USE OF DISTANCE EDUCATION FOR TEACHER TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT IN MALAWI: MODELS, PRACTICES, AND SUCCESSES

Professor Fred Gennings Wanyavinkhumbo Msiska[1]

ABSTRACT

This article argues that the distance education (DE) delivery model has the potential to offer education and training to a greater majority of Malawians who, for one reason or another, cannot be accommodated in the traditional face-to-face delivery model. Motivated by the need to understand the delivery models employed by DE institutions in the country, the technologies they employ, and the need to gauge major successes of this model of provision, an audit study involving Mzuzu University, the Domasi College of Education, the Malawi College of Distance Education, the Department of Teacher Education and Development, Chancellor College, the Malawi Polytechnic, and Aggrey Memorial School was conducted in 2012. This was necessitated by the need to establish the nature and efficacy of distance education in Malawi. The major finding of the study is that, although this model of delivery has allowed access to education and training for people who otherwise would have been denied the opportunity because of the restrictive nature of the face-to-face delivery mode, DE institutions in Malawi continue to face challenges pertaining to the use of basic, rudimentary and often obsolete technologies, which make the delivery model cumbersome for both tutors and learners. The implication is that the full potential of this delivery model has been attenuated by the use of such instructional technologies. The paper recommends that Malawi must invest in the requisite infrastructure and appropriate technologies to enhance the efficacy of distance education and e-learning as a means of broadening and increasing access to education and training.

Key words: distance education, residential face-to-face, education and training, access, efficacy

1   Commonwealth of Learning Chair of Open and Distance Learning, Mzuzu University, Malawi
     Email: fredmsiska@yahoo.com

INTRODUCTION

According to UNESCO (2002: 22) distance education is any educational process in which all or most of the teaching is conducted by someone removed in space and/ or time from the learner, with the effect that all or most of the communication between teachers and learners is through an artificial medium, either electronic or print. UNESCO (2002) further contends that the rationale for distance education from its earliest days has been to create the opportunity for learners to study regardless of geographic, socio-economic or other constraints (i.e. openness). This is the sense in which the term 'open and distance learning' is understood and used in this paper.

Distance Education in Malawi started in 1965 with the establishment of the Malawi Correspondence College. In the same year, the Schools Broadcasting Unit was set up to augment printed instructional modules by airing instructional programmes for primary, secondary and teacher education. The college and the broadcasting unit merged to form the Malawi Correspondence College and Broadcasting Unit in 1973, and in 1987 this establishment changed its name to the Malawi College of Distance Education. The idea of establishing a Malawian correspondence college was first captured by the Nyasaland (Malawi today) Development Plan of 1962-1965, which aimed at addressing the challenge presented by only a tiny fraction of primary school leavers continuing with secondary education; the need to improve the quality of teachers in primary schools through in-service training (thereby improving the standard of primary education); meeting the need for continuing education of the rural people; and fostering agricultural development, health education, and extension studies as a means of ensuring rural development (Nankwenya, 1974). In 1977 Aggrey Memorial School, a private institution for distance education, was established to offer both academic primary and secondary school educational courses, as well as professional/vocational education and training to a variety of artisans in Malawi (Msiska, 2013). However, this paper is about the use of distance education for teacher training and development in Malawi. The three notable public teacher education institutions using the distance education delivery model in Malawi are the Domasi College of Education, the Department of Teacher Education and Development, and Mzuzu University.

The Domasi College of Education started offering a Diploma in Secondary Teacher Education in 2000 in response to the need for upgrading primary school teachers teaching in community day secondary schools (CDSSs), which were created in 1999.

