linked to planning of distance education systems is enlightenment to educators on instructional materials' production for distance teaching and learning as well as learning support provision. Conceptualisation of the notion and its associated contexts is important in drawing a better interpretation of the distance

learning and the impact of planning on the distance learning environment, in this case, institutional organisation.

Conceptualisation of the term study circle is meant to shed more light on the best practice identified through this study in one of the distance institutions and illustrate it for further practice in other related contexts. Since study circles supplement print instructional materials which are primary media for the Malawi distance education, the strategy thus, increases students' ability to study independently at a distance locale (Msiska, 2013). As shall be discussed, the study circle is a learning strategy directly linked to planning. Through conceptualisation of the highlighted notions, this study provides knowledge on distance education institutional organisation and implications on learning with the reasons it impacts on students' learning the way it does. This study therefore, provides clear guidelines on the planning and enactment of distance education at a dual-mode institution of higher learning. In addition, this study describes the way student teachers' perceived and experienced the distance teacher training exposing learning implications.

Since the study's findings expose some good practices in one of the institutions regardless of uncertain system and obsolete planning, the practice is another contribution to knowledge. The institution employs study circles to achieve supervisor-students and student-student real conversation thereby incidentally adapting and extending the distance education systems to suit the Malawian context. The distance education system as the mega system consists of supporting systems within systems (Moore & Kearsley, 2012) as argued in this chapter. As practiced in Malawi, the material production, dispersal, student support and study circles are sub-systems of a single system, the tutorial system as these are handled by same instructors with support from field supervisors in study circles. Since educators in this institution were uncertain about the nature of institutional organisation, my interpretation of the practice based on the data is that the systems are there but are unknown to the practitioners.

Planning for open and distance education

As discussed, planning is an integral part of "every decision in life" (Shivaj University, 2013-2014, p. 44). In open and distance education informed planning to suit the needs of the students studying psychologically away from instructors, is a must. Tony argued that success of institutional organisation lies in informed planning (Tony, 2008). This allows administrators to effectively respond to any questions posed on trends reflected in the

strategic plan. Planning starts with the analysis of the institution's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats generally known by the acronym, SWOT. Tony's argument is that SWOT analysis paves the way for planning whilst planning yields informed administrators who can ably guide the institution through its vision and mission.

It is important that the institution analyses its capabilities or strengths such as offering competitive salaries and benefits (American University, 2014) to staff members and offer marketable programmes. The institution should be aware of its weaknesses which among other things include failure to successfully motivate staff, offer attractive courses and properly manage the institution. Minnaar (2013) argues that SWOT analysis empowers the institution to work on sustaining capabilities, mend flaws and market its services to attract more clients or students and gain economies of scale. It is further argued that to "obtain economies of scale, it is increasingly common to link up with other institutions and share the market, a process requiring unusual foresight and diplomacy on the part of senior managers" (Moore & Kearsley, 2012 p. 9). Retaining existing opportunities opens doors to more opportunities leading not only to survival but also growth and success of the institution. It is argued in literature that the existence of similar institutions offering similar courses emerge as a threat as these institutions may capitalise on each other's weaknesses and drive the students and staff away from them (Tony, 2008). For survival, "what matters most is the consideration of challenges when an ODL facility is planned" (Minnaar, 2013, p. 83) while deciding in advance how to handle the challenges. Institutions consequently, need to constantly detect its challenges, assess potentials and existing technologies, and monitor its operations (Shivaj University, 2013).

Tony (2008) suggests contingency planning for the succeeding key influential distance education factors: students' enrolment, faculty members, academics, technology, economics and distance teaching as responders of emerging and contemporary issues. The adoption of contingency planning implies that there might be some eventualities in students' enrolment, human resource, technology, the economy and the actual teaching demanding institution's prompt solutions. For example; the number of potential students may rise, students' taste in terms of courses of study and societal needs and staff motivation factors (promotions and trainings) may also change. Although it is argued that "one cannot anticipate with precision everything which will happen over a longer period but one can minimize uncertainty and carry out one's program as a result.... any long-term program should be susceptible to being

changed according to the variety, complexity and instability of events” (Wren, 2009, p. 222). In view of the afore, academic and administrative staff requires continuous trainings starting from the initial stage of distance education, promotions, and change in remunerations in line with set policies (Minnaar, 2013; Polk State College , 2012). The institution needs to plan for advancement in technology in relation to distance education generations or forms and models discussed earlier in chapter 2. Institutions should also plan for both internal and external growth for example; to become a single model or consortia model for example; an institution needs to plan for a lot of things including resource mobilisation and partnerships (Malawi Government, 2008; Moore & Kearsley, 2012)). Institutions need to plan for survival in economic hardships or recession and rise in demand for industrial needs. It is argued that “the best of plans cannot anticipate all unexpected occurrences which may arise, but it does include a place for these events and prepares the weapons which may be needed at the moment of being surprised” (Wren, 2009, p. 222).

As stated earlier, a distance education institution comprises varying skills and specialisation displayed in various sub-systems with different functionalities forming the whole (Moore & Kearsley, 2012). In support of the establishment of systems, an institution can among other things comprise student support, material production and distribution, finance management, human resource, policy, and monitoring and evaluation. The student support system is the heart of open and distance education that ensures that the needs of student are satisfied from admission to course completion (Simango, 2016). The material sub-system consists of experts that develop, design, produce and distribute programmes to effect teaching and learning (Moore & Kearsley, 2012). The financial management sub-system prepares a dynamic and achievable budget by estimating revenues and expenses based on the institution’s goals and control its expenditure. The human resource consists of an important asset of the institution, people who make up the work culture of the institution (Minnaar, 2013). It is argued that distance education staff is heterogeneous as it seeks expertise from different personnel on both part-time and full-time conditions while the policy systems draw policies for all the other systems. As discussed in chapter 2, predetermined decisions on distance education at the macro (national) levels “reflect the culture and mission of the organisation, its structure, its funding, and the views and experience of its faculty” (Moore & Kearsley, 2012, p. 11) and later influenced and determined by institutional policy.

According to Minnaar (2013) the policies align all the units, strategies and processes and guide the goals. The monitoring and evaluation sub-system is responsible for evaluation of other sub-systems and or the whole distance education system. Effectiveness of learning materials for example; can be tried out to ex-students and experts at draft and final stages for feedback and error correction. Monitoring and evaluation includes the management information system which ensures proper flow of information in all the stages and sub-systems of the institution for realistic planning and inputs-outputs flow control. The management information systems ensure proper flow of information to reduce errors and wastage of resources. It promotes controlled admission to control costs and match procurement of raw materials with the production and distribution of learning materials and the provision of student support (Tony, 2008; Minnaar, 2013; Dzimbiri, 2015). However, it has been noted as a big challenge for legislatures and university senates to adopt policies that can facilitate education institutions' change espousing "from a craft approach to a systems approach" (Moore & Kearsley, 2012, p. 13). According to Moore and Kearsley (2012), the change requires that administrators redistribute the human and capital resources into the whole system and that instructors be retrained to work as specialists within a system. This discussion establishes that adequate planning for distance education is essential in ensuring effective institutional organisation for effective teaching and learning to yield positive learning implications.

