

**EXPLORING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE INITIAL PRIMARY
TEACHER EDUCATION-OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING (IPTE-ODL)
PROGRAMME IN MALAWI: THE CASE OF LILONGWE RURAL WEST.**

M.Ed. (POLICY, PLANNING AND LEADERSHIP) THESIS

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**UNIVERSITY OF MALAWI
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Master of Education (Policy, Planning and Leadership) Thesis

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August, 2017

DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that this thesis is my own original work that has not been submitted to any other institution for similar purposes. Where other people's work has been used, acknowledgments have been made.

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CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my grandmother, Rosemary Ronaldson, my Mother, Cecilia Karim, my husband, Charles and our children, Qabaniso and Ryan. I love you all.

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to examine the effectiveness of the Initial Primary Teacher Education - Open and Distance Learning (IPTE-ODL) programme that Malawi introduced in 2010 in order to address the critical shortage of teachers in rural primary schools. The programme was envisaged as the most cost effective method of training huge numbers of teachers within a limited period. The study used qualitative case study design with purposively selected respondents. A sample of 34 participants was used. Data was generated through interviews, lesson observations and document analysis and four IPTE-ODL teachers were observed teaching. Data generated was compiled into readable texts. Themes and patterns were generated and were further clued-up to the Kirkpatrick's four-level conceptual framework and presented descriptively. Seven indicators were used and these were; objectives of the IPTE-ODL programme, completion rate, retention rate, perceptions, teacher performance, professional support and challenges. The study findings revealed that the IPTE-ODL programme is an effective teacher-training programme as the teachers trained through it, are able to transfer knowledge to their students. The programme is also cost-effective as it is able to train more and quality teachers within a short period. The study, however, noted that inadequate orientation period, lack of support and resources were negatively affecting its success. The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, therefore, should critically look into these areas and address them all.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ADEA	Association for the Development of Education in Africa
DAPP	Development Aid from People to People
DEM	District Education Manager
DTED	Department of Teacher Education and Development
EFA	Education for All
IPTE	Initial Primary Teacher Education
FPE	Free Primary Education
MANEB	Malawi National Examination Board
MASTEP	Malawi Special Distance Teacher Education Programme
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MGDS	Malawi Growth and Development Strategy
MIITEP	Malawi Integrated In-Service Teacher Education Programme
MoEST	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
MUKA	Mafunzuya Ualimu Kazini Kufikia Daraja ‘A’ (‘Upgrading programme for Grade B and C Teachers to Grade A’)
MSCE	Malawi School Certificate of Education
NESP	National Education Sector Plan
ODL	Open and Distance Learning
PEA	Primary Education Advisor
TDC	Teacher Development Centre
TTC	Teacher Training College
UPE	Universal Primary Education
ZINTEC	Zimbabwe Integrated Teacher Education Course

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Chapter overview

This chapter presents brief background information on Open and Distance Learning (ODL) in teacher education. The chapter also describes the statement of the problem and the purpose of the study, which is to examine the effectiveness of ODL in respect of Malawi's Initial Primary Teacher Education (IPTE) programme, which was rolled out in 2010 as a means of providing quality teacher education to primary school teachers in the country. The chapter also outlines research questions, the significance of the study, definitions of key terms commonly featured in this research study as well as limitations of the study.

1.1 Background to the study

Open and Distance Learning (ODL) in teacher education has been used globally for over 40 years and continues to grow to this day (Perraton, 2000). In developed countries such as Britain and America, ODL is used as a means of addressing critical shortage of teachers, which, in their case, is mostly emanating from retirement of most of their teaching workforce (Robinson, 2006). Similarly, in Africa, ODL is being employed to stem a rising demand for teachers instigated by such declarations and instruments as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), Universal Primary Education (UPE), the Education for All (EFA) of 1990 signed at

Jomtien in Thailand, as well as the Dakar Framework of Action signed in Dakar, Senegal in 2000 (UNESCO, 2003).

These declarations and instruments have spurred a sharp increase in pupil enrolment in primary schools, leading to a rise in demand for well-trained and qualified teachers, (Perraton, 2001; Lynd, 2005). They have also tasked countries with providing not just basic education but quality basic education to their citizenry, hence the massive demand for well-trained and qualified teachers, which, unfortunately, cannot be adequately addressed by the conventional, brick-and-mortar mode of training teachers (UNESCO, 2000). For example, in Sub-Saharan Africa only, pupil enrolment sky-rocketed to as high as 72.3 million from 39 million within a decade (UNESCO, 2000) with the figures projected to go as high as 139 million by 2015 (Banks et al., 2007). This means, there will be need for an additional requirement of over 10 million teachers to match the standard pupil: teacher ratios (UNESCO, 2003). These requirements are far beyond the capacity of traditional teachers' colleges in the region where training programmes have been criticized as being too academic, theoretical, ineffective and costly (Lynd, 2005; Banks et al., 2007).

For Africa, this is a crisis, which calls for radical reforms in teacher education (Banks et al., 2007). Countries have been forced to find alternative methods of training their teachers within the limited time and at a minimum cost. It is in this context that African policy makers and educational planners have been paying renewed attention to the potential of ODL as a key strategy in addressing the daunting teacher education challenge. This was further augmented following meetings of the African Ministers of Education in 2004, where governments were

called upon to include ODL in all their national plans and policies (Banks et al., 2007). The ODL mode of training teachers has since emerged as the most viable means that would enable countries to churn out the required large contingent of teachers in the shortest period of time and with limited resources.

Malawi being one of the countries in Africa with dire need of additional teachers has also embraced the ODL mode of training teachers as the country's strategy for meeting the EFA targets in order to address the critical shortage that exploded at the onset of the Free Primary Education (FPE). Specifically, the introduction of FPE in 1994 resulted into a surge in pupil enrolment from 1.9 million to 3.8 million within the very first year of its implementation (Kunje, 2003; MoEST, 2005). This unprecedented growth in enrolment resulted into a huge demand for trained teachers in order to keep pupil: teacher ratios at appropriate levels. In an effort to bridge this gap, the Government of Malawi, through the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST), instituted a number of training programmes, starting with the Malawi Integrated In-Service Teacher Education Programme (MITTEP) (Stuart & Kunje, 2000; Lynd, 2005) in 1995. The MITTEP aimed at training a large number of teachers within a short period. Unfortunately, the programme failed to provide Malawi with the much need-qualified teachers as the programme focused much on access (Kunje, 2003; MoEST, 2008; Rumble, 2011). The Initial Primary Teacher Education (IPTE 1+1) programme thus, replaced the MITTEP in 2005. In 2010, another programme, the Initial Primary Teacher Education through the Open and Distance Learning (IPTE-ODL) was instituted. The aim was to complement the IPTE 1+1 in order to keep up with the ever-increasing enrolment in the primary schools (MoEST, 2008). The ultimate goal of the IPTE-ODL programme was not

only to train and boost the supply of teachers in the shortest period but to also ensure that the trained teachers were of high quality (Stuart & Kunje, 2000; Lynd, 2005).

EMIS (2010) indicate that the pupil: qualified teacher ratio in 2009 was as high as 98:1. The introduction of the IPTE-ODL programme has however, helped to extremely bring down the pupil: qualified teacher ratio to as low as 78:1 (MoEST, 2014). All being equal therefore, it is envisaged that the pupil: qualified teacher ratios will further go down to 60:1 by 2015 as is indicated in the National Education Sector Plan (NESP) of 2008. With such remarkable reduction in pupil: qualified teacher ratio, the IPTE-ODL programme has thus, been established as the best model of training large numbers of teachers within the shortest period.

The IPTE-ODL programme has indeed successfully helped in increasing the number of teachers, more especially, for the rural schools where it is very difficult to retain teachers due to the many hardships associated with living in rural areas (MoEST, 2010). While the increase in number of the teachers trained through this programme may be self-evident and easy to quantify, the effectiveness of such a programme may not be easy to measure (Henard & Rinquet, 2008; UNESCO, 2001; MoEST, 2011). It is for this reason that the researcher wishes to examine the IPTE-ODL programme to establish its effectiveness. According to Brown and Atkins (1988), there are over a hundred indicators used to assess the effectiveness of a training programme, however for this study; only seven indicators will be used. The seven indicators are; objectives of the programme, completion rate, retention rate, perceptions, teacher performance, professional support and challenges.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Shortage of teachers has been a concern in this country since the introduction of FPE and the Ministry of Education has tried to address this problem using different strategies. Both the NESP and ESIP identify ODL, a non-conventional training programme, as one strategy that can effectively train and provide quality and adequate numbers of teachers within a short period and with limited resources. Unfortunately, the use of non-conventional teacher training programmes is under doubt due to the MITTEP experience as outlined above. Additionally, the actual effectiveness of any ODL programme has been questioned due to lack of empirical evidence. In Malawi, there is no literature on the IPTE-ODL programme while, globally, literature on ODL teacher training programme is very limited and scanty as very few studies have been conducted on the subject. Thus, lack of evidence to prove the effectiveness and quality of ODL teacher education programmes has brought about many unanswered questions among key education stakeholders and the IPTE-ODL programme has not been spared. For many, the IPTE-ODL is an ineffective and inferior programme that can only serve to exacerbate the already dwindling quality of education of this country. It is, therefore, for this reason that the researcher decided to conduct a study to examine the effectiveness of the IPTE-ODL programme.

1.3 Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study was to examine the effectiveness of the IPTE-ODL programme in the provision of quality teacher education to primary school teachers in Malawi.

1.4 Research questions

The study was designed to answer one core question; how effective is the IPTE-ODL programme in training primary school teachers in Malawi?

In order to answer this question, six specific guiding questions were used and these were:

- i) Have the objectives of the IPTE-ODL programme been achieved?
- ii) How does the IPTE-ODL teacher feel about the training programme?
- iii) How competent is the IPTE-ODL teacher in transferring knowledge and skills to his/her learners?
- iv) What professional support do the IPTE-ODL student teachers get?
- v) What challenges do the IPTE-ODL teachers face in the course of their training?
- vi) How can IPTE-ODL programme be improved?

1.5 Significance of the study

The study intends to provide policy makers in MoEST as well as other stakeholders, notably, development partners, with important information on what is working and what is not working in the IPTE-ODL programme. This information might help them to come up with informed decisions on whether to abandon the programme, retain it in its current form or modify it in order to make it more effective and therefore formulate a better ODL-based teacher-training programme for the future as envisaged in the NESP and the NSTED, (MoEST, 1998).

It is also hoped that the findings will help other policy makers in and beyond MoEST, notably, the Ministries of Health and Agriculture to learn and possibly

replicate this mode of training in their own training programmes in order to address the critical shortage of personnel that their ministries are grappling with.

Additionally, it is hoped that the research findings will contribute and substantially add onto the scanty literature on ODL programmes in Malawi, thereby, expanding the existing research base on the topic in Malawi and even beyond. In turn, this will be of great benefit to the nation and to the academic fraternity since very little is known about the effectiveness of ODL programmes (Perraton, 2007) and that of the IPTE-ODL programme. Further, the research findings might assist other researchers who may be interested in studying the topic or the programme further.

Lastly, the conclusions, recommendations and suggestions generated from this study might help the distance education practitioners in this country and beyond to come up with better ideas that can assist in improving the design and implementation of distance teacher education. It is believed that some positive outcomes of the programme that may not have necessarily been part of the programme's objectives may be discovered in the course of the research, and once mainstreamed into the programme, may also help in improving its effectiveness which will result in more competent teachers.

1.6 Conceptual Framework

This study will be guided by the Kirkpatrick theoretical framework, which is one of the leading frameworks used in evaluating the effectiveness of training programmes in the world (Basore, 2012). The framework was built around a four-step process of reaction, learning, behaviour, results, and has been used to evaluate various training programme including those in teacher education (Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2009;

Basore, 2012). This framework analyses effectiveness, impact and results of a training programme as well as identifies ways of improving it (Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2009) and as such, it was deemed an ideal framework for analysing the effectiveness of the IPTE-ODL programme.

1.7 Definitions of terms

Teacher Education (TE): It refers to policies and procedures designed to equip prospective teachers with the knowledge, attitudes, behaviours and skills to enable them to effectively perform their tasks in the classroom, school, and the wider community (Gunawardhane, 2011).

Initial Teacher Education (ITE): It is the conventional type of teacher-training education, which often times is residential in nature. According to UNESCO (2002), Initial Teacher Education refers to that part of a teacher's education, preparation and training that leads to fully qualified, licensed or credentialed teacher status within a national or state/provincial system. In other words, it is a stage prior to in-service teacher education, which seeks to enhance teacher quality and performance beyond the professional entry level.

Distance Education (DE): This is an educational process that separates the learner from the instructional base or teacher in either space or time for a significant proportion of his learning (Greenberg, 1998; UNESCO, 2001; Perraton et al., 2002).

Open Learning (OL): This is a philosophy of learning or an organised educational activity based on the principle of flexibility to education and training which make it more accessible, equitable, effective and responsive to individual needs without

being constrained by access, time, place, pace, method of study, or any combination of these (Keegan, 1995; Chikuya, 2007; UNESCO, 2001; Perraton et al., 2002).

Open Distance Learning (ODL): This is an umbrella term for educational approaches that reach teachers in their schools by providing them with learning resources and enabling them to qualify without attending college in person and is designed to minimise barriers to learning in terms of; access, time, place, pace, method of study or curriculum content, and much of the communication between teacher and learner is done through electronic or print media (UNESCO, 2001; Perraton et al., 2002; UNICEF, 2009).

Effectiveness: This refers to the degree to which objectives are achieved and the extent to which targeted problems are solved or the degree to which something is successful in producing a desired result (Harvey, 2004).

Teacher Effectiveness: This is defined as changes that take place in the knowledge, attitudes, and behaviours of individuals and communities because of teacher involvement (Hunt, 2009).

Cost-effective: This means producing good results without spending a lot of money/ being economical. (Perraton, 2001).

Competencies: These are general descriptions of the behaviour or actions needed to successfully perform within a particular work or context (e.g. job, group of jobs, function, etc.) (Smith & Simpson, 1995).

Teaching competencies: These are an integrated set of personal characteristics, knowledge, skills and attitude that are needed for effective performance in various teaching contexts (Smith & Simpson, 1995).

Mentor: This refers to an experienced teacher who also acts as a model teacher to student teachers or other qualified teachers and he/she inspires and demonstrates lessons to help them to get used to the teaching profession and its culture (Gunawardhane, 2011).

ODL-Field Supervisor: This refers to a senior teacher who is well qualified, has a wealth of experience in the teaching profession, and has been given the responsibility to supervise ODL student teachers (Gunawardhane, 2011).

1.8 Limitations of the study

The main limitations of this study were time and finances. A longitudinal study would have yielded better results as it would have allowed the researcher to discover “sleeping effects” or connections between different events over a long period of time (Cherry, 2015). However, such a study required an enormous amount of time and financial resources, which the researcher did not have.

The researcher was also constrained financially, and this forced her to limit her study sample size to just 34 participants and drew them from one education district. Thus, Lilongwe Rural West was chosen because of its proximity to where the researcher resides and works. The aim was to cut on travel costs due to the limited resource the researcher had. Additionally, the researcher had to use qualitative methodologies that required a small sample that could fit into the limited budget.

Despite all these challenges, the experiences in the field were quiet fulfilling and the sample managed to yield sufficient and worthwhile information for the study.

1.9 Structure of the Thesis

This research report is divided into five chapters with chapter 1 describing the context of the study, the statement of the problem and the purpose of the study. The chapter also outlines the research questions that have guided the research process and explains the significance of the study. The conceptual framework that has guided the analysis of the generated data is also explained in this chapter, so too are the definitions of the commonly used terms and the limitations of the study.

Chapter 2 provides literature review on the concept of effectiveness and on both initial and ODL teacher education programmes in Europe, America, Sub-Saharan Africa and Malawi. The chapter also describes in detail the Kirkpatrick four level training evaluation conceptual framework; a framework that has guided the researcher to make sense of the information that was generated in this study.

Chapter 3 describes the methods used in conducting this study and the reasons for choosing them. Issues of credibility and trustworthiness as well as ethical considerations have also been highlighted in this chapter.

Chapter 4 discusses the research findings through themes. These themes respond to the six research questions of the study and finally, chapter five provides conclusions, implications and recommendations to some key stakeholders. It also provides areas for future research.

1.10 Chapter Summary

The chapter has highlighted the background of both the ODL and IPTE-ODL programmes. Reasons why countries opted for the ODL in their teacher education programmes have also been clearly spelt out, the major one being to address the critical shortage of teachers in schools due to unexpected increase in pupil enrolment or, indeed, retirement of the teaching work force. The chapter has also defined the problem statement and the purpose of conducting the study, namely, that stakeholders have questioned the effectiveness of the IPTE-ODL programme as such the study was conducted to examine its effectiveness and put this question to rest.

Furthermore, the chapter has also outlined the research questions and explained the significance of the study, which is mainly to provide literature on ODL as well as to provide information on which to base the decision on whether to continue with the programme or drop it and on whether it is something that can be replicated in other programmes. Additionally, the Kirkpatrick framework, a conceptual framework guiding the study has been introduced and key terms used in this document have been defined. The chapter has also highlighted limitations of the study, which are; finances and time.

The next chapter will look in detail the literature review of both the initial and ODL teacher education programmes across the continents and their effectiveness as teacher training programmes. The chapter will also discuss the Kirkpatrick four level evaluation framework, which is a guiding framework in the analysis of data generated for this study.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.0 Chapter overview

This chapter presents relevant literature on teacher education in Sub-Saharan Africa and around the world. The chapter begins by looking at the models of teacher education. It also examines the concept of “effectiveness”, which is key to this study as it helps in providing an analytical framework for the study. The chapter also provides an overview of a variety of studies that have been conducted on ODL within the Sub-Saharan African region. Information on the completion rate, professional support and challenges of these ODL programmes has also been explained in this chapter. Teacher education programmes in Malawi, more especially the IPTE-ODL programme, have also been discussed in detail in this chapter. Finally, the Kirkpatrick evaluation model which is a framework guiding this study has also been thoroughly discussed in this chapter.

2.1 Models of Teacher Education

There are three main models used in teacher education, namely, the craft, the reflective and the applied science. According to Gambhir et. al. (2008) the craft model is the oldest model and is widely utilised in practicum courses. A student teacher, in this model, works with an expert teacher and learns by imitating all the

teaching techniques used by the experienced teacher (Wallace, 1991) and the student teacher gains knowledge through observation, instruction, and practice.

The reflective model, on the other hand, is based on the assumption that teachers develop professional competence through reflecting on their own practice other than on tradition or authority (Gambhir et. al, 2008; Wallace, 1991). Teachers in this model develop a deeper understanding of their teaching profession and are able to evaluate themselves on their professional growth. They are also able to decide on their own, what aspects of their teaching they need to improve on.

The last model is called applied science. Applied science model derives its authority from the achievements of empirical science, which is based on the assumption that teaching is a science and can be examined rationally and objectively (Gambhir et. al.2008). In this model, teachers learn to be teachers by being taught research-based theories by experts and are said to be educated when they become proficient enough to apply these theories in practice.

The IPTE-ODL programme has borrowed some elements from each of the three models in order to make it a more effective teacher education programme. In this programme, student teachers are attached to an experienced teacher from whom they learn the art of teaching. The programme also allows the student teacher to reflect on his own practices, apply theories and make changes on elements that he or she feels need improving.

2.2 The Concept of Effectiveness

The word “effectiveness” refers to the extent to which something is successful in producing a desired result or fulfilling its intended purpose or function (Harvey, 2004). It may also mean the extent to which stated objectives are met or achieved (Perraton, 2010). Effectiveness of an education-training programme, according to UNESCO (2007), refers to the degree to which outputs of specific views measure the achievement of specific educational goal or requirements (UNESCO, 2007). Effectiveness in an education-training programme can also be defined as the extent to which such a programme meets its intended purpose (Perraton, 2000), which mostly, is to produce competent teachers as is stated by Palameta et al. (2011).

According to Brown & Atkins (1988), effectiveness of a programme can be best assessed through its own goals. It should, however, be borne in mind that what counts as effective in one context may not be so in another context (Brown & Atkins, 1988) and in most teaching programmes, effectiveness is equated to performance which also has a bearing on quality.

According to MoEST (2008), the ultimate goal of teacher education in Malawi is to train teachers who can competently and effectively teach. Such teachers have the right skills and knowledge and are able to transfer these to the learners under their charge. The best way to assess effectiveness in a teacher-training programme is by using indicators, which, according to Gajda & Jewiss (2004), gauge the degree upon which a programme is progressing. These indicators can measure the programme both quantitatively and qualitatively. This study, will however, use the qualitative indicators as these are in line with the research design of the study which is qualitative.