Confronted with the urgent demand for 8 000 qualified primary school teachers in 2009, and the need to reduce the qualified teacher-to-pupil ratio of 1:90 in 2009 to 1:60 by 2013 and 1:40 by 2017; the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology mandated the Department of Teacher Education and Development to start training primary school teachers using the distance education delivery model in 2010, alongside the residential Initial Primary Teacher Education Programme run by teacher training colleges. Following the realisation that the distance education delivery model would be needed to complement the traditional face-to-face model of provision to increase and broaden access to higher education and training, Mzuzu University established the Centre for Open and Distance Learning in July 2006 to plan, design, and develop instructional materials and delivery systems; and co-ordinate and facilitate all other activities necessary for offering programmes through the distance education delivery model. Mzuzu University enrolled the first cohort of distance learners in the Bachelor of Arts (Education) and Bachelor of Science (Education) programmes in November 2011, the second cohort in November 2012, and the third cohort in November 2013.

What was not entirely clear to most people by 2012 was the model each of these institutions used to provide teacher education and training, specific practices and technologies employed to facilitate provision, and the major successes of each of the institutions in their endeavours to provide education and training by means of this model. Furthermore, many people were not sure of the major challenges these institutions faced in providing education and training through distance education. There was, therefore, a need to carry out an audit in order to establish the nature and efficacy of distance education delivery models in Malawi.

AIM OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study was to document the start and development of distance education delivery models in Malawi, with particular focus on the models employed, the technologies used, the successes achieved thus far, and the challenges created by this model of provision.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Specifically, the objectives of the study were to:

• Document the beginning and evolution of distance education and e-learning in Malawi

- Explain the various models, if any, of distance education employed by different institutions included in this study
- Assess the impact of distance education and e-learning on broadening and increasing access to education and training in Malawi
- Assess the degree of use of technology in the provision of distance education
- Outline major successes in distance education for the various institutions involved in the audit
- Identify major challenges confronting distance education delivery models at the institutions involved in the study

METHODOLOGY

This survey was a descriptive census of all known institutions offering teacher education and training through distance education and e-learning delivery models at primary, secondary and tertiary education levels in Malawi. According to Borg and Gall (1983: 406), Fraenkel and Wallen (2000: 432), and Ary, Jacobs, Razavieh and Sorensen (2006: 402), surveys can be classified according to their focus and scope (census and sample surveys) or according to time frames for data collection (longitudinal and cross-sectional surveys). Clearly, this was a cross-sectional census survey of all known teacher education institutions using distance education delivery models. The survey instrument comprised 10 items, soliciting information on the background and origins of distance education delivery models at the institution; the aim and objectives of starting distance education at the institution; the organisation and delivery of distance education at the institution; the extent to which the institution uses technology to deliver programmes through the distance education model; enrolment trends and completion figures from the start to the present day; the major successes of distance education; the major challenges faced; suggestions for expanding and improving the distance education model; evidence for increasing and broadening access to education and training; and future plans for growth and development of this model of delivery.

Data collection

To ensure uniformity of approach and consistency of the presentation of findings, the lead researcher (author of this article) conducted briefing discussions via email with each of the institutional researchers regarding the purpose of the study and use of the research instrument prior to the beginning of the study. Each

institutional researcher was required to confirm understanding of what information the instrument sought to solicit for the report. The main method of data collection was desk study, utilising a documentary search/analysis technique. This technique was complemented by focus group discussion, in the form of a one-day meeting of the eight institutional researchers presenting their findings, followed by a critical discussion of each institutional researcher's report. This helped to bring several different perspectives together, enabling the lead researcher to gain insight into how the institutional researchers were thinking and why they were thinking as they did (Ary et al., 2006: 481). The study ended with a presentation of the draft research report to a select team of stakeholders at a national dissemination seminar for the purposes of isolating issues surrounding distance education and e-learning in Malawi, building consensus on major challenges, and suggesting possible strategies for addressing these challenges. This constituted part of the methodology, in that after the dissemination seminar, the lead researcher incorporated suggestions from plenary discussions, in particular those relating to recommendations for addressing the identified challenges.

