Dual Mode University in Southern Africa Development Community (SADC): Successes, Challenges and Solutions

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Abstract: - **Dual mode offering of university education is a fast growing phenomenon around the world. While an increasing number of higher education conventional institutions is transforming into dual mode, their reasons for transforming, successes achieved and challenges faced have not been well documented. The factors influencing transformation of conventional universities to dual mode have also not been well documented. It is of significance to interrogate why single mode open and distance learning (ODL) universities are not transforming to dual mode, that is, incorporating the conventional mode yet they seem to be increasing enrolment numbers in leaps and bounds. While there is a lot of information concerning successes and challenges experienced in both conventional and open and distance higher education institutions, there is a paucity of information on these experiences about dual mode higher education institutions. The study examined how dual mode is enhancing internationalisation of university culture in the global village. It is, therefore, the aim for this paper to interrogate and document the SADC dual mode higher education institutions' successes and challenges in order to improve the academic performance of the students. The study used qualitative approach, interpretive philosophy and case study design. Data were generated through interviews and document analysis. The data were analysed through constant comparison analysis technique. The population of the study comprised distance education institutes directors and lecturers. One of the key findings was dual mode university increase access, enrollment and revenue and this led to the conclusion that conventional and DE learning environments are complementary and advance internationalisation of higher education. The main recommendation was that DE centers and institutes become autonomous in order to run the units effectively and efficiently to produce quality products.**

Key Words: **dual mode, higher education, distance education, conventional university**

I. INTRODUCTION

Not everyone can attend conventional university education. Some people have jobs to work during typical classroom hours. Some people live far from conventional university campus and do not have the means or the time to travel to classes. Some people have disabilities that prevent or make attending conventional university lectures unreasonably difficult. Thus, this is where the complementary of conventional and distance education learning environments become critical in expanding the higher education learning environments. When distance education is used in addition to conventional mode of learning, it increases the access to learning by the disadvantaged and those tied to work environment. Education is an important commodity and the distance education using modern technologies such as the Internet, has broken many barriers to providing an education to people who would not otherwise get the opportunity to get higher education at conventional universities.

This paper documents dual mode learning system as a concept of complementary of conventional and distance education, expanding our knowledge on how this learning environment increases access to higher learning institutions by all; the women, those with challenged abilities, workers and those who live in remote and rural areas. The paper also documents the theoretical framework underpinning the study, challenges and successes of dual mode as experienced in SADC dual mode institutions. It also presents the conclusions and recommendations drawn from the study.

II. BACKGROUND TO THE PROBLEM

SADC is composed of 15 countries that are Angola, Botswana, Democratic Republic of Congo, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Each country has a state conventional university or state conventional universities. Most of the state conventional universities were built during the colonial era. In almost every country there is a private or many private conventional universities. Some countries have single mode open university or have transformed the conventional university or universities into dual mode by adding on Distance Education centres and institutes. Internationalisation has always been a norm within SADC conventional universities because most of the colonial universities used curricular from the colonial masters' universities. The establishment of open and distance learning institutions has not spared SADC from the debates about whether awards gained through ODL are comparable in quality to those from conventional institutions (Modesto, Ed, 2011). The advent of the open universities has influenced the transformation of some conventional universities into dual mode institutions. However, the factors influencing conventional universities to transform into dual mode has not been well documented.

Furthermore, the successes achieved and challenges faced in transforming conventional universities into dual mode have not been fully interrogated in the context of SADC region.

III. SADC DUAL MODE HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

There are a number of dual mode higher education institutions in this region that include Botswana University; Eduardo Mondlane University, Mozambique; University of Lesotho, University of Namibia, University of Pretoria, South Africa; Universality of Swaziland, University of Zambia and Women's University in Africa, Zimbabwe. The entire above mentioned dual mode universities were first established as conventional learning environments and later added the component of distance education thereby becoming dual mode institutions. The distance education component of each former conventional university is shown in table 1 below.