According to Chalmers (2008), qualitative indicators are associated with observation-based descriptions and are categorised as process indicators and outcome indicators. According to Gadjia & Jewiss (2004), process indicators are those that help to track down the progress of a programme and provide feedback to the programme providers. Outcome indicators on the other hand, provide evidence that the program is making a difference in the lives of the program participants. The indicators are many and they range from objective, design, completion rate, performance, knowledge, skills, attitudes, perceptions, support and many more. The choice of which indicator to use depends on the context of which effectiveness of the programme is being studied as alluded by Brown & Atkins (1988). Such being the case therefore, this study will use objectives, completion rate, learner retention, perceptions, teacher performance, support and challenges to measure the effectiveness of the IPTE-ODL programme. These were assessed using in-depth interviews, observations and documentary analysis within the realm of the Kirkpatrick four-level evaluation model framework.

2.3 Teacher Education: The Global Perspective

Teacher Education is not a new phenomenon although it is not clear in which country it was first used. Records, however, show that Britain and America were among the first countries to embrace teacher education in the 17th Century (Chikuya, 2007). Africa, on the other hand, had its teacher education developed in the 19th Century. The white missionaries brought along with them education and as more Africans were introduced to the white man's education, so did the need for more teachers arise, hence the introduction of teacher education. This section will, therefore, look at teacher education in Britain, America, Sub Saharan Africa and Malawi. Britain and America were chosen because of the influence they have on the

education system of Malawi. For centuries, they have supported Malawi financially and technically. This has resulted into Malawi adopting some elements of their education system into its own system. Sub-Saharan Africa countries, on the other hand, were chosen because of their proximity to Malawi. Also, because their education systems are similar and they share common challenges.

2.3.1 Britain

As already alluded to, Britain started teacher education in the 17th Century (Chikuya, 2007) and this was done informally as a family business with student teachers being trained as apprentices. Knowledge was passed on from one generation to the other by word of mouth and other interpersonal means of communication. Christian churches took up teacher education later in the century. They aimed at drilling senior pupils who were class monitors in some elementary facts or words so that they could teach the parishioners to read the Bible (Gillard, 2009). The issue of effectiveness in this age was of no significance but what comes out clear is the fact that the objectives of both these training programmes were met as is noticed in the performance of both senior learners and the parishioners. The senior learners were able to effectively teach the parishioners to read the Bible.

In 1846, Britain decided to change its system of training teachers. According to Chitty (2002), bright elementary pupils aged thirteen, were identified and apprenticed to the headmaster programme for a term of five year, after which they were recognised as well-qualified teachers. They were however, not given a certificate despite being able to competently teach at elementary level. A three-year residential teacher-training programme later replaced this programme. Under this programme, bright elementary pupils were identified and trained to teach on the job

through classroom observation and practical experience done under the supervision and instruction of the head teacher of their school (Chitty, 2002; Robinson, 2006). According to Robinson (2006), Her Majesty's Inspectors examined these pupil-teachers annually and monitored them regularly. Their performance and progress in their academic and professional knowledge were recognised and the best students were thus, awarded the Queens scholarship to attend residential training colleges and acquire full certificated status.

By conducting annual examinations, monitoring regularly and providing scholarships to the pupil-teachers, the programme tried to address the issues of effectiveness and quality. Using performance as an indicator, it can therefore, be concluded that this programme was effective as it managed to train and provide the society with quality and skilled teachers that could effectively teach in elementary schools. The certification also attested to the fact that these teachers were qualified enough to teach in elementary schools since they had gained both professional knowledge and skills to teach at that level.

In 1882, the pupil-teacher system was modernised with the aim of enhancing academic standards within the teaching profession. Designated centres were introduced and established as a form of higher education requiring the completion of secondary school education. The pupil-teacher system was replaced by the bursar system. According to Chitty (2002), under this system, an aspiring teacher attended school until the age of 17 or 18 years and later proceeded to a teacher-training college or became a student teacher at a public elementary school. The student teacher spent half the time in actual practice in an elementary school and studied in a secondary school during the other half. While the effectiveness of these three

programmes may not have been established, the fact that these student-teachers spent half their training period practising teaching and were assessed, recognised and given certificates upon successful completion of the training, attests to the effectiveness of the programmes in as far as meeting the objectives of the training programme, the knowledge gained and provision of professional support was concerned.

In 1890, teacher-education took another dimension as it started being offered through universities (Gillard, 2009). Through the Local Education Authorities (LEAs), which were established in 1902, universities started to offer a four-year programme in which the final year was dedicated to teacher education (Robinson, 2006; Gillard, 2009). Thus, the student teachers were rigorously trained in both content and practice. They were effectively provided with a lot of professional support. As such teacher- education in Britain in this era became more standardised, very high and effective (Chitty 2002; Robinson 2006; Gillard 2009).

2.3.2 America

America, unlike Britain, introduced teacher education after 1755 (Nasseh, 1997). Prior to that, teaching was done in an ad-hoc and voluntary basis. Parents, preachers, master craftsmen, association leaders, adults in the neighbourhood, itinerant tutors, private contractors, town officials, corporate employees or college professors were all teachers (Labaree, 2008; Chitty, 2002). In 1830 as more schools opened, so did the demand for more teachers with high qualification, arise (Nasseh, 1997; Chitty, 2002). Summer teacher institutes were established to offer on-the-job trainings in both pedagogy and subject matter. These trainings took a period of one to eight

weeks and a professional training certificate was issued upon successfully completion of the training, (Labaree, 2008).

According to Labaree (2008), the objective of this programme was to produce more teachers who were professionally skilled. Unfortunately, when trying to fill the classroom with the much-needed teachers, issues of quality and effectiveness did not prominently feature in the programme resulting in a conflict between effectiveness and quality on one hand and quantity, on the other. Ultimately, quantity prevailed over effectiveness and quality, rendering the programme ineffective with most teachers going to teach having received less rigorous training and, therefore, professionally weak.

Like their counterparts in Britain, the Americans also started demanding quality education and pressure started mounting on their policy makers to provide them with university education. In 1950, the government started the process of converting some schools into teachers' colleges and, eventually, by 1970s, into state universities. These state universities focused much on the preparation of a much smaller number of high school teachers, school administrators and educational researchers. This was an extreme departure from the objective of the normal schools, which was to expand the education system by preparing a large number of teachers.

The other deviation in the objective was that with the universities, more men than women were enrolled. This situation was quite different from the situation in the normal schools where more women were being enrolled. Other than training just a small number and less women, this university teacher training programme proved to have been more effective and made teacher education to become more prestigious

(Labaree, 2008). According to Labaree (2008), these teachers, mastered content and the teaching pedagogy since professionally, they were well supported. All this, therefore, signifies the effectiveness of the American university teacher education programmes.

2.3.3 Sub-Saharan Africa

In the Sub-Saharan Africa, teacher education started way back before colonisation. According to Major & Tiro (2012), groups of elders were identified and given the responsibility of teaching children facts of life and rituals that would help them in their adult life. These elders were trained in content to enable them deliver similar content to their students. As far as Africa is concerned, these training programmes were effective since the elders were able to master the content and pass it on to their students and ever since then, facts of life and rituals have been passed on from generation to generation. These facts and rituals are still alive and being practiced to this day (Major & Tiro, 2012). These statements justify the effectiveness of the programme.

The coming of the White Missionaries to Africa in the 19th century brought about a total different form of education. Mission schools were opened across Africa and Africans were taught to read the scriptures and to write (Banda, 1982). As more schools were opened, the demand for more teachers also increased (Chikuya, 2007). Initially, the missionaries handpicked some of their members within their congregation to help in teaching. The increase in number of schools brought about the need for a more standardised teaching system. Teacher-training institutes were established and these varied from one country to another as well as from one congregation to another. Regardless of the differences in their training programmes,

these mission teacher-training institutions had one similar objective, which was to train teachers who would in turn, teach their congregation to read the scriptures and to write. During this era, effectiveness of a training programme was not considered an issue, as what mattered to the missionaries was whether the objective of the programme was met or not.

According to Banda (1982) and Major & Tiro (2012), the objective of these mission teacher-training programmes was to train adequate numbers of teacher and most of them met this objective. The teachers were drilled in content, they in turn were able to transfer the knowledge they had to their students, and this therefore denotes the effectiveness of these programme. Unfortunately, these programmes were uncoordinated as each mission grouping was trying to respond to their congregation's objectives (Banda, 1982; Major & Tiro 2012). In order to harmonise the education system in these Sub-Saharan countries, the colonial governments, decided to take over the training of teachers. A curriculum was developed for each mission college to follow and this saw an improvement in the quality of the teacher training and production of quality teachers who could effectively teach.

2.3.4 Teacher Education: The Malawi Perspective

Teacher education in Malawi started sometime back before the white man colonised Africa though not documented. Knowledge was passed on from one generation to the other orally or through the word of mouth and this was done mostly through storytelling. Uncles, aunts, grandparents and village councilors were responsible for passing on knowledge to the young ones.

2.3.4.1 Teacher education in pre-colonial era

As already alluded to, education in Malawi started sometime back before colonisation and since then it has evolved greatly. During the pre-colonial era, trained instructors or village counsellors known as ‘angaliba’ or ‘anankungwi,’ who had specific content of instruction, (Banda, 1982; Kadzera, 2010; Major & Tiro, 2012), taught children informally through initiation ceremonies. Like their other African counterparts, the training these instructors and village counsellors undertook, was significantly effective. This is so because this content they learnt has been passed on from generation to generation to this day. Despite the formal education of the white man, Malawians still pass on facts through initiation ceremonies and other informal settings. The “*angalibas*” and the traditional “counsellors” are still out there in the society and people, regardless of their level of education or status, still use them despite the presence of well-trained and skilled personnel to do similar work. This, therefore, proves the effectiveness of the training of these “*angalibas*” and “counsellors”. The knowledge and skills they gained continue to be passed on from generation to generation and is being enjoyed and supported by all Malawians regardless of their status even in this new era.

2.3.4.2 Teacher education in the colonial era

The white missionaries introduced formal teacher education to Malawi in the 19th century with the objective of training local people who would in turn provide elementary education to other locals. Overton Institute, which was established in 1894 at Cape Maclear in Mangochi in the southern region of Malawi, was the first teacher education institute in the country and was opened under the guidance of Dr. Robert Laws of the Free Church of Scotland (Banda, 1982; MoEST, 2008; Mtika, 2008). It offered a three-year training programme spread over a period of seven

years and the teachers graduated as either vernacular grade or English grade teachers, (Banda, 1982; MoEST, 2008).

The second group of missionaries to establish a teacher training college was that of the Livingstonia Mission who opened their teacher training college at Khondowe in the northern region of Malawi in 1895. The Universities Mission to Central Africa (UMCA) followed suit in 1899 by establishing St. Michael's Teachers' Training School at Malindi in Mangochi. The college offered a T4 certificate, which was awarded to a teacher who had a primary school qualification. In 1902, the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) opened their own teacher-training school for both teachers and evangelists at a place called Mvera in Dowa. This training school was later, moved to Nkhoma in Lilongwe district and was renamed William Murray's Teachers' Training College. In 1903, the White Fathers of the Roman Catholic Church (RCC) also opened a number of teacher training schools in some of their stations.

From all these programmes, the most prominent and significant one was that of the Blantyre Mission offered by Henry Henderson Institute (HHI) from 1908. Teachers at HHI were trained through a programme of supervised apprenticeship called "mentorship" (Banda, 1982; MoEST, 2008). These teachers were graded as vernacular grade teachers for elementary village schools as well as schoolmaster's certificate teachers who were also known as English Grade Teachers. Those that failed to pass the teachers' examination to obtain the master's certificate were awarded an acting teacher probationer's certificate (Anglo-vernacular). The institute also organised a two-month in-service training course each year for all teachers for the purposes of upgrading and enhancing their professional development and

growth. According to Banda (1982) and Chiziwa (2013), this was the most organized and coordinated teacher-training programme that the missionaries ever established in this country.

Literature, however, reveals that there was lack of coordination among these various missionaries and this affected the training programmes they offered. Additionally, these various teacher training schools had very little access, if any, to information and good practice. The result was low standards of education (Chiziwa, 2013). According to Banda (1982), in 1927, the Department of Education conducted an assessment on 4,000 mission-trained teachers and only 319 of them succeeded and were deemed suitable for the award of the Third Grade Certificate. This represented about 8% pass rate, meaning that the programmes that were offered by these missionaries were substandard and ineffective. Consequently, this forced the colonial government to take over the training of teachers.

Jeannes Training Centre, which opened in Zomba at Domasi in 1929, was the first government teacher college to be opened (MoEST, 2008). A post-school certificate replaced the vernacular grade and the completion of eight years of primary school education was set as minimum entry qualification for teacher training. According to Banda (1982), the first teacher education curriculum was developed in 1959 and between 1960 and 1964 a policy was formulated to emphasise the need for improved teacher quality. In 1962, Soche Hill College was opened and offered teacher education courses for T2 and T3 grades and this has been the basis on which the current teacher-training programmes have been built. The government policy at that time emphasised on quality and effectiveness and as such these programmes can be said to have been effective teacher training programmes.

2.3.4.3 Teacher education in the post-independence era

According to Chiziwa (2013), teacher education in the post-independent era has been characterised by series of shifts which have forced the country to experiment with, at least, 6 different modes of teacher training. These are the 2-year programme, the 1-year crush programme, the Malawi Special Teacher Education Project (MASTEP), the Malawi Integrated Teacher Education Programme (MITTEP), the Initial Primary Teacher Education 1+1 (IPTE 1+1) and the Initial Primary Teacher Education through Open and Distant Learning (IPTE-ODL).

i) The 2- year and the 1-year Teacher Training Programmes

In 1964, a two-year residential programme was introduced and the programme ran until 1986. It awarded teachers with T2 and T3 primary school teacher certificates (Kunje, 2003; MoEST, 2008). According to Chiziwa (2013), this period was the golden period for teacher education in Malawi. The programme was very effective as it produced teachers that could competently teach as well as compete on the African market. Unfortunately, the programme could not produce adequate numbers of teachers and, as such, a number of untrained teachers found their way into the system. This forced the government of Malawi to come up with yet another training programme, the one-year residential crush programme, which was introduced at Domasi TTC in 1987 with the aim of training these unqualified but experienced teachers.

The one-year crush programme ran concurrently with the two-year programme. Since the teachers trained through the one-year crush programme were already in the system, the programme, therefore, did not bring into the system any additional

teachers. Both programmes were however envisaged to be very effective despite having not been evaluated. Thus, according to Banda (1982) and Kunje & Lewin (2000), both programmes produced very skilled, knowledgeable and competent teachers. The education standards of Malawi by then were high and at par with most of the renowned countries in the sub-Saharan Africa (Kunje & Lewin, 2000).

ii) *The Malawi Special Distance Teacher Education Programme (MASTEP)*

At the beginning of 1989, education standards started to deteriorate following a gradual but steady rise in enrolment in primary schools, which resulted in a high demand for teachers whose projection indicated that there would be a shortfall of 7,000 teachers by 1993 (Kunje & Lewin, 2000). In response, Malawi established the MASTEP to address the situation by way of complementing the ‘normal’ two-year programme. The MASTEP was believed to be the most cost-effective option of training more teachers in the shortest time possible due to its ODL characteristics. The main objective of MASTEP was to train 4,500 teachers within a period of 3 years. The programme managed to train 4,300 teachers (Kunje & Lewin, 2000), representing a 96% completion rate thereby achieving its main objective, more or less. The programme had a completion rate of about 96% and a pass rate of 99% (Kunje & Lewin, 2000). Unfortunately, the quality of graduates that MASTEP produced was found wanting, compared to those produced under the two-year programme and the one-year crash programme. Among other contributing factors, was the fact that its educators had not been adequately oriented on the demands of this new programme.

According to Kunje et al. (2003), there were many inconsistencies in the assessment of the MASTEP student teachers by different educators due to lack of an assessment policy (Stuart & Kunje, 2000). Individual tutors would give exercises and tests at their own discretion. Such being the case therefore, tracking of student's progress was very difficult (Stuart & Kunje, 2000) due to non-availability of progress records in most institutions. These intrinsic flaws made people to start questioning the quality and effectiveness of the MASTEP. However, when one uses an achievement of the objective of the MASTEP as the main indicator for assessing its effectiveness, then in that respect, one may conclude that the programme was effective. This is so because 96% of the recruits completed the training and were deployed into various primary schools where they were able to reduce the pupil: teacher ratios to much more manageable ratios. Stuart & Kunje. (2000), on the other hand, believe that MASTEP programme was effective since the MASTEP teachers were professionally supported throughout their trainings by tutors, mentors, senior primary school teachers and Primary Education Advisors (PEAs). But despite the MASTEP teachers getting all this support, their quality could not be favourably compared to that of the 2-year teacher- training programme.

*iii) Malawi Integrated In-Service Teacher Education
Programme (MITTEP)*

As it has already been alluded to, the introduction of the FPE in Malawi in 1994 resulted into an unprecedented surge in enrolment. The enrolment jumped up to as high as 3.8 million from 1.9 million (Kunje, 2003). This increase in enrolment forced MoEST to recruit 18,000 untrained teachers to address the demand created by the FPE, and a special programme, MITTEP, was immediately established in 1995 to train these new recruits. The MITTEP model had a combination of distance and

residential delivery modes starting with a one term residential course, which was followed by five terms of school-based training and, thereafter, a one-month residential block, which culminated into final examinations. The objective of MITTEP was to train the 18,000 out of school youth in teaching within the shortest period possible. At that time, the government was mostly interested in mass production of teachers to address the crisis that had been created by the introduction of FPE. The MITTEP was, thus, designed with the aim of filling the teacher deficit that FPE had created in the system. Despite achieving its objective of training and pumping into the system 18,000 teachers, the issue of quality was, somehow, disregarded in the programme design and this affected the performance of learners in all schools across the country. As such, the programme attracted heavy criticisms from various stakeholders. They all blamed the poor standards of education of this country on the MITTEP programme and was, thus, rated ineffective as a teacher-training programme. The MITTEP was abandoned and replaced with the IPTE 1+1 programme in 2005, specifically, to address the issues of quality.

iv) The Initial Primary Teacher Education (IPTE 1 + 1) programme

The IPTE 1+1 programme comprises of two phases over duration of two years. The first phase is a one-year college-based while the other year is school-based (Rumble, 2011). During the college-based year, students are taught pedagogical skills in the teaching of all the subjects offered at the primary school level while in the school-based year, trainee teachers practice the skills they learnt during the college-based phase and are supported by mentors, PEAs and Head teachers (MoEST, 2008). These IPTE1+1 teachers are well trained in content, imparted with pedagogical skills and are professionally supported.

Unfortunately, no study has been conducted to establish the effectiveness of the IPTE 1+1 programme, however, most stakeholders hold the programme in high esteem and believe that the programme is effective and is producing quality and competent teachers for the education system. Despite these facts and sentiments, the programme cannot train adequate numbers as required by the system, hence the introduction of the IPTE-ODL programme to complement those numbers trained through the IPTE 1+1 programme. The IPTE-ODL programme is a 2½-year programme of which 2 weeks of each year are for college-based orientation and the remaining period are school-based (MoEST,2008; Rumble,2011).

2.4 Concept of Open and Distance Learning (ODL) in Teacher Education

A number of scholars and authors have defined ODL differently. Greenberg, (1998), defines ODL as an educational process that separates the learner from the instructional base or teacher, either in space or in time for a significant proportion of his or her learning. Louw (2007), however, defines ODL as a multi-dimensional system aimed at bridging the time, geographical and transactional distance between student and institution, student and lecturer, student and peers, and student and material.

ODL in teacher education can be traced back to the 1840s when countries like Britain, Sweden, America, Germany and Australia embraced it as one of the teacher training modes (Chikuya, 2007). Since then, ODL has grown rapidly becoming one of the most promising modes of training teachers (Holmberg, 1986). In Africa, ODL in teacher education can be traced to as far back as the 1960s when it was, first, embraced by countries like Ghana, Nigeria, Kenya, Uganda, Botswana and South Africa.

ODL in teacher education was first introduced because of a failure by the conventional teacher training colleges to respond to the demands for more teachers by the schools (Perraton, 2007). As the enrolment in schools increased, so did the demand for more, well-trained and qualified teachers to which the tradition conventional colleges could not adequately provide (Holmberg, 1986). Thus, the ODL was found to be the best alternative method of training these additional teachers (Perraton, 2007). In Malawi, the ODL mode of teacher education was adopted in the 1980's, in order to address the critical shortage of teachers that were being faced by the primary schools.