One-size-fits-all approach to distance education

The concept one-size-fits-all is abstract. However, to gaudily explore the nature of institutional organisation of the distance secondary school teacher training in Malawi, it is important that I theorise the notion with its associated ODE contexts. The perpetual concepts linked to the 'one-size-fits-all' philosophy are: systems, curriculum, instructional material design and development, and organisation of the entire distance education system (Saba, 2012). Conceptualisation of the one-size-fits-all concept is vital in understanding how it is linked to planning of distance education systems, instructional materials production and distance teaching, learning and learning support. Again, theorising the notion, one-size-fits-all and its associated contexts, aids in drawing a better interpretation of distance learning and the impact of planning on the learning environment or institutional organisation.

The concept or philosophy 'one-size-fits-all' refers to the situation where "institutions do not offer programs with differential learning options to learners" (Saba, 2012, p. 35). When

applied to curriculum, the curriculum model is “a relic of the industrial era when standardisation of products and services was highly valued in advanced economies” (Saba, 2012, p. 37). The author argues that the one-size-fits-all institutional organisation or “industrial-management structure of colleges and universities dramatically inhibits the flexibility that dynamic distance education systems can offer students and instructors” (p. 37). This opinion can further be expounded to say, one-size-fits-all institutional organisation for higher education where all apply to both traditional and distance education can block probable innovations to teaching and learning. It is argued that the management sub-system is expected to offer human capital, “organise policy, needs assessment, and resource allocation; to evaluate outcomes; and to coordinate other sub-systems” (Moore & Kearsley, 2012 p. 12). The argument implies that in cases where distance education is “resting on the foundation of a larger system” (Moore & Kearsley, 2012 p. 11) all the management functions are “determined by institutional policy, which is itself influenced by state and national policies” (p. 11).

The one-size-fits-all approach to open and distance education implies that institutions through pre-set systems offer similar “courses of fixed length, content and pedagogy” (Dede, 2005, p. 8) rather than “educational services tailored to individual needs” (p. 8). It is argued that “in most cases, colleges and universities offer a one-size-fits-all curriculum through “one-size-fits-all course structure” (Saba, 2012, p. 35) and “information and communication technologies” (p. 37). This implication weds well with Minnaar’s (Minnaar, 2013, p. 82) argument that “the greatest challenge for education institutions moving towards ODL is to adopt a singular vision, policies and procedures for ODL implementation”. Minnaar’s argument implies that in higher education, it is difficult for an ODE system to have “clear guidelines available to follow when planning open and distance learning” (p. 2) and hence “lack strategic planning” (p. 3). It can hence be concluded that, since the open and distance education system is founded on policies of the larger systems, the ODE system especially on dual and mixed mode, follows ‘one-size-fits-all planning strategies. The one-size fits-all approach can hence be defined as the chic of creating similar products for use by all regardless of differences in individual tastes. In this case, “institutions do not offer programs with differential learning options to learners” (Saba, 2012, p. 36).

In a one-size-fits-all system “time and money is wasted...course structure is more costly because it prevents the system of higher education from responding better to the needs of the

learners in form and function” (Saba, 2012, p. 36). Saba further argues that the one-size-fits-all or “systems terminology and organisation of distance education cannot respond appropriately to their environment” (Saba, 2012, p. 36) hence in danger of decline. Moore and Kearsley (2012 p. 9) provide a contrasting argument contending that “a systems view is very helpful to an understanding of distance education as a field of study, and that adopting a systems approach is the secret of successful practice”. It is further argued that “because distance education requires using a range of technical and human resources, it is always best delivered in a system” (p. 9) with properly linked and coordinated sub-systems. These authors further argued that a systems approach to distance education aid the distance unit by providing “faculty of the parent body to provide subject expertise... on-campus faculty usually does the teaching with support from part time faculty...managed by the distance unit” (p. 4). Saba (2012) opposes the system approach further contending that it proposes “internet without fully taking advantage of personalised instruction and learning that the telecommunication and computer nexus offers...disregarding the most valuable aspect of digital technologies” (Saba, 2012, p. 30).

However, the one-size-fits-all philosophy applies to all walks of life. For example; analysis of innovative policies by Veugelers and Schweiger (2016) proved to be similar across the transition region characterised by an excessive focus on the creation of technology, particularly from public funded research organisations. It is argued in literature that the designed one-size-fits-all policies should consider individual circumstance to support innovations (Veugelers & Schweiger, 2016; Saba, 2012). This argument implies that properly planned one-size-fits-all contexts in distance education can yield effective learning environment and positive learning implications. In the next discussion I conceptualise the notion, study circle as an intervention within the one-size fits-all approach which is a strategy of addressing individual student needs as commended by Veugelers and Schweiger (2016). The conceptual analysis of the notion, study circle will aid in understanding learning implications of continuous real conversation on students’ learning as compared to mere one-size-fits-all curriculum.

Study circle

To understand the learning implications of the nature of the distance teacher training student teachers’ learning it is important that I conceptualise the notion study circle which has emerged in the study’s findings as an innovation. The concept study circle is defined as a

'small group of students' or 'learning strategy' of enhancing students' learning (Msiska, 2013) or a programme for the provision of learning support (Shirin, Islam, Mohammad, & Islam, 2014). The term study circle in Malawi, is attached to field supervisors or "distance education representatives of the college in the field" (Malawi Government, 2006, p. 10) help students on a face-to-face situation. Msiska (2013, p. 5) argues that "during the home-study period, learners are encouraged to form study circles, hold monthly seminars and meetings, and keep a professional portfolios to ensure successful learning". The notion study circle is attached to two other terms: professional portfolio building and reflective journals. Conceptualisation of the term study circle is important in understanding the learning implications of the distance secondary school teacher training in Malawi and the role study circles play in students' learning. As a learning strategy, a study circle is directly linked to planning.

What is a study circle? Or what constitutes a study circle? A study circle is a "small group of students who meet multiple times for academic purposes to discuss educational topics. In other words, it is a group of equals learning by sharing, thereby relying on each other's knowledge and experience" (Campain for Female Education, 2015, p. 2). This definition of a study circle implies that this small group of students "pursue similar subjects/courses and work together on a particular learning challenge" (Msiska, 2013, p. 5). This implication diverges the Malaysian model where "undergraduate students from various bachelor degree programs" (Shirin, et al. 2014, p. 1) are involved in the study circle program.

