| **Background** | A number of initiatives have been introduced from the Human Resources Development Directorate aligned to unisa’s strategic and operational plans to accelerate levels of performance. A Young Academics Programme (YAP), initiated in 2008, has received Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) accolades as a critical intervention to development a new cadre of scholars and practitioners. This has been complemented by a Building Tomorrow’s Leaders (BTL) programme targeted at middle-level managers to sustain the developmental trajectory. The Young Academics Programme was developed and piloted in 2008. The program seeks to develop a cohort of young, promising and talented academics for the future, both in terms of academic development as well as management |

**Title:** Towards an integrated and sustainable model for the development of ODL management and leadership.

**Sub-theme Theme 1: ODL capacity building for sustainable development**

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A young Academic is regarded as someone under the age of 40, who holds a minimum of an Honours Degree. The ideal candidate should be considering registering or have registered for a Master’s Degree. This training and development initiative seeks to fast track these academics in the areas of tuition, research and academic management, providing them with the knowledge and skills required to become high achievers not only within UNISA but also the national environment and global stage. The initiative also further seeks to enable these young academics to one day assume the role of leadership in their academic Departments or Colleges.

Since its inception in 2008 HRD has presented 7 programs up to date. A total of 113 delegates have participated in the program. In 2013 HRD presented the 7th program with 16 delegates who participated in the program. The program was reviewed and the contact period was shortened. The program was divided into 3 phases, phase 1 was 3 weeks full time contact sessions, phase 2 dealt with on-line assignments and group work and phase 3 was 3 weeks full time contact sessions. The candidates each received a tablet to promote ICT enhanced learning and research to enable them to function optimally in the global knowledge economy.

The new reviewed program was found to be more effective as it allowed delegates the opportunity to go back to their substantive positions and start implementing some of their learning. The delegates were exposed to presentations by internal and external experts, workshops, assignments and various self and leadership assessments. The focus of the program being on developing or enhancing skills in self- mastery, Teaching and Learning, research and Community Engagement.

The expectation from candidates that their participation would automatically lead to a promotion position needs to be explicitly managed within existing structural organisational constraints. The added value and richness of contributions to their existing departments and units upon graduation should be measured more intensively. Other contributing factors might be the introduction of the new
research development qualification improvement programmes with more tangible benefits, or perceptions that the Building Tomorrow’s leaders is more prestigious. The selection criteria and purposes do differ considerably as do the target audiences, but this evidently requires deeper analyses.

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<td>In the South African context, higher education institutions have been challenged to fundamentally transform their identities and practices and to locate themselves in a just and democratic system with social mandates that address the national imperatives of transformation, equity and redress. The transformation agenda and its influences on and uptake in universities is highly contested, complex and contradictory.</td>
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<td>A helpful distinction is made in the literature between the conserving the ‘old’ against the relative investments into ‘building the new’. Institutional cultures are often dissected by the inherent contradictions of valuing historical and archaic regimes that resist technological advances and stifle spaces for critique and dialogue. Universities have been, and still are however, expected to provide personnel for institution-building in new civil societies under construction.</td>
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<td>Consciously developed conceptual frameworks for professional development in higher education are scarce in the literature. Drawing largely from the body of work of Zuber-Skerritt, the constructs of networking and knowledge brokerage is introduced as a critical element, and often unarticulated process that promotes collaborative enquiry and professional development. This has been a fundamental premise upon which the YAP had been designed.</td>
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<td>It is further proposed that engaging in the ‘knowledge economy’ as a system of highly developed knowledge networks, might open out and revitalize institutional transformation. The DEASA platform as a regional civil society network, like higher education itself, has been and are central to research and for strengthening local knowledge development.</td>
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<td>Key defining characteristics of the global knowledge economy are discussed to underpin strategies that could harness the power and potential of networks – from institutional to regional levels. The key global drivers of innovation and their related concepts are shared in an attempt to reimagine and reconstruct the ‘global’</td>
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from the perspective of a developing middle-class economy country.

As Brennan, J., King, R. and Lebeau, Y. (2004), so eloquently argue, social transformation is a disruptive force “at the radical end of conceptions of social change”. It assumes some fundamental changes to society’s core institutions and supporting arrangements that will affect power relationships between social groups and for the means of creating and distributing status, power and access to resources. The lessons and insights from an intensive study of 15 countries across five regions that had recently undergone or were experiencing major transformation have identified a number of critical concerns for the purposes of this paper.

| Problem statement | There is an need to examine the extent to which Unisa’s considerable institutional investments over the past five years, supplemented by earmarked government funding, into a number of initiatives to develop organisational management and leadership practitioners skills have been effective and will be sustainable.

The regional benefits from the selected case study will demonstrate how to translate national policy imperatives into sound institutional strategies that actively promote sustainable regional development. |
| Aims and objectives | The collaborative review from an HRD practitioner, policy and strategic planning perspective aims to identify the features of an integrated and sustainable model for the development of ODL management and leadership. |
| Research design and methodology | The design is based on revisiting the conceptualisation of the interventions, the various iterations of implementation, achieved outcomes and responsiveness to emerging challenges.

Participatory formative and summative stakeholder reviews, reflected in institutional monitoring, evaluation and reporting from the basis of the methodological approach.

The data has been analysed through formal surveys, focus discussion groups and a process of policy alignment through project management methodologies to ensure continued external. Financial performance and independent external audits attest to the efficacy of the intervention. |
**Findings and discussions**

The essential principles of the intervention are encapsulated in a number of national policies such as the 2030 National Development Plan, the specialized and earmarked teaching and research development grants.

The study has illuminated the critical features towards the development of an integrated and sustainable model of ODL management and leadership within an ODL context. A capabilities framework for developing new cadres of ODL practitioners, scholars, leaders and managers for the sector has emerged for further refinement.

**References**


Title: Evaluation of BOCODOL’s use of part-time writers in the material writing process—examination of their value add.

Sub-theme: ODL Innovations and best practices for sustainable development

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Background

Botswana College of Distance and Open Learning (BOCODOL) have been engaged in the production of self-instructional materials for its learners through the use part-time writers in the development process. A writing process has been developed to ensure that the materials meet the needs of learners and are of the desirable quality. BOCODOL thrives through the use of part-time staff in the material development and it is through this engagement that the issue of cost and quality arise.

This study therefore examined the contribution of part-time writers in the process of material writing to see if they add any value.

Literature review

Since many of the instructional activities commonly associated with conventional face-to-face instruction, such as classroom discussion and immediate and direct feedback, are not easy to provide in the DE context, the role of the instructional materials that are prepared in advance of the learning activity is especially important. According to Rahman (2006:55) developing
course materials for Open and distance learning is a continuous process which involves a variety of staffs with a wide range of expertise. According to Shaw and Taylor (1994) the development of high quality instructional materials for DE is a labour intensive and costly affair, and draws upon a wide range of expertise that is not normally found in the repertoire of skills of any one person. Moore and Tait (2002, 12) argue that unlike face-to-face teaching, ODL offers potential economies of scale because although development costs of materials are high, teaching costs are low. However, the economies of scale in this context would assume an organisation that is producing its own learning materials. When materials are bought in, unit costs should start low and continue to be low as numbers rise.

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<th>Problem statement</th>
<th>The engagement of part time writers in the writing of materials was meant to speed up the process of writing and improving the quality of the output. Despite all this learners still complain of error ridden materials either in terms of spelling or misrepresentation of facts. Moreover because writers are engaged in full time jobs elsewhere they often do not honour the agreed delivery schedules leading to late completion which consequently affects offering or launching of programmes. Moreover overtime the cost involved in engaging part time writers has soared with the increase of programmes that needs to be introduced. This means that the budget for producing learning materials become disproportional to the programmes and</th>
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| Aims and objectives (this can also include research questions) | The following are the objectives for carrying out this research:

- To assess contribution of writers in the overall quality of materials
- To determine the cost involved in producing learning materials
- To evaluate the existing writing process
- To suggest an effective writing model that would be suitable for the College |
| Research design and methodology | This research was done through use of semi-structured questionnaires administered to Programme Coordinators/lecturers and Editors. Also a calculation of costs that goes into the engagement of part-time writers in the material development was conducted |
| Findings and discussions | The study shows that although part-time writers are important in the writing process, their worth is questionable due to issues of their commitment, contribution and high costs involved.

The study calls for a relook into the arrangement of using part-time writers and content editors. In particular, this study calls for re-examination of the writing process and consideration of business reengineering to ensure that the process is efficacious. |
| References | Dr. GangappaKurubacourse material development and delivery in distance education in Botswana

Som Naidu Applying learning and instructional strategies in open and distance learning Distance Education Vol. 15 No. 1 1994 |
| Suzanne Levy, Ed.D. Six Factors to Consider when Planning Online Distance Learning Programs in Higher Education |
| Rebecca Essel (Mrs.) William Owusu-Boateng (Rev.) Albert AmoahSaahEffect of Distance Learner-Perception of Course Materials on Access to Learning for Professional Development: A Case Study of Centre for Continuing Education, University of Cape Coast, Ghana |
| Developing Course Materials for Open and Distance Learning: BOU Perspective Mohammad Habibur RAHMAN Bangladesh Open University BANGLADESH, Turkish Online Journal of Distance Education-TOJDE July 2006 ISSN 1302-6488 Volume: 7 Number: 4 Article: 4 |

| Style | Times New Roman Font 12 Space 1.5 |
An extended abstract of a paper to be presented at the 49th DEASA CONFERENCE: Open and Distance Learning (ODL): Towards sustainable development in the Southern African Development Community (SADC Region) to be held in Mauritius, 19th to 21st September 2014

**Title:** Celebrating the covert skills acquired through Open and Distance Learning for effective institutional management and leadership

**Sub-theme:** ODL capacity building for sustainable development

**Name/s of author/s:** Bantu L Morolong (Dr)

**Institution affiliation:** University of Botswana, Gaborone, Botswana

**e-mail address:** morolongbl@mopipi.ub.bw

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<td>It is an established notion that people who lead organisations must have received some education and training that prepared them for organizational management. In other words, they should have undergone some conventional 'training' which often covers the essential work-related knowledge, skills, and techniques. Literature surveyed for this paper refers to this as conventional or traditional 'training'. By focusing on the presumed covert skills that managers who acquired from learning through the distance learning mode, this paper picks the idea of management effectiveness and develops it by arguing that, the most effective way to develop managers would need much more than taking them through conventional training and skills development. Instead while there are other ways of enhancing their growth, studying by distance is one of the most effective ways to develop organisational managers because as a process it is a holistic and effectively facilitates personal and professional growth in a balanced way. In other words, it extends the range of development way outside traditional work skills and</td>
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knowledge, [http://www.businessballs.com/traindev.htm](http://www.businessballs.com/traindev.htm) and creates far more independent and innovative leaders and managers than the conventional mode.

