An investigation of inclusion of students with disabilities in Tertiary learning Institutions:

A case study of two public universities in Malawi.

By

Marianne Nsanja Gunda

A Dissertation

submitted to the faculty of Education, Department of Education and Teaching studies,

in partial fulfilment for the award of Master of Education (MEd) Degree in Leadership and Management

Mzuzu University

2015

Declaration

I declare that this thesis represents my own original effort and I have not plagiarized the work of anyone in conducting this study. All views and quotations from others have been acknowledged and referenced.

Researcher's name: Marianne Nsanja Gunda

Researcher's signature:

Date:

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my loving husband, Alfred Gift Gunda and our beloved daughters, Stella Gabriella and Thembeka Pauline. Thank you all for the support that you gave to me when I was doing this research. It is this support and your understanding that helped me complete this programme. I love you all and may God bless you.

Acknowledgments

I wish to begin by thanking the Almighty God for giving me the tools; wisdom and confidence that helped me do this project with much ease. Let me also thank Him for providing me with a loving husband, Alfred, who apart from his love offered me immense support, encouragement and assistance which cannot be taken for granted.

Let me also thank my two children, Stella Gabriella and Thembeka Pauline for understanding and enduring my continued absence as this work blockaded my availability before members of my family.

I would also like to recognize my wonderful brother Michael Nsanja and my sister in-law, Norah Nsanja for their encouragement, support and assistance.

I wish also to thank my dad, Kasigere Nsanja, my siblings and family for their advice and support.

Importantly, let me also acknowledge my supervisor, Dr. Ambumulire Phiri for her invaluable advice and encouragement. She was truly an amazing supervisor and played an important role in providing scholarly advice throughout my research.

Lastly, let me recognize all the students with disabilities who participated in this study by providing me with personal issues about their lives. All the administrators, faculty members and support staff who contributed towards this study in great many ways should feel equally honoured and valued May God bless you all.

Table of contents

List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

1. **SNE** – Special Needs Education
2. **SWD** – Students with Disabilities
3. **SN** – Special Needs
4. **MOE** – Ministry of Education
5. **MOEST** – Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
6. **UNESCO** – United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
7. **NESP** – National Education Sector Plan
8. **DRC** – Dutch Reformed Church
9. **RCC** – Roman Catholic Church
10. **MACOHA** – Malawi Council for the Handicapped
11. **NGOs** – Non Governmental Organizations
12. **MANA** – Malawi News Agency
13. **MANAD** – Malawi National Association for the Deaf
14. **MSCE** – Malawi School Certificate of Education
15. **PSLCE** – Primary School Leaving Certificate of Education
16. **JCE** – Junior Certificate of Education
17. **UEE** – University Entrance Examinations
18. **UNIMA** (University of Malawi)
19. **MZUNI** – Mzuzu University
20. **CHANCO** – Chancellor College
21. **COM** – College of Medicine
22. **KCN** – Kamuzu College of Nursing
23. **LUANAR** – Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources
24. **POLY** – Polytechnic
25. **LSEN** – Learners with Special Educational Needs
26. **FBOs** – Faith Based Organizations
27. **VI** – Visual Impairments
28. **HI** – Hearing Impairments

29. **SAEC** – South African Evangelical Church

30. **CRC** – Convention on the Right

31. **ACRWC** – African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child

32. **EFA** – Education for All

33. **SEN** – Special Educational Needs

34. **DU** – Disability Unit

35. **IEP** – Individualized Education Program

36. **UDI** – Universal Design of Instruction

37. **EMIS** – Education Management Information System

38. **BE** – Basic Education

39. **SE** – Secondary Education

40. **DIAS** – Department of Inspection and Advisory Services

41. **IEA** – Inclusive Education Approach

42. **TEE** – Tertiary Education Environment

43. **PWDs** – Persons with disabilities

44. **AA** – Asset Based Approach

45. **SNEP** – Special Needs Education Policy

46. **NPQS** – Non Proportional Quota Sampling

47. **SSS** – Student Support Services

Abstract

Education is critical in promoting political, social and economic development. The provision of meaningful adequate and equitable education is fundamental to Malawi's overall development.

In Malawi, the future and academic success of students with disabilities in tertiary education settings is highly dependent on their accessibility to tertiary institutions, access to curriculum, guidance and counselling, provision of transition programs and the accommodations that are made and provided for them while at university.

This research was carried out to determine the support that is given to students with disabilities in tertiary institutions in Malawi by examining areas of access, transition from secondary school and accommodations made for students with disabilities. The study was carried out using two public universities in Malawi namely Chancellor College, a constituent college of the University of Malawi and Mzuzu University.

Chapter 1: Introduction

The Malawi Government recognizes education as a basic human right. In addition, the Malawi government further recognizes that people with disabilities (PWD) can make positive contributions towards the achievement of political, social and economic development of the country if a conducive environment is created and provided for their inclusion at all levels of education. This chapter provides a brief background of Special Needs Education as well as the present status of special needs education in Malawi. Furthermore, the various strides that have been made by Malawi towards Special Needs Education are also discussed in this chapter. Furthermore, a brief description of the education structure of Malawi at all levels and how students' access tertiary education is provided in this chapter. Finally, this chapter provides an overview of the objectives and significance of the study and the limitations and delimitations of the study.

1.0 Background

Special needs education (SNE), as defined by Hauya and Makuwira (1996) is an enriched form of general education aimed at improving the quality of lives of people with disability by making use of specially trained personnel as well as equipment to meet their specific and individual needs. Florian (2007) defines SNE as 'educational intervention and support designed to address special educational needs'. The concept of Special Educational Needs (SEN) is broad, extending beyond categories of disability, to include all children and youth who are in need of additional support. A learner with SEN requires special service and support in order to access education and optimally benefit from the learning process. This research sought to investigate the support that is given to students who have disabilities in public tertiary institutions in Malawi.

In Malawi, SNE began in the late 1950s. Since then, children with SEN are included in primary and secondary school learning environments, and efforts are made to ensure that they have access to quality education.

As this study concerns access and support for students with disabilities, it is important to start by defining people with disabilities. The traditional view, and most probably still the view of the average person, is that disabilities are defects or deficiencies in individuals that set them apart from normal people. The number of people with various defects can be identified and counted,

and the appropriate public policy response is to fix remedy what is wrong or to care for the disabled, this is often called the medical model. Among the problems of this model is its failure to consider the degree to which those with physical or mental impairments feel that they are disabled and what help or care they want (Wolanin and Steele, 2004).

Wolanin and Steele further postulate that most recently, a social model of disability has been advanced that views persons with disabilities as full-fledged members of society, who are not to be marginalized or stigmatized. In view of the social model, these persons live in social environment that fails to meet their needs. Much of this disabling environment is artificial, produced by humans rather than by nature. This applies, for example, to housing, transport, communications, public services and education programs and institutions. In this view, there are not a number of disabled persons there are, instead, a number of disabling environments or social circumstances. Proponents of the social model believe that disability is not a personal tragedy; it is instead social oppression and that once society changes, disability will disappear.

Tertiary education tends to be voluntary, not compulsory. Those admitted to tertiary institutions must meet specified academic and other standards, and in the case of selective institutions even many of those who meet the standards are not admitted. It is also common for students to be terminated at tertiary institutions, usually for substandard performance. Generally, attention must be focused on providing tertiary educational opportunities for those persons with disabilities who can meet the academic standards for admission, progress and graduate, who are, in short, qualified for university.

1.1 The present status of special needs education in Malawi

Persons with disabilities in Malawi, like in many countries, face numerous challenges that result in their exclusion from mainstream society, making it difficult for them to access their fundamental social, political, educational and economic rights (Ministry of Persons with Disabilities and the Elderly, 2006). The Ministry of Persons with Disabilities and Elderly further elaborates that Malawi has people living with various kinds of disabilities. However there is a lack of reliable statistics on the nature and prevalence of disability in Malawi. Moreover, according to a 2003 study on the Living Conditions among people with Activity Limitations

indicated that the number of people with disabilities in Malawi has grown by 30% in a twenty-year period (1983-2003).

Similarly, the Malawi Education for All document (2002),observes that school going children of aged between 0-15 years with SNE, 66% of them have learning disabilities with 21% having visual impairments and 13% having hearing impairments. The Education Management Information System (EMIS), (2007) statistics indicate that there are 69,943 learners with SEN enrolled in schools. The table below shows a breakdown of this figure:

Low vision	Complete blindness	Partial deafness	Complete deafnges	Physical challenges
18,328	366	17,344	1,636	7,194

Table: 1 statistics of learners with disabilities in Malawi (EMIS 2007)

Nevertheless, these statistics do not take into consideration the number of learners who are enrolled in mainstream schools with disabilities or learning difficulties such as intellectual disability, emotional and behavioral difficulty, specific learning disability, health impairment, and language and communication difficulty. According to the MOE (2009) learners with disabilities in Malawi are unable to attain their fullest educational potential due to various challenges that hinder their participation in education. MOE elaborates some of these challenges as follows:

a) Stigma by the community
b) Lack of specialist teachers and resource centres
c) Shortage of specialized teaching and learning resources and assistive devices; and
d) Inaccessible infrastructures and information.

Other learners with disabilities in Malawi require information, which is accessible in appropriate forms to enhance their learning. For example, Braille print for learners with visual impairment, sign language for hearing impaired and augmentative alternative communication for those with communication challenges. Learners with specific learning disabilities or intellectual challenges require modifications and accommodation to the current curriculum content. Due to lack of

capacity to provide these support systems, some learners are unable to attend school (Implementation Guidelines for the National Policy on Special Needs Education, 2009).

As a service provider, MOEST has programs to cater for learners in inclusive education settings. These programs are primarily provided through the departments of Special Needs Education (SNE), Basic Education (BE), Secondary Education (SE) and Inspection and Advisory Services (DIAS) which provide inclusive support for basic, secondary and higher education.

As the world highlights the importance of SNE and support of learners with Special Educational Needs (LSEN), Malawi has not lagged behind. For example, Itimu and Kopetz (2008) observe that SNE initiatives in Malawi are achieving commendable strides in the country's pursuit to build a stronger, better educated and economically sustainable republic (Fox and Liebenthal, 2006; Malawi Government, 2006; Ministry of Education, 2004b). A report written by the Development of Education in Malawi, 2004, which was prepared for the 47th session of International Conference of Education, articulates that the Malawi Government introduced a component of SNE in the six regular teaching colleges so that all students, upon graduating, have the skills to handle LSEN.

Another stride that Malawi has taken in supporting SNE in the country is the establishment of the Malawi National Association for the Deaf (MANAD). MANAD is a Non-profit making Organization (NGO) for the deaf (Hearing Impairment (HI)) that was formed in 1992 and was registered with the Malawi Government in 1996 with the aim of addressing various problems being faced by people with HIS. MANAD foresees a Malawi in which people with HIS have access to sign language and sign language interpreting services, equal opportunities in education and employment; resulting in improved quality of life for individuals with HI in Malawi. Among other things, MANAD aims at developing indigenous Malawi sign language based on cultural aspects as means of communication of the hearing impaired and arrange sign language classes for the interested public (Hauya and Makuwira, 1996).

In 2013, MOEST had plans to construct 150 resource centres across the country in an attempt to ensure that equitable opportunities are offered when it comes to access to education. MOEST had intended to equip these resource centres with specialized equipment as well as specially trained human resources to ensure effective and efficient delivery (Brian Itai, 2013). However,

Malawi as a country has not yet made significant strides in provision of services and support to students with special needs in the country's universities.

1.2 The Education Structure of Malawi

Education in Malawi is governed by the Education Act of 1962. Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MOEST) is the agency that has administrative, financial and academic control of primary, secondary and tertiary education as well as training of teachers. MOEST is structured into several departments, namely: Education Planning, Basic Education, Special Needs Education, Secondary Education, Teacher Education and Development, Higher Education, Education Methods and Advisory Services, Technical Education and Vocational Training, Education and Management Unit, Supplies Unit and Finance and Administration (UNESCO, 2011).

1.2.1 Primary Education

The education system in Malawi is structured into four units which are pre-school, primary, secondary and tertiary education. Pre-school education is provided by day care centres and pre-school play groups. These are generally attended by children from the age of three. Attendance is not compulsory and pre-school play groups usually accommodate children between the ages of 0-5 years) as part of Basic Education. Primary School Education covers the age group of six to thirteen years and is organized into three cycles: infant (standard 1-2); junior (standard 3-5); and senior (standard 6-8). The Primary Education culminates in the Primary School Leaving Certificate (PSLCE). This examination is used as a tool to allocate pupils to Secondary Schools. Although Primary Education in Malawi is free, it is not compulsory (NESP, 2008-2017).

1.2.2 Secondary Education

Secondary School Education is expected to lasts four years and is divided into two stages each with two year duration. The first stage (form 1 and 2) the Junior Cycle, prepares students for Junior Certificate Examination (JCE). The second stage (form 3 and 4), the Senior Cycle, culminates in the Malawi School Certificate Examination (MSCE).

1.2.3 Tertiary Education

Technical and Vocational Education Training is provided in Technical Colleges, Community Colleges, Community Based Centres, Private Training Providers and the Apprenticeship Training System, combining on the job training with instruction in the colleges (UNESCO, 2010/2011).

Post-secondary education courses vary in length, depending on the type of training program. Admission to university is based on individual performance at MSCE and during University Entrance Examinations. Programs leading to certificate usually last one year; diploma programs normally take two to three years to complete while Bachelor's degree program (undergraduate degree programs) normally take four to five years depending on the nature of the degree. Programs leading to postgraduate studies last two to three years.

Until recently, the Public University system was the major source of tertiary education for most Malawians. University of Malawi (UNIMA) first opened its doors to 90 first year students in 1965 and was the only university at the time. UNIMA is comprised of five campuses spread across the Southern and Central regions in the country. These are Chancellor College (CHANCO) in Zomba, The Polytechnic (POLY) in Blantyre, College of Medicine established in 1991 (COM) in Blantyre, Bunda College of Agriculture (BUNDA) and Kamuzu College of Nursing (KCN) in Lilongwe (Divala, 2009). However, in 2012, the Government of Malawi removed BUNDA College as a constituent college of UNIMA and established it as a college on its own. BUNDA College is now Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources (LUANAR).

Other universities emerged within the last fifteen years. These include a Public University, Mzuzu University which was established in 1998 and Malawi University of Science and Technology (MUST) in Thyolo in the Southern region which was established in 2011. Malawi has also seen an increase in the number of private tertiary learning institutions which have been established and these include University of Livingstonia run by the CCAP synod of Livingstonia, Catholic University run by the Catholic Church among others.

In Malawi, selection to universities is very competitive and limited by classroom infrastructure and bed space (Msiska, 2012; Chibambo, 2009). As a result, many qualified candidates cannot be

admitted. For example, as of 2007, over 20,000 students sat for MSCE, out of which 11,000 passed and sat for the University Entrance Examination (UEE) which is a requirement for the University of Malawi (UNIMA). 4,500 students passed UEE and qualified for UNIMA but only 1,000 of those students were admitted to UNIMA due to lack of space (UNESCO 2010/2011). Moreover, between 2007 and 2012, access to university education has remained at .0.03% against the internationally required margin of 35%. (Msiska 2012; Chibambo 2009).

1.3 International Standards

Malawi as a state has obligations to guarantee rights of SWDs through international standards that Malawi is party to (Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties, 1969). The Malawi Government has also either ratified or endorsed the main international conventions and policy commitments concerning education: Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; Article 27 of the African Charter on Human and People's Rights; Article 11 of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child; Article 28 of the UN Convention on the Rights of a child; Article 13 and 14 of the International Covenant on the Elimination of all forms of racial discrimination; Article (E) (V), to which Malawi is also party, prohibit discrimination in the field of education. Malawi is also a signatory to the 1990, Jomtien Education for All (EFA) Declaration, by which countries agreed to provide basic education to their people. Malawi is not, however, a party to the 1960 UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education (NESP, 2008).

Malawi is a dualist state which entails that after ratification of any international instruments, they must be domesticated by an Act of Parliament to make them enforceable at national level (Malawi Constitution, 1995). Malawi has since domesticated the Convention on the rights of the Child (CRC) and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC). Malawi has also domesticated the Salamanca Statement on SNE (1994), which recognizes the necessity and urgency of inclusive education to learners with disabilities. It expects education to take into account the wide diversity and learning needs of every child to enable learners with disability to access regular educational institutions. In addition, the Salamanca Statement requires states to enact laws or policies that implement inclusive education and institutions to enrol learners with disabilities in their institutions and to give the highest policy and budgetary priority to ensure inclusive education. The Salamanca statement also requires the adoption of legislation that

recognizes the principal of equality of opportunity for learners with disabilities. It also advocates for the adoption of policies that require learners with disabilities to attend regular institutions unless specific cases have demonstrated that special education is ideal for particular learners with disabilities. Furthermore, the Salamanca statement requires states and governments to mainstream education of learners with disabilities in national plans for achieving Education for All (EFA).

1.4 The Constitution of Malawi and SNE

The Constitution of Malawi is the Supreme Law (Malawi Constitution, 1995). It has provisions of national policy which consist of goals that the Government is expected to implement through policies and legislation. Some of these goals can have an impact on the right to education of learners with disabilities. The provisions on disability expect the Government to support people with disabilities by ensuring greater access to public places, fair opportunities in employment and the fullest possible participation in spheres of society. As earlier indicated, the Constitution guarantees rights and some of these rights have an impact on the right to education of learners with disabilities. Firstly, the constitution provides for equality and inclusiveness of all learners and recognizes disability not as a ground for discriminating anybody wanting to participate in education and so on. It also requires the enactment of Laws to address inequalities and prohibit any form of discrimination against individuals (Malawi Constitution, 1995).

It is evident that Malawi has made great efforts in improving and providing SNE to its citizenry. It is, however, evident that there is still need for definitive SNE in Malawi, at all levels of education. The issue is that children and youth with special needs have faced discrimination and exclusion for a long time one way or the other, even though this was subconsciously or unconsciously committed. To this end, the government of Malawi does however; need to improve on its implementation of SNE in the country. This can only be done if it considers putting in place systems that will ensure that LSENs have access to equitable education at all education levels

1.5 Problem Statement

Since the introduction of SNE in Malawi in the late 1950s, it would appear that the main focus of the Malawi Government has been on providing equitable education for students with disabilities

(SWDS) at both primary and secondary school levels but not at university level. It is also evident that LSEN in Malawi's universities are disadvantaged in many ways, and has problems, particularly, in accessing important areas such as lecture rooms, libraries, bathrooms and toilets within and without the university premises. This study will, accordingly, examine the support that is provided for SWDs). It will further examine and analyse the support that is provided to SWDs by university administrators, faculty, students, support staff and the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MOEST). This study will finally make possible recommendations to both the Government, universities and all stakeholders as a means to ensuring progress in this area. The information generated through this study will be relevant for guiding policy-makers and all stakeholders so that they seal those gaps that have curtailed and perpetrated all forms of pernicious discrimination against SWDs.