Msiska further argues that "study circles are either informally organised or timetabled to meet on specific days, for example, once a week on every Friday" (p. 5). This implies that a study circle can be unplanned or planned to happen on particular days and times when students interact with peers to discuss issues pertaining to their studies. It can therefore be argued that a study circle is a get-together of students for peer discussions either based on their areas of specialisation or mixed courses but with or without guidance from the institution.

A study circle is a "learning strategy that is employed to enhance students' success for independent learning" (Malawi Government, 2006, p. 39) thereby liberating their studies at both traditional and distance mode. It is argued in literature that study circles are used to supplement print instructional materials and to increase students' capacity to work independently while away from the instructors. Msiska (2013, p. 5) contends that study circles "discuss issues pertaining to distance learning support required, clarity of subject

content, effectiveness of teaching methods employed, community projects/school-based activities, professional topics as identified by learners”. (Shirin, et al. (2014, p. 20) argue that study circles can be used in “instilling the best moral and ethical value-laden ... philosophy into the graduates” (p. 20). The authors point out to the “infiltration and imparting of islamisation of knowledge as well as religious values” in the Islamic university as done through study circles in Malaysia. It can further be argued that a study circle is a source of real interaction for distance students as they interact not only with peers, but also field supervisors. The conversed purposes of study circles imply that they promote students’ thinking, creation of knowledge, solving and writing of assignments and homework, clarity of concepts and promotion of cultural and religious values.

Study circles are meant to “encourage active learning through group problem solving, reading and discussions; give students chance to participate and contribute to group’s learning and ensure variety in the learning styles” (Msiska, 2013, p. 5). This is the reason why apart from the student being autonomous and committed, the presence of supervisors is crucial. Apart from the pedagogic roles they play in study circles gathered in cluster centres, they likewise aid in monitoring students’ performance in study circles as the students themselves also “monitor performance and progress of peers” Msiska (2013). Students can monitor the progress of their peers by scrutinizing their professional portfolios when they meet for face-to-face sessions in their various study circles or at college level.

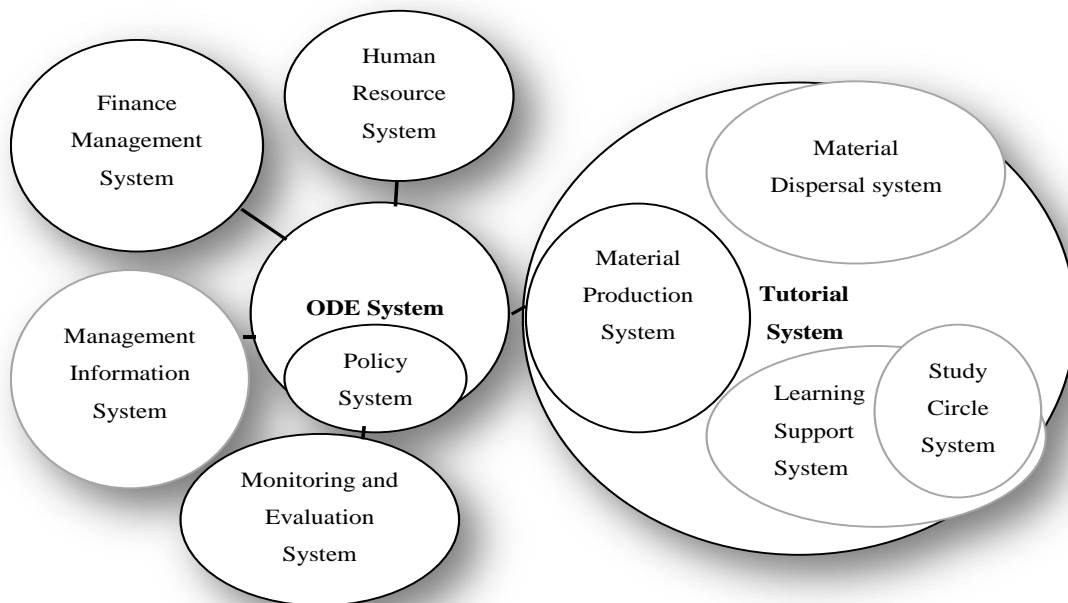
A professional portfolio is another learning strategy within the study circle strategy. A professional portfolio is a “collection of documents, sample performances and any relevant materials which show the range and evolution in a learner’s work and gives professional accomplishments in the life of the learner” (Msiska, 2013, p. 5). It is argued that the institution in both tradition and distance education employing study circle strategy advise students to individually compile a professional portfolio based on set guidelines while studying away from the educating institution. The portfolio contains “evidence showing that the student has achieved in each competency at both subject and school-based activity level” (Malawi Government, 2006, p. 41). Msiska (2013, p. 6) specifies that “during successive residential face-to-face sessions, learners submit their portfolios to lecturers for evaluating and grading” while peers “check the portfolios during residential sessions”. This implies that students carry their portfolios with them to all face-to-face gatherings for use by distance education coordinators, subject facilitators and supervisors, instructors, teacher helpers and

head teachers. A student is mandated to keep a professional portfolio for all the subjects of study as it is evaluated for formative as well as summative assessments. This means that the professional portfolio acts as strong evidence of students' attainment and adds-up to their final assessment results.

A reflective journal is another learning strategy within the study circle and used in monitoring students' performance. A reflective journal is a record of student's exact times and dates of specific occurrences and undertaking portraying the student's lived experience, how the student experienced it and the benefits drawn from it (Malawi Government, 2006). The definition of a reflective journal implies that the document can be the best tool to the assessment of not only study circles but the entire distance education system at an institution. For example; the student's reflection on his or her learning and support, disclose some deficit or successes of the content or instruction ensuing negative or positive feelings about the programme. The student may reflect inter alia on the performance of clusters and the study circles and the issues conversed, the support from field supervisors and inform the institution through the reflective journal.

The Malawi's study circle innovation extends the distance education system to incorporate teaching, learning and leaning support using the local structures. If linked to the proposed systems and sub-systems, the Malawi distance education system may embrace the following, as diagrammatically presented.

Figure 6: Suggested systems and sub-systems for distance teacher training in Malawi



The diagram implies that the tutorial system includes the materials production, dispersal and learning support incorporating the study circle sub-systems as has been a practice in one of the institutions in Malawi.

The diagram further links industrial education, conversational learning and phenomenology theories in that the study circles may act as a source of real conversation achieved through shared lived experiences gained from studying mediated mass produced instructions and occasional face-to-face interactions.

