CHAPTER EIGHT

CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 INTRODUCTION

This study set out to critically examine the existing distance education model, for the provision of In-Service Teacher Education (INSET) for secondary school teachers in Uganda, identify its strengths and weaknesses and to suggest a framework for improvement. This chapter therefore provides the summary, implications and conclusions of the study and sets out to present recommendations for the improvement of In-Service Distance Education for the Education of Secondary School Teachers in Uganda and it also presents suggestions for further research.

The introduction to the study is given in chapter one. This chapter also includes the reasons for the study, states the research problem, research objectives, and questions. The main objective of the study was to 'critically examine the existing model for the provision of distance education In-Service Teacher Education (INSET) for secondary school teachers in Uganda against existing contemporary distance education theories and practice, identify the model's strengths and weaknesses thereby establishing its efficacy to provide quality teacher education and suggest a framework for improvement'. In order to achieve this, the study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What are the various theories of distance education and the different typologies of distance education institutions?
2. What are the different definitions and forms of teacher education?
3. To what extent can distance education be a viable option for the provision of high quality teacher education that effectively meets education needs in Uganda?
4. What are the practical demands in teacher education by distance and are the current teacher education programmes meeting these demands?
5. What factors are impacting teacher education by distance in Uganda?
6. What are the strengths and weaknesses of teacher education programmes that have been offered through distance education in Uganda and how can these programmes be improved?
7. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the Bachelor of Education (External) and how far is it helping teachers acquire the required competencies?

8. To what extent can Information Communications Technology be integrated in the provision of Teacher Education by Distance In Uganda?
9. How should a distance teacher education model be designed to meet the needs and demands in Uganda?

Uganda has run some teacher education programmes using distance education and through these programmes, a number of teachers have been trained. Makerere University in particular is running the biggest programme in the country and is through this programme, the Bachelor of Education (B.Ed External), providing in-service teacher education for secondary school teachers. However, this programme seems to be facing a number of challenges and as a result there are suspicions that the graduates of the programme are not 'as good as' teachers trained in the internal programmes. It was therefore vital to identify what some of these challenges are and suggest ways of making the programme much more efficient.

In chapter two the study traced the historical development of distance education, explored some of the theories underpinning it and related these to distance education in Uganda. From these theories, key characteristics of distance education were identified and these are:

- The teacher and the learner are separated (Amundsen 1996:61-79, Holmberg 1995b:2, Keegan 1996:119, Moore 1996:22, Peters 1994:227, 1996:45, Verduin and Clark 1991:8). This separation is both a challenge and an opportunity. It is a challenge, because the distance education institutions have to plan for effective and efficient ways of bridging this gap. It is however an opportunity because it opens avenues for creativity so as to bridge this gap. Also the different dimensions of this separation should all be taken into consideration
- Technology is important for bridging the distance between the teacher and the learner but the choice of the technology to be used needs care since there are a number of factors that are likely to affect this choice (Moore 1996:25, Verduin and Clark 1991:124).
- Distance education promotes learner autonomy since learners will often be required, for most of the time, to study on their own (Moore 1996:29, Peters 1994:227, 1996:46, Verduin and Clark 1991:4-5).
- Distance education demands careful planning and organisation since there are many activities to be run involving a wide cross section of people and since the students will often be scattered across large areas (Keegan 1996:120, Peters 1994:118).

- To effectively and efficiently provide all the services, distance education needs key sub systems which should each be well established and organised but which must all work in unity and harmony.

The chapter also discussed some of the various distance education programmes that have been provided in Uganda since 1990 and the major features of these programmes discussed.

In chapter three and as part of theoretical analysis, the study explored In-Service Teacher Education provided in Uganda through Distance Education since 1990. The different programmes discussed in this chapter indicate that Uganda has attempted to use distance education for the training of schoolteachers and this has in many ways helped Uganda increase the number of trained teachers particularly for the primary section and to upgrade a number of secondary school teachers. However, there have been a number of challenges and in the face of increasing school enrolments there is continued need for more and for better teachers.

Chapter four presented the methodology that was used to carry out the study. To gather all the data presented in this study, three basic instruments were used; literature survey, questionnaires and a structured interview schedule. The sample in the study included current students of B.Ed and B.Sc (External) programmes, prospective students of the B.Ed (External), tutors and managers of the programme and teacher education policy makers. The chapter also attempted to cover content validation of the research instruments.

The data from the fieldwork is then presented in chapters five, six and seven. Chapter five discussed viability of distance education and factors that impact it in Uganda. The other concerns in this chapter were the challenge of providing for practical demands of teacher education and the need for a well-articulated policy on distance education.

Whereas chapter six explores the strengths and weaknesses of teacher education programmes that have been run in the country using distance education, chapter seven focuses on the integration of Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) in these programmes. Issues of access, use and cost of the ICTs are all discussed here. The discussions on the weaknesses and strengths of the teacher education programmes that have been run in Uganda using distance education and the discussion of the Bachelor of

Education (External) do reveal that there have been a lot of achievements but the study has also revealed that there are a number of areas of weakness that need attention.

Using the information gathered from the literature survey, and the results of the empirical data, a framework for the improvement of In-Service Distance Education for the Education of Secondary School Teachers in Uganda is then presented in chapter eight. Since no research is always totally exhaustive but rather raises further questions, suggestions for further research are then given at the close of the report. See also figure 1.2 for the organisation and structure of the report.

In the next sections, the conclusions drawn from this study are discussed.

8.2 SUMMARY OF RESEARCH FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

8.2.1 Viability of Distance Education to Meet Educational Needs in Uganda

This study sought to establish how many of the students, prospective students, tutors and managers of B.Ed (External) and policy makers actually do believe in the viability of distance education to meet educational needs in Uganda. According to the results obtained in the study, whereas there is general belief in the viability of distance education to meet various educational needs in the country, there is hesitation regarding its efficacy to cater for education in the science related fields.

The results indicate that policy makers in education believe that distance education has a lot of potential in the country because of its potential to increase access, provide flexible teaching/learning and the possibility that distance education could be cheaper than internal programmes. This faith in the potential of distance education is in agreement with views already expressed by various writers on distance education (Bates 2000:128, De Wolf 1994:1558, Holmberg 2001:17, Orivel 1994:1567, Perraton 2000:126-127). Perraton, Robinson and Creed (2001:28) in the case studies they present conclude that distance education has been used and continues to be used for teacher education in the areas of *'…initial professional education, continuing professional development, curriculum reform and change, and teachers' career development'.*

However, the respondents in the study expressed reservations with using distance education to offer science-based programmes. This is largely because of the demands in

these subjects for practical work, hands-on experience, specialist study materials and equipment, close interaction and supervision by tutors, which distance education, according to them may not be able to meet. The other reason for hesitation is the likely high cost of providing these courses. A number of authors have in the past said that distance education has been accused of being effective in distributing information and delivering facts but as ineffective in promoting deeper learning and the acquisition of critical thinking skills (Bates 1994:1577, Garrison 1996:12, Henri and Kaye 1993:27-28, Holmberg 1993:331, Paul 1990:85, Perraton 2000:12). This failure could according to these results be extended to failure in the acquisition of practical skills - a common need in science subjects. However, the policy makers' fear may partly emanate from lack of information on cases in Sub Saharan Africa in general and in Uganda in particular where distance education has been successfully used for science courses.