2.4.1 Open and Distance Learning in Britain

The element of ODL in teacher education was first introduced in Britain in the early 1840's when bright, elementary students were identified and trained on the job; however, it gained momentum in 1969 when it was used with the aim of responding to the teacher shortages that existed in Britain at that time (Perraton, 2010). Most teachers had reached the retirement age and this called for radical means of training more teachers within the shortest time possible (Perraton, 2010).

ODL in teacher education was also used as a means of responding to the rising demand for professional development as several qualified teachers wished to upgrade their qualifications to diploma, degree or doctorate levels (Perraton, 2010). These teachers wanted to improve their teaching competencies but, unfortunately, could not afford to enter the conventional programmes due to pressure of work and family responsibilities, hence the choice of ODL (Perraton, 2010). The Open University was thus opened and according to Pimm & Selinger (1995), the British

government extensively funded it. A part-time distance learning Post Graduate Certificate of Education for both primary and secondary school teachers was introduced and the first group started classes in 1994 (Pimm & Selinger, 1995; Perraton, 2010). Despite the technological advancement in such areas as the internet, which enable student teachers to share information, send files, pictures, audio and video among themselves or with their lecturers (Pimm & Selinger 1995; Perraton, 2010), the programme proved ineffective. It failed to provide adequate support to the student teachers and it also failed to retain most of them. As such, quality and effectiveness of the programmes could not be equated to that of the conventional programmes (Peraton et al., 2002).

2.4.2 Open and Distance Learning Teacher Education in America

In America, Teacher Education became popular in the 17th century when teachers started to be trained on-the-job, and, eventually, the arrangement evolved into, fully-fledged open and distance learning in teacher education. America fully formalised this system in 1874 at Illinois Wesleyan University where bachelor and graduate degrees in teacher education by distance learning were introduced. However, the teaching of academic and other vocational courses by correspondence only became popular in the early 1900s due to technological advancement. For instance, in 1948, the University of Louisville in Kentucky teamed up with the National Broadcasting Corporation to use the radio as a medium for distance education and this put American education way ahead of the rest of the countries that had embraced open and distance education (Anderson, 2003).

In the 1990s, the introduction of computers improved the efficiency of the delivery process of distance education in teacher training programmes. A programme called Teach for America was introduced with a 3-8-week summer programme designed with the aim of preparing university graduates for teaching (Samkange, 2013). However, according to Samkange (2013), all the four evaluations done on the programme found that the programme was unable to adequately prepare graduate teachers in the areas of pedagogy, teaching methods and class management and it was, therefore, concluded that the programme was ineffective as a teacher-training programme.

2.4.3 Open and Distance Learning Teacher Education in Sub-Saharan Africa

Unlike Europe and America, ODL in Sub Saharan Africa was and continues to be used, primarily, to widen access to basic education as well as to improve quality in the conventional school system through in-service training of teachers (Leary & Berge, 2007). With the Education for All (EFA) protocols, which advocate for universal education, most countries in the Sub- Saharan Africa adopted either the free primary education FPE, as is the case of Malawi or the universal primary education (UPE) as is the case of Uganda, (UNESCO, 2000 ;Perraton, 2000). This resulted in a huge increase of enrolment forcing countries to come up with alternative methods of training large numbers of teachers in a very short period, hence the adoption of the ODL mode of teacher education.

For countries that were recovering from civil conflict or war such as Angola, Sierra Leone, Rwanda and South Sudan, the demand for more teachers was exacerbated by the death of teachers or their flight into exile (UNICEF, 2009). These countries,

therefore, adopted ODL in order to replace those teachers within the shortest period. However, issues of quality and effectiveness were not taken into consideration as the programmes were developed in haste and this compromised the standards of education in these countries.

In some instances, ODL has been used to contain costs in situations where countries had limited state budgets, as was the case with most Sub-Saharan Africa countries. Thus, ODL programmes have enabled them to produce more teachers at a minimum cost. It is believed that ODL programmes operate on average one-third or two-thirds of the cost of a student in a conventional programme (UNESCO, 2010). Despite this cost benefit, the quality and effectiveness of most of these programmes have been compromised.

The ODL teacher-training programmes were also a preferred mode of training by countries that wanted to recruit and train more female teachers to act as role models for the girl-child particularly those in rural primary schools. Most teachers, especially those trained through the conventional programmes, prefer to teach in cities. Since ODL programmes permit teachers to stay in their schools and communities while following their course of study, such programmes were regarded as being well suited for increasing the number of teachers, particularly female teachers, in rural areas. At the same time, ODL programmes increase teacher-retention especially in rural areas since teachers trained in this fashion always remain in their home locations including those based in rural areas. To some extent, ODL has also proved to be effective in implementing the mother tongue instruction policies since locally recruited teachers naturally teach in the language of their communities. Though this is an effective way of training teachers, the quality in

most cases is compromised. Often times, these teachers have lower entry qualification and lack exposure.

In Africa, ODL has been used for initial training of teachers since the early 1960s and it started in countries like Nigeria, Botswana, Kenya and Uganda (Perraton, 2002) before, trickling down to countries like South Africa, Namibia, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, Zambia and Malawi. According to Perraton (2010), some of these programmes have been effective when it comes to registering a high completion rate and high pass rate as is the case with Nigeria, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Kenya and Zimbabwe. However, when it comes to professional support and teacher performance, these have been below standard in most of these ODL programmes particularly those offered in Zambia, Namibia, and Botswana (Samkange, 2013). This review will, however, focus on ODL programmes offered in Zimbabwe, Tanzania and Botswana due to their proximity to Malawi, the core of the study and thereafter will analyse the IPTE-ODL of Malawi, whose effectiveness is still hazy.

Zimbabwe introduced the Zimbabwe Integrated Teacher Education Course (ZINTEC), an ODL programme in 1980, soon after the country got her independence. The aim of the ZINTEC was to train 8,500 teachers within a period of five years. According to Chikuya (2007), the conventional system of training teachers could not provide Zimbabwe with the much-needed numbers of teachers and, therefore, ODL proved to be the most effective method of training many teachers within the shortest time and with limited resources. ZINTEC was an accelerated four-year teacher-training program consisting of two terms in college, one at the beginning and the other at the end, and the rest of the three years in

schools (Lynd, 2005; Chikuya, 2007; Kangai & Bukaleya, 2011). Distance learning materials and face-to-face tutorial support (Lynd, 2005) accompanied it.

According to Kangai & Bukaleya (2011), the programme managed to admit 7,353 teachers, out of the 8,500 teachers that were targeted. Out of these, 1,147 teachers dropped out of the programme due to non-payment of tuition fees and failure to cope with the programmes, representing a 16% dropout rate. Thus, 6,206 teachers (84%) went through the course and 5,857 (94.0%) of these teachers passed their final examinations with 236 (3.2%) passing with distinctions. About 349 teachers (6%) failed their final examinations (Kangai & Bukaliya, 2011).

From the statistics, the effectiveness of the ZINTEC programme is evident. The high completion rate of 84%, high pass rate of 94% and a minimal dropout percentage of just 16% substantiate this notion. Perraton (2010) and Kangai & Bukaliya (2011), in their studies also proved the effectiveness of the ZINTEC programme. According to Perraton (2010), examination performance of pupils taught by teachers trained through the ZINTEC programme was in line with the national trend, hence the conclusion that the programme was effective. Both Perraton (2010) and Kangai & Bukaliya (2011) stated that the ZINTEC students were well supported professionally. College tutors, head teachers and mentors had been well oriented in their roles and were, therefore, able to provide the much-needed professional support to the ZINTEC students. Both studies also indicated that ZINTEC was cost-effective as it was able to train quality teachers in large numbers within a limited time, something that could not have been done through conventional brick-and-mortar approaches, considering limitations of accommodation and upkeep.

However, Chikuya (2007) rated the ZINTEC programme as effective basing on class management as an indicator for measuring effectiveness. Issues of lesson introduction, development, teacher-pupil interaction, questioning techniques, class control, pupil participation and the amount of written work were all analysed. The study revealed that the ZINTEC teachers were very good in lesson introduction, teacher-pupil interaction, questioning techniques, class control, and amount of work given and as such, the programme was rated as effective. The researcher shares these sentiments. In her study, she is using six indicators, namely; objectives of the programme, knowledge gained, perceptions, completion rate, professional support and challenges. The ZINTEC achieved five of them except the one of knowledge gained, hence the conclusion that the programme was an effective teacher-training programme.

Like Zimbabwe, Tanzania too used an ODL programme which in *Kiswahili* was called the *Mafunzuya Ualimu Kazini Kufikia Daraja A* ('Upgrading programme for Grade B and C Teachers to Grade A') to train about 45,000 grade B and C teachers (Kruijer, 2010). The programme was popularly known as *MUKA*. (Kruijer, 2010) and it ran from 2003 to 2009 (Kruijer, 2010). According to Perraton (2010), the conventional teacher training colleges in Tanzania could only train 5,000 teachers, annually and this forced the Tanzanian government to find other alternative methods of training such a large number of teachers at a minimal cost and within the 7 years as indicated by Kruijer (2010).

The ODL method was deemed the most appropriate method. Both grade seven and secondary school leavers were recruited and trained using an apprenticeship model. These student teachers were partly trained on the job and partly through distance

education, (Lynd, 2005). They were attached to various primary schools where they were given a reduced teaching load. A radio programme supported their course work. The students were also supervised and tested with a six-week residential seminar following at the end of the programme. About 38,000 trainees completed the course and passed their examinations.

To establish the effectiveness of the *MUKA* programme, two studies were conducted and classroom performance was used as an indicator to measure effectiveness the programme (Lynd, 2005). According to Lynd (2005), both of these research inquiries revealed that student teachers trained at a distance do perform better in all activities related to classroom performance than student teachers trained in conventional, pre-service programs. Both studies however, revealed that student teachers trained at a distance had a poor command of subject matter especially in Mathematics and Science compared to those trained through the conventional programme (Lynd, 2005). The two studies also found out that the distance-training program was less successful in reinforcing self-confidence especially among female teachers who were impeccably challenged in the two subjects; Mathematics and Science (Lynd, 2005; Perraton, 2010). Bearing in mind that knowledge of subject matter is an integral component of any teacher training programme therefore, failure to make these student teachers master the content tantamount to failure of the programme. As such, the programme was deemed to be ineffective, a position that is also strongly supported by Perraton (2010).

In Botswana, ODL was used to upgrade large numbers of primary school teachers with low qualifications to diploma level (Perraton, 2010). According to Aderinoye et al. (2009) and Sikwibele & Mungoo (2009), Botswana adopted a National Policy on

Education (RNPE) in 1994, which called for more qualitative improvements of the education system and one of its recommendations was that all primary school teachers should have a minimum qualification of a Diploma in Primary Education (DPE). The justification was that teachers with diplomas would add more value to the quality of educational provision in the country (Aderinoye et al., 2009; Sikwibele & Mungoo, 2009). About 1,200 teachers were enrolled into the programmes, out of which 1,009 reached the final year and wrote examinations. However, only 522 teachers (52%) passed their examinations (Sikwebele & Mungoo, 2009). High attrition and low completion rates were the major issues of this programme thereby rendering it ineffective (Aderinoye et al., 2009; Sikwibele & Mungoo, 2009).

The programme was also considered not to be cost-effective. Apart from the pass rate being very low, most of the teachers trained were also over aged, above 45 years old, and most of them were ready for retirement by the time they completed the course. As such, the new skills and knowledge they gained could not, therefore, benefit their pupils. Studies also showed that minimal support was given to the student teachers by the tutors whose training was limited only to conventional instruction for primary settings. Bearing in mind all flaws, it can be easily concluded that the Botswana ODL programme was ineffective as it was unable to meet its objective of training all its teachers to diploma level. Very few student teachers completed the course. These student teachers did not also gain much skill or knowledge since they got just minimal support from their tutors.

2.4.4 Open and Distance Learning Teacher Education in Malawi

ODL in Malawi started as early as the 1960s (Leymaman, 1989). In teacher education, it was first used in 1991 through the Malawi Special Distance Teacher Education Programme (MASTEP) (Kunje, 2003). The aim of the Programme was to train all the unqualified primary school teachers that were teaching in primary schools (Kunje, 2003). The MASTEP proved to be an effective programme as it managed to train all the unqualified teachers that were in the primary schools and the retention rate was 100%. This was so because the student teachers were well supported throughout the training as such the quality of MASTEP teachers was as good as those trained through the conventional programmes. After the MASTEP had successfully achieved its objective, the Ministry of Education introduced another ODL programme, the Malawi Integrated In-Service Teacher Education Programme (MIITEP) in 1996. The MIITEP was created as a direct response to the Policy and Investment Framework (PIF) whose objective was to respond to drastic increase in primary school enrolment due to the introduction of FPE (Lynd, 2005). MIITEP combined college-based and school-based methodologies, (Lewin et. al., 2003). However, due to some flaws in its design, the MIITEP proved to be ineffective as a teacher-training programme. In 2005, the MIITEP was replaced with yet another mixed mode programme, the IPTE 1+1. Students in this programme spend 1 year in college learning pedagogy and subject content and the other year in school, practicing teaching using the pedagogy learnt in college. However, the IPTE 1+1 could not train the required numbers of teachers due to limited bed and classroom space in the country's TTCs. This, therefore, forced government to find other alternative methods of training teachers, hence the introduction of the IPTE-ODL programme in 2010 to complement the IPTE 1+1.

2.4.4.1 The IPTE-ODL Programme

As already indicated, one of the major challenges facing the Education Sector in Malawi is the acute shortage of qualified primary school teachers especially in rural primary schools. According to MoEST (2011), the long-term solution to this problem is to expand the existing teacher-training colleges (TTCs) and build additional ones. This may, however, take a long time. In view of the gravity of the problem, the National Education Sector Plan (NESP) (2008) and the Education Sector Implementation Plan I (ESIP I), proposed some alternative modes of training teachers. One such mode was the Initial Primary Teacher Education through Open and Distance Learning (IPTE-ODL) (MoEST, 2011). The IPTE-ODL was introduced in 2010 with the aim of training 18,000 teachers to augment the numbers produced by the conventional training model, IPTE 1+1 (MoEST, 2003; Rumble, 2011). Under this programme, 18,000 teachers were to be trained in 3 cohorts and the programme was designed around a two-week orientation session followed by two and half years of school-based deployment in which practical classroom teaching would be mixed with distance study (Rumble, 2011)

(i) Objectives of the IPTE-ODL Programme

According to MoEST (2011), the IPTE-ODL programme has five major objectives and these are as follows:

- To meet the expected annual output of 8,000 graduate teachers as stipulated in the National Education Sector Plan (NESP) in order to reduce teacher: pupil ratios.
- To offer a cost-effective mode of training teachers compared to the conventional mode since ODL targets a large number of trainees.
- To offer on-the-job training since the teacher-learner will be studying while working.

- To provide the teacher-learner with foundation for lifelong independent study.
- To provide a motivation for the districts to be engaged in the preparation of primary school teachers who are likely to serve in their localities during and after training.

(ii) *Structure of the Course*

a. *The face-to-face mode*

The IPTE-ODL programme has two major components, namely; the face-to-face and the distance-learning mode. The face-to-face mode runs for two weeks every year and, during this period, student teachers are provided with modules for five learning areas. They are also oriented on the basic teaching skills that the student teachers would use during the distance mode. They are also given two assignments to be done during the distance mode. It is during this phase that the student teachers are allocated field supervisors to support them during the distance-learning mode.

b. *The Distance learning mode*

The distance-learning mode is the period when the student teachers study on their own while conducting teaching practice in the schools to which they are posted. According to MoEST (2011) and Rumble (2011), the IPTE-ODL student teachers are allowed to teach standards 3 and 4 only so that they can have adequate time to study. Throughout this period, the student teachers are supposed to get support from college tutors, field supervisors, PEAs, head teachers, class teachers, and in-school mentors.

Thus, learner support is an important component of the IPTE-ODL programme. Student teachers get support for academic, professional, administrative services as well as for guidance and counselling services. These services are very important as

they help to instil confidence in the student teachers (MoEST, 2011). According to Rumble (2011), a number of stakeholders like college tutors, District Education Managers (DEM), Primary Education Advisors (PEAs), head teachers, in-school mentors, teachers, community leaders, members of the Parent Teachers Association (PTA) and School Management Committees (SMC) are all involved in the provision of support to the IPTE-ODL student teachers. Through weekly Study Circles and Monthly Meetings organized by the Field Supervisors, student teachers are also provided with some support as well as feedback on assignments (MoEST, 2011).

On paper, the IPTE-ODL programme looks very good; however, there is need to interrogate whether what is obtaining on the ground is equally good; whether the IPTE-ODL programme in training primary school teachers is effective. The purpose of this study is, therefore, to critically examine the effectiveness of IPTE-ODL as a teacher training programme and this will be done under the guidance of the Kirkpatrick's four-level evaluation conceptual framework.

2.5 The Kirkpatrick four-level training evaluation conceptual framework

The study used the Kirkpatrick's four-level evaluation conceptual framework. The Kirkpatrick's four-level evaluation framework is one of the most well-known approaches that are used to objectively measure the effectiveness of any training programme. Donald Kirkpatrick, a professor at the University of Wisconsin, developed this framework in the 1950's and since then it has undergone some modification, the first one having been done in 1975 and the other in 1994. The Kirkpatrick framework analyses the effectiveness, impact and results of a training program and further identifies ways of improving it. The framework is applied using

the four levels of evaluation, namely, reaction, learning, behaviour and results. These levels have been expounded below as follows:

2.5.1 Level I: Reaction

This level according to the Training Performance Indicator Matrix measures the learner's reaction, perceptions, expectations, attitudes and satisfaction of the learner to the training programme. According to Polchin (2014), the level has a number of advantages. Firstly, it is the fastest and the easiest to conduct among the four levels of the Kirkpatrick's evaluation framework. Secondly, it is inexpensive and is best done using surveys or interviews.

2.5.2 Level II: Learning

This level provides critical inputs to fine-tuning the design of the programme as it measures the objectives of the programme as well as the skills and knowledge that the learner has gained in the training. Questionnaires, tests and discussions are tools used to measure this level as such this level is not as easy as level I as it requires adequate time and resources.

2.5.3 Level III: Behaviour

According to Polchin (2014), level III measures the application of the learning in the working environment. The researcher is interested in knowing how the newly acquired skills or knowledge, are being used or applied in the learner's everyday environment or work place. It is at this level where the cause of success or failure of a programme or the constraints posed by the system and processes are discovered. The most common assessment tools at this level are observation surveys or student surveys. This level is, normally, done a few months after the training in order to

provide the student with adequate time to implement or practice what he has learnt or apply the knowledge he has gained at his workplace.

2.5.4 Level IV: Results

This is the last level and it measures the impact of the training and subsequent reinforcement on the programme. It also looks at the successes or outcomes that are considered good for the programme or for the student teachers. However, measuring the results of the training at this level is likely to be costly and time consuming since it has to be done over a long period. As earlier indicated, the researcher has neither the required time nor resources to conduct a study of this magnitude.

Though popular and widely used in assessing the effectiveness of training programmes, the Kirkpatrick' framework, like any other framework, has a few shortfalls. Firstly, the framework requires a lot of time and is, therefore, time-consuming and expensive. It also requires many resources especially at levels 3 and 4. The researcher was aware of all these challenges and to cut on both cost and time, only levels 1, 2 and 3 were used. The researcher was however, aware that by leaving out level 4 of the conceptual framework, the results of the study may be compromised. Such being the case, therefore, multiple sources and techniques of data collection were used to rectify the situation. Table 1 is the performance indicator matrix that was used in measuring the effectiveness of the IPTE-ODL programme.

Table 1: Training Performance Indicator Matrix

Evaluation Categories What is Measured	When is measurement and evaluation done	
	During Training	After Training Has Taken Place
Level I: Reaction <i>Learner Satisfaction</i> Measuring the reaction, perceptions, expectations, attitudes and satisfaction of the learners to the training and training results.	Measures and analyses reactions perceptions, expectations, attitudes and satisfaction of the student-teacher during training.	Measures and analyses the learners' reactions, perceptions, expectations, attitudes and satisfaction.
Level II: Learning <i>Learner Performance</i> Measuring the results of learner's application of the knowledge, skills, and attitudes.	Measures and analyses learner performance during training is he able to absorb the knowledge, skills, and attitudes as stated by the learning objectives.	Measures and analyses the level of learner performance on the job, is he using the skills and knowledge that he gained in the training.
Level III: Behaviour Learner Behaviour seeks to find out if the learner's behaviour has changed as a result of the learning experience.	Measures and analyses the quality of the training, support and facilities	Measures and analyses the impact of training on the student teacher, the institution/school and the programme's goals and objectives.
Level IV: Results <i>Returned Value</i> Measuring the expected and actual return value/ cost benefit	Identifies and documents areas for cost reduction and avoidance	Measures the improvement in the quality of services, training cost and value of the programme.