1.6 Purpose of the study

Accordingly, this study will examine two public universities in the country, namely Mzuzu University (Mzuni) and University of Malawi to establish whether these universities give the students with Special Needs adequate support or not. To achieve this goal, the study will analyze the current support that the two universities provide to students with disabilities (SWD). Support in this context refers to accessibility to the curriculum and instruction which includes access to lecture rooms, libraries, access to teaching and learning materials and preparedness of lecturers; access to Student Support Services (SSSs) such as guidance and counselling, health-care and moral support and access to physical facilities such as bathrooms, toilets, hostels, the cafeteria and other social and sporting facilities. It is important to have an understanding of what universities in Malawi are doing or what they intend to do in order to provide support to SWDs. It is equally important to understand the impression that SWDs have on the current support and services provided by their universities.

1.7 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are to:

1. Assess and gauge the level of support (academic, guidance and counselling, accessibility to physical structures etc.) provided to enhance meaningful inclusion of students with disabilities in universities,

2. Examine how universities facilitate and implement support for students with disabilities,

3. Identify the challenges faced by universities in providing support to SWDS,

4. Examine how SWDs cope with challenges of participating and mainstreaming in tertiary learning institutions,

5. Suggest possible recommendations for supporting inclusion of SWDS in Malawi's universities.

1.8 Research Question

From the onset of this study, it was clear that public universities in Malawi have made efforts in providing some support to SWDS in their tertiary institutions. The students too shared different ways in which they were supported by their respective universities. However, both the institutions and the students also acknowledged that the support provided is lacking in many areas.

The research question for this study is:

What is the support that is provided to SWDS in public tertiary institutions in Malawi and how is this support implemented.

1.9 Significance of the Study

The study is very significant in that it presents unique experiences of students with special educational needs and provides an in-depth analysis of supportive and challenging factors that influence their participation in tertiary education. Lessons drawn from this study will broaden the understanding of inclusive education practices in tertiary learning of education, and inform educators on supportive practices that result in meaningful participation of SWD in Malawian Universities.

1.10 Limitations and Delimitations of the study

1.10.1 Limitations

Although there are four public universities in Malawi, this study was limited to two public universities. At the beginning of the study, the researcher had planned on using three universities for this study. However, although one university had agreed to participate, they did not grant the

researcher any interviews or access to the tertiary institution. The study, however, aimed at getting an in-depth understanding of the support that is provided to SWDS in public tertiary learning institutions in Malawi.

There is very little literature available on SWDS in tertiary institutions in Malawi and few studies have been done on this subject. This therefore limited the research and literature review done for this study. In addition, there are no available SNE policies specifically for tertiary institutions and SWDS in tertiary institutions in Malawi. This too limited the study as the researcher was unable to ascertain the actual practices and procedures universities have in place for working with SWDS.

1.10.2 Delimitations

Although the researcher conducted interviews with SWDS at their respective tertiary institutions, the researcher did not conduct any home visits or interviews with parents or guardians of SWDS. This was done deliberately as the researcher wanted to ensure that the concentration of this study and that the views, opinions and experiences provided were of SWDS who are the focal subject of this study. Similarly, the researcher did not seek any views, opinions or experiences from typically developing students for the same reason.

1.11.0 Theoretical Framework

This study uses the Asset-Based Approach (ABA) in order to identify, mobilize and utilize individuals and community assets for the improvement and provision of support for learners with disabilities. To achieve these results, universities in Malawi need to evaluate their assets. This approach also creates opportunities for exploring and generating new knowledge that is relevant for students with disabilities (SWDS) as well as policy makers and all relevant stakeholders. Kretzman and McKnight (1993) introduce the ABA framework as a means of promoting development and empowerment of communities from the inside out by focusing on their strengths, abilities, resources and possibilities that already exist.

Asset-based practice is applicable to the context of Malawi as it is widely used across the nation. The Asset-based perspective offers practical innovative ways to impact on the positive factors that nurture health and well-being (Foot, 2012). When applying the ABA to the support of SWDS in Tertiary Education, it could be argued that institutions need to first empower SWDS by working on and highlighting their skills, strengths, capabilities and experiences. SWDS in Tertiary Education should be empowered so that they have more control over their lives, where and how they live and how decisions made by the Government and universities affect their learning experiences and future life. The ABA is based on the belief that all individuals, families, institutions and learning contexts have capabilities, skills, resources and assets that can make contributions for positive change.

Recognizing that every single person has skills, strengths, capabilities and experiences', being able to live effectively depend on whether such capabilities and abilities can be used and expressed. This granted, the individuals will have a sense of value; feel powerful and connected to all the people around them. Each time a person uses their "gift" the community is stronger and the person feels more powerful. It is essential to recognize the capacities of people who, for example, have been labelled with disabilities, being too young or too old (Kretzman and McKnight, 1993).

Asset-based interventions are devoted to identifying assets and mobilizing the assets for sustainable support. It recognizes the assumption that needs are indeed real; they can be addressed by focusing on the assets.

Developing assets/capabilities

Recognizing the value of positive self-perceptions to achievement and the pursuit of post-secondary education, educators at secondary school level have constructed transition programs designed to develop positive attitudes and dispositions through modelling and mentoring methods as well as direct instruction. These programs are generally aimed at fostering, in students with special needs, a sense of self-determination characterized by autonomous responses and a sense of personal competence (Wehmey et al., Abrey Mithany and Stancliffe, 2003). Relative to this, Trainor, 2008 suggests that program goals are quite varied and include coping strategies such as the ability to set goals, take action toward these goals and self-assess progress. Like Wehmey et al. Test (2009) recognizes that other programs explicitly instruct students in skills choosing, decision-making and self-advocacy.

Asset Mapping

Asset mapping is derived from and Asset-Based Approach to community development, and refers to a range of approaches that work from the principal that a community can be built only by focusing on the strengths and capacities of its citizens and associates that call a neighbourhood, a community or a country home.

As described by Kretzman and McKnight (1993), there are three levels of assets to be considered. The first is the "gifts, skills and capacities" of the individuals living in the community. The second level of assets includes citizen associations through which local people come together to pursue common goals. The third level of assets are those institutions such as local government, hospitals, education and human service agencies present in that community.

Asset mapping becomes extremely important when confronting a new issue or concern in which we have little or no prior experience. Kretzman and McKnight (1993) start with a community asset map. Nevertheless, it should be noted that no community asset map is ever complete – it is a work in progress updated and revised as more information is available (Kretzman and McKnight, 1993).

The ABA lays its importance on a continued emphasis on resources and the fact that an initial focus on resources and capacities does not necessarily result in a continuous positive focus.

Studies show that teaching professionals need to continuously focus on the "half-full" part of the glass (Ebersohn and Eloff, 2003). The studies further reveal the phenomena of unanticipated positive outcomes. This means that a focus on strengths and resources can result in surprisingly positive effects (Ebersohn and Eloff, 2003).

The way of recognizing assets is by drawing an "Asset Map" of all skills, capacities and resources that are available. Ammerman and Parks (1998) propose three levels of community asset assessment:

- An individual capacity inventory of specific skills, talents, interests and experiences of community members,
- An inventory of local associations and organizations that includes formal and informal groups,
- An inventory of local institutions such as parks, libraries, schools, colleges, hospitals, clinics, banks, police departments and other businesses.

Once students have been empowered, institutions should then focus on the available resources and how these resources can be used to support SWDS in their respective tertiary institutions. Tertiary institutions should be encouraged to draw an Asset map of all the skills, capacities and resources that are available to them and use them to SWDS. The ABA, although not perfect, offers some possibilities for approaching professional practice in a new refreshing way (Ebersohn and Eloff, 2003).

Definition of Terms

In the context of this dissertation the following words have been defined as follows:

Disability – An umbrella term covering impairments, activity limitations and participation restrictions. A disability results from a loss of physical functioning or impairment Garguilo, 2006).

Students with disabilities – this term is used as an umbrella term covering all students with Hearing Impairments, Visual Impairments, Physical Disabilities (activity limitations) and Learning Impairments.

Impairment – any injury, illness or inherent condition that causes or is likely to cause loss or limitation of psychological or anatomical structure or function (Malawi Government, 2006).

Special Needs Education – Education that is individualized and responsive to cater for individual learning differences for learners with Special Educational Needs or education that is specifically designed and adapted to suit individual specific needs of learners who have special learning needs (Gargiulo, 2006).

Specialist teachers – teachers who are specifically trained for Special Needs Education (MOE, 2009).

Curriculum – curriculum is a course of study to be followed in the process of acquiring education (MOE, 2009).

Accommodations – Changes made in testing materials and/or instructional procedures that "level the playing field" for students with disabilities (Meyen and Bui, 2007).

Assistive technology devices – Any item, piece of equipment, or product system used to increase, maintain or improve functional capabilities of a student with a disability (McLeskey, Rosenberg and Westling, 2013).

Inclusion – Students with disabilities are included as valued members of the learning community. This suggests that they belong to the institution and are accepted by others; that they

actively participate in the academic and social community of the school; and that they receive supports that offer them the opportunity to succeed (McLeskey, Rosenberg and Westling, 2013).

Inclusive education – this is a learning environment that provides access, accommodates and supports all learners (Malawi Government, 2006).

Resource centre – an institutional setting attached to a Primary School, Secondary School or tertiary institution that caters to learners with Special Educational Needs (MOE, 2009).

Special school – a school that provides educational and other related services solely to learners with Special Educational Needs and is staffed by specially trained teachers (MOE, 2009).

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.0 Introduction

This chapter examines disability, tertiary education and inclusion. The chapter also examines the transition of students with disabilities (SWDS) from Secondary School to Tertiary Education. It further scrutinizes accommodations for SWDS in Tertiary Institutions and the concepts of self-determination and Universal Design of Instruction (UDI). These are deliberately selected for this study so as to illustrate how they affect each other and influence SWDS.

2.1 Transition from Secondary to Tertiary Education for Students with Disabilities

According to Estrada, Dupoux and Wolman (2006), the transition from secondary education to tertiary education can be difficult for students with learning disabilities. Students who have become accustomed to comprehensive instruction in a special education environment or who have received individualized accommodations in a regular classroom are likely to experience challenges in a less structured, more challenging higher education environment. Often these students may not be prepared for the level of diligence, self-control, self-evaluation, decision making and goal setting that success in college requires. Estrada et al. (2006) further asserts that students with disabilities require special support in order for them to be fully integrated into the academic and social environment. The type of services recommended for these students vary widely from one student to the other and from one college to another. It is also asserted that lack of proper support, may lead to high percentages of students with learning disabilities dropping out of High Schools consequently not participating into Tertiary Education.

Similarly, many learners are not adequately prepared to meet entrance requirements and academic rigor of tertiary institutions. SWDS are less likely than their peers to complete a full secondary academic curriculum (Kochhar-Bryant, Basset and Webb 2009). Moreover, many are not encouraged in Secondary School to extend their education beyond Secondary School. Many university students either with or without disabilities are faced with numerous challenging physical and social environments. These challenges include architectural barriers, attitudinal misrepresentations about their skills and abilities by both faculty fellow peers as well as scarce support services (Justesen and Justesen, 2000).

According to Kochhar-Bryant et al. (2009) during the transition to university life, individuals with disabilities do have the same choices to make as their nondisabled peers though they many hav additional considerations to make. The additional considerations include:

- Which universities have the support services, accommodations and relevant devices they will need;
- Whether they will be able to access their hostels, lecture rooms and other physical structures;
- Whether they will be able to make friends and if their lecturers will be accommodating and;
- Whether the campus will be accessible with their wheelchairs (if they have any), among other considerations.

Because these additional uncertainties place extraordinary demands on young adults with disabilities, supportive services are often (though not always) needed to help them adjust and n transition into university settings.

Transition policies have significantly increased and broadened access to Tertiary Education for young SWDs. Nevertheless, these policies do not address all major inherent obstacles faced by the SWDs, and do not do enough to provide continuous and coherent pathway to Tertiary Education and employment (Education and Training Policy, 2011). Successful transition depends much on the resources and the resourcefulness of the individuals concerned and their families. Thus, students with sensory, motor or cognitive impairments and or from underprivileged backgrounds may be more vulnerable than those with minimal impairments and from privileged families (Kochar-Bryant et al. (2009).

Moreover, the priority for most SWDs at Tertiary Education is not limited to being physically present in a lecture room but rather extends to the possibility to ask questions, discuss ideas with classmates, experience cohort socialization, critically converse with their lecturers about their work, reflect upon readings, explore the library, access information just like their typically developing classmates, participate in social and cultural events and participate in all university experiences (Estrada et al. (2006).

Successfully completing tertiary studies is a further challenge for SWDs who encounter obstacles during their studies. Moreover, the additional resources allocated to institutions and to the SWDs are not sufficiently linked to preparing them for their future social and professional inclusion. As a result, SWDs may remain unemployed or underemployed despite accessing and completing Higher Education. It is therefore important to develop policies that encourage a successful transition from lower levels of education to Tertiary Education up to the time they get employed. Only when education policies achieve this will they are considered meeting their goals; goals such as efficiency, equity, access and building a promising future for the learners (Kochar-Bryant et al. (2009).

Access to tertiary education is essentially necessary for young adults with disabilities as it boosts their chances of employment, possibilities for inclusion and helps reduce prejudices against impairment. It can take on a special meaning for them in that the transition to adulthood changes the demands on educational systems, and m. In addition, the path to Tertiary Education requires the building.

Preparation for transition from Secondary School to Tertiary Education and adult life involves changes in the self-concept, motivation and development of the individual and is a fragile passage for the adolescent seeking to make difficult choices in life (German et.al 2000). This period is even more delicate for youths with disabilities who need additional support and preparation in order for them to complete this journey (German et al. (2009).

2.2 Inclusion of Individuals with Disability in Tertiary Education

Tertiary Education is a process of imparting knowledge and skills to individuals to empower them to participate in decision-making, development and democratic process. Effective education takes place when students are able to participate and benefit from that education. According to Kochung (2011) Higher Education in Africa has been perceived as a privilege of the few intellectuals or the rich and therefore those with disabilities are denied accessibility. Kochung further asserts that currently, less than 1% of people with disabilities in Africa have access to higher education and success of this small portion of the population is limited. Persons with disabilities are unable to access Higher Education due to barriers that exist within and without the learning institutions. Such barriers include narrowly defined set of eligibility criteria,

negative attitude and inaccessible environments. Inclusive education approach is instrumental in addressing these barriers in order to open up Higher Education to SWDs and all those who are denied access to education due on racial, ethnic, health, linguistic and cultural grounds.

Likewise, Kaputa (2013) observes that people with disabilities have always been at the peripheral of formal education programs. Historically, education of SWDS has been a result of hand-outs from benevolent missionaries and NGOs. Modestoi and Tau (2009) points out that key to meaningful and effective inclusion of SWDS is the creation and provision of suitable study materials. Tertiary institutions can enrol as many SWDs as they want but if these students are not provided with appropriate learning materials then they experience a more pronounced segregation than those who are not in the programs.

UNESCO (2005) considers inclusion as a dynamic approach of responding positively to student diversity and seeing individual differences not as a problem but as an opportunity for enriching learning. The aim of inclusive education, according to Reiser (2009), is to remove the historical exclusion from within and without the educational institutions through enactment or modification of legislation, policies and educational management practices in order to promote the re-organization of the educational systems and the acceptance of all students independently of their differences. Inclusive education recognizes that these differences are valuable and bring creativity and through them ideas are shared and experienced (UNICEF 2009). In other words, inclusion is about transforming the education system to be inclusive of everyone and not about inserting persons with disabilities into already existing structures.

Wolanin and Steele (2004), add that inclusion of SWDs in Primary and Secondary Education is a clear precedent that creates an obvious expectation that they will be included at the next level of education. There is no acceptable principle that would deny SWDs access to Tertiary Education considering that this form of education is a necessary step to full participation in life and individuals liberation. However, according to the authors, the inclusion of SWDs in Primary and Secondary School Education does not automatically transfer their inclusion in Tertiary Education.

The current education system perpetuates inequalities that do not favour SWDS. For instance, historically, typically developing learners have received general education separate from

Learners with Special Needs who were placed in specialized schools. Very often, in the latter system, the curricula could not prepare learners for the world of work. McCullum and Healey (2009) observe that only a very limited number offered tuition up to the end of secondary school level, thus excluding learners with disabilities from Tertiary Education opportunities. Although the current educational system has the potential to support greater participation of persons with disabilities in tertiary institutions, barriers and challenges are still prevalent. Traditional attitudes and stereotyping of these learners lead to exclusion and reinforcement of the notion that learners with disabilities do not have a future in education. Moreover, barriers are aggravated by inequalities inherent in the Tertiary Education system. For example, students are still being excluded or channelled based on mere perceptions of their capabilities. Furthermore, fieldwork or practical development in off campus facilities or use of graphic material or specific types of equipment are often used as excuses for not allowing them to participate in non-traditional courses and degree programs (Kochung, 2011). This perceived ineligibility is linked to the continued use of the medical model of dealing with disability, where the emphasis is placed solely on the nature and extent of the student's impairment rather than on institutional barriers. Although it would probably, in most cases, be extremely difficult to prove outright discrimination against students or potential SWDs; subjective evidence suggests that students are often persuaded to follow certain courses viewed suitable for them and/or institutional exclusion is based on the perceived unreasonableness of accommodation requests that goes unchallenged (McCullam and Healey, 2009).

McCallum and Healey (2009) further argue that traditionally, limited attention has been placed on addressing issues of access, retention, progression and participation of students with disabilities in tertiary environments. This is not-withstanding the fact that SWDs have been identified in various governmental policy documents (such as the National Education Sector Plan of Malawi (NESP) as being historically disadvantaged and deserving special attention. More and more tertiary institutions, however, are now seemingly focusing on the inclusion of SWDs. Some tertiary institutions in South Africa have established Disability Units (DU) to offer specialized services to their SWDs in order to facilitate access and integration of these students at their institutions (Kochung, 2011).

Tertiary Education has often been associated with specific outcomes such as good employment opportunities and high income but with the ailing economy, many students complete their university education and do not gain any employment. Tertiary institutions still perceive disability from the basis of the medical model rather than the social model. This makes it rather difficult for them to understand the students' learning problem as a result of interaction between the impairment and contextual barriers (McCullam and Healey, 2009).

Students who enrol in tertiary institutions are expected to come from Secondary Schools, however, in most African countries, the majority of SWDs are vulnerable and do not complete High School Education and when they do complete it, they do not always meet university admission criteria which is based on academic performance and economic ability (Kochung, 2011).