The main findings provide insights on the learning implications of the distance secondary teacher training in Malawi linked to institutional organisation. This is important for decision makers; Ministry of education and distance education institutions on the suitable strategies to follow in the enactment of open and distance education in dual-mode institutions. The research may also be of interest to a wider research community in Malawi, as it is the first study in Malawi on institutional organisation and learning implications. The study creates more opportunities for further study to be carried out in Malawi. The more the research is

carried out, the better the understanding of distance institutional organisations to ensure that Malawi will be bending towards positive learning implications and quality educational standards.

Since the study aimed at getting an in-depth understanding of the learning implications of the distance secondary teacher training to inform decision makers; Ministry of Education and institutions under study, on suitable strategies to adopt in the enactment of open and distance education, recommendations to these decision makers are provided in the next section starting with recommendations to national education policy maker; Ministry of Education.

Recommendations to policy maker: Dual-modes in Malawi

As claimed by instructors and students in chapter 7, the efficacy of open and distance education requires support from all stakeholders that include the government, colleges and students themselves. It was suggested in the same chapter that for ODE to improve there is need for all stakeholders to change their mindset towards distance education with the government taking the lead to build a positive attitude. Recommendations to educating institutions hosting distance education shall be listed next to be followed by recommendations to Ministry of Education.

Instituting planning for open and distance education

This study has shown that planning for distance education was a problem as discussed in chapter 7; educators could not give precise components or sub-systems of the distance education system regardless of displaying understanding of their roles in open and distance education. As discussed in chapter 3, planning entails the availability of living strategies like strategic plan, policies, systems and challenges that impact on planning processes. The two institutions differed in their magnitude of lack of planning. One institution had a comprehensive obsolete strategic plan for both traditional and distance education with the other had nothing documented for one to call it a plan. In this regard, they both lacked planning of open and distance education as the obsolete strategic plan expired 7 years ago. It was also suggested that instructors' unprofessionalism and students' under-learning were perhaps a result of space in educators' knowledge and its application to enactment and total dependency on one-size-fits-all philosophy. This argument offers sufficient grounds for the formulation of institutional policies, review and development of strategic plans,

establishments of clear systems within systems and identification of challenges to the planned strategies and their remedial actions. Insertion of institutional growth strategies such as resource mobilization activities to promote growth and sustainability of set development for accomplishment was endorsed as a necessity. The plans should be well communicated and coordinated within the institutions and among the systems to keep the staff informed.

Staff development

Evidence from the study showed that both administrators and instructors (educators) are not well conversant with the distance education institutional organisation which embraces planning, coordination, division of labour, specialisation and mass production of instructional materials. This created uncertainty and unprofessionalism in the way distance education was enacted more especially the way students were supported. The fact that instructors train traditional students or their participation in instructional material development does not guarantee their expertise in teaching and supporting distance students whose uniqueness requires distinct pedagogic and andragogic approaches. To bring about productive change in instructors' perceptions of the distance education programme, responsible staff should be adequately and constantly trained to fully develop distance education knowledge, skills and attitudes.

Intensify research activities

As shown in the study, the distance education for secondary teacher training lacks monitoring and evaluation systems as revealed in its uncertain system and absence of knowledge on high dropout rate experienced by one institution. To retain students and for efficacy, the institutions should establish a monitoring and evaluation system as well as an information communication system to ensure constant assessment of the programme and communication flow for immediate feedback on the weak areas requiring attention.

The provision of adequate learning and learning support

The study shows that learning and learning support in the distance secondary teacher training was a problem with one institution being heavily affected to the extent of experiencing high dropout rate as shown in chapter 9. Much as this was linked to instructors' inadequate training and heavy work overloads and there are several other factors exposed in chapters 8

and 9 that need to be looked into with seriousness as suggested by the data. Areas requiring institutions to improve with proposed improvements include:

1. Explore possible fertile areas for innovative approaches to student support and registration including use of social media (WhatsApp, Facebook, Skype, Short Message Service or SMS) while capitalising on existing affordable mobile phones. This should also help improve communication amongst the existing sub-systems.
2. Actualise set plans, for example; putting into action the plans of setting four learning centres across the country as well as skyping with students via internet centres.
3. Design all print instructional materials in a way that it provides “empathy” for students to purposefully interact with the mediated content.
4. Supplement print instructional materials with constant real conversation and the identified electronic media to fulfil conversational learning and complete the learning support cycle.
5. Provide essential learning resources such as laboratory sessions for students’ hands-on-experience during face-to-face sessions and through local centres using secondary school science teachers as local facilitators.
6. Provide timely feedback to students by timely marking and dispatching assignments for students to gauge their capabilities and make appropriate adjustments prior to end of semester examinations. Timely feedback on summative assessment reduces stress, discouragement and dropout rate thus, increasing completion rate.
7. Seek partnership and collaborative efforts with other institutions within and outside the country as a strategy for institutional growth and promotion of efficacy.
8. Market ODE with clear alertness of its required practices, procedures, prospects, paybacks and challenges prospective students may face. Marketing and the provision of a range of learning support to help prepare students for distance learning and minimise negative experiences.

As indicated earlier, recommendations for improvements were also made to the Ministry of Education on open and distance education implementation.

Recommendations to the Ministry of Education

The study found that although the state adopted and mainstreamed distance education in its status and attention, there is still limited understanding of its enactment. It has been argued all through the thesis that, the nature of distance education institutional organisation for

secondary teacher training in Malawi is swayed by the macro system's total adoption of one-size-fits-all approach affecting planning of the distance mode. The nation fails to guide open and distance education enactment through a national policy to guide its institutional organisation and accord it some autonomy to successfully explore its potentials. As discussed in chapter 2 and 7, distance education is intermingled within the traditional practices in both planning and operations without proper adaptation to the one-size-fits-all philosophy. The Ministry needs to come up with a distance education policy for higher learning in Malawi to direct its enactment with clear guidelines on its establishment, dependency status and financial muscle strategies. Therefore, the Ministry needs to consider open and distance education as a unique education mode, regulate its enactment and operations and help address its enactment challenges.

The formulation of a national distance education policy

The study shows that distance education in Malawi lacks national policy and guidelines for its enactment for institutions to take after and as guidance to the best institutional organisation practices. It was suggested that the success of distance education relies on the policy and adherence to it with devotion to a living strategic plan and other institutional policies. Since it is through policies that growth and eventualities are taken in, the Ministry of Education needs to draw a policy for distance education enactment with supporting guidelines. As discussed in chapter 2, this helps in proper management of students' enrolment, faculty members, trainings, technology, economic recession and distance learning.