8.2.2 Factors that Impact distance Education in Uganda

As another way of establishing what the respondents in this study think about the viability of distance education in Uganda, they were asked to suggest factors that are impacting distance education in Uganda. According to them, there are a number of factors. The factors identified are in agreement with what other writers have identified before as important in distance education. These factors include among others:

- The need for expertise in distance education (Bottomley and Calvert 2003:3).
- Government and institutional policies on distance education (Bates 2000:18, 2001:142).
- The level of funding available for distance education programmes (Perraton, Robinson and Creed 2001:8).
- How far institutions and students have access to Information Communication Technologies (Bates 1994:1577, De Wolf 1994:1561, Meyer-Peyton 2000:85, Moore 1996:25, Verduin and Clark 1991:124).
- How distance education programmes are managed and administered (Aguti 1996:84, 88; Keegan 1996:120).
- Attitudes of various stakeholders towards distance education (Paul 1990:59, Perraton 2000:82,199).

The study did not seek to establish which of these factors has the greatest impact on distance education so determining this would perhaps require further study. However, planners can bear these in mind while planning and implementing programmes.

8.2.3 Strengths and weaknesses of TE programmes

Chapter two documented teacher education programmes run by distance education in Uganda since 1990. The research results showed that many of the respondents in the study have participated in these programmes (see figure 6.1). From this experience a number of strengths and weaknesses were raised. Some of these weaknesses were in the areas of:

- The content of the programmes
- The management and administration of these programmes
- Study materials development and provision in these programmes
- Students support services provided in the programmes
- Assessment and examinations in these programmes and
- The level of integration of ICTs in these programmes.

It is critical that all the major subsystems of any distance education programme are given sufficient attention because poor management, inadequate study materials and poor student support are likely to lead to a poor teaching/learning environment. Management is key for the planning, daily running of programmes, their monitoring and evaluation. Good management is therefore the hub for the provision of the rest of the services and hence highly critical (Peters 1994:118).

Study materials on the other hand are central in the actual teaching/learning acts. Study materials are the bridge between the institution and the learners and without study materials; regardless of the media that is used for the provision no effective distance education can take place. For, study materials take up the teaching functions of a teacher, and the students who, in distance education are expected to study for the most of their time on their own, cannot do without these study materials (Keegan 1996:130, Robinson 1996:7, Robertshaw 2000:2). Likewise, student support is set up with the ultimate purpose of enabling the students to effectively study. Support services are important for the provision of other support services like guidance and counselling, provision of library services and face-to-face sessions (Keegan 1996:130, Robertshaw 2000:2). Although students could survive without efficient support services, their study is likely to be with a lot of struggle and difficulties.

So a combination of poor management, inadequate study materials and poor student support will lead to a poor teaching/learning environment; which would in turn lead to low

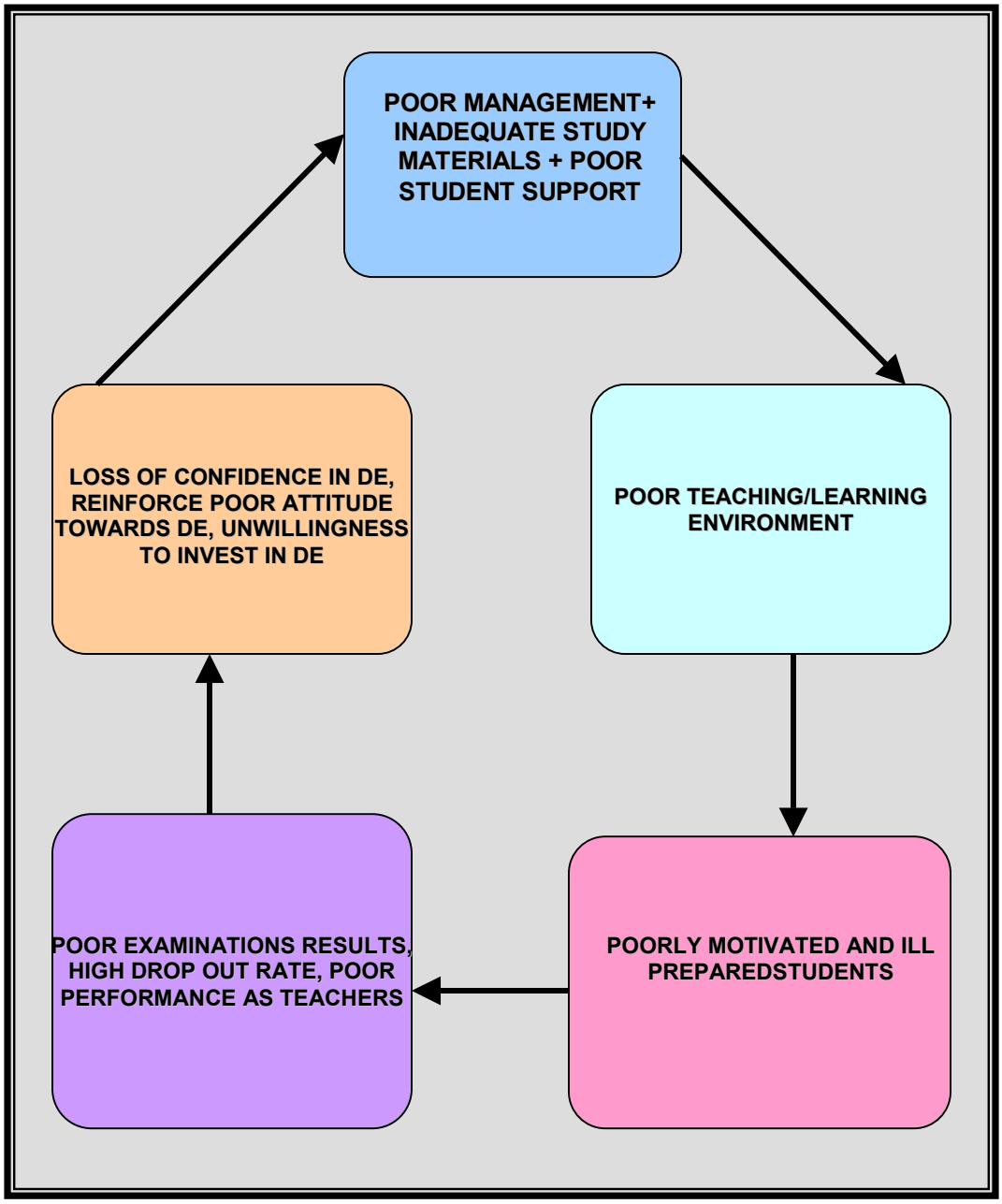
motivation for students. Teachers joining INSET programmes are often working adults with many other responsibilities. So although they may have high motivation for joining the programmes, this motivation needs to be sustained and where possible heightened and a good teaching/learning environment can achieve this. In addition to low motivation, these students are likely to be ill prepared for examinations and implementation of the knowledge and skills they are expected to have learnt from the programme which will inevitably lead to high dropout rates, poor examination results and poor performance as teachers.

Distance education has been accused of being a second rate option of providing education and there are perceptions that its graduates are not good enough (Paul 1990:59, Perraton 2000:82, 199). Also, one of the challenges that many distance education programmes face is high drop out rates (Holmberg 2001:73, Keegan and Rumble 1982:228, Paul 1990:79, Perraton 2000:12, Perraton et al. 2001:30, Tooth 2000:2). So, high drop out rates, poor examination passes and poor performance on graduation is likely to lead to loss of confidence in distance education, reinforce the poor attitudes towards distance education and cause policy makers to be unwilling to invest in distance education. For then distance education will be viewed as a losing option - an option with only dismal achievements.