The current trend is that students enrolling into tertiary institutions are coming from regular or Special Education Secondary Schools. In many cases, Secondary Schools catering for SWDs are well prepared for such learners. Conversely, tertiary institutions are not prepared to convert reading materials to electronic formats for certain groups of students, to provide sign language interpreters and captioning on campus events for those who are deaf or blind. Whether students go through regular or Special Education Schools, they face certain barriers before enrolling into tertiary institutions or after getting into tertiary institutions. According to Mutswanga and Mapuranga (2014) universities lack policies on inclusive education and are hardly prepared to enrol students who are disadvantaged in order to keep the set reputation high. Lack of enforcing rules is therefore likely to negatively impact on inclusive practices. There is also need to have strict transitional processes when students move from Primary Schools to Secondary Schools and up to Tertiary Education (Evangelou, 2008). Furthermore, Kochung(2011)summarizes the barriers faced by SWDs before enrolling into tertiary institutions as follows:

- Social exclusion and stigmatization by society
- Tertiary institutions catering for those with disabilities are not available in every community
- Environments in tertiary institutions are not disability friendly and the facilities within the community that they are expected to use are inaccessible

- Admission criteria to tertiary institutions are complex, inflexible and stringent for vulnerable students intending to enrol
- Most vulnerable students intending to enrol into tertiary institutions are coming from poor economic backgrounds

Kochung (2009) further observes that when students meet all the requirements for admission into Higher Education, they still face certain barriers within the tertiary institutions. These barriers include:

- Rigid curriculum and examination system
- Lack of appropriate teaching methodology
- Feeling of inadequacy by teachers
- Rote and memorization learning
- Exams weighted high to discriminate students

According to Anittos and McLuskie, 2008, universities are not aware that their institutions are discriminative against students with differences including physical, intellectual, sensory, ethnic or emotional. Tertiary institutions become sensitive and responsive to diverse contexts of students' conditions.

Tertiary education has the responsibility of promoting lifelong learning that enables individuals to participate in development and decision making, by making education accessible to all through elimination of all forms of barriers from both within tertiary institutions and society (McCallum and Healey, 2009).

Inclusive policies have not always succeeded in ensuring the successful transition of young adults with disabilities. Despite the progress made, young adults with disabilities generally have a harder and bumpier transition to tertiary education than other young adults. Those students with sensory, motor or mental impairment or psychological problems face particular challenges. Their pathways to tertiary education are also less straight – forward and there may be breaks or forced changes of direction along the way (Education and training policy, 2011).

2.3 Self –Determination as a key to Successful Inclusion of Students with Disabilities

Since the early 1990s, the concept of self-determination and its related practices has been widely studied. This concept and its related values and practices have been widely accepted by the disability community as essential for quality assurance in education services and independent living (Zhang, Wehmeyer and Chen, 2005). Ultimately, self-determination means involving s people with disabilities claiming basic rights including all the freedom guaranteed by the Constitution (Zhang et al. (2005). It is the freedom to make individual choices about one's own life and the opportunity to fail, just like any other person. Cobb, Lehman, Newman-Gonchar and Alwell (2009) assert that self-determination as a construct is multifaceted and a reflection of both a psychological trait and a behavioural set of skills. For SWDs, it appears that increasing their self-determination status correlates with the increased quality of life in their future. The skills of determination should be taught and modelled at school and at home. Field (2003) adds that self-determination is considered a key component of high quality transition services.

When applied to education, self-determination revolves around fostering an interest in students to learn value education and have confidence in their strengths (Zhang and Benz, 2005). Zhang and Benz further observes that student self-determination helps with staying in school and completing school and enhances student post- outcomes. According to Test and Neale (2004) self-determination skills have been used to increase student involvement in educational decision making such as participating in the Individualized Education Program (IEP) process.

Research indicates that providing instruction and opportunities in self-determination may improve the post-school outcomes of SWDs. Self-determination has further been considered as both a complex set of skills such as problem-solving, self-awareness and decision-making, and organizational practices that provide opportunities for students to become self-determined (Morningstar et al., 2010). Specifically, self-determination has become an increasingly important skill for SWDs who transition to Tertiary Education settings. To receive support services for an identified disability in tertiary settings, students must disclose their disability status (Eckes and Ochoa, 2005).However, Finn, Getzel and McManus (2008), observes that being able to request and manage critical accommodations at tertiary level can present challenges for an individual with a disability who has not received foundational instruction in these processes. Therefore

instruction and opportunities for self-determination while in Secondary School programs are critical transition services to facilitate improved success in Tertiary Education.

Adjusting to a university environment presents challenges for all students, however, for SWDs; the responsibility of managing their accommodations along with their academic work presents a set of challenges unique to these students. According to Getzel and Thoma (2008), SWDs enter university unprepared to disclose their disability or lack the understanding of how to access services on campus. SWDs must self-identify to the university and request accommodations and support. Several support services such as developing self-determination skills, exploring technology and obtaining internships or other career related experiences are essential for the retention of SWDs at Post-secondary Education levels (Doe, 2006). SWDs need self-determination skills to successfully transition to, adjust to and remain in the university system. These skills are a set of personal and interpersonal skills that include acceptance of a disability and how it affects learning, understanding which support services are needed, knowing how to describe one's disability and the need for certain support services and having the determination to overcome obstacles that may arise in the course of learning (Getzel, McManus and Briel, 2004).

Research indicates that certain components of self-determination are beneficial for SWDs in Tertiary Education. Durlak, Rose and Bursack (1994) asserts that instruction in self-awareness and self-advocacy play a critical role in improving skills and academic experiences for the SWDs in Tertiary Education. Others do recommend increasing self-advocacy skills during the secondary years in order to improve the ability of SWDs so that they can manage the tertiary environment in so doing retaining the SWDs in the school system.

2.4 Accommodations that Promote Successful Inclusion of Students with Disabilities in Tertiary Institutions

One aspect that facilitates the learning of SWDs in Post-secondary Educational is the provision of accommodations. Bolt, Decker, Lloyd and Morlock (2011) observes that accommodations are changes in the presentation of instructional or testing materials, changes in how students are expected to respond to instruction, and or testing changes to the setting in which materials are presented. Although research about accommodations and its impact on the success of SWDs at

college level is still limited, some studies suggest that providing accommodations in other educational settings has promoted the inclusion of SWDs in general education activities. Sireci, Scarpati and Li (2005) state that rules and procedures for determining which accommodations a student should receive vary considerably from Secondary School to Post-secondary School settings.

Recent advances in assistive technology have made it increasingly possible for students with reading and writing disabilities to be successful in environments where print is used (Silver and Pacuilla, 2006). Computer supported accommodations are often preferred because students can use them independently and don't require additional human support to administer. The authors further observe that there are many opportunities for students with reading and writing difficulties when they are exposed to rich content and they easily develop self-determination skills when provided with training in the use of various assistive technologies. Similarly, Lange McPhillips, Mulher and Wylie (2006) reported that assistive technology support students with reading and writing difficulties and were particularly effective in improving learning among Secondary School students. Likewise, Orr and Bach (2009) further expound that students' need for accommodation may change drastically as institutions and faculty begin implementing universal design principals.

According to Kohler and Field (2003) it s important to consider the needs of each individual student in making appropriate accommodation decisions. Although student-reported experiences may not be very objective, they still provide basic information for an informed decision making. As students reach more advanced educational levels, they become more aware of the accommodations that can assist them learn effectively. Experts have argued that it becomes more important for them to be involved in their own educational decisions. Morningstar, Frey, Noonan, Clavenna-Deane, Graves, Kellems, McCall, Pearson, Wade and Williams-Diehm (2010) assert that providing instruction in self-determination may facilitate the success of students with disabilities in Post-secondary education settings.

Decker, Lloyd and Morlock (2011) identifies several factors that may hinder the use of accommodations among students with disabilities and one of such factors includes poor legal knowledge among university professors. Marshak, Van Wieren, Ferrel, Swiss and Dugan (2010) report that SWDs may choose to make use of accommodations if they feel that they are being

stigmatized. Lack of advocacy and self-determination skills can also limit students from using the available support that can help them succeed. Moreover, research emphasizes the importance of advocacy and self-determination skills. For example, Barnard-Brak Brak, Lechtenberger and Lan (2010) observe that SWDs who succeed academically will often engage in the following actions when talking with faculty about accommodations (a) they will develop a script for how they will disclose their disability to a faculty member, (b) they will negotiate with faculty for access to particular accommodations (rather than report faculty noncompliance), and (c) they will downplay the severity of their disability. It is important to examine the barriers to the use of accommodations SWDs report about as well as their perceptions of what may facilitate their use of accommodations to promote better practices that can facilitate their use, to promote better practices that can facilitate greater success and learning among SWDs as they transition from Secondary to Post-secondary Educational settings.

2.5 Universal Design of Instruction (UDI) as Key to Successful Inclusion of Students with Disabilities

Universal design for instruction (UDI) in Tertiary Education is a relatively new concept that has generated significant support.

UDI began to be considered in the 1950s in Europe, Japan and the United States and focuses on removing physical and environmental barriers for example providing flat entries to buildings designed with stairways leading to entry way) that prevent access to tall buildings by individuals with disabilities. To this end, flat entries to buildings designed with stairways leading to entry ways are deliberately put in place. In the 1970s, the concept of UD evolved from mere removal of physical barriers to the integration of all people with disabilities within all environments (Roberts, Park, Brown and Cook, 2010).

The Centre for Universal Design published seven principles applicable to environmental accessibility (Connell et al., 1997):

1) Equitable use: Design should be usable and marketable to diverse individuals. For example, a curb cut that someone riding a wheelchair can use and benefit from.
2) Flexibility in use: Design accommodates preferences and abilities

3) Simple and intuitive use: Easily used by individuals of diverse knowledge, literacy levels and background experiences

4) Perceptible information: information is provided with ease of use regardless of sensory needs. For example, elevators that have buttons for each floor available at wheelchair height, in Braille and with sounds as each floor is passed

5) Tolerance of error: consequences or potential hazards are minimized

6) Low physical effort: design can be used comfortably with minimal effort. For example, levered door, as opposed to door knob

7) Size and space in approach and use: Design accounts for users of different shapes, sizes and agility. For example, accessing an office mailbox from a sitting or standing position with minimal reaching effort

Historically, the seven UD principles promoted architectural and environmental designs to enhance accessibility and usability for as many people as possible. In the past decade, educators have expanded these principles to include educational access. Examples of these include:

- Equitable use: Accessing a variety of information, such as syllabi, in a variety of formats, including print, disk and online

- Flexibility in use: varying instructional methods, including lecture, discussion and individual and group activities

- Simple intuitive: clearly describing course expectations for grading, in different formats, for example narrative and rubrics

- Perceptible information: using videos that include subtitles, or captioning for those with hearing impairments

- Tolerance for error: providing ongoing and continual feedback on coursework rather than at specified interim periods, such as midterm or final exams

- Low physical effort: providing lecture notes, so that students who have difficulties in taking notes do not need to take notes e.g. the visually impaired and the hearing impaired

- Size and space for approach and use: making seating easily accessible, if possible, so that everyone can see each other and communicate with one another directly. Circular seating may address this principle

- Community of learners: Creating a variety of learning settings, for example, use of email groups, social networking sites or chat rooms (Cohort socialisation)
- Instructional climate: Including a statement in the syllabus indicating the desire to meet the instructional needs of all students to convey their needs to the instructor

Summarily, the nine principles of UDI present multiple means of representation, engagement and expression as Centre for Applied Special Technology, (2008) observes.

Although UDI is a relatively new concept, in Tertiary Education, it has generated significant support. Newby (2005) for example, suggest that approaches based on UDI bring flexibility and creativity to both instructional delivery and management. Newby further asserts that the concept allows students to gain knowledge by taking advantage of their strengths.

Al-Hmouz (2014) further suggests that there should be careful attention to the design of the classrooms so that it should accommodate the diverse types of disabilities exhibited by the students who are included in the classroom. Diverse severity of disabilities represented between the SWDs in the class might require special demands from the teacher. Schmidt and Cagran (2008) for instance, observe that students who are blind, deaf or physically impaired will require more significant instructional accommodations or curriculum modifications than others would. The classroom space, design, location, lights, elevators and support tools should be considered in environmental settings.

2.6 Conclusion

Tertiary Education has many long term economic benefits. It is also associated with long term benefits such as better health and life longevity, higher reported happiness and more participation in civic, charitable and democratic institutions. Participation in Tertiary Education (TE) has also been associated with development of independence, lifelong friendships and professional relationships and higher self-esteem helps has the responsibility to restructure its programs to include provision of supportive assistive devices, accommodation of academic flexibility, supporting aids and services, modification of classroom environment, sign language interpreters and note-takers among other things. Tertiary Education policy should recognize and appreciate differences among students who enrol or intend to get into Higher Education programs and such

formulation of policy ought to involve people with disability in planning, implementation and evaluation.

Tertiary institutions must therefore ensure that they are providing equitable education to SWDs. In doing so, tertiary institutions must ensure that these students have access to campus buildings and facilities, instructional and learning materials and access to student support services such as guidance and counselling. Likewise, tertiary institutions must empower SWDs to ensure that they are able to use their skills, capabilities and experiences. Once these students have been empowered, they will be able to take more control over their lives and the decisions that affect them.

Historically, people with disabilities have constituted minorities and have been subjected to unfair discrimination and stigmatization. To date, people with disabilities still suffer indignity, widespread discrimination and lack of economic independence. The majority of people with disabilities in Malawi have been excluded from education, housing, transport, employment, information and community life. They have been prevented from exercising fundamental political, economic, cultural and developmental rights. In the education system, there are many disparities between people with disabilities and those that have none or have minimal disabilities.

Chapter 3: Methods

3.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the research methods which were used for this study. The chapter will also explain the research design, data collection, sampling, and methods of data analysis. The principal aim of this study was to analyze the support that the two tertiary institutions under study provide to students with disabilities (SWDS). It is essential to have a clear understanding of what universities in Malawi are doing or what they propose to do in order to provide support to SWDS.

3.1 Research paradigm

This study is framed within the interpretative paradigm because it focuses on the holistic analysis of the phenomena and provides an opportunity for the voice, concerns and practices of research participants to be heard (Cole, 2006; Weaver and Olson, 2006).

This study utilizes a systematic analysis of socially meaningful action through the direct detailed observation of people in their natural settings in order to arrive at understandings and interpretations off how people create and maintain their social worlds (Neuman, 2006). Through the use of the interpretive approach, the researcher also attempted to answer questions about the phenomena under study with the purpose of describing and understanding the phenomena from the participant's point of view (Leedy and Omrod, 2005).

3.2 Research design

This study utilizes the exploratory case study. The study sought to understand the phenomenon under study by focusing on a holistic picture and in-depth understanding which was more critical than a numeric analysis of data (Ary, Jacobs, Razavieh and Sorensen, 2006). The focus of this study was on gaining insights into the support provided to SWDS, and to create familiarity for later investigations to be undertaken when problems are in a preliminary stage of investigation (Wiersma and Jurs, 2009).

This study used Mzuzu University and University of Malawi as case studies and the goal was to arrive at a detailed description and understanding of the entity (Ary et al., 2006).

The study facilitated an exploration of the support provided to SWDS within its context using a variety of data sources. These sources include interviews, observations and documents. This ensured an exploration of data through a variety of lenses which allowed for multiple facets of the phenomena to be revealed and understood (Baxter and Jack, 2008).

The case study design was considered because (a) the focus of the study was to answer "how" and "why" questions; (b) the researcher could not manipulate the behaviour of those involved in the study; (c) the researcher wanted to cover contextual conditions because she believed they were relevant to the phenomena under study; or (c) the boundaries were not clear between the phenomenon and the context (Yin, 2003).

The researcher went to the site of the participants to conduct the research and interacted with the participants. It was also necessary to observe the participants in their respective colleges. This allowed the researcher develop a certain level of detail about the individuals, their environment and to be highly involved in their actual experiences.

3.3 Sample and sampling techniques

This study used purposive sampling. This allowed decisions concerning individuals to be included in the sample to be taken by the researcher, based upon a variety of criteria which included specialist knowledge of the research issue, or capacity and willingness to participate in the research. Some types of research design necessitate researchers taking a decision about the individual participants who would most likely contribute appropriate data, both in terms and depth (Koerber and McMichael, 2008). The focus of this study was students with disabilities and the support that is provided to them in tertiary institutions in Malawi.

Since purposeful sampling also looks for participants who possess certain traits or qualities, the researcher considered the aim of the study and selected samples accordingly (Coyne, 1997). The most important guiding principle is maximum variation; this study included people who represented the widest variety or perspectives possible within the range specified by their purpose (Higginbottom, 2004). This study also included participants from more than one tertiary institution.

This study also used non proportional quota sampling (NPQS) as this is a less restrictive sampling method where the researcher specified the numbers that match the proportions instead of the population. The researcher also made sure to have enough of the sample to be able to talk about even small groups in the population. In addition, because of the small numbers of SWDs enrolling universities in Malawi, there was some assurance that the small population of SWDs was sufficiently represented in this study (Koerber and McMichael, 2008).

3.3 Data collection methods

Data collection methods used for this study were time consuming and consequently data was collected from small numbers of people. (McMillan and Schumacher, 2010). The benefits of using these approaches included richness of data and deeper insight into the support that is given to SWDS in the tertiary institutions under study. The data from this study was derived from face to face interviews, focus group discussions or observations.

3.4.1 Interviews

This study used semi structured interviews which consisted of several key questions and helped to define the areas to be explored, but also allowed the interviewer or the interviewee to diverge in order to pursue an idea or respond in more detail. This interview format provided participants with some guidance on what to talk about. The flexibility of this approach also allowed for the discovery or elaboration of information that is important to participants but may not have precisely been thought of as pertinent by the researcher (Gill, Stewart, Treasure and Chadwick, 2008).

The purpose of the research interview was to explore the views, experiences, beliefs and or motivations of individuals on specific matters. Interviews are believed to provide a "deeper" understanding of social phenomena than would be obtained from purely quantitative methods, such as questionnaires Gil et al., 2008)

The interviews were scheduled in advance at a designated time and location outside of everyday events. They were organized around a set of pre-determined open-ended questions, with other questions emerging from dialogue between the interviewer and interviewee(s) (DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree, 2006). The researcher used questions that invited the interviewees to tell a story

were employed and this generated detailed descriptions about topics of interest. These descriptions were further explored using follow up questions or probes on what had already been said. The probes used the participants' own words to generate questions that elicit further description (Roulston, 2009).

When designing an interview schedule, the researcher found it imperative to ask questions that were likely to yield as much information about the study as possible and also address the aims and objectives of the research, thus the use of open ended questions which were neutral, sensitive and understandable and required more than yes or no responses. In order to put the respondents at ease, the researcher built a rapport with the participants. Each interview began with questions that participants could easily answer easily and then proceeded to more difficult ones. This was also done to generate rich data and allowed the interview to develop further (Gil et al. 2008). Prior to the interviews, participants were informed of the details of the study and were assured of their right to privacy, anonymity and confidentiality.

When conducting the actual interview, the researcher found it necessary to be familiar with the interview schedule, so that the process appeared more natural. The researcher also developed and used reporting skills to ensure that the interview was as productive as possible. Another skill needed in this process is the ability to listen attentively to the interviewees. Many skills are necessary for conducting research as suggested by Gill (2008). These skills were achieved by first conducting a pilot interview schedule on several respondents prior to data collection. This helped establish if the schedule was clear and enough for the research questions, and if any changes should be made.