Staff development activities

The study found out that the distance secondary teacher training in Malawi is run by inadequately trained personnel in open and distance education. Evidence from chapter 8 shows that educators run open and distance education without ample and constant training on technical know-how on how this innovative mode need to be enacted. Instructors have developed their own ways of handling distance education students as revealed in chapter 9 with uncertain systems discussed in chapter 8. It is proposed in this thesis that the government through the Ministry of Education should plan and initiate plans for instructors and administrators constant trainings. The trainings will not only instill in the educators the necessary skills, knowledge and attitudes to successfully handle the ODE mode but will help change instructors' and students' mindset. Adequately trained personnel will bring the needed

change not only to the secondary teacher training but to satisfying Malawi's hunger for higher education.

Total adoption and mainstreaming of open and distance education

This research has found out that although the state through the Ministry of Education prioritises governance and management, quality and relevance and access and equity in higher education, it however fails to fully capture distance education in the priorities. The state fails to acknowledge that the distance mode requires that organisation of resources be done differently from the traditional practices to allow instructors design courses and support students via technology (Moore, 2013). It is for the identified defy that the Ministry is required to fully integrate open and distance education in its plans with the understanding that distance education differs from the traditional education in its implementation. Although serving the same purpose of educating the nation distance education accelerates the development of the nation at a greater speed than the usual approaches. There are five recommendations for the state as follows:

1. Monitor planning, enactment and progress of open and distance education for higher education.
2. Free distance education from total adherence to traditional resources by empowering the mode to mobilise resources within its means and operate as a separate entity even within the one-size-fits-all approach.
3. Provide adequate instructors to cater for both distance and traditional modes.
4. Utilise fully open and distance education potential of providing equitable access to education by maximising the mode to address the endless hunger for higher education in Malawi. This is to fulfil one administrator's claim that open and distance education as 'a catalyst of national development' requires ample planning and resource mobilisation to attain quality education.
5. Provide adequate funding for open and distance education, ample and incessant staff training, improved salaries and other incentives to retain staff while extricating ODE from the traditional mode.

Study support to distance student teachers

This study has revealed that despite the need for the state to train teachers on the job through open and distance education, it fails to fully support them professionally and to some extent, financially. The student teachers bemoaned lack of support from school managers who always gave them heavy workloads regardless of their school work, blocking income generating activities like invigilation and lack of student loans. It is for this reason that the Ministry of education is recommended to support distance student teachers as follows:

- i. Liaise with school managers to give the student teachers a breather for them to study properly.
- ii. Liaise with school managers to include the student teachers in activities that bring money to teachers to help support their studies.
- iii. Provide loans to student teachers to ease their financial challenges.

Recommendation for further research

Management of higher distance education institutions in Malawi

There is shortage of research on enactment and learning implications in dual-mode institutions specifically on distance education institutional organisation approaches. Presently, there is no national policy to guide formulation of institutional policy to help improve the institutional organisation and the nation to attain its three educational pillars of equity and access, quality and relevance and management and governance. Thus, more research, both qualitative and quantitative is required in this innovative comparatively new field of education implemented through dual-mode institutions in Malawi. Careful analysis of the data made me suggest the following recommendations for future studies and practice:

Future researchers should consider expanding the unit of analysis to include educators of privately owned dual-mode colleges of education and carry out a comparative study of private and government owned institutions of higher learning. If a qualitative method is applied in a future study on this topic, the researcher should consider expanding the sample to include those institutions that have just introduced distance education such as the Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources.

Future researchers should consider applying a randomised sampling method so that the results might be a more representative of the distance secondary teacher training in Malawi. This study included a population sample from two dual-mode teacher training institutions in Malawi with a final sample of four educators (2 instructors, 2 administrators) and ten student teachers. The future researcher should consider studying financing of distance education in dual-mode institutions to shed light on how the two education modes are financed while housed by a single institution.

Conclusion

This study bid to draw an in-depth understanding of the learning implications of the distance secondary teacher training in Malawi in relation to the learning environment or institutional organisation. The main study's contribution to knowledge is diverse. First, this study makes an original contribution to knowledge on distance education institutional organisation and learning implications in Malawi. Second, the study makes a significant contribution to theory by blending tenets of three theories into a single theoretical framework. Third, the study makes an original contribution to knowledge by generating and introducing phenomenological reflections into research as a tool to data collection of lived experiences. Fourth, the study makes a significant contribution to knowledge by conceptualising notions such as planning, one-size-fits-all and study circle which were otherwise abstract. The study revealed that regardless of the adoption and mainstreaming of distance education in its status and attention in Malawi, there is still limited understanding of its enactment. The state and institutions hosting open and distance education are finding it difficult to draw policies for or review existing plans hence embrace uncertain systems. This has bred total adherence to one-size-fits-all approach to ODE implementation, dependency syndrome and lack of autonomy yielding high dropout rate and student retention where innovative strategies were employed. This supports the findings of two distance education studies. These studies are on organisation of dual mode distance education institutions in Nigeria: Present and future done in 2015 in Nigeria by Ipaye. The study found that organisational practices for dual mode institutions in Nigeria differed from one institution to another. However, the Nigerian dual mode institutions registered some common trends that indicate similarities in all dual mode institutions in Nigeria as follows: setting of a special unit and well-known subunits with specific activities and distance education initiation endorsed by the university senate whose coordinator automatically becomes a member of the senate while reporting directly to the

Chancellor. Ipaye, disclosed the one-size-fits-all philosophy of depending on same lecturers teach same content to both traditional and distance students with lectures having varying experiences and to some extent inexperienced to teach certain courses. The only departure from this study is that, the Nigerian dual mode practice has a clearly set learning environment (institutional organisation) embedded in specifically established system with sub-systems to direct the institution. Similarly, Saba (2012) found one-size-fits-all approach hindering flexibility of ODE systems. What this suggests perhaps is that institutional organisation for distance education in dual-mode institutions cannot do without the one-size-fits-all philosophy. However, the immediate suggestion is what one institution in this study has done, to adapt the philosophy by bringing in some innovations such as study circles to minimise the rigidity. The study made some recommendations which could be used in the improvement of the distance learning environment.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Ethical Clearance for University of KwaZulu-Natal



12 April 2016

Mrs Annie T Chizengo-Thawani 214585072
School of Education
Edgewood Campus

Dear Mrs Chizengo-Thawani

Protocol reference number: HSS/0380/0160

Project Title: Investigating Learning Implications of Distance Secondary School Teacher Training in Malawi

Full Approval – Expedited Application

In response to your application received 09 April 2016, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol has been granted **FULL APPROVAL**.

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment /modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number.

PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

The ethical clearance certificate is only valid for a period of 3 years from the date of issue. Thereafter Recertification must be applied for on an annual basis.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully

Dr Shenuka Singh (Chair)
Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

/p/m

Cc Supervisor: Dr Lester Brian Shawa
Cc Academic Leader: Research: Dr SB Khoza
Cc School Administrator: Ms Tyzer Khumalo

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee
Dr Shenuka Singh (Chair)

Westville Campus, Govan Mbeki Building

Postal Address: Private Bag 364001 Durban 4000

Telephone: +27 (0) 31 266 3557/83950/4557 Fax: +27 (0) 31 266 4600 Email: u@ukzn.ac.za / senrum@ukzn.ac.za / mcclup@ukzn.ac.za

Website: www.ukzn.ac.za



Partner Campuses: Edgewood Howard College Medical School Pietermaritzburg Westville

Appendix 2: Requesting participants to participate



Dear Sir/Madam/Prof/Dr/Mrs/Miss/Mr

REQUEST TO PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH

My name is **Mrs Annie Tamara Chizengo-Thawani** studying at University of KwaZulu-Natal. Research is the main component in the present study; hence, I hereby present to you my proposal for consideration to take part in my academic research study. I request you to participate in interviews that will be conducted at your convenience. After understanding the objective of this study as outlined below, I would like to request you to consider signing the Consent to Participation at the end of this letter.

Study Title: Exploring Learning Implications of the Distance Secondary School Teacher Training in Malawi

Central Research Questions:

1. What is the nature of institutional organisation of the distance secondary school teacher training at Domasi College of Education and Mzuzu University?
2. How does the institutional organisation of the distance secondary school teacher training at Domasi College of Education and Mzuzu University affect student teachers' learning experiences?
3. Why does the institutional organisation of the distance secondary school teacher training at Domasi College of Education and Mzuzu University affect student teachers' learning experiences in the way it does?

Research Aims and Benefits

1. To explore the nature of distance education institutional organisation for secondary school teacher training at Domasi College of Education and Mzuzu University in Malawi.

2. To explore how the distance education secondary school teacher training at Domasi and Mzuzu University affect teachers' learning experiences.
3. To explore the learning experiences of secondary school teachers trained through distance education programmes at Domasi College of Education and Mzuzu University.

Research Student Annie Tamara Chizengo-Thawani

Telephone 265 (0) 888522296/994475407. Email: anniethawani@yahoo.co.uk

Project Location Mzuzu University and Domasi College of Education

Alternate Contact Person Dr Lester Brian Shawa (PhD)

University of KwaZulu Natal,
Higher Education Training and Development,
Durban 4041, South Africa. Tel: +27 (0) 31 260 22991.
Email: shawa@ukzn.ac.za

Ethical Clearance Office Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethical Committee
University of KwaZulu Natal
Research Office- Ethics
Govan Mbeki Building
Telephone: 0312604557

Participation in this study interviews is entirely voluntary; with the right being reserved for you to withdraw participation without giving reasons or without penalty of any sort.

You are offered the opportunity to declare the type of anonymity and confidentiality required for your involvement in this study. Although your name will not be mentioned, materials from the study might still be attributed to the role you played in the study. Again, the name of the institution you are coming from will be mentioned only where necessary.

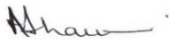
A single interview shall last a maximum of two hour administered to educators at different structural levels and distance students at Domasi College of Education and Mzuzu University. A copy of the Interview Schedule is attached. Audio recording device will be used to record the Interviews proceedings.

The information provided will only be used for the purposes of this PhD research, academic papers and conferences.

The researcher will be the lone transcriber of the interviews and that she will replace your names with letters/codes and electronically wipe out the tape recording of the interview at the end of the research. The primary data will be stored in the School of Education, University of KwaZulu-Natal to be disposed according to the regulations of the University after a period of five years.

I look forward to receiving your responses to this request.

Thank you.



Annie Thawani.

Data generation participant's informed consent.

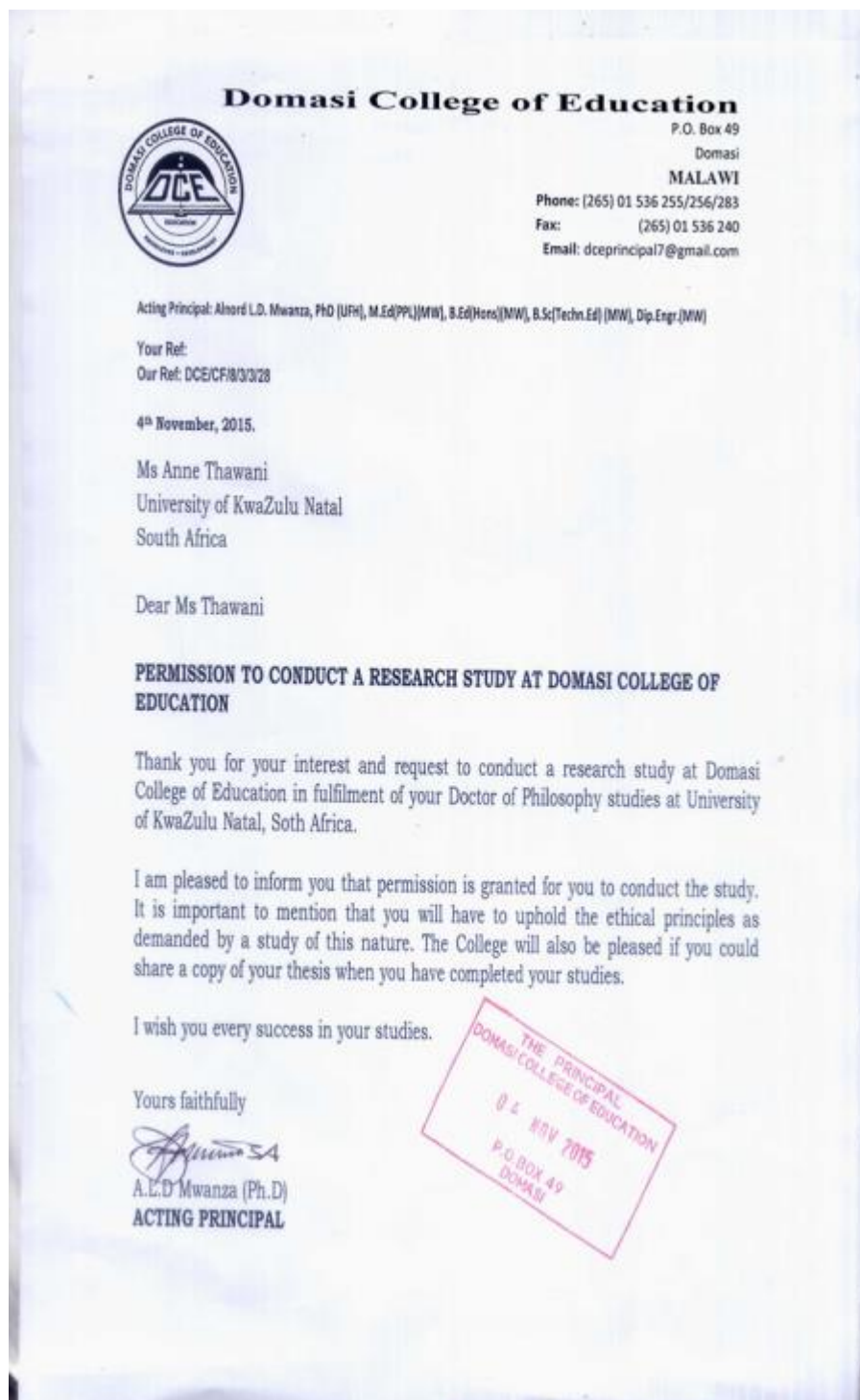
I..... (Full names of participant)
hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research study, and I consent to participating in the research.

