IMPACT OF ADULT DISTANCE LEARNING ON TEACHERS: A CASE STUDY OF KATETE DAY SECONDARY SCHOOL, ZAMBIA

BY

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DECLARATION

I, Mwiya Namatama Loveness solemnly declare that the work presented is entirely of my own making, and that no part of this work has neither been presented for award for a degree at any university or any other college. Proof of other people's work has been substantiated by acknowledging the sources.

Signature of author………………………….. Date……………………

Signature of supervisor ………………………… Date……………………..

DEDICATION

This work is wholeheartedly dedicated to the Almighty Father,

My husband

And my children especially the youngest, Limpo, whom I robbed off all the attention, love and care during the period of studying.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ABSTRACT

The study aimed at addressing the contribution adult distance learning in as far as personal growth and economic development is concerned through the acquisition of new skills. More so, the study addressed challenges that affected the adult learners in their learning process. By and large the teachers who were respondents undertook their training from various institutions across the country and beyond, thus having a broad spectrum of challenges.

The study was largely qualitative in nature and used a case study design. However, some of the data were interpreted quantitatively, effectively making this a mixed-methods study. It centred on how teachers in adult distance learning and learners are impacted and the challenges which affect adult distance learning in general. Katete Day Secondary School was chosen as a site from where interviews were carried out. The target sample included eight teachers, the head of the institution and one official from the District Education Office. The sample size was determined based on the fact that a rich source of information from the informants was available at the main site selected, making it easier and cost-effective for the researcher and the informants.

The target sample of 8 teachers was selected by using snow ball sampling. The technique was ideal because it avoided naturally linked bondages amongst respondents. The head of the institution (01) and the District Education Standards Officer (01) were selected using purposive technique. The technique was employed because data collected was more specific and could only be provided by strategically positioned respondents.

The semi-structured interview schedule was used for all the categories of participants. Qualitative data was analysed thematically through identification of themes which prominently emerged from the data collected. The other form of data collection used was through the analysis of documents collected from the school which aimed at assessing the performance of learners in the grade twelve general certificate examination for three consecutive years basing. The data were important to ascertain whether the performance of teachers who studied through distance learning had any impact on the performance of school-going learners.

The study revealed that respondents had challenges in adult distance education because of the misinterpretations surrounding the meaning of the concept 'adult education'. The study also revealed that adult distance students encountered many challenges during the course of their studies. The challenges ranged mainly from lack of financial support, lack of adequate and timeous feedback to demanding work schedules. However, participants highlighted how they mitigated the challenges they encountered. Among the mitigations cited were accessibility to loan facilities, working extra hours and as well as being in constant contacts with other students.

All the participants were, however, in full support on the relevance of adult education because of the role it plays in development; provision of opportunities for individual growth and acquisition of knowledge and skills.

Key words:

- Adult distance learning
- Challenges that affect the adult learner
- Misinterpretations of adult education
- Mitigation of problems in accessing distance learning

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ACRONYMS

EFA	Education for All
ESIP	Education Sector Investment Programme
MOE	Ministry of Education
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNISA	University of South Africa
UNZA	University of Zambia

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CHAPTER 1:

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

According to Mwansa (2009:40), adult distance learning is a relatively well-known phenomenon popularised by Knowles which has been in existence for some years. The major reason most adults engage in any learning is perceived to be for personal, social and economic growth. O'Lawrence (2006:47) affirms that adult distance learning opens up new opportunities for learners who might otherwise be excluded from participation in the learning process.

Similarly, Carmody (2004:21) views alternative strategies of education such as adult distance learning as vehicles that provide the type of labour force required for industrial development, economic growth and social transformation. The kind of education provided via distance learning could develop the capacity of individuals to participate more effectively in the process of change and development within the context of national needs and priorities.

Zambia, like many other developing countries attaches importance on education because teachers require continuing support once they reach the classroom to enable them to reflect on teaching practices to foster motivation and to help them adapt to change such as using new curriculum (United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation [UNESCO], 2014:26). Ongoing learning enables teachers to be well vested in handling matters of concern such as improving learner performance. Ministry of Education (2009:53) states that it provides teachers with new ideas about how to support weak learners because teachers who have received in-service training are found to be better than those who have not. If teachers are holistically developed, education will have made a break-through in providing them a balanced personality, which demonstrates inner stability and steadfastness which enables one to make informed decision.

The classroom effectiveness of teachers therefore depends heavily on teachers' knowledge of the subject matter and their pedagogical skills (Ministry of Education [MoE],

1996:20). Teachers should be proficient in the subjects and resourceful in converting their knowledge into effective learning experiences for their students. Furthermore, in order to meet the learning outcomes, teachers should have a sound knowledge of the subject they teach and ability to transmit to learners (UNESCO, 2014:25). Adult distance learning should make teachers familiar with any new curriculum content and materials to upgrade their actual instructional skills.

Improving teachers' proficiency in the subject matter improves teacher performance and proficiency. The Zambian Ministry of Education (MoE, 2006:12) requires teachers to use teaching strategies that are effective to successfully deliver lessons. Keremidchieva and Yankova (2001:2) intimate that all teachers can move from the most traditional to the most innovative approaches. Above all, teachers will benefit from the distance-learning method in their teaching, and immensely enrich their pedagogical skills.

The MoE in Zambia with its limited resources has not been able to provide initial teacher education to many on full-time basis to be able to teach in schools. Since teachers as adults have socio-economic responsibilities and may not be able to go back to full-time studies, most of them take advantage of distance education to improve their knowledge and teaching skills (MoE, 2006:21). In 1994, only 1% of serving teachers underwent formal training of one kind or another.

It is from this quest that Zambia participated actively in the global revolutionary movement whose focus was on the right of everyone to quality education and providing different opportunities for categories of learners. UNESCO (2014:28) affirms that this motivated Zambia to participate in various world conferences on Education for All (EFA) such as the Jomtien conference in 1990 and the Dakar Framework in Senegal, April 2000 which saw the expansion and growth of adult distance-learning programmes.

1.2 CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

The study was conducted at a school with a total number of 44 teachers; of these, 17 hold bachelor's degrees in various disciplines while 12 are currently pursuing their bachelor's degrees. One female and one male teacher are studying for their master's degrees through distance learning. Thirteen of the teachers are not yet studying but are

contemplating to begin soon since the Zambian Ministry of Education (MoE) has set that the minimal qualification for teachers at a secondary school should be a first degree. Teachers with such a qualification are believed to have a high level of teacher proficiency and able to translate the curriculum appropriately.

The bachelors' degree holders pursued their studies through distance learning while they continued with their teaching careers. They managed to do so by combining work, family matters and education. According to the MoE (1996:115), it considers teacher education to be a continuing process that must be extended throughout the individual's years of actual teaching.

According to Kim and Bonk (2006 cited in The Adult Learner, 2013), for the adult learner, distance learning has become the preferred way to continue their education sequentially to advance in their careers or train for new ones.

The rate of participation in adult distance learning has increased in nearly every country and there is no sign of the curve of progress dipping or even flattening (Mwansa, 2009:40). In the recent past, most teachers have realised the need for self-improvement in terms of upgrading their qualifications through distance learning due to the realisation of the fact that inadequate qualification was a factor that resulted into poor teacher proficiency and poor learner pass percentage (Ministry of Education {MoE, 2006:71}).

The improvement in adult distance learning has resulted in the participation of adult learners in higher education in ever-increasing numbers (Mwansa, 2009:34) because upgrading oneself adds prestige to the learner and this becomes a prerequisite in many countries for employment, promotion, salary increases and even social status. It is therefore important to note that high teacher morale, relevant subject knowledge and the teacher's specialised or pedagogical skills are central to quality teaching and learning.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation, UNESCO (2014:26) argues that classroom effectiveness of teachers depends heavily on the knowledge of subject matter, which will enable teachers to be proficient and resourceful in converting their knowledge into effective learning experiences for their students. Additionally, Carmody (2004:54) views adult distance learning positively because equips

teachers to be proficient. It also creates opportunities to enable them obtain credentials necessary for economic change. The foundation laid in the pre-service programme may be sound and adequate as a start, but it might not be sufficient to teach for life.

Table 1.1 below gives a clear picture of teachers who are studying through distance learning, as well as teachers who already acquired and attained their levels of education through the same mode respectively, at Katete Day Secondary School.

Table 1.1: Statistics of teachers who are studying

Level	Men studying	Women studying	Total
Bachelor's Degree	05	07	12
Master's Degree	01	01	02

Katete District is one of the eight districts in the Eastern Province of the Republic of Zambia. Its mainstay is largely farming. The province is situated between longitude 31 450 and 32 300 East and Latitudes 13 800 and 14 450 South (Mapland.com, 2017:online). The district shares an international boundary with the Republic of Mozambique in the South, with Chadiza district in the Southeast, Chipata district in the Northeast, Mambwe in the North, and Petauke in the southwest (Ministry of General Education [MoGE], 2012:8), Katete District Annual report (Online). Katete Day Secondary School lies just along Mozambique Road, and was established in 1996 as a community school. It was a community which initiated it out of the realisation of not having a day school within the district to cater for the underprivileged children who could not afford to go to the two boarding secondary schools which were available at that time. The district now boasts of eight secondary schools, Ministry of General Education (MoGE, 2019: online). Below is a map of Zambia with an arrow pointing at Katete District.
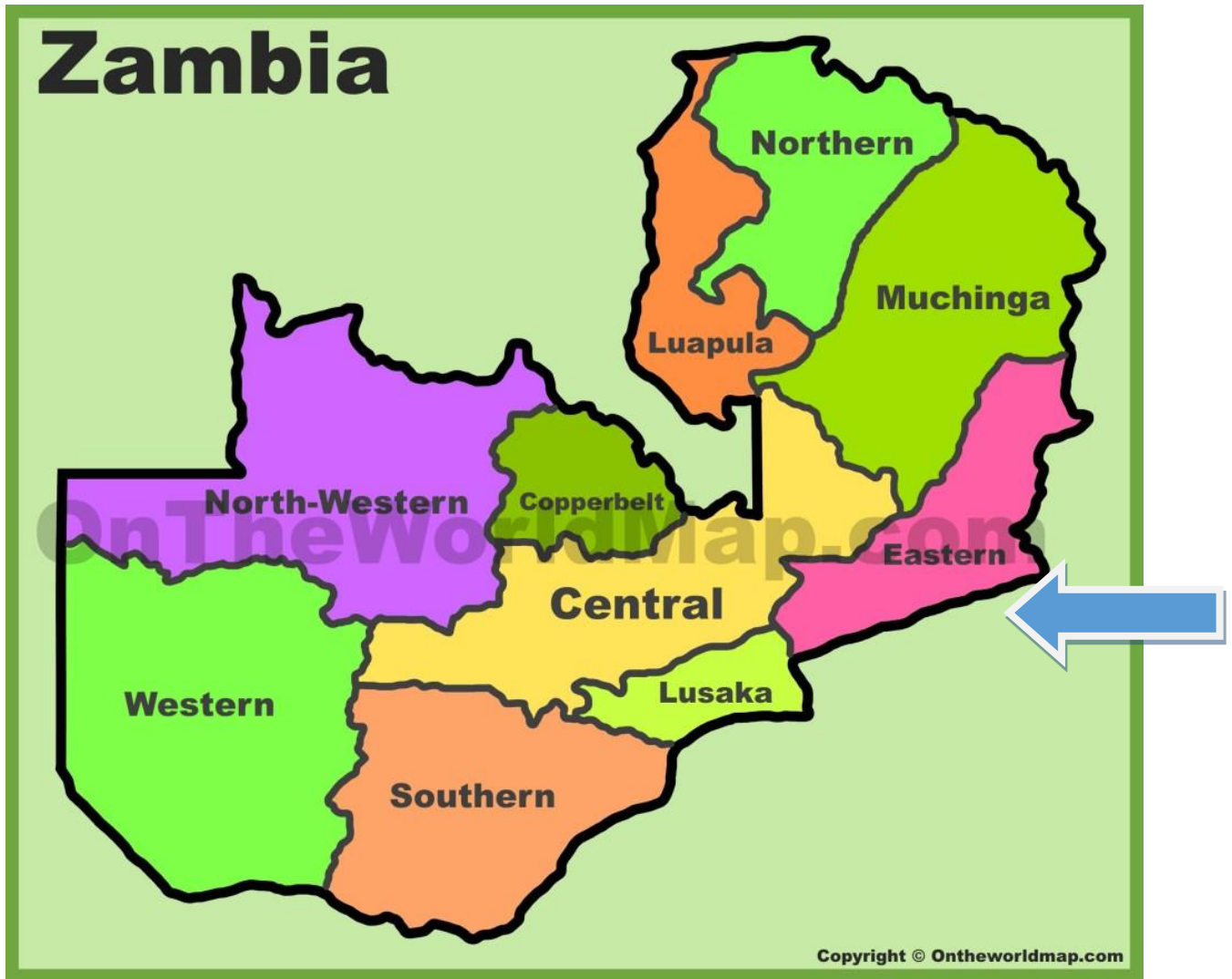
Figure 1.1: Map of Zambia

Source: (Mapland.com, 2017)

1.3 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

According to Kombo and Tromp (2006:24), the background to the study refers to the setting or position of the research and accounts for a brief overview of the problem the researcher attempts to undertake. It is the centre stage of the research because it helps to clarify what prompted the need to undertake a specific study.

Knowles (1980, as cited in Galusha, 1998:111) affirms that adult distance learning is a common phenomenon which has been in existence for some time. This kind of learning

has been popularised due to its nature and approaches. In any programme, the adults are largely voluntary participants, but the learner's role is just of many roles and responsibilities competing for their time and attention. According to Knowles, the major reason most adults engage in any learning is perceived to be for personal, social and economic growth.

Belanger and Jordan (2004, as cited in O'Lawrence, 2006:47) ascertain that adult distance learning opens up new opportunities for learners who might otherwise be excluded from participation in the learning process. In this regard, the study targeted teachers of Katete Day Secondary School, among whom, some had upgraded their professional qualifications through adult distance-learning programmes.

