

The Marginality of Distance Education Units of Dual-mode Universities
by


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We accept this thesis as conforming
to the required standard




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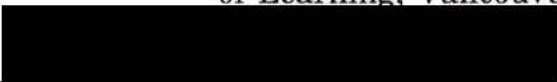
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ABSTRACT

Guided by organisational structure approach, this thesis examines the phenomenon of marginality of distance education units of dual mode universities. The study focuses on the case of the Correspondence and Open Studies Institute (COSIT) of the University of Lagos, Nigeria. Specifically, it investigates the formal structural relationship between the Institute and its parent University, the University of Lagos. Analysing data contained in relevant institutional documents using the method of content analysis, the study shows that there are critical structural gaps in the relationship. It is concluded that the structural gaps between the University and COSIT are crucial factors accounting for the marginality of the Institute. Hence the concept of structural distancing emerging from the study is proposed as a framework for building new understandings of the marginality of distance education units of dual mode universities.

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Dedication

Dedicated to
My wife, Agatha,
My son, Nnazowa,
Relations and friends who
have a stake in me.

Chapter 1

Problem

Although there is evidence of an increasing number of conventional universities that are becoming dual mode (universities that deliver education by both conventional and distance strategies) as a result of rising societal demand for distance education (Croft, 1992), the status of distance education units of such universities still remains marginal (Rumble, 1986; Donaldson, 1991; Olcott, 1991; Calvert, 1992; Chick, 1992; Croft, 1992; Sharpe, 1992).

A number of studies have examined the marginality of educational subunits (e.g. university extension, distance education) by attempting to conceptually explicate and measure its manifestations or symptoms, especially, funding and budget, staffing, actual and perceived quality of programmes (Kolker, 1975; Penfield, 1975; Darkenwald, 1977; Beder, 1978; Devlin, 1982, 1986; Donaldson, 1991; Black, 1992), but there is little or no research that attempts to explore the formal organisational structure of the parent organisation in relation to the subunit with a view to accounting for the marginality of the subunits.

An Organisational structure approach to the study of the marginality of distance education units of dual mode universities has the potential of accounting for the marginality of the units in the light of the view that the form and functioning of an organisation derive from its formal structure (Buchanan & Huczynski, 1985). Wilson and Rosenfeld (1990, p. 215) emphasized this view when they stated that "the most immediate and accessible way to describe any formal organisation is to outline its

structure." Analysis of the structure of an organisation is crucial to understanding the processes and relationships which occur within it. Hence Wilson & Rosenfeld (1990, p. 215) defined organisational structure as "the established pattern of relationships between the component parts of an organisation outlining both communication, control and authority patterns."

Devlin (1982, p. 4) tended to subscribe to the view that organisational structure approach to the study of marginality is likely to add to a better understanding of the phenomenon when he stated that reported studies of marginality, which can be said to dwell virtually on its conceptual explication, and measurement of its manifestations "are too narrow for an adequate explanation of the phenomenon." He suggested that "value insecurity and organisational structure" give rise to and sustain marginality (Devlin, p. 7).

In sum, current approaches to the study of subunit marginality, namely, measurement of manifestations of the phenomenon; and the 'psychologistic approach'(Buchanan & Huczynski, 1985) which attempts to account for marginality by measuring attitudes and perceptions of individuals (especially faculty) towards subunit values and operations, tend to neglect the impact of the formal structural context. Fox (1966) stressed that elements of formal organisational structure are crucial factors in any meaningful study of organisational behaviour.

Purpose of Study

Although Buchanan and Huczynski (1985) acknowledged that "it is people who do the work" (p. 295), they stated that a structuralist perspective of organisation holds that "They [organisation members] are a taken-for-granted element in the organisation puzzle and are viewed as expendable, replaceable, interchangeable and generally capable of being fitted into organisational scheme as required" (p. 295). Contrary to this view, most of the studies of the marginality of distance education units in dual mode universities tend to attribute the marginality of the units to faculty attitude towards distance education (Halsey & Trow, 1971; Ballis, 1972; Adamson, 1976; Anwyl & Bowden, 1986; Siaciwena, 1989; Black, 1992). Although faculty attitude may be related to the phenomenon, this study sought to account for the marginality of distance education units by examining the formal structural relationship between parent universities and distance education units.

Specifically, the purpose of this study was to examine the formal organisational structure of the University of Lagos in relation to the Correspondence and Open Studies Institute (COSIT) with a view to accounting for the marginality of the Institute in the light of the structural relationship.