Programmes that are either established or being run in circumstances where confidence in distance education is low, attitudes are poor and policy makers unwilling to invest in distance education, are likely to be poorly resourced and therefore poorly managed and with inadequate student support. So, in my opinion the vicious cycle of mediocre distance education will then continue. Figure 8.1 is an illustration of what I believe is this vicious cycle of mediocre distance education.

This seems to be the dilemma that the B.Ed (External) is currently in. The B.Ed (External) programme was set up among other things to provide upgrading opportunities and it should be seen to be achieving this. It has indeed done so as shown in the previous discussions however the programme is still plagued by a number of problems. The challenge therefore is to break out of this vicious cycle and begin to work towards a much more effective and efficient programme. To do so requires a closer examination of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats or challenges facing it and design plans that will cause it to improve.

Figure 8.1: Vicious Cycle of Mediocre Distance Education Programmes



The guidelines given in this chapter in the form of a framework are meant to be the beginning of that process. These are not prescription drugs meant to 'fish' the B.Ed (External) programme from its crisis but could become a working document for further reflection and discussions. However, in spite of the achievements that are not being underrated, there is need for urgent attention to the provision of INSET by distance education for secondary school teachers in Uganda.

8.2.4 Integration of ICTs in Distance Education Programmes

The history of the development and growth of distance education as documented in chapter two shows that distance education cannot do without ICTs. Its development has been intricately associated with the technology of the time (Amundsen 1996:67, Daniel 1997:50, Garrison 1989:52, Peters 1996:51, Verduin and Clark 1991:84). However, in Uganda the teacher education programmes that been run using distance education have had very little integration of ICTs. The study therefore sought to establish which technology the stakeholders have access to, what they believe can be used for B.Ed (External) and for what purpose and finally what prerequisites should be put in place for this technology to work.

According to the results of this study, there is some level of access to all the ICTs listed in the research instruments (radio, audio cassette, television, computer and Internet). However, the results indicate that personal ownership to all the ICTs with the exception of the radio is clearly limited and for the computer and Internet, extremely limited. The question of access to ICTs is an important one because it is one of the key factors that should be considered while determining and choosing the ICT to use because as Meyer-Peyton (2000:85) says, *'…if students experience frustration with the technology, they will drop out'*.

If distance education is to thrive in Uganda, access to ICTs must be given deep thought since the results of this study show that majority do not have personal access to video, computer and Internet whereas a higher proportion has access to the radio and to audiocassette. If therefore, Makerere University is to fully integrate ICTs in its B.Ed (External), a model based on personal ownership of video, computer and Internet will not be appropriate. A model that exploits provision through centres and sharing of facilities is likely to promote higher access to the technology for particularly students (Bates 1994:1577, De Wolf 1994:1561).

Integration of ICTs cannot be ignored because according to this study, it has potential to enrich teaching and learning. This particularly is in agreement with what is recognised by a number of authors (Bates 2000:16, Juma, 2001:294, Meyer-Peyton 2000:84, Tschang and Senta 2001:6). However for this to be achieved, according to the policy makers, the following prerequisites should be put in place:

- Access to the ICTs by all users
- Adequate funding for acquisition and maintenance
- Training and sensitisation of staff and students
- Electrification or access to alternative power
- Policies and guidelines at national and institutional levels
- Collaboration and networking with other institutions and departments

8.2.5 Conclusion

This study has restated the importance of distance education in Uganda because according to the results, there is a huge potential for it in the country. However while exploiting this potential there seems to be a problem with utilising distance education to run science courses because of the practical demands in these courses.

The teacher education programmes that have already been run in the country do illustrate the fact that this potential of distance education can be exploited for the education of teachers. Nevertheless, in spite of the various achievements made, these programmes still have many weaknesses which, if not addressed, will reinforce a cycle of mediocre distance education programmes. It is therefore crucial that teacher education providers running distance education seek to break out of this cycle. The next section now addresses this by providing a framework for high quality education for the education of secondary school teachers in Uganda. As stated earlier this framework should be viewed as guidelines that can form the basis of further discussions for the improvement of these programmes.

8.3 FRAMEWORK FOR HIGH QUALITY INSET DISTANCE EDUCATION FOR SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS IN UGANDA

8.3.1 Introduction

Chapters five, six and seven explored, the potential of distance education in Uganda, the various strengths and weaknesses of the different teacher education programmes that have been run by distance education in Uganda and the integration of Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) in the programmes. From the results discussed in those chapters, it is evident that whereas distance education has a huge potential in the country and has indeed been used to offer INSET with tremendous achievements, the programmes have faced a number of challenges. The B.Ed (External) in particular has achieved much as an INSET programme especially for secondary school teachers in Uganda, however, a number of questions have been raised with regard to its efficiency and effectiveness. There are weaknesses in:

- Its management and service delivery
- Provision of study materials for its students
- The quality of the teaching /learning environment as a result of these two
- The pass and drop out rates in the programme, and the quality of teachers being trained and the
- The attitude towards B.Ed (External) and the willingness of both the University and the Ministry of Education to invest in this programme.

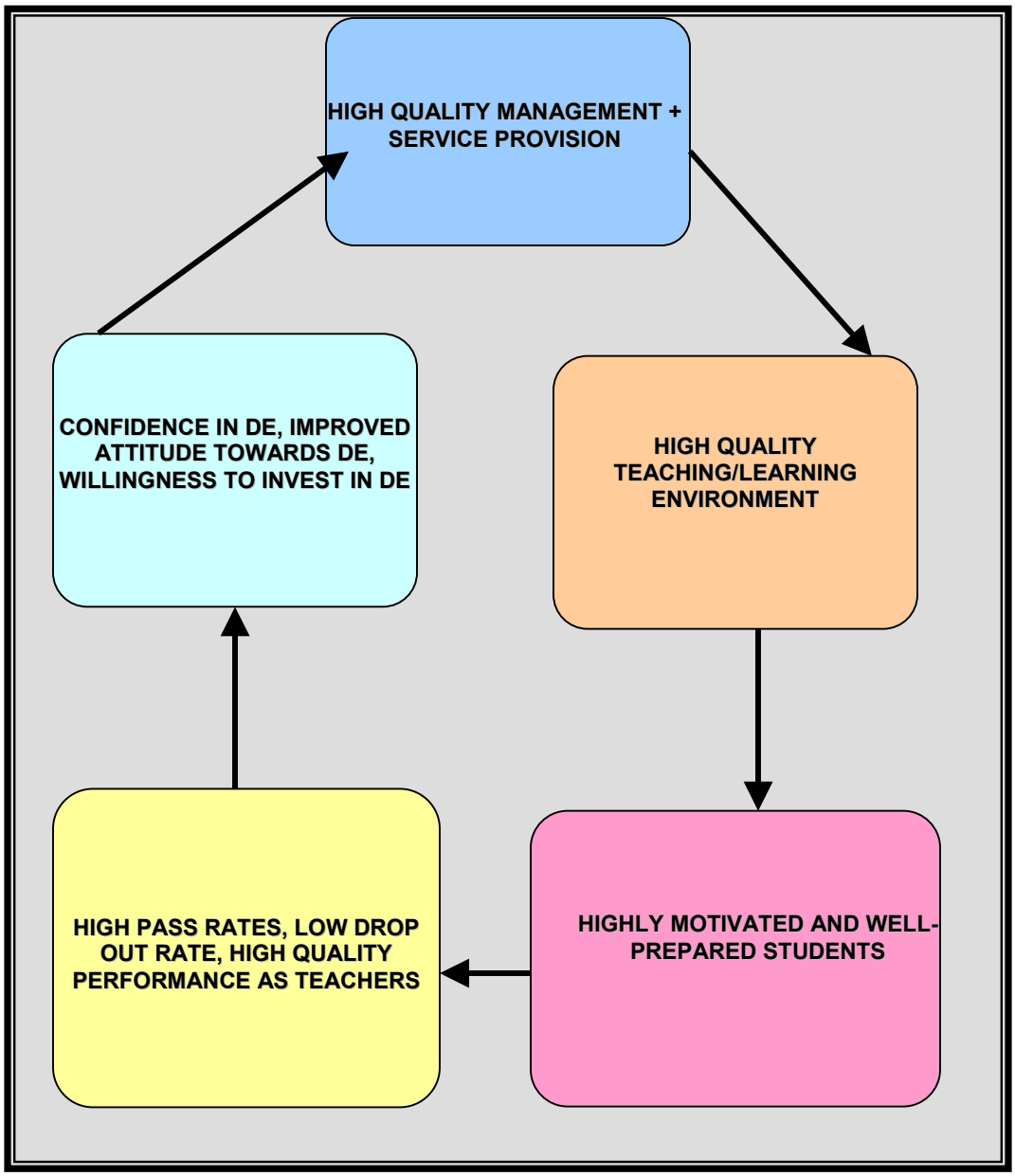
These weaknesses as shown in figure 8.1 can lead to a vicious cycle of mediocre distance education programme. To improve, the programme must strive to break out of this cycle and the next discussions provide guidelines, a framework for breaking this cycle so as to achieve high quality INSET distance education for the education for secondary school teachers in Uganda. A cycle of high quality distance education programmes can therefore be attained.