The background to this research discusses issues relating to the challenges of adult distance learning on schoolteachers. Matshazi (1983:65) argues that prior to independence, it was clear that Zambia did not have enough qualified personnel meant to undertake socio-economic development at all levels of the economy. Alexander (1975:15) articulates that a large number of personnel was characterised by expatriates and while a huge number of the citizenry were unskilled and illiterate. The huge disparities urged the University of Zambia (UNZA) to accelerate expansion of educational opportunities by opening doors to open distance learning under the Directorate for Distance Education (UNZA, 1972: 21), which was intended to contribute to the supply of skilled manpower in various sectors including the MOE.

The move was cardinal to offer equal opportunity of access to education by the masses of the people. It was also a plan to enhance in-service human resource development, (Kwaba & Kaunda, 1993:3). In addition, the move was intended to address the scarcity of skilled labour which was worse in the schools in rural areas than in urban areas. For example, primary school teachers were seconded to handle senior secondary school classes or teach at the secondary school based on their academic performance, Ministry of Education, (MoE, 2009:31), Katete District annual report (online). It was for these reasons that the MoE, with its limited resources was compelled to open doors to learning opportunities. According to MoE, the formal education system is characterised by a

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pyramidal structure, with selection of both lecturers and fellow students. Consequently, the teachers should be more knowledgeable to be able to teach effectively.

However, adult distance learning has challenges. Unlike children and teenagers, adults have many responsibilities. The Adult Learner (2013:4) attests to the fact that the demands on adults who pursue their studies through distance learning are numerous. For example, adults are expected to finance their studies and facilitate for other learning resources. Besides that, adults are expected to look after and care for their families. Above all, amidst all these, adult learners still undergo difficulties in terms of balancing up time for their studies alongside work commitments and other various equally important demands.

The teachers at Katete Day Secondary School are not an exception to these challenges. Particularly, teachers were targeted because the researcher felt that these were at the core of the research subject matter and were thus in a better position to respond to issues addressed in the study. Above all, the teachers belonged to a group of people who once underwent and others were undergoing the same mode of learning.

1.4 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

According to the MoGE (2017:2), Katete Day School Establishment report, Katete Day Secondary School has 44 teachers, and most of them have inadequate qualifications. The MoGE requires Zambian teachers who teach at secondary school to have a minimum qualification of a bachelor's degree in the area of specialisation.

Teaching is a learned and learning profession. Therefore, teachers are seen to be carriers of the learning experiences. Ideally, every teacher should also be learned and a learner. Certificate and diploma level teachers have been given considerable opportunity for their personal development through undertaking learning. Kim and Bonk (2006:10) attest to the fact that distance learning was a sure and preferred way to continue education sequentially to advance in careers and train for new ones.

The rate of participation in adult distance learning has increased in nearly every country and there is no sign of the curve of progress dipping or even flattening. In the recent past,

in some countries the improvement in adult distance learning has resulted in the participation of adult learners in higher education in ever-increasing numbers because upgrading oneself adds prestige to the learner and become a prerequisite in many countries for employment, promotion, salary upgrade and even social status. A high teacher morale, relevant subject knowledge and the teacher's specialised or pedagogical skills are central to quality teaching and learning (Mwansa, 2009:34).

However, although many views attest to the value and contribution of adult distance learning, literature according to Kennedy (1996:8) reviews that adult distance learning suffers from various challenges that affect and hamper adult progression. It is therefore against that background that the researcher seeks to investigate the nature and causing factors to challenges affecting distance education. Carrying out such important research is cardinal because if left unattended to would lead to a society which is not educated thereby less productive. Above all, addressing the challenges could provide the required development and be able to foster socio-economic and personal emancipation and the nation at large.

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- What form of support is provided to adult distance students during the course of study?
- How does adult distance learning impact on teachers' quality of teaching?
- In which ways do challenges affect adult affect adult distance students during their course study?

1.6 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethical issues were addressed at each phase in the study. In compliance with regulations of the Institutional Review Board, the permission for conducting research was obtained from administrators of the school where data was collected. The research committee system at University of South Africa (UNISA) which aims to protect potential human participants and to contribute to the highest attainable quality of scientific and ethical research also granted the researcher the permission to conduct the research. Application for research permission containing detailed information in regards the value, methods and procedures, the participants and research status was sought from the institution where

data were collected. Informed consent as well as participants' anonymity and confidentiality were critically addressed.

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010:118), informed consent is an assurance of confidentiality and anonymity. It also includes a description of the intended use of data. The consent should be signed by two parties. This is an important step because it clarifies issues of respondents' rights to secrecy and confidentiality. An informed consent is a written document, to request for permission which the participant must read and append his/her signature to show that one agrees to information provided (Mwansa, 2005:50).

In view of the above, the research involved collecting of data by way of interviews with selected individuals who had diverse experiences and various degrees of responsibilities and accountabilities in as far as education and delivery of learning matters are concerned. The researcher personally carried out the face-to-face interviews on individual respondents with the assurance that the identity of the respondents would be kept anonymous. This implied that the respondents' names were not recorded in any form.

1.7 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the research were as follows:

- To determine the form of support provided to adult distance students during the course of study.
- To investigate the impact of adult distance learning on teachers' quality of work.
- To determine challenges which affect adult distance students during the course of their studies.
- To suggest measures the government can take to improve the provision of distance education.

1.8 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study was expected to help the following groups of people:

Improve teachers' proficiency and academic achievement of pupils through adult distance-learning programmes for teachers in Zambia.

- The study would be of value to distance education stakeholders.
- The information obtained from the study would be used by the MOE to improve adult distance learning by alleviating all possible difficulties which affect adult distance learners.
- The study would help in generating necessary information that would create an appropriate perception regarding adult education.
- A further expectation of the study was to advocate for adult education distance-learning programmes in Zambian schools.

1.9 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

According to Kombo and Tromp (2006:56), a theoretical framework is a collection of interrelated ideas based on theories. It is a reasoned set of prepositions which are derived from and supported and evidenced by data. It attempts to clarify why

things are the way they are based on theories. A theory is a reasoned statement or groups of statements, which are supported by evidence meant to explain phenomena. It provides a generalised explanation to an occurrence (Kombo, 2006:56). With this regard, there are numerous theories of which Maslow's (1968) theory of motivation is good for adult distance learning because it explains common features which motivate adults to engage themselves in various forms of learning (McLeod, 2007, as cited in Reckline, 2010:65).

Motivation is perceived to be intrinsic in nature, internally determined, purposeful and self-directed. It is a determinant of behaviour which enables learners to pursue their studies, (Fasokan et al., 2005 as cited in Mwansa, 2009:33).

According to Maslow, the need for self-esteem and recognition is important for adults as it provides power and prestige in society. He arranged individual needs in a pyramidal structure. He placed the basic needs necessary for life such as water, air, food, shelter, at the base of the pyramid. Maslow named them physiological needs. According to Maslow, these physiological needs must be satisfied in order to move to the next level (McLeod, 2007:22).

According to Merriam et al. (1999:21), Maslow believed that behaviour was motivated by a set of basic needs; a need which is satisfied is no longer active. The higher the satisfaction, the less active the need becomes. This means that the non-satisfied needs at the lowest base of the hierarchy become more active. A lower need is more urgent in the sense that it must be satisfied before a higher need can be met.

The next level on the hierarchy is safety. Maslow believed that individuals could have a sense of security when they have secured steady employment and have access to the provision of good social services such as health and education.

When an individual fails to provide for the family due to lack of employment, self-alienation comes in. The passion or motivation to strive harder to do other things would not be there. An individual who has a sense of safety would be motivated to strive hard for a higher order level, for example, a sense of belonginess.

According to The Adult Learner (2013:8), Maslow believed individuals tend to be more satisfied when people around them show affection and love. The sense of belonginess would enable one to strive for much higher levels in the hierarchy of needs. It is a motivator factor for self-esteem. He attributed self-esteem to self-worth, socio-recognition and accomplishment. As people move up the pyramid, needs increase. The motivation and desire to initiate change becomes greater. For example, at the top or apex of the pyramid is self-actualisation (Smith, 2002:6).

According to Maslow (1968, as cited in Merriam et al., 1999:5), self-actualisation is the full use and exploitation of talents, capabilities and one's potentialities. People have a tendency towards growth and the fulfilment of their potential and have various needs that differ in immediacy and need to be satisfied at different times. Self-actualisation is reached when all the lower level needs are satisfied which comes as result of positive feedback. It is not a permanent state, but a continuous process of development.

McLeod (2007:2) states that Maslow's theory of motivation gives a clear picture of how the human mind is driven. When simpler things or lower level needs appear to be too complicated to achieve in one's life, the individual would not be motivated or compelled to carry out higher level tasks. However, it is the urge to satisfy the various levels of needs

in one's life which compels individual adults to engage in adult learning as learning is viewed as a means to self-development, career improvement, increase of income and eventually self-actualisation.

The motivation theory relates well to Knowles' perspective on self-directed learning. According to Merriam et al.(1999:17), Knowles was convinced that people, who take the initiative in learning, learn more than those who sit at the feet of teachers passively waiting to be taught. Adult learning involves a process in which individuals take the initiative with or without the help of others, in diagnosing their learning needs, formulating learning goals, identifying human and material resources for learning as well as choosing and being able to interpret appropriate learning strategies and evaluating learning outcomes. They enter into learning more purposively with greater motivation and tend to retain and make use of what they learn.

The humanistic approach to self-development considers a person to be at the centre stage of learning. Knowles (1980:3), the proponent of the theory, points out that an individual has the freedom and ability to realise self-development. In addition, individuals have the potential to control their own destinies and are responsible for their own full development.

On the basis of Maslow's theory, the researcher perceives that adult learners prioritise the need for distance learning by considering that which they would want to satisfy first. When this is achieved, the realisation for the need creates a basis for an adult learner to order their learning needs by considering that which they feel they can do better. This would have a strong bearing on contributing to their self-development.

1.10 DEFINITION OF OPERATIONAL TERMS.

- **Adult Distance Learning**: Bower and Kimberly (2004:9) define adult distance learning as education specifically targeted at individuals who are regarded as adults by their society to improve their technical or professional qualification, further develop their abilities, enrich their knowledge with the purpose to complete a level of formal education, or to acquire, refresh or update their knowledge, skills and competencies in a particular field. In this study, adult distance learning refers to learning

characterised by interval contact sessions where learners are far apart and usually depend on written modules as a form of instruction.

- **Teacher:** A person trained to transmit knowledge to learners. A teacher imparts appropriate knowledge to students to be applied at a later stage.

- **Adult:** Knowles (1980:17) defines an adult as a person within the range of 18 years and above who has various roles in society such as having a family or career. In this study, an adult is one who is above 18 years, independent and able to take up various responsibilities in society.

- **Impact:** The powerful effect that something has on somebody or something (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 2000a:online). In this study, impact implies any form of improved change of lifestyles of status that comes as a result of adult distance learning.

- **Challenges:** The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (2000b:online) defines the term 'challenge' as a new or difficult task that tests somebody's ability and skill. In this study, challenges denote difficulties and obstacles that limit adults' participation in distance learning.

- **Andragogy:** The teaching strategies developed for adult learners. It is often interpreted as the process of engaging adult learners depending on their previous experience.

- **Pedagogy:** This refers to the art of teaching strategies aimed at developing young children academically. Its aims range from full development of a human being to skills acquisition in teaching children.

- **Support Services:** According to Usun (2004:2), support is any kind of assistance offered to adult distance learners. In this study, support refers to assistance offered to learners in form of material, financial or moral support from institutions offering distance learning.

1.11 CHAPTER DIVISIONS

Chapter 1 introduced the study and provided an overview of the whole process involved in research.

Chapter 2 provides a wider range of other people's work and findings in regards to the topic. It enables the researcher to identify the gap that could be sealed by undertaking a study of the same nature.

Chapter 3 sets the parameters for collection of data, choice of a site, selection of respondents, measurement and analysis of data.

Chapter 4 focuses on the presentation of findings from the data which was collected.

Chapter 5 presents a summary of findings and conclusions drawn from the literature and the empirical study.

1.12 SUMMARY

This chapter started with an introduction and a brief content of the study. The background of the study was provided, as well as a statement of the problem. It also included research questions, ethical considerations, objectives and significance to the study. The chapter also provided operational definitions of concepts used in the study, limitations to the study and chapter divisions.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter reviews literature which was deemed relevant to the subject under investigation. It discusses the effect of distance learning on teacher performance and output. The chapter also covers the theoretical framework for the study. The review of the literature covers the following areas:

- Support systems provided in adult distance learning;
- The value of adult distance learning;
- Challenges which adult distance learners face; and
- Measures to improve conditions for adult distance learners.

2.2 FORM OF SUPPORT SYSTEM PROVIDED TO ADULT DISTANCE STUDENTS

Distance learning represents approaches and strategies that focus on opening access to education provision and training. According to UNESCO (2002: 4), creating opportunities that free adult learners from constraints of time, space and socio-economic status is a sure way to encourage many adults to be engaged in distance learning. Kennedy (1996:1) views access to learning as cardinal because it produces a skilled workforce to operate in a world of change.

Support services to adult distance students provide an advantage for adults to complete their studies without interruption. According to Usun (2004:2), support services to adult distance students refer to any kind of assistance offered to adult distance learners. The support comes in various forms, among which could be mutual and moral support, immediate feedback, delivery of study materials on time and providing motivation.

It is clear, therefore, that adult students require support in order to enhance and foster their learning, without which steady progression could easily be hampered.