In order to pursue this purpose the study:

- 1) identified elements of the formal organisational structure of the University of Lagos,
- 2) investigated elements of formal organisational structure the

University has in common with COSIT, and
3) identified areas the Institute is structurally distanced from the University, and attempted to explain the marginality of the Institute on that account.

Key concepts

The following key concepts are central to this study:

- 1) Marginality/Structural distancing
- 2) Formal or objective organisational structure.

Definition of key concepts

Marginality/Structural distancing are used synonymously to express an organisational condition in which there are critical gaps in the relationship between a subunit and its parent organisation resulting in the peripheral status of the subunit. It is a situation where a subunit is 'structured out' of day-to-day mainstream organisational activities of the parent organisation. A marginal or structurally distanced subunit does not fully share common formal organisational structure with the parent organisation. Elements of formal organisational structure are: goals/mission statements, policies, administrative structures, formal organisational activities (Lazarsfeld & Menzel, 1969; Campbell *et al.*, 1974; Allinson, 1984).

Formal/Objective Organisational Structure: This study defines formal/objective organisational structure as the planned design of positions

and functional assignments, including coordinating mechanisms. It stipulates the required behaviour. Elements of formal organisational structure are: goals/mission statements, policies, administrative structures, formal organisational activities (Lazarsfeld & Menzel, 1969; Campbell *et al.*, 1974; Allinson, 1984).

General research question

This study was driven by the following general question:

Does the marginality of COSIT stem from the formal organisational structure of the University of Lagos in relation to the Institute?

The formulation of this question was informed by the organisational structure thesis which sees the form and dynamics of organisations and their subunits as dictated by organisational structure (Fox, 1966; Buchanan & Huczynski, 1985; Wilson & Rosenfeld, 1990).

Significance of the Study

Given that most of the reported studies that have investigated the marginality of distance education units of dual mode universities have tended to concentrate on attitudes and perceptions of faculty, the approach of this study (organisational structure approach) to the problem of marginality of the units, and the findings, will, hopefully, stimulate interest in more systematic exploration of how formal organisational structure accounts for the marginality of distance education in dual mode universities.

The study may be found useful for educational and institutional policy development. In this regard, the study has made a case for the

promulgation of policies adopting distance education university-wide, and modification of organisational structure of dual mode universities to ensure the mainstreaming of distance education. In view of the potentials of distance education, its assimilation by the mainstream will increase the capacities of the universities. The universities will then be better equipped to more effectively address the rising demand for higher education.

The integration of distance education into the mainstream will have positive effects on those distance students who have psychological and academic needs for full association with the parent universities of their institutions.

Historical Background

Educational needs and the establishment of COSIT

The Universal Primary Education Scheme launched by the Federal Government of Nigeria in 1976 led educational planners to critically determine Nigeria's need for teachers at all levels of the educational system. It was obvious that successful implementation of the Scheme depended, to a large extent, on availability, in good number, of teachers. While 60,000 additional teachers were needed in 1976 to launch the Scheme, about 300,000 additional teachers would be required in 1982. The figures were based on an assumed teacher/pupil ratio of about 1:35.

Before the introduction of the Scheme, a survey of teachers in the primary schools indicated that, at least, 50% of the teachers did not possess the minimum requisite teaching qualification (Grade 11 Teachers Certificate). The Federal Ministry of Education responded to the critical shortage of teachers and underqualification of a significant percentage of the teaching force at the primary level by establishing, in 1976, the National Teachers Institute, at Kaduna, to employ a multi-media distance education strategy for the training of primary school teachers.

The Universal Primary Education Scheme also had implication for the training of teacher-educators. The Scheme needed additional 4,500 graduate teachers between 1976-80 for the newly established and the expanded teacher training colleges. It was envisaged that the need for graduate teachers would double in 1982 when the graduates of the Universal Primary Education Scheme would be ready for post

primary/secondary education. The number of nongraduate teachers in the teacher training colleges and secondary schools requiring upgrading far outstripped available places in the Faculties of Education of the universities in the country. In 1973, there were about 8,000 nongraduate teachers in teacher training colleges (Olumide, 1982 pp.61-2).

Besides the need for teachers at the primary and secondary schools, there was the need to provide post-secondary educational opportunities for adults who could not for one reason or another participate in conventional on-campus education.

The foregoing background strongly contributed to the establishment, in 1976, of the Correspondence and Open Studies Unit (now Institute) of the University of Lagos. The establishment of the Institute was a response to the need to make educational opportunities available to a much wider public than was possible through on-campus provision.