Data analysis

The bulk of the information generated by this study was qualitative, and as such reducing and organising the data, synthesising, looking for commonalities and discovering the emerging picture formed the larger part of the analysis (Ary et al., 2006; Fraenkel & Wallen, 2000). Qualitative analysis enabled the researcher to identify trends, good practices, technologies used, successes, delivery gaps, challenges and future needs of distance education and e-learning in Malawi. It also enabled systematic searching, the arranging of information in order to increase understanding of the data, and presenting what had been learned to the reader, a process Ary et al. (2006: 489) refer to as making successive approximations towards the goal of describing and explaining the phenomenon under investigation.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Accuracy of information generated and presented by institutional researchers remains difficult to ascertain because each researcher worked alone and independently of others, despite the one-day meeting of the researchers. The issue is that different individuals perceive and interpret information differently. The meeting of researchers could not guarantee resolution of this problem because it was too short (one day) and each researcher selected what to share during

presentations. Consequently, the findings of this study can at best be suggestive as opposed to definitive.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

In spite of the numerous objectives of the study and the many institutions studied, this paper only presents and discusses findings related to models, practices, major successes, and the challenges of distance education in respect of the Domasi College of Education, the Department of Teacher Education and Development, and Mzuzu University, being teacher education institutions using this delivery model.

Models of distance education

The study revealed that teacher education institutions offering distance education learning delivery have essentially employed one model: that of blending face-to-face instructions with independent home study during the distance learning period. Of course, there are slight modifications to this model as one goes from one institution to the next, in terms of duration of face-to-face tuition and use of electronic media such as radio during the independent home-study period.

Distance education model at the Domasi College of Education

Within its model, the Domasi College of Education has eight weeks of residential face-to-face orientation at the college and 40 weeks of independent study at home in each academic year. During the face-to-face sessions, learners are introduced to the instructional materials in all the courses for the whole academic year. Study materials such as instructional modules, textbooks, and pamphlets are given to learners during this period. It is during the same period that lecturers/tutors distribute continuous assessment assignments to learners. On average, a learner collects two continuous assessment tasks for each course, to be completed during the 40 weeks of independent home study (refer to Msiska, 2013 for the full study report).

The Domasi College of Education, during the home-study period, encourages learners to form study circles, hold monthly seminars and meetings, and keep professional portfolios to ensure successful learning. A study circle is a small group of learners pursuing similar subjects/courses. The members work together on a particular learning challenge. Study circles are either informally organised or timetabled to meet on specific days, for example, every Friday. In principle, study

circles are meant to encourage active learning through group problem solving, reading and discussions. They provide a chance to participate in and contribute to the group's learning, ensure variety in the learning styles, and offer an opportunity to monitor performance and progress of other participating members. Seminars and professional meetings are held monthly, usually at the cluster leading school, and are co-ordinated by Field Supervisors. The purpose of these seminars and professional meetings is to discuss issues pertaining to distance learning support, clarity of subject content, efficacy of teaching methods employed, community projects/school-based activities, and professional topics as identified by learners, among others (Msiska, 2013: 56).

A professional portfolio is a collection of documents, sample performances and any relevant materials that show the range and evolution in a learner's work. It records professional accomplishments in the life of a learner (Woodley, 2005). During the home-study period, learners compile a portfolio of their studies based on specific guidelines given by lecturers/tutors. During successive residential face-to-face sessions, learners submit their portfolios to lecturers for evaluation and grading. Other activities during the home-study period include writing continuous assessment exercises and teaching practice. There is no use of radio and television to facilitate teaching and learning during the home-study period.

Distance education model at the Department of Teacher Education and Development

The Department of Teacher Education and Development manages the Initial Primary Teacher Education Programme delivered through a distance education delivery model in collaboration with teacher training colleges and the Malawi College of Distance Education. This programme blends residential face-to-face tuition, independent home study, and radio programmes. The face-to-face tuition runs for three weeks in three different months (August, December and April) in the academic year, when residential primary school student teachers are on holiday. The newly recruited primary school student teachers attend an orientation session in August, making use of a manual prepared for this purpose. During this orientation, the student teachers are taught basic teaching and study skills for use during the following independent home-study period. They are also given two assignments in each learning area, one to be done in the first term and the other in the second term of the school session. The April face-to-face sessions are meant to prepare students for the end-of-year examinations, which are held in June/July every year.