| | | |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| I would like to check transcripts of my interview | | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I would like to receive a summary of the research findings. | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| I would like to be provided with an electronic link to the final PhD thesis. | | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| The institution would like to have a copy of the thesis | | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I hereby provide consent to: | | |
| Audio-record my interview | YES | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | NO | <input type="checkbox"/> |

NAME OF PARTICIPANT

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT _____ DATE _____

Appendix 3: Permission to conduct research at Domasi College



Appendix 4: Permission to conduct research at Mzuzu University



MZUZU UNIVERSITY

DIRECTORATE OF RESEARCH

Mzuzu University
Private Bag 201
Luwingu
Mzuzu 2
MALAWI
TEL: 01 320 722
FAX: 01 320 648

24th March, 2016

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT MZUZU UNIVERSITY: MRS ANNIE TAMARA CHIZENGO THAWANI

Please refer to your request for permission to conduct research at this University. I am pleased to inform you that permission has been granted for you to carry out your research titled '*Investigating Learning Implications of Distance Secondary School Teacher Training in Malawi*' at this institution. This permission is granted on the understanding that the information that will be collected under this study will be used strictly for academic purposes and that where necessary informant consent will be sought before interviews and that respondents' confidentiality will be maintained.

Should you need any logistical support to facilitate your study at the University, contact the Directorate of Research.

Dr Victor Kasulo
DIRECTOR OF RESEARCH

Appendix 5: Letter of introduction from the Ministry of Education

All correspondences should be addressed
To: **The Education Division Manager**



In reply please quote ref no. SWED/1/1
SOUTH WEST EDUCATION
DIVISION
PRIVATE BAG 386
CHICHIRI
BLANTYRE 3
MAT AWI

TO SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN SOUTH WEST EDUCATION DIVISION

AUTHORITY TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

I write to kindly request your office to allow ANNIE TAMARA CHIZENGO-THAWANI to undertake research activities at your institution. She is currently a student at the University of KwaZulu Natal (UKZN) IN South Africa and she is conducting research for her Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) dissertation.

I would be most grateful if she is given all the necessary support and guidance so that his research activities are carried out successfully.

I look forward to your usual support and hoping at the same time that you will accord this request all the attention and urgency that it deserves.



ANTHONY MANJA - PEMA

FOR: EDUCATION DIVISION MANAGER (SWED)

Appendix 6 Questions for Administrators

a) Understanding distance education and its institutional organisation

1. What sub-systems/departments/activities comprise your distance education system?
2. What are the functions of each sub-system in the provision of distance education and in the institution as a whole?
3. How are the distance education sub-systems/departments coordinated to make sure that they all contribute positively to the distance education Programme?
4. What documents are available and in use in the institution to guide the enactment of distance education?
5. What are your core responsibilities and routine tasks in this institution?
6. What are the institutions' plans for growth in the coming five (5) to ten (10) years?
7. What is the institution's motivation for the set plans?
8. How does the institution plan to achieve the specified plans?
9. How will the successful enactment of the plans benefit the institution, students and the nation?
10. What could be the possible impact of failure in enactment of the set plans?
11. Studies done in education have reviewed the need for institutions to offer quality and relevant education through delivery of quality instructions. How relevant is this statement to the organisation of your institution?

b) Learning support and students' retention

1. What is the profile of the institution's distance students?
2. What criteria does the institution follow to enroll distance students? Justify the enrolment procedure followed.
3. How has your institution grown in terms of distance students enrolment, graduates and distance courses since the introduction of the distance education programme for teachers?
4. What is it that you have done to sustain student teachers retention and successful completion of the training?
5. In what ways does your institution respond to Malawi's educational pillars of equity and access, quality and relevance, and management and governance through the distance teacher training?

6. Given the way you address underqualified teachers' dire need for upgrading; do you think you are doing enough to widen their access to upgrading?
7. How has your institution managed to combat qualified teacher shortage in rural schools?
8. What is the institution's anticipation in:
 - i. students' enrolment
 - ii. faculty members
 - iii. academics
 - iv. technology
 - v. economy
 - vi. distance teaching?

c) Distance teaching, Learning and learning support

1. According to the organisation of your institution, are there any known procedures guiding the development and distribution of distance learning materials?
2. Is there any interconnectedness between the learning materials' development and the other sections or sub-systems of the distance education institution?
3. How are your responsibilities and tasks interconnected to students learning and instructional delivery in this institution?
4. How does the administrative roles and responsibilities link with the distance learning materials?
5. Which activities in the institution constitute students' learning and support?
6. What is done to make sure that the learning materials fully and relevantly communicate to students?
7. What role do you play as administrators in supporting distance students?
8. Most distance education institutions have been criticized for lack of adequate student support to bridge the gap between educators and students and failure to bring education to the student's door steps. What has been your experience and support?
9. What support and changes does the organisation of your institution need to ensure total support to students' learning?
10. Studies done in both developed and developing countries indicate the possibility of multimedia use while harnessing the available local resources to reach out to masses regardless of their remoteness. What is your experience and perception?
11. How does your distance education institution hire its instructors?

12. What are the characteristics of recruits for instructors?
13. What is your experience of staff recruitment in this institution?
14. What challenges does your institution experience in training and supporting distance students?
15. What could be possible causes of the institution's challenges?
16. How best could the distance education programmes at your institution be implemented to address the challenges?
17. What is your general perception of the Programme and the way it is organised in this institution?