The interviews conducted were be tape recorded and transcribed verbatim afterwards, as this protects against bias and provided a permanent record of what was and was not said. The researcher also found it helpful to make field notes during and immediately after each interview about observations, thoughts and ideas about the interview as this helped with data analysis (DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree, 2006).

3.4.2 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) made an important contribution to this study as they facilitated group interaction and assisted in bringing to the surface aspects of situations that might not have

been exposed. The group situation also stimulated people in making explicit their views, perceptions, motives and reasons (Punch, 2009).

The role of the researcher changed during the FGDs as the researcher functioned more as a moderator or facilitator, and less as an interviewer. The process was not one of alternate question and answer, as in the traditional interview. The researcher only facilitated, moderated, and monitored and recorded group interaction. The group interaction was directed by questions and topics supplied by the researcher. The researcher was required to have good interpersonal skills and he or she must know how to facilitate group discussion (Johnson and Christensen, 2000). In addition, the researcher, as the moderator, also ensured that everyone was involved in discussing the questions and topics and avoided allowing one or two people to dominate the discussions. The moderator was also sure to probe for information and to know when the discussion about a particular topic had been exhausted (Johnson and Christensen, 2000). A tape recorder was used to record proceedings and the researcher took notes of observations made.

3.4.3 Observations

Observations enabled the researcher to describe existing situations using the five senses, providing a "written photograph" of the situation under study (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper and Allen, 1993). Participant observation was the primary method used when doing field-work. Field-work involved "active looking, improving memory, informal interviewing, writing detailed field-notes and most importantly, patience (DeWalt and DeWalt, 2002 p. viii). Participant observation enabled the researcher to learn about the activities of the people under study in the natural setting through observing and participating in those activities (Kawulich, 2005).

Observation methods were useful to the researcher in a variety of ways. They provided the researcher with ways to check for nonverbal expression of feelings, determine who interacts with whom, grasp how participants communicate with each other and check for how much time is spent on various activities (Schmuck, 1997). Participant observation allowed the researcher to check definitions of terms that participants use in interviews, observe events that informants were maybe unable or unwilling to share when doing so would hve been , impolite or insensitive and observe situations informants have described in interviews, thereby making them aware of

distortions or inaccuracies in description provided by those informants (Marshall and Rossman, 1995).

The use of observation method also allowed the researcher holistic understanding of the phenomena under study that is as objective and accurate as possible (DeWalt and DeWalt, 2002). Participant observation was used as a way to increase the validity of the study, as observations helped the researcher to have a better understanding of the context of the issue.

Observation as a technique that was used when data collected through other means can be of limited value or is difficult to validate (Hancock, 1998). For example there was no guarantee that participants who were asked how they behave in certain situations would actually do what they said they would do. Observing them in these situations was more reliable because it was possible to see how they actually behave. Observation also served as a technique for verifying or nullifying information provided in face to face encounters (Hancock, 1998).

The researcher also made observations of the environment. This provided valuable background information about the environment where the research project was being undertaken (Hancock, 1998). For instance, this study was enhanced by some descriptions of physical features of buildings, leisure facilities, accommodations, etc that SWDs use within and without their tertiary institutions. Observations of people, a situation, interactions, lack of interactions, tone of voice, body language, facial expressions, gestures, and use of words, conversation topics or the environment were recorded by way of notes or tape recording.

Observation also helped in seeing or hearing what was naturally happening by observing naturally occurring behaviour over a long period in-depth understanding of the issues is achieved. The observations conducted were comprehensive in the sense that it was a continuous process and open to whatever may have been significant. It facilitated a deep understanding of the context and the participants' behaviour, which allowed collection of a more complete set of data reflected on the importance of the effect of the context (McMillan and Schumacher, 2010). Recorded detailed descriptive fields that are not vague or judgmental were necessary here as McMillan and Schumacher, (2010) proposes.

3.4.4   Documents

The researcher had planned on using official documents for this study. The researcher had further hoped that the documents that would have been made available would describe functions and values and how the tertiary institutions under study define their organizations where SWDS are concerned. Documentary data would have been collected in conjunction with interviews and observations. This study further aimed at examining university policy and procedures on SEN and LSENs as well as guidelines for SEN. The study was also meant to look at policies that MOEST may have on SENs and LSENs in tertiary institutions.

3.5   Data Analysis

During the data analysis the researcher made sense out of the data in a process which involved consolidating, reducing, comparing and interpreting what people had said, what had been seen and read. It was the process of making meaning (Merriam, 2009).

During data analysis the researcher moved back and forth between concrete bits of data and abstract concepts, between inductive and deductive reasoning, between description and interpretation. These meanings or understandings or insights constituted the findings of the study. Findings were in the form of organized descriptive accounts and themes that cut across the data (Merriam, 2009).The researcher found that there was a great amount of data to be analyzed and interpreted. Pages of field-notes and interviews were critically examined and synthesized. Analysis was an ongoing part of the study. Data collection and analysis were interwoven, influencing one another (McMillan and Schumacher, 2010).

The overall process of data collection began with identifying segments in the data that were responsive to the research questions. Merriam describes this segment as a unit of data which can be a potential answer or part of an answer to the research questions. The researcher interpreted each unit of data as any meaningful segment of data; at the beginning of a study, the researcher was uncertain about what will ultimately be meaningful. In some cases units of data were as small as a word a participant used to describe a feeling or a phenomenon, or as large as several pages of field-notes describing a particular incident. The researcher made sure that each unit revealed information relevant to the study and stimulate the reader to think beyond the particular bit of information. Secondly, the researcher ensured that "the smallest piece of information about

something that could stand by itself – that is it must be interpretable in the absence of any additional information other than a broad understanding of the context in which the inquiry is carried out" (Lincoln and Guba, 1985).

The researcher compared one unit of information with the next in looking for recurring regulations in the data. This process involved breaking data down in bits of information and then assigning "these bits of categories or classes which bring these bits together again. In the process, the researcher began to discriminate more clearly between the criteria for allocating data to one category or another. (Dey 1993).

An essential early step in data analysis which the researcher to was to organize the large amount of data so that coding was facilitated. Organizing the data separated it into a few workable units as there was a vast amount of data.

The process of data analysis in this study began with reading the first interview transcript, the first set of field notes, and the first document collected in the study. As the researcher read through the transcript, she took down notes, comments, observations and queries in the margin. These notations were next to the bits of data that the researcher found particularly striking or interesting or as potentially relevant or important to the study. This process of making notations next to the bits of data that appear to be potentially relevant for answering the research questions is called coding. The challenge of coding is to construct categories or themes that capture some recurring pattern or cuts across the data. It should be clear that categories are abstractions derived from the data, not the data themselves (Merriam, 2009).

Data reduction occurred continually throughout the analysis; it was part of the analysis. In the early stages, it occurred through editing, segmenting and summarizing the data. In the middle stages, it occurred through coding and memoing, and associated factors such as finding themes, clusters and patterns. In the later stages, it occurred through conceptualizing and explaining, since developing abstract concepts was also a way of reducing the data.

The data that was gathered was re-analyzed, and arranged to clean it up. The themes that emerged were continually assessed to consider any variations, distortions, similarities and differences. The responses from the interviews and FGDs were further analysed establishing the

extent to which the participants answered questions posed and arising assumptions from related literature review. Data was then put into emerging themes.

3.5.0 Interview analysis

The individual interviews and FGDs conducted were transcribed verbatim from a digital recorder that was used. Each transcript was read and re-read to ascertain that the meaning of significant words and phrases. From these, codes were developed against each piece of data. Coding also helped in summarizing the data by putting together themes and by identifying patterns. As a qualitative study, large volumes of complex data were collected and the labels that were formed from coding became an essential part of subsequent analysis. During the coding process, data segment texts were formed that were comprehensive on their own and contained one idea, episode or piece of relevant information. These segments were then analyzed to come up with codes so that each segment was labelled by at least one code. The codes then provided meaning to the segment. These codes included activities, quotations, relationships, contexts, participant perspectives, events, processes and other actions. Categories and entities comprised of grouped codes, to give meaning to the codes were used. These categories represented major ideas that were used to describe the meaning of the data that was similarly coded. Similar codes were put together to form a category which was then labelled to capture the essence of the code.

This study called for settling on what was transcribed. The term settled on has been deliberately used because despite all the best intentions, the textual data will never fully encompass everything that took place during an interview or FGD (Mishler 1986; Kvale 1996; Green, Franquiz and Dixon 1997; Poland and Pederson 1998). As part of data analysis, nonverbal observations such as facial expressions, body language and setting descriptions were included. Likewise, intonations and emotions were included too. Poland and Pederson (1998) state that what is said is just as important as what is not said and this is why the inclusion of contextual information regarding silences and pauses at interviews was critical.

However, as McLellan, MacQueen and Neidig (2003) note that transforming speech into specific words is not without challenges. Speech omissions, incomplete sentences, overlapping speech, lack of clear-cut endings in speech, or poor audio quality and background noises were some of the issues that the researcher encountered. In addition, it was necessary to carefully determine

where and when punctuation was required, so as not to change the intent or emphasis of the interviewee's responses or comments. Content from audio recordings was transcribed in its entirety and provided a verbatim account of the interviews. McLellan et al., (2003) state that in order to ensure that all transcriptions are generated systematically transcripts must include elisions, mispronunciations, slang, grammatical errors, nonverbal sounds and background noises. All these were included as this level of detail is important to ensure that all transcripts were prepared in a standardized manner and could provide a consistently prepared and comparable textual record. In order to ease readability, the transcripts were formatted identically to support Computer-based coding which was used. Each transcript was verbatim and included mispronunciations, grammatical errors, and slang and background noises. Any interruptions which occurred during the interviews and FGDs were taken note of. These interruptions included cell-phone calls, knocks, visits and background shouting.

Coding

The level of transcription that the researcher undertook complemented the level of analysis. This analysis focused on providing an in-depth description of the knowledge, attitudes, values, beliefs or experiences of an individual, a group of individuals or groups of individuals, a greater number and lengthier units of text needed to be included in the transcript. With this type of analysis, the researcher was not only interested in identifying patterns and prominent themes. She also wanted to demonstrate variations in how social phenomena were framed, articulated and experienced as well as the relationship within and between particular elements of such phenomena (Drisko, 1997).

Open coding, whereby units of meaning (any meaningful word, phrase, narrative etc. were identified and compared with other units of meaning, whilst looking for common themes that emerged across the data, was used. The themes that emerged were given codes (names) and were refined and adjusted as the analysis proceeded (Merriam, 2002).

The data was sorted according to the themes that emerged. Data from the interviews, FGDS and observations were continuously compared for consistency and differences.

Themes and sub themes were developed to represent the main concepts of impact and the different ways that these arose respectively. Themes were more abstract (exclusion) and the sub-

themes that were developed were more figurative (left behind). The themes that emerged were further discussed under the objectives, arising related literature review and assumptions.

The researcher used seven steps for managing data as proposed by LeCompte and Schensul (1999). The management involved (1) maintaining copies of all important materials; (2) ordering field notes using chronological, genre, cast of characters, event or activity; (3) designing and implementing a system for labelling and logging interviews; (4) cataloguing or indexing all documents and artefacts; (5) establishing the safe storage of all materials; (6) checking for missing data; and (7) developing a process for reading and reviewing text. The researcher will, therefore, ensure that each transcript is assigned a distinctive case identifier. The file name for each case identifier conveyed relevant and important information about the file that had meaning to the researcher (Drisko, 1996).

A transcription protocol was useful for two reasons: (1) it minimized the chances that the researcher would have incompatible transcript products to work with and (2) it reduced the likelihood that data analysis would be compromised or delayed (Kvale, 1998).

3.5.1 Observation analysis

This study used observations as another tool for collecting data. These observations helped describe existing situations, providing written photographs of situations under study.

Observation also allowed the researcher to see and hear what was occurring naturally at each research site. Lengthy observations helped the researcher in gaining a deep understanding of the phenomena. McMillan and Schumacher state that typically, the nature of observation is comprehensive in the sense that it is continuous and open to whatever maybe significant. It facilitates a deep understanding of the context and the participants' behaviour, which allows collection of a more complete set of data to reflect the importance of the effect of the context.

Data collected from observations was recorded as field-notes. The field-notes were dated and the context was identified. Field-notes were recorded using distinctive abbreviations so that they were difficult for others to read without editing. Finally, the field-notes that were recorded were descriptive rather than vague or judgmental

3.5.2 Document analysis

Documents are a non interactive strategy for obtaining qualitative data with little or no reciprocity between the researcher and the participants. It is less reactive than interactive strategies in that the researcher does not extract evidence. During the study, the researcher had planned on looking at official documents such as special needs education policies for each tertiary institution. The researcher had hoped to use these documents to describe functions and values and how various people define the institution in relation to SWDS. The researcher was of the opinion that these documents would be a rich source of data. However, neither institution under study had these documents available. The first institutions indicated that it had a draft SNE policy and the second institution indicated that it had a set of written guidelines and procedures. An examination of SNE policy from MOEST was also planned. However MOEST did not have an SNE policy that is specifically for tertiary institutions. Despite several requests and reminders, these documents were not presented leading to the abandonment of document analysis.

3.6 Validity and Reliability

McMillan and Schumacher (2010) suggest that validity in qualitative research refers to the degree of congruence between the explanations of the phenomena and the realities of the world. Claims of validity rest on data collection and analysis techniques. This study used a combination of strategies to enhance validity. McMillan and Schumacher (2010) argue that as many strategies as possible are used to ensure design validity.

In this study, it was vital to ensure prolonged and persistent field-work to enhance validity. As part of the data collection process, participant observation, semi-structured interviews and FGDs were used. These were conducted in natural settings to reflect lived experiences of the participants. The lengthy data collection period also provided opportunities for interim data analysis, preliminary comparisons and corroboration to refine ideas and to ensure the match between evidence-based categories and participant reality. Most qualitative researchers employ several data collection techniques in a study but usually select one as the central method – either participant observation or in-depth interviews (Janesick 1998). To some extent, participant observation, open observation, interviewing and documents are an interwoven web of techniques. McMillan and Schumacher (2010) assume that multimedia strategies permit

triangulation of data across inquiry techniques. Janesick (1998) further states that in its broad sense, triangulation can also refer to the use of multiple researchers, multiple theories, or perspectives to interpret the data; multiple data sources to corroborate data and multiple disciplines to broaden one's understanding of the method and the phenomenon of interest. In this study, multiple methods of collecting data which produced multiple sources of data were employed. As McMillan and Schumacher observe, these multiple sources of data allowed for triangulation. These different methods of data collection also provided different insights which increased the credibility of the findings.

A third way in which the researcher enhanced validity is through participant language and verbatim accounts. Here, the interviews were phrased in the interviewees' own language and not in abstract terms. The researcher was also sensitive to cultural translators – that is participants who translate their words into social terms. Likewise the researcher also made use of low-inference descriptors to augment validity. Concrete, precise descriptions from field-notes and interview elaborations are the hallmark of Qualitative Research and the principal methods for identifying patterns in the data (McMillan and Schumacher, 2010). It was necessary to ensure that descriptions provided from field-notes were as detailed and literal as possible and that any important terms were those used and understood by the participants. According to McMillan and Schumacher, low-inference descriptions stand in contrast to the abstract language of the researcher.

Moreover, mechanically recorded data was used to enhance validity. Here, the researcher made use of a tape recorder to provide accurate and relatively complete records. In addition, to make the data usable, the notes of any situational issues that arose such as failure of equipment were made. Finally, reconfirmation of observations and participants' meanings with individuals through casual conversations in informal settings and situations was crucial. McMillan and Schumacher (2010) refer to this as member checking and they assert that member checking can also be done within an interview as topics are rephrased then probed to obtain more complete and subtle meanings.

3.7 Ethical Considerations and Standards

Qualitative research is more likely to be personally intrusive than quantitative research. Thus ethical guidelines include polices regarding informed consent, deception, confidentiality, anonymity, privacy and caring. The researcher adopted these principles in complex situations (McMillan and Schumacher, 2010). In order to ensure that this study was credible, the research design involved not only selecting participants and effective research strategies but also adhering to research ethics. The researcher also planned how she would handle the ethical dilemmas in interactive data collection. The researcher also devised roles that elicited cooperation, trust, openness and acceptance.

Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2003, p. 131) summarize the main issues to consider as:

1. The rights to privacy of an individual
2. Voluntary nature of participation – and the right of individuals to withdraw partially or completely from the process
3. Consent and possible deception of participants
4. Maintenance of the confidentiality of data provided by individuals or identifiable participants and their anonymity
5. Reactions of participants to the way in which researchers seek to collect data
6. Effects on participants to the ways in which data is analyzed and reported
7. Behavioural and objectivity of the researcher

Furthermore, for this study, there was need for a number of procedures to ensure that ethical considerations and standards were met. Firstly, the researcher got permission from the participants and this ensured confidentiality and purpose of the data. In addition, participants

were also allowed to identify times and places when they would be available. Likewise, a strong rapport needed to be built in advance and this called for advance planning. It was also critical to consider that most participants can detect and reject insincerity and manipulation.

To ensure confidentiality locations and feature of settings were disguised and code names of participants were used. The researcher was aware that she had the responsibility to protect the individuals' identity from other persons and protect them from anyone reading research report (McMillan and Schumacher, 2010). Deception violates informed consent and privacy. The researcher therefore negotiated with participants so that they understood the power that they had in the research process. This power and the mutual problem-solving that resulted from it may have been an exchange for the privacy lost by participating in the study.

3.8 Limitations of the study

Some of the limitations that this study encountered include:

- Scope limitations the study was conducted at one university with a limited number of SWDS. The characteristics of the sample limit the generalizability of the findings and there is need for additional research of this nature with broader populations.
- The limited number of universities that participated in this study. Initially, it was planned that three tertiary institutions would be engaged as Case Studies. Two of these institutions were supposed to be under the UNIMA. However, despite having arranged a data collection period and scheduled interviews, one of the institutions did not want to be engaged in this study. As a result, research was only done at one constituent college of the UNIMA and Mzuni. Many SWDs need to be given the opportunity to voice their experiences, and ideas to achieve a greater cross-section of SWDS attending tertiary education programmes.
- There is very limited research which has been done on SWDS in tertiary institutions in Malawi.

Despite these limitations, the results of this study present important information, strategies, recommendations and approaches that can be used by tertiary institutions in providing support to SWDS.

Chapter 4: Results

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents results from the data that was collected and analysed. The study examined two public universities in Malawi to establish the support that is provided to students with disabilities (SWDS). The study therefore analyzed the current support that the two universities provide to SWDS.

4.1 Demographic Data

Semi-structured interviews were used to conduct at both tertiary institutions under study. The researcher conducted a total of twenty six interviews with selected participants. These participants included seven students, nine members from faculty and administration and ten members from the support staff (refer to appendix 2).

The researcher also collected data from the universities, which illustrates different categories of SWDS. The data showed that both universities combined had, at the time that the study was conducted, a total of twenty three visually impaired (VI) students and six physically challenged students (refer to appendix 3). The researcher further summarized the SWDS by faculty (refer to appendix 4).

Both universities indicated that the main categories of disabilities that they come across are the physically challenged, visually impaired and persons with albinism. Both universities also indicated that they have had rare cases of hearing impaired (HI) students.