2.2.1 Mutual and Moral Support

Adult distance education students are more likely to have insecurities about learning. Usun (2004:29) asserts that these insecurities are founded on personal and school-related issues such as financial costs of study, disruption of family life, perceived irrelevance of their studies and lack of support from employers. Because of these insecurities, the institution providing adult distance learning should endeavour to provide a conducive and enabling learning environment that provides mutual support. This support could be provided in such a way that adults are given well-designed study materials required to solve academic problems. Additionally, well-coordinated and constant encouragement from the institution could provide a source of motivation to an isolated adult distance student.

Moral support is also important. Melton (2002:13) articulates that the most obvious form of support hinges on providing moral support in order to enable adult learners to solve academic or personal problems but for students studying in isolation, moral support could be more important because adult learners are likely to spend the majority of their study time in their homes or at work. Ongoing support is therefore crucial to success. Trinidade and Carmo (2000:3-4) perceive that adult distance students require some form of support mechanism so that they can overcome their learning difficulties. Ibrahim (2006:31) indicates that it is the duty of any successful institution to meet the learning needs of their adult students as this ensures improving the quality of the educational content and enables them to complete their studies.

Support, according to UNISA (2013:13), is understood as the mechanism designed to meet the needs of particular groups or individual learners in order to provide encouragement and motivation. Usun (2004:27) believes that the availability of a tutor for consultation on a particular course is most important. Adult learners require support in the form of availability of tutors and academic planners to help them complete courses on time and to act as a support system when stress becomes a problem. This poses a great challenge as tutors often tend to be too busy to address the concerns of their students. This can bring about a communication breakdown, making it difficult for learners to comprehend issues arising from course materials.

2.2.2 Timeous Feedback

Any form of support is cardinal considering that adult distance students are often placed in awkward situations in which neither teachers nor fellow students are physically present to clarify, discuss or provide feedback. Usun (2004:8) argues that an effective support system contributes to the process of adult distance learning just as institutionalised or formal learning does.

Support systems developed in recognition of students enable them to acquire competence and self-confidence in learning social interactions and self-evaluation (Rae 1999, as cited in Usun, 2004:24). In order that adult students are kept on track and active in the learning process, timeous feedback should be provided as this is a sure way through which they could ascertain their abilities, and much more feedback enhances knowledge retention and understanding. Usun (2004:12) argues that learner support is any form of assistance rendered by any institution providing distance learning to adults.

According to Mbamba (1992:113), communication is an initiated behaviour between the sender and receiver which conveys desired meaning and causes desired response behaviour. In that regard, feedback is key to any success to be realised or attained because it provides two-way communication. This means that the flow of information from the tutor to the student is essential. Proper feedback between interested parties reduces the points of friction and diminishes problems that could arise. Sharing information takes the adult student into the confidence of the tutor and makes them more knowledgeable about what they are expected to perform or undertake.

2.2.3 Record-Keeping and Delivery of Study Materials

Delivery on time of up-to-date study materials to adult distance learners is key in any successful institution providing distance education. This ensures a two-way communication process between the learner and the institution. Effective communication is an integral ingredient as this promotes and springs out satisfaction on the learners. According to Mbamba (1992:113-114), communication is the process of passing information and understanding from one person to the other and ensures total understanding when any message is passed. This promotes good responses.

Success in attracting, serving, and retaining students hinges more on excellent student support services such as communication than on any technology issues (Galusha, 1998:3). In the view of the researcher, no matter how advanced in technology the learning institution is, if it misses out on the core value of critical issues such as record-keeping and timely delivery of study materials, students could get frustrated. In the end, this can promote high dropout rates.

2.2.4 Creation of Motivation and Collaborative Measures

Motivation is an important life skill and cause for people's actions, willingness and goals. In any learning process, motivation to learners is paramount. It has been shown that good motivation promotes good learning outcomes in learners Prenton (1997: 23, as cited in The Adult Learner, 2012:12). Learning in isolation by adult learners can leave them with a feeling of alienation which could be minimised if constant encouragement and praise for good performance are provided. When learners are motivated and kept on track through such practices of motivation, the likelihood of their dropping out could be reduced.

Similarly, institutions should strive to ensure that learners are encouraged to work collaboratively with other learners because distance learning can be a lonely venture if they are not kept in touch with other learners. Cross (1984:1) asserts that maintaining a system that is strongly founded on teamwork could promote knowledge retention in learners; for example, promoting discussion forums for information exchange and sharing new ideas with others results in enhancing knowledge acquisition.

2.2.5 Face-to-Face Contact

Distance learning takes away much of the social interaction that would be present in traditional learning environments. Institutions must therefore provide a sense of personal involvement between the student and the institution (Galusha, 1998:2). Because there is no daily or weekly face-to-face contact with teachers, students may have trouble in self-evaluation. Galusha (1998:4) believes that the separation of learners and teachers imposed by distance removes a vital link of communication between the two parties.

William (2010:5) and Gumbo (2014:17) point out that lack of contact with other learners and their lecturers makes the learner feel isolated as they tend to have little in common in terms of background and day-to-day experiences that afford them the time to develop the rapport between students and their lecturer. When learners hear about their colleagues' problems of instructional difficulties and solutions, they tend to feel less isolated and more confident about their ability to make changes (Cross, 1984:32).

Gumbo (2014:21) argues that adult distance students should be able to take control of all their daily endeavours by making sure that they budget for their limited time appropriately. For instance, they should schedule all the activities that one intends to undertake for a week including their studies in an effort to cut down on emotional stress. Emotional stress could, however, be managed by taking enough rest as this enhances the brain to work at its peak.

2.2.6 Use of Technology

The many roles which adult students tend to assume such as having families, working, social life and other commitments tend to be a hindrance for adult learners to concentrate and perform well in their studies. As such, learners tend to resort to memorising subject matter for the sake of writing assignments and passing examinations (William, 2010:5). In essence, they forget the underlying primal importance of being able to conceptualise, understand the content and be able to interpret and apply knowledge in real-life situations. Students might have some difficulties in handling the demands of academic study simply because they would not be in a position to access the instructor or would not be familiar with the technology in use (Mani, 1994: 3).

According to Zirke (2002:54), lack of experience with technology could have a negative bearing on the adult student. For instance, the learner could lack the training needed to locate and navigate course sites and be able to download course materials. When these are coupled with other life commitments, learning could be diminished. Mohanachandran and Subramanian (2013:4) assert that the situation is exacerbated as the adult students have to divide their time for their children and spouse, making them cut back on routine

activities and leisure time. To Mani (1994:5), all these are grouped as situational challenges because they affect an individual at a particular time.

UNISA is among the institutions providing adult distance learning which offers support to learners in various forms such as tutorial platforms via which students and their lecturers communicate issues pertaining to their studies. Group discussions are also intensified as they play a very important role in increasing output rates, success and understanding by the learners and to bring them closer to the faculty. Baloyi (2013:27) points out that the institution understands the importance and magnitude of this platform in as far as networking is concerned. It is because of this background that UNISA provides a group discussion platform as a tool where distance learners are helped to reduce the distance between the student and the institution. Some hiccups are, however, encountered in terms of some lecturers' failure to attend to issues which learners raise on the platform.

2.3. BENEFITS OF ADULT DISTANCE LEARNING ON TEACHERS' PROFICIENCY

Academics are a unique group whose sole responsibility is that of executing tasks of teaching, research and community service, as well as administrative and managerial duties, among other things. Gedefaw (2012:23) points out that teachers are, therefore, the most important resources in any educational institution. They are the key figures for any changes that bring about teacher efficacy and improvement in the learning needs of their pupils. The provision of a high-quality education system depends on high-quality teachers. High teacher morale, relevant subject knowledge, and the teacher's specialised teaching skills are central to quality teaching and learning.

The quality of teachers' efficiency and teachers' job satisfaction are both important because they have an impact on the teachers' ability to bring their best qualities to their schools, so that students, parents, and society may benefit from their services (Gedefaw, 2012:24). Mwansa (2005:7) argues that a lack of career growth and advancement could affect learner performance and so contribute to dissatisfaction and boredom with their jobs. Employees who feel stuck in their job positions are less motivated to maintain high productivity than those who are constantly upgrading themselves.

Dubois (1996:7) and Nafukho, Amutabi and Otunga (2005:65) argue that adult distance learning acts as a catalyst for transforming people as well as a country at large and facilitates adults in pursuing their life aspirations such as new skills. Furthermore, adults are exposed to the latest technologies without being disconnected from their families as well as their work. It offers adult learners an opportunity to develop new skills and be exposed to interdisciplinary studies. Adults tend to learn cultural and intercultural issues thereby pursuing a clear pathway to a degree and obtaining educational credentials without having to forsake family and work responsibilities (Dubois,1996:9).

Hannah and Newvine (2006:17) affirm the potential of adult distance learning because it allows professionals the opportunity to remain abreast of new developments in the field of study. David (2006:2) points out that the flexible scheduling that distance learning offers is the reason most people choose to take distance-learning programmes because they usually have other responsibilities that make it impossible for them to return to school on a full-time basis. Adult distance education offers learning opportunities to adults to acquire a universally recognised profession aimed at working adults who have the zeal to upgrade themselves and achieve their dreams (Dubois, 1996:15).

Usun (2004:47) postulates that distance learning is a viable vehicle for transforming the country's economy by ensuring that the masses of people who do not have access to full-time studies are readily equipped. This is achieved by allowing institutions to educate larger numbers of people in a scenario where the country has fewer instructors and institutions to accommodate massive numbers of students. Thus, distance learning ensures a cost-effective way of delivering higher education. Adults have the opportunity to pursue lifelong learning after graduation, regardless of lifestyle and location. It is cost-effective in a way that, in some cases, distance learning takes the place of already existing, traditional institutions.

Greenberg (2000:75) perceives that adults engage in distance learning because of the desire to keep abreast of technology as well as for the advancement of their careers. Advanced knowledge enables one to contribute effectively towards the priorities of the country such as developing the economy. For example, the Ministry of Education (MoE 1996:115) states that an education system is not static, but dynamic, promoting change,

in response to the needs and expectations of society. This is the reason why adults should enhance their workplace skills and capabilities.

According to Craig (1998:11), effective teachers have different styles and approaches, and may be considered effective for varying reasons. Teachers are considered effective if many of their students achieve some academic qualification which is attained through giving learners appropriate attention. Effectiveness is usually expressed as an indicator of teachers' work expressed in terms of students' academic achievement, something that is more easily measured than some other valued outcomes of good education. The measurable gains in learners' progress are some of the strongest indicators of improvement in educational quality.

It is clearly viewed and research has evidenced that an effective and capable teacher is one who has a high level of mastery of the content and skill he or she imparts to learners. However, the mastery of skill does not happen in a vacuum. It comes as a result of attaining knowledge in the subject matter. According to UNESCO (2014:25-26), teachers should have a sound knowledge of subjects they teach and ability to acquire the skills needed to teach and should be able to adapt to change, such as when a new curriculum or language of instruction is introduced. Ongoing training has an impact on teachers as it enables them to provide new ideas about how to support weaker pupils.

Competent and effective teachers are required for societal and national development because well-qualified and trained teachers are cardinal to every society to help mould the nation. The quality of service provided by teachers to the learners is very important: the Zambian MoE (2006:21) asserts that the necessary knowledge opens the minds of the learners to a lifelong search for competencies necessary for professional life.

Thus, the researcher strongly believes that the increase in knowledge that one obtains from a learning programme largely contributes to the development of the individual and the society at large. After any learning encounter, a teacher becomes capable of executing tasks not only of relevant subject matter for the learners but also administrative and managerial duties. This is the reason why most teachers in Zambia are considered for higher managerial positions in the MoE after having undertaken learning programmes.

Thomas (1990:51) attests that highly qualified teachers are what the nation demands because society usually depends upon them in enhancing and uplifting the entire nation as they are the ones in whom the provision of quality education is anchored. Consequently, the nation depends on such teachers to produce high scores among pupils in the examination results.

The MoE (1996:27) describes quality as a result of maximising teachers' potential and that creating a good learning environment enhances effective teaching and learning, and therefore, contributes to the highest standards of achievement. It is argued that poor examination performance is the result of teachers' exposure to poor educational situations that arise from lack of a sound education background, poor teacher output and inexperience.

Kanyika (2000:52) and Kasanda (2003:105) concur that, through knowledge advancement, highly qualified teachers are able to incorporate different teaching and learning strategies. High teacher morale, relevant subject knowledge, and teachers' specialised skills enhance pupils' understanding and are able to obtain maximum value from it. Successful teachers have expectations of their pupils, emphasise achievement, monitor learning closely and have a strong sense of purpose. Furthermore, they are able to foster in-depth understanding as well as realistically solve academic problems (Forrest, 2001:29).

A good example is at the school where the researcher teaches. Teachers who have advanced their education either through distance learning or through full-time mode produce good results in their specific subject areas. This is simply because they have acquired new instructional skills or methodologies that enable them to deliver the subject matter effectively. Therefore, the teachers tend to have confidence and capabilities to handle learners by being able to select materials that are appropriate to their learners' abilities. They promote learning by use of academic instruction and active learning strategies. Above all, effective teachers usually waste less time during the instructional timeframe allocated to them.

Craig (1998:11) affirms that effective teachers have qualities such as:

- Knowledge of the subject matter;
- Ability to use pedagogy appropriate for the content;
- Ability to use an appropriate language of instruction and have that mastery;
- Creating and sustaining an effective learning environment;
- Finding out about and responding to the needs and interests of the learners;
- Reflecting on their teaching and pupils' responses and making changes to the learning environment as necessary;
- A strong sense of ethics;
- Commitment to teaching; and
- Caring about their pupils.

The qualities above relate very well to the views of Kasanda (2003:50). He alludes to the fact that quality emanates from maximising the effort of the teachers because schools should be places of effective teaching and learning to enhance the highest standards of achievement in accordance with the ability of every learner. Society, among other things, expects teachers to be competent and effective. It holds teachers accountable for learner achievement and maintaining a high level of performance.