This line of thought forced the researcher to pose this critical question…which skills are required by managers of this milieu for effective organisational management. In the view of Murphy, (2005) the organisation of the twenty-first century is virtual and therefore requires virtual management styles, systems and structures. Understanding this new organization which is a complex adaptive system, with regard to its architecture, its dynamics, and its organizational code, needs a level of understanding beyond what is taught in most business schools today. Further borrowing from Murphy, some of the most interesting and relevant characteristics of this virtual organisation which this paper will use to show their parallels with some of the strengths of distance education are; a decreased dependence on a command-and-control style of leadership; a breakdown of hierarchies and a changed management system; an increasing commitment to virtual technologies; reliance on teamwork; greater flexibility; knowledge centres that interact largely through mutual interest and electronic - rather than authority – systems (p.5).

**Context**

The context of this study is Botswana a country in southern Africa, which has used ODL (evolving from Non Formal Education) as an alternative delivery to conventional education for approximately more than three decades to date. While the number of institutions in the country which subscribe to the ODL idea are increasing, there is still only one thus far being Botswana College of Distance and Open Learning (BOCODOL) which is a public institution in the country dedicated to the delivery of school equivalency programmes through ODL. However, there are other public institutions in the country such as the University of Botswana (UB) and government departments such as the Out Of School Education and Training (OSET) which have over the years delivered education and training using
some of the non-conventional modes of educational delivery including part time non formal and Distance Education.

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| In spite of the existing paucity of information on how Organisations are managed in Botswana, there is some evidence to suggest that in Botswana like in the rest of Africa, or maybe even the world, discussions of organisational management are framed within the three areas of economies, namely the Public sector, the private/business sector and the non-government often non-profit organisations. These discussions also find their basis on the traditional Theoretical model of management which lays emphasis on the core functions of the management practice which are Planning, controlling, organising and motivating. It is around these that what has been referred to above as traditional management training is also anchored. The training also covers the practical stipulations of how to manage organisations, making the whole thing somewhat prescriptive within the framework of a template of how to for communication, human resources management and development, mobilisation of other resources and how to manage change in organisations among others (MurokiMwaura, Edward Tiagha, J. Muruku Waiguchu, 1999)

The close positive correlation between effective organisational management and the training that has been received by managers of organisations is well documented. Studies conducted on this issue worldwide show this positive relationship. There are also very strong views that, about 50 percent of the investments in training and development result in organizational or individual improvements in American companies (Jodlbauer et al., 2011) and this is why, companies all over the world spend billions of dollars on training their employees including those in management and leadership. However, there is also a common view that while training enables employees to gain skills and
knowledge but there is no guarantee that training results in improved performance. A study conducted on Training and organizational effectiveness in Malaysia found that training employees to acquire individual/managerial skills and process skills helps in improving organizational effectiveness; knowledge application and knowledge protection interact with individual/managerial skills training to improve organizational effectiveness and that knowledge acquisition, application, and protection interact with process skills training to enhance organizational effectiveness (Rahman, Imm, Sambasivan and Wong, 2013). It is also very easy from the training content of the programmes which managers undergo, to identify the expected specific skills that such training would impart for those managers and leaders to be able to perform well in their managerial functions. Most of these programmes are delivered through the conventional formal training institutions such as schools of business and leadership in universities and professional studies institutes on a full time or part time basis. It can be argued that conventional 'training' is required to cover essential work-related skills, techniques and knowledge.

All the above notwithstanding, this study was aimed at documenting the covert skills that managers and leaders of organisations who studied through Open and distance learning would have acquired from learning through that mode to be able to effectively lead and manage organisations. These skills are not duly acknowledged, recognised and credited. The study recognised the fact that there are other nonconventional ways which those who serve as managers and leaders of organisations go through so as to acquire skill not only to serve in organisations but also to lead them. These include some of the following: on-the-job training; informal training; on-the-job coaching and life-coaching; mentoring; skills training; product training, technical training, and distance education. http://www.businessballs.com/traindev.htm#developing-people-versus-skills. These are some of the skills that the study aims to give Managers from a sample of Organisations opportunity to reflect on and uphold as the contribution of Distance education to organisational management and growth in Botswana. The study will tease out
reasons for this lack of recognition of the covert skills and highlight the disadvantages of this.

Problem statement

This study is concerned about the relationship between the mode of learning managers used to qualify to lead and manage organisations and their effectiveness as managers. The study acknowledges the fact that there are many aspects to a learning process, key among which are the content and the mode of delivery. Of the two, the study picked for specific attention, Open and Distance Learning as a mode and sought to answer the question… which covert skills does learning, through this mode develop in the learners for them to be able to manage and lead organisations. These skills are considered, aside from any other skills that the content that is delivered to a distance learner might have emphasised. The study considers the presumed additional skills (apart from the skills that might be acquired through the explicit content of the distance learners’ curriculum as covert. This is because it argued that, while those undergoing learning and training by distance often have a particular content area that they focus on, the distance learning mode extends the effects of the learning process beyond the content to the area commonly known as training and learning development. Training and learning development includes aspects such as: ethics and morality; attitude and behaviour; leadership and determination, as well as skills and knowledge to mention but a few. These are usually the not so spelled out aspects of many learning and training encounters especially in the conventional classroom learning. If learners acquire these in the process, this is more or less a bonus. In this paper it is argued that by its nature, learning by distance almost invariably puts the learner in a position of no choice but to acquire these skills if they are to even succeed as distance learners. The fundamental premise in this study is that when so acquired, these skills are naturally applied in management and leadership. And this makes those who learnt through the distance education mode more amenable to
succeed in their managerial roles, particularly in the management of educational institutions. In other words learning by distance facilitates development which is said to be not restricted to training. Instead, it is anything that while helping people to grow in their knowledge base and in abilities, it also brings with it acquisition of desired levels of self-confidence, creativity, tolerance, commitment, initiative, strong interpersonal skills, self-control, and motivation.

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<td>This study was aimed at documenting the covert skills that managers and leaders of organisations who studied through Open and distance learning would have acquired from learning through that mode to be able to effectively lead and manage organisations. Therefore, the study undertook to delineate and make comparisons between the skills which are overt and acquired through the traditional modes of learning and those that a distance learner acquires in the process of learning through this mode which prepare them for effective organisational management. And these are viewed as covert because they would not have been explicitly identified in the curriculum</td>
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**Research Questions**

Are there any covert or unintended skills that those learning through the distance learning mode acquire during their learning process?

Which covert skills does learning, through the distance education mode develop in the learners?

Is there a positive correlation between the covert skills acquired through the distance education mode and effectiveness in organisational leadership and management?
**Research design and methodology**

Within the framework of mainly qualitative research methodologies, purposive non probability sampling procedure was used to select participants in this study. The majority of participants in this study had obtained their tertiary education qualifications by studying through the ODL mode and held managerial positions in a number of organisations. Individual and focus group interviews mainly, were used to have participants reflect on their experiences as ODL learners. They were also to share the learning experiences which in their view have positively influenced their performance as managers. The findings of the study point to the fact that learning through ODL develops certain clandestine skills in learners that when applied in a leadership role contribute to effectiveness. Among others the participants mentioned, independence of thought, effective time management, team work, networking skills, strong interpersonal relationships’ skills and planning. From the sample, there were also participants who had learnt through conventional face to face methods and were able to make comparisons. While they recognised the fact that some of these areas are effectively covered in the content of training as a leader and or manager, they argued that learning through ODL gives one an opportunity to try these practically at a personal level before one finds themselves in the functions of manager or leader. The key recommendation is that the design of ODL programmes should better flag these skills so that they are no longer covert but stated as part of the uniqueness of ODL. And secondly, it is recommended that conventional training for organisational managerial and leadership functions should integrate these skills into the learning processes and develop them not only in theory but also through practice. Thirdly, it is recommended that in this knowledge society, managers of organisations should look to ODL to develop some of the identified skills as opportunities to learn through the conventional mode shrink while technology mediated and Open and Distance Learning opportunities expand. These would enable managers and leaders of organisations to continue to learn, be responsive to the changing landscape of training/ learning and
development and to effectively contribute to sustainable development through effective capacity building.

**Findings and discussions**

The findings of the study point to the fact that learning through ODL develops certain clandestine skills in learners that when applied in a leadership role contribute to effectiveness. Among others the participants mentioned, independence of thought, effective time management, teamwork, networking skills, strong interpersonal relationships’ skills and planning, group dynamics and group functioning, leadership skills, critical reflection and thinking, and emotional intelligence. For purposes of comparison this sample of managers included six who had also studied through the traditional mode and were able to identify skills that they could specifically, say the traditional mode of learning had not been able to develop in them so that they become effective managers as compared to the distance mode. While these participants recognised the fact that some of the mentioned skill areas are effectively covered in the content of learning or training as a leader and or manager, they argued that learning through ODL gives one an opportunity to try these skills, practically, and at a personal level during the learning period, before one finds themselves in the functions of manager or leader.