Table 1 SADC Dual Mode Universities

Name of Dual mode University	Distance Education Unit
Botswana University	Centre for Continuing Education
Eduardo Mondlane University	Centre for Distance Education
University of Lesotho	Institute of Extramural Studies
University of Malawi	College of Distance Education
University of Namibia	Centre for external studies
University of Pretoria,	Unit for Distance Education
Universality of Swaziland	Institute of Distance Education Department of Adult studies
University of Zambia	Institute of Distance Education
Women's University in Africa, Zimbabwe	Faculty of Gender and Transformative Sciences

While literature reveals that the success of ODL programs is generally as a result of coordinated efforts among the strong organisational systems, knowledgeable and skilled practitioners as well as committed learners (Owen and Demb, 2004;Yoon, 2003) not much is known about the factors that enhance or challenge dual mode institutions within the SADC region. Bailey (1999) concurs and mentions flexible supportive national and institutional ODL policies as additional necessities for successful ODL. It has been observed by Enuku & Ojogwu,(2006) ; Rennie and Mason,(2007) that in developing countries the strength of ODL has been severely deterred due to lack of ODL skilled practitioners, lack of technological infrastructure, negative perceptions of ODL degrees as well as unstable socio political environments.

Purpose for the study

The study sought to identify reasons for conventional universities transforming into dual mode universities, successes achieved and challenges faced with a view to proffer recommendations for smooth running of dual mode institutions.

Objectives for the study

The study sought to achieve the following objectives:

1. To identify reasons for transforming conventional universities to dual mode institutions.
2. To examine the successes achieved in transforming conventional universities into dual mode institutions.
3. To scrutinize challenges faced by dual mode institutions.

Research questions

1. Why are some SADC conventional universities transforming into dual mode institutions?
2. What are the successes achieved in transforming conventional universities into dual mode institutions?
3. What challenges are faced by dual mode institutions?

IV. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Increasing globalization has decreased barriers to accessing university education. This access of university education at international higher education institutions will continue and universities must realize that internationalisation is not an option but a necessity to be competitive. According to Knight and Cavusgil (1996); Madsen and Servais (1997) a lot of research on internationalisation have been undertaken in firms while very little have been undertaken in universities. Flach and Flach (2010) concur by saying that internationalisation theory is usually related to the firm. This study used the theory of internationalisation to understand how the internationalisation processes influence the transformation of conventional universities into dual mode institutions. With the increasing demand for higher education, DE mode of learning in the form of institutes and centers is gaining ground because conventional universities cannot meet the demand.

Thus, this paper sought to understand the transformation of conventional university into dual mode through the lens of internationalisation theory. According to Mort and Weeradena (2006); Anderson (2000); Benito and Gripsrud (1992), the internationalisation process of firms can broadly be divided into two streams of theories that are, the economic approach to theory and the behavioral approach to theory. Hermannsdottir (2008) posit that many firms involve in internationalisation due to the need to expand into international markets so as to increase their investments and revenue. Anderson (2000) concurs with Hermannsdottir (2008) by saying that the basics of firm internationalisation is to expand on firm investments.

The economic approach of the internationalization process was chosen to understand why conventional universities in the SADC context are transforming into dual mode. The economic approach helped to understand that the transformation from conventional into dual mode universities was to increase the market share of the conventional university through establishing distance education institutes and centers, leading to access to higher education, increase of

revenue, increase of human development and ultimately increase of economic empowerment of the products of dual mode universities.

The economic approach helped to understand that in the context of SADC dual mode universities; the concept of internationalisation is the one called internationalisation at home, that consists of incorporating intercultural and international dimensions of curriculum, teaching, research and extracurricular activities that helps students to develop intercultural skills without ever living their country (OECD, 2004 ; Wachter, 2003).

Therefore, this study is underpinned by internationalisation theory, economic approach. This is so because within the SADC context transformation of conventional universities into dual mode is not to attract foreign students only; it is to increase access by the locals coming from diverse backgrounds.