It should be emphasised that the independent home study takes place soon after the face-to-face session, which is followed by primary school student teachers being attached to schools for the purpose of teaching practice throughout the home-study period. The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology prefers that the distance education learners practise teaching in Standards 3 and 4 so that they have adequate time for their independent studies. During this same period, the Malawi College of Distance Education, in a partnership arrangement, broadcasts radio programmes (known as Tikwere) on local radio stations once a week for 30 minutes. These radio programmes provide extra information on primary teacher education principles and techniques, as well as providing details for administrative arrangements concerning assignment submission dates and feedback on assignments.

Distance education model at Mzuzu University

The teacher education programme through distance education at Mzuzu University also uses blended learning. Learners start with a four-week face-to-face orientation in each semester, meant to introduce them to distance education learning techniques and explain to them how to work their way through the instructional modules, including how to tackle continuous assessment assignments, how to handle self-assessment exercises at the end of each unit and the module itself, and how to approach end-of-semester examination questions. During the face-to-face orientation period, learners are given instructional modules and have the opportunity to use the university library. All other complementary instructional materials are given to learners during the face-to-face orientation. Since the instructional modules are not exhaustive, learners are encouraged to photocopy as many reference materials as they will require during the independent home-study period. All such photocopying is at the expense of the Centre for Open and Distance Learning. The orientation is also meant to provide an opportunity for the lecturers and students to go through materials deemed difficult for students to tackle on their own. For students studying basic sciences, Mzuzu University organises a summer school in the middle of each semester for the purposes of conducting laboratory experiments. This is done at the university, because satellite learning centres have not yet been established, although this is in progress (as will be explained later).

All this is complemented with 20 weeks of independent home study throughout the semester. The main support provided to learners when studying from home

is regular communication by means of short messaging services (SMS) for the purposes of providing administrative information relating to assignment due dates, summer school dates, examination dates, and responding to learners' anxieties where applicable. To ensure that lecturers attend to learners' requests, the Centre for Open and Distance Learning gives each and every lecturer an amount money to cover incidental costs of postage, SMSs, internet usage, etc. per semester. As in the case of the Domasi College of Education, radio and television are not used to facilitate teaching and learning.

Practices: technologies used to deliver teacher education and training

The study revealed that all teacher education institutions using distance education in Malawi employ basic, rudimentary and sometimes obsolete technologies like typewriters, photocopiers, and ink duplicating machines to deliver their programmes, except for the Malawi College of Distance Education, which airs 30-minute radio programmes for the Initial Primary Teacher Education Programme managed by the Department of Teacher Education and Development.

Malawi College of Distance Education

The Malawi College of Distance Education uses print, radio and CD-ROMs as the main instructional technologies for delivering its programmes. The predominant medium for course delivery is print, in the form of self-instructional modules, based on the existing school curricula.

Domasi College of Education

The Domasi College of Education has used print as the main medium of instruction since its establishment in 2000. It is only recently that the college opened 11 internet centres throughout the country to enable learners to access additional learning materials from the web and interact with tutors via email. Otherwise, there is no use of a web-based learning management system.

Mzuzu University

Mzuzu University also relies predominantly on printed instructional modules as its main medium of instruction. The internet is used mainly for searching for reference materials to complement instructional modules and complete continuous assessment tasks during independent home study, but only for those learners who have access to internet facilities. A Moodle Learning Management System is in the process

of being developed and the hope is that, when fully developed and functional, it will facilitate online access to instructional modules, links to assignment tasks, short tests, and online reference materials; as well as offering the opportunity for frequent contact between learners and staff during the independent home-study period through discussion forums. The point is that, while the country has internet connectivity, the university is yet to build the requisite infrastructure for carrying instructions through web-based technologies.