Each interview was transcribed verbatim and the researcher used line by line analysis to develop themes which emerged from the data. The level of transcription that the researcher undertook complemented the level of analysis. This analysis focused on providing an in-depth description of the knowledge, attitudes, values, beliefs or experiences of SWDS as well as the members of staff and officials from the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MOEST). This type of analysis also allowed the researcher to not only identify patterns and prominent themes.

Open coding where units of meaning were identified and compared with other units of meaning, while looking for common themes that emerged from the data was used. The themes that emerged were given codes and were refined and adjusted as the analysis proceeded (Merriam, 2002). The data was sorted according to the themes that emerged. Data from the interviews, focus group discussions (FGDS) and observations were continuously compared for consistency and differences.

The researcher developed themes and sub themes to represent the main concepts of impact and the different ways that these arose respectively. The results of this study are presented according to the themes.

4.2 Admission and Retention

Both universities reported that SWDS have access to education in their tertiary institutions. However, these students are in minority as compared to their typically developing peers (refer to appendix 2).

4.2.1   Application Process

Students who would like to be enrolled in tertiary institutions in Malawi are required to apply to their preferred university. Donna, an administrator who was interviewed, acknowledged that SWDS are in the minority. She indicated that the low enrolment rate of SWDS in their institutions can be attributed to the students themselves. She said:

> I don't think a lot of them actually applied for the offered programs because I know we haven't had very many SWDS at the institution (Donna, T2: 42-44).

Another administrator, Don, felt that the performance and discourse of disability of SWDS at secondary school level also has influenced their access to tertiary education. He stated:

> I think it depends on their performance [at secondary school] because when they apply for admission to the university there's no indication of whether we are dealing with special needs students or not. I mean we only find out when they are on campus so technically I think it's all about the performance of the students and also in the way they want to progress, what kind of programs and studies they have to pursue (Don, T1: 21-25).

Maxwell, a faculty member, corroborates these sentiments. He indicated that there was lack of information and encouragement for SWDS. He said:

> During the admission process, people fill the [application] form and I'm not sure whether the form asks someone who has a disability to indicate on the form, otherwise we receive applicants and by and large there's no indication. Likewise, maybe people with one form or other of disability who want to apply should be encouraged. I don't think we have done a lot of career guidance to attract these people because there are others who say in my condition I don't think I should apply anywhere else. So I look at it from that angle but as a university, it would be incumbent upon us to actually go out and encourage those people with disability to join the system. That's the way I look at it (Maxwell, T7: 137-144).

Vivian, a visually impaired student, revealed that she applied to the university she attends because there were only a few SWDS there and she was not aware of many who had applied there. She said:

> You know, I just thought for myself most students with visual impairments do go for other colleges but I haven't heard [of] someone enrolling here so I had to apply on my own. I was just trying [that] maybe I will be admitted (Vivian, T9: 240-243).

However, Margret, a physically challenged student, and Vivian both narrated incidences where they were discouraged by university staff from pursuing their tertiary education when they reported for classes. In addition, both students were told to go back home. During her interview,

Vivian narrated how some lecturers were not prepared to work with a VI student, as a result she was told to go back home. She said:

> I had to go through tough challenges. Some people would tell me to go back home and come again the following year. Some people would discourage me in different ways but I had to resist (Vivian, T9: 93-95).

Vivian's comments are corroborated by Jerry, a faculty member, who confirmed that the institution had indeed tried to deregister her. Jerry stated:

> As far as I remember, there's one student who has a VI. I think we got some information before she actually arrived. You know there was a kind of backlash from the Ministry of Education advising us to provide for this student (Jerry, T4: 68- 71).

Similarly, Margret also narrated that a lecturer once told her to go back home due to her disability. She narrated how a lecturer told her that the university was not for disabled people and told her to go back home (Margret, T3: 135-136).

The interview with Margret turned emotional and she began to shed tears. The incident narrated by Margret was corroborated by Donna, who described some lecturers as being 'unsupportive' when it came to working with SWDS. Donna said:

> One of the problems we had [was] about a certain physically challenged student where she the department rejected her as it anticipated problems when going out for academic excursions. But we insisted that she be taken on board since she was an up-grader and she already had a certificate in the course she's going to do. So you can't be telling her now that you can't go to the field because our understanding is that if she's working in that particular field then it MEANS SHE GOES TO THE FIELD then find a way of incorporating her in the system (Donna, T2: 125-130).

Even though some of the lecturers are not prepared to work with SWDS, Donna's statements demonstrate the administration's role in ensuring retention and support to SWDS.

Similarly, Mable, another member of the administration, shared that some of the departments refuse to process applications for SWDS in certain programmes due to their disability status.

However, attempts are made by the administration to increase awareness and tolerance of disability. For example, Mable said:

> We try to keep conducting awareness campaigns because some [people] do not really understand [disability] very well. Like there are some programmes where SWDS want to take courses and they are not allowed to do those courses. And that was another challenge because SWDS feel they can do anything but the department felt that they couldn't manage to use some of the equipment, but we believed that they can do anything and on that ground allowed them to go on (Mable, T4: 206-211).

4.2.2 Registration Process

Students with disabilities (SWDS) that are enrolled in the universities under study are required to undergo a registration process for the courses they have selected in their respective programmes. Although administrators in both universities indicated that they do make accommodations for SWDS during registration, the students interviewed indicated that no accommodations are made for them during the registration process. Don, an administrator, observes that SWDS are given 'special preference' during registration. Conversely, SWDS interviewed in this university responded that they are not given any accommodations and have to rely on their friends to assist them with the registration process. For instance, Martha responded that 'nothing' is done for her during registration and in response to how she registers. She said:

> Someone has to push me on the wheelchair; unfortunately nobody is around [today]. But I have to register, I sent someone, they bought this for me (she holds up a registration form) (Martha, T3: 112-113).

Similarly, Alinafe, a physically challenged student, and Peter a VI student, both indicated that there is no extra support provided to them during registration and that they register the same way their colleagues do. Peter responded as follows: "During registration we do what our friends do" (Peter, T11: 79).

Peter further asserts that the current system of registration poses problems for him and his colleagues who are visually impaired.

50

But I personally would prefer it if the administration had one area where registration can be done to accommodate students with visual impairments. It would be a lot easier for us than to have to do what our friends do because we are different. We are not the same as them (Peter, T11: 79-82).

4.2.3   Faculty attitudes

The study revealed that there are some discriminatory practices present in both universities under study, although university administrators are not necessarily aware of them.

Don asserts that because the university has a fairly large population consisting of students and staff, it is difficult to observe a general attitude of the university community towards SWDS. He however asserts that the university has not received any complaints regarding ill treatment of SWDS. Don said:

> I think that's a tricky question because it depends on personality and you can't tell where you are dealing with so many people like members of staff and students. But I think we are all educating each other to be able to accept special needs students on campus and also give them appropriate assistance. I already said we haven't had any reports of any phobic attitudes against these students and I think we will continue along those lines (Don, T1: 133-143).

The study also revealed that the university communities have varying attitudes towards SWDS and that in some cases it is difficult to actually guage what such attitudes towards SWDS are. Maxwell, a faculty member feels that not much has been pre-fixed to support SWDS. Maxwell stated:

> So far I would say I don't think many of us have put serious thought about that. But it's something we all really need to do to raise awareness amongst ourselves, faculty [and] administration and so on; even fellow students should be made aware of the importance of treating everybody and providing that necessary assistance when it is required (Maxwell, T17: 94-97).

Vivian feels that lecturers have negative attitudes towards SWDS as they feel that such students cannot perform. She said:

Most of the times these lecturers have negative attitudes towards students with challenges. They have negative attitude [s] that maybe we can't perform, that they can't perform. So I do look at this when I'm in class. Sometimes they just write on the chalkboard without any explanation and [the lecturer] points at the chalkboard with such remarks as can you see it, explaining, they just say can you see this, that and point at the chalkboard without explaining what is there yet some of us are visually impaired. How do you expect somebody to see when they have visual problems? So I conclude that they don't want us to learn as they think that we cannot perform (Vivian, T9: 195-200).

Mable, one of the administrators, feels that the general attitude of her institution towards SWDS is relatively good. She feels that the community supports them but acknowledges that more can be done. She said:

It's generally good. They [the community] support them very well. But we still need to keep doing awareness because some of them don't understand disability very well (Mable, T14: 206-207).

Chimwemwe who is also an administrator, feels that the university faces a lot of challenges when it comes to attitude towards SWDS and he also believes that the university can do better. He however feels that the general attitude of his university is better than that of other public universities in Malawi. He said:

It's a challenge, but we take students with disabilities with some positivity and a lot of pride and we will go all the way. You may wish to know that for a long time, things [might] have changed here, but I doubt it, but students with disabilities have been sent away from other public colleges (Chimwemwe, T20: 146-149).

Chimwemwe adds that one of the public universities rejected a student thinking he could not cope with the academic demands. The student was, however, enrolled at another public university and here he completed his studies. He said:

A public university actually said no we can't take you because you can't manage. But we said let's take him on board and that we did so we have taken them positively with our programmes that we have so we do that (Chimwemwe, T20: 151-153).

Both universities indicated that they ensure positive attitudes towards SWDS are maintained through continuous sensitization programmes. These programmes also help communities to understand issues concerning SWDS and how best they can support them. Mable asserts that her institution regularly holds awareness campaigns for faculty members teaching them about special needs students. These campaigns are mainly conducted by the resource centre staff. Awareness campaigns are conducted both within and without the universities. Mable said: "We also had one this year where we were sensitizing people about SWDS that they are able people like ever body else and can do anything we all do" (Mable, T14: 40-42).

However, Don, also a member of the administration, points out that they don't conduct sensitization campaigns as set programmes. They simply lead by example. He said:

> Not as an orientation programme would be, but when we have issues with special needs students, staff simply led by example by doing what is best in helping them. The students union also supports these students very well and makes sure that their voice is heard and respected (Don, T1: 146-151).

Vivian who has been at university for two years notes that some of her friends and lecturers treat her differently and she attributes this to lack of sensitization. She stated:

> Some students treat us equally, yet others treat us poorly possibly due to lack of sensitization maybe they think the same way some lecturers think (Vivian, T9: 213-214).

4.2.4 Special Needs Education Policy (SNEP) and Ministry of Education, Science and Technology

At present, both universities do not have working Special Needs Education Policies (SNEP) in their institutions. Faculty members who were interviewed admitted that SWDS are handled in an ad hoc manner. However, one of the institutions indicated that they do have a draft SNEP, though it was never availed to the researcher. Management from the second institution indicated that it was planning to design a SNEP. Don acknowledges that his university does not have a SNEP although procedures for dealing with SWDS are there. Don said:

Not at the moment we don't have a policy for special needs education students but we do have some procedures in place. I think it's time we had one now and we ought to have a policy for special needs students (Don, T1: 27-29).

Mable, an administrator, also indicated that her university does not have an SNEP, but acknowledged that faculty members are made aware of the needs of SWDS.

Not really because they are just developing it but the faculty members are made aware of such issues and they do help. Moreover, the special needs section has also been conducting awareness not only at this university but also around the city (Mable, T14: 37-40).

Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MOEST)

As earlier indicated both tertiary institutions under study are public institutions and fall under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MOEST). This means that the public universities receive their funding from MOEST. MOEST has a special needs section (SNS). While this is the case, both universities lamented that they do not receive adequate support from MOEST through the SNS. One of the institutions under study indicated that they only receive budgetary support from MOEST which is exclusive of SNE support. Mable stated:

Yes in terms of budgeting, we do budget for special needs students. Nonetheless, when MOEST is sent the budget for approval, they definitely look into that more money should be given towards that (Mable, T14: 191-192).

Don, another administrator, indicated that his university has not worked directly with MOEST in providing support for SWDS other than Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) but acknowledged that his university has worked with other organizations that deal with disabilities. He feels that MOEST mainly deals with primary and secondary school education. Don said:

We have worked with NGOs such as FEDOMA, MACOHA and others. The Ministry as you know deals with primary and secondary education. Therefore, we only go to them if there is need for guidance. But we do liaise with MACOHA and FEDOMA when we need their advice on SWDS, or if we need some equipment (Don, T1: 120-126).

5.0 General Student Support Services

a) Availability of medical supplies and resources for SWDS

Students with disabilities (SWDS) who are registered with the public universities under study at times require certain medical supplies and resources. These include items such as catheter bags, canes and sometimes wheelchairs. In many cases, students source some of these items from their parents/ guardians or well wishers. Both public institutions have clinics on sight, and the clinics at times need to provide SWDS with some medical supplies and resources. This being the case, the study revealed that the university clinics are not always equipped with some of the medical supplies and resources that SWDS need to make them more comfortable. For instance, Martha, a physically challenged student, narrated how lack of medical supplies negatively affected her at university. She felt that clinics at universities should have certain equipment necessary to meet their unique needs. Martha said she needs to use catheters, and that there was an incident where she had to go for two days without attending classes because she couldn't change her catheter as the clinic had nothing. She said:

> I went to the clinic to look for the catheter but they had nothing. The one I had was leaking so I wouldn't go to the classroom because I was scared I would be there and maybe it would start leaking and bring me to shame. I had as such to stay in the hostel for two days until the urine bags came from the Central Hospital (Martha, T8: 170-175).

b) Guidance and Counselling Services

Students with disabilities (SWDS) enrolled in both public tertiary institutions under study have access to guidance and counselling services. In both universities, guidance and counselling services are often carried out by members of staff in the Dean of students office who are also responsible for student affairs and welfare. One of the universities under study also indicated that they have a member of staff from their clinic who has received training in psychosocial therapy and thus assists in providing guidance and counselling to both typically developing students as well as SWDS. The guidance and counselling services that are provided are therefore not only open to SWDS but rather to the entire student population. This has been asserted by administrators as well as Deans of Students from both institutions.

In response to the question about the availability of guidance and counselling services at her university, Donna, an administrator responded as follows:

> ...As student affairs we've tried to give them the support they need by using personnel that we have. Of course what I have discovered is that most of the times the [SWDS] don't open up but we try to make them feel free and let them talk to us (Donna, T2: 47-49).

Further to this, Jones a member of the support staff, indicated that members of the clinic staff have received training and are equipped with guidance and counselling skills. He said:

> Yes, like those with mental problems we all at least do something to do with mental problems as part of our training. And on top of that, one of us has a Diploma in Psychosocial Counselling (Jones, T5: 42-43).

It is therefore apparent that tertiary institutions are able to provide guidance and counselling services and that there are members of staff available who have received training in psychosocial counselling. However, although support staff and administrators indicated that guidance and counselling are provided, not all the students are aware of this. For instance, during her interview, Margret indicated that the university does not provide guidance and counselling services (Margret, T3: 91-96).

Chimwemwe, another administrator, also corroborated that guidance and counselling services are available to all students. However, he stresses that the kind of guidance and counselling that is available is not 'specialized' for SWDS. He said:

> The kind of guidance and counselling is open to everybody although there is special support for the. We've got people who've been to Montfort College. They are the ones we use as experts to help the SWDS and the rest (Chimwemwe, T20:82 – 86).

6.0 Curriculum

All students who are enrolled into these two public universities under study have access to curriculum and academic activities. Nevertheless, all students with disabilities (SWDS) reported

that they experience some challenges in accessing the curriculum and participating in academic activities.

a) Teaching and learning resources

A significant element of access to curriculum for SWDS is access to teaching and learning resources. Both universities under study have Resource Centres (Disability Units) on site. One of the institutions has a resource centre that is well established and adequately equipped to cater for students who have visual impairments and low vision. The resource centre at this institution has two rooms. The first room is used by the resource centre staff and it contains five computers, each installed with specialized Jaws programme. The room also has two embossers for transcribing notes, examinations, assessments and books for visually impaired students. This resource centre also has three members of staff who cater for all SWDS there. The three members of staff are well trained and equipped to work with SWDS. The second room contains thirteen computers, and these computers are used by the visually impaired students. These computers also have Jaws installed and have internet access. The room also contains two scanners which are used to enlarge print for students who have low vision. In addition, both visually impaired students and the students with low vision have full access to this room to work on their assignments, study, and read lecture notes, and or do research.

The resource centre also assists physically challenged students including persons with albinism to print and do their research or type assignments at the resource centre.

The second institution also has its own resource centre. However, this resource centre only has one computer which has the Jaws programme installed. The VI students who use this computer are also provided with a Perkin's Braille which they are able to use in their rooms. Nonetheless, this institution does not have an embosser and as a result, a member of staff in one of the resource centres has to travel about 100kms from the campus to access an embosser. He said:

> One of the challenges is the one which I've already talked about: the embosser because as I do travel a very long distance [to access this facility]... We have another challenge that is the computers which are supposed to be used by the students. The ones that have been installed do not have all the features which are supposed to be used by the SWDS

because the computers are supposed to have speakers and they are supposed to have headphones and text to speech enhances (Paul, T6: 77-83).

Students interviewed at both universities also asserted that lecturers prefer to use overhead projectors during lecturers and this works to the disadvantage of the VI students and the low vision students. Presently, both universities do not provide students with note-takers or recorders. In this regard, Don shared these sentiments:

I think at the moment we haven't been able to provide note-takers. Our assumption has been that we have some organizations that are specialized in helping students with special needs and if the special needs students need some gadgets maybe personalized laptops etc. They should be assisted by these organizations (Don, T1: 95-99).

Maxwell, a member of the faculty, feels that currently, there isn't enough support that is being given to students with disabilities and feels that more can be done. He said:

There is a lot that we need to do to provide for people with various disabilities. The arrangement we have now is ad hoc because the university admits the students with disabilities and at the end of the day we seem to neglect them (Maxwell, T7: 30-33).

In addition, one of the institutions relies on donations for equipment like embossers and computers. A member of staff at the resource centre added that the institution had mainly relied on donations from donors outside Malawi. He said:

You can see that these computers are the ones which we use for transcribing. And these were donated by the Scottish Government (Mike, T19: 95-96).