V. RELATED LITERATURE REVIEW

Internationalisation of University Culture

Internationalisation of university culture has brought opportunities for study and research that is no longer limited by national boundaries. Internationalisation brings in the issues of benchmarks and standards for curricula and qualifications (Altbach, et. al, 2009). On another note, Henard, Diamond and Roseveare (2012) posit that internationalisation of university culture in developing educational environments is a concept that has been pushed by the current labour market that requires graduates to have international foreign language and intercultural skills to interact in a global setting.

Thus, higher education institutions world over are placing more importance on internationalisation. OECD (2004) and Wachter (2003) explain internationalisation as a practice of incorporating intercultural and international dimensions into curricula, teaching, research and extramural curricula activities that helps students develop international and intercultural skills without ever leaving their countries. Henard, Diamond and Roseveare (2012) view internationalisation of higher education as a practice of having education delivered through off-shore campuses, joint programmes, distance learning and others.

Knight (2003, p.2) posits that the purpose of internationalisation is to make graduates agile and able to work in diverse environments as well as make them work in international settings with ease. Bache, Kane and Meth (2015) say that internationalisation is about good teaching supported by solid structures and supporting systems producing an international worker.

Therefore, in the context of this paper, internationalisation of learning and teaching culture in dual mode institution is about providing an enriched learning environment for all students, those following conventional mode and those following distance education mode.

An example of higher education internationalisation in the context of complementary conventional and distance education is Women's University in Africa (WUA), Zimbabwe. WUA operates as a dual mode university, has three faculties that are Agricultural Sciences; Entrepreneurial Leadership Sciences; Social and Gender Transformative Sciences. The Faculty of Social and Gender and Transformative Sciences is the only faculty implementing conventional and open and distance learning undergraduate and post-graduate programmes. It has open and distance learning centers in Malawi, Blantyre and Zambia, Lusaka. Thus, through internationalisation of higher education, it is very possible to study with WUA while in Malawi or Zambia without travelling to Zimbabwe.

Learning Environment of Conventional University

Conventional University is where you find a campus with residential hostels, lecture halls and mostly with 18 to 22 year olds residential females and male students.Conventional university is a learning environment where the lecturer and the students meet in the lecture hall regularly at fixed time (Holland, 2005). It is a university that involves face to face interaction of both lecturers and students. In fact King, Young, Drivere-Richmond, Kelly & Schrader, (2001) define a conventional university as a place of learning that has formalized instructional learning and where the geographic situation constraints learning by requiring synchronous person to person interaction.

Thus, conventional university education is a mode of teaching that involves little or no online teaching and learning. Around the world conventional universities are seen as societies that are research oriented primarily generators and transmitters of knowledge (Holland, 2005). However, access to conventional universities around the world was limited due to financial constraints and geographic distance between potential university learners and higher education institutions (Ferriman, 2013).

Learning Environment of Distance Education

Distance education is a learning delivery mode that opens access to education and training provision, freeing learners from the constraints of time and place, and offering flexible learning opportunities to individuals and groups of learners (UNESCO, 2002, p. 20). King, et.al (2001) posit that distance education mode of delivery is formalized instructional learning, where the geographic situation constraints learning by not affording in-person contact between student and instructor or practitioner. Therefore, distance education includes all teaching, learning environment where the instructor or practitioner and the learner are separated by space and time.

It is that type of learning where learners are not physically present in a lecture hall. In this type of learning

environment curriculum is implemented by means of specifically prepared materials which are delivered to the learners' door step through various media such as print , television, radio, satellite, audio or video tapes, CD-ROMs , internet, WhatsApp and world wide web. Furthermore, technological medium replaces the interpersonal communication of the conventional university. In addition, communication among the institution, practitioner and learners is mainly through electronic media such as postal correspondence, telephone, interactive radio counseling, teleconferencing, video conferencing, chat sessions and email.