It is because of the aforementioned that it is believed that if people are holistically developed, distance education will have succeeded in providing teachers with a balanced personality which would enable them to exhibit inner stability and steadfastness. It would also equip them with the ability to provide basic knowledge and the acquisition of capabilities that would enable them to make informed decisions. Adult distance learning creates human emancipation by opening the way to mastery of techniques and human actions. In view of this, Bower and Kimberly (2004: 9) contend that distance learning offers working adults opportunities to fulfil their educational goals by allowing them to take courses that are more adaptable to their schedules and to their lives. Distance learning offers customised courses which meet the specific needs of each person's profession.

2.4 CHALLENGES FACED BY ADULT DISTANCE STUDENTS

Although adult distance learning offers flexibility and convenience among other things, it is not without its challenges. The most difficult problems faced by adults as perceived by

Hannay and Newvine (2006:1) are in comprehending technical, qualitative and scientifically oriented courses. No matter how much they may communicate with others by phone, email and discussion boards or in chat rooms, it is never the same feeling, and thus students who are uncomfortable with their reading and writing skills find themselves equally uncomfortable with their distance-learning courses. Similarly, some learners feel lonely without face-to-face contact with other learners (O'Lawrence, 2006:47).

Zirke (2003:12) ascribe challenges to the institutions and to the learners themselves. Distance learning is a cost-intensive business. Start-up costs can be prohibitive because computers, servers and networks need to be set up. The ongoing support for technical assistance services and continual software upgrades result in higher costs that are passed on to adult learners in the form of additional fees.

Some institutions rely on hired skilled manpower to offer different courses but securing faculty to teach at off times also poses a challenge (Prenton, 1997:11) For Zirke (2001: 13), new advancements in technology in offering course materials such as videoconferencing and other technologies are expensive. Zirke (2003:32) argues that course content such as psychomotor skills may not be easily taught through distance learning.

According to Zirke (2003:5), challenges that adult distance learners in distance learning has been extensively researched. For instance, Zirke (2003:17) categorises barriers to distance learning as technical relating to access to technology. Structural challenges which involve budgeting, training, technical and attitudinal support including reluctance to use of technological equipment are also faced by adult distance learners. Research by Zirke (2001:12) attribute challenges to institutional and learners' barriers to learning.

In the same vein, Cross (1984:25) ascertain situational and dispositional challenges as factors which hamper progress. Dispositional challenges are traits or psychological characteristics of adult learners or learners' attitudes and self-perceptions. For instance, stress and anxiety are personal stumbling blocks that hinder the learning process. Anxiety may result in fear of failing, a characteristic common among adult learners.

2.5.1 Institutional Challenges

Providing good quality personal service in which the student feels supported by the institution has been shown to be an important component of student retention. Plageman, (2011:23) articulate that institutions should enable students have a significant connection to a professor, to a programme or activity that creates roots on a campus. In a similar way, Plageman, felt that programme directors should work as much as possible in direct contact with their student population and must reconcile student needs with budgetary constraints.

These are challenges mainly contributed by institutions. Mani (1994:11) argues that they are aligned to lack of support needed by adult learners during the course of study. Library facilities and lack of appropriate study materials adversely affect adult distance students' performance in assignments and during an examination. For example, due to learning in isolation, the distance learner might have difficulties in accessing prescribed books.

Learning can only be made easier when such facilities like a library are accessible. This isolation could actually be due to technological limitations of distance courses that require only a superficial level of participation by adult learners. Zirke (2002:34) argues that when the perception of isolation persists, adult distance learners might consider themselves less important than other learners on campus.

The other important aspect in as far as distance education or any other educational provision is concerned is timely feedback to learners. The quality and integrity of the educational process depends heavily on sustained two-way communication between the students and the faculty. For example, providing feedback at an appropriate time enables learners to evaluate their performance. According to Mwansa (2005:42), the whole essence of evaluating the learning outcomes is to determine the benefits that learners themselves derive from their learning programmes. But more often than not, feedback in distance learning is delayed, and in some instances not provided at all. This leaves distance learners with frustrations and, in the end, they may drop out of the programme.

It is therefore important to consider communication as an interactive component that needs to be given serious consideration. Mahle (2007:5) points out that adequate

feedback from instructors is necessary to reinforce students' concerns about whether they have acquired accurate knowledge. She argues that distance educators should be able to provide support to their students by giving fast and relevant assistance by sending timely and individualised messages and providing appropriate feedback to students.

Lack of feedback could lead to perceptions of alienation and isolation as it is a well-known fact that adult learners would want to be a part of the larger school community. Tutors usually would not adequately provide feedback on a timely basis even though the quality and integrity of the educational process depends on sustained two-way communication between adult learners and the faculty. Proper communication between interested parties reduces the points of friction and thus minimises those that inevitably arise.

Communication is a two-way system that creates an enabling environment for any good transfer of knowledge and learning. Adult distance learning depends more also on the provision of some technical assistance. Technical assistance would mean the appropriate knowledge required on how to handle educational matters in ways that would help in meeting learning objectives. Lack of an effective institutional network of technical assistance is a significant barrier. For instance, adults may find difficulty in logging into videoconferences or internet course sites and would be unable to obtain the required help. According to Zirke (2003:55), putting in place and maintaining successful technical assistance resources is key to any successful adult distance education programme.

According to Zirke (2003:41), a lack of skilled manpower by some institutions poses some challenges. An institution which heavily depends on temporary or contract staff suffers discrepancies in the promotion of institutional aspirations and goals from hired manpower. In addition, maintaining quality and excellence in delivery of learning materials is thwarted. Offering courses relying on contracted manpower rather than full-time staff can be a difficult endeavour because adults have different commitments to various schedules. For example, Zirke (2001:11) points out that faculty would not be able to appropriately pace and respond to learners' questions in a continuous communication environment.

2.5.2 Student Barriers

Barriers to accessing distance education by the learner have been attributed to factors such as costs and motivators, lack of feedback and teacher contact, alienation and isolation and technological aspects (Galusha, 1998:17).

Lack of feedback to learners can lead to alienation and isolation as it is a well-known fact that adult learners want to be part of the larger educational community. Apart from the aforementioned, Zirke (2003:3) states that adult learners are affected by job conflict, family matters, time constraints and financial issues. The different roles adults play in life conflict with their learning aspirations, thus making distance learners more liable to failure, dropping out and, indeed, poor performance.

Mohanachandran and Subramanian (2013:11) attest to time management problems as a common factor. Learners suffer from coping with the increasing demands at work and completing their course assignments. For instance, female adult learners are faced with numerous challenges ranging from costs and motivation, isolation, as well as the lack of experience of technology (Galusha, 1998:21). In addition, due to work and other commitments, some learners find it difficult to apply self-discipline to accomplish given tasks.

Due to loneliness, distance students often fail to allocate time for their studies appropriately (O'Lawrence, 2006:47). According to Greenberg (2000:77), the other common factors that affect adult learners are financial demands as they are often expected to foot their own education bills, coupled with meeting the needs of their families. The experience is more demanding as more hours are dedicated and devoted to studies on the expense of the family's time.

Mohanachandran and Subramanian (2013:23) argue that time management is a contributing factor to completing assignments on time. Adult learners struggle to cope with the increasing demands at work and at the same time to complete their course assignments. The scenario is more difficult for women; the demand for attention is exacerbated by the many roles which they are expected to fulfil. For instance, distance learners may have to divide their limited time between learning and the time they need to

spend with their children and spouse; this may reduce the time they have available for family activities such as outings, travelling, watching television and reading. These are major challenges that affect distance students because they fail to apportion time and resources according to their demands. In some cases, even the finances are limited.

2.6 SUMMARY

The chapter focused on review of the literature pertaining to support services adults studying by means of distance learning are offered. The chapter also highlighted how adult distance learning impacts teacher proficiency. The challenges which adult learners face were highlighted. The challenges ranged from combining work, studies and families. Above all, the chapter suggested some solutions to the challenges identified. Support systems are cardinal to adult distance learners because they can enable them to cut down on the many challenges they are faced with in the societies in which they live. Support could be in form of timeous feedback to adult distance learners and constant support through the media and other technological aspects. This support enables the teachers to be acquainted with new teaching strategies and makes them more proficient and effective in providing high-quality education. It also provides learners with the opportunity to access education and improves their academic performance.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the research design and methodology employed by the researcher in conducting the study. It also provides justification for the choice of research methodologies. The chapter covers the research design and research methodologies. The qualitative approach was used for data collection.

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

McMillan and Schumacher (2010:20) describe a research design as procedures for conducting a study, indicating when, from whom, and under what conditions the data would be obtained. The research design also aims at specifying a plan for generating empirical evidence that would be used to answer the research questions. Similarly, Kombo and Tromp (2006:70) see research design as the structure of research; a glue that holds all of the elements in a study together. A research design can be viewed as an arrangement of conditions for collection and analysis of data in a manner that aims to combine relevance with research purpose.

A case design is a holistic method that uses multiple sources of evidence to analyse a specific phenomenon. Leedy and Ormrod (2005:135) state that a case study is designed specifically for learning more about a little known or poorly understood situation. McMillan and Schumacher (2006:316) assert that a case study focuses on one phenomenon, which the researcher chooses to understand clearly. Above all, Robson (1993:5) advances that a case study offers an opportunity to consider a situation, individual, group, organisation or whatever is appropriate as the object of study.

According to Kombo and Tromp (2006:73), a good research design is systematic and logical. It also effectively addresses the questions raised in the study. A good research design accomplishes the following:

- It contributes to accurate and fair interpretation of results;

- It clarifies to the researcher and the respondents, the means by which the study will be conducted; and
- It contributes to deeper insights and better understanding of the research topic.

The case study design was used to enable the researcher to collect data from a specific group of teachers who were able to provide desired responses. A case study design was employed and a semi-structured interview schedule was designed and administered to respondents so as to obtain an in-depth understanding. According to Kombo and Tromp (2006:93-94), in-depth understanding enables the researcher to obtain the desired responses. This was because the researcher wanted to bring about a detailed and deeper understanding of the phenomenon. It involved collecting data from teachers, a head teacher and an official from the District Education Office.

3.3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A method refers to the way of approaching the problem (Ghosh, 1992:92). In order to find out the truth involved in a problem, certain steps should be taken in a certain order, and the ordered steps are a method. McMillan and Schumacher (2010:29) view research methodology as the part of a study where the researcher indicates the research design, subjects, instruments, interventions and procedures used in the study.

The information contained therein would enable other researchers to replicate the study. Methodology stands for the correct arrangement of thoughts either for discovery or for the exposition of truth (Ghosh, 1992:25).

A research methodology therefore is the activity or business of choosing, reflecting upon, evaluating and justifying the approaches used in data collection (Wellington, 2004:22). Research methodology covers population, sample and sampling techniques, tools for data collection, administration of tools for data collection, validation of data collected, and finally data presentation.

3.4 POPULATION

McMillan and Schumacher (2010:129) define population as a group of elements or cases, whether individuals, objects, or events, that conform to specific criteria and to which we

intend to generalise the results of the research. This group is also referred to as the target population or universe. Kombo and Tromp (2006:76) view population as a group of people, objects or items from which samples are derived for measurement purposes. It is an entire group of persons or elements that have at least one thing in common, and thus refers to the entire universe from which a sample size is chosen. In this research, the target population involved 44 teachers at Katete Day Secondary School in Katete District, and one District Education Standards Officer who happens to be the chief officer who ensures education standards are maintained in the district.

3.5 SAMPLE AND SAMPLING PROCEDURES.

3.5.1 Sample Size

A sample refers to a group of objects or subjects from whom the data are collected. It refers to a set of respondents or people who are selected from a larger population for the purpose of the research. McMillan and Schumacher (2010:328-329) believe that to understand something, selecting information-rich cases for in-depth study is required. The researcher searches for information-rich key informants who are chosen because they are likely to be knowledgeable and informative about the phenomenon.

The size of a sample plays an important role in sampling. Ghosh (1992:236-237) asserts that an optimum sample is one which fulfils the requirements of efficiency, representativeness, reliability and flexibility. Similarly, McMillan and Schumacher (2010:328) and Nkhata (2003:43) affirm the aspect of the size of the sample stating that a sample is chosen basing on factors ranging from availability of rich informants to accessibility and must be small enough to avoid unnecessary expenditure and to avoid sample error. Sidhu (2006:15) sees limitations to resources and time factors as worthy of consideration because this leads to selecting a sample from the study population. The sample size of this study was eight teachers and one head teacher who were selected from a total population of 44 teachers. The District Education Standard Officer represented officials from the District Education Office. Based on the factors above, and in consideration of aspects cited, the total sample size was 10.

3.5.2 Sampling Procedure

Sampling denotes the strategies that are followed to form or come up with a sample (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:129). Kombo and Tromp (2006:78) affirm that sampling is an act, process of or technique of selecting a suitable sample, or a representative part of a population for the purpose of determining parameters or characteristics of the whole population. The researcher usually decides how a sample is chosen either by way of probability or non-probability sampling methods. In probability sampling, the researcher utilises some form of random selection, whereas in non-probability sampling, the researcher selects only a few representatives based on key criteria.

In this study, two methods of selecting the sample were employed; the head teacher and the District Education Standards Officer were selected through purposive sampling technique because it involves a small sample. They were also selected for judgement (Ghosh, 1992:116; McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:138). In this study, the researcher purposely targeted a group of people or individuals who were believed to have the information available to answer the questions for the study (Kombo & Tromp, 2006:82). For instance, to study teacher effectiveness, it was prudent to interview key informants or personnel rather than random sampling. Snowball sampling has a positive bearing on selecting information-rich cases related to the central issues being studied (Kombo & Tromp, 2006:82) for in-depth analysis. The greatest advantage of this kind of sampling is that it offers a high participation rate; it is easy to administer; and above all, it ensures immediate receipt of the much-needed information (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:140).