These guidelines are a result of my reflection on the theories of distance education discussed in chapter two; reflections on teacher education practices as presented in chapter three and the discussion of results presented in chapters five, six and seven. The framework is also guided by the guidelines offered as a 'Vision of South African Teacher Education in the Year 2020' (SAIDE 1996:111-136), and 'The Quality Standards Framework

for South African Distance Education Provision' (Directorate: Distance Education, Media and Technological Services 1996:53-71).

However, what is being presented here is not a blue print to be followed religiously but it is to be viewed as a framework that can form the beginnings of further discussions and plans for continuous improvement of B.Ed (External). Major elements of each of these components will be specified; however, these key elements should be seen as part and parcel of one whole and should therefore not be handled exclusive of each other.

Figure 8.2: Cycle of High Quality Distance Education Programmes



8.3.2 High Quality Management And Service Delivery

The Department of Distance Education is already running the B.Ed (External) using a collaborative arrangement involving different faculties, departments and individuals. This is a good foundation for the strengthening of the administration of the different activities of the programme. What is required here is a re-examination and re-conceptualisation of the collaboration. It is imperative that:

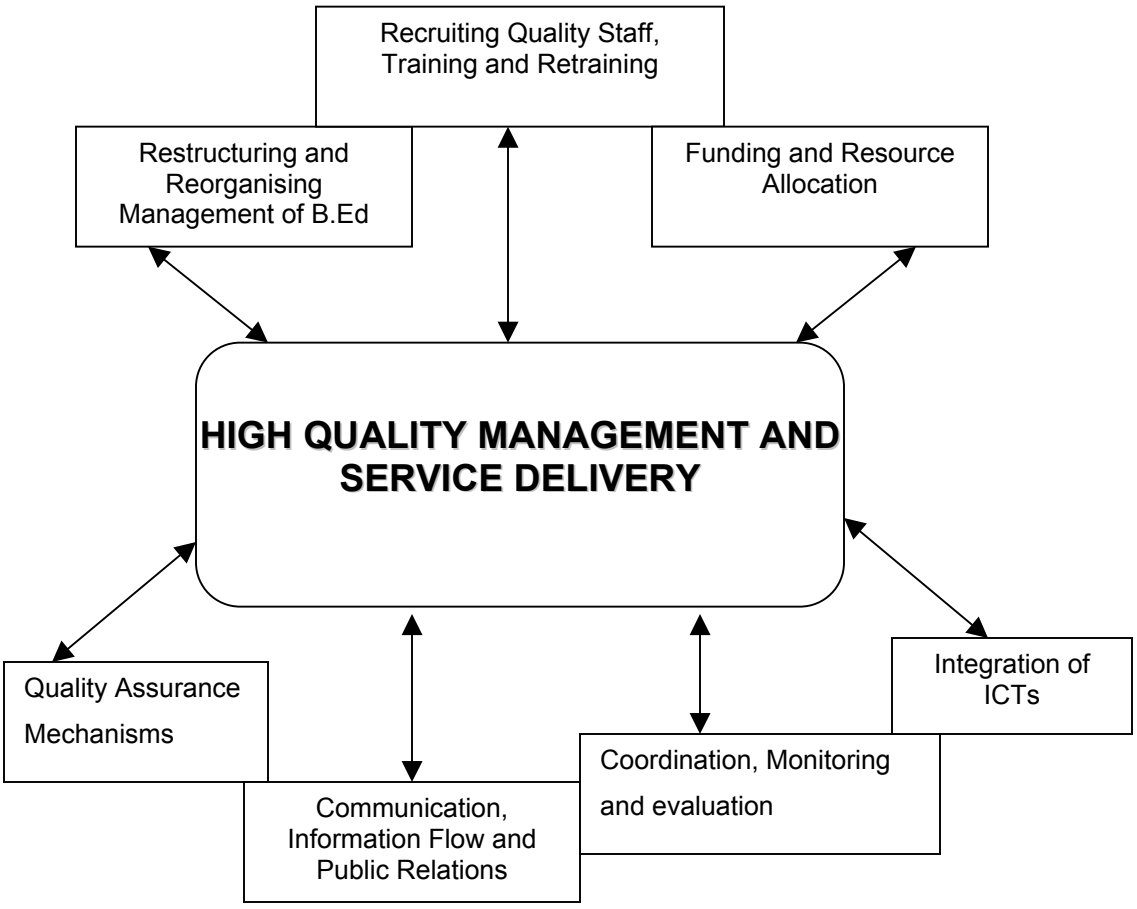
- Stock is taken of who the different collaborators are
- Clear specification of the roles and responsibilities of the different collaborators
- Determine the management strategies of this collaboration.

An efficient and effective management system and service delivery is paramount in any distance education programme. This can be achieved through:

- Continuous restructuring and reorganisation of the Department so as to cope with changing demands and needs (Bottomley and Calvert 2003:1, Peters 1994:109, SAIDE 1996:92).
- Recruitment of sufficient quality staff, continuous training and retraining to ensure that all staff can execute their duties with efficiency (Bottomley and Calvert 2003:3).
- Adequate funding and resource allocation for all the activities of the programme (Bates 2000:122, Perraton, Robinson and Creed 2001:8)
- Quality assurance mechanisms for all the programme activities (Tait 1997:2). These mechanisms should be carefully designed, implemented and reviewed
- Efficient information flow and dissemination to all the stakeholders (Moore 1996:22). Communication and information flow is a key element in the administration, management and student support of any distance education programme and therefore demands careful thought.
- Coordination and monitoring of all the different staff, and students, and of all the programme activities especially since in most distance education programmes students are scattered across wide areas (De Wolf 1994:1558, Perraton 2000:136).