In some distance education institutes and centres there is limited face–to-face contact sessions that are held at study or regional centers set up close to the learners' homes. In fact Aderinoye and Ojokheta (2004), asset that open and distance education emerged in response to the need of providing access to those who would not be able to participate in conventional higher education institutions for different reasons. Today there are some learning environments that have developed from the concept of distance education such as e-learning, blended learning and virtual learning to mention just a few. These learning environments are now briefly explained.

E-learning

Abaidoo and Arkorful (2014) say that e-learning is a system that uses digital tools for teaching and learning in higher education distance education institutions as well as in conventional education institutions. Some scholars (Bates, 2001; Niper, 1989; Peters, 2001) are of the opinion that e-learning is a part of distance education learning mode while scholars such as Garrison and Anderson, (2003); Alonso, López, Manrique and Viñes, (2005) see it as a learning system that uses multimedia to enhance learning and used in both the conventional and distance education learning modes. Abbad, Morris and de Nalhlik (2009) define e-Learning as any learning that is enabled electronically. E- Learning, therefore can refer to the situation where teachers and students interact online. According to Sneha and Nagaraja (2013) e-learning is widely linked to technology-enhanced learning (TEL), computer based training (CBT), computer based instruction (CBI) or internet based training (IBT), web based training (WBT), online education, computer aided instruction (CAI), virtual education, virtual learning environments (VLE) and digital educational collaboration.

Blended Learning

Kiran and Dangwal (2017) say that blended learning is a concept that includes framing teaching learning process that incorporates both face to face teaching and learning supported by information communication technology (ICT). Thus, blended learning is a combination of learning at a distance and the conventional learning in a dual mode university. What happens is students will have to attend classes at the institution or learning centers for part of the programme and the rest of programme will be done through distance learning mode using multimedia learning tools.

Virtual Learning Environment (VLE)

Strafford and Shirota (2011) define virtual learning environment as a collection of software tools supporting academic administration, teaching and research using the Internet particularly the World Wide Web. Sneha and Nagaraja (2013) define virtual learning environment as components in which learners and tutors participate in online interactions of several kinds comprising online learning. VLEs are also called learning platforms. They constitute student tracking, communication tools, assessment and collaboration. VLEs can be accessed on and off campus 24 hours a day and seven days a week meaning it is a system that is used by distance education students and conventional students.

Dual Mode Learning Environment in Higher Education

Dual mode universities are those universities composed of conventional and distance education learning environments. These are the universities that differ from the single conventional and single open and distance learning universities. Dual mode universities start as conventional institutions and later distance education is added on in order to expand access for those not able to attend conventional mode of learning. King (2012) is of the opinion that dual mode universities emanate from conventional universities as a commitment entered later to satisfy the needs of learners who cannot attend conventional learning mode because of several reasons.

Freeman (2004) explains the challenges faced in dual mode universities as resistance embrace the distance education delivery system by the conventional academic staff. Moran and Myringer explain the source of resistance by conventional academics as coming from insecurity of academics as they lose authority of directing learning with distance education students who depend more on instructional learning materials as opposed to conventional students who depend more on the academics for their learning.

Olcott and Wright (1995) mention lack of support of the DE component of dual mode university major challenge. Morgan (2000) adds his concern about the attitude of conventional administrative staff when he says that some of them do not accept responsibility for DE students' related work to the extent that DE students are not counted as university students and they are treated indifferently.

VI. METHODOLOGY

The study was undertaken through a qualitative approach, interpretive philosophy and case study design. Data were generated from the universities' websites, annual reports, newsletters, face to face interviews and emails. The researcher used the opportunity of DEASA meetings, where she met

some of the directors of the DE institutes or centers of dual mode universities sampled to generate data through face to face interviews.

Of the 9 dual mode institutions identified, 6 were sampled through convenience sampling technique. Three directors of the sampled institutes were interviewed face to face, two responded to the emailed interview questions and one did not respond to the emailed questions as well as follow up through telephone calls and emails. Interview questions were sent through emails after requesting the participants through telephone calls, messages and WhatsApp. Emails were also sent to 12 lecturers from sampled DE centers and institutes. Eight lecturers responded. The total number of participants for this study were 13, 4 women and 9 men.