The Department of Teacher Education and Development

The Department of Teacher Education and Development admitted that, while blended learning offers one of the strategies helpful for learning (Msiska, 2013; Sethy, 2008), the concept is only partially applied in the Initial Primary Teacher Education Programme (IPTEP). Tuition is predominantly conducted through short face-to-face sessions, which run for three weeks in August, December and April every academic year. During the face-to-face sessions, use is made of basic equipment such as LCD projectors, audio tapes, video cassette recorders and television sets to deliver instructions. During the home-study phase, mobile phones are used by teacher training colleges that support IPTEP, but only for sending mass messages to students. Otherwise, there is no use of computer-mediated learning in the Initial Primary Teacher Education Programme.

The emerging picture suggests that distance education in Malawi is predominantly driven by basic and rudimentary technologies: computers for word processing, printing and ink duplicating machines, CD-ROMs, LCD projectors, audio and video tapes, and mobile phones for sending mass messages to learners. The radio is only used by the Malawi College of Distance Education in the Initial Primary Teacher Education Programme of the Department of Teacher Education and Development. This state of affairs makes the distance education delivery model very cumbersome for both tutors and learners, leading to the strong negative impression of education and training through distance education as more challenging and requiring extra effort. Hence, it may appear less attractive to prospective students than the residential face-to-face delivery model. For their part, lecturers/tutors are not able to update instructional modules in a timely manner, provide timely feedback to learners, or give regular support as learners progress through the study programmes. This tendency risks giving the unfortunate impression that the content and resulting learning are dependent on very few and poor resources, which are not readily updated; hence, not comparable to content and learning in

the residential face-to-face delivery model. Learners find themselves isolated from their tutors for the greater part of their home-study periods, making it very difficult to get the necessary guidance and support during the course of study, leading to frustration and learners dropping out of the study programme. More serious is that reliance on such media deprives learners of the possibility of enriching learning with the wealth of resources available on the internet, while at the same time limiting flexibility of study (Msiska, 2013).

Major successes in distance education in Malawi

Institutions were asked to outline what they consider to be the major successes of their distance education delivery model. The findings suggest that most institutions cited very modest successes, a reflection of the infancy of the distance education delivery model in Malawi.

Malawi College of Distance Education

The Malawi College of Distance Education cited training a cadre of secondary school teachers in instructional module writing, who have written all instructional materials for the Malawi College of Distance Education; building staff capacity in distance education administration and student support services through local and international training; offering education and training to many more Malawians (1 424 learners enrolled in 1965, which grew to 34 966 by the 1991/92 school session and 47 998 in 2011); and opening a total of 400 open secondary schools by 2012, having started with only 44 in 1998 (Msiska, 2013: 43, 87). This large number of people educated through the distance education delivery model negates the widely held view that people do not like this model of delivery (Msiska, 2013: 115). The experiences of the Malawi College of Distance Education serve to illustrate that distance education is feasible and can be used to broaden and increase access to education and training where the face-to-face residential delivery model serves only a tiny proportion of the population.

Domasi College of Education

The Domasi College of Education highlighted four major successes, one of them being the enrolment of female teachers and lactating mothers. The college has registered more female learners in the distance education delivery model than in its residential face-to-face delivery model. Lactating mothers are allowed to bring nannies with them to take care of children while mothers attend tuition during