**References**


[http://www.businessballs.com/traindev.htm#developing-people-versus-skills](http://www.businessballs.com/traindev.htm#developing-people-versus-skills)

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<td>Rashmi Shashikant Malapur (2009) Changing Paradigms in Management.</td>
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Title: The Impact of Restricting Distance Education to Serving Teachers on Sustainable Development: A Case of Mufulira College of Education (Copperbelt-Zambia)

Sub-theme: Ideology and philosophy of ODL for sustainable development

Name: Brenda Haamoonga-Kaleyo (M.A.Ed)/Phd Student-UNISA (51509903)

Institution affiliation: Mufulira College of Education

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Background.

The role of equity and accessibility to education cannot be overemphasized in any attempt to achieve sustainable development. Education, according to Taneja (2012), is derived from two Latin words ‘educare’ and ‘educere’ which mean ‘to bring up’ and ‘bring forth’, respectively. This may be interpreted as an effort to build or mould someone in a particular manner so as to reflect to some extent the expected code of conduct or display mastery of skills and knowledge for a certain cause. To bring forth perhaps may suggest, that which may be transmitted so as to ensure the particular manner of bringing up is achieved. It is obvious that education definitely vary in nature as it ultimately reflects the social, religious, political and economic values of a society.

On the other hand, sustainable development, though diversely defined is usually and widely used as presented in 1987 by the World Commission on Environment and Development as “Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs,” (Todaro and Smith,2011:467).That, all improvements socially or economically, shall not be done at the expense of those yet to come. As much as possible every attempt to develop or improve standards of living should be done with maximum care to ensure the forth coming generation benefits or is not at all disadvantaged by our actions.

In view of the above, it is evident that education plays a very vital role in the attainment of the kind of development that does not impact negatively on the future. Zambia, like any other country in Africa has
a huge task to ensure that adequate education is provided for to the nation to bring awareness on serious issues that affect its development. Training of teachers among others has been the back born for education provision. However, limited space or infrastructure to meet the required demand in the traditional full time education has usually been a challenge. Like many other countries in Africa, Zambia has embraced distance education to allow as many people as possible who, for one reason or another, may not be able to enroll in a full time traditional system. This undoubtedly is a positive move to fulfilling Equity and equality, elements strongly recommended for the development of education, (MOE, 1996).

Nevertheless, in the recent past, the Ministry of Education, Science, Vocational Training and Early Education, instructed all Teacher Colleges not to enroll any candidates that were not serving teachers under the distance mode. Given the background to distance education, and its role in reducing the limitations surrounding the traditional full time system, the researcher carried out an investigation on the implications of the circular on sustainable development.

**Literature Review**

Open and Distance Learning everywhere in the world has usually played a key role in increasing access to education provision in attempts to yield equity and equality. According to MOE (1996), equity and equality have been defined as giving opportunities to everyone to access education regardless of age, gender, geographical set up, or religious affiliation among others. This means that there may not be one way suitable to accessing education as individuals may have varied challenges such as distance, economic and social factors that may prevent them from fitting into the one traditional system. As such in the name of equity and equality their challenges may be dealt with by finding alternatives. Beyani, (2013) echoes the importance of open and distance learning in offering equitable education to vulnerable society members. The Ministry of Education, Science, Vocational Training and Early Education is obliged to focus as much as possible on factors that may hinder it from achieving a well-intended dream. Sticks to its dream by avoiding at all cost the temptation to

**Problem Statement.**
In the recent past Zambia has improved access to education through the provision of open and distance education which the 1992 Focus on Learning targeted as other channels of education delivery. There is no doubt that this is and will continue being a relief to many people who may have had problems taking up the usual full time approach. In the area of teacher training this also cushioned the pressure to meet the target number of teachers required to meet the demand. Unfortunately lately the Zambian Government has instructed against training by distance to non-serving teachers. This is quite disturbing especially that many people who may be asked to attend full time system may not be able to do so for various reasons. The researcher is concerned about this instruction as a number of people may be denied the chance to access education in the event that they do not manage to do so. Not only that, the researcher is largely concerned because Mufulira College Of Education is one of the two Colleges offering Junior Secondary Teacher Training out of the fourteen public Colleges in Zambia,( MESVTEE 2014) . The one big question is ‘what does this entail in terms of sustainable development?’

The researcher undertook a research to find the effect of this on sustainable development.

Aims and Objective of the Study

The research aimed at examining why people opted to do study by distance mode. At the same time, the study meant to evaluate the repercussions of restricting distance education to serving teachers on sustainable development. On the other hand, the study meant to draw lessons that could influence policy makers on decisions that may affect sustainable development. The study dwells on the following research questions:

- Why do people choose studying by distance mode?
- What contribution does distance and open learning make to sustainable development?
- How can distance and open learning be improved to enhance sustainable development?

Research Design and Methodology

Both random and purposive sampling was used in this research because the distance students in particular and the lectures involved would be able to provide the required information. The sampling frame was the total number of first, second and third year distance students who were directly affected by the instruction. The research methodology included both qualitative and quantitative through the use


Findings and Discussions

The research generally revealed that restricting distance education to serving teachers would negatively impact the attempt to achieve sustainable development. Below are some of the reasons to justify the statement.

Firstly, the research revealed that about 65% of the candidates who participated in the research were women. This suggests that perhaps most of those women did not have chance to complete their education as they dropped out of school, early pregnancies or marriages and poverty to mention but a few typical of many girls in Zambia.

The number of drop outs among girls in schools raises a lot of concern. Quite often, especially in rural, areas girls drop out of school more than boys because of early pregnancies leading to early marriages (MESVTEE, 2011)

Additionally, Kelly, (2009) argues that the number of HIV/AIDS disadvantages many girls as they have play their traditional role of being care giving for their infected relatives at the expense of their progression in education.

That aside, the research shows that many of the candidates were self-sponsored who depended on small scale businesses when not in college. Therefore even if they were offered full time training, they would not be able to take it up for financial reasons. If the opportunity to train by distance was denied to them then that would be the end of their attempt to get educated.

Not only that, but there was an indication that many of them had tried gaining entry to full time programmes, but it was not possible because of high competition and limited space. Beyani, (2013) argues that access to tertiary education remains an issue as of the 55000 school leavers at O level, approximately 15% gain access to tertiary institutions. This definitely is worrisome and the only possible intervention would be open and distance education.

Furthermore, the research shows that the preferred in-service teachers held either Early childhood or Primary school Teacher’s certificate which indicates that specializing in any of the subjects offered at
the college would be a diversion from what they were already doing thereby creating a crisis for those field already taken up. The fact that they take up a diploma they will be completely detached from Early childhood training or Primary teaching an area which is already facing a challenge of lack of teachers, (MESVTEE,2013). It would be beneficial if they were provided a higher qualification for the already undertaken course to ensure quality delivery and effective learning achievements which most countries seem not to successfully achieve. For instance, UNESCO (2012:8) reports that, “assessments have shown that children in many worlds’ poorest countries can spend several years in school without learning to read a word”. This obviously sends a bad signal on the ability of the teachers to attain learning achievements. Therefore, this indicates the need to seriously consider professional development to enhance achievement of educational goals.

In conclusion, in view of the few discussions above, the researcher recommends that Zambia and the continent at large revisits its policy making approach to ensure that adequate research is undertaken prior to making any pronouncements that hinge on development. There is no doubt that the move will go a long way in affecting the lives of people today and more so in future. There is no way a noble cause for distance and open learning would be put to rest when the continent is in dare need of more trained and qualified teachers to fill the many vacancies characterizing many African countries (UNESCO,2014)

References


1. Introduction

This research critically analyzes the strengths and weaknesses of the learning management system (LMS) as an asynchronous technology used in DE based on a case study of the efficiency of use of the LMS by first year students in an open distance learning institution. Firstly, the issue of concern in DE, student support, is outlined. The strengths of learning management systems in providing student support are then discussed. This is followed by a critique of the technology for its weaknesses and the negative impact that it can have on student support endeavors. The efficiency with which first year students with diverse digital proficiency use the LMS is discussed based on a case study in an ODL environment.

2. Related literature

2.1. Need for Student Support in Distance Education

DE is a type of education in which for most of the time that teaching and learning occurs teachers and students are in different places (Moore & Kearsly, 2012). Consequently, DE students experience different kinds of problems than students in face-to-face education and need different kinds of support than students in residential institutions. Student support includes supporting learning through course materials and learning resources developed (cognitive), the environment created to enhance student commitment and self-esteem (affective), and establishing effective administrative processes and information management systems (systemic) (Tait, 2014). In DE the geographic distance makes interaction between teachers and students more dependent on some form of communication technology to achieve this. Thus students in DE need to learn to study and to communicate with other students and teachers through technology.

2.2. Strengths of Learning Management Systems in Providing Student Support

LMSs provide a useful way for knowledge acquisition and support active learning (Emelyanova & Voronina, 2014). LMSs are enterprise-wide and internet-based systems such
as WebCT, Blackboard, and Sakai that integrate a wide range of pedagogical and administration tools that can create virtual learning environments (Coates, James & Baldwin, 2005). LMSs are the most widespread asynchronous e-learning tools which provide an online learning environment through which course material can be delivered and enable peer-peer, student-teacher, and student-content interaction (Geogouli, Kantzavelou, Guerreiro & Koilias, 2006; Subramaniam & Kandasamy, 2011).

Advantages of the LMS as an asynchronous learning tool include providing flexibility in that it is accessible at any time via webpages. This can motivate students because they can take part in the learning and teaching process by reading, writing, and creating graphics. This learning environment supports audio-visual presentations making it more effective (Tait, 2014). Students can advance at their own pace, independent of their peers. It is also scalable and can meet the growing demand for higher-education. Interaction and support can occur through the use of discussion forums featured in the LMS where students can post questions to their teachers or peers and they in turn can respond at their convenience.

2.3. Weaknesses of Learning Management Systems in Providing Student Support

This asynchronous mode of communication can be effectively implemented if the technological features of the LMS function efficiently and effectively, and moreover students need to know how and when to use these features (Subramaniam & Kandasamy, 2011). Affective factors such as user-friendliness of the LMS and student readiness for using such technology are also important in ensuring effective DE programs. A major disadvantage of the LMS as an asynchronous learning tool is that it is more suited to motivated, disciplined students. DE students may feel alienated due to a loss of community and interaction with their peers and often face barriers to completing their education such as lack of support and lack of motivation (Osborn, 2001).