Data generated were transcribed into scripts and analysed through content analysis (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005; Patton, 2002; Mayring, 2000). Analysis was undertaken using the constant comparison method of data generated from the different sources. The themes that emanated from the data are as follows: reasons for transforming conventional universities to dual mode, successes of dual mode universities in SADC, challenges faced in institutes or centers of DE institutes and proposed solutions to the challenges.

VII. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Reasons for transforming from conventional university to dual mode university

The key finding is that transformation of conventional universities into dual mode was in response to demand for access to higher education through distance education. The creation of distance education institutes or centers was to satisfy the higher education learning needs for the disadvantaged who could not be able to access conventional universities for diverse reasons. For this reason it was found that the content, assignments and examinations for a programme offered in the conventional faculty and the institute of distance education in a dual mode are the same.

Nine former conventional universities in SADC region transformed to dual mode universities. The transformation could have been influenced by the success of the single mode open universities that are University of South Africa (UNISA), Open University Tanzania (OUT) and Zimbabwe Open University (ZOU). Another interesting finding is that there is no established single mode open university that has transformed to dual mode in SADC region that I know of from his study.

Another finding is that the trend in SADC conventional universities is to establish dual mode at faculty level first. In this region dual mode delivery started in the faculties or departments of education. Later on centers and institutes of distance education were established. The reason given for why faculties of education were turned to dual mode first was to improve teachers qualifications through in-service. As such the distance education was implemented through

print, school holiday face to face residential sessions and later radio and television were also used for the distance education teaching and learning.

Thus, in the SADC context, dual mode has evolved from faculty based to university based through the creation of institutes and centers for the sole purpose of fulfilling the learning needs for those who cannot be on campus every day. This reason for creation of dual mode is in tandem with that given by Aderinoye and Ojokheta (2004).

Another finding is that admission of both conventional and distance education is centrally done in most of the SADC dual mode institutions. Those with high, high school grades are automatically placed in conventional faculties while those with low high school grades are placed in the DE center or institute. However, following the conventional delivery system, if someone is unable to attend the classes regularly due to job or other responsibilities in family, he/she is transferred to DE mode. Unfortunately a student following the DE mode is not allowed to transfer to conventional mode. The reasons for this practice were beyond this study.

Another finding is that conventional universities transformed to dual mode due to governments need to expand human development spaces through higher education. All participants said DE gives the disadvantaged, rural based and those in remote areas access to higher education. This finding is in tandem with Suja (2014) who asserts that success of the distance education institutes lies in their ability to extend educational opportunities to all, including the unreached, disadvantaged, underprivileged and the community as a whole, thereby, contributing to the manpower development and growth.

In the SADC context, rural based agricultural extension officers, nurses and teachers are given opportunity to improve their skills through DE while at the same time attached to the old prestigious conventional universities. This finding is similar to what Holland (2005) said concerning conventional universities and why students would want to be attached to them.

The other finding is that dual mode benefits elderly women who missed their opportunity during their prime time due to gender discrimination and family commitments. This finding is in agreement with Suja (2014) who posits that distance learners are from diverse backgrounds in terms of age, experience, socio cultural, educational and occupational backgrounds and they have different methods of learning. They may be employed, unemployed, retired, single, married, house wives, physically disabled having varied social and financial problems.

Successes of dual mode in SADC context

The major success is the increase in enrolment through the addition of DE students. It was found that institutes or centers have regional centers that are found in other provinces other

than the conventional university. Therefore, creating dual mode institutions increase enrollment as well as revenue. The fact that DE regional centers do not need to build accommodation for students and lecture halls makes the dual university cut costs and increase revenue with limited structures.

Another success finding is that dual mode creates employment for employees in the sense that in addition to lecturers employed for conventional students, additional lectures mostly part time are hired for DE centre or institute. Administrators are hired to help with the increased enrolment.

The other success finding is that more deserving students are now able to access higher education through dual mode and this has increased the number of skilled labour in SADC region's context.