orientation and write assessments during examination periods. This experience vindicates the claim that distance education can be used to accommodate learners with special circumstances (thereby broadening access). The second success is the provision of mentorship to other tertiary institutions for distance education. The Domasi College of Education was the first tertiary institution to offer a Diploma in Education using the distance education model. Based on its experience, the College has provided mentorship to a number of institutions in Malawi, including the Department of Teacher Education and Development and Mzuzu University. Thirdly, the college has increased enrolment into teacher education programmes as a whole, as shown in Figure 1.
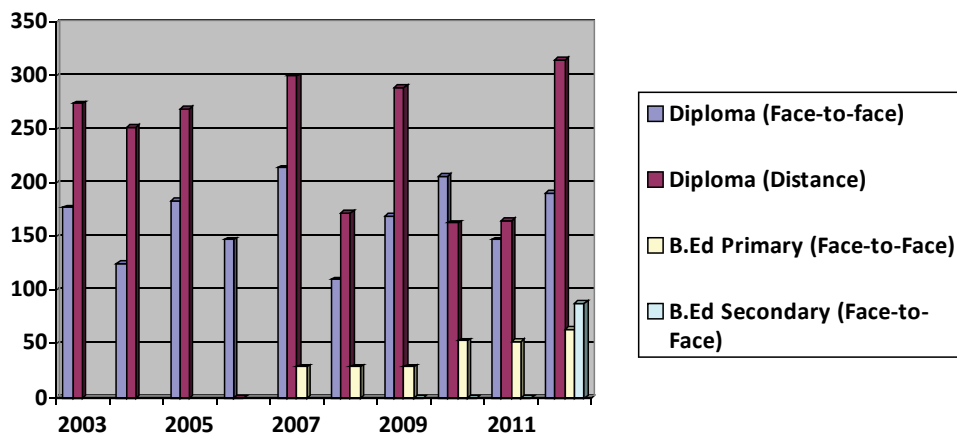

Figure 1: Domasi College of Education enrolment trends in open and distance learning and face-to-face delivery models (Msiska, 2013)

The fourth success is the creation of capacity through workshops, study tours and in-service training to deliver programmes through the distance education model. Consequently, the college is able to develop its own instructional materials for this model of delivery, manage programmes, and provide comprehensive support services to distance education learners.

Mzuzu University

The major successes of Mzuzu University include the establishment of the Centre for Open and Distance Learning, to plan, co-ordinate and oversee activities relating to distance education. The centre has facilitated training of staff in designing and

developing instructional materials for the open and distance learning delivery models. To date, instructional materials for the Diploma in Education have all been produced by its academic staff, and the University has enrolled three cohorts of learners (34 in November 2011, 150 in 2012, and 700 in 2013). By far, the major success has been the establishment of the UNESCO Commonwealth of Learning Chair for Open and Distance Learning. Both establishment of the Centre for Open and Distance Learning and Chair for Open and Distance Learning signify determination to institutionalise distance education models at the University.

Department of Teacher Education and Development

With regard to the Department of Teacher Education and Development, the introduction of distance education in the Initial Primary Teacher Education Programme has greatly contributed to the supply of primary school teachers, thereby reducing the teacher-to-pupil ratio. Since 2010, the delivery model has recruited 16 000 teacher trainees and attached them to selected primary schools in the country. As a consequence of this, the teacher to pupil ratio has been drastically reduced from 1:90 in 2010 to 1:60 in 2012. The target is a 1:40 teacher-to-pupil ratio by 2017 (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, 2011).

Finally, the Initial Primary Teacher Education Programme has created 16 000 jobs for school leavers who otherwise could have been unemployed. This demonstrates that distance education has the potential for training the required personnel in a particular sector of the economy. The successes of the Department of Teacher Education and Development further underscore acceptability of the distance education learning model.

To sum up this section, the experiences of the Department of Teacher Education and Development, the Domasi College of Education, and Mzuzu University remind us of the need to harness this delivery model as a means of bringing education and training to the majority of our people; thereby broadening and increasing access to the education and training required for creating an open society necessary for the development of the nation and of individuals. The issue for Malawi, however, is that distance education seems not to have been given due prominence at policy level, and that budgetary allocation for this model of provision has been muted to say the least (Msiska, 2013: 116-119). It seems that these two tendencies have conspired to stifle the development of the distance education model of provision.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Available evidence suggests that Malawi has used the distance education delivery model with relative success since 1965 at primary, secondary and tertiary levels of education and training, and that thousands of people have benefitted from this model of provision. Accordingly, this paper contends that it is a paradox to insist that the distance education delivery model is not popular with learners. Secondly, the study has revealed that a hybrid of face-to-face interaction and independent home study is the most commonly used model for provision through distance education. Within this design, institutions of distance education in Malawi continue to use basic, rudimentary and often obsolete technologies, which make the delivery model cumbersome for both tutors and learners, leading to the impression that education and training through a distance education model is more challenging than through the residential face-to-face model of provision. The implication is that the full potential of the distance education delivery model has been attenuated by use of such instructional technologies. This has denied thousands of deserving Malawians access to education and training. Given that only a very limited number of eligible school leavers access higher education and training in Malawi, the paper recommends that Malawi must invest in the requisite infrastructure and appropriate technologies to enhance the efficacy of distance education as a means of broadening and increasing access to education and training.