The effectiveness of LMS is also dependent on the teacher’s ability to design and develop courseware that suits the LMS technology and their implement of student support. The DE teacher should be well trained to use the LMS technology successfully (Moore & Kearsly, 2012). Teachers need support when learning about new technologies. Instructional development and production is a team effort and the delivery of DE also requires a team of well-trained individuals (Sherry, 1995). This requires that the teacher pays attention to advanced preparation, student interaction, visual materials, activities for independent study
and follow-up activities. Teachers must be at ease with the LMS technology. This requires ongoing training and practice for teachers in using the LMS to design appropriate courseware in line with the nature and philosophy of DE.

3. Aims and objectives
3.1. Aim: Investigate the efficiency with which first year students with varying digital proficiency utilise the LMS.
3.2. Objectives
3.2.1. Determine the amount of time taken by participants in the four levels of digital proficiency to complete assigned tasks in the Human Computer Interaction (HCI) laboratory.
3.2.2. Assess the participants’ perception of the LMS’s usability in terms of efficiency, effectiveness and ease of use.

4. Research design and methodology
4.1. Case study: A case study was used to determine the efficiency with which first year students with varying digital proficiency utilise the LMS.
4.2. Major activities
Three tasks were given to four groups of students and their efficiency in performing the task was recorded using audio-visual records. A post-test questionnaire was also administered to ascertain the participants’ perception of the LMS’s usability in terms of efficiency, effectiveness and ease of use.

In the research students were categorized according to their e-Skills levels based on individual performance in a simulated competence-based assessment. Four groups of the Digital Proficiency Framework (ECDL, 2011; Mabila, Gelderblom & Ssemugabi, 2014): Digital Awareness, Digital Literacy, Digital Competence and Digital Expertise were used to group the students. Users in the four levels of digital proficiency were then assigned three tasks which they performed at the HCI laboratory. Usability testing and eye tracking were used to determine how students use the LMS to perform the given tasks. The amount of time for each student to complete the specific task was recorded. The data collected was analysed in order to determine the efficiency with which students with varying digital proficiency use the LMS.
The three tasks:
Task 1 – Send an e-mail: In this task participants had to login to the e-mail system and send an e-mail with a specified attachment to a given e-mail address. Participants had to browse for the correct document and attach it to the e-mail, and send it.
Task 2 – Find tutorial letter 101: This task involved finding a resource, a tutorial letter, of a module in the LMS. This required that the participant logon to the LMS, click on “Official Study Material” and select the tutorial letter.
Task 3 – Post a comment on the discussion forum: This task involved posting a comment on a discussion forum of a study module in the LMS. The task required participants to login to the LMS, select “Discussion Forum”, choose an on-going discussion forum, write a comment and submit it.

5. Findings and Discussions
Evidence gathered in the study showed differences in the performance of the tasks among participants in the different levels of digital proficiency and that Students’ ICT skills vary which influences their ability to use the LMS.
Table 1 shows the average time taken by participants in different digital proficiency categories to complete tasks.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Digital competence</th>
<th>Task 1</th>
<th>Task 2</th>
<th>Task 3</th>
<th>Average time (all three tasks)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Digital Awareness</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digital Literacy</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digital Competence</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digital Expertise</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Task 1 all the participants in the Digital Awareness category required assistance, and 50% of participants in the Digital Literacy category required assistance while performing the task. In contrast, none of the participants in the Digital Expertise category and 17% in the Digital Competence category required assistance. Participants in the Digital Competence and Digital Expertise categories found the tasks easier to do and took less time, eight (8) and six (6)
minutes respectively, on average performing them. This is in comparison to fifteen (15) for the Digital Awareness and thirteen (13) minutes for the participants in Digital Literacy category.

Table 2 shows the results of the post-test questionnaire completed by students after performing the tasks.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants’ assessment of usability components per digital proficiency level</th>
<th>Ease of use</th>
<th>Efficiency</th>
<th>Effectiveness</th>
<th>Easy to remember</th>
<th>Satisfaction</th>
<th>Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Digital Awareness</td>
<td>4.40</td>
<td>4.40</td>
<td>4.40</td>
<td>4.50</td>
<td>4.40</td>
<td>4.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digital Expertise</td>
<td>4.75</td>
<td>4.65</td>
<td>4.75</td>
<td>4.81</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>4.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digital Competence</td>
<td>4.67</td>
<td>4.10</td>
<td>4.22</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.50</td>
<td>4.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digital Literacy</td>
<td>4.81</td>
<td>4.47</td>
<td>4.44</td>
<td>4.58</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>4.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>4.66</td>
<td>4.40</td>
<td>4.45</td>
<td>4.47</td>
<td>4.73</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The overall mean of the first four elements, “ease of use”, efficiency, effectiveness and “easy to remember is 4.50. This compares fairly well to the mean of 4.73 obtained for the satisfaction with the way the system works. The average mean value for “ease of use” was 4.66. For efficiency this was 4.40, and 4.45 for effectiveness. The average means for “easy to remember” was 4.47, and 4.73 for satisfaction. Efficiency had the lowest average at 4.40, and the highest average was 4.73 for “Satisfaction”. Participants in the Digital Expertise category consistently scored the usability components higher than all the other categories, with one exception, “ease of use” in which the score was the second highest after the Digital Literacy category. The participants in the Digital Competence category consistently scored the usability components lower than all the other categories with one exception, the “ease of use” in which they were the second lowest after the Digital Awareness category. Participants in the Digital Awareness category scored all the usability components lower than the Digital Literacy and Digital Expertise categories.
6. Conclusion

DE can be effectively offered through asynchronous LMSs by mitigating apparent weaknesses and capitalizing on the strengths of the technology. The LMS itself should be designed to be user-friendly and its technological features should function efficiently and effectively. Additionally, students need to know how and when to use these features. The advantages provided by this virtual learning environment include flexibility through being accessible at any time through web pages and its ability to support audio-visual presentations. On-going training of teachers in the design and implementation of courseware through the LMS is essential in making teachers feel at ease with using it. The LMS also enables peer-peer, student-teacher, and student-content interaction. Geographic separation between teacher and student in DE means different kinds of problems are experienced by DE students therefore student support using the LMS should address cognitive, affective, and systemic aspects in line with DE philosophy.

7. References


Title: Open and distance learning: a panacea for social and economic sustainable development in South Africa

Sub-theme: ODL capacity building for sustainable development

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1. BACKGROUND

The purpose of this study was to explore and describe how open and distance learning (ODL) capacity building can enhance social and economic sustainable development. The concept of sustainable development had its roots in the idea of a sustainable society (Brown, 1981) and in the management of renewable and non-renewable resources. Sustainable development can only be achieved through long-term investments in economic, human and environmental capital. Institutions of higher education are to play an important role in offering knowledge and skills that will be used by those students to promote sustainable social and economic development of their society.

If ODL institutions are to improve social and economic lives of societies, it is necessary that they should give knowledge and skills that addresses the needs of the society that students are coming from. Sustainable economic growth at national and global levels depends on graduates joining the labour force and fuller use being made of their skills and qualifications. Skilled and well knowledgeable graduates would also help to reduce the problems that are faced by society. Sustainable development is increasingly a team sport, and capacity building for sustainable development therefore needs to consider the development of group-based skills and collaboration processes. The phrase “capacity building” incorporates within it other terms such as “training,” “professional development,” and “professional education.”
2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this study is to x-rays the role that is played by open distance learning (ODL) institutions in promoting sustainable social and economic development. The academic literature has paid increasing attention to the role of open distance learning institutions in the development process. Higher education institutions are regarded as one of the major groups that played an important role of sensitizing the public society about sustainable development. The role of sustainable development in education has been the subject of a heated debate (Hopkins, 1998; Rassool, 1999; Jickling, 2000; Foster, 2001; Gough, 2002; Bonnett, 1999). Education was recognised as one of the most important tools that can be used to enhance sustainable social and economic development through the cultivation of new knowledge abilities, values and attitudes (Keating 1993;United Nations 1993).

UNESCO has declared the decade 2004-2014 as “the Decade for education for Sustainable Development. The objective that UNESCO sets for Education for Sustainable Development into ordinary educational activities and re-orientating the existing curricula from pre-school to university. Refocusing lifelong education on the acquisition of knowledge, skills and values needed. Critics have argued that sustainable development is an inappropriate focal point for developing curriculum as it is too normative, ambiguous and ineffective at solving the complex problems that will face the next generation (Jickling, 2000). These critics misrepresent the proposed role of sustainable development in education.

According to the researcher it is important that all programmes that are offered in ODL institutions should include and cover topics and problems on how to maintain sustainable social and economic development that will encourages all our graduates to gain more skills and knowledge to solve problems that are found in their societies. By so doing all graduates will be well informed about how they can improve the social and economic performances of the societies that they are coming from. Rassool (1999) posits that the importance of “multi-literacies” and adequate levels of communicative competence in facilitating effective participation in the democratic process. Through this programmes all graduates as members of societies will become knowledgeable and well informed of the general approaches to all problems that are found in their society.
3. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Open and distance learning (ODL) has been correctly identified as a panacea for the myriad of social and economic problems in the whole world. It creates opportunities for all. The paper x-rays the role that is played by ODL institutions in promoting social and economic development and argues that ODL institutions should not only meet the needs of present without preparing students to meet the needs of the community that they come from. Furthermore, without a vibrant and well educated student, sustained and reasonable development could not be attained. This, all ODL institutions lacks, as the majority of those who are expected to plough back /instil to their communities at present are not there. This paper therefore, examines open and distance learning for sustainable development with emphasis on the production of students who will help their communities to improve social and economic development of their communities. The paper also established the relationship that exists between institutions and communities and concludes that for sustainable development of the communities, ODL institutions must be able to attend to the problems that prohibit students from developing their communities.

4. AIMS AND OBJECTIVE

- To explore and to describe programmes that can be used to give skills to students.
- To look at how ODL institution can help to improve and to promote sustainable social and economic development of societies.

5. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This was a descriptive qualitative research study aimed at understanding that ODL can play to bring about sustainable development in our communities. This research study was underpinned by the following research question: How can social and economic sustainable development be enhanced through the utilisation of open and distance learning delivery system? To answer the above research question semi-structured interviews were utilised. Data were collected, recorded and analysed using Collaizi’s(1978) thematic data analysis framework. The framework was chosen for its ability to provide clear steps for data presentation and analysis.
6. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The study found that for sustainable development to occur institutions must attend to the problems that prohibit students to develop their communities. Furthermore, the study revealed that students in various institutions appear to lack skills and competencies to improve their communities. The study argued that whatever skills and competencies gained by students it must be shared and promote social and economic development. Furthermore, the study also revealed that programmes that are offered in ODL institutions must also be aligned or address the needs of the society.

7. REFERENCES


Rassool, N. (1999). Literacy for Sustainable Development in the Age of Information, Multilingual According to the researcher it is Matters Ltd, University of Reading, Reading, MA.


Title: The role of higher education in enhancing capacity building for sustainable development: An open and distance learning perspective.

Sub-theme: ODL capacity building for sustainable development

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1. Background

The purpose of this study was to unmask the role of higher education as an agent that can be used to enhance capacity building for sustainable development through open and distance learning (ODL) delivery system. Over the past several years it has become clear that capacity building is central to the quest for sustainable development. If society is going to realise the goals of Agenda 21, which were strongly reaffirmed at the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in South Africa in 2002, the ability of regional organisations, national governments and civil society to address the principal challenges of sustainable development must be reinforced. Capacity building has therefore become a core goal of technical assistance provided by the United Nations system. Instead of being regarded as merely a component or by-product of development programmes and products, capacity building has become a principal and explicit priority of all United Nations activities. Institutions of higher education are poised to play a significant role in the search for a more sustainable future.

Most universities are tackling sustainability issues in a compartmentalised manner, sustainability education is confined to specific courses, education is often isolated from research, and neither is likely to be linked to sustainable campus operations. Yet education is the key to sustainable development and for competing in the global knowledge economy (World Bank, 2002). If we are to compete in the global knowledge economy, we must invest more on human capital. It was against this background that the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) supported training courses for policy-makers working in open and distance learning (ODL) environments in various countries around the world. ODL, properly structured, is one of the many cost-efficient and effective strategies for providing human capacity building in developing countries. It has an edge over face-to-face education and learning. It is a powerful channel for reaching learners anywhere at the same time provided the necessary infrastructure, equipment, and expertise are available. This approach explicitly links research, educational, operational and outreach activities and engages students in each. By encouraging a collaborative space within the curriculum for students, academics and managers to critically reflect on university’s performance with regard to sustainability, many positive benefits ensue, including raising the profile of university’s sustainability initiatives; providing solutions to sustainability problems; building trust among students, managers and academics; and providing meaningful learning experiences for students.
2. Literature review

One of the key drivers of the global knowledge and sustainable development is capacity building in human capital. Sustainable development requires the meaningful involvement and active participation of regional, national and sub-national legislatures and judiciaries, and all major groups: women, children and youth, indigenous peoples, non-governmental organizations, local authorities, workers and trade unions, business and industry, the scientific and technological community, and farmers, as well as other stakeholders, including local communities, volunteer groups and foundations, migrants, families as well as older persons and persons with disabilities (Lambert, 2004). Improving the implementation of sustainable development will thus not be achieved simply by increasing the skill and capacity of a few key individuals in government (Hadfield, 2002). Managing flows of knowledge as complex as those described earlier, and turning those flows into actionable policies and decisions, requires building the capacities of groups of people who can work together across increasingly fuzzy lines of sector specialisation.

Sustainable development is increasingly a team sport, and capacity building for sustainable development therefore needs to consider the development of group-based skills and collaboration processes. The phrase “capacity building” incorporates within it other terms such as “training,” “professional development,” and “professional education.” It may also, depending on the user, include broader processes such as “community development,” the improvement of institutional arrangements, and the strengthening of accountability mechanisms, as well as general educational activity (Hopkins & Jackson, 2002). The more common general phrase used in development circles is “capacity development,” but to avoid repetition and confusion (capacity development, sustainable development, etc.), this report follows United Nations convention and uses “capacity building” to refer to all these activities.

Capacity building is such a central activity in the process of sustainable development that it receives special treatment in the Outcome Document, The Future We Want, as part of the section on implementation (UNESCO, 2002). According to the classical definition given by the United Nations World Commission on Environment and Development in 1987, development is sustainable if it “meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” In addition, ODL is appropriate for (1) education of a large pool of people from different levels and types of education: basic, secondary, and tertiary; (2) disadvantaged people who are unable to enter conventional education for a variety of reasons; and (3) training or retraining professional, technical and vocational workers who want to upgrade and update their skills, knowledge and attitudes. ODL enables learners to study at their own time, any place convenient to them, and at their own pace (Verduin, 1992). It caters for all types of people regardless of their age, gender, citizenship, social standing, commitment, social responsibilities, and geographical location (Rumble, 1992).
3. Problem statement

Sustainable development cannot be efficiently and effectively operationalized without appropriate and adequate capacity building. Therefore, if the needs of the present generation are to be satisfied without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs, capacity building should be central to the sustainable development agenda. Because sustainable development involves a complex interplay between economic, environmental and socio-cultural considerations, it follows that for a country to achieve sustainable development it must consider all these issues in making short- and long-term development plans. However, social and economic considerations cannot be appreciated if there is lack of up-to-date information, knowledge, tools and skills to address the various issues. This makes capacity building another very critical issue to consider in policy development. This calls for the need to rationalise resource allocation and standardise processes and procedures while ensuring manpower training specifically in ODL.

4. Aims and objectives of the study

The objectives of this study were:

- To establish how ODL institutions can contribute towards sustainable capacity development
- To explore ways and means of empowering management and leadership structures through open and distance learning
- To develop visions and missions of higher education and optimise its contribution to sustainable development

5. Research design and methodology

This was a descriptive qualitative research study which utilised semi-structured interviews to collect data. The collected data were recorded, transcribed and analysed using Collaizzi (1978) and Kvale’s (1996) thematic data analysis framework. The reason for choosing this framework was because of its ability to provide clear step-by-step data analysis procedures. In order to achieve study credibility, the researcher used document analysis in order to triangulate the study findings.

6. Findings and discussions

On the basis of the analysis made above the study revealed that capacity development plays an important role in bringing about social, economic, political and cultural sustainable development. The evidence from this research study had shown that sustainable capacity development could be achieved by a combination of factors that are embedded in the teaching and learning pedagogy. Furthermore, the study reiterated the importance of human resource development, including
training, exchange of experiences and expertise, knowledge transfer and technical assistance for capacity-building, which involves strengthening institutional capacity, including planning, management and monitoring capacities. The study also found that for successful capacity building to occur, formal capacity building and professional training programs related to sustainable development should be offered by a range of agencies. The study also revealed that ODL institutions should develop catalogues with all the programs that users can quickly locate in order to get training on capacity building for sustainable development. The study emphasised the need for enhanced capacity building for sustainable development and, in this regard, the study calls for strengthening technical and scientific cooperation.

7. Conclusion

Institutions of higher education play a significant role in the search for a more sustainable future. The benefits from pursuing a whole-system approach to institutional sustainability are threefold: pedagogical, operational and capacity building. Given the complex nature of sustainability issues, it is imperative that institutions of higher education pursue an integrative approach in modelling sustainability in their core functions and systems.

8. References


Background and Introduction

The Centre for Continuing Education (CCE) was first established in 1991, as a multi-disciplinary and inter-faculty outreach arm of the University of Botswana (UB). The CCE is mandated to offer credit and non-credit programmes, within the framework of lifelong learning. It does this through the Department of Distance Education (DDE) and Department of Extra Mural and Public Education (DEPE). The Centre runs part-time evening classes, distance education programmes, professional development and training programmes, public education/outreach and other extension activities (UB: 2014). At the beginning of 2014, CCE embarked on a Marketing Campaign to advertise the programmes offered by the Centre. The campaign revealed that the market for CCE programmes is spread across the country and there are still impediments of reaching out because of distance and other logistical challenges. It became apparent that there is an untapped market for non-credit professional development courses in the Kalahari and other areas far from the Main Campus in Gaborone.

This paper discusses a proposed collaboration between DDE and DEPE to offer credit and non-credit Professional Development Courses (PDCs) through the distance education mode. The rationale for the proposal is that PDCs have been identified as an effective in-service training mode and Open and Distance Learning (ODL) is a suitable vehicle to extend the reach of these courses. In less developed countries self sponsored full time training is difficult because one has to contend with the obligation to provide for not only the immediate family but in most instances the extended family. PDCs are therefore appealing because they allow
individuals to upgrade their professional skills and still be gainfully employed thus meeting their obligations.

The current face-to-face delivery mode requires participants to leave their duty stations in the processes incurring travel, accommodation and training costs. On the other hand, ODL has been proved to be cost effective and able to reach populations in distant and isolated areas. Ansari (2002) argues that “The flexible and innovative characteristic features of the ODL systems allow for meeting the educational requirements of heterogeneous groups of learners at low costs”. DEPE operates with a small staff complement therefore collaborating with the DDE and harnessing their ODL expertise will help extend the reach of our programmes to the public. This will be advantageous as we would be able to use the ODL materials development processes to produce and package instructional materials. The training facilitation at distant locations will be outsourced to part-time tutors and they will be constantly supervised for quality assurance purposes.