Challenges faced in SADC Dual Mode Institutions

The major challenge finding is that of senior dual university management that half heartedly support DE activities. One of the participants said, "because of their conventional background the senior managers' take DE component as any other business". In other words participants meant that management does not support the DE centers or institutes activities as they do the conventional activities.

Another challenge finding is that in dual mode institutions where the DE programmes share the lecturers from conventional faculties; their attitude is the same as that of senior management. As a result DE students do not get support at the same level as the conventional students. This finding is similar to Croft (1992) who says that lecturers from conventional university background see the DE as threatening the integrity of conventional learning practices and do not fully support them.

The other challenge finding is lack of autonomy experienced in the DE institutes. Most of the dual mode universities have central admissions, same calendar and use the same lecturers except for only one out of the five institutes and centers studied. Lack of autonomy is a challenge because DE institutes have issues like need for dispatching instructional learning materials and assignments in time and if this is controlled by the senior managers who give little support to DE it becomes a challenge. Lack of autonomy slows down the institutes in introducing new programmes and opening of new regional centers. This is because the senior management who are in charge of the finances and decisions do not see the urgency in expanding DE activities.

Another challenge finding is that one of the DE center had results of a consultant hired to look at the issue of transforming the center to an autonomous open and distance Education University in 2014 and to date that has not been implemented due to lack of autonomy. This delay affects the prospective students who need this expansion of DE to realize their dreams.

Another challenge finding is that of lecturer burnout. It was revealed that lecturers experience exhaustion and their performance depreciations as they work with conventional and DE students. This research found that lectures' exhaustion lowers the quality of products especially from the DE perspective. Usually the lecturers from the conventional faculties are hired as part - time lecturers in the DE institutes or centers and paid allowances. However, participants all agreed that due to overload, these lecturers do not support the DE students at the same level as they do the conventional students.

Another challenge finding is that of lack of qualified DE instructional learning materials and the institutions depend on outsourcing the materials development, resulting in delays in delivery of materials to students.

Another challenge finding is that while all dual mode institutions boast of ICT infrastructure for online registration by all conventional and DE students, there is shortage of ICT instructors especially for DE. Most DE students in remote areas fail to download the learning materials or upload the assignments due to weak internet connections. However, the problem is partly solved by providing print modules and audio cassettes.

Another finding is that dual mode universities studied have not fully implemented DE using e-learning, blended learning and virtual learning as the tools are described by Abaidoo and Arkorful (2014); Kiran and Dangwal (2017) and Sneha and Nagaraja (2013) respectively. The finding is that all dual mode universities studied are working towards the use of ICT in both the conventional and DE settings. However, progress is hindered by lack of modern technologies and ICT expert lecturers or practitioners.

VIII. CONCLUSIONS

It is concluded that dual mode universities exist in SADC region; they are a result of complementary of conventional and DE. They have increased access to university education by people from diverse backgrounds and have increased economic empowerment of individuals, families and society.

It is concluded that dual mode universities in SADC use, international curricular and that there are limited international lecturers and or practitioners. It is concluded that dual mode universities are creating a learning environment and culture that is different from single mode conventional and single mode open universities. It is also concluded that there is more internationalisation in the conventional mode than in the DE institutes or centers due to limited number of ICT teaching and learning experts, availability of ICT modern technologies for teaching and learning and that is limiting internationalisation of DE.

It is concluded that institutional international partnerships in form of lecturer and students exchange or programmes sharing is very limited and in some dual mode universities it is just not being practiced.

IX. RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the findings and conclusions, the study gives the following recommendations:

1. That DE centers and institutes become autonomous in terms of planning, admissions, calendar and budgets so as to implement activities in time and efficiently.
2. That senior management in dual mode universities improve ICT infrastructure, literacy levels of academics and provide ICT learning tools.
3. That dual mode senior management is staff developed to understand DE philosophy, management and leadership practices.
4. That DE centers and institutes have their own practitioners who are computer literate, qualified for ODL teaching, learning and materials development.

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