Source: Adapted from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) (Anderson, 2003)

2.6 Chapter Summary

The chapter has described the concept of effectiveness and examined literature on teacher education since the 15th century. Both conventional and ODL teacher education training programmes in Britain, America, the Sub-Saharan Africa and Malawi have been reviewed. According to literature, teacher education dates as far back as the 15th century with Britain and America being among its first pioneers.

In Africa, teacher education started well before the coming of the white missionaries in the 19th century. Africa practiced informal education in which knowledge was mostly passed on by word of mouth and thus African teachers were trained by the same means. Formal education was introduced by the white missionaries in the 19th century, and along with it came formal teacher education.

The chapter has also discussed teacher education in Malawi focussing on programmes that emerged because of FPE, namely; the MITTEP of 1994, IPTE 1+1 of 2005 and IPTE-ODL of 2010. The Kirkpatrick four-level evaluation framework which is a conceptual framework guiding this study has also been discussed in the chapter. The next chapter will look at the research design and the methodology used in the study.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

3.0 Chapter overview

This chapter provides the research design used in the study. It has also articulated and justified the data generation instruments that were employed in the study, how data was generated, analysed and interpreted. Ethical principles that were followed in the course of conducting this study have also been discussed in detail before presenting the chapter summary.

3.1 Research design

Research design refers to a plan or structure of investigation that is used to obtain multiple sources of evidence to answer and analyse research questions (Yin, 1993; McMillan & Schumacher, 2006). It is also defined as an overall approach that is used to investigate the problem of interest, with the aim of shedding more light on it or answering the question of interest (Gay, 1996).

This study adopted a qualitative research approach that was descriptive in nature. Data was generated in natural settings through in-depth interviews, observations and documentary analysis. Through the stories told during the interviews, observation of lessons and the analysis of the various documents, the researcher was able to gather the experiences and views of participants on the IPTE-ODL programme and made

sense out of them since she interacted with the participants face-to-face. The views of these participants were documented using electronic voice recording so as not to lose any piece of information. These were later, transcribed verbatim. Themes such as perception, support, challenges were identified and meanings were generated out of them.

Within the qualitative research paradigm, a single case study design was used with the IPTE-ODL cohort 1 teachers being the case study. The other participants; Deputy District Education Manager, Desk Officer, PEAs, ODL-Field Supervisors, Mentors and Head teachers were interviewed for triangulation purpose. A case study, according to Yin (2003), is defined as an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context. In this study, the IPTE-ODL programme is a contemporary phenomenon and was being studied and investigated within its own natural setting, the school, hence the use of a single case study design. Considering time and financial constraints, which the researcher lacked, a case study approach was ideal as it is inexpensive since it does not require expensive equipment or extensive research staff and can be carried out within a limited time, (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Yin, 2003).

Additionally, the design was also ideal as it allowed the use of multiple instruments. In this regard, three data generating instruments were used to gather the experiences and views of the participants on the IPTE-ODL programme. These instruments were interviews, observation and documentary analysis. Interview were chosen because of their ability to generate in-depth data, however, they tend to generate too much

data that requires more time to transcribe and analyse and an interview schedule was used to generate data.

Observations, on the other hand, was chosen due to its ability to provide first-hand information because people do different from what they say, hence observation provide a true picture of what the teacher does in class and a lesson observation schedule was used to generate data through this method. The documentary analysis was used just to beef up the information that was gathered from the interviews and observations bearing in mind that some of the technical issues stipulated in documents may not be clearly explained by some of the participants. These documents were analysed and notes and coded under the themes that had been generate for the study.

3.2 Study Sample

A sample is defined as a subset of a population that represents a larger population to draw inference about that population (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006; Cohen, 2007). In this study, a population of 34 participants drawn from 16 schools was used as a study sample. The sample included 16 IPTE-ODL cohort 1 teachers, 1 Deputy District Education Manager, 1 Desk Officer, 4 Primary Education Advisors, 4 ODL Field Supervisors, 4 head teachers and 4 mentors. Except the district education officials, these were all drawn from remote, rural schools in the Lilongwe Rural West Education District. Out of this sample, 17 participants were female and 17 were male, with all of them having been involved in the ODL programme in one way or the other. The sample size of the study has been summarised in table 2.

Table 2: Sample Categories and Size of Key Interviewees

Participants	Males	Female	Total
IPTE- ODL 1	8	8	16
Deputy District Education Manager	0	1	1
Desk Officer	1	0	1
PEAs	2	2	4
ODL-Field Supervisors	0	4	4
Mentors	4	0	4
Head teachers	2	2	4
Total	17	17	34

Source: Data generated by the Researcher

3.3 Sampling procedures and techniques

The study used both purposive and random sampling. According to Silverman (2005), purposive sampling enabled the researcher to choose a case that possessed features that interested her. Thus, the study chose the IPTE-ODL, cohort one teachers, as they possessed the relevant knowledge and insights in the IPTE-ODL programme since they had been trained through this programme. Purposive sampling also enabled the researcher to choose participants that were willing to take part in the study. All the participants that took part in the study were willing participants and had given the researcher their consent. This made it possible to obtain accurate information, as it is only a willing participant that can give accurate information, (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). On class observation, random sampling was used as the researcher wanted to get a true picture of what happens in the classroom.

Lilongwe Rural Education Office has 20 zones with 241 schools. Some of these schools are in the outskirts of the Lilongwe Urban and the pupil: teacher ratio in these schools is very low and therefore no ODL teacher was allocated to these

schools. There are 12 zones in Lilongwe Rural West that are located in the remote rural area and these were the ones the study was interested in. However, due to financial constraints the study could not use all of them and therefore, only 4 zones were picked from very remote areas. These zones had 40 schools but only 21 schools had been supplied with the IPTE-ODL cohort 1 teachers. The study purposively sampled 16 schools to get equal numbers of male and female participants. The same was applied to the other participants, namely, the DEM, PEAs, Field Supervisors, Head teachers and the Mentors. While the researcher tried to take into consideration the gender issue, it was difficult to do so in areas where one sex dominated, for example field supervisors in Lilongwe Rural West were all females while all mentors were all males. However, by using purposive sampling, the researcher was able to get accurate results as the participants were able to provide sufficient and maximum insights, and understanding of the IPTE-ODL programme as is indicated by Denzin & Lincoln, (2000).

3.4 Data generating instruments

A number of data generating instruments were developed and used for this study and this is line with Miles & Huberman (1984), who states that the greater the contrast between the methods of data collection, the more reliable and valid the data will be. Such being the case, therefore, the researcher used such instruments as interviews schedules, observation schedules and documentary analysis.

3.4.1 In-depth Interviews

According to Cohen et al. (2007), an interview is a data collection strategy that involves the interchange of views between the researcher and the respondent in order to obtain research-relevant information. The study used face-to face- interview

because of its ability to gather in-depth data as respondents are allowed to express their opinion on the topic being studied (McMillan and Schumacher, 2006). Thus, semi-structured interviews were used. Semi-structured interviews allowed the researcher to probe and follow up on ideas raised by the respondents. These respondents included the IPTE-ODL student teachers, DEM, Desk Officer, PEAs, Mentors, Head teachers and the ODL-Field Officers. A study interview schedule (appendix 4 and 5) was used and served as the main instrument for data collection for this study. This guide was developed with some open-ended questions to allow the participants to freely express themselves. The interview sessions, which took almost two hours, were conducted in the form of a conversation and participants were left to respond without any constrain or interruption. The responses were captured through note taking and tape-recording. This was done in order to safeguard the accuracy of the information obtained and to reduce biasness in selection of the responses during the analysis stage (Cohen et al., 2007). This was good as it allowed free flow of issues some of which were irrelevant and were teased out during the data cleaning stage. This had an advantage as it allowed the researcher to ask follow-up questions basing on the response given as well as to probe further basing on non-verbal cues. Apart from these advantages, the use of the interview schedule was also good as it ensured that all the participants were subjected to similar questions.

3.4.2 Observation

Observation is a systemic process of recording the behavioural pattern of participants without necessarily questioning them (Chiziwa, 2013). Observation provides first-hand information as it allows a researcher to see and hear for himself other than getting a report from participants (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006). First-

hand information is important because what people say may be different from what they do (Cohen, et al., 2007). Lesson observation therefore, enabled the researcher to analyse the IPTE-ODL student teachers' ability to transfer knowledge to the pupil.

In this study, 4 participants, 2 males and 2 females, were observed teaching. Each participant was observed in three lessons except one who was observed in one lesson as he was absent from work on the two other occasions that the researcher visited the school. Thus, ten lessons were observed. The subjects that were observed included English, Mathematics, Chichewa and Social Studies and the classes observed were standards 5, 6 and 7. A lesson observation checklist was used (appendix 6). The data that was collected through lesson observation was mostly used to respond to research question 3 that was interested in finding out the competency of IPTE-ODL teachers in transferring knowledge and skills to their learners.

The researcher and a PEA from Lilongwe Rural East conducted the lesson observation. The researcher is a well-seasoned educator; however, for the findings to be valid and trustworthy, she had to bring in a PEA who is a quality control expert. Thus, a common stand on the grade of each lesson and the performance of each participant was arrived at after a thorough discussion in which notes of both researchers were scrutinised and analysed. A PEA from a non-study district was involved in the observation to avoid biasness and misrepresentation of facts. Again, to get accurate findings, the participants were never informed of the observation part of the study until just after the interview was done. This gave the participants no

time to prepare and as such, the researcher was able to get a true account of the teaching competencies of these IPTE-ODL teachers.

The observation was also conducted within the scheduled master timetable so as not to disturb or interfere with the school's learning routine. This is also the reason why two lessons were not observed. One of the teachers was teaching one subject in standard 6 and all subjects in standard 2. By the time the researchers arrived at the school, standard 2 had already knocked off, forcing the researchers to observe just one lesson, that of standard 6.

3.4.3 Documentary analysis

Documentary analysis is very important as it allows a researcher to cross-examine the subjectivity of the participants (Cohen, 2007). In this study, a number of documents were examined and these included the ODL training manual, ODL guidelines booklet, schemes and records of work, lesson plans, lesson notes, teaching practice file and PEAs supervisory reports. The ODL training manual and ODL guidelines clearly stipulate the objectives of the programme and the roles and responsibilities of various stakeholders in ODL programme. The schemes and records of work, lesson plans, lesson notes and the teaching practice files were checked and compared with what is indicated in the training manuals. The PEAs' supervisory reports were checked and further compared to the lesson observations conducted by the researcher.

The researcher read the documents and took notes on the key issues according to the themes that had already been generated. The data generated from the documents was analysed together with the data generated through interviews and observations.

These were further reflected upon in order to come up with a close to accurate account of the IPTE-ODL programme.

3.5 Data Analysis

Data analysis is a process of making meaning from the collected data (Simon, 2011). It also refers to the process of examining, sorting, categorizing, evaluating, comparing, synthesizing; and contemplating the raw, coded and recorded data, (UNESCO, 1999). Data analysis in this study was a back-and-forth process. The conversations, the lesson observations and document analysis were all compiled into readable texts, which could be easily subjected to an analysis. The texts were further condensed while keeping their original meaning. Texts that were lengthy and bulky were further condensed and compressed into meaningful short statements. Quotations were also generated and it was out of these quotations and short statements that themes like perception, support, duration and many more others were generated.

As the study was clued-up on the Kirkpatrick's four-level conceptual framework, the researcher also linked the analysis, using the study's six indicators, to the framework to examine if the findings were in conformity with the Kirkpatrick's four-level conceptual framework. Being a case study, the findings were generated and presented descriptively as advocated by (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Merriam, 1998).

3.6 Credibility and Trustworthiness of the study

According to Schumacher & McMillan (2006), credibility refers to the degree of congruence between the explanations of the phenomena and the realities of the

world. In qualitative research, however, credibility refers to the degree to which the interpretations have mutual meanings for the participant and the researcher.

Credibility in qualitative research involves collecting data from different participants while making sure that participants' understanding of what is being asked of them, is as close as possible to the researcher's understanding and as close as possible to the other research participants (Lankshear & Knobel, 2004).

Trustworthiness, according to White (2005), refers to the quality of the research. A well-founded case design and relevant informants such as the IPTE-ODL teachers, DEMs, PEAs, ODL field supervisors, head teachers and mentors were used in order to make the study more trustworthy. The researcher also tape-recorded the interviews and took field notes and photographs, which were later scrutinised. To address the issues of credibility and trustworthiness, triangulation techniques were used. Triangulation, according to Lincoln and Guba (1985), refers to the use of multiple data sources and instruments. In this study the researcher generated data from multiple sources such as IPTE-ODL teachers, DEMs, PEAs, ODL field supervisors, head teachers and mentors and used multiple instruments such as interview schedules, observation schedules and document analysis to generate her data. These instruments were validated by colleagues and piloted in a zone that was not in the programme. The generated data was also subjected to participants' checking so as to safeguard the research findings from biasness and to check if their views were clearly reflected in the documentation. Thus, credibility and trustworthiness of the study were effectively ensured.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

According to Cohen et al. (2007), the onus of observing ethics and guaranteeing privacy to the participants is placed in the hands of the researcher. In carrying out this study, the researcher observed all the ethical considerations. Firstly, access to the targeted schools was done after seeking permission from the gatekeepers, the Ministry of Education Science and Technology (MoEST), DEMs and Head teachers (appendices 1 and 2).

The researcher also obtained an informed consent from all participants after interacting with them and telling them about the purpose of the study (appendix 3). According to Cohen (2007), participants must give their consent before taking part in any research and must willingly accept to participate in the research (Simons, 2002). The participants in this study gave their consent and were willing to participate in the study. They were not coerced into participating in the study.

In this study, participants were assured of their anonymity. According to Cohen et al. (2007), anonymity in research means that information provided by the participants must neither be revealed nor their identities be revealed. To ensure this anonymity, codes such as Teacher #1, PEA #1, head teacher #1 or mentor #1, were used. This made the participants comfortable and as such, they were able to freely share their views and experiences.

The right to confidentiality was also observed (Cohen et al., 2007). The participants were assured of their right to privacy and that no information will be divulge to anyone at any cost.

3.8 Chapter Summary

In this chapter, qualitative methodologies used in the study have been explained and the reasons for choosing them have also been discussed. Qualitative case study design was chosen because it has a potential to obtain lived and rich descriptions of the views and experiences of the participants.

The chapter has described the sample population and sample size. Thirty-four (34) people participated in the study and these included the IPTE-ODL cohort 1 teachers, Deputy District Education Manager, Desk Officer, PEAs, ODL-Field Supervisors, Head teachers and Mentors. These participants were purposively sampled. Data generating instruments, which included in-depth interview schedules, observation schedules and documentary analysis have also been discussed in this chapter. Data analysis processes that were followed have also been explained.

The chapter has also highlighted strategies that were employed to ensure that research findings and results were valid and reliable. Issues of ethical consideration, which included issues of consent, privacy, anonymity and confidentiality, have been clearly spelt out in this chapter. The next chapter will present the results and discuss the study findings.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

4.0 Chapter Overview

The chapter presents and discusses findings from the in-depth interviews, lesson observations and document analysis. The views and experiences of the participants constituted the bulk of this chapter and these have simultaneously been presented and discussed using the Kirkpatrick's four-level evaluation model framework. The results and findings have been presented under themes outlined in chapter 3. Achievement of objectives of the programme, completion rate, retention rate, perceptions of stakeholders, orientation period, teacher performance, professional support and challenges has also been discussed in this chapter. The chapter has also discussed ways in which the IPTE-ODL programme can be improved to make it a more effective teacher-training programme.

4.1 Achievement of the objectives of the IPTE-ODL programme

According to MoEST, (2011) and Rumble (2011), the IPTE-ODL programme had five objectives and the study was interested in knowing if all these five objectives were achieved. The objectives are as follows; to train teachers to meet the expected annual output of 8,000 graduate teachers annually, to offer a cost effective mode of training teachers, to offer on-the-job training, to provide lifelong independent study and lastly to provide a motivation to the districts to be engaged in the preparation of primary school teachers. These objectives were measured using the Kirkpatrick's

four-level evaluation framework and level three of the framework was used in order to find out if the objectives of the programme were achieved. This allowed the researcher to identify critical inputs necessary for fine-tuning the programme as shown in the findings of this study:

4.1.1 To meet the expected annual output of 8,000 graduate teachers

The first objective of the IPTE-ODL programme was to meet the expected annual output of 8,000 graduate teachers as stipulated in the National Education Sector Plan (NESP). According to NESP, the annual output of the conventional programmes in the TTCs is 2,500 teachers (MoEST, 2008) which is far much below what the system requires if it is to attain a pupil ratio of 60:1 by 2015 or 40:1 by 2017 (MoEST,2008). According to the document analysis, the IPTE-ODL programme was designed to complement the IPTE 1+1 programme. The programme was to train 6,000 teachers annually (MoEST, 2008, Rumble, 2011). It was envisaged that the two programmes would together produce a total output of 8,000 graduate teachers each year. Findings from the study show that the two programmes had surpassed their target. The private TTCs contributed to this output. Table 3 summarises the output of the two programs since 2012.

Table 3: Recruitment and completion trends of IPTE 1+1 and IPTE-ODL

Year	IPTE 1+1 from public TTCs			IPTE-ODL			Number deployed		
	# recruited	# completed	# dropped	# recruited	# dropped	# completed	Public (IPTE 1+1 and ODL)	PVT TTCs (IPTE1+1)	Total
2012/13	4500	3,673	827	4,000	434	3,766	7,349	636	8,075
2013/14	4500	3,766	734	6,000	4	5,996	9,762	636	10,398
2014/15	4500	3,977	523	6,000	542	5,458	9,435	759	10,194

Source: Department of Teacher Education and Development (DTED) (2014).

4.1.1.1 Completion Rate

From table 3, the completion rate of the IPTE-ODL in 2012/13 academic year was at 94.1%, thus from the 4,000 IPTE-ODL teachers that were recruited, 3,766 of them completed their training and were deployed in various rural primary schools. According to the deployment schedule from MoEST, the two programmes, IPTE-ODL and IPTE 1+1, supplied the primary schools with 8,075 teachers in the 2012/13 academic year. Thus, the number of teachers deployed to primary school surpassed the national annual target of 8,000 by 0.9%. The IPTE-ODL programme alone contributed about 47% of the total number of teachers deployed and this was a very significant contribution to the teaching work.

In the 2013/14 academic year, the IPTE-ODL programme pumped into the system 5,996 teachers out of the 6,000 teachers recruited. Thus, the programme had a completion rate of 99%. The IPTE 1+1 on the other had managed to provide 4,402 teachers. In total, 10,398 teachers were deployed into various primary schools and 58% of these were IPTE-ODL the teachers.

Statistics also show that in 2014/15; about 10,194 teachers will be ready for deployment and 5,458 of these teachers are IPTE-ODL teachers while 4,736 teachers are IPTE 1+1. From the total number deployed to the primary schools, 54% of them were those trained through the IPTE-ODL programme. From the statistics, it is evident that the IPTE-ODL programme had few dropouts and failures as compared to the IPTE-1+1 programme. These findings are similar to those of the Tanzanian's *MUKA*. *MUKA* is one of the ODL programmes that is rated effective in the Sub Saharan Africa. It had a completion rate of as high as 84%. The programme recruited 45,000 teachers and 38,000 of them completed the course and got their qualifications (UNESCO, 2000; Perraton, 2010; Kruijer, 2010). The completion rate of Tanzania was far much better than the completion rate of most developed countries in Europe and Asia and the same is true for the ZINTEC of Zimbabwe. The ZINTEC recruited 6,206 trainee teachers and 5,857 of them completed and passed their examinations and had therefore a completion rate of about 94%. The ZINTEC, like the *MUKA*, was also rated effective as far as completion rate was concerned.

Bearing in mind such findings, it can also be concluded that the Malawi IPTE-ODL programme was effective as it too had a high completion rate of 95% from its three cohorts. The IPTE-ODL programme recruited and trained 16,000 teachers in the three cohorts. About 15,197 completed the programme, passed their examinations and were deployed into various primary schools and thus the 95% completion rate. The 95% completion rate of the IPTE-ODL of Malawi is higher than that of the *MUKA* and the ZINTEC. Therefore, basing on completion rate, the IPTE-ODL programme can as well be rated as an effective teacher-training programme in as far as completion rate is concerned.