REFERENCES

Ary, D., Jacobs, L. C., Razavieh, A. & Sorensen, C. (2006). *Introduction to Research in Education.* 7th edition. Belmont: Thomas Wadsworth.

Borg, W. R. & Gall, M. R. (1983). *Educational Research: An introduction.* 4th edition. New York & London: Longman.

Chawala, M. F. (1993). *Statistical Bulletin 1964-1992.* Blantyre: Malawi College of Distance Education.

Cohen, L., Manion, L. & Morrison, K. (2008). *Research Methods in Education.* 2nd edition. Abingdon: Milton Park.

Commonwealth Secretariat (2001). *Education for Our Common Future: The Halifax Statement on Education in the Commonwealth.* London: Commonwealth Secretariat.

Fraenkel, J. R. & Wallen, N. E. (2000). *How to Design and Evaluate Research in Education.* New York: McGraw-Hall.

Jung, I. & Latchem, C. (2007). Assuring Quality in Asian Open and Distance Learning. *Open Learning,* 22(3): 235-250.

Jian, N. & Hamp-Lyons, L. (2006). Progress Assessment in Chinese Distance Education: The Voices of Learners. *Open Learning,* 21(2): 111-123.

Malawi Correspondence College (1980). *Progress Report.* Blantyre: Malawi Correspondence College and Broadcasting Unit.

Malawi College of Distance Education (1993). *Handbook for Distance Education Centres and Night Schools.* Blantyre: Malawi College of Distance Education.

Malawi College of Distance Education (1996). *Education Policy Issues for the Malawi College of Distance Education.* Blantyre: Malawi College of Distance Education.

Malawi College of Distance Education (2008). *Handbook for Open Secondary Schools and Study Centres.* Blantyre: Malawi College of Distance Education.

Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (2011). *Education Management Information System.* Lilongwe: Ministry of Education Science and Technology.

Msiska, F. G. W. (2013). *Audit Study to Determine Effectiveness of Open, Distance and E-learning Delivery Mode in Broadening and Increasing Access to Education and Training in Malawi.* Mzuzu: Commonwealth of Learning.

Nankwenya, I. A. J. (1974). *The Origin and Development of Correspondence Education in Malawi 1962-1972.* M.Ed. dissertation. University of Malawi, Zomba.

Paul, R.H. (1990). *Open Learning and Open Management: Leadership and Integrity in Distance Education.* London: Kogan Page.

Republic of Malawi (1973). *Education Development Plan 1973 – 1980.* Lilongwe: Ministry of Education, Science and Technology.

Republic of Malawi (1985). *Education Development Plan 1985 – 1995.* Ministry of Education, Science and Technology.

Sethy, S. S. (2008). Distance Education in the Age of Globalization: An Overwhelming Desire Towards Blended Learning. *Turkish Online Journal of Distance Education,* 9(3): 29-44.

SADC (2012). *Regional Open and Distance Learning Policy Framework.* Gaborone: SADC.

UNESCO (2002). *Open and Distance Learning: Trends, Policy and Strategy Considerations.* Paris: UNESCO.

Woodley, A. (2005). *Doing Educational Research and Evaluation in Open and Distance Learning.* Vancouver: Commonwealth of Learning.