Appendix 7: Questions for Instructors

a) Understanding of distance education

1. What do you understand by a “distance education instructor”?
2. What are your roles and traditional responsibilities as a distance instructor?
3. For how long have you been a distance instructor?
4. How has your job as an instructor assisted you in understanding the nature of distance students?
5. What are the characteristics of your distance students?

b) Distance education institutional organisation

1. What is the composition of your institution’s distance education system in terms of sub-systems/departments/operations?
2. What are the functions of each sub-system in the provision of distance education and in the institution as a whole?
3. Which documents guide the delivery of distance education in the institution?
4. If there are any, how do the named documents perform the guiding role to the institution?
5. If there are no documents, then, what informs the distance teaching, learning and student support?
6. What is done to ensure that the intended institutional objectives on students’ learning and support are met?
7. How significant are the individual documents to the provision of distance teacher training in your institution?

c) Teaching, Learning and students’ support

1. What is your experience of teaching and supporting students at a distance?
2. Studies indicate that distance education especially in developing nations rely on pre-planned and pre-packaged learning materials. How is this true to the designing,

development and distribution of the distance learning materials to students in your institution?

3. What procedures are followed in the production of learning material? Who is involved in this process?
4. How are the distance student teachers trained?
5. Distance students are considered to be psychologically and transactionally isolated, how does your institution and you as instructors reduce the psychological gap among students?
6. What other roles do you play in the institution apart from lecturing?
7. As an instructor in this institution, how do you support distance student teachers?
8. The way you effect learning to distance students, do you think that's the best you can do or more has to be done?

d) The impact of the distance teacher training

1. Research studies have shown that distance education as an innovation in the education sector impact differently on students, lecturers and the nation at large, what has been your experience?
2. Given the way you instruct and support distance students, do you think you are adequately reaching out to all students regardless of their locality?
3. If yes to question 2, how is this achieved? If no, why is it so?
4. How does the organisation of instructions in this institution address the shortage of qualified teachers in Malawi?

e) Challenges and suggestions for improvement

1. What challenges have you experienced as an instructor in training and supporting distance students?
2. What should be done to address the challenges?
3. What is your general perception of the way distance education is organised in this institution in relation to student learning and experiences?
4. What improvements do you suggest if distance learning is to be efficiently and effectively delivered?

Appendix 8: Students Questions

a) Student teachers' lived experiences

1. What do you understand by open and distance learning?
2. What were your motivations to pursue your teacher training through an open and distance education programme?
3. What is it like to be a distance education student undergoing teacher training? (Include expectations and actual results).
4. With typical examples of situations and their influences, can you describe fully how different situations affected your learning and experiences of the distance learning programme?
5. Based on your experience as a distance student what do you think should be done to improve the distance teacher programme at the institution where you were/are studying and elsewhere in terms of:
 - i. Program management ,
 - ii. Instructors
 - iii. Instructional delivery
 - iv. Student support
 - v. The general program

Appendix 9: Self-Learning Materials' Analysis Worksheet

| | | | |
|--|---------------------------------|--|---|
| Name of Document (Module) | | | |
| Social Production of the document | | | |
| Relevance | Date of production | Institutional setting (sub-systems) | Material design and production (human activities) |
| | | | |
| Social Organisation of the document | | | |
| Writing process | Writers involved (specialities) | | |
| <i>Language</i> | | | |
| <i>Readability</i> | | | |
| <i>Interactivity</i> | | | |
| <i>Assessment</i> | | | |
| <i>Feedback</i> | | | |
| Direct analysis (Semiotics) | | | |
| Teaching Narratives | | | |
| <i>Language</i> | | | |
| Application to theories | | | |
| Industrial education theory | | Conversational learning theory (mediated conversation) | |
| | | | |

Appendix 10: Turnitin Originality Report

8/21/2019

Turnitin

Document Viewer

Turnitin Originality Report

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 ANNIE TAMARA CHIZENGO-THAWANI

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| <1% match (Internet from 26-May-2016) http://uir.unisa.ac.za | ■ |
| <1% match (publications) Jerry Evans, "Globalisation, post-Fordism and open and distance education", Distance Education, 1995 | ■ |
| <1% match (Internet from 10-Dec-2012) http://www.lba.unesco.org | ■ |
| <1% match (Internet from 24-Nov-2013) http://shodysanga.infn.net.ac.in | ■ |

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1/107

Appendix 11: Language Clearance Certificate

25 Maple Crescent
Circle Park
KLOOF
3610

Phone 031 – 7075912
0823757722
Fax 031 - 7110458
E-mail:
dr1govender@telkomsa.net
sathsgovender4@gmail.com

Dr Saths Govender

15 JULY 2018

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

LANGUAGE CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

This serves to inform that I have read the final version of the thesis titled:

**EXPLORING LEARNING IMPLICATIONS OF THE DISTANCE
SECONDARYSCHOOLTEACHER TRAINING IN MALAWI: A CASE STUDY OF MZUZU
UNIVERSITY AND DOMASI COLLEGE OF EDUCATION by Annie Tamara Chizengo-
Thawani, Student Number 214585072**

To the best of my knowledge, all the proposed amendments have been effected and the work is free of spelling and grammatical errors. I am of the view that the quality of language used meets generally accepted academic standards.

Yours faithfully

S. Govender (duly signed)

DR S. GOVENDER

B Paed. (Arts), B.A. (Hons), B Ed.
Cambridge Certificate for English Medium Teachers
MPA, D Admin.

Appendix 12: Change in Research Title Approval Notification



15 February 2019

Mrs Annie T Chizengo-Thawani (214585072)
School of Education
Edgewood Campus

Dear Mrs Chizengo-Thawani,

Protocol reference number: HSS/0380/016D

New project title: Exploring Learning implications of the Distance Secondary School Teacher Training in Malawi: A case study of Mzuzu University and Domasi College of Education

Approval Notification – Amendment Application

This letter serves to notify you that your application and request for an amendment received on 15 February 2019 has now been approved as follows:

- Change In Title

Any alterations to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form; Title of the Project, Location of the Study must be reviewed and approved through an amendment /modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number.

PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

The ethical clearance certificate is only valid for period of 3 years from the date of original issue. Thereafter Recertification must be applied for on an annual basis.

Best wishes for the successful completion of your research protocol.

Yours faithfully

Dr Rosemary Sibanda (Chair)

/ms

Cc Supervisor: Dr Lester Briar Shawa
Cc Academic Leader Research: Dr SB Khoza
Cc School Administrator: Ms Tyzer Khumalo

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

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Website: www.uukzn.ac.za



100 YEARS OF ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

Funding Campuses: Edgewood Howard College Medical School Pietermaritzburg Westville