In addition, the Braille papers that are used are also not purchased locally by the institution. They are purchased from South Africa and through Montfort College for Special Needs. The institution has also received donations from Ministry of Education Science and Technology (MOEST) in the form of Perkin's Braille. The resource centre staff also indicated that another challenge they face is that they have inadequate staff to service all SWDS. Mike states: "I would like the University to employ more workers in the section of special needs since the number of students needing assistance is increasing" (Mike, T19: 121).

b) Library resources

Both tertiary institutions under study have library facilities and services available on site. In addition, both universities have demonstrated that they have made attempts to ensure that SWDS have access to the libraries and the services that are offered such as internet usage, reading space and reading materials. Both tertiary institutions under study have wheelchair ramps at the entrance of their libraries which allows students using wheelchairs and canes easy access into the libraries. Nevertheless, both libraries in the universities under study are two story buildings and this has limited those students with wheelchairs and those who are visually impaired from accessing the second floor. Neither university has an elevator which can assist SWDS in accessing the second floor of the library. However, both tertiary institutions revealed that they are to benefit from an African Development Bank (ADB) grant where new 'purpose built' buildings will be constructed. These buildings will include libraries and other facilities that will cater well for all students and will be disability friendly. Maxwell, a faculty member, said:

> We are benefitting from the African Development Bank (ADB) grant and one area is to build a new library, purpose built library which will cater well for SWDS. We have also factored in equipment and sound proofing premises for that. It will also have a ramp and even provide mobility through an internal lift (Maxwell, T7: 59-64).

c) Assessment

Students with disabilities who are enrolled in the two public universities under study are required to undergo various assessment processes. The two tertiary institutions mainly use two forms of assessment which are continuous assessments i.e. assignments and tests administered and written during the semester and end of semester examinations which are administered at the end of each course at the end of a semester. Depending on the programme that the students are enrolled in, students are also sometimes required to be assessed through practical's or field work.

i.   Examinations

Accommodations provided during examinations at the two universities under study include provision of a separate exam room specifically for VI students; provision of additional time during exams for VI students and ensuring that exams are transcribed into Braille and those

exams for students who have low vision are produced in large fonts. During her interview, Vivian pointed out that the university does give her additional time during examinations. She said: "They give me extra-time during examinations" (Vivian, T9: 156).

However, Vivian points out other areas where support for her is lacking during examinations. For instance, she notes that she is not provided with an invigilator when she is writing her exams and that sometimes there are delays in delivery of her examination papers. She states: "Sometimes exams don't come in good time, but they also don't invigilate me" (Vivian, T9: 126).

Regarding the absence of invigilators, Vivian said:

Sometimes it becomes a problem. They realize too late that there is someone who needs assistance because I do write my exams at the resource room where I write without somebody else. It's too difficult for them to remember that there is someone who needs invigilation elsewhere (Vivian, T9: 126-132).

Vivian's concern regarding the delay of examination papers is corroborated by Paul, a faculty member who adds:

> And the other one is untimely delivery of examination question papers so that they can be transcribed. We had an experience when one of the lecturers delivered a mid-semester question paper [for transcribing] on the same day when that paper was supposed to be administered (Paul, T6: 106-109).

Conversely, accommodations during examinations for SWDS are only made for students with VIS. There seem to be no accommodations made for students who are physically challenged. For instance, Martha, a physically challenged student, stated that she writes her exams with her colleagues. She said: "I would write exams with other people" (Martha, T8: 57). In addition, Martha adds that she faces challenges using the desks provided by the university during examinations. She said:

> I can't use my desk for writing...but I have to improvise by sitting on the side. Or even when taking exams, I have to use my lap because the desks are not wheelchair friendly (Martha, T8: 51-54).

Don acknowledged that his institution is able to make accommodations for SWDS in certain areas. He said:

> In terms of examinations, we use Braille and some of them want larger font of print. You know we make those facilities available to those who want to use different fonts. And also if they are using wheelchairs, we create space for them to sit in the exam room and staff are available to wheel those around if need be (Don, T1: 63-68).

However, Alinafe, a physically challenged student, asserts that the university does not do anything additional for her during examinations. She states: "During exams again, not really. It's mainly the desks that are a problem" (Alinafe, T13: 112-113).

Two visually impaired students who were interviewed from one of the universities acknowledged that there are some accommodations that are made for them during examinations. Alex, a VI student, stated that the university provides VI students with their own room to write examinations. He stated:

> But during examinations, all of us that are visually impaired we sit in our own room and write exams there using our laptops. They also give us extra-time for each exam and we have an invigilator with us. So at least they try (Alex, T10: 83-86).

Peter, another VI student, corroborates these sentiments by stating "But for examinations we have our own room where we write exams and the exams [question papers] are transcribed into Braille for us" (Peter, T11: 82-84).

d) Competency to teach Students with disabilities (SWDS)

Both universities under study have indicated that their lecturers do not receive any training to prepare them to work with students with disabilities (SWDS). In some cases, lecturers and faculty members pointed out that they are not given any information prior to a SWD enrolling in their courses or programs. Lack of training aside, faculty members also noted that the lecturers are also not provided with the right resources and materials to facilitate the teaching of SWDS. Jones a member of the support staff cites limited classroom space which sometimes forces lecturers to hold classes in rooms that were not designed for teaching such as assembly halls.

This requires the lecturers to strain their voices and hinders students listening abilities and vision. In this regard, Jones said:

> Both the lecturers and students do have problems when lectures are held in the halls. Thus, students sitting at the back of the class [hall] hardly get what the teacher is saying; this becomes grave for those with hearing impairments and visual impairments (Jones, T9: 101-103).

Jerry adds that lecturers were informed when a VI student enrolled into their university. However, he feels that the administration also needs to inform faculty members when physically challenged students are selected. He said:

> I think for other disabilities the university needs to make comprehensive assessment so that those with physical impairments and other disabilities can be presented to lecturers prior to the commencement of the classes (Jerry, T4: 72-75).

Jerry further added that if lecturers have any knowledge of SWDS, it is from their previous background and not from any form of training provided by the university. These sentiments are reinforced by Maxwell, a faculty member, who confirms that he has never been given any form of training to prepare him for SWDS. He indicates that his knowledge of SWDS comes from his interest in this field. However, both Jerry and Maxwell, add that they are comfortable working with SWDS. Maxwell said:

> It just came to some of us because of finding ourselves having to cater for the needs of students with special needs as we have interest in them. But as a university, we are factoring it into the University Policy so that training for [working] SWDS could be provided for (Maxwell, T7: 71-74).

Members of staff at the resource centre also indicated that lecturers need to be sensitized more to ensure that they are willing to work with SWDS. Mike said:

> Not all lecturers are sensitized in this field. [For instance] Not all the lecturers provide notes to VI students. You can see it's a big challenge for us to go with this situation (Mike, T19: 57-60).

Paul, another member of staff from the resource centre, also asserts that lecturers need to be sensitized to prepare them for working with SWDS. Paul said:

> The problem is that every semester, we are receiving new lecturers. That's the problem, but what I usually do is at the beginning of the semester I sensitize lecturers of what is supposed to be done to the SWDS (Paul, 6: 66-68).

Furthermore, Paul has taken it upon himself to sensitize lecturers.

> My sensitization part is to the part of notes because it has been observed that some of the lecturers when teaching they usually use projectors. I happen to tell them that whenever they are using a projector, they should also make sure that the students should access their notes in other formats (Paul, T6: 70-73)

Some lecturers have also shown unwillingness to work with SWDS and usually discourage them from continuing with their education and are unwilling to accept them in the university. This is evidenced by the incidences experienced by Vivian and Margret.

On the other hand, the study has also revealed that some of the lecturers are more supportive towards SWDS. For instance, Ruth who has been a lecturer for twelve years, and has taught several SWDS indicated that she is very comfortable working with SWDS. In addition, the main forms of disabilities she has come across during her career are those with visual impairments and those with low vision. She is able to make accommodations for the SWDS she teaches as well as provide them with lecture notes prior to her lectures. Ruth said:

> I give them all the power-points that I use in my lectures for all the students in advance so that they can follow as I teach, and this enables them to add more notes or explanations and examples as the lecture progresses. The power-points are brailled (Ruth, T17: 32-34).

Alex, a visually impaired student, narrates how one of his lecturers was supportive and showed her willingness to work with him by purchasing a tape recorder for him to use during lectures. Alex said: "I had the lecturer who gave me the recorder to help me with my lectures" (Alex, T10: 151-152).

7.0 Physical Infrastructure

From observations made, both universities have made attempts to ensure that students with disabilities (SWDS) have access to physical structures and some facilities that are accessible around their respective campuses. This was true with structures such as wheelchair ramps. However, both institutions indicated that these structures are not available at some buildings like libraries, lecture – rooms and hostels. Furthermore, data from the study indicate that prior to having physically challenged students, both tertiary institutions did not have wheelchair ramps available at their campuses and they had to improvise to accommodate students with mobility challenges. Donna, an administrator, indicated that as a result of having a student with physical challenges, the university resorted to having temporary wooden wheelchair ramps constructed around the campus. She said:

> For our physically challenged students last time we had one, we had to put ramps all over the place so that they can wheel their wheelchairs [around] – of course after that one went, I have not seen most of those things around (Donna, T2: 24-26).

In addition, a faculty member also outlines that physically challenged students do face a number of problems in getting around the campus and accessing physical structures such as lecture rooms. Jerry said:

> (Hesitates). It's quite challenging but I've seen students taking longer routes. For example, we have a class with stairs so if you're coming from the main corridor you can't access that classroom. However, if you come from the other prefab buildings then it's easier that way, though quite challenging for SWDS in a wheelchair (Jerry, T4: 42-46).

Members of the support staff also acknowledged that the access SWDS have to physical structures is abysmal. Don, an administrator, asserts that although access is not adequate, the institution is making attempts to improve this. He said:

> I think our common rooms, if I may say, the library or entrance to the admin building those that are common rooms; we've tried to have ramps for students to be able to come through when they are on wheelchairs. In terms of the classrooms, I think we are led by what's happening on the ground when a special needs student comes up and we think we haven't stretched that far because as you are aware there are different types of disabilities. Some of them are physical some of them we are dealing with them along the

way, we've been trying to make the campus user friendly for them and we are doing our best and we will continue to do so (Don, T1: 41-49).

Six of the physically challenged and visually impaired students who were interviewed also expressed concern at how they are unable to access some areas of their respective campuses because fellow students often move desks and chairs around and place them in corridors, obstructing the paths. Alex, who is visually impaired, narrated how he finds this to be a challenge. He said:

You know some of our friends like to move furniture from classes and they put them in the corridors so when you are walking even if you are using a cane you bump into them and that happened to me. I hear people laughing when I do that. And then the university has never put rails in the corridors so I don't have anything to hold onto when I walk by myself (Alex, T10: 90-95).

Peter, a visually impaired student, corroborated Alex's sentiments. He stated:

The challenges are many, but I think the main ones are accessibility to places around the campus. Many of the areas are full of steps and I use a cane so when you are using a cane it's very difficult. Also the buildings don't have rails, so there is nothing to hold to when you are walking (Peter, T11: 69-72).

Alinafe, a physically challenged student, acknoledged that she faces problems accessing the library and resources within the library. She said:

The main challenge is the library. Sometimes I want something and I can't reach it. I can't go up to the second floor because it's only steps, there's no lift. It's also not easy to reserve books. Sometimes I just borrow from friends who have already done that. But other physical buildings like I said I have my friends to help me get around otherwise on my own it's not easy (Alinafe, T13: 115-119).

Alinafe further elaborates that she also faces challenges in accessing other areas around the campus. She also explained that classrooms and hostels lack ramps and are therefore inaccessible (Alinafe, T13: 121-122).

Martha, a physically challenged student, also outlined the challenges she faces in accessing some of the physical structures around her campus. She said:

> I think the university needs to improve a lot of things for example accessibility of the buildings. If you can see the lecture theatres, when classes are located there it is a problem for me to get in there because of the stairs. Sometimes my friends have to lift me up and I don't feel comfortable because it's like I'm troubling my friends. Also if you talk of the bathrooms and toilets, they aren't user friendly for me because I cannot close the doors as the space is too small for a wheelchair (Martha, T8: 64-71).

The statement by Martha also revealed that students who are physically challenged do not only have problems in accessing physical structures but also meet serious problems in accessing and using physical facilities. Evidently, both universities lack physical facilities such as bathrooms, shower rooms and toilets that are disability friendly. Concurring with Martha, Donna, an administrator, acknowledges that the university had to improvise for bathroom facilities in order to make students like Martha more comfortable. She said:

> We had to make shift – to build something for her so that she can sit and take her shower or sometimes then she would have her maid clean her up. But most of the times, she would be wheeled into the bathroom sat on that thing that was built for her so that she can take her shower (Donna, T2: 96-99).

However, one of the universities had one of its male hostels modified to accommodate and cater for SWDS. Chimwemwe, an administrator, outlines this:

> They are all accommodated on the campus. The hostels were not custom designed but we have modified one hostel for the male students. I think they are able to get around in the hostel for male students. I think they are able to get around in the hostels; certain rooms are reserved for them. So because of access, we have tried to work ad hoc. But we are managing (Chimwemwe, T20: 39-42).

Mable, another member of the administration, agreed with the students and acknowledged that the university also finds access to certain areas to be a challenge.

Sometimes when students are on campus, they take away desks and put them everywhere in the corridors so the visually impaired they walk on their own, they are used to the campus but they have problems because they meet these stumbling blocks on their way but they keep on – they have to come back to us to ask that we should assist them with that so it's also another problem (Mable, T14: 101-105).

Coincidentally, it was observed that the administration offices at one university are all on the second floor of the administration block which has no elevator. These offices include the University Registrar, Senior Assistant Registrar and Assistant Registrar for academics. When queried about this, Mable acknowledged that it is another challenge that the institution faces but quickly said that the institution is working on it.

That's another challenge. But we are building purposeful buildings with funding from African Development Bank (ADB). There will be administration blocks which will have facilities for   everybody. Because at the moment indeed people with wheelchairs have to sit down there and ask someone to come and inform us about their problem and we have to walk down to listen to them so it's challenge (Mable, T14: 109-113).

However, both universities under study have demonstrated that they are able to make certain accommodations for SWDS where access to physical structures and facilities is concerned. Martha, a physically challenged student acknowledged this by stating:

At first they weren't aware because during my first semester I was doing everything on my own like mopping up my room and going to the cafeteria. I would sometimes use friends and it was even a challenge to access books in the library because there are other books which are on reserve so I would go there sometimes and fail to reserve a reference book. So it was kind of a challenge. During the second semester they got someone who was helping me like going to the cafeteria, getting food for me, escorting me to the library...sometimes when I wanted to go borrow books on reserve, I would go there early in the morning with the same person that the university hired (Martha, T8: 35-42).

 Other accommodations that respond to her unique needs were:

The university put a ramp on my hostel door that's what I saw them do. And also they helped me accessing a pressure relieving mattress because since I broke my spine I can't feel anything from the waist down so [with] the mattress I was using I would get sores. When I wake up I would find that I have some kind of blisters and those pressure sores would get really deep sometimes they would really give me problems so the university helped me through. They improved on the entrance to the hostel by putting a ramp. They also built a ramp on one of the doors to the labs. That's what I saw them do (Martha, T8: 86-93).

Martha's observations are supported by Donna, an administrator, who acknowledged that the university is indeed able to make accommodations for students in certain areas as the need arises. She said:

For the first student we actually had to employ someone to wheel her around. So apart from the colleagues, she had a permanent staff who was actually supposed to wheel her around and in the library she was given priority to getting books before everyone else (Donna, T2: 78-82).

Donna also highlighted other accommodations that the university has made for SWDS where access to physical structures and facilities is concerned. She explained how the university improvised by building a stand that physically challenged students could use to take showers (Donna, T2: 96-99). Factually, the hostels in Universities are built for students who are typically developing.

Chimwemwe, an administrator, also described a program that the university has for ensuring that SWDS are accommodated. He said:

When the results are out, we arrange for a meeting with the SWDS and their parents and guardians to appreciate their concerns. Through this process, we are also able to guage the levels of individual's disabilities. It is really difficult as each disability is unique in its own right (Chimwemwe, T20: 94-98).

7.1 Sign Posts that aid in Navigating the University

It was also observed that at both Universities there is a lack of signs and labels around the campus. It was also observed that some of the signs that are available have some letters missing due to vandalism. Where the signs are available, they are still too small for students with low vision. In addition, there no signs in Braille which would cater to visually impaired students, hence the signs that are available fail to serve the purpose. Signs and labels are also important as they cater for students with hearing impairments and help them get around the campus. Faculty and administrators who were interviewed acknowledged that the lack of signs around the campuses are an oversight despite their importance to the SWDS. Donna, an administrator said:

> I don't think we've thought about that. Maybe, only when we get somebody with hearing impairment, will we realize the relevance of signs and labels that's when we've got to think that wow we don't have that. As I've already said that for us at the moment, signs and labels are not an emergency to do some of these constructions or putting in signs and all that. My thinking is maybe when we get a student with this challenge, we will expedite the process and that will be a wakeup call for us and we'll say we don't have anything to assist them (Donna, T2: 112-116).

Maxwell, a faculty member, feels that his university has not put any serious consideration to putting up more signs around their campus.

> I think it's a wakeup call for us. It means we will have to really seriously look into things like those. But it's something that we can factor in the current premises, but for the new structure, we provided for that in the planning and we've done the briefing with the architects who are designing the new buildings (Maxwell, T7: 85-89).

Jerry, a faculty member, also feels that the University needs to do more to provide signs for hearing impaired students. He said:

> Maybe, the meetings we might have in the near future would be very important for urging the University to have pamphlets or maps that can guide SWDS including those with hearing impairments in order to guide such students so they take it and know when I'm going to class this is the direction. But as of now, I don't think there's that facility. Even the labelling is not good and you can get lost along the way (Jerry, T4: 59-64).

The university is therefore making efforts to ensure that they understand SWDS enrolled in their institutions and this allows them to try and provide for individual needs.

8.0 The social environment

Emerging from the data were other themes that described areas where students with disabilities (SWDS) have had negative and possibly damaging experiences in their respective tertiary institutions. Philip who is a Postgraduate student and is visually impaired narrates an incident where he was attacked and beaten up on the college campus by fellow students of the college. He said:

> I was attacked even when somebody told them that I was a Masters student here. I was wounded and severely brutalized. But to my surprise, nobody was brought to book by the authorities and my attackers finished their studies (Phillip, T12: 187-191).

Phillip further narrated how he suffered injuries and spent almost twelve weeks in bed. Although the administration was aware of this incident, according to Phillip, nothing was done. He stated:

> The story wasn't probed. I understand there was some kind of disciplinary hearing and I was told they would communicate to me about the outcomes but they didn't until to date. The incident happened last year [2013] in June. You can imagine that... (Phillip, T12: 196-200).

However, when interviewed, the Dean of Students indicated that they had never received any cases of bullying or victimisation where SWDS are concerned. She said: "I haven't received a complaint so far" (Chimwemwe, T20: 121).

Similarly, when interviewed, Mable indicated that there are low incidences of SWDS being bullied, and that the institution has not had any serious cases. She said:

> At the moment, we have not had any serious one that has caused us to call them. But what we have so far done is to embark on awareness campaigns involving al the students so that they should change their mindsets regarding SWDS (Mable, T14: 220-222).

In his interview Peter, a visually impaired student, declared that he felt victimized by his fellow students who often attribute the good pass-rate of SWDS to leaked examinations. He said:

I think it's important for the administration to explain to our colleagues that they should not have the impression that our exams are leaked because if they were then the administration would know it. Our colleagues should know that we work hard to pass our exams, we are not given anything. It's our own work (Peter, T11: 107-110).

However, this study has also revealed that SWDS are not only bullied by students but also by some of their lecturers and support staff in one way or the other. Interviews revealed that such bullying incidents are as a result of their physical and or psychological conditions. The case of Margret where she was told to go back home after she complained that she could not access some of the critical buildings is a good example of this claim. She said: "I complained that I can't access some of the classrooms because they are upstairs [on the second floor] and that it was difficult to get there using a wheelchair. They shouted at me and asked me to withdraw" (Margret, T3: 132-133).