Snowball sampling, also called network sampling or chain sampling, is a strategy in which each successive participant or group is named by a preceding group or individual (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:327). Kombo and Tromp (2006:83) state that by asking a number of people, the researcher can identify specific kinds of cases. It begins with a few people or cases and then gradually increases the sample size as new contacts are mentioned by the people the researcher started with. The process grows like a ball of snow. This process of sampling is more convenient, as those selected provide a true reflection of what the researcher intends to investigate (Mwansa, 2005:13). In this study, snowball sampling was used for selecting adult distance teachers because it offered an

opportunity to the first person to identify the other person eligible to provide information involved in adult distance learning (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:327). It continues until data saturation has been reached; i.e. until no additional, useful information arises from the interviews.

3.6 TOOLS FOR DATA COLLECTION

Data collection, according to Kombo and Tromp (2006:99), is a method or strategy which a researcher employs to gather information to serve or prove some facts.

The information gathered is specific and is aimed at proving or refuting some facts. By collecting views on people's attitudes about their day-to-day aspects of life, they tend to capture their interests and attitudes and researchers should have a clear understanding of what they hope to obtain and how they hope to obtain it.

The principal tools for data collection were interviews and documents. An interview is one of the fastest, most reliable and accurate ways by which data are collected (Ghosh, 1992:98). Different forms of interviews are employed, but this research used the semi-structured interview because it is flexible in the sense that it consists of both open- and closed-ended questions. By so doing, the researcher gets a complete and detailed understanding of the issue under research (Kombo & Tromp, 2006:93-94).

According to Ghosh (1992:259), an interview enables the researcher to assess factors such as attitudes, feelings, opinions, and reactions of the interviewee. Above all, an interview eliminates personal barriers, brings all parties close, making the study more fruitful, thus providing an opportunity for the study of the immediate reactions of the interviewees.

The interview method is a kind of verbal technique for obtaining data. It is regarded as a systematic method by which a person enters more or less imaginatively into the life of a complete stranger (Ghosh, 1992:253). According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010:205), the interview technique is flexible and adaptable; it can be used with many different problems and types of persons.

Interviews are much better than other forms of data collection because they allow for an opportunity to observe nonverbal and verbal expressions and the interviewer has a chance to motivate the respondent; above all, interviews result in a much higher response rate. The sole purpose of interviews, according to Kombo and Tromp (2006:100), is to:

- stimulate new ideas because data collection helps in identifying areas related to the research topic that needs improvement or future evaluation;
- highlight a situation and therefore create awareness and improvement;
- influence legislative policies and regulations;
- provide justification for an existing programme or illustrate a need for a new programme; and
- promote decision-making and resource allocation that is based on solid evidence rather than on isolated occurrences, assumptions, emotion, politics and others.

3.6.1 Semi-Structured Interviews

These are interviews which follow questions that are drawn up ahead of time (Mwansa, 2005:15). In Kombo and Tromp's view (2006:93), an interview schedule is based on the use of an interview guide. It is a written list of questions or topics that need to be covered by the interview. Semi-structured questions have no standard choices from which the respondent selects an answer. Rather, the question is phrased to allow for an individual's personal responses. The questions are usually open-ended and fairly specific in intent (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:358). In order to have an in-depth understanding of the challenges of distance learning by adults, the semi-structured interview schedule was used for conducting interviews with 10 selected informants some of whom had studied by means of distance education.

An interview, according to Ghosh (1992:259) and McMillan and Schumacher (2010:355), is a means of getting direct knowledge personally and the information is therefore reliable because it provides an inflow and outflow of information and knowledge which may be mutually helpful to the interviewer as well as to the interviewee. To consolidate the interview, note-taking is used to help record nonverbal communication which comes

through facial expressions. Facial expressions indicate a participant's likes and dislikes on certain issues. The interview schedule used is provided as Appendix C.

3.6.2 Document Review

Document review involves reading published and unpublished works such as research reports. McMillan and Schumacher (2010:362) and Mwansa (2005:42) attest that documents are an integration of new findings and linkage to what others have found before. It is also a process of sifting through what seems to complement the findings as well as to provide a critique of studies. A general understanding is that documents are used in order to suggest trends, propose new questions and to corroborate qualitative data (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:361).

Document for result analysis were accessed from the Careers Department within the school for the past three years (2016–2018). These were reviewed as a form of consolidating already existing information with the new findings (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:361). The researcher reviewed results analysis documents for Grade 12 for three consecutive years to ascertain how adult distance learning had impacted teachers' proficiency with regard to learners' performance.

3.7 PROCEDURE OF ADMINISTERING THE TOOLS.

Before undertaking an interview, the interviewer prepared the ground so that the problems at hand were understood properly. Thereafter, the researcher prepared the interview schedule which gave an outline of the different aspects of the study (Ghosh, 1992:257).

The researcher recorded the proceedings of the interviews using an audio-recorder. According to the researcher, it was felt that by so doing, it would allow for completeness of the verbal interaction and provide the opportunity for reliability checks. Alongside the audio-recorder, note-taking was carried out to help record nonverbal communication and help the interviewer to be attentive (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:363). Before the interview began, the interviewer gave a full account of her details. Permission was first granted by the principal of the school (Appendix B).

3.8 DATA ANALYSIS

Kombo and Tromp (2006:110) describe analysis of data as a critical examination of coded data and making inferences from the analysis for the purposes of providing the results. In this study, the process involved identifying, categorising and listing responses according to themes. These responses were coded and grouped by establishing the emerging issues. Data were analysed qualitatively in the form of descriptions to give a full account of the findings. Descriptive analysis provided a detailed, elaborate and clear understanding of the analysed data. Interviews were transcribed and the researcher read and re-read through the data in order to identify the issues which emerged.

Data coding begins by identifying small pieces of data that stand alone. A code is a name or phrase that is used to provide meaning to this segment (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:371). Categories (themes) are entities composed of grouped data. A single category is used to give meaning to codes that are then combined into themes. The categories represent major ideas that are used to describe the meaning of similarly coded data (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:370-371).

Data were analysed qualitatively to give a full account of the findings. Interviews were transcribed, read and re-read in order to identify the data which emerged as themes. According to Kombo and Tromp (2006:110-111), the data collected should be analysed using a content analysis approach. This strategy aims at identifying, categorising and listing responses according to themes. Thereafter, the responses are coded and grouped by establishing the emerging themes.

The relevant documents were extensively reviewed for an in-depth understanding of different perspectives. A qualitative design which employs a case study strategy is directed towards discovering or uncovering new insights, meanings and understandings. It is an in-depth analysis of the problem in order to understand the 'what' and 'why' of human behaviours (Chiyongo, 2010:71).

Figure 3.1 below served as a guide in analysing the data:

Collect data   Organise data   Transcribe data into segments   Code data   Describe data   Categorise data   Develop patterns

Data preparation
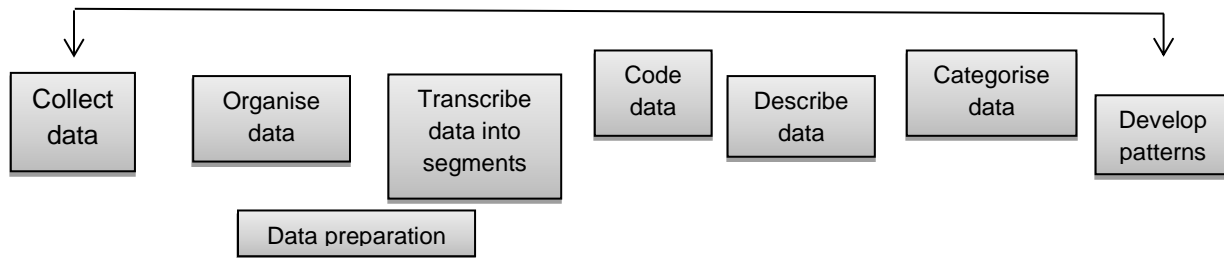
Figure 3.1: Guide for analysis of data

Source: McMillan & Schumacher (2010:369)

3.9 TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE STUDY

According to Chiyongo (2010:76), trustworthiness is understood to be the quality of the research. The work was therefore worthwhile because its findings involved respondents who were reliable and were part and parcel of the problem under investigation. This involved an interpersonal face-to-face interaction, whereby the researcher was able to get information directly from the persons who had experienced the actual distance learning. Having intimate knowledge of the case is a sure way by which necessary information can be provided.

3.10 SUMMARY

This chapter focused on the research design and methodology. The study used a qualitative approach, specifically a case study. The researcher chose the relevant methods for data collection. The chapter also described the population for the study, tools for data collection, the sample size as well as the population of the research. The research tools for data collection were semi-structured interviews and document reviews. Data validation was addressed as this offered the researcher an opportunity to obtain reliable and accurate results of the research. Finally, ethical issues basing on the participants were critically considered as these assured participants' secrecy and privacy.

CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the discussion and findings based on the data collected from the respondents who participated in the study. The investigation focused on understanding adult distance learning and who an adult learner is. The benefits of adult distance learning education and as well what motivates them to study by distance learning are presented and discussed. In addition to that, the aspect of support on adult learners, the challenges that affect them and how challenges are mitigated are included. The Chapter also presented a review of a results analysis document to show how adult learning impacts on learners at classroom level.

PRESENTATION FROM INTERVIEWS

4.2 DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

4.2.1 Gender

Figure 4.1 below shows that 40% of the participants were women and 60% were men. This was due to the fact that the school had a large number of male teachers.
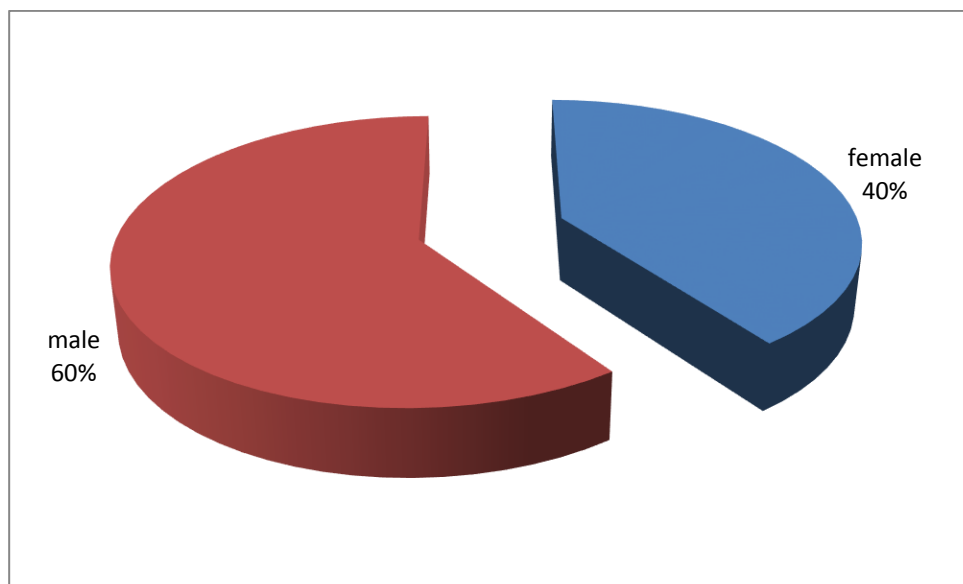
Figure 4.1: Distribution of participants by gender

The disparity in gender is an aspect which is felt in most workplaces in Zambia for the reason that, in the past, our forefathers considered a woman merely as a tool for marriage and as a source of income for the family through exchange for dowries or bride wealth. In the recent past, the trend has changed because the government has intervened and has been working together with civil society to bring about gender equality.

4.2.2 Age

Table 4.1: Distribution of participants by age group

AGE GROUP	NUMBER
26 – 35 Years	2
36 – 45 Years	6
Over 46 Years	2
TOTAL	**10**

The study showed that two participants were in the age group of 26-35 years, six were between 36 and 45 years, whereas two were over 46 years of age. It was revealed that the majority, namely, 60% of the participants were between 36 and 45 years of age.

4.2.3 Qualifications

Table 4.2 below shows that a large representation of participants had pursued adult distance learning and as well as some were currently engaged in studies by distance learning with regards to their verbatim responses.

Table 4.2: Qualifications of the participants

Participant	Highest qualification	How qualification was earned		Currently studying
		Face-to-face	**Distance**	**Yes/No**
Participant 1	Diploma	Yes		Yes
Participant 2	Diploma		Yes	Yes
Participant 3	Degree		Yes	Yes
Participant 4	Diploma		Yes	Yes
Participant 5	Degree		Yes	No
Participant 6	Degree		Yes	Yes
Participant 7	Degree		Yes	Yes

Participant	Highest qualification	How qualification was earned		Currently studying
		Face-to-face	Distance	Yes/No
Participant 8	Diploma		Yes	No
Participant 9	Degree	Yes		Yes
Participant 10	Degree		Yes	No

It therefore provides an understanding that informants were able to provide the necessary information. In Zambia, the trend is that most teachers start work with a lower level of qualification like a certificate and eventually upgrade themselves through various modes of learning to a higher level such as a bachelor's degree. This is because Zambia, like many other developing countries, attaches importance to education and encourages or supports teachers to upgrade themselves. Continuing education enables them to improve their classroom practices and to reflect on new curriculum and teaching practices to foster motivation to help them adapt to change (UNESCO, 2014: 26).

Ongoing learning enables teachers to be well vested in handling matters of concern such as improving learner performance. It also provides teachers with new ideas about how to support weak learners because teachers who have received in-service training are found to be better than those who have not. If teachers are holistically developed, education will have made a breakthrough in providing them with a opportunities for better placements in employment (MoE, 2009: 53).

4.2 PARTICIPANTS' UNDERSTANDING OF ADULT DISTANCE LEARNING EDUCATION

In order to assess the participants' knowledge of distance education, various scenarios of adult education were set for participants through the interview guide. Generally, knowledge on understanding of the meaning of adult distance education was obtained from the responses by participants in Table 4.3 below:

Table 4.3: Views on adult distance education

VIEWS	FREQUENCY
• Done while one is working • Contact session done during holiday to upgrade professional credentials • Learning from a non-formal environment	9

VIEWS	FREQUENCY
• An adult person undertaking higher learning at higher level	
• Learning through part time	
• Kind of adult education done through libraries, modules etc.	
• Type of learning by adults without contact with lectures	
• Not sure because even young ones are doing adult education	1
Total	10

Table 4.3 indicates that nine of the participants were aware of what distance learning is all about. Only one participant expressed ignorance and so could not clearly describe the phenomenon.