4.1.1.2 Retention of Women in the programme

According to Juma (2000), Africa has a serious low enrolment of women in its higher education institutions due to low secondary school enrolment and high dropout rate. The other reason is that most girls do not perform competitively well with boys in their Malawi School Certificate of Education (MSCE) examinations. This, therefore, allows just a small pool of girls to be eligible for entry into higher education (Juma, 2000). ODL programmes, have thus, offered opportunities to most girls and women to upgrade and acquire high qualifications. ODL programmes allow girls to enjoy learning through many facets of teaching or learning (Juma, 2000). According to UNESCO (2002), female teachers in primary schools are in minority. In Africa, females make just about 39% of the total teaching work force while in Asia the females make up only 28% of the teaching workforce. This is a serious challenge as it leaves the girl child, especially that one in the rural school, without a role model and this therefore increases dropout among girls in the rural primary schools. Bearing in mind such consequences, the IPTE ODL programme was designed with the aim of recruiting, retaining and training as many female teachers as possible. These female teachers are to teach in the rural schools. Below is a table 4 depicting retention by gender.

Table 4: Retention by Gender

Year	IPTE Programme					IPTE-ODL Programme				
	# Recruited	# Completed		# Dropped out		# Recruited	# Completed		# Dropped-out	
	Total	M	F	M	F	Total	M	F	M	F
2012	4500	2117	2383	97	730	4000	3530	1644	430	4
2013	4500	1545	2965	34	700	6000	2598	3402	4	0
2014	4500	2281	2219	28	495	6000	3200	2800	540	2
TOTAL	13500	5943	7567	159	1925	16000	9328	7846	974	6

Source: Department of Teacher Education and Development

The IPTE-ODL programme succeeded in retaining most of the female student teacher that were recruits. Table 4 above indicates that 7,852 female teachers were recruited in three years, from 2012 to 2014. Almost all of them completed their training and were deployed into various primary schools across the country. The table also indicates that six of these female recruits dropped out of the programme, representing just 0.08%. In the same period, 974 males dropped out, representing about 9.4%. The very low dropout rate among female recruits could be attributed to the flexibility of the IPTE-ODL programme. For instance, the programme allowed women to remain in the programme even if they were pregnant, contrary to what was happening in the IPTE1+1 programme where any girl found to be pregnant had to withdraw, hence the high dropout rate among female IPTE 1+1 recruits. Apart from training more women, the programme actually made tremendous strides in ensuring most of these women were from and remained in the rural areas, thus enhancing rural women's participation in teaching. The programme has provided the opportunity to rural women to participate in teaching regardless of their social economic status and geographical location. Thus, more female teachers have been

trained and have been deployed in most rural schools where apart from teaching are also acting as role models to the rural girls.

The retention of more women in the programme signifies the effectiveness of the programme as it has managed to achieve one of its main objectives, which is to deploy at least 8,000 teachers annually into the system. A deliberate effort was made to recruit more females into the programme. For instance, in the 2012/13 academic year, the IPTE-ODL programme placed 1,393 female teachers into the system. The number drastically increased in the 2013/14 academic year. About 4,424 female IPTE-ODL teachers were employed (MoEST, 2014 unpublished).

According to EMIS (2014), there are currently 24,651 qualified female teachers against the 34,568 qualified male teachers in the system, representing 42% of the total teaching workforce. The IPTE-ODL programme has helped to narrow down the gender gap that has existed in the ministry for a very long time. Currently, the male to female teacher ratio is at 2:1 (EMIS 2014), a massive improvement from the 4:1 male to female teacher ratio (EMIS, 2009), which prevailed before the introduction of ODL programme in 2010. The gender gap has been narrowed by 50%. MOEST regards improved gender representation amongst teachers to be of great importance because female teachers act as role models for the girl-child, thereby enhancing retention of these girls in school, particularly, in the rural schools. This has been possible because of the flexibility of the IPTE-ODL programme and as such, it has been a favourite programme for women particularly those that are married as is indicated by IPTE-ODL teacher:

I could not enroll in the IPTE 1+1 programme because I got married soon after completing my form four. I felt the ODL programme was good enough for me as I could do school and at the same time care for my family, my husband and children. Two years in college under IPTE 1+1 was too much for my family and I. There was no way I could afford to be away from them for that long (IDI-IPTE-ODL # 12 - School L-17/06/2014)

Another female teacher had this to say:

I am the breadwinner in my family. I look after my old grandmother and my three siblings and as such could not afford to go to college and spend a full year there. The ODL programme was the best alternative for me. I am able to till the garden and produce food for my family at the same time I am able to do my teacher training. The programme fits very well with my needs (IDI-IPTE-ODL teacher # 5 - School E-06/06/2014).

From the excerpts, both teacher #12 and #5 expressed their satisfaction with the programme and this is in line with Level I of the Kirkpatrick's evaluation conceptual framework. This level measures and analyses the learner's reactions, satisfaction, attitudes and perceptions. Thus, this expression of satisfaction entails the effectiveness of a training programme. In this regard therefore, it is certain that the IPTE-ODL programme is effective as a teacher-training programme. Indeed, the IPTE-ODL programme is effective, as it has offered an opportunity to most women who due to poverty, early pregnancy or marriage could not enrol into the conventional programme. From the findings, 50% of the IPTE-ODL female respondents were married and had babies. According to EMIS (2014), out of 161,725 girls that were enrolled in the secondary schools in the 2013/14 academic year, 5,265 dropped out of school, with about 3,004 due to early pregnancies and

2, 261 due to early marriages representing a 4% drop out rate. This scenario also prevailed in the TTCs where, about 5% of the females enrolled in the IPTE 1+1 programme dropped out of college due to pregnancies and marriage. About 158 females dropped out of college with 134 due to pregnancies and 24 due to marriage (EMIS, 2014).

For the IPTE-ODL programme, the scenario was different. Due to the flexibility of the programme, all the female teachers recruited were retained despite some of them falling pregnant as the programme allowed pregnant women in its programme. Suffice to say, therefore, that the IPTE-ODL programme has helped to give a second chance to such girls and this has helped to remove the gender disparities that exist in the conventional programme in the education systems. Furthermore, the IPTE-ODL programme has helped most women to overcome gender-related constraints that limit their ability to pursue higher education. Having obtained their teaching certificates, coupled with experience in teaching, a number of them have managed to upgrade their Malawi School Certificate of Education (MSCE) and therefore, finding their way into the universities and colleges to pursue education diploma and degree courses.

4.1.1.3 Low entry qualification

Again, the entry qualification requirements of the IPTE-ODL programme are lower than those of the IPTE1+1. For one to get into the programme, one needs to have a Malawi School Certificate of Education (MSCE) with a pass in English, Mathematics where as in the IPTE 1+1 one needs credits in these two subjects and in any two science subjects, hence the huge influx of women into the programme. Though the IPTE-ODL did not require credits, still it did not take any MSCE failure

into the programme. Malawi had learnt lessons from the MITTEP programme that had recruited Junior Certificate of Education (JCE) holders as teacher trainees. According to Stuart and Kunje (2000), these JCE holders could not comprehend the content and the concepts in the training manuals and this made the programme to be ineffective as a training programme.

The same mistake also happened in Zanzibar in Tanzania. According to Komba, (2009), 240 primary school teachers from Zanzibar were recruited and trained through the ODL programme. Most of these teachers were female and had the lowest qualification. Majority of them were Form III or IV school leavers. According to Komba (2009), these teachers had a poor command of subject matter especially in Mathematics and Science. In the *MUKA* programme too, grade 7 school leavers were recruited and most of them had some challenges in mastering the subject content in Mathematics and Science. This was because the programme used English as language of instruction and this was a barrier to the majority of them, especially the grade 7 school leavers Kruijer, 2010).

To avoid a repetition of what happened with the MITTEP and in Tanzania, the IPTE-ODL programme recruited Malawi School Certificate of Education (MSCE) holders but with just passes in English and Mathematics. This allowed those that did not get a credit in Mathematics and English, a challenge for most females, to enrol in the programme as IPTE-ODL teacher #10 testifies:

I did not have a credit in English and therefore did not qualify for the IPTE 1+1 programme, but since I had dreamed of becoming a teacher, I decided to enroll through the ODL programme, which does not demand such entry qualifications as long as one has a full MSCE certificate (IDI - IPTE-ODL teacher #10 - School J-13/06/2014).

According to MoEST (2014), only 47 % of the girls who sat for the 2014 Malawi School Certificate of Education (MSCE) passed the examinations with the majority of them securing just mere passes in Mathematics and English. This has been the trend for the past five years (MoEST, 2014) and, it is no surprise therefore, that the majority of females opted for the IPTE-ODL programme whose entry qualification requires just a pass in these two subjects.

As already alluded to, the lowering of the entry qualification allows more girls, especially those with just a pass in English, Mathematics and Science, to join the teaching profession. The idea is good but unfortunately, by lowering the entry qualifications, people tend to develop a wrong impression of the programme. For most of them, the lowering of the entry qualification signifies a low quality or low class teacher training programme and the teachers trained through this programme are thus regarded to be academically not sound and are equate to those trained through the MITTEP. From the findings, the IPTE-ODL did not equal to the MITTEP. The IPTE-ODL programme is as effective and to some extent more effective than the conventional programme, the IPTE1+1.

4.1.2 To offer a cost effective mode of training teachers

From the analysed documents, it was noted that the budget allocation for the IPTE-ODL programme was higher as compared to that of the IPTE 1+1 programme.

Government spends about MK658, 000.00 per one IPTE-ODL student teacher while MK547, 000.00 is used to train one IPTE1+1 student-teacher, (National Budget, 2014/15). This cost is inclusive of all expenses such as training materials and student upkeep allowances, which are both expensive. The student upkeep of the IPTE-ODL teacher was at MK20, 000 a month while the IPTE 1+1 got about MK1, 500 per month hence raising cost in the IPTE-ODL programme.

The figures show that the IPTE-ODL programme is more expensive than the IPTE 1+1 programme. ODL programmes have high fixed and low variable costs that allow economies of scale (UNESCO, 2002). What this entails is that when there are more students in the programme, the unit cost goes down (UNESCO, 2002) and the economies of scale are clearly seen. However, when there are very few students in the programme, the unit cost goes high making it to appear very expensive and as such, the economies of scale do not show (Perraton, 2010).

The IPTE-ODL programme was designed to train not more than 18,000 teachers in three cohorts and this to some extent affected its economies of scale especially when it came to production of training materials. According to Perraton (2010), ODL teaching and learning materials are expensive especially when not bought in bulky. Still more, the IPTE-ODL may be rated as less expensive and much more cost effective when compared with most conventional programmes. To further support the foregoing argument, Danaher (2010) states that ODL programmes are resource-efficient since they do not require residency, which incurs cost of food, utilities, and maintenance of buildings among others. This is true of the IPTE-ODL programme. The IPTE-ODL student teachers spend just two weeks in college during school holidays. Much of their training is done on-the-job while coming from their own

homes. These student teachers fend for themselves using their training allowances and as such, the colleges do not incur many costs on food, utilities and maintenance of buildings, hence being more cost effective than the conventional programmes.

Again, by allowing student teachers to train on-the-job, both the government and the learner benefit a lot. The government is able to place these teachers in the schools to teach for about 2 years and pays them just an upkeep allowance of MK20, 000 that is far below the salary of a qualified teacher, which is pegged at MK53, 000 and leave grant at MK28, 000.00 per year. Government saves money. The presence of these teachers in the schools and classrooms eases the pressure the schools have due to inadequate number of teachers. As such, the cost analysis of a training programme should always take into account the value of the work the ODL-student teachers perform in the school and the cost the government or school would incur if it employed additional teachers (UNESCO, 2000). These views are also shared by Perraton (2010) who talks about the opportunity cost enjoyed by the government, the school and to some extent by the student teacher. The fact that student teachers are placed in the schools while studying, saves government on teachers' salaries and the same time schools have adequate numbers of teachers and therefore a reduced workload while the student teacher receive an upkeep allowance and is not separated from his family. This is a win-win situation as each entity benefits from the arrangement.

It is true that the quality of these student teachers is very low and cannot be compared to that of the qualified teachers. Having ODL student teachers attending to the learners is far much better than having no teacher in the classroom or using

volunteer teachers who are either Junior Certificate of Education (JCE) holders or standard 8 school leavers. The issue of quality of teaching by the ODL student teachers is something that can be easily addressed by the supervisory team, a group of people tasked with the responsibility of supervising and providing professional support to the ODL student teachers. This team is comprised of the tutors, PEAs, ODL field supervisor, mentor and head teachers. If this team performs its duties effectively then there is no need to worry about the quality of teaching as these ODL-student teachers will be as good as any qualified teacher.

Cost effectiveness also comes in since the IPTE-ODL programme is able to produce more trained teachers within a cohort than the IPTE 1+1. For instance, in the 2013/14 academic year, the IPTE-ODL programme was able to produce 5,996 teachers against the 3,766 produced by conventional IPTE 1+1 in the public TTCs. In 2014/15, about 5,458 teachers have been trained through the IPTE-ODL programme while about 3,997 teachers have been trained through the IPTE 1+1 programme. The low enrolment in the conventional programmes is mostly due to the bed and class space in the TTCs. According to MoEST (2013), the total bed space in the 6 Teacher Training Colleges (TTCs) namely; Blantyre, Machinga, St. Joseph, Lilongwe, Kasungu and Karonga, is 3,490 which is far below the annual requirement of 8,000 teachers. Thus, bed space in these TTCs is a challenge as is the case in most conventional teacher training colleges worldwide. To save the situation, ODL teacher training programmes have thus been used as they have the ability to train more teachers at once and within a limited period. Danaher (2010) states that ODL programmes produce more trained teachers within a limited time as they do not require bed or class space. The IPTE-ODL programme like any other ODL programme was also able to train more teachers within a limited time and outside

the four walls of a teacher training college. The programme also proved to be more cost effective as it was able to achieve greater scales of economy just like the MITTEP programme (Perraton, 2010). Such being the case, therefore, it has also proved to be a more effective teacher-training programme.

4.1.3 To offer on-the-job training

The IPTE-ODL programme was designed to offer on the job training. This is important as it integrates the theoretical and practical aspects of teaching and learning. According to Vygostky in Danaher (2010), one cannot learn how to swim by standing at the shore but by plunging right into the water despite not knowing how to swim. Thus, one learns something by doing it, or by being on-the-job as is the case with the IPTE-ODL programme. Student teachers learn teaching by actually teaching and according to Danaher (2010), this is the most effective way of training teachers. The on-the-job training increases their opportunity to integrate theory and practice. As ODL student teachers interact with teaching and its problems in the classroom and outside, they are able to come up with solutions like any other qualified teachers. This puts them a step ahead of those student teachers in the conventional programmes.

The on-the-job training is also more flexible and it therefore fosters home studying. Students learn on their own, with the support of their peers through study circles. The IPTE-ODL programme encourages them to read more on their own and to be more resourceful and as such it is suitable for those married especially women as is being stated by teacher # 3:

The programme enables us to learn much faster than those in the IPTE1+1 programme. Within a term, we master how to write lesson plans, schemes and records of work. We even teach our counterparts, the IPTE 1+1 student teacher. However, the programme needs a person who can manage to study on his own, manage time and is well disciplined. (IDI - IPTE-ODL teacher #3 - School C- 04/06/2014).

A Deputy District Education Manager who was also interviewed expressed more or less similar sentiments:

Teachers trained through the ODL programme are performing better than the IPTE 1+1 teachers. The ODL teachers do more practical work than the IPTE 1+1 who are more academic and generally poor on the practical side. However, the academic part of the ODL ought to be strengthened as well to make them even better, (IDI-Deputy District Education Manger # 1-District N- 26/05/2014).

From the literature reviewed, it has been noted that most of the ODL programmes in Teacher Education in the Sub-Saharan Africa are being offered as on-the-job training programmes. Student teachers get the training while serving as teachers to the school they are attached to. This is done to solve the critical teacher shortages in the primary schools in the midst of an enrolment surge as well as to reduce the number of unqualified teachers that are in the system. Countries cannot afford to keep these teachers in college and wait for two or more years for them to complete their training. Teachers are needed, presently, hence the on-the-job training. The on-the-job training for the IPTE-ODL has been achieved and from the quotations above there is an indication that it is an effective way of training teachers as it provides them with adequate time to practice more and to use the skills and knowledge that

they gained in the actual teaching. This is in line with level II that measures learner's application of knowledge, skills, and attitudes.

4.1.4 To provide foundation for life-long independent study

The study found out that some ODL teachers had enrolled into higher education institutions such as Mzuzu University, where ODL programmes are offered. One female IPTE- ODL who was entering her second year at Mzuzu University had this to say:

The programme is very good and has been of great benefit to me as an individual since it has prepared me very well in acquiring skills to study independently and I have therefore enrolled with the, Mzuzu University for an ODL degree programme in Education. I am optimistic that I will successfully complete the course and graduate, (IDI-IPTE-ODL teacher #2 - School B-03/06/2014).

Another male ODL student teacher had also secured a place at the same University and was in his first year and this is what he said:

The IPTE-ODL programme has taught me four main things; self-study, discipline, time management and resourcefulness. These same pillars are helping me in my studies as an ODL student at Mzuzu University (IDI- IPTE-ODL student teacher #7- School G -10/06 /2014).

These two extract show that these particular student teachers were more satisfied with the IPTE-ODL programme as it has aroused in them the interest to further their education. According to Moore (1991), most student teachers that undergo the ODL programme are independent and resourceful as they do not rely on tutors for their information but get it from books and peers. They also develop the capacity to carry out self-directed learning and continue to learn in their own environment (Moore,

1991). As a result, these student teachers develop a culture of reading which fosters critical thinking and motivates them to venture for further education (Moore, 1991). Some of them have gone for ODL programmes while others have gone for the conventional programme in institutions and colleges.

Teachers who were believed not to have had the right qualification to enter the conventional teacher-training programme, have upgraded themselves up and have found their way into the higher education bracket. The desire to advance in education is an indication of a change in behaviour and this falls under level III of the Kirkpatrick's four-level evaluation framework. This level measures and analyses the impact of training on the student teacher, as is clearly seen in the quotation above where the student teachers explain how the IPTE-ODL programme aroused their interest to join Mzuzu University for higher education.

4.1.5 To provide a motivation for the districts to be engaged in the preparation of primary school teachers

By engaging the districts in the recruitment process of the IPTE-ODL teachers, it was believed that the district officers would be motivated and will own the programme and therefore support the student teachers as they progressed with their training. Unfortunately, research findings were contrary to this vision. Despite engaging the DEM's office in this recruitment process, they failed to own the programme. The PEAs who were given the supervisory role, failed to fulfil their mandate as one district official explains in the following quote:

PEAs do not have full mandate, as they have not been oriented and therefore are not able to supervise the IPTE-ODL student teachers. PEAs involvement in the ODL programme is not clear (IDI -Deputy District Education Manager #1-District N-26/05/2014)

A PEA who lamented that they lacked formal training on how to assist the IPTE-ODL student teachers supports the foregoing in the statement below:

We were not given formal training on how to assist these ODL student teachers and therefore we fail to support them adequately, (IDI-PEA #1-Zone Q -28/05/2014)

The core function of a PEA is to supervise and provide professional support to the teachers (MoEST, 2015). However, all PEAs that were interviewed for this assignment expressed lack of knowledge and skills in supervising these IPTE-ODL teachers. One may, therefore, wonder how a PEA whose core duty is to supervise teachers may find it difficult to professionally support student teachers. One may think that they could use the very same knowledge and instruments they apply in supervising the qualified teachers to supervise and support the student teachers. Specifically, one would have expected that as they go into schools to supervise the qualified teachers, they would have taken the initiative to go into the classrooms of the IPTE-ODL teachers to observe their lessons and advise them accordingly. Unfortunately, this was not the case.

The study also revealed that there was less involvement of the key stakeholders at the inception of programme. This forced most of them to shun the programme resulting in little or no professional support being provided to the IPTE-ODL student teachers. Yet professional support is key in teacher education and especially in ODL

teacher-training programmes. According to Junaid (2014), teachers can be effective in their work only when they are given full professional support in their training. This is so because ODL learners learn independently and as such require more support if they are to be as equally good or much better trained than those trained through the conventional methods. The PEAs should have thus, embraced the ODL programme and owned it despite the challenges they claimed to have experienced. The PEAs, according to ministry, are adequately trained and have both in-depth knowledge and skills in supervision of all teachers, be it qualified or student teachers. By refusing to provide professional support to these ODL student teachers, the PEAs were just trying to demonstrate how dissatisfied they were with the programme. The study revealed that the PEAs had negative perception and attitudes towards the IPTE-ODL programme the major reason being that the programme provided no incentive to them.