**Literature Review**

Botswana like most developing countries is striving to keep abreast with the rapidly changing global market hence the need for an informed and trained workforce. Svanström, Lozano-Garcia and Rowe (2008) argue that in this rapidly changing world education plays a crucial role in training “influential decision-makers”. They further state that this role “…implies rethinking and reorganizing higher education institutions (HEIs) to become effective change agents” (Svanström, Lozano-Garcia and Rowe, 2008: 340). Open and Distance Learning and lifelong learning initiatives are a means of bridging the knowledge gap while also responding to emergent needs of the local and global marketplace (Robinson, Rice, Stoddart and Alfred, 2013). According to the survey it was identified that there are a good number of employees in various organisations who lack academic qualifications but have somehow climbed the organisational ladder due to length of service in their organisations. They could not gain entry into the conventional educational system as they do not have requisite qualifications. The proposal therefore is to run PDCs as credit courses through distance mode so that participants can accumulate credits that can be counted towards entry requirements into diploma and degree programmes.
According to Barth, Godemann, Rieckmann and Stoltenberg (2007), globalisation and the resulting complexities have increased the pressure to offer education for sustainable development. Barth, et al. (2007) further explain that, “higher education for sustainable development (ESD) aims at enabling people to not only acquire and generate knowledge, but also to reflect on further effects and the complexity of behaviour and decisions in a future-oriented and global perspective of responsibility” (p. 416). As the world continues to battle with the economic downturn that has stalled many developments and crippled some national economies, it has become increasingly important for organisations to utilise their resources in a sustainable and cost-effective manner. The purpose of this paper is to propose training that will be responsive to local economic needs and develop a workforce that has the competence and value systems aligned with sustainable development (SD). Barth et al., (2007) posit that education for sustainable development requires the acquisition of certain competencies which lead to “breaking through established patterns of action and leading to a re-evaluation of action possibilities” (p. 419).

Therefore the paper is motivated by the need to re-visit, re-evaluate and re-cast the way DEPE has been providing PDCs. The DEPE needs to envision and embrace a new way of offering PDCs so that they have a wider reach and a significant contribution to developing a workforce that has the competencies to carry out the dictates of SD. Market research has already indicated the demand for PDCs therefore collaborating with DDE and offering courses through both face to face and ODL will help the CCE offer in-time and on-demand training that is responsive to the rapidly changing global and local economic demands thus providing Education for Sustainable Development. This collaboration will position CCE at the epicentre of training a workforce that is attune to environmental, social and economic challenges as they become apparent and respond in a sustainable manner.

**Problem Statement**

The current system of offering PDCs is rigid in the sense that all courses are mainly offered on campus and the dates of specified courses are planned in advance. The practice is against the principles of education for sustainable development because “ESD is education for the future, for everyone everywhere” (UNESCO, 2012b: 12). Thus defined, ESD demands an education that is not only responsive to global economic needs but also reaches beyond the confines of the four walls of the university campus. However, the tendency of universities to
confine course offerings to campuses thus largely ignoring distant populations is not unique to the University of Botswana. Sterling (2008) observes that education is largely unresponsive to issues pertaining to sustainable development and further argues that; “...formal education largely remains part of the problem of unsustainability” (p. 64). Sterling (2008) further states that “...we need an educational culture and practice adequate and appropriate to the volatile, densely interconnected, and dangerously vulnerable world that we have created” (p. 64). ODL offers the capacity to reach far-flung populations and offer them the necessary competences for sustainable development. It is due to this need to extend access to PDCs offered by the CCE that it is argued that using ODL as a mode of delivery would be cost effective and also eliminate the need for participants to travel to UB campuses in to attend courses. According to Ansari, 2002, “The flexible and innovative characteristic features of the ODL systems allow for meeting the educational requirements of heterogeneous groups of learners at low costs” (p. 219).

Aims and Objectives

The aim of this study is to propose a collaborative effort between DEPE and DDE to extend the reach of PDCs beyond the confines of the UB campuses. The study is also intended to utilise ODL systems to offer PDCs that are responsive to local and global economic needs to facilitate sustainable development. The study’s objectives are to:

- Extend PDCs to distant populations within Botswana and beyond
- Offer training that is responsive to the demands of ESD
- Utilise collaboration between DEPE and DDE through ODL to increase workforce capacity for sustainable development

Research Design and Methodology

The study will be carried out through mixed methods utilising both qualitative and quantitative research methods. Johnson and Onweugbuzie (2004) explain that; “A key feature of mixed methods is its methodological pluralism or eclecticism, which frequently results in superior research (compared to monomethod research)” (p.14). The use of mixed methods is important in research as the two complement one another in that in instances where one is
weak the other is strong resulted in a balanced assessment of issues. Data will be collected through the use of focus groups, individual interviews, open ended questionnaires and document analysis.

**Findings and Discussions**

It is the expectation of the researchers that the findings will yield a platform for Education for Sustainable Development through collaborative efforts. It will also give the Centre an opportunity for expansion into wider spheres. The study will help identify training gaps to equip our target population with skills needed to pursue Sustainable Development ideals. It is expected that the study will reveal strategies to empower and develop a workforce that has competencies necessary for sustainable development. This will be achieved by offering PDCs that will create; “…the learning individual...enabled to discover and to analyse his/her own value system, and to revise it with respect to its adequacy to reality” (Barth, Godemann, Rieckmann, and Stoltenberg. 2007: 419). It is forecast that this study will offer the CCE the necessary tools to make systemic changes that will align its offering of PDCs with the principles of Education for Sustainable Development.

**References**


University of Botswana website: http://www.ub.bw/home/ac/1/fac/22/Centre-for-Continuing-Education/ retrieved on 01/08/14.
### Title:

**Sub-theme Theme 1: ODL capacity building for sustainable development**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ms Rachel C Prinsloo</th>
<th>Mrs F. Patel</th>
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<tr>
<td>University of South Africa</td>
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### Background

A number of initiatives have been introduced from the Human Resources Development Directorate aligned to unisa’s strategic and operational plans to accelerate levels of performance. A Young Academics Programme (YAP), initiated in 2008, has received Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) accolades as a critical intervention to development a new cadre of scholars and practitioners. This has been complemented by a Building Tomorrow’s Leaders (BTL) programme targeted at middle-level managers to sustain the developmental trajectory.

The Young Academics Programme was developed and piloted in 2008. The program seeks to develop a cohort of young, promising and talented academics for the future, both in terms of academic development as well as management development.
A young Academic is regarded as someone under the age of 40, who holds a minimum of an Honours Degree. The ideal candidate should be considering registering or have registered for a Master’s Degree. This training and development initiative seeks to fast track these academics in the areas of tuition, research and academic management, providing them with the knowledge and skills required to become high achievers not only within UNISA but also the national environment and global stage. The initiative also further seeks to enable these young academics to one day assume the role of leadership in their academic Departments or Colleges.

Since its inception in 2008 HRD has presented 7 programs up to date. A total of 113 delegates have participated in the program. In 2013 HRD presented the 7th program with 16 delegates who participated in the program. The program was reviewed and the contact period was shortened. The program was divided into 3 phases, phase 1 was 3 weeks full time contact sessions, phase 2 dealt with on-line assignments and group work and phase 3 was 3 weeks full time contact sessions. The candidates each received a tablet to promote ICT enhanced learning and research to enable them to function optimally in the global knowledge economy.

The new reviewed program was found to be more effective as it allowed delegates the opportunity to go back to their substantive positions and start implementing some of their learning. The delegates were exposed to presentations by internal and external experts, workshops, assignments and various self and leadership assessments. The focus of the program being on developing or enhancing skills in self-mastery, Teaching and Learning, research and Community Engagement.

The expectation from candidates that their participation would automatically lead to a promotion position needs to be explicitly managed within existing structural organisational constraints. The added value and richness of contributions to their existing departments and units upon graduation should be measured more intensively. Other contributing factors might be the introduction of the new research development qualification improvement programmes with more tangible
benefits, or perceptions that the Building Tomorrow’s leaders is more prestigious. The selection criteria and purposes do differ considerably as do the target audiences, but this evidently requires deeper analyses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Literature review</th>
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<tr>
<td>In the South African context, higher education institutions have been challenged to fundamentally transform their identities and practices and to locate themselves in a just and democratic system with social mandates that address the national imperatives of transformation, equity and redress. The transformation agenda and its influences on and uptake in universities is highly contested, complex and contradictory.</td>
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<tr>
<td>A helpful distinction is made in the literature between the conserving the ‘old’ against the relative investments into ‘building the new’. Institutional cultures are often dissected by the inherent contradictions of valuing historical and archaic regimes that resist technological advances and stifle spaces for critique and dialogue. Universities have been, and still are however, expected to provide personnel for institution-building in new civil societies under construction.</td>
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<td>Consciously developed conceptual frameworks for professional development in higher education are scarce in the literature. Drawing largely from the body of work of Zuber-Skerritt, the constructs of networking and knowledge brokerage is introduced as a critical element, and often unarticulated process that promotes collaborative enquiry and professional development. This has been a fundamental premise upon which the YAP had been designed.</td>
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<td>It is further proposed that engaging in the ‘knowledge economy’ as a system of highly developed knowledge networks, might open out and revitalize institutional transformation. The DEASA platform as a regional civil society network, like higher education itself, has been and are central to research and for strengthening local knowledge development.</td>
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<td>Key defining characteristics of the global knowledge economy are discussed to underpin strategies that could harness the power and potential of networks – from institutional to regional levels. The key global drivers of innovation and their related concepts are shared in an attempt to reimagine and reconstruct the ‘global’</td>
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from the perspective of a developing middle-class economy country.

As Brennan, J., King, R. and Lebeau, Y. (2004), so eloquently argue, social transformation is a disruptive force “at the radical end of conceptions of social change”. It assumes some fundamental changes to society’s core institutions and supporting arrangements that will affect power relationships between social groups and for the means of creating and distributing status, power and access to resources. The lessons and insights from an intensive study of 15 countries across five regions that had recently undergone or were experiencing major transformation have identified a number of critical concerns for the purposes of this paper.

| Problem statement | There is a need to examine the extent to which Unisa’s considerable institutional investments over the past five years, supplemented by earmarked government funding, into a number of initiatives to develop organisational management and leadership practitioners’ skills have been effective and will be sustainable. The regional benefits from the selected case study will demonstrate how to translate national policy imperatives into sound institutional strategies that actively promote sustainable regional development. |
| Aims and objectives | The collaborative review from an HRD practitioner, policy and strategic planning perspective aims to identify the features of an integrated and sustainable model for the development of ODL management and leadership. |
| Research design and methodology | The design is based on revisiting the conceptualisation of the interventions, the various iterations of implementation, achieved outcomes and responsiveness to emerging challenges. Participatory formative and summative stakeholder reviews, reflected in institutional monitoring, evaluation and reporting from the basis of the methodological approach. The data has been analysed through formal surveys, focus discussion groups and a process of policy alignment through project management methodologies to ensure continued external. Financial performance and independent external audits attest to the efficacy of the intervention. |
| **Findings and discussions** | The essential principles of the intervention are encapsulated in a number of national policies such as the 2030 National Development Plan, the specialized and earmarked teaching and research development grants.