Generally, it was discovered that the question on adult distance learning was responded to in different ways. However, all the responses indicated that it was well understood. What was interesting was that it was not mistaken for full-time learning. Nine of the participants were of the view that distance learning involved the absence of face-to-face contact between students and their lecturers as well as their colleagues. In addition to that, participants felt that distance learning offered adults freedom and independence to pursue their studies at their own time and place, with some form of flexibility in all respects. One participant was not sure about adult distance learning giving reasons that even young ones were involved in distance learning. One participant had this to say:

> *"Distance learning is flexible and cheaper in the sense that I am able to pursue my studies while am working, and able to take care of my family. Secondly the family ties are never broken, and the relationship between my husband and I still remains strong."*

The participant's views are in line with that of UNESCO (2014:5) which describes distance education as being an avenue which represents an approach that aims at providing flexible training or education that offers students adequate time to study and they are not restricted in terms of where they should study, thereby widening the accessibility of learning opportunities.

Carmody (2004:45) postulates that alternative strategies of education such as adult distance learning are a vehicle that provides the type of labour force required for the process of change and development within the context of national needs and prioritisation of industrial development, economic growth and social transformation. Therefore, the kind of education provided should develop the capacity of an individual to participate more effectively in the process of change and development within the context of national needs and priorities.

Furthermore, in line with the aforementioned views, UNESCO (2014:13) affirms that distance learning education targets individuals who are regarded as adults by their society in order to improve their technical or professional qualifications, further develop their abilities, and be able to enrich their knowledge with the purpose of completing a formal education. It aims at developing a labour force which is proficient and able to compete in today's global economy. This kind of education enhances knowledge and training opportunities in diverse aspects of life, targeting not only people who were previously disadvantaged and could not complete their education, but also offers opportunities to people who are already in formal or non-formal employment to upgrade themselves.

4.3 AN UNDERSTANDING OF WHO IS AN ADULT LEARNER

The findings from the participants give a full description for understanding the confusion which exists in as far as comprehending who an adult learner is. Although three argued that an adult learner is one who is advanced in age, five expressed the understanding that any person over 18 years of age, regardless of where one is, be it in school, college or university is an adult. The confusion became more apparent when two of the participants could not actually explain the concept. Lack of clarity of who an adult is still exists among many people, especially in Zambia, the reason being that the concept can be defined culturally, politically or biologically. While in some countries, Zambia included, the legal adult age is 18, in other countries where the legal adult age is 21, the scenario is relatively different.

The concept 'adult learning' is confused by many people because an adult may be regarded as someone who assumes the roles of taking care of the family and may be in

either formal or non-formal employment. When asked who an adult learner was, the participants gave different views. Participants said that:

> "*An adult learner is one who has completed secondary and tertiary education and is either in business or working and thus pursuing and advancing the level of education.*"

> "*In my own understanding, I feel an adult learner is one who is in occupation and desires to obtain a degree or any level of education as a vehicle for career change.*"

It was clear that distance education meant different things to different people. This was from a variety of definitions or meanings that were given by the participants. One participant had this to say:

> "*This is confusing because even the young ones are doing adult distance education; moreover, the young ones bring a lot of confusion during the sessions. Why not change the name to something appropriate?*"

From the participants' views, it was clear to the researcher that the confusion which pertains to the conceptualisation of adult distance education really exists. What was encouraging was that a combination of the meanings put together was able to justify the meaning of adult education as in line with Galusha (1998:12). Another participant said this:

> "*Is this adult distance education referred to that which involves learning how to read and write or what?*"

This skepticism among some of the participants confirmed the existing confusion in the understanding of the term "adult learning or education". Some confusion was evidenced among participants who could not distinguish a wrong answer from a correct one in all the scenarios given to them. This established a gap in the findings of the study which concurred with Matshazi (1975:67). He argued about the long-existing confusion of understanding the meaning of adult education among the majority of Zambians. This continuous divergent view of the concept was attributed to the elusiveness of the term in that it seemed to defy any attempts at a clear definition.

Matshazi's (1975:67) observation was that ordinary Zambians, academics and professionals alike, use the term 'adult learning' or 'education' to refer exclusively to the Night School Programme of the MoE, which confirms the different views which the study equally established. This also coincides with the researcher's observation during distribution and collection of data where a number of the participants were interested to hear from the researcher what adult education was all about. Some likened adult education to the adult literacy programmes meant for the illiterate to learn how to read, write and do simple arithmetic. Though the concept of adult literacy is part of the adult education sector, where the misconceptions occurred was in narrowing down the wider and major concept into a smaller component.

Lowe (1970:62) and Matshazi (1975:89) share the view that adult distance education covers many areas of education provision such as agriculture extension, HIV and AIDS awareness, family planning and literacy programmes. All these and many others are areas of adult education provision. Hence, people see it differently. The authors justified their claim when they stated that the semantic muddle is further complicated by the fact that many activities concerned with the education of adults are neither acknowledged as such nor carried out under the auspices of a ministry of education; for example, in Spanish-speaking South America. As Findsen (2012:16) points out the ministry or department officially responsible for education (in some countries) has little to do with most of what is classified as adult education programmes. This is particularly true with the Zambian situation where almost all the government education policy documents discussed in the literature review have failed to give adult education the recognition it deserves.

There is a clear indication that the different views of the meaning of the concept adult education is not only a problem here in Zambia but a phenomenon that affects other parts of the world. It therefore calls for more research of this nature to ascertain the gravity of the problem world over.

It is worth noting that the University of Zambia Adult Education and Extension Studies Programme was set up in June 1966. Despite over 45 years of the University's Adult Education and Extension activities in the community, some academic members of staff

at the University and people at large still have misconceptions in understanding the meaning of adult education. Perhaps, the misconception by the people can be regarded as the cause for the recommendation that was made by the task force to remove the Centre for Continuing Education, as discussed in Chakanika and Mtonga (1995:53).

The foregoing was also confirmed by this study from the participants where some of them gave incorrect answers. Though the numbers of the wrong answers could be considered minor, the responses still confirmed that there was confusion among the participants in fully understanding the meaning of adult education.

Another important factor linked to the meaning of adult education was the concept of adulthood. The literature reviewed exhaustively covered adulthood as perceived by various authors. This was meant to precisely describe and establish adulthood so that a line could be drawn on who qualifies for this so-called adult education. Lindeman (1968, as cited in The Adult Learner 2013:95) was the person whose early writings opened up the doors of debate regarding adult education and is considered to be the father of adult education. He argued that the concept is called adult education not because it is confined to adults but because adulthood and maturity define its limits.

Going by the several stages of adulthood as discussed by Gwenengwe (1986:5), Mbiti (1991:32) and Matshazi (1983:75) confirm that the concept is too wide to be confined to a specific age limit since adulthood ranges from as low as 16 depending on the context. This gives credence that adult education has no specific age limit but cuts across all age groups depending on how a particular community defines it.

Although the concept 'adult' is open to various interpretations, literature reveals that a person qualifies to be an adult beginning at the age of 18 depending on the country of residence, while others ascribe it to situations. This simply means that for any one person to be at college or university, one would have attained adulthood. Regardless of the form of education, be it full-time or distance, the concept would still apply.

4.4 BENEFITS OF ADULT DISTANCE EDUCATION

The value of adult distance education cannot be over-emphasised. The evidence in Table 4.4 shows that adult education plays a major role in development at personal, community and national levels. Though the degree of relevance differed from the participants, what is critical is that 80% of the participants appreciated the importance of adult distance education.

Table 4.4: Participants' views on the importance and benefits of adult distance education

RESPONSES	NUMBER
Not at all	0
Very little	0
A little	2
Quite a lot	3
A very great deal	5
Total	**10**

The measurable gains in students' progress in schools are some of the strongest indicators of measuring the quality of adult distance education. A teacher who upgrades professionally can improve in the teaching and learning methodologies so as to meet the learning needs of his learners. For example, eight of the participants indicated that teacher proficiency improved after teachers upgraded their levels of education. Eight participants attested to this fact, whereas two participants had mixed feelings about it. The two were administrators who felt teachers needed to do more to improve pass rates of learners. However, the eight teachers who appreciated the core value of distance education said that they taught various levels or grades of learners.

As evidenced by the responses in support of the relevance of adult distance education to development in all situations, the participants recognised the contribution it plays in the socio-economic development of the country. This, according to O'Lawrence (2006:47), is the most obvious way of differentiating adult education from other forms of education. Lindeman (1968, as cited in The Adult Learner 2013:95) rightly noted that adult education

is concerned not only with preparing people for life, but with helping people to live more successfully. It also assists adults to increase their competencies or to negotiate transitions in their social roles such as workers, retired persons and parents, to help them gain greater fulfilment in their personal lives. Above all, it assists them in solving personal and community problems.

Nafukho et al. (2005:8), in supporting the relevance of adult distance education in development, acknowledge that adult education is concerned with working with adults to provide them with the education which is essential for their adult lives. They say, however, that as a profession, adult distance education could involve equipping youths who are in the process of growing up with skills and knowledge that will be relevant to their lives. If the majority of adults who are active in the socio-economic development of the country, are not educated, development would lag behind. It means that their capacity to contribute to certain complex issues is limited. Most participants confidently said:

> "*Through adult distance education I have had a salary scale changed for the better followed by promotions to different responsibilities.*"

> "*The social and economic status in the society drastically changed; people in our community consider us as people of the upper class; this includes the people we associate with, and the kind of life. Life is no longer the same.*"

> "*Adult distance learning has awakened and revived the slackened mind. Studying has kept me stay abreast with the latest information required to get along with the latest development and new technologies.*"

In support of the sentiments above, one participant commented that:

> "*I feel good, great, complete and inner satisfaction.*"

Through such personal achievements, individuals are able to contribute to national development. There is a correlation and interdependence between adult distance education and development. For meaningful development to take place, people must be equipped with relevant and appropriate education which should make them productive and self-reliant. Nyerere (2006:27) notes that this type of meaningful and appropriate

education liberates people from constraints and limitations of ignorance and dependence. Furthermore, it facilitates an increase in people's mental freedom to have control over themselves, their own lives and the environment in which they live.

Nyerere (2006:8) further argues that education should therefore be liberating; anything short of that is not education. Thus, educating adults has several advantages where shaping the socio-economic status of the country is concerned. Economic development is directly dependent and centred on adults as they are the ones who spearhead almost all human activities, be it at family, community, national or international level.

In view of teacher proficiency, participants viewed knowledge advancement through adult distance education as follows:

> *"My experience has been that handling of subject matter, and application of teaching methods improved."*

The view above is in line with UNESCO (2014:18) which confirms that education imparts knowledge and skills that enable people to realise their full potential and so it becomes a catalyst for the achievement of other developmental goals. For example, teacher proficiency is measured and is expressed in terms of pupils' academic achievement.

In line with the second objective, it was found that participants greatly had high consideration and respect for adult distance education. This was because many had seen it bearing fruit. Although two of the participants could not give their views, the rest were of the view that distance education was of great value to them. For example, many of the people who had had their qualifications upgraded were either promoted or elevated to positions of authority. In Zambia, for instance, higher remuneration depends on the level of qualification.

Eight of the participants expressed feelings of satisfaction. They seemed to derive satisfaction from experiences of being promoted, whereas for others, the idea of change of a salary scale from a lower to a higher scale provided great satisfaction. However, two of the participants could not ascertain the value of distance education because of the long

time it had taken to have their salaries upgraded and because they had not been promoted.

In the recent past, women in Zambia had little or no education at all due to various factors such as childbearing and caring for the family but the concept of adult distance education has played a major role in ensuring that men and women become equal partners in fostering national development because of acquiring qualifications and improving their education levels. This sounds interesting because, for a long time, women were sidelined in many developmental issues as they were perceived to be home managers only. But the reality is that women have since assumed and held high positions in government departments and ministerial positions. Therefore, more women need to be well equipped with knowledge and skills that can take them to higher heights.

UNESCO (2014:13) notes that the role of adult distance education is to provide adults with the cultural background that will enable them, as far as possible, to make sense of the changes taking place. It is vital to consider the literature by UNESCO since adults have a relevant and important role to play in development. Ongoing education imparts knowledge and skills that enable people to realise their full potential, and so it becomes a catalyst for the achievement of other development goals.

Distance adult learning and education reduces poverty, boosts job opportunities and fosters economic prosperity. It also increases people's chances of leading a healthy life, deepens the foundations of democracy, and changes attitudes to protect the environment and empowers women. Education is a key tool in helping individuals escape poverty and in preventing poverty from being passed down through generations. It enables those in paid formal jobs to earn higher wages and offers better livelihoods for those who work (UNESCO, 2014:13).

Generally, adult education, formal or non-formal, plays a pivotal role in contributing to the development of any country in the world. A good example is the one provided on how investment in education has benefited most of the emerging economies on the Asian continent. This can apply equally to many other countries in the world with African countries not being an exception, Zambia in particular. This is only achievable through

the empowerment of all the citizens with relevant and appropriate education that would motivate them to participate in all aspects of human activities in their environment. But for this to happen, it requires political will and commitment from individuals and those in the corridors of power to bring things to fruition. Anything short of this means that development would remain a political rhetoric without feasible and tangible results being seen.

Similarly, Mwansa (2009:27) elaborates clearly that for any given level of job there is an escalation in minimum qualifications needed. Employers use education qualifications as filters rather than certification of the real competences required for any job. Increased use of formal certificates by employers creates additional demand for school and university qualifications. Mwansa (2009:27) supports the view that adults engage in any learning programme with expectations of improving their living conditions.