As expected, the PEAs are always overwhelmed with work and the additional load of supervising IPTE-ODL student teachers made the situation worse especially bearing in mind that there were no financial gains by the end of the day. This made the PEAs to resent the programme. Other than this, most of them considered the programme to be inferior and felt that the programme would further lead to the dwindling of education quality in the country as is stated by an emotionally charged PEA #4.

Why do we not learn from our mistakes? Our education system is now in shambles because of the MITTEP. Instead of rectifying a problem that MITTEP created, we are now introducing the same MITTEP in the name of ODL. You, policy makers what are you doing up there at capital hill? Do you really love this country? You are destroying the education system of this country with your so-called ODL (IDI- PEA #4- Zone Z- 28/05/2014).

A number of stakeholders in a number of forums have voiced similar sentiments as those of PEA #4. However, to say that the IPTE-ODL programme is the same as the MITTEP is just a misconception since no study has been conducted to prove such sentiments. At the same time, these two programmes are very different in so many ways; their objectives, design, support systems and implementation strategies are all different.

For teachers to be effective in their work they need professional support (Junaid, 2014) which can be obtained from such professional and skilled personnel as PEAs. By refusing to provide professional support to the student teachers, the PEAs compromised the effectiveness of the programme since they denied the student teachers the chance of acquiring the right knowledge and skills needed for effective teaching. Still more, by looking at the number of objectives the programme achieved, it can be said that the programme is effective as four out of the five objective of the IPTE-ODL programme were fully achieved.

4.2 Stakeholders' Perceptions on the IPTE-ODL Programme

The effectiveness of the IPTE-ODL programme was also measured in terms of perceptions of the IPTE-ODL student teachers, head teachers, teachers, mentors, PEAs and ODL Field Supervisors. This was done using reaction that falls under

Level I of the Kirkpatrick's four-level evaluation framework. Reactions were, therefore, sort from these participants with the aim of finding out their levels of satisfaction with the programme.

4.2.1 Perceptions on the IPTE-ODL Programme

Most of the IPTE-ODL student teachers held the programme in high esteem. They felt the programme was good in a number of ways. According to these respondents, the IPTE-ODL programme was as good as any other conventional programmes and to some extent much better than the IPTE-1+1. The IPTE-ODL teachers were deemed to be hard workers, resourceful and always willing to work in the remote rural schools unlike the IPTE 1+1 teachers who mostly prefer the urban or semi urban schools. These IPTE-ODL student teachers went even further to suggest that the IPTE-ODL programme should replace the IPTE 1+1 programme. The excerpt below illustrates these perceptions:

The programme is good and should continue. The programme has helped the schools to at least have adequate numbers of teachers particularly those schools in the very remote rural areas. Again, in those schools where female teachers refused to go to, now at least there is one or two and these are coming from the villages surrounding the schools within the community, which is an advantage as these female teachers are good role models for the girls (IDI-Head teacher #2 –School B-03/06/2014).

Mentors too had similar views as those of the head teachers and one of them had this to say:

The programme is very good as it has helped to improve the pupil: teacher ratios in the very remote rural schools like ours and most of these IPTE-ODL teachers are better teachers than those trained through the IPTE1+1 programme (IDI-Mentor #2- School B- 03/06/2014).

All the ODL Field Supervisors that were interviewed also echoed these sentiments and one of them stressed that:

The programme is good and, therefore, has to continue. Recruit even those from the cities since there is a very critical shortage of teachers out there. One student teacher is handling a class of over 200 learners meaning that there is still need for more teachers particularly in the lower classes, standard 1 to 5. (IDI- ODL- Field Supervisor #1- District N-28/05/2014).

From the sentiments expressed above, it is clear that most of participants that were interviewed had positive perception towards the IPTE-ODL programme. Most of them felt that the programme was good just because it had increased the number of teachers in the rural schools thereby reducing the high pupil: teacher ratios that existed in these schools. For them, what mattered most was having a teacher in front of a class and whether this teacher was effectively delivering or not, this mattered less. Thus, the quality of this teacher and the effectiveness of his teaching did no matter at all. However, a few more proponents looked beyond just having a teacher in front of a class. They were interested with the actual teaching and most of them were impressed with the performance of these IPTE-ODL teachers in front of class.

These participants also viewed the IPTE-ODL teachers to be better teachers than those trained through conventional training programmes. To them the IPTE-ODL teachers were hard workers and very competent in their teaching job. These

sentiments compare very well with those of Perraton (1993) and Simpson (2002), who in their studies which were conducted after examining a number of ODL programmes, concluded that ODL programmes compare very well in both quality and teacher competence with the conventional programmes and that there are no significant differences between the two modes of training teachers. With this evidence in mind, the IPTE-ODL programme too has been rated as an effective teacher-training programme and Head teacher #4 confirms this conclusion in the following quote:

These IPTE-ODL teachers are my best teachers compared to the rest of the teachers in this school. They are hard workers, their teaching is excellent, and I am sure you can agree with me having observed them teaching (IDI - Head teacher #4 - School D-05/06/2014.

Despite the majority of the participants favouring the IPTE-ODL programme, a few others looked at the programme with discontentment. They had their own dissenting views and mostly it was the PEAs as is illustrated in the quote below:

The IPTE ODL programme like the MITTEP will continue to bring down the quality of education down. Why not use these precious resources to boost the conventional IPTE 1+1 programme to yield best results (IDI-PEA #4-Zone Z-28/05/2014)

The negative perceptions of PEA #4 were cemented by the perception of Desk Officer #1 who once served as a PEA in the district. The desk officer downgraded the programme as is stated in the following quote:

These IPTE-ODL teachers are empty-headed, arrogant and non-performers. The programme should be phased out. Let us use the IPTE 1+1 programme to train our teachers if we really want quality education in this country (IDI - Desk Officer #1- N-26/05/2014).

Much as it may be noted that these sentiments have some truth in them, there was no evidence to discredit the IPTE-ODL programme as being an ineffective programme nor was there any evidence to substantiate the claim that the conventional programmes are more superior. Neither is there evidence that teachers train through conventional programmes are of good quality, very effective and competent in their professional work than those trained through the ODL programme. This is so because no study has been conducted on any of these programmes to establish their effectiveness as teacher training programmes. Other than the PEAs, some of the IPTE-ODL teachers themselves registered some reservation on the IPTE-ODL programme. However, for them, the negative sentiments came about due to the treatment they got from teachers trained through the other programmes as IPTE-ODL teacher #6 expresses:

I do not like how our colleagues, trained through the conventional programmes, view us. Most of them resent and ridicule us. They do not call us by our names. To them our name is “aphunzitsi a ODL” (ODL teachers) and this is demining. They underrate our training programme and us. May be it is because of the entry qualification. I wish this could be like that of the IPTE 1+1 programme, a credit in Mathematics, English and in one Science subject. May be this could make them respect us as they do with the IPTE1+1 teachers (IDI - IPTE-ODL teacher #6 -School F-09/06/2014).

The foregoing reactions from both the PEAs and the IPTE-ODL teachers are very beneficial, as they would assist in identifying areas that needed improvement or change in the programme. Hence, the need to look at these criticisms positively and come up with solutions to address them. This will make the programme to be more effective and the remove the misconceptions that the IPTE-ODL programme produce half-baked teachers that cannot competently and effectively teach.

4.2.2 Orientation period

The IPTE-ODL programme is a 2½ years teacher-training programme that is divided into two phases; the college-based phase and the school-based phase (Rumble, 2011). During the college-based phase, student teachers are oriented for three weeks soon after recruitment where they are drilled in teaching pedagogy, training modules and teaching ethics (MoEST, 2010). Thereafter, they have four face-to-face sessions of 2 weeks each. These are conducting during the recess period in college. The school-based phase covers the remaining period of the training. Student teachers are attached to various primary schools in the rural areas and practice teaching with the support of experienced class teachers, mentors and ODL supervisors (Rumble, 2011). From the study, all the participants that were interviewed expressed their discontentment with the orientation period. They all felt that the orientation period was inadequate for the student teachers to grasp the basic skills and knowledge of teaching. They all had the sentiment that the orientation period should be increased to at least two months and the other consecutive face-to-face sessions to be increased to a month each to allow more interface time between the student teachers with their tutors and peers and to allow them to use the library. This is what an IPTE-ODL student teacher said:

The three-week college based phase was just too little for us to grasp all those concepts in teacher education. I wish it were increased to at least 8 weeks at the beginning of the programme and between 3 to 4 weeks during the subsequent face-to-face sessions (IDI - IPTE-ODL #7 - School G -10/06/2014).

Similarly, a Deputy District Education Manager also indicated that the three weeks orientation period was not adequate to effectively prepare these teachers professionally. She was of the view that the period should be increase to at least three months as expressed in this quote:

The ODL programme fails to prepare these teachers professionally, bearing in mind that the orientation period is just three weeks. What can one learn in three weeks? I wish the policy makers would consider increasing the orientation period to at least 3 months or even 6 months,(IDI - Desk Officer #1- District N-26/05/2014)

According to these respondents, there is need for more time for orientation. The more time they spend in college, the better they are professionally prepared. The three weeks are not adequate for them to learn and acquire teaching techniques and skills that will enable them effectively teach, hence the suggestion to increase the orientation period. However, most of the studies that have been conducted world over have revealed that the length of the orientation period, whether long or short, has no effect on the teachers trained through the ODL programme. There are some programmes that had just three weeks of orientation and yet they are said to be more effective. The MUKA of Tanzania is an example. Student teachers in the MUKA programme were oriented for 1 week at the beginning of the course and had a one-week face-to-face session twice a year during holidays in June and December (Kruijir, 2010). The ZINTEC, on the other hand had an orientation period of 6

months, split into two sessions of 3 months each (Lynd, 2005). The first session of 3 months was at the beginning of the course and the other session of 3 months at the end of the course. In between, the student teachers taught in schools while receiving face-to-face tutorial support from the tutors. ZINTEC was considered successful in terms of both quality and cost-effectiveness since its students were prepared well before being sent into schools to practice teaching.

Despite the differences in the orientation period between the *MUKA* and the ZINTEC, both programmes were rated as effective and as such, the three-week orientation period for the IPTE ODL programme is sufficient to help the student teachers grasp the major concepts in the teaching profession. The orientation period should therefore not be a cause of concern, as it has no effect on neither the programme nor the product.

4.2.3 Workload of the IPTE-ODL student teachers

All respondents felt that the programme was overloaded and the work was too much for student teachers. Guidelines for the programme clearly stipulated that a student teacher should be paired with a qualified teacher and that subjects should be shared between them. Unfortunately, this was not followed in most schools due to the critical shortage of teachers in such schools. About 60% of the IPTE-ODL teachers that were interviewed said that they were given a full class and had to teach between 35 and 45 periods per week. According to the guidelines, the maximum number of periods per week for student teachers is 20 (MoEST, 2010). The student teacher is also required to teach a class of 60 learners or below (MoEST, 2010). The study, however, revealed that most of IPTE-ODL student teachers were given classes with

an enrolment as high as 200 learners, making class management very difficult and challenging. This was also against the ministry's recommendation on pupil: teacher ratio of 60:1 (NESP, 2008) and double shifting guidelines, (MoEST, 2010, unpublished). Table 4 illustrates the workload of the student teachers.

Table 5: Workload for the IPTE-ODL student teachers

Name of Teacher	No. of periods per week	Class allocated	Class Enrolment		
			Boys	Girls	Total
Teacher #1	17	4	53	27	80
Teacher #2	20	4	100	130	230
Teacher #3	35	4	90	110	200
Teacher #4	47	3	100	145	245
Teacher #5	47	2	60	60	120
Teacher #6	35	4	34	40	74
Teacher #7	20	4	110	120	230
Teacher #8	20	3	43	55	98
Teacher #9	30	5	68	190	285
Teacher #10	20	4	80	100	180
Teacher #11	45	6	20	23	43
Teacher #12	17	4	25	15	40

Source: Researcher's analysed data.

Guidelines also clearly dictate that the IPTE-ODL student teachers should be allocated standards 3 and 4 only (MoEST, 2011; Rumble, 2011). On the contrary, the IPTE-ODL student teachers in most schools were made to teach standards 1 and 2 or 6 and 7 and this posed a great challenge to most of them. According to MoEST (2010), these classes are very difficult to teach and require very experienced teachers. Standards 1 and 2 are challenging as the learners are just being introduced

to structured learning and have very short attention spans (MoEST, 2011). Standards 6 and 7, on the other hand, are also challenging as the learners are more inquisitive, more engaging and ask many questions (MoEST, 2011).

This, therefore, put the learners at a huge disadvantage, as the IPTE-ODL student teachers could not effectively engage and respond to their questions and as for the IPTE-ODL student teachers, this was frustrating. Standards 1 and 2 are the foundation of the primary school education and it is this level that determines the product at standard eight. Any mismanagement of this level, results into high repetition rate, high dropout rate and low achievement rate. There is, therefore, great need to handle this level with much care if the system is to produce excellent learners for the next level of education.

By giving the student-teachers a huge work load of more than 20 periods a week and a large class with an enrolment of as many as 200 learners, the student-teachers could not have adequate time to prepare for lessons, write assignments, attend study circles or listen to the IPTE-ODL *Tikwere* Radio programme, let alone have quality time with their families not to mention resting. This on the other hand was to the advantage of these teachers as they had real working experience. These teachers were able to face the challenges of education and come up with their solutions at the same time they were also able to develop skills of managing large class and using learner centred methodologies in their lesson presentations which is in line with level II of the Kirkpatrick's four-level evaluation framework.

4.3 Teacher performance

The study has also revealed that the IPTE-ODL teachers are as competent as those teachers trained through the conventional training programmes. This conclusion was based on lesson observations that were conducted on some of the IPTE-ODL teachers. Four teachers, two females and two males, had their lessons observed by the researcher who is a seasoned educationist with support from a PEA from Lilongwe Rural East. A total of ten lessons were observed using an observation checklist (appendix 6).

From the ten lessons observed, seven of them were excellent, two were good and one was poor. All the teachers except one knew their subject content. There was evidence that the three of these teachers had thoroughly and carefully prepared their lessons. They all had well-planned and well-written schemes and records of work, detailed lesson plans and lesson notes which they effectively used. However, the one teacher that performed poorly did so because he had challenges in the English language.

Despite this challenge, all the teachers used a variety of learner centred methodologies with group work dominating. Unfortunately, the group work could not be effectively utilised due to large class sizes. A group would be composed by not less than 20 learners making it impossible for each one of them to fully participate in the discussions. Again, the schools had inadequate numbers of textbooks and as such, each group would be given not more than three books. This made the learners not to fully participate in the group work.

Despite this challenge of textbooks, these three teachers were very resourceful in that they created additional teaching and learning materials in the form of charts and flash cards, which they used to explain the concepts to the learners. One of the teachers who taught Mathematics in standard 7 had clock faces made out of cardboard paper and pupils used these in groups to tell the time as is illustrated in the picture below:



Figure 1: A standard 6 Mathematics class at school J

Source: Researcher Photos

The three teachers also demonstrated that they could effectively teach. They presented their lessons very well starting with the introduction that was built from what the learners already knew, either from the previous lesson or from life experiences. Then the main body that contain the subject matter was presented using a variety of methods and a variety of teaching and learning aids. The conclusion part was also well done in most of the lessons. Feedback was given through the question

and answer sessions, exercises or assignments. Most importantly, class management was good and learner participation was excellent. Girls participated more than the boys did. However, due to the problem of large classes, it was very difficult to mark all exercise books within the 35-minute period and as such; some teachers resorted to collecting the exercise books and marking them during recess. The performance of the three IPTE-ODL teachers was exceptionally good. They managed to transfer knowledge and skills to their learners and this proves that the IPTE-ODL teachers are equally competent as any conventionally trained teachers. A number of evaluation studies conducted all over the world also hold similar views. For example, in the two enquires that were conducted in Tanzania on the *MUKA* programme, it was revealed that student teachers trained at a distance do perform better than those trained in traditional pre-service programs on a number of measures of classroom performance (Lynd, 2005). Again, in Zimbabwe, the ZINTEC teachers were considered highly qualified and even much better than the conventional trained teachers in terms of practical skills and experience (Kangai & Bukaliya, 2011). Chakwera (2005) also proved that the distance teacher education that was provided at Domasi Teachers College compared favourably in terms of quality with the conventional programme. Some of the participants to the study also share these views and one such participant was a head teacher who said that:

These ODL teachers are better than some of us, the so called qualified teachers, and even much better than the IPTE 1+1 teachers and that is why I have located a standard 7 class to this lady, (IDI - Head teacher, #3-School C- 04/06/2014).

Indeed, these IPTE-ODL teachers are very good and even better than those trained through the conventional programmes and this was proved by the three IPTE-ODL

teachers whose lessons were observed. They were excellent in class management, lesson preparation and presentation. They were also very confident which helped them to gain respect from their learners at the same time able to control them. Such being the case, therefore, it was concluded that the IPTE-ODL was a very effective programme as it enabled the student teachers to transfer knowledge and skills to the learners and this is in line with both levels II and III of the Kirkpatrick's Four-Level of Evaluation. These two levels determine the amount of knowledge and skills acquired and transferred. According to Polchin (2014), the amount of knowledge and skills acquired and transferred can be measured through observation by using an observation checklist.

4.4 Professional Support given to the IPTE-ODL student-teachers

The other way in which the effectiveness of the IPTE-ODL programme was evaluated was through an assessment of the professional support that the IPTE-ODL student teachers received from various educational stakeholders. This is in line with the Kirkpatrick's four-Level of Evaluation. According to Peratton (2010), student teachers need close supervision and continuous coaching during their school-based year if they are to acquire sound practical competencies. These sentiments are further expounded by Chiyongo (2010), who says that student support is very important and crucial in teacher education. Kruijer (2010) holds similar views when he says that success of ODL programmes largely depends on the availability of sufficient support from mentors and colleagues at the school level and that personal support, such as observation of classroom practice and the offering of feedback, are some of the essential element in effective ODL teacher education programmes.

When the IPTE-ODL programme was being designed, these essential elements were considered. A whole chapter on teacher learner support was included in the IPTE-ODL learner's handbook. Roles of all key stakeholders of the programme were clearly spelt out. Unfortunately, the stakeholders had not performed their roles due various reasons and such being the case, therefore, not much support was given to the IPTE-ODL cohort 1 student teachers.

Findings revealed that the TTC tutors and PEAs did not supervise these ODL-student teachers. The mentors and head teachers, however, provided some support though not adequate. The study also revealed that moderation was done during the last face-to-face session during microteaching just before commencement of the final national examination and not in the schools where they were practicing teaching.

According to research findings, the tutors failed to supervise their students because of two main challenges. Firstly, they had a heavy workload as they had to teach the conventional students in the IPTE 1+1 programme and, at the same time, supervise the IPTE-ODL student teachers in the field. The IPTE 1+1 student-teacher were favoured at the expense of the IPTE-ODL student-teachers. Secondly, the colleges did not receive adequate funding from the government to enable the tutors to go out and supervise these IPTE-ODL student teachers. Much of the funding the TTCs were getting was being used to pay for the upkeep allowances for the IPTE-ODL student teachers, leaving the colleges with very little or no resources at all for supervision. As a way of mitigating the situation, the TTCs relied on the PEAs, mentors and the head teachers to do the supervision.

Unfortunately, these people did not do much since they, too, were inadequately capacitated and this left the IPTE-ODL student teachers with just minimal support, which, to some extent, was an advantage to the IPTE-ODL teachers as they were forced to develop a spirit of independence and resourcefulness. They were able to source professional and material support from friends and colleagues within and outside the schools. They therefore, managed to gain more professional knowledge and skills that enabled them to effectively and competently teach the learners under their charge.

The study also revealed that the ministry did not recruit field supervisors and, therefore, most of the IPTE-ODL cohort 1 student teachers had to rely on their fellow student teachers, PEAs or mentors for professional support. Unfortunately, none of these provided them with the much-needed support due to various reasons. The PEAs, for instance, claimed to have been overwhelmed and engulfed in their own heavy workloads and had little time spared to support these student teachers. Further, both PEAs and Mentors claimed that they were not oriented on the programme hence did not know how to support the IPTE-ODL student teachers. All these appeared to be lame excuses. Every teacher knows what supervision entails and can therefore conduct supervision. Supervision in any form and with whatever instrument would have made a difference in the student teachers' professional work. However, lack of it denied them the chance to get quality professional advice. There were a few who were fortunate and had been located to schools that had their head teachers and mentors trained to support the IPTE 1+1 student teachers which they also extended to the IPTE-ODL student teachers as one head teachers explains:

I was not trained for the IPTE-ODL programme, but I was trained for the IPTE 1+1 programme and I therefore used the very same knowledge and skills to support the IPTE-ODL student-teachers that were allocated to my school. (IDI-Head teacher #1- School A- 02/06/2014).