In response to her request, a lecturer said "I should go back home [and] that this is not a school for disabled people" (Margret, T3: 132-133).

Another incident pertained to when Martha could not access certain classrooms. She said:

The lecture theatre usually required me to be lifted by my fellow students and that caused me a lot of discomfort (Martha, T8: 121-128).

Additionally she said "in a certain lab, there are all kinds of desks which were hard for me to pass between them and use them. So I usually sat at the back and couldn't hear everything the lecturer was saying" (Martha, T8: 121-128).

Vivian, conversely, shared one of her negative experiences where she was discouraged from pursuing her education at the university. Vivian disclosed her disability prior to her arrival, despite being approved; it seemed the University was not well prepared. She said:

I don't know what went wrong because the time I came here, they seemed to be surprised as to why they had first enrolled me. They said they didn't know that I belonged to that category. However, I did declare my disability on the application forms – that I am visually impaired (Vivian, T9: 86-91).

Vivian further elaborates her experience by saying: "some people would tell me that I should go back home and come again the following year. Some people would simply discourage me in different ways (Vivian, T9: 93-95).

These statements made by SWDS are supported by Donna, a member of the administration. She said:

> Others are supportive, others are not. Mostly others will feel like – when SWD complain they are like asking for too much. It's like they are using their disability as an excuse for not doing certain tasks; but when you listen to their complaints you really understand them. Nevertheless, we are different people. Others do support them and others may simply not (Donna, T2: 72-75).

8.0 Positive experiences of Students with Disabilities in Universities

Although students with disabilities (SWDS) from both Universities presented some negative experiences they have had in their institutions, they also had positive experiences. These positive experiences centred on personal and professional friendships and networks they have had while in the Universities. Martha, like many other SWDS added that one of her positive experiences was being allowed entrye to the University. This was her greatest moment, so she adds: "My experience was exciting in that I was part of the University and was able to compete with all kinds of students even if I had a disability" (Martha, T8: 116-118).

Alex cites the time when a lecturer him a tape recorder for him to use during lectures as one of the exciting moments he had. He said: "Of course, I had some good experiences and I have met some very nice guys here...I had a nice girlfriend (laughs). I had a lecturer who gave me a recorder to help me record lectures" (Alex, T10: 149-152).

Alinafe, conversely, agrees that she too had some good moments with the University community but appeals to people to be a little more understanding towards SWDS. She said: "My experience has been pretty good so far. I can't really complain. It's just like I said that people need to understand us and help us" (Alinafe, T13: 139-141).

9.0 Conclusion

In summary, the results of this study have indicated the following:

a) Students with hidden disabilities (for example, specific learning disabilities, emotional disturbances, communication disorder and the like) are not well represented or identified in both universities.

b) The number of students with disabilities (SWDS) compared to their counterparts is very low.

c) SWDS do not have all the necessary resources to meet their study needs.

d) SWDS are not completely satisfied with the support that is provided by their respective Universities. For instance, the SWDS interviewed indicated that they do not receive support during processes like registration and in some cases there was little support offered during examinations. Most of the SWDS interviewed further believe that the accommodations that are made for them are inadequate to address all their needs.

e) Very few buildings are accessible for SWDS. They indicated that they are lacking in such areas as accessibility to physical structures such as lecture rooms and facilities such as bathrooms and toilets. They further indicated that they do not have full access to the library and resources within the library among other areas.

f) There are inadequate assistive devices available for SWDS in the Universities. Students who are visually impaired attend lecturers where overhead projectors are used and notes are not provided. Other visually impaired students have had to rely on lecturers to provide them with recorders for recording lectures.

g) Faculty and administrative staff are not trained to deal with and work with SWDS.

h) Although SWDS are studying in integrated tertiary institutions, inclusion is not practiced adequately in the Universities under study.

i) Neither University under study has a Special Needs Education policy available.

This study has shown that both Universities strive to ensure that SWDS have access to education. Likewise, once SWDS are enrolled, the institutions attempt to provide them with what they need to ensure that they have access to structures, the curriculum and guidance and counselling. Although these institutions try hard to provide for SWDS, they encounter several problems. Consequently, general support for SWDS is done on an ad hoc basis and this affects their life while at University. It is also apparent that SWDS enrolled in the Universities are not treated equally as their counterparts so much so that these students face several challenges from the University community including lecturers. Nevertheless, it has been revealed that the Universities are not completely aware of some of the challenges SWDS face.

Moreover, the Universities have demonstrated that they do have plans in the pipeline for improving the support SWDS require. Conversely, the Universities also need to be aware of the importance of concluding formal sensitization campaigns and possible training for all members of staff who directly or indirectly work with SWDS. This will help to ensure that SWDS are given the much needed support by their peers and the entire University community.

Chapter 5: Discussion of the results and recommendations

5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents a discussion of the findings as outlined in chapter 4. The results are discussed in line with the objectives of this study to ensure that the researcher stays within the parameters of this study. Recommendations for further studies and training are also presented.

Tertiary education is the process of imparting knowledge and skills to individuals to empower them to participate in decision-making, development and democratic process. Effective education takes place when students are able to participate fully and benefit from that education (UNICEF 2011; Chibambo, 2014). However to Kochung (2011), explains that persons with disabilities are unable to access tertiary education due to barriers existing outside and within the institutions. Such barriers include, but are not limited to, narrowly defined set of legibility criteria, negative attitude and inaccessible environments. The Inclusive Education Approach (IEA) is instrumental in addressing these barriers in order to provide access and ensure meaningful participation in tertiary institutions

SWDs have unique and diverse needs given these needs SWDs require special support in order to integrate academically and socially to university life (Kowolsky and Fresko, 2002). The types of services recommended can vary widely from student to student, but critical forms of support include such as assessment accommodations, assistance during registration, counselling and self-determination are critical to student success in tertiary institutions as (Brickerhoff, 1994) observed.

The study examined how SWDs develop and utilize strategies to facilitate their learning experiences with respect to their unique academic needs in tertiary institutions. The study also explored the types of support that are provided or not provided to SWDs in tertiary institutions in Malawi. It thus revealed four underlying themes that depicted the support provided to SWDs in the Universities. These themes included the following:

a) Admission and retention
b) General student support services
c) Curriculum
d) Physical Infrastructure

These themes describe information as to how SWDs can succeed and have a meaningful university experience. Themes were developed using open coding, whereby units of meaning were identified and compared with other units of meaning while looking for common themes that emerged from the data. The data was sorted according to the themes that emerged. Data from the interviews and observations were continuously compared for consistency and differences. The researcher developed themes and sub themes to represent the main concepts of impact and the differences that these arose.

5.1 Admission and Retention

Literature that was reviewed for this study indicated that the current common practice is that students enrolling into the Universities are coming from regular or special education secondary school systems. In many cases, secondary school institutions catering for SWDs are prepared for such learners. Tertiary institutions on the other hand are not designed to accommodate diversity. Mutswanga and Mapuranga (2014) observed that universities lack policy on inclusive education and are hardly prepared to enrol students who are disadvantaged in order to keep their reputation high. Lack of enforcing rules is therefore likely to negatively impact on inclusive practices.

From this study, it was discovered that the Tertiary Education Environment (TEE) for SWDs does not include the same extent of support that is provided in inclusive school settings. In tertiary learning setting it is the students' responsibility to initiate requests for services in the tertiary education environment. When students make the transition from secondary school to Universities, they are expected to make contact with the university, self-identify as a student with

a disability, provide documentation of their disability if possible and provide the accommodations they need, self-advocate to their instructors and participate in the services that will support their academic progress. Such self-advocacy moves SWDs from a pattern of more passive dependent behaviour to a more responsible role (Hadley, 2009).

In terms of the very low percentage of enrolment of SWDs in the universities, it is possible that this may be due to the fact that it is easier for the educational system in Malawi to identify students with severe disabilities and sensory impairments using the medical approach than identifying students with learning disabilities or mild-disabilities. While disabilities have been viewed traditionally as a negative characteristic addressed by disability services, it is important to consider how disabilities may become a positive aspect of students' identity (Linton, 1998; Weeber, 2004).

Literature so far reviewed has revealed that tertiary education has been perceived as a privilege of the few intellectuals or the rich and therefore those with disabilities are denied accessibility. Kochung (2011) asserts that currently less than 1% of people with disabilities in Africa have access to higher education and success of this small portion is limited. Persons with disabilities (PWDs) are unable to access Universities due to barriers originating from outside and the institutions. Such barriers include narrowly defined set of legibility criteria, negative attitudes and inaccessible environments.

Results from this study have revealed that although SWDs are enrolled in Universities, they are in minority. Moreover, SWDs are enrolled in specific programs sometimes depending on the nature of their disability and such students are sometimes denied access to certain programs because of their disabilities.

UNESCO (2005) maintains that inclusion is a dynamic approach of responding positively to student diversity and seeing individual differences not as a problem but as an opportunity for enriching learning. Inclusion is about transforming the education system to accommodate and be tolerant of everyone.

Transition and adjust to tertiary learning presents challenges for all students, however, for SwDs, their unique needs pose greater challenges if support is not provided. (Doe, 2006) states that there are several support services essential to the retention of SWDs in Universities such as

developing self-determination skills, exploring technology and obtaining internships and other careers.

Self-determination involves PWDs claiming basic rights. Self-determination is the freedom to make individual choices about one's own life and the opportunity to fail, just like any other person. Cobb, Lehman, Newman-Gonchar and Alwell (2009) assert that self-determination as a construct is reflective of both a psychological and behavioural set of skills. For SWDs, it appears increasing their self-determination correlates positively with the increased quality of life in their future.

5.2 Curriculum and General Student Support

This study also examined experiences and perceptions of accommodations used among students in the Universities. SWDs who were interviewed reported that they do make use of the accommodations that are made for them by their Universities. These accommodations include extended examination time; assistance with reading, transcription of lecture notes, examinations and modification of hostels. This suggests that there is some continuity in the way accommodations are made and used by the students.

Best practices suggested in literature explained in this study indicate various types of accommodations that can support SWDs in tertiary institutions. Bolt, Decker, Lloyd and Morlock (2011) describe accommodations as changes in presentation of instructional or testing materials, changes in (how) students are expected to respond to instruction and or testing and changes to settings in which materials are presented. Kholer and Field (2003) argue that it is important to consider the needs of each individual student in making appropriate accommodation decisions. As students reach more advanced educational levels, they become more aware of the accommodations that assist with their learning.

The results of this study revealed that SWDs tend to develop and use strategies that help them cope facilitate their learning experiences and participate in academic and social activities. Most SWDs interviewed in this study indicated that they rely on their peers in areas where their institutions do not assistance or make accommodations for them. These areas include registration for classes, navigating around the campuses and accessing the physical environment and books, information and resources from the libraries.

5.3 The Social Environment

Findings from this study revealed attitudes and perceptions of university staff and communities towards SWDs that form as barriers to their participation in tertiary institutions. The research found that faculty perceptions regarding SWDs are different ways. For instance, it is established that University staff who have not participated in some form of SNE training generally show less knowledge and sensitivity towards SWDs. They also appear to have less interest in receiving such training. The findings also showed that attending workshops, courses and sensitization campaigns positively influenced supportive attitudes towards SWDS. The study found that administrators play a critical role in creation of positive attitudes and perceptions for SWDs. Administrators can directly support training initiatives by providing time, incentives, and resources for such trainings. Administrators can also participate and become knowledgeable about the needs of SWDs in tertiary institutions themselves and by positively providing university staff members and faculty with incentives and recognition for participating and developing skills in inclusive education. As it stands, the findings would also appear to indicate that it appears both faculty and the administrators do have limited exposure to PWDs prior to encountering these students.

While SWDs may face additional challenges in their involvement on campus, supportive administrators and faculty can use sensitization and awareness campaigns. Campuses can be ideal places when SWDs feel safe, secured, included, supported and encouraged to grow as everybody else.

5.4 Special Needs Education Policies (SNEP)

The results of the study have indicated that neither tertiary institution under study has special needs education policies for their institutions. Although one institution indicated that it does have one, still the draft policy has never been circulated to the staff. The second institution indicated that they don't have a special needs education policy, they do but they simply have some guidelines that facilitate in dealing with SWDs issues. Special needs education policies are important for any institution that enrols SWDs because they provide a framework to guide provision of specialist support and resource allocation. Lack of this policy could be one of the reasons universities are not practicing inclusive practices in their institutions.

Without a policy framework to guide provisions of specialist support and resource allocation, SWDs are denied an opportunity for meaningful participation in the activities that characterize everyday university life because disability, by definition, is something that limits functioning unless it is mediated in some way. Special needs education policies for tertiary institutions provide guidelines on how to include SWDs in education, provide interventions and manage special needs education programs. These policies would raise awareness and accountability to the university staff, students and communities about SWDs and special educational needs their needs. Development of special needs education policies specifically for Universities also help promote the inclusion of SWDs as a means to attaining a more inclusive society.

5.5 Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MOEST)

As earlier indicated, both Universities under study are public Universities and fall under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MOEST). This means that as public Universities they receive their funding from MOEST. MOEST has a Special Needs Section (SNS). Whiles this is the case, both universities lamented that they do not get adequate support from MOEST through SNS. One of the institutions indicated that they only get budgetary support from MOEST which is exclusive of special needs education (SNE) support. Mable, an administrator said:

> Yes in terms of budgeting, we do a budget for special needs students. Nonetheless, when MOEST is sent that budget for approval, they definitely look into that that more money should be given towards that (Mable, T14: 191-192).

Mable further indicated that apart from this budgetary support, MOEST does not assist them with assistive technologies for SWDS or any other teaching and learning materials that the institutions may require for SWDS.

Don, another administrator indicated that his University has not worked directly with MOEST in providing support for SWDS other than other Nongovernmental Organizations (NGOS) but acknowledged that his University has worked with other organizations that deal with disabilities. He feels that MOEST mainly deals with primary and secondary school education. He said:

We have worked with NGOS such as FEDOMA and others. The Ministry as you know deal with primary and secondary education. Therefore, we only go to them if there is need for guidance. But we do liaise with MACOHA and FEDOMA when we need their advice on SWDS, or if we need some equipment (Don, T1: 120-126).

5.6 Asset-based Approach

Developing assets/ capabilities

The Asset-based Framework was introduced by Kretzman and McKnight (1993) by proposing the empowerment of communities from the inside out by focusing on their strengths, abilities, resources and possibilities that already exist.

The Asset-based Approach (AA) uses assets as a way of addressing problems in a variety of contexts. It interprets issues through the analogy "seeing the glass as half-full" and its philosophy is based on the belief that all individuals and learning contexts have capacities, skills, resources and assets that can make contributions for positive change. This approach centres on the principal that people who feel connected through supportive relationships more readily develop and become individuals with resources (Ebersohn and Eloff, 2003).

The identification and mobilization of assets can be preceded by institutions learning to focus and gain awareness of assets. In this study, the asset AA was introduced on the "half-full, half-empty" glass analogy.

Recognizing the value of positive self-perceptions to achievement and pursuit of tertiary education, educators at secondary school level need to develop transition programs designed to develop positive attitudes and disposition through modelling and mentoring as well as direct instruction. These programs are generally aimed at fostering development of self-determination skills in students.

Despite the challenges faced in tertiary learning institutions, SWDs demonstrate perseverance, commitment and initiative with their education. Already, they have used their existing assets to ignite and mobilize new assets that they may not even be aware of. This strengthening and developing of awareness of existing and new assets motivated the SWDs to challenge perceptions and stigmas. For instance, Vivian, one of the study participants, was not intimidated by people who discouraged her from continuing with her education, rather she used her assets to educate and share knowledge about people with VIs and about her needs. In my opinion, this results in a shift from being a "victim" of the medical model to being a self advocate..

The AA starts out by focusing on the needs, deficiencies and problems of communities, and accordingly devises strategies to address these needs and problems. Kretzman, et.al, (1993) however, maintain that the needs-based approaches create mental maps of communities that encourage its members to think about themselves as fundamentally deficient and as powerless victims of their circumstances. The alternative, they maintain, is to focus on capabilities, skills and social resources of people and their communities. This is not to deny that communities have problems and deficiencies, but to start out from what the community has rather than what it doesn't have (Ebersohnet.al, 2003). The point, therefore, is to think about potential and about ways in which the existing potential can be directed towards available opportunities.

I therefore believe that it is imperative that the AA is introduced to all SWDs in Universities and identifying their individual assets. Kretzman, et.al (1993) assert that the AA does not deny the existence of needs, but the main effort of SWDs in an AA intervention can be devoted to identifying assets, accessing assets and mobilizing such assets for sustainable support. While identification of the problem is important, this approach takes the "half-full" rather than the "half-empty" approach (Ammerman and Parks, 1998).

I believe that knowledge, skills and asset awareness can empower SWDs in Universities. Similarly, knowledge, skills and assets also empower Universities that enrol SWDs. The practical application and implementation of raising asset awareness by applying the AA was beneficial to the learners and can yield positive outcomes of empowerment, confidence and independence.

Results of this study have but stressed the fact that knowledge, skills and asset awareness can empower SWDs. Application and implementation of raising asset awareness by applying the AA is beneficial to SWDs and truly yield positive outcomes of empowerment, confidence and independence as was the case here. Accordingly, the AA should be viewed as an explanation for sustainability in supporting SWDs.

5.6 Recommendations

Based on the results of this study, the researcher would like to make the following recommendations:

a) Universities should consider the needs of SWDs in all discussions of physical estates, teaching, learning, assessment and admissions, as well as raising awareness among all of the staff about the needs of SWDs.

b) Universities should provide assistive tools which help SWDs in getting the required information from programs and libraries.

c) Faculty, administrators and other staff who should be provided with enough information, assistive tools and devices that can help them deal with SWDs needs.

d) Members of staff in the Disability Support Units (Resource Centres) should be made aware of the importance of recognizing students' needs and making their universities aware of the difficulties SWDs face.

e) Universities should establish an Advisory Unit to prepare information, organize training, collect information and produce reports about SWDs.

5.7 Implications and areas for more research

The results of this study have several implications for practice and for future research. First, more research is needed on how systematic can disability identification processes be developed and implemented so that there is consistency. The development and use of more systematic

procedures for identifying specific accommodations for individual student also calls for more research.

Moreover, efforts should be made to empower students to understand and advocate for their needs and to reduce stigma attached to SWDs and use of accommodations. Universities need to ensure that they promote positive environments that embrace the diversity of SWDs and ensure that all students feel comfortable to advocate for their needs. Students therefore must also be provided with the necessary skills on how they can advocate for their needs. SWDs can be taught appropriate methods for seeking out accommodations as and when they are needed.