The study has illuminated the critical features towards the development of an integrated and sustainable model of ODL management and leadership within an ODL context. A capabilities framework for developing new cadres of ODL practitioners, scholars, leaders and managers for the sector has emerged for further refinement. |
|---|---|


Knowledge-Driven Economy of E-Learning in Business Franchising Education of Overseas Partner Institutions in Higher Education: Danger, Success or Dilemma?

-The Mauritian Welfare State Experience-

by

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I. Introduction. This paper deals with business ‘franchising’ education coupled with a knowledge-driven economy as more and more overseas partner institutions wish to franchise with local tertiary institutions in Mauritius. Despite economic constraints, and after relying on sugar for a very long time, the Mauritian government is still struggling hard to provide and to maintain free education to one and all in a Welfare State and multiracial country where people and citizens live peacefully and mutually respecting each other, thus, encouraging foreigners and overseas partner institutions to invest and franchise with local tertiary institutions in Mauritius. Despite there are pros and cons of franchise with both institutions, local and abroad, it would probably provide e-learning to their students as well as it is cheaper than to travel abroad and second it caters for time, place and space management for mature students who have time and family constraints as well.

The economy of Mauritius is as fragile as other countries but there is a need to set strong pillars to build a great nation. One of these pillars is education and it is often considered as the backbone of any economic system and of any country of the world. By the beginning of this century Mauritius has embarked on an important phase of industrialisation with the creation of new secondary schools and cyber cities, education of low cost for one and all, access to new schools of medicine and dentistry. With a view to enhance regional trade in the Indian Ocean and the African continent financial support also bursts from India and China at a time where the African Growth and Opportunity Act is coming to an end. For education to prosper there must be political and economic stability.

Social development shall then follow automatically provided there are available labour and world demand for Mauritian exports. In its achievement to support knowledge hub it is also recommended that the education sector prepare an excellent pool of highly trainable degree holders. Then, the nation can concentrate further more on agriculture, the manufacturing sector, tourism and the services sector with experienced and well qualified students who are the manpower of tomorrow. Therefore, it is implied that a nation can prosper provided its people are educated and have acquired sufficient abilities and skills in their respective field.

Education may also help to strengthen those qualities but its success will depend primarily on the ability of the population to imbibe the ethos of excellence. And to avoid the deadly trap of financial constraints and knowledge ‘pub’ it is advisable to prepare for the future. Can the Government of Mauritius pledge for knowledge hub if there are financial constraints especially in parastatal bodies and public tertiary institutions? One thing is sure: the Mauritian Government will maintain its policies and continue its basic principle of equity of access to education but Mauritians have the gift of being optimists even in difficult circumstances. There is therefore hope for the future.

Is there business franchising education in Mauritius and is e-learning the answer? Therefore, after an Introduction (-I-) the structure of the paper is in the form of an empirical research based on its Literature Review (-II-), the Problem Statement of the paper (-III-) coupled with its Aims and Objectives (-IV-), the Research Methodology (-V-) following major findings (-VI-). This paper will
close with a Conclusion (VII) but there are relevant references on this paper (VIII) for further research on this topic. Finally this paper makes an attempt and tries to bring a new sense of wonder and a certain degree of awareness to any country who wish to embark on this type of education because there is still “business in the air” and as a result to what extent e-learning and its strategies may help the Mauritian government to enhance education in Mauritius.

II. Literature Review. It has been argued that our main resource is our people and most especially our students. Hebert Simon, Nobel Prize winner, stated that the greatest resource available to mankind is “in men’s heads” whereas Schultz, in his research on Investment in Education, concluded that “education was an important contributor to economic growth”. Nonetheless, the economy of a country is always very fragile especially at a time where financial crisis is inevitable with unexpected climate change and other natural disasters which would probably jeopardise the socio-economic development of a country. E-learning is popular but there is still little research on web based courses and training (Beller and Or, 1998). Despite, overseas institutions are franchising with local tertiary institutions there is no proper implementation of e-learning will have to be developed and the framework has to be developed (Piccoli and al, 2001) as well. Though there is a shift from face-to-face learning maturity and motivation have been found to be linked to academic success in e-learning (Jarvenpaa, 1995) but it has also been demonstrated that e-learning students have to work harder as they have to adapt and interact extensively with computers. Apart from the system instructors are principal actors in any learning environment (Webster and Hackley, 1997). In fact, it has been found that they must be at ease with the system (Jonassen, 1985). Indeed, e-learning students irrespective they are affiliated to local or foreign institutions students’ acceptance and use of technology is an important prerequisite (Agarwal & Prasad, 1997; Davis, 1989, Lederer, Maupin, Sena & Zhuang, 2000; Venkatesh & D Davis, 1996). E-learning irrespective there is franchising with overseas foreign tertiary institutions have its cons as well as it has been found that there is a fear that lecturers may lose their jobs as a result of the widespread adoption of e-learning. Students also feel isolated while they are on-line and they need more attention and communication (Hara and Kling, 2000). However, the instructor’s self efficacy and teaching style contribute greatly to learning effectiveness (Cavanaugh and al 2000; Mathieu and al, 1993). Therefore, it is urgent to find a learning model in e-learning (Leider and Jarvenpass, 1995; Vencatchary) despite that there are objectivist theories which point out that reality can be represented and communicated (Jonassen, 1985) and that the objectivist and traditional model learning is very often viewed as a transfer of knowledge to the e-learner. The constructivist model considers reality as constructed either socially or by individuals (Jonassen, 1993).

III. Problem Statement. The Government of Mauritius is prepared to invest in the education sector. To avoid a financial crisis, which struck some tertiary institutions some years ago (2007), it must be prepared to afford more fundings as well. Tertiary education in small island States cannot inspire from British universities where students may pay some 3,000 £ annually for their studies. Of course, most of them may catch up by working on a time basis but this is not the case for Mauritian students. Though the standard of living is relatively different, the average cost for a full-time student in local tertiary institutions is approximately Rs 6,000 annually (nearly 90 £ annually) and an increase of 20% may not affect them. However, if parents have widened their ambitions for their children, there are still some part of the population which have not been able to catch the train on time and they are still at the bottom of the economic ladder. They are continuously left behind. Consequently, they live in slums and some very poor areas of the country. To avoid discrimination the Government of Mauritius must afford bursaries and scholarships to students who face financial problems.
IV. **Aims and objectives.** This paper deals with overseas partner institutions in higher education and tries to enlighten how and why more and more foreign institutions are franchising their programmes with Mauritian institutions under our ‘old’ Education Act 1966. The research methodology used is in the form of a survey that has been carried out to demonstrate to what extent they can support Mauritius to achieve a knowledge hub on the African continent? It is obvious that there are major obstacles with franchising but the government is overcoming one by one and each of them to overcome any hurdle ahead so that both overseas partner institutions and local students have greater satisfaction for the money they have invested. Nonetheless, during his research on the field as a subject specialist and during site visits for accreditation of overseas partners (according to the Tertiary Education Commission Act 1988 (Act 9/1988) and The Licensing of recruiting agents for overseas educational and training institutions Act 2008 (Act No. 17 of 2006)) in the country, the author found that there are serious loopholes in the system and pledged for precautions before moving ahead. Thus, the aims and objectives of this study are threefold: to find to what extent Mauritius would achieve education and sustainable development, what are the government policies and how legislations (Education Act 1957) would support its knowledge-driven economy such that in the overall they would combat against poverty and illiteracy for a better Mauritius, and which could use as a model for other countries. Several strategic plans (Table 1) were continually approved by the government to set the goals and milestones of the education sector to ensure access to learning opportunities to one and all.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PLAN</th>
<th>STRATEGIES</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1971-1975 Four-Year Plan for Social and Economic Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1975-1980 Five-Year Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1980-1982 Development Plan and 1984-1986 Development Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>White Paper of 1984 and the Master Plan in education in Nov. 1992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>2005-2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>21st century (beginning)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

(Table 1. Source: author)

V. **Research Methodology.** This empirical paper isfounded both on primary datas (200 questionnaires would be distributed to students and academics to share their opinion on this topic) but there are also secondary datas which have also been borrowed from various reliable institutions (Central Statistics Office, Board of investment, Bank of Mauritius or UNCTAD). These datas would be then be compiled by using SPSS to reflect major findings on this topic.