According to The Adult Learner (2013:8), adult education has divergent views and importance attached to it. What is cardinal to note are the context and the intentions of the one who is engaged in this kind of learning. For example, the aspect of further and third level education, continuing and training are what adult education entails. It describes priority areas such as the raising of consciousness, competitiveness, cultural development and community building. Additionally, Knowles (1980:87) holds similar views, adding that adult education facilitates structural change in a dynamic society by supporting and maintaining social order, promoting productivity and enhancing personal growth.

4.5 MOTIVATION TO STUDY BY DISTANCE EDUCATION

Most often than not, teachers especially, are motivated to study by distance in order to familiarise themselves with new curriculum content and materials to upgrade their actual instructional skills. Improving teachers' proficiency in the subject matter improves teacher performance and proficiency. According to the MoE (2006:34), teachers need modern teaching strategies to effectively and successfully deliver their lessons. Most teachers have realised the need for self-improvement in terms of upgrading their qualifications

through distance learning due to the realisation of the fact that inadequate qualifications are a factor that can result in poor teacher proficiency and poor learner pass rates.

Productivity and personal growth cannot be over-emphasised especially taking into consideration disadvantaged individuals who at one time could not study, not out of choice but due to circumstances in their lives. In a similar manner, adults who are already in employment but have inadequate qualifications to enable them to compete favourably with others further their education in order to realise their full potential and fulfil their long-harboured ambitions and aspirations.

When asked what motivated them to study by distance, different views came out from the ten participants:

> *"Distance learning is very flexible and thus offers me an opportunity and time to do other things. Besides one continues taking care of the family which is the most important in maintaining family ties."*

> *"For me, personal improvement professionally was all I desired to enable me to meet the ever-changing educational matters and, of course, even for upward movement in terms of remuneration and promotions."*

In line with the responses above, the MoE (1996:115) sees teacher education as a continuing process that must be extended throughout the individual's years of actual teaching. The foundation laid in the pre-service programme may be sound and adequate as a start, but it is not sufficient for life. Ongoing learning enables teachers to be well vested in handling matters of concerns such as improving learner performance and providing teachers with new ideas about how to support weak learners. Teachers who have received in-service training are found to be better than those who have not. If teachers are holistically developed, education will have made a break-through in providing them with a balanced personality which demonstrates inner stability and steadfastness which enables one to make informed decisions MoGE (2009: 53).

The improvement in adult distance learning has resulted in the participation of adult learners in higher education in ever-increasing numbers. Mwansa (2009:27) argues that

upgrading oneself adds prestige to people who become employable in many countries and earn promotions, salary increases and improve their social status. A high teacher morale, relevant subject knowledge and the teacher's specialised or pedagogical skills are central to quality teaching and learning. Table 4.5 below shows the frequency of the responses as to what motivated the participants to study by distance education.

Table 4.5: What motivates adults to study through distance education*?*

Response	Number
Flexibility	3
Cost effectiveness	2
Improve efficiency	5
Total	10

Table 4.5 shows that three of the participants indicated flexibility of adult distance education in terms of studying in one's own time. Two of the participants indicated that the terms of the payment schedule were very affordable and flexible in the sense that payments were made in instalments while five participants said that improvement in teacher efficiency motivated them to study by distance.

4.6 SUPPORT DURING THE COURSE OF STUDY

Despite the fact that many teachers were engaged in distance education, one would be tempted to think that everything took place smoothly. Regardless of adult distance education being a vehicle that provides the type of labour force required for industrial development, economic growth and social transformation, very little attention and support for this kind of education was attached by the Zambian MoE. Yet once completed, the kind of education acquired could develop the capacity of an individual to participate more effectively in the process of change and development within the context of national needs and priorities.

Adult distance education, according to The Adult Learner (2013:67), states that demands on adult distance education students are sometimes problematic as these included footing education bills and balancing time for studies with work and family responsibilities. In addition, adults lack time management skills and lack of confidence in themselves to

help them cope with various responsibilities. Another problem is a loss of motivation due to lack of face-to-face interaction with both lecturers and other students. When participants were asked whether they received any form of support, different views were expressed as shown in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6: Do teachers receive support?

Responses	Number
Study materials provided	7
Timeous feedback	2
No support at all	1
Financially	0
Total	**10**

Table 4.6 represents the responses from the participants. Both teachers and administrators attested to the fact that neither institutions where teachers work nor distance education providers contribute to teachers financially. However, seven teachers stated that modules were prepared and delivered on time by distance education providers, although one participant claimed that delivery of modules was not effective as most distance students suffered delays. Two participants agreed that feedback was also provided as a form of support, but they were quick to state that sometimes it was delayed and, in certain instances, it was not offered at all.

When asked whether support was offered, it was sad to note that one participant claimed not to have received any form of support. All ten participants claimed that financial support was not offered but materials such as modules were readily available. Seven participants claimed that modules were provided and on time. One participant stated:

> *"Financially, it has not been so easy the road to pass, despite providing the knowledge to us adult learners; the government does not consider support to us studying on distance. But modules were supplied and on time."*

The lack of financial support was seen as a hindrance to high mastery of skill and completion of the course at a specified time. This also contributed to a high dropout rate from the course because adult learners require support in some way to mitigate the

financial constraints they suffer. However, information gathered from the interviews showed that other forms of support were offered, such as timeous feedback and learning materials that were well written and extensive. One participant stated:

> *"Most adult education providers attach importance to learning materials. The modules are good, simplified and well guided."*

In line with the research question above, Ibrahim (2006:31) points out that any form of support offered to adult distance students is cardinal. He further asserts that it is the duty of any successful institution to meet the needs of adult students to constantly improve the quality of the educational content. Failure to do so will affect students' success.

Melton (2002:13) attests to the fact that delivery of study materials to adult students is key in any successful institution. It ensures two-way communication between the distance student and the institution and serves as an integral and effective tool that leads to satisfaction. It ensures understanding when the message is passed on.

4.7 CHALLENGES THAT AFFECT ADULT DISTANCE STUDENTS

Although adult distance learning offers flexibility and convenience among other things, it is not without challenges, as evidenced from the literature review. The challenges indicated by the participants were discussed in line with the literature in order to establish the information gap that exists pertaining to distance education. To begin with, one of the participants had this to say:

> *"It's quite challenging in the sense that I could reach a point where I felt I could no longer contain the pressure from various aspects of life; it was difficult to pay for tuition, more so dividing the work schedule, family and studying."*

Table 4.7 below shows the responses from the participants which were grouped into themes.

Table 4.7: Responses to the challenges

Responses	Number
Lack of financial support	3

Responses	Number
Lack of feedback	3
Demanding work	2
Inadequate study materials	1
Time management	1
Total	**10**

Objective 4 aimed at finding out the problems that affect adult distance students. Despite distance learning transforming people's lives, participants shed light on some challenges which affected and hampered their progress. Some of the challenges came from the individual students, while other challenges emanated from the institutions offering the courses but if there was good planning and coordination, the challenges could be managed.

From Table 4.7 above, it is clear that lack of financial support and inadequate feedback accounted for some of the challenges three distance students faced. A demanding work schedule was mentioned by two participants whereas inadequate study materials and time management were mentioned by one each.

To this effect, one participant alluded to this fact and clearly pointed out that:

> *"One of the challenges among many that I can point out is that of inadequate study materials, at times distributed late for a particular course. This has made it difficult for me to write assignments as well as study for examinations. As a result, the grades are generally bad for us doing programmes through distance. The common grades are C, C+ and B"*.

This challenge brought out by one of the participants is in line with Mani (1994:40) who attests that inadequate study materials pose a great challenge to those pursuing various programmes through distance learning. These are challenges mainly attributed to institutions offering distance education. Mani (1994:39) points out lack of support for adult learners during the course of study, of which some are library facilities and lack of appropriate study materials and the lack of timely feedback to learners. Similarly, another participant had this to say:

"*It is very difficult to access materials through internet technology and in some places where some of us come from, there are no such facilities hence we have to travel to Boma areas in order to access these facilities.*"

Galusha (1998: 21) affirms that adult distance learning is a cost-intensive business in terms of start-up capital. This can be prohibitive, as computers and servers must be bought and networks must be established. Ongoing support for technical assistance services and continual software upgrades are expensive as these result in higher costs that are passed on to adult learners in the form of additional fees. Consequently, the cost can hinder participation in learning. According to Yap (1996:12), the availability of proper equipment for offering courses at a distance poses another challenge. Instead of reducing the costs of education, the equipment involved with information technology and distance learning actually increases it. Lack of the latest technology in terms of equipment and infrastructure for distance learning education is especially prevalent in highly underprivileged areas. One participant had this to say:

"*Adult distance learning comes with its own challenges such as lack of adequate contact sessions with lecturers, some lecturers are not supportive, difficult to divide study and work time, family responsibilities affect academic work and it is also difficult to get permission from work.*"

The most difficult part as perceived by Hannay and Newvine (2006:7) are problems faced by adults in comprehending technical, qualitative and scientifically oriented courses. No matter how much they may communicate with others by phone, email and discussions in board/chat room, it is never the same feeling when students come face-to-face with a lecturer. Thus, students who are uncomfortable with their reading and writing skills find themselves equally uncomfortable with their distance learning courses. Similarly, some students feel lonely without face-to-face contact with other learners (O'Lawrence, 2006:47).

For instance, Zirke (2003:17) categorises barriers to distance learning as technical relating to access to technology; structural involving budgeting, training and technical support; and attitudinal including reluctance to use of technological equipment. Research

by Cross (1984:16) and Zirke (2001:21) attributes challenges to institutional and learners' barriers to learning. In the same vein, Cross (1984:16) add situational and dispositional challenges as factors which hamper progress. Dispositional challenges are traits or psychological characteristics of adult learning or learner attitudes and self-perceptions. For example, stress and anxiety are personal blocks that hinder the learning process. The end result is anxiety which would cause fear of failing, a characteristic common among adult learners.

Barriers to accessing distance education by the student have been attributed to factors such as costs and motivators, lack of feedback and teacher contact, alienation and isolation and technological aspects (Galusha, 1998:7). Lack of feedback to learners can lead to alienation and isolation as it is a well-known fact that adult learners want to be part of the larger school community. The perception of isolation persists, according to Zirke (2002:28), because students would perceive themselves as less important compared to their on-campus counterparts. Apart from that, Zirke (2003:22) posits that adult learners are affected by the time they have to spend at their jobs as well as family relationships, time constraints and financial issues.

4.7 OVERCOMING CHALLENGES

All 10 participants attested to the fact that distance learning requires total commitment, huge sacrifices, proper time management, dedication and perseverance to achieve success. This is clearly seen from the responses in Table 4.8 below; for example, accessing loans to make payments toward education and working overtime require self-denial of activities which a person would normally engage in on a daily basis.

Table 4.8: How adult distance students overcome challenges

Responses	Number
Accessing loans to finance studies	7
Through making contacts with friends	1
Working extra hours	2
Making use of the internet	0
Total	**10**

From Table 4.8, it is evident that the main solution for teachers to overcome financial challenges related to studies was through accessing loans from the banks. Other challenges were overcome through working extra hours and making contacts with friends. Finances posed a big challenge to adult learners as concentration and performance were compromised because they tended to be worried about where the next tuition fee would come from. Families too were affected with resources to meet the demands at home. When asked how adult students mitigate the challenges, one participant said that:

> *"If it were not for the lending institutions available, I think I would not have managed to complete my studies."*

One other participant had this to say:

> *"It was just through determination, endurance and hardworking that made me to pull through."*

Poor socio-economic status among adult students in Zambia is a factor that affects academic performance. Due to their poor economic status, adult students are compelled to apply for loans. It is a phenomenon that affects performance because the basic needs remain unfulfilled and contribute to low self-esteem among individuals. As observed in the Global Education Conference (2013:2), colleges and universities should pay particular attention to what happens in adult learning. Teaching and learning resources are a priority for any meaningful education to take place. Failure to provide these result in low morale and frustration. This would adversely affect performance. Maslow (1968:112) argues that if the needs are not satisfied, the drive diminishes.

4.7.1 Document Review

The document review showed that teachers who upgrade their academic qualifications significantly improve learner performance. This is in line with MoE (1996:15) which emphasises ongoing learning as a continuous process that must be extended throughout the individual's years of actual teaching.

Table 4.9 below shows how results in a particular subject improved:

Table 4.9: Results analysis

Yr	Dist		Merit		Credit		Pass		Fail	No Entered	Pass Percentage	
											Quantity	Quality
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8				
2014			7	9	7	20	55	74	103	270	40	10
2015	14	15	41	16	22	15	25	25	70	343	50	25
2016	22	25	65	23	34	25	30	34	68	364	71	38

Table 4.9 shows that learners' performance improved tremendously after teachers upgraded their qualifications. For instance, the results for three consecutive years improved year by year. Therefore, it can be concluded that ongoing learning enables teachers to be well vested in handling matters of concern such as improving learner performance. The MoGE (2009:53) states that it provides teachers with new ideas about how to support weak learners because teachers who have received in-service training are found to be better than those who have not. If teachers are holistically developed, education will have made a break-through in providing them a balanced personality, which demonstrates inner stability and steadfastness which enables one to make informed decision. In Zambia, quality pass is rated from Distinction to Merit, whereas quantity pass is from Distinction to a pass mark respectively

4.8 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter presented and discussed the findings from the data. The discussion was based on the objectives of the study and the research questions. The discussion also referred to the literature reviewed for the study. The chapter discussed how much the participants understood the meaning of adult education, their attitude and perception of its relevance to development. The salient issues discussed in the chapter included the disagreements regarding the meaning of the concept of adult education, the value people attach to adult education in relation to development, challenges and efforts. The study found that participants were unable to provide a single definition for adult education because they all saw it differently.

Furthermore, the study reviewed the results over three years. The document gave more insight on the importance of adult distance learning.