This relationship is illustrated diagrammatically in figure 8.3. Key elements of each of these components of high quality management and service delivery will now be given.

Figure 8.3: Major Components of High Quality Management and Service Delivery in Distance Education



a) Restructuring and Reorganising Management of B.Ed (External) Programme

According to data collected in this study, the management of the Bachelor of Education (External) programme is not well organised and has been carried out 'by crisis'. There is therefore need for careful restructuring and reorganisation to ensure more efficient and effective management and administration.

1. Rational Departmental establishment that caters for all the needs of the programme.
2. Clear roles and responsibilities for all the collaborating partners accompanied by clear lines of accountability and reporting.
3. Clear strategic plans for all services and activities.
4. Decentralised management of the programme so that all the services are provided nearest the students.
5. Active participation of students in the decision-making processes of the programme.

b) Recruiting Quality Staff, Training and Retraining

1. Careful selection and recruitment of staff for the Department, support staff and all other part-time staff.
2. Recruitment of sufficient staff for all the sections in the Department.
3. Orientation of all staff on adult learning practices and basics on distance education and retraining for specific and specialised roles.
4. Division of labour and clear job descriptions
5. Clear staff development plans and strategies

c) Funding and Resource Allocation in the B.Ed (External)

1. Well identified funding sources and sustained resource mobilisation
2. Institutional commitment to investing in study materials development and acquisition of Information Communication Technologies.
3. Resourceful and rational resource allocation.
4. Well laid out but flexible budgeting procedures.
5. Clear lines of accountability and monitoring of all expenditures.

d) Quality Assurance Mechanisms in the B.Ed (External)

1. Clear policy statements on all elements of administration and management and on services taking into account the uniqueness of distance education.
2. Strategic plans for all services and clear implementation strategies
3. Monitoring procedures and continuous monitoring and evaluation of all activities.
4. Clear research agenda and integration of research findings into the programme.

e) Communication, Information Flow and Public Relations in the B.Ed (External)

1. Training of all staff on public relations particularly with adult learners.
2. Strategic and accurate publicity of the programme.
3. Well-articulated administrative structures and information which is easily available to all stakeholders.
4. Varied and appropriate media for communication and for dissemination of information.
5. Versatile and well-developed web page.

f) Coordination, Monitoring and Evaluation in the B.Ed (External)

1. Reporting and accountability schedules and procedures.
2. Deliberate involvement of students in coordination, monitoring and evaluation of the programme.
3. Continuous monitoring and evaluation and strategic utilisation of these results for continuous improvement of the programme.

g) Integration of ICTs

1. Choice of appropriate technology
2. Planning for management and upgrading of technology
3. Recruitment and training of technology staff and training of all academic and support staff in the use of identified technology for efficient and effective management of programmes and for delivery of services.
4. Integration of technology in all management and service delivery processes

8.3.3 High Quality Teaching/Learning Environment in the B.Ed (External) Programme

According to Moore (1996:22) in distance education, there is always a space separating the learner from the institution and from his/her teacher. Moore calls this space transactional distance and he says this distance affects both the teaching and learning and so efforts should be directed at crossing this distance so that effective teaching and learning can take place. Keegan shares the same view when he argues that since the learner is separated from his/her teacher, the teaching/learning acts should be reintegrated (Keegan1996:130). Crossing the transactional distance and reintegrating the teaching/learning acts could lead to high quality teaching and learning.

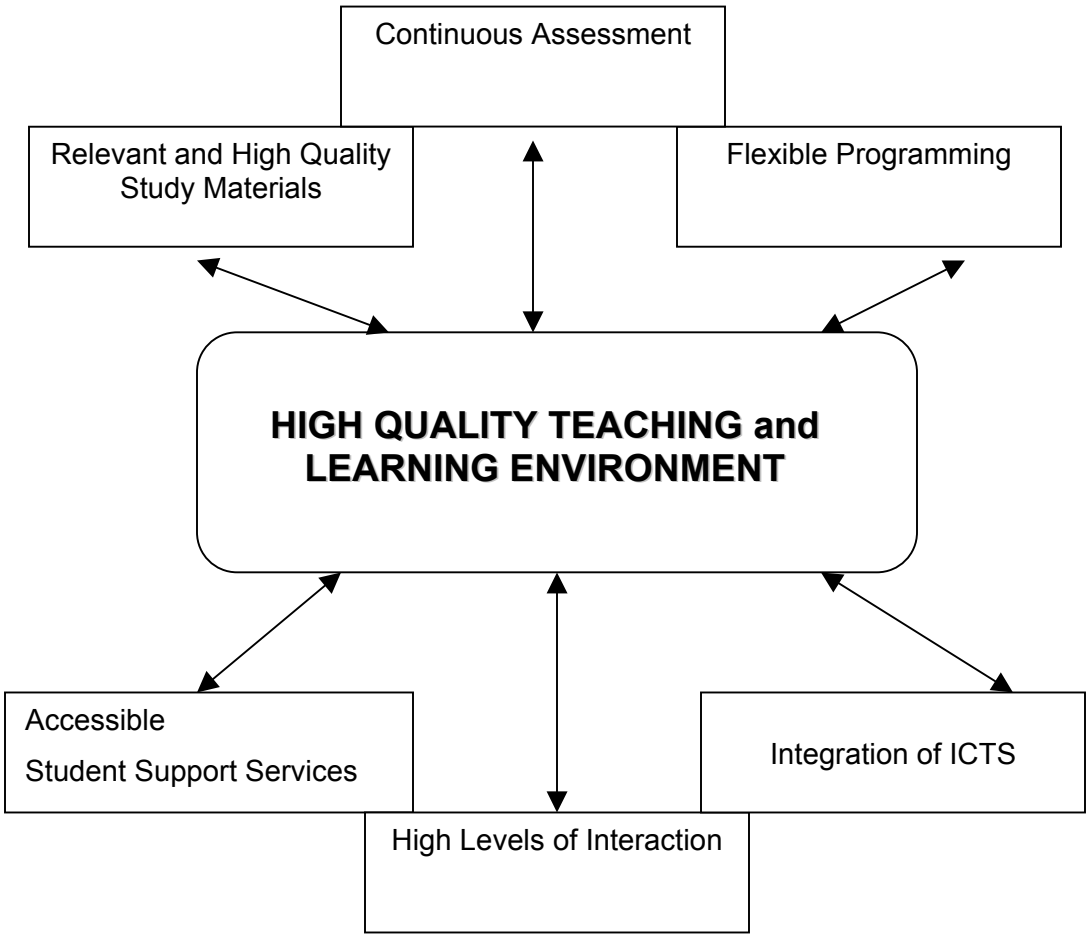
The B.Ed (External) should promote high quality teaching and learning. In other words, the teaching process should recognise the needs and potential of the learners exploit these, and encourage independent learning so as to achieve effective learning. This can be achieved by ensuring:

- Relevant and High Quality Courses and Study Materials (Holmberg 1986:108-111, 1995b:47, 2001:38-41, Keegan 1996:130, Robinson 1996:7, Rowntree 1986:19 –23, 58, SAIDE 1996:21).