In some instances, head teachers, class teachers and mentors used the knowledge and experience gained during the training of MASTEP and MITTEP teachers and their own knowledge as qualified teachers to support these IPTE-ODL teachers. As such, those attached to good and skilled teachers became good and skilled too but those attached to those that were not so good had challenges.

In some schools, head teachers claimed that they were not informed of the need to appoint mentors and as such these schools had none, hence no support to the ODL-student teachers. In some instances, a mentor was identified but not oriented in his roles and responsibilities and therefore ended up giving less support to the student teachers.

The professional support given to these IPTE-ODL students' teachers was mostly on how to write lesson plans, schemes, and records of work and it was the head teacher and the mentor that gave this kind of support. Not much lesson observation was done since it was mostly the mentor teacher who was assigned this responsibility. Unfortunately, these mentors had heavy workloads due to the critical shortage of teachers in the schools, leaving them with little or no time to spare. The same was the case with the head teachers who often times were occupied with management issues on top of teaching a class. Like the mentors, they too had very little time to spare for lesson observations.

4.5 Challenges in the IPTE-ODL Programme

This question of challenges of the IPTE-ODL programme was directed to IPTE-ODL teachers, District Officials, PEAs, ODL-Field Supervisors, head teachers and mentors. A number of challenges were identified and these included, delays in payment of allowances, lack of Teaching and Learning Materials (TLMs), large class sizes, inadequate school infrastructure, particularly, classrooms and inadequate support and these have been clearly in the subsequent paragraphs.

4.5.1 Delays in the payment of upkeep allowances

The issue of allowances featured prominently throughout the interviews with about 48% of the student teachers identifying the issue of allowances as a major challenge as is indicated in this quote:

Allowances must be paid on time to enable the student-teacher support himself financially. Most of us come from poor families and when you secure a job you expect to be paid to support yourself and your family (IDI - IPTE-ODL teacher #7 -School G- 10/06/2014).

Another IPTE-ODL had this to say:

Allowances must be paid each and every month and in good time to enable the student-teacher buy teaching and learning materials and other necessities like soap so that he is clean and presentable as the job requires of him to be (IDI - IPTE-ODL teacher #10 - School J- 13/06/2014).

The findings also revealed that at the beginning of the programme, the ODL-student-teachers were included on the pay roll of their district and as such, they got their allowances each month on time and together with the rest of the teachers in the district. This, however, changed in the second term of their training after treasury issued an instruction to the Ministry of Education Science and Technology to pay

the student teachers an allowance outside the payroll. The reason for this was that these IPTE-ODL student teachers were temporary employees of the ministry and were, therefore, not entitled to a salary but to an allowance. This system resulted in delays with student teachers spending up to six months without pay yet they had to procure their own teaching and learning materials at the same time take care of their families, as most of them were married. This delay, therefore, frustrated and de-motivated most of these student teachers as IPTE-ODL teacher #11 expresses:

Unlike our counterparts, the IPTE 1+1 student teachers, we have to buy our own teaching and learning materials such as chart paper, markers etc. On top of this, most of us are married and have families to take care of. Our own source of income is this allowance and any delay in getting this allowance affects us both at school and in our homes. Why should we go to work on an empty stomach or wearing dirty clothes or fail to prepare teaching and learning materials just because we do not have money to buy either food or soap or paper? This is frustrating and very de-motivating (IDI - IPTE-ODL student teacher #11 - School K-16/06/2014).

Indeed, this was frustrating and de-motivating to most of these IPTE-ODL student teachers. Most of these IPTE-ODL student teachers were recruited from remote rural areas where poverty is extremely high and could therefore not afford to buy stationary on their own. The government through the TTCs needed to provide all the needed stationary to these student teachers as it was doing with the IPTE1+1 student teachers as this will enable them to thoroughly prepare for their lessons. The upkeep allowances are equally important. Most of these IPTE-ODL student teachers were married and had families to take care of and with their busy and tight schedule; they could not participate in any income generating activities. Most of their free time was

spent on lesson preparation, attending study circles or listening to *Tikwere* radio programme and these allowances were their only source of income. Timely payment of these allowances would have, therefore, been a motivating factor to these student teachers. It would have assisted them to procure their personal needs like food, soap and even the much-needed stationary. A teacher can only effectively teach if the basic needs are made available, No teacher can teach effectively without food at the same time a teacher who dresses smartly is always respected by both students and the community. Government, therefore, needed to make sure that these allowances are paid to the student teachers on time.

4.5.2 Inadequate professional support

Another challenge was little or no professional support being given to the IPTE-ODL teachers. According to the IPTE-ODL guidelines, ODL-field supervisors were supposed to be recruited and placed in the zones to provide professional support to the IPTE-ODL student teachers (MoEST, 2010; Rumble, 2011). The ministry did not recruit these ODL-Field Supervisors and the IPTE-ODL cohort 1 completed their training without these field officers being put in place. Ideally, the ODL-field supervisors were supposed to be recruited and trained before the commencement of the programme. However, due to some logistical problems, this did not happen. Instead, the PEAs, head teachers and mentors were tasked with the function of providing the support to the IPTE-ODL student teachers. Unfortunately, most of them were not oriented and, as such, had no idea of the support they were supposed to give to these ODL-student-teachers. Thus, no support, apart from checking schemes and records of work and lesson plans, was given to these IPTE-ODL student teachers. This frustrated most of them despite having joined the teaching profession eagerly and with the enthusiasm to learn. This, again, left the student

teachers with no choice but to rely mostly on the modules and for those who were very resourceful, on the IPTE 1+1 student-teachers, which was more or less, the blind leading the blind as the IPTE 1+1 student-teachers were students themselves. Such being the case, therefore, about 26% of the respondents identified lack of professional support as one of the major challenges encountered during the training of the IPTE-ODL cohort 1 teachers.

4.5.3 Large class size

The other challenge was the issue of large classes. About 13 % of the respondents indicated this as a challenge. According to NESP, the recommended pupil to teacher ratio is 60:1 (MoEST, 2008). In most rural schools in Malawi, however, the pupil to teacher ratio is as high as 200:1. Thus, most of the IPTE-ODL student teachers found themselves in such situations as can be seen in the figure 2 below:



Figure 2: An overcrowded classroom at School F

Source: Researcher's photos

Figure 2, above shows one of the overcrowded classrooms. The IPTE-ODL student teachers were allocated to such big classes and had to teach without any support. This was contrary to the IPTE-ODL guidelines which clearly emphasise the need to allocate a class of not more than 60 learners to a student teacher and that a student teacher should be paired with a well-qualified teacher, (Rumble, 2011). In reality, this was not possible due to the critical shortage of teachers in the Malawian primary schools. Again, IPTE-ODL guidelines clearly stipulating that a student teacher should be given a workload of between 12 and 20 periods a week (MoEST, 2010). With the shortage of teachers and classrooms in schools, these student teachers had to teach about 35 periods a week or even more. This left the student teachers with inadequate time to prepare lessons, write assignments, attend study circles and participate in the *Tikwere* Radio programmes. This was a real life experience and an advantage to the IPTE-ODL-student teachers as it helped them to develop skills in managing large classes and time and thus achieving level two of the Kirkpatrick's four level of evaluation framework.

4.5.4 Class misallocation

Some of the IPTE-ODL student teachers were allocated either standards 1, 2, 6 or 7 and yet guidelines clearly state that any student teacher should be allocated only standards 3 and 4 (MoEST, 2010). This misallocation came about due to the critical shortage of teachers in most of these rural schools. Unfortunately, this compromised quality of education in these schools. According to MoEST, (2011), standards 1 and 2 are the foundation of the whole education system where as standards 6 and 7 are the foundation for standard 8 and thereafter secondary school education. These classes are too demanding and at the same time too challenging to the student teachers. Such being the case therefore, most of them got de-motivated, as they

could not effectively teach. This had a bearing on their final results as well as on the performance of their pupils.

4.5.5 Inadequate teaching and learning materials

The other challenge was lack of teaching and learning materials. Most schools did not have adequate teaching and learning materials such as textbooks and teachers guides. As such, the student teachers had to borrow these from neighbouring schools or colleagues in the IPTE1+1 programme as IPTE-ODL student teacher expresses:

The programme does not provide us with stationary like paper, flipchart, folders and pentel pens, as is the case with the IPTE1 + 1 student teachers. We have to buy on our own or beg from friends and colleagues. (IDI-IPTE-ODL student teacher #1 - School A – 02/06/2014).

As it is clearly stated in the quote, the IPTE-ODL student-teachers, most of the times, lacked teaching and learning materials as they had to buy on their own using the allowances they were paid. Unfortunately, these allowances were paid to them very late. Often times, the payment would be done three months or even six months late and this was frustrating to the student teachers, as they could not buy the much-needed teaching and learning materials. However, the training modules were given to them on time and this enabled them to write their assignments in time as well as to study in preparation for examinations.

4.5.6 Inadequate orientation time

Another challenge was on the three-week orientation period. All the respondents felt that the three weeks' orientation period left them half-baked since they were inadequately prepared for the teaching profession. This is what some was not

adequate for the student teachers to grasp all the important teaching concepts. This is what some of them had to say:

The orientation period need to increase to 4 months so that the trainees are well-drilled on how to write lesson plans, schemes as well as on how to present a lesson (IDI -IPTE-ODL teacher #8 - School H-11/06/2014)

Another IPTE-ODL teacher wanted the student teachers to be given adequate time at the end of the course to prepare for their final examinations and this is what he said:

Time for orientation need to be increased to 1 month and before writing exams, another 1 month should be given for students to effectively prepare for exams (IDI- IPTE-ODL student teacher #7- School G -10/06/2014)

One of the head teachers also had similar views that the orientation period was too short for the student teachers to acquire the pedagogical skills and suggested that it should be increased to at least 4 weeks. A mentor, on the other hand, suggested that the period be increased to 4 months. In general, what clearly came out of all these conversations is that the orientation period of three weeks was not adequate. It needs to be revised and increased to at least a month so that student teachers have adequate time to interact with their tutors, peers and even access libraries and laboratories in the college. By interacting more with the tutors and peers, the student- teachers become more professionally equipped to effectively and confidently handle a class. According to the research findings, it was further established that most of the ODL-student-teachers lacked confidence in the first term of their training as is indicated by Fuller and Kartz (1998). It was also established that most of them had problems in lesson preparation and presentation, class management, writing of schemes and

records of work and lesson plans until after the first term as student teacher #4 explains:

In my first term of work, I had difficulties in choosing appropriate methods of teaching and this coupled with the large class I was assigned, made it very difficult for me to manage and control my pupils. The college did not prepare us well for what we were about to face out there in the field. Though the methods were clearly explained in the modules we were not trained on how to use them and again not much was explained on class management. However, I am glad to say I learnt fast and within a term I was able to overcome all my challenges, (IDI- IPTE-ODL student teacher # 4 -School D- 05/06/2014).

4.5.7 Inadequate class space

The other challenge was inadequate classroom space due to inadequate infrastructure in the schools. According to MoEST (2011), most schools in Malawi are faced with a critical shortage of classrooms, resulting in most pupils learning in open air and under trees. The IPTE-ODL student teachers were not spared. They too were forced to conduct classes in the open, under trees as illustrated in Figure 3:



Figure 3: An open air class at school E

Source: Researcher's photos

Lack of classroom space posed a big challenge to most of the ODL-student teachers, as they could not effectively deliver instructions to their pupils. Professionally, it is a requirement for a teacher to prepare teaching and learning materials to aid the teaching and learning process. These teaching and learning materials need to be prepared and displayed on the walls to clarify concepts and assist the learner to learn better and to be reminded of what they have learnt thereafter (MoEST,2011). Unfortunately, this is not possible in most schools in Malawi. Most lessons are conducted under trees as is the case in the picture above and it is therefore impossible, for both student-teachers and qualified teachers, to display these teaching and learning aids in an open class. This, to some extent, brought some frustration, which culminated into laziness and de-motivation in some student teachers. It also destroyed a sense of innovation and creativity in the student teacher and, to some extent, affected the performance of the pupils under their charge. For the IPTE-ODL student teachers, production, use and display of these teaching and learning materials contribute towards their final grade hence very important if they were to pass their final examinations as is explained by IPTE-ODL student teacher #2.

This school has only one school block with two classrooms that have been assigned to standard 7 and 8. The rest of the classes are conducted outside, under these trees. According to my college tutors, I was supposed to teach in a classroom and display my teaching and learning aids on the walls for reference during teaching. I was disappointed since I could not do so and yet this was supposed to contribute towards my final grade (IDI -IPTE-ODL student teacher #2 - School B- 03/06/2014).

Indeed, teaching under a tree frustrated most student teachers as it was very hard to make learners understanding concepts that could have been better explained by displays of pictures and tables on the walls of a classroom.

4.5.8 Lack of accommodation in the schools

The other challenge was on accommodation. The guidelines stipulate that the recruitment of the IPTE-ODL student teachers should be done at zonal level and that only youth with Malawi School Certification of Education (MSCE) and native to that zone should be recruited to give them an opportunity to get training and be employed. The guidelines also aim at addressing the housing problem, which is critical to most rural schools, as student teachers would be operating from their own homes. Unfortunately, this was not the case in most schools especially those in the districts that are bordering with urban districts. Most youths in urban district cheated their way into the programme and in some cases with the aid of the PEAs. However, in other instances, this was done because some of the remote rural areas could not produce even a single youth with the right qualifications for the programme and yet more teachers were needed in the schools in those areas. This resulted into student teachers being posted to schools that were very far away from their homes and therefore needing accommodation, which was not readily available in most schools as teacher # 7 laments:

Yes, I had applied to teach at a school in this zone but not at this particular one. This school is far away from my home and I cannot manage to walk every day. If I had a bicycle maybe I could. I have been forced to look for accommodation in this area and the SMC got me a house within the village though the house is grass-thatched and would do with some maintenance. I do not like it but what can I do, I need the training and the job (IDI -IPTE-ODL teacher #7 - School G -10/06/2014).

To this ODL-student-teacher and others, this was a challenge as they were forced to either stay in dilapidated houses within the school or to rent a house within the community and thus, violating one of the fundamental principles of the IPTE-ODL programme on teacher housing and accommodation. The IPTE-ODL programme is designed in a way that student teachers should be recruited within the school catchment so that they can operate from their own homes. This is done to address the critical shortage of houses that schools are grappling with. Unfortunately, this fundamental principle was not adhered to resulting in most of the IPTE-ODL student asking for accommodation in the schools they were sent to teach. Most of them were housed in dilapidated houses within the schools or out in the away in the community and this de-motivated them also affected their performance in the school.

4.6 Proposals on how to improve IPTE-ODL programme

The study revealed three major areas that need to be improved on if the IPTE-ODL programme was to be an effective teacher-training programme. The areas were; orientation period; student professional support services; and resources.

4.6.1 Orientation period

All the respondents emphasised on the need to increase the orientation period from the current 3 weeks to at least 2 months to enable the IPTE-ODL student teachers to have an interface with the tutors and to adequately understand the theory part of teaching. This will also help them to use the college library and therefore enhance their knowledge from additional information they will get from the books or the internet. By interacting with their peers, they will also be able to acquire some knowledge and skills. As such, there is need for policy makers to look into this area and adjust the orientation period while bearing in mind the financial implications of such adjustments.

4.6.2 Student professional support services

Student support is of vital importance in distance education as it positively relates to the performance of the student teachers (Chiyongo, 2010). Such being the case therefore, this area needs to be considered for improvement. The ministry should clearly define the supervisory role of each stakeholder. The ODL-field supervisors, PEAs, Head teachers, and mentors should be thoroughly oriented in their roles as supervisors and guidelines and supervision tools should be supplied to them.

4.6.3 Resources

The research findings revealed that the programme lacked resources, hence the many challenges. This area, therefore, needs to be looked into and improvement be made if the programme is to be effectively implemented. Firstly, the ministry should provide teaching and learning materials in the form of manuals, syllabi, paper, folders, chart paper, markers and note books to the ODL student teachers just as it does with the IPTE 1+1 student teachers. The Ministry should also allocate adequate funds to the TTCs for supervision and student monthly upkeep allowances. The

ODL field supervisors and the PEAs should also be provided with mobility in the form of motor bicycles and or fuel.

4.6.4 Large class size and class misallocation.

The research findings revealed that the programme had failed to orient Head teachers and PEAs on their duties and responsibilities. As a result, student teachers were given large classes with about 120 learners and in most schools, they were allocated to infant classes or senior classes. This was in contradiction to what is being stipulated in the IPTE-ODL booklet. To address these two challenges there is need to allocate adequate resources for orientation and monitoring of the programme so that head teachers understand the programme and provide the necessary support to the student teachers.

4.6.5 Lack of teacher accommodation

Student teachers for the IPTE-ODL programme are supposed to be recruited and allocated to schools close to their homes. Unfortunately, for districts that are near to cities or towns, some young men and women from the urban districts were also recruited and it is these that had problems in finding accommodation in these remote rural schools. DEMs and PEAs need to stick to rules and regulations stipulated in the IPTE-ODL booklet and engage only those that come from the villages around the school. This will address the issue of housing, as they will be operating from their homes.

4.7 Chapter Summary

This chapter has reported on the findings and discussed the results of the study. The chapter started by looking at the overview of the chapter. It, thereafter, discussed

the IPTE-ODL programmes in terms of its objectives, completion rate, retention rate, participants' perceptions of the programme, teacher performance and ability to transfer knowledge and skills to their learners, nature and level of professional support given to the IPTE-ODL student-teachers and the challenges that were met during the training of the IPTE-ODL cohort 1 teachers. According to the findings, almost all the objectives of the programme were achieved but with some challenges. Still more, the programme was considered an effective teacher-training programme. On perceptions of the participants, some of them felt the programme was good, while others felt that the programme was inferior. Almost all participants agreed that the orientation period need to be increased, as the three weeks were not adequate to prepare these student teachers into professional teachers that can effectively teach.

This chapter also discussed challenges of the programme one of which was lack of professional support to the IPTE-ODL student teachers. It was revealed that very little support was given to these student teachers. It was also revealed that there was no orientation of the main key stakeholders especially the PEAs, head teacher and mentors on their role in the programme, making them unable to provide the much-needed professional support to the ODL-student teachers. This also caused resentment amongst the PEAs and other key players such as the head teachers and mentors. The chapter concludes with a proposal on how to improve the IPTE-ODL programme. Three areas, which are duration of orientation period, professional support and resources, have been identified as the main areas that need improvement.

The next chapter will provide conclusions of the study. It will also explain the implications of the study and highlight a number of recommendations to various stakeholders in teacher education.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

5.0 Chapter Overview

This chapter presents the conclusions and implications on the findings of this study. The effectiveness of the IPTE-ODL programme has been assessed through literature review, observation of the student teachers as well as through interviews with the IPTE-ODL teachers, Deputy District Education Manager, Desk Officer, PEAs, ODL-Field Supervisors, head teachers and mentors. The chapter also discusses the implications and areas for further research. It is envisaged that the conclusions and implications made in this chapter will assist policy makers to make informed decisions on how to improve the IPTE-ODL programme with the aim of making it a more effective teacher-training programme in Malawi.

5.1 Conclusions

The purpose of the study was to examine the effectiveness of the IPTE-ODL programme in the provision of quality teacher education to primary school teachers in Malawi. Seven indicators were used to analyse the effectiveness of the IPTE-ODL programme, namely, objectives, completion rate, retention rate, perceptions, teacher performance, professional support and challenges.

In order to get meaningful conclusions, six research questions were answered out of which a number of themes were generated. These themes were analysed using a qualitative design which was deemed suitable because the emphasis of the study was to provide an interpretation of the meaning of the IPTE-ODL programme, which was a phenomenon being studied. Since the study did not aim at offering any substantial theory that could bring some level of generalisability, it used a small sample size and according to Yin (2009), qualitative design is the most suitable strategy for such a study. The themes that were generated were further analysed using the Kirkpatrick's four level conceptual framework. Discussions of the findings were substantiated with quotes from interviews, observations, documentary analysis and were further interwoven with existing literature on ODL teacher education programmes in Europe, America and the Sub-Saharan Africa.

The study also exposed some challenges in the implementation of the IPTE-ODL programme. These challenges included inadequate student professional support, inadequate teaching and learning materials, inadequate orientation time, delays in the payment of upkeep allowances, inadequate classrooms, large classes and class misallocation.