VI. **Findings and discussions.** It has been found that since its independence in 1968 the Mauritian government considered education (section 14 of the Constitution 1968 provides for protection of freedom to establish schools) as a tool for sustainable development in terms of providing training and raise public awareness on sustainable development. All children in Mauritius are given access to free education both at primary and secondary level. The Final Report on the Working Group on Education recommends that policies be formulated to provide equal opportunities to all students and that free basic schooling be offered to children especially focusing on vulnerable groups. The
methods of assessment at primary level schooling have also been deemed to be insufficient and it is recommended to review it so as to take on board multiple skills, artistic abilities and musical abilities\(^1\) as well. Mauritius knowledge-driven economy is also successful with foreign institutions which are franchising with local institutions in Mauritius affording various facilities (Table 2 and Table 3).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Foreign institutions in collaboration with local institutions</th>
<th>Programmes offered</th>
<th>Field</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Middlesex University Mauritius Branch Campus</td>
<td>Licence Droit, Psychologie, l’Informatique, Maîtrise de Gestion</td>
<td>-----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Vatel Mauritius and Vatel International Business School</td>
<td>Licence et Master en hôtellerie internationale</td>
<td>Hôtellerie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Charles Telfair Institute and Curtin University</td>
<td>Bachelor en commerce</td>
<td>-----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Rushmore Business School and European Business School</td>
<td>Master of Business Administration (MBA)</td>
<td>-----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 TNA Analysis Maurice and l’Université de Paris Dauphine, IAE de Panthéon Sorbonne</td>
<td>MBA International Paris</td>
<td>-----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Centre d’études supérieures (CES) and Académie de la Réunion, IUT de Saint-Pierre, IAE de l’Université de Poitiers</td>
<td>Licence, Master en Informatique, Administration des entreprises, Management International, commerce électronique</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Table 2: Knowledge hub. Source: author)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overseas Institutions</th>
<th>Their local Partners in Mauritius</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Curtin University (Australia)</td>
<td>Charles Telfair Institute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Vatel International Business School</td>
<td>Vatel Mauritius</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Institut de la Francophonie pour l’Entrepreneuriat (IFE)/France</td>
<td>University of Mauritius</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Agence universitaire de la Francophonie (AUF)/France</td>
<td>University of Mauritius</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 European Business School</td>
<td>Rushmore Business School</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Table 3: Overseas partner institutions which are still operating in Mauritius. Source: author)

With a view to achieve a knowledge-driven economy the following proposed objectives must be implemented:

- Education must be more market oriented - the recent development of Work Based Learning (WBL), by the UoM, encourages tertiary students to be placed in the real world of work and business environments. They are presumed to develop further skills and professional attributes under the supervision of their mentors. Tertiary education must support productive employment as well.
- Improvements in quality, relevance, equity and efficiency.
- Improvements in research, in referred journals.
- Improvement of distance and e-learning
- Mauritius is a model for Africa. Transformation of the Mauritian economy has a heavy impact on the education sector. As a result, Mauritius has to achieve excellence in all fields.
- Knowledge hub prevails over knowledge pub if tertiary education can attract managers, professionals, technicians, inspectors, police officers, teachers are given opportunity to increase their knowledge such that, in the overall, the Mauritian society is more dynamic.
- The UoM has to increase its range of degree courses to attract both professionals and non-professionals.

• Exploration and implementation of all means for bringing tertiary education in conformity with employment opportunities.
• And to give more facilities to facilitators and learners if a small island State like Mauritius wishes to establish knowledge hub or otherwise knowledge pub shall prevail over knowledge hub and this would be the death of the collapsed patient.

VII. Conclusion. Prior to socio-economic development of a country people need education first and not money. No country would survive economically for long with a high rate of illiteracy and hopeless politicians. The African countries shall open their education to overseas institutions and we have a lot to learn from their experts and scholars. Lack of funds explains to what extent African students still have very little access to British or Australian universities unless they want to join local institutions. With franchising and encouraging overseas partner institutions to settle in their country African tertiary education will open a gate to those students who could not afford to travel and study abroad.

VIII. References.
Agarwal & Prasad (1997). The role of innovation characteristics and perceived voluntariness in the acceptance of information technologies, Decision Sciences, 28: 557-582
Background

In 2012, Madagascar population is estimated as 21.3 million with a tax GDP ratio about 10.1 [1], one of the lowest in sub-Saharan Africa. The gross enrollment ratio in tertiary education is just 3.6 percent [2]. The public sector mostly includes six universities, four higher institutes of technology providing vocational training, one national center for distance learning called Centre National de Télé Enseignement de Madagascar (CNETMAD) and 122 private non-university institutes.

Investing in higher education is essential to the future of Madagascar’s youth and the development of the country's economy. While still low, the numbers of youth graduating from upper secondary education are soaring, and the population aged 15-24 might reach 6 million by 2025. The present system is unable to absorb the resulting demand for higher education.

Literature review

Earlier studies carried out by the Word Bank [3-7] show that for some reasons such as low attainment and inequity in access, internal inefficiency of the education system, poor quality and relevance, Madagascar’s higher education is not able to meet the demands of a changing economy.

Attainment in higher education access is low; between 2000 and 2011, the number of high school students taking graduation exams (baccalauréat) increased from 38,777 to 114,739 and the pass rate went up from 32.5% to 46.1%, resulting in the number of graduates quadrupling to 52,860, of which 54.0% entered higher education. The total number of students in the country went up from 32,156 to 85,548, or 199 to 385 students per 100,000 inhabitants. The country has not quite reached gender parity, though the share of female students has increased slightly, to 48.2 %.
Internal efficiency is also low; around a quarter of all students dropped out every year between 2004 and 2010; in 2011 a record 30.8% dropped out. The share of students repeating a year is also significant – between 2004 and 2011 it ranged between 14.5% and 15.7% but 18.2% in 2008-2009. These rates imply a very high wastage of resources that Madagascar can ill afford, and a swelling number of out-of-school youth with limited educational attainment.

Madagascar’s tertiary education and training system does not provide graduates with skills that are relevant in today’s – or tomorrow’s – labor markets. The quality of public universities has long been affected by pedagogical and managerial deficiencies. Students have a heavy course load consisting mostly in lecture courses, but they have few writing assignments. This curriculum structure contributes to high failure, repetition and drop out. Equally importantly, it also fails to build flexible ‘employability’ skills that graduates can apply to problem solving in many areas. Linkages between education and training institutions and industry/employers in the private sector are limited, both in research and in enterprise-based training. As a result, Madagascar ranks low in international competitiveness: the Global Competitiveness Index ranks Madagascar 132 out of 148 countries ranked overall, and 132 on higher education and training [1].

**Aims and objectives**

The aim is to increase the access, to make the higher education more efficient, to enhance its quality and make it more relevant. Introducing Open and Distance Learning could help improve on the situation.

**Research design and methodology**

A complete feasibility study, designed to decide upon the appropriate ODL model is probably the first step. In terms of programs, learners, delivery mechanisms, tech platforms and business model, Madagascar has some experiences in using distance learning at the tertiary level. Support for the higher education network called Research and Education Network for Academic and Learning Activities (IRENALA) is already set up. This network is an essential element in realizing Bologna Process implementation, especially in support of the more active role students are expected to play in new pedagogy and technology — which implies fewer large lectures classes and, therefore, reduced teaching loads. A feasibility study of a Virtual
Numerical University (UNuM) is also undergoing supported financially by the “Mission française de la cooperation”.

In this paper, we report recent studies on current distance learning statutes [8] in the scope of creating an ODL programs that would respond the needs of Madagascar’s sustainable development.

**Data collection process and Major activities**

Data collection was conducted in six steps i) undertook preliminary investigations in order to get institution list delivering distance learning training ii) identified target establishments and right responsible, iii) conception and development the adequate tools iv) preliminary test of these tools v) in-situ investigations vi) computation, treatment et exploitation of the data.

**Data analysis processes**

Data have been collected amongst 55 responsible of institutions, 30 teachers (lecturers or tutors of courses), 197 learners and 5 parents. 43 establishments within 28 distance learning agencies were identified. Much information have been included in the data such as i) the pedagogy used within teaching strategies and techniques ii) Technology involved concerning the learning materials and resources, the local support systems for learners and the delivery systems iii) the number of learners during the year.

**Findings and discussions**

As many as 43 different institutions provide distance learning in Madagascar, including the 28 regional centers of the national center for distance education CNTEMAD, three public universities (Antananarivo, Fianarantsoa, Toliara), two IST (Antananarivo, Antsiranana), two private institutions (Université Privée de Madagascar, Institut Supérieur de Spécialisation en Sciences de la Gestion), and a few more public, private or NGO providers. A few students are enrolled in programs run by foreign institutions, including Canadian and French distance learning centers. The sector has expanded in recent years with the opening of several new programs.

By 2011-12, 16,212 students were enrolled, mostly at CNTEMAD which in 2011 attracted 6.3% of high school graduates who were entering higher education. Malagasy institutions admit students either in initial or continuing education, requiring only academic degrees (91% of CNTEMAD students) or in continuing education, also requiring professional experience.
Subjects offered in the former track include business and management, ICT, international trade, law and local development. The latter offers more specialized training, e.g. for physicians, civil servants or trainers. Degrees range from 2-year DTSS to 5-year master’s or engineering degrees.

Distance learning programs broaden access to higher education and are run regularly. High school graduates living in remote areas who could not afford moving to a university town find it less costly to enroll in a distance learning program, which may also accept those not admitted in universities, or older students. Training is also free from disturbance from strikes and political agitation which affects universities. Curricula tend to be less academic, more work-oriented, and distance learning also develops learners’ autonomy. Newer programs increasingly rely on ICT rather than distributing paper materials; programs also differ in the frequency with which they organize gatherings of learners.

Distance learning programs remain fragile. Regional centers of CNTEMAD have insignificant budgets and lack vital equipment including computers or internet access; teacher salaries are extremely low. As a result, learning materials are sent irregularly and may be in short number; gatherings are difficult to organize, and not all learners attend. As in the rest of the higher education system, learning materials are often outdated, and they are not clearly structured, so that learners – and tutors – may not know precisely what learners are expected to learn. The role of tutors is not defined clearly enough; those working for CNTEMAD do not receive enough support from the institution. Learners face difficulties in using learning materials, which may be too long, unclear, badly printed, especially if they do not have sufficient mastery of French. Gatherings may not be frequent or long enough to compensate for those difficulties. Financial difficulties also affect participation on the long term.

*General conclusions and recommendations*

These activities are carried out in the scope of creating an ODL programs that will increase the internal efficiency and the quality of the tertiary education. Features of successful ODL programs include relevance; self-financing over a few years’ time; and clear, professional management structures. Capacity building realized during ODL Project of SADC (2008-2014) will be very helpful.

Advances in technology and the operation of large ODL programs in many countries have made it possible to operate such programs in low income countries with limited infrastructure
like Madagascar. Models operating in other countries such as Open University of Mauritius can be inspired, paying attention to the replicability of the design features.

References