- Flexible Programming (Epper 2001:3, Levine (1993:4) as quoted by Rumble (2000:1), Peters 1996: 45, Robinson 1996:6).
- Continuous Assessment (Manning 2001:61).
- Integration of ICTs (Bates 1994:1576–77, 2000:16, Daniel 1997:50, Moore 1996:24-32, Paul 1990:121-127, Peters, 1996:51, Tschang and Senta 2001:5-6, Verduin and Clark 1991:84).
- High Levels of Interaction, and accessible Student Support Services (Department of Distance Education 2000:2, Holmberg 1986:110, 2001:39, Keegan 1996:131, Robertshaw 2000:2, Robinson 1996:10, SAIDE 1996:115).

The core elements of each of these will now be given in the next sub sections.

Figure 8.4: Major Components of High Quality Teaching and Learning Environment in Distance Education



a) Relevant and High Quality Courses and Study Materials for the B.Ed (External) Programme

1. Needs assessment to identify the needs of the schools and teachers and the courses needed
2. Courses that are designed to meet national needs, the needs of the teachers and the needs of the schools
3. Well designed study materials that meet the needs of the courses, teachers and schools
4. Quality assurance in study materials development
5. Development of study materials according to plans and adequate finances to promptly produce the materials
6. Student access to all the study materials required in the different courses

b) Flexible Programming in the B.Ed (External) Programme

1. Programme activities that take into account the programmes of the schools and teachers
2. Involve stakeholders in developing plans for programme activities
3. Schedules that give students opportunity to take charge of their learning

c) Accessible Student Support Services in the B.Ed (External) Programme

1. Decentralised student support services
2. Student support that is in-built into the study materials
3. Adequate number of well trained tutors
4. Student support staff who are willing and available to support students.
5. Efficient library service that is able to meet the needs of the distance learners
6. Guidance and counselling systems based on the nature and character of the distance learner.
7. Well planned and meaningful face-to-face sessions

d) High Levels of Interaction in the B.Ed (External) Programme

1. Clear lines of communication between students and the institutions/tutors and amongst the students.
2. Regular communication to students and tutors.

3. Involvement of student leaders in communication between the students and the institutions/tutors and amongst the students.
4. Active and highly interactive face-to-face sessions and student group meetings.
5. Study materials that promote interactive teaching/learning

e) Integration of ICTs in the B.Ed (External) Programme

1. Planned and careful choice of ICTs. This should be done taking into account all factors.
2. Integration of ICTs into all teaching/learning activities.
3. Maximum utilisation of ICTs in records management and administration
4. Accessible and relevant records to staff and students

f) Continuous Assessment in the B.Ed (External) Programme

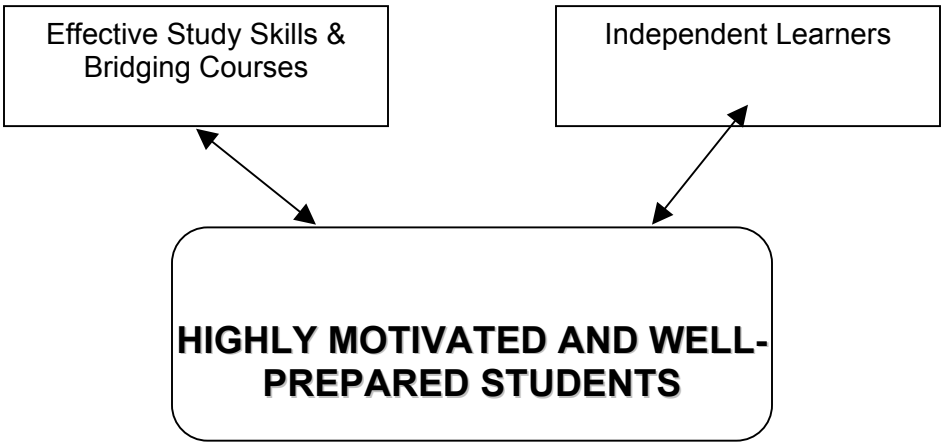
1. Relevant and stimulating assignments
2. Short assignment turn around time
3. Prompt and comprehensive feedback to students that serves guidance and counselling functions as well.
4. Quality assurance mechanisms to ensure high standards in the assignments, tests, projects and examinations.

8.3.4 Highly Motivated and Well-Prepared Students

Distance education students are often already highly motivated students by time of enrolment in the programmes (Verduin and Clark 1991:5). However, it is vital to sustain this motivation throughout the study period. Also, teachers trained in these INSET programmes should emerge as highly motivated and well prepared students. However, in this study, it is feared that the B.Ed (External) is not effectively equipping teachers with the relevant competencies. Also, service delivery in the programme has some weaknesses that may be impacting the motivation of the students (section 6.6 explores a number of weaknesses of the B.Ed External). All this needs to be dealt with and high quality management and service delivery and high quality teaching/learning environment can lead to highly motivated and well-prepared students. A highly motivated and well-prepared student is one who has effective study skills and one who is capable of carrying out independent study (Verduin and Clark 1991:124 - 127). Where the student has inadequate entry requirements, bridging

courses would help boost the student's self-confidence and heighten his/her motivation Robinson and Latchem (2003c:237). These elements are illustrated in figure 8.5.

Figure 8.5: Major Components of Highly Motivated and Well-Prepared Students in Distance Education



a) Effective Study Skills and Bridging Courses

1. Bridging courses for students that do not have the minimum requirements.
2. Study skills course for all students to help them study more effectively as distance learners.
3. Specific skills in getting the best out of the study materials and support services

b) Independent Learners

1. Activities that help develop self-confident students capable of working most of the time on their own.
2. Activities that motivate students and encourage them to engage in individual and group learning
3. Higher-level learner outcomes including ability to analyse, synthesise and evaluate courses.

8.3.5 High Pass Rates, Low Dropout Rates & High Quality Teachers

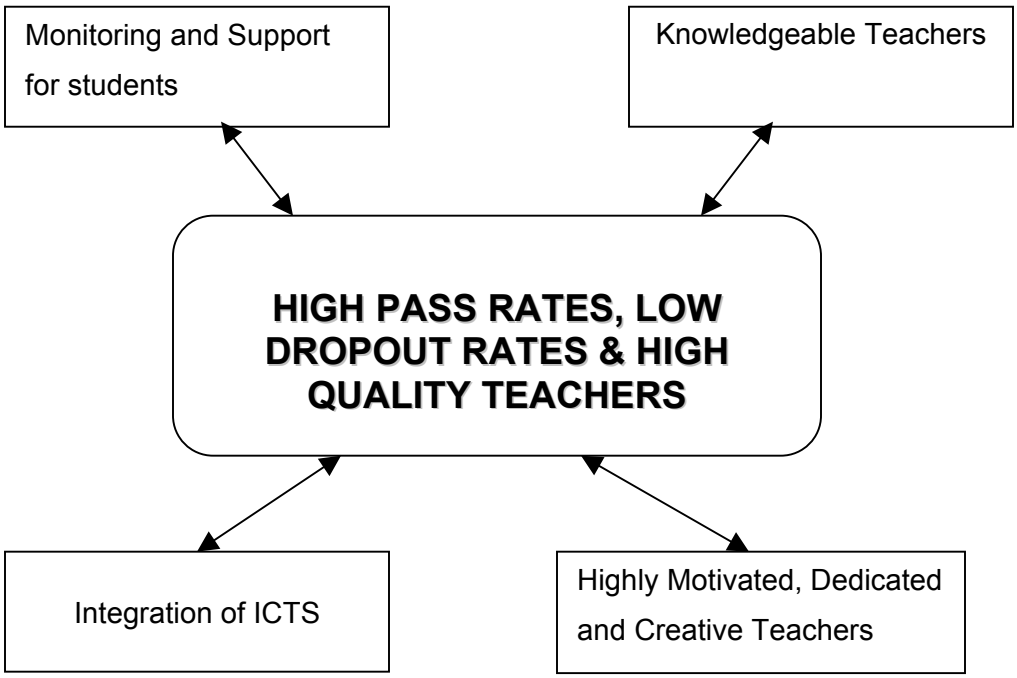
One of the major problems distance education faces is low pass rates and high dropout rates (Holmberg 2001:73, Keegan and Rumble 1982:228, Paul 1990:79, Perraton 2000:12, Perraton et al. 2001:30, Tooth 2000:2). According to Tooth (2002:2), h*igh dropout rates are endemic in distance education programmes, and every effort must be made to encourage*

students to persevere. Whereas distance education is known to register high enrolments, completion rates and pass rates are not always high (Perraton, et al. 2001:30). So the problem of dropout must be dealt with so as to achieve high pass rates, low dropout rates and produce high quality teachers. This should be one of the marks of a good distance education programme. The core elements of this are:

- Effective monitoring and support for students (Department of Distance Education 2000:2, Holmberg 2001:39, O'Shea and Downes 1997:64, Robinson 1996:10, Robertshaw 2000:2)
- Knowledgeable teacher (Ben-Peretz 1994:5992, Dove 1986:241, Iredale 1996:13, Moon and Robinson 2003:74, Perraton et al. 2002:8, Robinson and Latchem 2003a:4).
- Highly motivated and creative teachers.

The components of these key elements will now be discussed briefly in the next sub sections and are also illustrated in figure 8.6.

Figure 8.6: Major Components of High Pass Rates, Low Dropout Rates and High Quality Teachers in Distance Education



a) Monitoring and Support for students

1. Counselling and support for the weak students

2. Plans for retention of learners in the programmes
3. Continuous research on pass rates, dropout rates and student retention in the programme

b) Knowledgeable Teacher

1. Good command of the subject content
2. Understanding and knowledge of the learners and their needs
3. Clear grasp and understanding of pedagogical knowledge and when to apply the knowledge and skills
4. Wide general knowledge and readiness to continue learning
5. An appreciation of potential of ICTs in education
6. Basic computer skills and knowledge

c) Highly Motivated and Creative Teachers

1. Activities that will promote passion and love for the teaching profession and dedication to it
2. Teaching/learning activities that will encourage innovation and creativity among the students
3. Follow up of all the students
4. School based mentoring and support for the students

d) Integration of ICTs

1. Student access to all the ICTs being used in the programmes
2. Efficient and effective study centres that are well equipped and resourced
3. Training of students in maximum utilisation of ICTs for study purposes and as teachers in schools
4. Maximum utilisation of ICTs for monitoring and supporting students

8.3.6 Confidence In Distance Education and Willingness To Invest in It

There seem to be some reservations with regard to the efficacy of distance education to deliver high quality programmes (Paul 1990:59, Perraton 2000:82, 199). This suspicion seems to plague the B.Ed (External) as well because from the data gathered in this study, there are fears that the graduates of B.Ed (External) are not as good as the teachers trained

in internal programmes. There is therefore need to ensure that this programme is run in such a manner as to establish confidence in distance education and this can be achieved if the programme has high pass rates, low dropout rates and produces high quality teachers. Established confidence in distance education will motivate government, the private sector managers and administrators to invest in it. Elements of this are:

- Policy on distance education (Haddad and Jurich 2002:49)
- Government and institutional investment in distance education (Bates 2000:19, Berge 2001b:19, Orivel 1994:1572).
- Student willingness to invest in their studies
- Community involvement and participation in the programme

Figure 8.7 illustrates these elements of confidence in distance education and willingness to invest in it.

a) Policy on Distance Education

1. Clearly spelt out national and institutional policies that promote growth and development of distance education
2. Political and institutional support and acceptance of distance education
3. Clear policies on recruitment and promotion for graduates of distance education programmes

b) Government and Institutional Investment

1. Definite budget lines for distance education programmes
2. Plans for resource mobilisation and allocation
3. Staff development especially on distance education and Information Communication Technologies

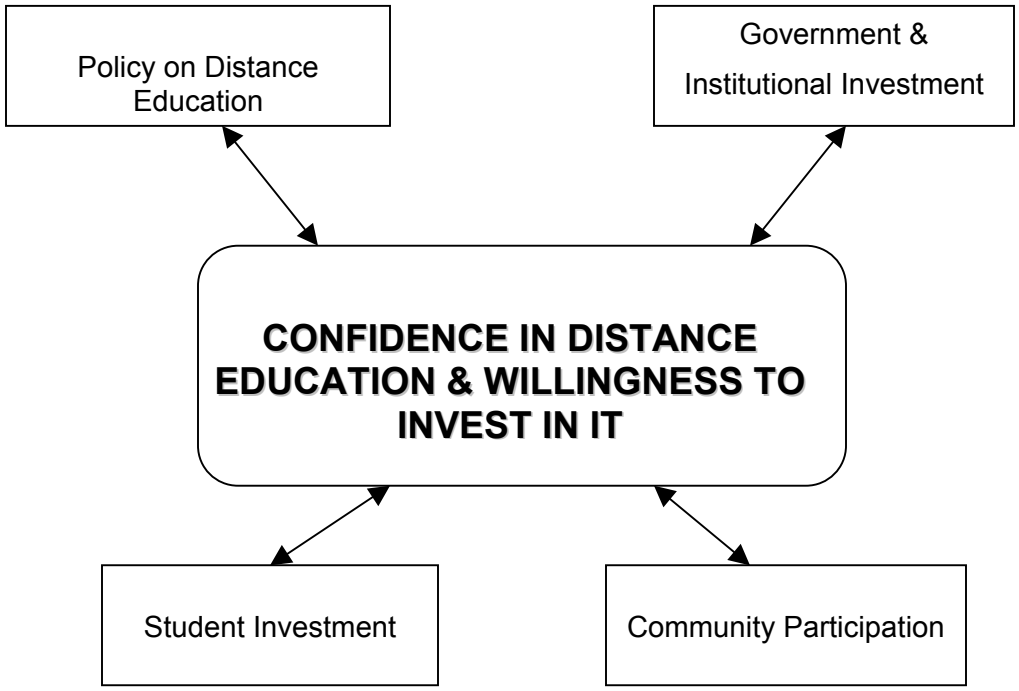
c) Student Investment

1. Willingness to pay fees and purchase study materials
2. Time management skills to ensure students can and will plan time for study
3. Strategies for financial support for students

d) Community Participation

1. Plans that involve the local communities in supporting distance learners
2. Collaborative ventures with Public Libraries, Teachers' Colleges, Resource Centres and other local community institutions.

Figure 8.7: Major Components of Confidence in Distance Education & Willingness to Invest in it



8.3.7 Implementing The Framework

The framework presented in sections 8.3.1 – 8.3.6 as mentioned earlier presents a set of guidelines that can be the beginning of a journey to better INSET programmes. However, to implement this framework it is vital that Makerere University or any other university providing INSET programmes, put in place institutional structures and systems that will permit this implementation to take place. Makerere University for instance needs:

- To strengthen it's Department of Distance Education in terms of capacity and decision making role.
- Recognise that distance education and distance education students are different from internal programmes and internal students. Special plans should therefore be made to cater for the needs of the programmes and the needs of the students.