5.1.1 Summary of the key findings

The Literature review revealed that ODL is an effective method of training more teachers within a limited period using limited resources (Perraton, 2000; Chikuya, 2007). This position was confirmed by a study that was looking at the effectiveness of the Malawi IPTE-ODL programme. According to the findings, the IPTE-ODL programme trained about 15,220 teachers in just three academic years that ran from

2012 to 2015. Within the same period, the conventional IPTE1+1 managed to train just 11,416 teachers. Thus, the IPTE-ODL was able to train 3,804 teachers more than the IPTE 1+1 and the two programmes, the IPTE-ODL and the IPTE1+1, have managed to train more than the 8,000 teachers that the system required annually. This has therefore enabled the IPTE-ODL programme to achieve its main objectives of meeting the expected output of 8,000 teachers annually. Basing on this fact therefore, it can be concluded that the IPTE-ODL programme was an effective teacher training programme in as far as this objective is concerned.

The study also revealed that the completion rate for the IPTE-ODL programme was very high as it was at 95%. This was well above completion rates of other ODL programmes that are rated effective in this region of the Sub Saharan Africa. For example, in the literature review, it was indicated that the ZINTEC of Zimbabwe had a completion rate of 94% while the *MUKA* of Tanzania had a completion rate of 84%. Both the ZINTEC and the *MUKA* were rated as effective using the completion rate parameter. The 95% completion rate of Malawi is similar to that of the ZINTEC and much higher than that of the *MUKA*. Such being the case therefore it can be concluded that the Malawi IPTE-ODL programme is an effective programme and its effectiveness can be compared favourably in this region of the Sub-Saharan Africa.

Additionally, the completion rate of female teachers in the IPTE-ODL programme was significantly very high at 99.9%. This was because the programme has an open policy that allows pregnant female student teachers to continue studying regardless of their condition. Other than this, the programme's recruitment process favours women more as it aims at narrowing the gender gap that exist between male teachers and female teachers. So far, it has managed to reduce it from 4:1 to 2:1 (MoEST,

2014). This was a deliberate effort. More female teachers were needed in the rural schools who, apart from teaching would also act as role models to the rural Malawian girl child as is indicated in the National Girls Education Strategy (NGES) (MoEST, 2013).

This thinking, however, was lacking in the IPTE1+1 programme whose aim was to train more teachers with the right entry qualifications. The IPTE1+1 programme therefore favoured men than the women. Being a conventional programme, women who were pregnant had to withdraw from the programme and as such the programme registered more dropouts. As for the ZINTEC and the *MUKA* programmes, their aim was to train all unqualified teachers that were already in the teaching service (Kruijer, 2010) and as such, the issue of training more female teachers was of no consequence.

The IPTE-ODL programme thus, took a bold step to recruit and train more female teachers within their own environment, a thing the other three programmes could not do. This shows that the IPTE-ODL was an effective programme in as far as the training of more female teachers is concerned. These female teachers became a strong force of role models for the rural Malawian child, an initiative that both government and development partners are striving to provide to the rural girl child to keep her in school.

Related literature also indicates that the ODL programmes are more cost effective than the conventional programme. However, in this study, it was found out that the IPTE-ODL programme was costly when compared to the conventional IPTE 1+1 programme but had more opportunity costs than the conventional IPTE1+1

programme. Under the IPTE-ODL programme, student teachers were recruited and immediately deployed into various primary schools. Government was therefore not laboured with the issue of employing additional teachers and spending more money on salaries while waiting for the student teachers to complete their training. The IPTE-ODL student teachers were readily available and offered their services at a low cost, receiving an allowance of about MK20, 000.00 per month, which was far less than the MK55, 000.00 that a qualified teacher gets per month. Meanwhile, the availability of student teachers in schools also led to a reduction in the pupil: teacher ratios resulting in a reduction of teachers' workload. The student teachers themselves receive an allowance, which they would not have received had they not joined this programme. When all these factors are considered, the IPTE-ODL programme will prove to be far much cost effective than the IPTE 1+1 programme and therefore, a very effective teacher training programme.

Further, the study was also able to unearth participants' perceptions towards the IPTE-ODL programme. According to the findings of the study, the majority of the participants had positive perceptions as is indicated in statements made by the Deputy District Education Manager #1, ODL field officer #1, mentor #2, and 4, Head teacher #1, 2 and 4, ODL-student teacher # 3 in section 4.1. These participants recognised the programme as being good and that the teachers trained through it are as good as those trained through the conventional programmes. They felt that IPTE-ODL should be made the sole teacher training programme for Malawi and that all resources in teacher education should be used to improve it.

Despite a large group being in favour of the IPTE-ODL programme, still more, there were some who had negative perceptions. These mostly consisted of the PEAs, Desk

officers and some IPTE-ODL teachers themselves as is shown by statements made by PEA # 4, Desk Office #1 and IPTE-ODL teacher #6. Some of these participants equated the IPTE-ODL programme to the MITTEP, which was a flop. However, other participants had positive perceptions. They believed teachers trained through ODL are excellent teachers, very resourceful and willing to work in the remote rural schools. Such being the case, therefore, it can be concluded that the IPTE-ODL programme is a good programme and is able to effectively train teachers like any other conventional programme.

Related literature clearly explains the importance of the face-to-face component of the programme. The face-to-face component is regarded as an essential component of any ODL programme as it provides an opportunity to the student teachers to interact with their tutors and with their peers so that they can explain and clarify difficult concepts that they did not successfully interpret on their own (Lynd 2005, Perraton, 2010; Kruijer, 2010). According to findings of the study, all the participants that were interviewed agreed that the three-week orientation period and the subsequent two-week face-to-face sessions in a semester were very helpful. However, they bemoaned the short period allocated to the exercise saying that it was not adequate for the student teachers to grasp all the skills and knowledge required for them to effectively teach. They felt that the period for face-to-face interaction should be increased to, at least, two months. Literature however, revealed that the length of orientation period makes no difference. What matters is how well the programme has been designed and is being supported. Different ODL programmes have different orientation period. The orientation period may range from one week to six months. An example is the *MUKA* of Tanzania and the *ZINTEC* of Zimbabwe whose orientation periods were 1 week and 6 months respectively. Both of these

programmes were rated as effective programme despite the difference in their orientation period. The orientation period of the IPTE-ODL was therefore, just enough and could not in any way negatively affect the effectiveness of the programme or the teachers.

Literature also indicated that teachers trained through ODL programmes are as competent as those trained through conventional programmes (Perraton, 2000; Lynd, 2010). These views have also been proved by the study on the effectiveness of the IPTE-ODL programme. According to the study, it was revealed that the IPTE-ODL teachers are as competent as those trained through the conventional IPT 1+1 training programmes. These findings were based on the class observations that were conducted. Out of the 4 teachers that were observed, 3 of them had their lessons rated either very good or excellent. In total, 7 lessons were observed and 6 of them were either excellent or very good. Thus 86% of the lessons were good. This, therefore, signifies the effectiveness of the IPTE-ODL programme as it is able to produce competent teachers who can teach effectively.

Literature also explains the importance of student professional support to ODL teacher education programmes. High completion rate and performance are positively related to the provision of effective professional support to the ODL-student teachers (Chiyongo, 2010), hence its importance. These views are also reflected in the study on the effectiveness of the IPTE-ODL programme. According to this study, student teachers in the IPTE-ODL programme require effective professional support from their supervisors who included tutors, PEAs, field supervisors, Head teachers and mentors. Unfortunately, these IPTE-ODL student teachers did not receive much of this professional support from since the supervisors were not

oriented on the programme and therefore did not have the right knowledge and skill to effectively support the IPTE- ODL student teachers.

The research findings revealed that IPTE-ODL students were not being provided with teaching and learning materials as was the case with their counterparts under the conventional programme. Instead, they were being requested to use part of their allowances to procure stationary, which put a strain on their livelihood. Modules were also not made readily available to the student teachers, making it very difficult for the student teachers to study, write assignment and to prepare for their national examinations.

The study also exposed that there were delays in paying the student teacher upkeep allowances part of which was supposed to be used by the student teachers to procure teaching and learning materials such as stationary. As a result, the student teachers had to endure teaching with inadequate teaching and learning materials, which affected their preparations and presentation of their lessons. At the same time, their livelihood was affected, as they were unable to procure personal things like soap, decent clothes and food.

The research findings revealed that most of the schools to which these student teachers were allocated had inadequate classrooms and as such, the student teachers had to conduct their lessons outside, in the open. This affected their teaching process, as they could not properly display their teaching and learning material to support their teaching. This also had an impact, more especially on the learners who need reinforcement in the form of visual aids.

The study also discovered that in some schools student teachers were allocated to very large classes with an enrolment of over 100 learners and had to teach all the subjects on their own. These teachers were paired neither with a qualified teacher nor with another student teacher. This was very tough for them as it left them exhausted by the end of the day and could not prepare thoroughly for the next day's lessons. This affected their studies and they were too exhausted to study, write assignment or attend study circles.

The study also revealed that some students were located in classes that were not appropriate to them. According to the ODL handbook, IPTE-ODL student teachers are supposed to be allocated to standards 3 and 4 only (MoEST, 2011). However, some of them found themselves teaching in infant classes, which are standards 1 and 2, or in the senior section in standard 7 or 8. This was a challenge. Most of them did not have the confidence to handle such classes and they ended up being demotivated. Yet, despite having some challenges, it can still be concluded that the IPTE-ODL programme is as effective as any other teacher-training programme. This conclusion is based on the many positive aspects of the programme, which outweighed the negative aspects. However, looking at both these positive and negative aspects, a number of implications were also drawn from the findings.

5.1.2 Implications of the findings

There are many implications to the findings of the study. As alluded to, the IPTE ODL programme was able to train more teachers and had a high completion rate, which helped Malawi to reach its annual target of training and deploying 8000 teachers annually. This resulted in reduction in pupil: teacher ratio. According to MoEST (2014), the pupil: teacher ratio went down to 78:1 from the 92:1 due to the

many teachers that were trained through the IPTE-ODL programme. The reduction in pupil: teacher ratios entail quality teaching and learning as it allows teachers to provide individual support to each learner.

Apart from just training more teachers, the programme has also been able to train more women. These women have completed the course and have been deployed in various primary schools, where apart from teaching they are also acting as role models to the rural girl child. This has so far increased the retention of girls in rural primary schools. According to EMIS (214) about 45% of the girls in Malawi were able to complete the primary cycle in 2009. However, with the introduction of the IPTE-ODL programme the completion rate of girls in 2014 went up to about 47%. Though there may be some factors contributing towards this 2% increase, still the IPTE-ODL programme may have contributed something towards this increase. The role modelling by the female ODL teachers to the rural girls may have contributed to this increase. This is a positive sign that if more female teachers are trained and sent to teach in the rural primary schools, more girls will be retained and be able to complete the primary school cycle.

According to Perraton (2000), ODL programmes are the most cost effective methods of training teachers as they are able to train more teachers at a low cost and within a limited time. In the case of the IPTE-ODL programme, the programme was able to train more teachers within a limited period; however, the programme appeared to be more costly than the conventional programmes. This has some financial implications. Government needs to source more financial support from within and from the donor community.

The study also found out that the professional support given to the IPTE-ODL student teachers was inadequate. Findings revealed that the PEAs, mentors and head teachers who had been assigned the supervisory role had not been adequately oriented. This had some detrimental implications to the performance of the student teachers. Professional support is a very crucial element in teacher education (Lynd 2005; Kruijer, 2010) and it should not be compromised as it may lead to student teachers not acquiring the professional skills and knowledge required for their teaching work. Lack of skills and knowledge de-motivates the student teachers. The teachers lack confidence and therefore, feel incompetent. This has a long lasting negative repercussion not only on the student teacher but on the learners, as well.

The study revealed that the IPTE-ODL programme offered no stationary to use in lesson preparation and yet the teachers had to prepare learning material for learners in excess of 120. In some instances, they were forced to teach classes beyond their capacity like standards 1, 2 and 8. This had a negative impact on the performance of these student teachers. They could not effectively plan, prepare lesson plans or teach. At the same time, the student teachers were denied the free time they needed most for studying, writing assignments and participating in study circles. This compromised the quality of education of both the student teachers and that of the learners under their care.

Despite these numerous challenges, the IPTE-ODL programme has still proved to be an effective teacher-training programme. The programme managed to achieve its objectives of creating lifelong education. The student teachers under the IPTE-ODL programme used the challenges they encountered to their own advantage. They became resourceful and were, therefore, able to source teaching and learning

materials from colleagues and the community. For supervision, they mostly relied on their peers and other qualified teachers within the school who would observe them while teaching and give them feedback. They also developed self-discipline and interest to study independently through ODL programmes offered in the universities as was the case with student teachers # 7. Thus, improving their capacity in teaching.

Through observations and document analysis, it was noted that the IPTE-ODL teachers were able to prepare teaching documents like schemes and records of work, lesson plans as well as teaching and learning aids. They were also able to effectively use a variety of teaching methods, clarify concepts and effectively manage large classes. Through interviews, head teachers, ODL-field officers and mentors expressed their satisfaction with the IPTE-ODL programme. They rated the IPTE-ODL teachers highly. To make it more effective, there is need to address all the challenges that the study has highlighted.

5.2 Future Research Areas

- i) Considering the government's continued search for a lasting solution towards effective teacher training, there is need for a comprehensive comparative study on the effectiveness of the IPTE-ODL and the IPTE 1+1 programme in order to comprehensively ascertain its effectiveness in terms of both performance and cost. This will therefore enable the policy makers make informed decisions on the two programmes.
- ii) A follow-up study on the effectiveness of the IPTE-ODL programme is also required. This is important because the sample of this study was very small and

may not be representative enough to generalise the findings. As such, there is need to conduct a more comprehensive study that would cover a large sample from a number of education districts.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Letter of introduction from the University of Malawi



CHANCELLOR COLLEGE

Principal: Richard Tambulasi,
B.A. (Pub Admin), BPA (Hon), MPA, Ph.D

P. O. Box 280, Zomba, MALAWI
Tel: (265) 01 524 222
Telex: 44742 CHANCOL MI
Fax: (265) 01 524 046

Our Ref.: EDF/6/19
Your Ref.:

13th April, 2014

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

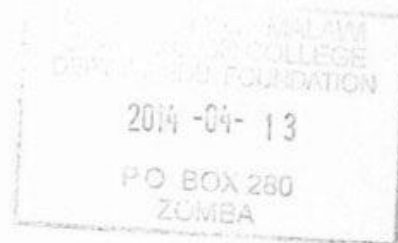
INTRODUCTORY LETTER FOR MASTER OF EDUCATION (POLICY, PLANNING AND LEADERSHIP) RESEARCH

Mrs. Ellen Chonde Simango is a student of Education in the Department of Education Foundations at Chancellor College, University of Malawi.

Mrs. Simango is working on her thesis, "*Exploring the Effectiveness of the Initial Primary Teacher Education-Open and Distance Learning (IPTE-ODL) Programme in Malawi.*" This is meant to be a request to your institution or organization to assist our student in her endeavor to collect data.

Thank you

Symon E. Chiziwa, PhD
Head, Education Foundations Department



Appendix II- Letter of Introduction from MoEST

Telegrams: MIMED, Lilongwe
Telephone: (265) 01 789 422/ 01 789404
Telex: 44636
Facsimile: (265) 01 788 064



MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
PRIVATE BAG 328
CAPITAL CITY
LILONGWE 3
MALAWI

10th March, 2014

Dear Sir,

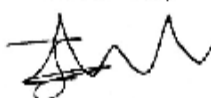
Letter of Permission to Conduct Research In Lilongwe Rural West

The bearer of this letter is Mrs Ellen Gertrude Chonde-Simango, a Master of Education candidate at Chancellor College, University of Malawi.

The Ministry of Education Science and Technology has granted permission to Mrs Ellen Simango to conduct a research study on the PTE-ODL teacher training programme in your district, Lilongwe Rural West.

The office therefore, requests your office to assist her.

Yours faithfully,



Joseph Chimombo (PhD)
Director for Basic Education

Appendix III: Letter of Permission from the DEM

Ref. No: DEM/LLRW/

Communications should be addressed to:
The District Education Manager
Lilongwe Rural West



District Education Manager
P/BAG A94
MALAWI

25TH MARCH, 2014

TO: ALL CONCERNED PEAs AND HEADTEACHERS,

Dear Sir/Madam

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH STUDY IN LILONGWE RURAL WEST

This is to inform you that permission has been granted to Mrs Ellen Gertrude Chonde-Simango, a Master of Education (Policy, Planning and Leadership) student, to conduct a research study in your schools. She is researching on the IPTE-ODL teacher training programme.

Please assist and provide her all the relevant information she may require for her study.

Yours faithfully,

Alfred Hauya



District Education Manager for Lilongwe Rural West

Appendix IV: IPTE-ODL teacher consent form

I am seeking your consent to be involved in a study in which I am trying to explore the effectiveness of the IPTE-ODL programme, which is one of the teacher-training programmes in Malawi.

As a participant in the study, you will be subjected to an interview and observation and all the information gathered will be recorded in a note pad and a tape recorder. However, be assured of confidentiality.

Be informed that the results of this study will help improve the IPTE-ODL programme and other teacher education programmes that Malawi is offering.

Be assured that this study will adhere to research ethics and I assure you that:

- The study will not interfere with your activities
- You will not be identified or named
- You will not be assessed or graded
- You can choose to withdraw from the study at any time.

Thank you in advance for accepting this request.

Participant's Consent

Signed.....Printed name.....

Primary school.....Date.....

**Appendix V: Interview schedule for DEM/PEA/ODL Field
Supervisor/HeadTeacher/Mentor.**

Sex _____ Qualification _____

Teacher professional programme _____

Years of experience _____ Position _____

1. How are IPTE- ODL student teachers recruited. What factors are taken into consideration when recruiting them?
1. Once these IPTE-ODL student teachers have been recruited, do they undergo any training before being given a class to teach? If yes for how long?
2. What support do you provide to the IPTE-ODL student teachers? Where you trained for this task to enable you effectively support them and for how long?
3. What classes are the IPTE-ODL teachers assigned? What is the maximum number of periods/week an IPTE-ODL student teacher is allocated? What do you think is the reasonable number? Why is that reasonable?
4. What are some of the problems that you experience as you try to support the IPTE-ODL student teachers? What impact do these problems have on the IPTE-ODL student teachers?
5. What problems do IPTE-ODL student teachers experience during their training? Are they classroom, personal, organizational or management problems? What effects do the problems have on their performance?
6. In your opinion, do you think student teachers make use of the things they learn during their training?

7. What changes, if any, would you propose to the conduct of the IPTE-ODL programme?

Appendix VI: Interview schedule for the IPTE-ODL teachers

Name _____ Sex _____

School _____ Subjects _____

Becoming a teacher

1. Why did you join the IPTE-ODL teacher-training programme?
2. Did you want to become a teacher? Why or why not?

School Description

3. Who allocated you to this school? What was your preferred school and why? What do you think about the school now?
4. Describe this primary school in terms of available resources, location and support received?
5. How many teaching periods per week were you allocated during your training?
Were these teaching periods manageable to you as a student teacher? Explain.
6. How many pupils were in your classroom? Were they the right number to help you learn how to teach? What difficulties did this pose for you and how did you get support?

Supervision /Teacher support

7. How many times were you visited? How much would have been appropriate for you to be visited by supervisors /tutors/mentors/head teachers/class teachers/during your training period?
8. Did tutors from the TTC visit you during your training period? Did you get any feedback from them from both their visits and the assignments you present to them?
9. Was the feedback helpful to you as a student teacher?

School experiences

10. Please comment on these aspects of teaching. Which aspects did you find difficult, or easy? Why? What help did you get?
 - a. Lesson planning and preparation
 - b. Lesson presentation
 - c. Choosing appropriate teaching methods
 - d. Classroom management and control
 - e. Sourcing appropriate teaching and learning materials
11. What do you think about the length of training programme (two and half years)?
12. What three things do you feel you learnt from this school based phase
13. What three things frustrated you most during this school based phase?
14. How did the parents /the community regard and treat you during the training period?
15. What changes would you suggest that should be made to the IPTE-ODL programme to make it more effective?

Appendix VII: Class Observation Checklist

NAME OF IPTE-ODL STUDENT:

SCHOOL:

CLASS:

DATE:

SUBJECT:

TOPIC:

TIME:

ACTIVITY	STATEMENT	REMARKS
Preparation	• Evidence of careful preparation	
	• Clarity of lesson plan	
Presentation	• Introduction	
	• Variety of teaching approaches	
	• Clarity of explanation	
	• Use of chalkboard	
Management	• Organisation of learning activities	
	• Clarity of Instructions	
	• Use of time and space	
Content Mastery	• Teacher's understanding of underlying ideas	
	• Development of subject matter	
Learner Orientation	• Pupils 'participation	
	• Use of languages	
	Questioning technique • Feedback to responses	
Evaluation	• Teacher's own reflection	