The study further revealed that participants had challenges in defining adult distance education. It also revealed that the participants appreciated the impact and relevance of adult distance education on development at household, community and national levels. The majority of the participants were in full support of adult education because of the role it plays in development, provision of opportunities for individual growth and acquisition of knowledge and skills. The next chapter provides a summary of the study, draws conclusions and makes recommendations.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, a summary of the findings of the study is presented. The chapter presents the conclusions drawn from the literature and the results and the recommendations which were made based on the findings of the study. The chapter also provides recommendations for future research.

5.2 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS FROM THE LITERATURE

Findings from the literature review revealed that any form of support relating to the learning of adult distance students is cardinal (Chapter 2, s.2.2.1). In this regard, it was revealed that prompt feedback and material, moral, mutual and financial support are the most obvious means which could assist an adult learner to actualise his/her full potential and to realise his/her aspirations. Hence, such an atmosphere is a motivating factor toward completion of qualifications.

Other facts which were obtained from the literature were the benefits with which adult distance learning is associated (Chapter 2, s.2.3). It was affirmed that education plays a pivotal role in human emancipation and contributes towards the economic gains of the country. Above all, it was shown that knowledge is dynamic not static; therefore, acquiring new information promotes change in response to the needs and expectations of society. It is the main reason why teachers engage in upgrading their levels of education to improve themselves in matters such as subject content, pedagogical approach, and to enhance their workplace skills and capabilities.

Despite adult distance education being an equaliser in all areas of human endeavours, literature revealed that adult distance students faced various challenges (Chapter 2, s.2.4). Among the challenges identified were the lack of prompt feedback and the high cost of learning. Adults also suffer from coping with increasing demands at work. More

so, adult students are affected because of the different roles they assume in life which conflict with their learning aspirations.

5.2.1 Understanding Adult Distance Education

There have been different lines of thought regarding the understanding of adult distance education, especially in Zambia. Some years back it used to be associated with literacy training which was then known to include reading and writing only. From the literature, adult distance education could be understood as the provision of formal education to individuals who are regarded as adults by their society in order to improve their technical or professional qualifications, with or without face-to-face contact with lecturers.

5.2.2 The Definition of an Adult Learner

From the literature, (Chapter 1, s.1.10) an adult is regarded as someone who has assumed various responsibilities in the society and is independent. An adult would either be in employment or in a business venture, with different roles such as taking care of a family. Depending on different societies, adulthood is perceived differently. In some societies, it comes as early as at the age of 16, but in the Zambian context, one attains adulthood at the age of 18 and is eligible to participate in political affairs. At this age, most often, one would be at a tertiary institution of learning.

5.2.3 Benefits of Adult Distance Education

Literature (Chapter 2, s.2.3), extensively revealed that the economic development of any country largely depends on adults who would have acquired their education either through distance education or other means. An educated citizenry is a viable vehicle for transforming the country's economy. Secondly, professional development through distance learning assures effective and capable teachers as they acquire a high level of mastery of the content and skills necessary for the classroom situation.

5.2.4 Motivation to Study by Distance Education

Ideally, the drive to study via distance comes from the inner conviction to keep abreast of the latest knowledge required for one to participate equitably in decision-making and

planning for their country. Other than that, distance learning offers working adults an opportunity to upgrade themselves while working.

5.2.5 Challenges of Adult Distance Education

The MoE (2006:12) attests to the fact that students in tertiary education are encouraged to develop skills in critical thinking as a means through which they can develop a better understanding of what constitutes learning and by consequence, their understanding of self. It is an acknowledgement of the importance of putting newly acquired skills into practice to reinforce learning. Despite adult distance education being an equaliser in all areas of human endeavour, literature revealed that adult distance students faced various challenges (Chapter 2, s,2.4). Among other challenges stated were lack of prompt feedback, for example, providing feedback at an appropriate time enables students to evaluate their performance. It is a sure form of communication that bridges the gap between the adult student and the lecturer. The literature (Chapter 2, s,2.3) also revealed that the high cost towards tuition is a prohibiting factor to many adults toward undertaking studies.

Furthermore, another important point raised was that of the difficulties faced in applying technology in their studies (Chapter 2, s.2.2.6). For instance, adults may find difficulties in logging into video conferences or internet courses and would thus be unable to obtain the required help. The different roles adults assume in life also conflict with their learning aspirations. Adult learners struggle to cope with the increasing demands at work and simultaneously complete their course assignments. This consequently makes distance students more liable to failure, dropping out and poor performance.

5.3 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS FROM THE INTERVIEWS

The findings from the participants' responses were that adult students suffered considerable pressure in financing their studies and had inadequate time to concentrate on their academic work due to the demands of their jobs chapter. However, the study revealed that the only support which was appropriately provided was adequate study materials(Chapter 2, s.2.3).

To understand the impact of adult distance learning on teachers' quality of work, the study revealed that after teachers had upgraded their levels of professional qualification, (Chapter 4, s.4.5), they improved their competency in handling education matters.

Regarding the challenges which affect adult distance students during the course of their studies, (Chapter 4, s,4.7) it was discovered that adult distance students were faced with challenges ranging from inadequate support, lack of adequate time for studies, lack of timeous feedback and financial constraints.

5.3.1 The Understanding of Adult Distance Education

Generally, the findings indicated that the concept of adult distance education was well understood by the participants. This was evidenced by a number of responses which indicated good knowledge of the concept (Chapter 4 s.4.3). What was interesting was that it was not mistaken for full-time learning.

5.3.2 The Definition of Adult Learner

Lack of clarity on who is an adult still exists among many people (Chapter 4, s.4.5) especially in Zambia. This is because the concept can be defined culturally, politically or biologically. While in some countries such as Zambia, the legal adult age is 18, the scenario differs in countries where the adult age starts at 21.

5.3.3 The Value of Adult Distance Education

Half of the participants attached high value to education in the sense that education imparts knowledge and skills that enable people to realise their full potential (Chapter 4, s.4.5). It is a catalyst for the achievement of other developmental goals. The other gain is that it equips teachers to be more proficient in handling classroom matters.

5.3.4 Motivation to Study through Distance Education

The underlying factor which contributes to why teachers opt to study via distance education is that participants view teacher education as a continuing process which must be extended throughout the individual's years of actual teaching. The foundation laid in the pre-service programme may be sound and adequate as a start, but it is not sufficient

for life. Ongoing learning enables teachers to be well vested in handling matters of concern such as improving learner performance (Chapter 2, s.2.2). It also provides teachers with new ideas about how to support weak learners. Lastly, to some teachers, the flexibility aspect was the driving factor for studying through distance learning.

5.3.5 Challenges of Adult Distance Education and How to Overcome Them

It was evident that a lack of financial support and inadequate feedback accounted for many of the challenges which distance students faced during their studies (Chapter 2, s.2.2). Other responses were distributed around demanding work schedules while inadequate study materials and time management were not so problematic.

Lastly, access to loans to finance their studies was the main way which a large number of participants gave as the means for financing their studies. Participants revealed that this challenge was also overcome through working extra hours.

5.4 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study was limited by the following challenges:

- Financial constraints: Due to financial constraints, the researcher took a case study of one school, instead of many schools. This was to enable the researcher to operate on a limited amount of money from her own resources.
- Busy school calendar: The study was conducted during the busy school term which made it difficult to spend more time on the research study. Thus, as a case study, involving only one school, the findings cannot be generalised to other situations.

5.5 CONCLUSIONS

In accordance with the findings of this study, pertinent among other issues, is the fact that adult distance students must be considered to be equal partners in development because competent and committed teachers are needed for societal and national development. Well trained teachers are cardinal to every society because they help mould the nation.

5.6 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE STUDY

The following recommendations are made:

- The MOE should consider upgrading and changing the salary scales immediately someone completes his/her education regardless of the mode of learning. This would cushion the expenses, thereby motivating other teachers to improve their qualifications.

- Institutions providing adult distance education should consider improving the provision of timeous feedback to learners to ensure that a two-way communication is maintained and sustained.

- A clear definition of adult education should be formulated because the current one is confusing, wide and misleading.

- The title "adult distance education" should be changed to "open distance education". This would be more encompassing because distance education is done by people of all age groups.

- The government through the MoGE should consider widening opportunities to offer financial support through loan schemes to distance learning students to encourage many teachers who might have difficulties in meeting payment costs due to family pressures and the high cost of living.

- The MoGE at district level should have a deliberate policy to upskill Distance Education Standards Officers to help in the coordination and strengthening of the links between the pursuance of distance education and the ministry.

- Adult distance learning should be expanded in such a way that even people who missed out on learning opportunities when they were young can have access to education. For example, all levels of education should be open to distance learning whether at the primary, secondary or even at the initial level of education such as literacy levels.

- The MoGE should consider intensifying coordination and monitoring of all institutions providing distance education so as to ensure that standards, uniformity in delivery and content of materials in the institutions are upheld.

- The MoGE should streamline adult education.

5.7 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

It is recommended that:

- A study be undertaken on the misunderstandings about who an adult is.
- Because there is a clear indication that the different views of the meaning of the concept 'adult education' is a problem, this calls for more research about the concept.
- There is a clear indication that the different views of the meaning of the concept adult education is not only a problem here in Zambia but a phenomenon that affects other parts of the world. It therefore calls for more research of this nature to ascertain the gravity of the problem world over.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: ETHICS APPROVAL FORM

UNISA | university of south africa

UNISA COLLEGE OF EDUCATION ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

Date: 2017/09/13

Dear Mrs Mwiya

Decision: Ethics Approval from 2017/0p/13 to 2020/09/13

Ref: **2017/09/13/53455363/14/MC**
Name: Mrs LN Mwiya
Student: 53455363

Researcher:

Name: Mrs LN Mwiya
Email: mwiyanamatama@gmail.com
Telephone: 0978879802 / 0968879802

Supervisor:

Name: Prof K Quan-Baffour
Email: quanbkp@unisa.ac.za
Telephone: 012 484 2808

Title of research:

Impact of adult distance learning among teachers: A case study of Katete Day secondary school, Zambia

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Qualification: M Ed in Adult Education

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the UNISA College of Education Ethics Review Committee for the above mentioned research. Ethics approval is granted for the period 2017/08/16 to 2020/08/16.

The low risk application was reviewed by the Ethics Review Committee on 2017/09/13 in compliance with the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics and the Standard Operating Procedure on Research Ethics Risk Assessment.

The proposed research may now commence with the provisions that:

The proposed research may now commence with the provisions that:

1. The researcher(s) will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.

2. Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study should be communicated in writing to the UNISA College of Education Ethics Review Committee.

3. The researcher(s) will conduct the study according to the methods and procedures set out in the approved application.

4. Any changes that can affect the study-related risks for the research participants, particularly in terms of assurances made with regards to the protection of participants' privacy and the confidentiality of the data, should be reported to the Committee in writing.

5. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to any applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study. Adherence to the following South African legislation is important, if applicable: Protection of Personal Information Act, no 4 of 2013; Children's act no 38 of 2005 and the National Health Act, no 61 of 2003.

6. Only de-identified research data may be used for secondary research purposes in future on condition that the research objectives are similar to those of the original research. Secondary use of identifiable human research data requires additional ethics clearance.

7. No field work activities may continue after the expiry date 2022/08/15. Submission of a completed research ethics progress report will constitute an application for renewal of Ethics Research Committee approval.

Note:

The reference number **2017/08/16/30557992/11/MC** should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication with the intended research participants, as well as with the Committee.

Kind regards,

Dr M Claassens

CHAIRPERSON: CEDU RERC
mcdtc@netactive.co.za

Prof V McKay

EXECUTIVE DEAN

Approved - decision template – updated 16 Feb 2017

APPENDIX B: PERMISSION FROM THE PRINCIPAL OF THE SCHOOL TO CONDUCT THE STUDY

University of South Africa

P. Box 0003

SOUTH AFRICA.

12th June, 2018

The Headteacher

Katete Day Secondary School

P.O Box 550037

KATETE

EASTERN PROVINCE

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A SEMI-SRUCTURED INTERVIEW FOR A DISSERTATION PURPOSE

I am a student at the University of South Africa and am presently registered for a dissertation which forms part of the structured master's degree in adult education. I would like to conduct an interview with 8 members of staff. The study is on the "Impact of Adult Distance Learning on Teachers". A Case Study at Katete Day Secondary School.

Note here that the names of the participants remains confidential and that participation is voluntary and can be terminated without penalty. Any information collected from here will entirely be towards academic award and that any information will not be published.

Thanking you in anticipation.

Mwiya Namatama Loveness

APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

1. What do you understand by the term adult distance learning?

2. Who is an adult learner?

3. In your own opinion, does teacher proficiency improve after undertaking an adult distance-learning programme?

4. What has been the most beneficial aspect of your adult distance-learning programme?

5. What do you think motivates teachers to go the distance way?

6. What form of support do teachers receive during the course of study from both their workplaces and the institutions at where they pursue their studies?

7. How effective is the support provided to adult distance education students?

8. What challenges do adult distance teachers encounter during the period of pursuing their studies?

9. How do adult distance learners overcome the challenges they encounter?

10. What suggestions can you give to alleviate the challenges faced by adult distance students?

11. What do you suggest to the Ministry of Education and the distance institutions to improve the programmes offered to students?

APPENDIX D: CONFIRMATION LETTER OF EDIT

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Declaration of professional edit

IMPACT OF ADULT DISTANCE LEARNING ON TEACHERS: A CASE STUDY OF KATETE DAY SECONDARY SCHOOL, ZAMBIA
BY
MWIYA NAMATAMA LOVENESS

I declare that I have edited and proofread this thesis. My involvement was restricted to language usage and spelling, completeness and consistency, referencing style and formatting of headings, captions and Tables of Contents. I did no structural re-writing of the content.

I am qualified to have done such editing, being in possession of a Bachelor's degree with a major in English, having taught English to matriculation, and having a Certificate in Copy Editing from the University of Cape Town. I have edited more than 100 Masters and Doctoral theses, as well as articles, books and reports.

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Sincerely,

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