There are, however, several strategies for administrators, faculty and support staff to consider in providing support to SWDs:

- For students preparing for college, it is imperative that they understand the support services available to them at the university they would want to enrol (Milsom and Hartely, 2005).
- Educators can learn more about specific disabilities and disability accommodations (for instance, extended examination and assessment times, access to teaching and learning materials, accessibility to classrooms and other physical structures) through online information, institutions that specialize in SNE(for example Montfort College, FEDOMA, MACOHA etc.) and sensitization programs.
- Campuses can seek ways to implement universal design. Universally designed instruction seeks to create courses that are inclusive for all students from the onset (McGuire, et.al 2004). In this approach, the student does not have to continually advocate for access, because disabilities are seen as a naturally occurring human differences and is addressed in the same manner as other individual differences (AHEAD, 2009b). Accessibility is inherently included through flexible instruction and curricula and does not need to be readdressed for each new student with a disability.

5.8 Areas for further research

In terms of future research, I recommend the following:

1) Extension of this study to include more Universities in Malawi and involve larger groups of participants using similar aims.

2) Research on the importance of self-determination and transition for SWDs in Universities.

3) Research on self-determination strategies and approaches to increase enrolment and retention of SWDs in Universities.

4) Research on the importance of career planning and development for SWDs in Secondary Schools.

5.9 Recommendations for further training

1) The Asset-based Approach (AA) to be introduced to undergraduates.

2) The AA to be presented to educators, administrators, faculty and support staff in Universities.

3) Workshops to be presented to administrators, and members of staff of the Universities on how to work with SWDs.

4) Self-determination should be presented to SWDs at the end of secondary schooling.

In conclusion, SWDs do in fact present a challenge Universities. They force these institutions to question conventional concepts of teaching and learning. If Universities take up this challenge, it will represent a significant improvement in practice for all students. Moreover, Universities need to consult SWDs otherwise they will remain uninformed about the challenges and barriers these students face in the course of their education. Likewise, Universities will remain ignorant of areas their institutions need to attend to or improve in order to serve SWDs well unless they consult the SWDs themselves.

References

Ainscow, M. (2010) *Education for All: Making It Happen*. Birmingham: Routlegde,

Al-Hmouz, H. (2014) *Experiences of Students with Disabilities in Public Universities in Jordan.* International journal of special needs, 29 (1).

Barnard-Barak, L., Lichtenberger, D., and Lan, W.Y. (2010) *Accommodation Strategies of College Students with Disabilities.* Qualitative Report, 15 411-429

Baxter, P. And Jack, S. (2008) *Qualitative Case Study Methodology*: Study, Design and Implementation for novice researchers. *The qualitative report 13 (4) 544-559*.

Bernard, R.H. (1994) *Research Methods in Anthropology: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches* (2nd edition). Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira.

Bersohn, L. and Eloff, I. (2006) *Identifying Asset-based Approach Trends in Sustainable Programmes which Support Vulnerable Children*. South African journal of education, 26 (3), 457-472.

Brickenhoff, L.C., (1994) *Developing Effective Self-advocacy Skills in College-bound SWDs*. Intervention in School and Clinics, 29, 229-237.

Chibambo, M.I. (2009) *How Mobile-phone Technology can Support ODL Students: Malawi's Own Context*. A Paper Presented at the Murray Edwards College in Cambridge, for the

Cambridge University, Commonwealth of Learning and the Open University of UK International Conference on ODL. Retrieved from: http://www.col/ouk/cam-con/international/conference/ODL/UK/27/09/2009.

Chibambo, M.I. (2014) *How Best to Support ODL Students in Malawi who have no Access to Textbooks.* MA Thesis, Published. London, Kingston University Press. Accessed http://www.ku.ac.uk/kudis/chibambo/disertation/rls

Cobb, B., Lehmann, J., Newman-Gonchar, R. and Alwell, M. (2009) Self-determination for Students with Disabilities: A narrative Metasynthesis. *Career Development for Exceptional Individuals*.

Connell, B.R., Jones, M., Mace, R., Mueller, J., Mulick, A., Ostroff, E. and Vanderheiden (1997) *Principals of Universal Design Version 2.0.* Raleigh, NC: North Carolina State University. Retrieved from http://www.design.ncsu.edu/cud/about.ud/udprincipalshtmlformat.html

Coyne I.T. (1997) *Sampling in Qualitative Research. Purposeful and Theoretic Sampling: Merging or Clear Boundaries*? Journal of advanced nursing, 26, 623-630.

Creswell, J.W. (2009) *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches* (3rd edition). London: Sage Publications

DeMunk, V.C. and Sobo, E.J. (Eds.) (1998) *Using Methods in the Field: A Practical Introduction in Casebook*. Walnut Creek CA: AltaMira Press

Denhart H. (2008) *Deconstructing Barriers. Perceptions of Students with Learning Disabilities in Higher Education. Journal of learning disabilities*, *41 483-497*

DeWalt, K.M. and DeWalt, B.R. (2002) *Participant Observation: a Guide for Fieldworkers*. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press

DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree, B.F. (2006) *Making Sense of Qualitative Research: The Qualitative Research Interview.* Medical Education Journal, 40, 314-321

Durlack, C.M., Rose E., and Bursack, W.D. (1994) *Preparing High School Students with Learning Disabilities for Transition to Postsecondary Education: Teaching Skills of Self-determination.* Journal of learning disabilities, 27, 51-59

Ebersohn, L., and Eloff, I. (2003) Life *Skills and Assets*. Pretoria. Van Schaik.

Eckes, S.E. and Ochoa, T.A. (2005) *Students with Disabilities: Transitioning from High School to Higher Education.* American Secondary Education, 33 (3) 6-20

Erland, D.A., Harris, E.L., Skipper, B.L. and Allen, S.D. (1993) *Doing Naturalistic Inquiry: a Guide to Methods.* Newbury Park, CA: Sage

Estrada, L., Dopoux, E., and Wolman, C. (2006) *The Relationship between Locus of Control and Personal Emotional Adjustment and Social Adjustment to College Life in Students with and without Learning Disabilities*. College Student Journal, 40 43-54.

Ferrel, D.R. and Marshak, L. (2004) *Up Close and Personal: University Students with Disabilities, Transition, Planning and Career Choices*. Paper presented at the fifth International Conference on Higher Education and Disability in Innsbruck, Austria.

Field, S. (2003) *Self-determination Assuming Control over Your Plans for Post-secondary Education*. Washington DC: George Washington University, Health Resource Centre.

Field, S., Sarver, M.D. and Shaw, S.F. (2003) *Self-determination: A key to Success in Post-secondary Education for Students with Learning Disab*ilities. Remedial and Special Education, 24 339-349

Finn, D., Getzel, E.E. and McManus, S. (2008) *Adapting Self-determined Learning Model for Instruction of College Students with Disabilities*. Career Development for Exceptional individuals, 31 (2) 85-93

Florian, L., (2007) *Reimagining Special Education: The Sage Handbook of Special Educational Needs* (7-20). London, Sage.

Foot, J. (2012) *What Makes Us Healthy? The Asset-based Approach in Practice: Evidence, Action, Evaluation.* Retrieved from www.assetbasedconsulting.co.uk

Fraenkel, J.R. and Wallen, N. (2003) *How to Design and Evaluate Research in Education*. (5th edition). New York, NY. McGraw – Hill

Gargiulo R.M. (2006) *Special Education in Contemporary Society. 2nd Edition.* USA, Thomson Wadsworth.

Gill, P., Stewart, K., Treasure, E. And Chadwick. B. (2008) *Methods of Data Collection in Qualitative Research: Interviews and Focus Goups*.British Dental Journal, 204 (6).

Grigal, M., Hart, D., and Migliore, A. (2011) *Comparing the Transition Planning, Post-secondary Education and Employment Outcomes of Students with Intellectual and Other Disabilities.* Career Development for Exceptional Individuals, 34 (1), 4-17.

Guest, G., Arwen, B. And Johnson, L. (2006) *How Many Interviews Are Enough? An Experiment with Data Saturation and Variability*. Field Methods, 18 (1), 59-82.

Hancock, B. (1998) *An Introduction to Qualitative Research*. University of Nottingham, Trent Focus Group.

Hauya, R.J. and Makuwira, J.J. (1996) *Basic Education in Malawi. Objectives, Problems and Perspectives.* Blantyre: Dzuka.

Herward, W.L. (2006) *Exceptional Child: An Introduction to Special Education*. Pearson: Merrill-Prentice Hall

Higginbottom, G.M.A. (2004) *Sampling Issues in Qualitative Research*. Nurse Researcher, 12 (1), 7-19.

Inclusion of Students with Disabilities in Tertiary Education and Employment (2011) *Education and Training Policy*. OECD

Itai, B. (2013, 7th March) *Government to Construct 150 Special Needs Resource Centres Country-wide*. The Malawi News Agency online report. Retrieved on 22nd May 2014.

Kaputa, T.M. (2013) *Making Open and Distance Learning Inclusive: the Zimbabwe Open University's Experience with People with Disabilities*. Greener journal of educational research 2 (3) 392-401.

Kawulich, B.B. (2005) *Participant Observation as a Data Collection Method. Forum:* Qualitative Social Research.

Kochung, E.J. (2011) *Role of Higher Education in Promoting Inclusive Education. Kenyan Perspective*. Journal of emerging trends in educational research and policy studies 2 (3) 144-149.

Koeber, A. and McMichael, L. (2008) *Qualitative Sampling Methods: A Primer for Technical Communicators.* Journal of Business and Technical Communication, 22 (4), 454-473.

Kohler, P.D. and Field, S. (2003) *Transition-focused Education: Foundation for the Future.* Journal of Special Education, 37 174-183

Kowolsky, R., and Fresko, B. (2002) *Peer-tutoring for College SWDs.* Higher Education Research and Development, 21, 259-271.

Kretzman, J.P., and McKnight, J. (1993*) Building Communities from inside-out: a Path toward Finding and Mobilizing a Community's Assets*. The Asset-based Community Development Institute (Institute for policy and research)

Kvale, S. (1996) *Interviews: An Introduction to Qualitative Research Interviewing*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage

Leedy, P.D. and Ormrod, J.E. (2005) *Practical Research and Design* (5[th]edition). New Jersey, NJ: Pearson Merrill Prentice Hall

Lincoln, Y.S. and Guba, E.G. (1985) *Naturalistic Inquiry*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage

Marshak, L., Van Wieren, T., Ferell. Swiss, L., and Dugan, C. (2010) *Exploring Barriers to College Student Use of Disability Services and Accommodations*. Journal of Post-secondary Education and Disability, 22 (3)

Marshall, C. And Rossman, G.B. (1989) *Designing Qualitative Research*. Newbury Park: Sage.

Masten, A.S. and Reed, M.J. (2002) *Resilience in Development*. In Snyder, C.R. and Lopez, S.J. *Handbook of Positive Psychology*. New York: Oxford University Press.

McLellan, E., MacQueen, K.M. and Neidig, J. (2003) *Beyond the Qualitative Interview: Data Preparation and Transcription.* Field-methods, 15 (1) 63-84.

McLeskey J., Rosenberg M.S. and Westling D.L. (2013). *Inclusion: Effective Practices for All Students*. New Jersey. Pearson Education Inc.

McMillan, H. And Schumacher, S. (2010) *Evidence-based Enquiry.*7th*Ed.*New Jersey NJ, Pearson Education Inc.

Merriam S.B. (2002) *Introduction to Qualitative Research.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Merriam, S. (2009) *Qualitative Research: a Guide to Design and Implementation*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bas

Meyen E.L. and Bui Y.N. (2007). *Exceptional Children in Today's Schools: What Teachers Need to Know.* USA, Love Publishing Company.

Miles, M.B. And Huberman, M.A. (1994) *Qualitative Data Analysis: An Expanded Sourcebook.2nd Edition*. Thousand oaks, California: Sage.

Miles, M.B., Huberman, M.A. and Saldana, J. (2014) *Qualitative Data Analysis: A Methods Sourcebook*. 3rd Edition. London: Sage.

Ministry of Persons with Disabilities and the Elderly (2006) *National Policy on Equalization of Opportunities for persons with Disabilities*.MoPWD&E. Lilongwe.

Miska, F.G.W. (2012) *The Brain-drain Gain : Quality of Higher Education in Malawi.* Retrieved on 25 July 2014 from: http://www.nuigalway.i.e/dern/documents/65-fred-gennings-wanyavinkhumbo-msiska-pdf

Modestoi, S.T. and Tau, R.D. (2009) *Introducing Distance Education.* Virtual University: BOCODOL

MoEST(2005).*National Policy on Equalization of Opportunities for PWDs, Malawi Government.*

MoEST(2009)*Implementation Guidelines for the National Policy on SNE.*

MoEST-Malawi (2009) *Implementation of Guidelines for the National Policy on SNE.*

Msiska, F.G.W. (2013) Audit Study to Determine Effectiveness of Open, Distance and E-Learning Delivery Mode in Broadening and Increasing Access to Education and training in Malawi. Vancouver: Commonwealth of Learning. Retrieved on 13 June 2014 from http://www.col.org/Unesco-/colchair/malawi/odl/reports

Mutswanga, P. and Mapuranga, B. (2014).*ODL University Inclusion Experiences of Students with Disadvantages in Zimbabwe*. International Journal of Humanities, Social Sciences and Education, 1 (4).

Neuman, W.L. (2006) *Social Research Methods in Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches. 6th Edition.* Boston, Pearson.

Norwich, B. (2006) *Special Needs Education Inclusive education or just Education for All?* London: Institute of Education.

Orr, A.C. and Bachman, H.S (2009) *Inclusive Post-secondary Strategies for Teaching SWDs: A Review of the Literature.* Learning Disability Quarterly, 32 181-196

Patton, M. (2002) *Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods.*3rd Edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage

Punch, K.F. (2009) *Introduction to Research Methods in Education*. London: Sage.

Reiser (2009) *Implementing Inclusive Education. A Commonwealth Guide to Implementing Article 24 of the UN Convention on the Rights of PWDs.* London: Commonwealth Secretariat

Roulston (2009) *Asking Questions and Individual Interviews*. International Journal of Qualitative Methods, 10 (4).

Schimdt, M. and Cagran, B. (2008) *Self-concept of Students in Inclusive Settings. Journal of Special Education*, *23 8-17.*

Schmuck, R. (1997) *Practical Action Research for Change*. Arlington Heights: Skylight Training and Publishing

Silver-Pacuilla, H. (2006)*Access and Benefits: Assistive Technology in Adult Literacy.* Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy, 50 114-125

Sireci S., Scarpati, S., and Li, S. (2005)*Test Accommodations for SWDs. An Analysis of the Interaction Hypothesis.* Review of Educational   Research, 75 457-490.

Stake, R.E. (1995) *The Art of Case Study Research*. Thousand Oaks', CA: Sage .Test, D.W. and Neale, M. (2004) *"Using the Self-advocacy strategy" to Increase Middle Graders   IEP Participation*. Journal of Behavioural Education, 13, 135-145.

Wehmeyer, M.L. (2004) *Beyond Self-determination: Causal Agency Theory*. Journal of Developmental and Physical Disabilities, 16 337-359

Wolanin ,T.R. and Steele, P.E. (2004)*Higher Education Opportunities for SWDs: A Primer for Policy Makers*. The Institute of Higher Education Policy.

Yin, R.K. (2003) *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*.3rd Edition. *21 (6), 1117-   1122*

Zhang, D. and Benz, M.R. (2006)*Enhancing self-determination of Culturally Diverse   SWDS. Current Status and Future Directions.* Focus on   Exceptional Children, 38 (9), 1-12

Zhang, D., Wehemeyer, M.L. and Chen, L.J. (2005) *Parent and Teacher Engagement in   Fostering Self-determination in SWDs: A Comparison between   the U.S. and the R.O.C.* Remedial and Special Education, 26, 55-64

Appendices

Table 2: number of participants

PARTICIPANTS (Groups)	TOTAL NUMBERS
Group (1): students	7
Group (2): Administration & faculty	9
Group 3: (Support staff)	10
Total interviewed:	**26**

Table 3: number of visually impaired students

Visually impaired	Female	Male	Number of students
Year one	3	5	8
Year two	0	4	4
Year three	2	6	8
Year four	1	2	3
Total	**6**	**17**	**23**

Table 4: number of physically challenged students

Physically challenged	Female	Male	Number of students
Year one	1	0	1
Year two	2	0	2
Year three	0	3	3
Year four	0	0	0
Total	**3**	**3**	**6**

Summary by Faculty

Table 5: Summary of SWDS by Faculty

	Female	Male	Number of students
Faculty of education	3	1	4
Faculty of law	0	2	2
Faculty of humanities	2	6	8
Faculty of science	3	1	4
Faculty of environmental studies	1	0	1
Faculty of information & communication sciences	1	0	1
Total	**10**	**10**	**20**

6. Consent letter

My name is Marianne Nsanja Gunda. I am a postgraduate student at Mzuzu University pursuing my Master's in Educational Leadership and Management. As part of my course requirement, I am conducting this research which is aimed at I investigate the support provided to students with disabilities (SWDs) Malawi's Universities. Please, be assured of the following:

- Your participation in this study is of great importance as it will enable me to gather information relevant to the study.

- Your participation is completely voluntary and will not expose you to any harm.

- You are also free not to respond to any question (s) which you consider to be uncomfortable or too difficult for you, or to terminate the interview at any point should you wish to do so. Please be assured that there are no repercussions for doing so.

- Please note that there are also no monetary or material rewards attached to participating in this study.

- The results of this study are of profound humanitarian benefit as they will assist in developing recommendations for additional support that can be given to students with disabilities in the Universities.

Please be assured that your privacy and confidentiality will be maintained and respected. This will be done through use of a numbering system to ensure anonymity. All the information gathered during the interviews will be kept safe and will only be accessible to the researcher.

_____

I have understood the information provided concerning the study and I therefore, without coercion, give my consent to participate in this study.

Signature_____   Date_____

I have provided adequate information pertaining to the study to the participant to allow them to give their consent for participation. I therefore declare that the privacy and confidentiality of the participant(s) will be maintained and respected throughout the study.

Signature_____   Date_____

7. Transcript protocol

Transcript #

Place: ……………………………………………………

Date of interview:…………………………………………..

Time of interview:……………………………………………….

Purpose: ………………………………………………………………………

<u>Interviewer:</u>(Name of researcher)

<u>Interviewee:</u> (use Pseudonym)

<u>Note:</u> To aid in preservation of original tone and to ensure an accurate representation of the words used in the interview, the following techniques are adopted:

[ ] squire brackets provide interviewer's interpretive explanations intended to add clarity

( ) non-verbal responses are indicated in parenthesis

"" quotation marks indicate reported speech

– An em dash indicates a change in thought in mid-sentence.

! an exclamation mark is used to indicate a raised intonation

? a question mark is used to indicate a question

, a comma indicates a brief pause

CAPITAL letters reflect vocal emphasis of a word or phrase

… indicates moments within the interview in which the audio recorder was muffled or the interviewee spoke much too softly to hear

A – precedes words spoken by Interviewer

I – precedes the words spoken by the Interviewee/Participant

Notes to myself are presented in squire brackets [], in **bold** and *italics*

Context of the Interview: (explain briefly the scenario prior to interview, e.g. your interview setting, were there any interruptions that could have impacted the free flow of your conversation with the participant…modify it to suit your needs/preferences)