- Work towards much more flexible management and administration of the programmes by reducing bureaucracy.

In addition to internal structures and systems, there is need for a closer collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Sports. This collaboration should particularly be with the following departments in the Ministry:

- Education Service Agency
- Department of Higher Education
- Department of Secondary Education
- Department of Teacher Education
- With the Curriculum Development Centre; and
- Any other Departments that may have a stake on INSET for secondary school teachers in the country.

Makerere University may therefore need to establish structures that ensure regular consultations with these Departments.

This section (8.3) has presented a proposed Framework for High Quality INSET Distance Education for Secondary School Teachers in Uganda. This framework sets out guidelines in the areas of:

- Management and Service Provision
- Teaching and Learning Environment
- Motivation and Preparation of Students
- Pass Rates, Drop out Rates and Performance of Teachers
- Attitudes and Investment in Distance Education

These guidelines can form the beginning of the reform process of the B.Ed (External) however, for Makerere University to implement this framework, institutional structures and systems that enhance this implementation need to be put in place.

8.4 SUMMARY

This chapter has dealt with a summary of what is outlined in the rest of the chapters, the highlights of the research findings, presents the conclusions and implications drawn and outlines recommendations that have been made.

This study set out to 'critically examine the existing model for the provision of distance education In-Service Teacher Education (INSET) for secondary school teachers in Uganda against existing contemporary distance education theories and practice, identify the model's strengths and weaknesses thereby establishing its efficacy to provide quality teacher education and suggest a framework for improvement'. From the study, it is evident that distance education has a lot of potential to meet educational needs and has indeed been used in a number of countries for various purposes. It has also been used in Uganda, and in Makerere University in particular, especially for the training, retraining and upgrading of teachers. However, the study has revealed that, in spite of the many achievements, the models used in the different programmes that have been discussed in the study have some weaknesses. There is clearly therefore need to revisit the models being used for the provision of In-Service Teacher Education programmes so as to break out of the vicious cycle of mediocre distance education programmes. To do so, this study recommends a framework for high quality INSET distance education for secondary school teachers in Uganda. The suggestion here is that this framework should be viewed as guidelines for further reflection and discussion of the current model.

In spite of what the findings, conclusions and implications of this study, there were some limitations encountered and these are now presented in the next section.

8.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This was a descriptive and evaluative study that depended a lot on qualitative data drawn from the different stakeholders of teacher education in Uganda. The preceding chapters all do indicate that a lot of ground was covered in the study and a valuable contribution hopefully made to INSET by distance education in Uganda in particular and INSET by distance education in general. However, there are some limitations that affected the data collection and there are also other limitations that may have affected the entire study.

To minimise the error effects of these limitations, the researcher used a number of strategies as outlined in chapter four section 4.8, but it is still vital to bring these limitations to the fore so that the reading, understanding and interpretation of this study should be with these limitations in mind.

1. All the research instruments were self-developed and this could be a limiting factor to the study. Although the researcher attempted to use the literature reviewed to draw up items in the instruments, nevertheless, self-developed instruments can be said to be subject to the researcher's subjectivity.

2. The questionnaires (appendices II – IV) had a lot of open questions whose responses could have been influenced by the respondents' attitudes. This could therefore limit the extent to which these responses can be generalised.

3. The sampling strategies used could have also lent the study to bias and subjectivity since as outlined in chapter 4 section 4.6.2 non-probability sampling was largely used.

4. All the interviews were conducted, transcribed and coded by the researcher. Self-administered, transcribed and coded data may be influenced by the researcher's own subjectivity. The use of many interviewers could give rise to varied interpretation of questions and so having one interviewer implies that all the questions are similarly interpreted. Nevertheless, the researcher's subjectivity is not entirely eliminated.

5. Literature on theory of distance education by Sub Saharan authors is unavailable whilst literature on distance education in Uganda is very limited. The theories included in this study are all put forward by European authors and one could argue that they may therefore not be entirely relevant to sub Saharan Africa. The key elements these theories do raise however could be said to be relevant to distance education practice in any country.

6. This study focused on the Makerere University B.Ed (External) programme although it explored the strengths and weaknesses of some of the other INSET distance education programmes. Nevertheless, other INSET distance education programmes were not discussed. Insights from such programmes have therefore not been taken into account. This may limit the generalisability of the findings of this study to all INSET distance education programmes in Uganda.

7. Insecurity in the North of the country. Initial plans were to visit among others Lira district. However, by October 2002 when the fieldwork started, the security situation in Lira had

deteriorated as a result of Kony rebel activities. As an alternative, Masindi district was instead visited.

8. Many officials at Ministry of Education and Sports headquarters, District Education offices, National Teachers' Colleges, Primary Teachers' Colleges, Makerere University and Kyambogo University confessed to having heavy schedules. This therefore made some of them unwilling to be interviewed or unable to keep appointments made for the interviews. For those who received questionnaires, their busy schedules made it difficult for them to promptly return the questionnaires and in some cases completely fail to return the same.

Since this study was not totally exhaustive and since it also had limitations as outlined above, the interpretation and application of the findings should be with these limitations in mind. Also, this study has raised further questions that are now presented here as suggestions for further research.

8.6 SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTHER RESEARCH

As already discussed, this study has not been exhaustive, it had its own limitations and on the basis of the research findings, there are areas for further research that have been identified. These are:

1. A number of distance education teacher education programmes have been offered in the country but no studies have been carried out to establish the impact of these programmes on the school system. It is therefore vital that this be carried out. In particular, the B.Ed (External) programme is upgrading secondary school teachers who should now be able to teach in the 'A' Level. However, this study has revealed that some policy makers believe these graduates are incapable of handling these classes. Are these views based on attitudes or are they based on the teachers' actual inabilities?

2. Uganda's primary and secondary schools have teachers of different qualifications involved at each stage. However, it is not clear what impact this has on the school system and this needs to be determined particularly as more and more teachers seek to upgrade their qualifications and the attendant result of a larger wage bill. Is this justifiable and why?

3. The Ministry of Education and Sports has clearly stated objectives for teacher education in the country, however due to lack of evaluative studies of teacher education programmes in the country, it is not clear how far each of these objectives is being deliberately attended to in the various teacher education programmes and it is also not certain if this so, how far these are being achieved. This is therefore an area for further study.

4. Completion rates in some of the programmes discussed in this study were very low. The B.Ed (External) is also still registering high drop out rates and it is not entirely clear why this is so. To ensure higher retention and better passes, reason for both drop out and low pass rates need to be identified.

5. This study also revealed that there was general consensus among the respondents that the government of Uganda needs to come up with a clear policy on distance and open learning in the country. This study identified some of the issues that could be included in this policy but perhaps more specific and comprehensive study needs to be carried out with a draft policy as an outcome.

6. This study has also revealed that a lot of coordination and collaboration is needed for the success of distance education. The Department of Distance Education, Makerere University needs to identify these potential partners and plans for the partnership worked out.

7. Although this study revealed that there is general consensus on the efficacy of distance education to meet the educational needs of the country, there was reluctance to believe that distance education can be used for science-oriented courses. At the same time, a number of other courses including some science-oriented courses were listed as courses that could be offered by distance education. It is perhaps necessary to carry out a needs assessment of the knowledge and skills needed in the country and the role that distance education can play in meeting this need. Also, since Makerere University has already launched a Bachelor of Science (External) programme, clear monitoring strategies should be put in place to determine the effectiveness of the programme.