Chapter 2

Review of Literature

This chapter begins with a discussion of the concept and definition of distance education. It will be followed by an overview of distance education in Africa. Then, a discussion of university goals, academic culture, and distance education will follow. The concept of marginality will be examined next. Finally, the appropriateness of strategic contingency theory of intra-organisational power, and organisational structure approach as theoretical and analytical framework for the study will be examined. The foregoing are chosen for review because they put the study in pertinent contexts, and justify its direction -- organisational structure approach.

Concept and definition of Distance Education

Many different terms, such as, correspondence study, independent study, home study, and external study, are used to refer to distance education (Keegan, 1990). Correspondence study, the first form of distance education based primarily on print facilitated by postal service. Willen (1981) saw distance education as a development of correspondence education. Although printed course materials are a dominant feature of contemporary distance education, the use of varied communication technologies has significantly changed the character and processes of delivering education at a distance that it is no longer accurate to refer to this method of educational delivery as correspondence education. Garrison and Shale (1987) noted that the use of communication technologies has

blurred the distinctions between distance and conventional education and has consequently added to the difficulty of defining distance education.

There are some attempts to define distance education in terms of the concepts involved: communication, distance, independence, and control (Moore, 1973; Wedemeyer, 1981; Holmberg, 1986; Garrison, 1989; Garrison & Baynton, 1987; Garrison & Shale, 1990).

In the midst of the controversy that attend the definition of distance education, there is, however, wide agreement that separation of the teacher and mechanical devices are distinctive characteristics of distance education (Rumble, 1986; Keegan, 1990). The separation of the teachers from the learners, and of the learners from other learners may not be total, especially, if interactive communication technologies and occasional face-to-face or residential sessions are used.

So far, the most cited and debated definition of distance education is that of Keegan (1990,p.44) which sees distance education as having the following characteristics:

1. the quasi-permanent separation of teacher and learner throughout the length of the learning process distinguishes it from the conventional face-to-face education;
2. the influence of an educational organisation both in the planning and preparation of learning materials and in the provision of student support services distinguishes it from private study;
3. the use of technical media (print, audio, video, or computer) to unite teacher and learner and to carry the content of the course;
4. the provision of two-way communication so that the student may benefit from or initiate dialogue distinguishes it from other uses of

technology in education;

5. the quasi-permanent absence of the learning group throughout the length of the process, so that people are usually taught as individuals and not in groups, with the possibility of occasional meetings for both didactic and socialization purposes.

Keegan's definition appears to encapsulate the essential characteristics of distance education, and is, by far, the most comprehensive.

Distance Education in Africa

A number of economic and social considerations informed the adoption of distance education by many African countries. Following the attainment of political independence in the 1950s and 60s by many African countries, the production of manpower for the development of the modern sector of the economy was a development priority. Consequently, efforts were made towards educational expansion. There was, as a result, "a phenomenal increase in the establishment of schools" (Makulu, 1971, p.14). It soon became obvious that national budgets could not support the educational projects initiated and envisaged. According to Makulu (1971, p.49) "A total expansion of secondary education would bring problems out of proportion to the resources now available within Africa...the short-term plan covers the period 1961-6 and the long term 1961-8 ...even for the long term the needs are enormous." In other words, African countries found themselves in a situation where the execution of their plans to develop human resources using conventional educational methods were being made increasingly difficult on account of lack of funds. In the circumstances, distance education, owing to its attractive potentials, appealed to a number of African countries. Distance education is generally seen as a less expensive method of educational delivery, particularly, in developing countries where sophisticated and expensive technical media are minimally used or not in use yet.

Accounting for the establishment of distance education in developing countries, Rumble (1989, p.90) stated, "It is in the post colonial Third World where the cost of expanding primary, secondary and tertiary level provision

to meet the needs of increasing populations has proved too much for many countries and has strained the budgets of others, that distance education has come to be seen as a means of meeting demand for education."

The view that distance education is less expensive is not always true even if the teaching-learning transaction is entirely print based. Distance education can only be comparatively less expensive if the number of students registered in a programme is large enough. The cost per learner declines as the number of learners increases. It is basically because of the potential of distance education to offer economies of scale that it is generally held to be less expensive (Kabwasa & Kaunda, 1973; Young *et al.*, 1980; Rumble, 1989).

Aside from the attraction of its potential to be comparatively less expensive, distance education is considered by many African countries as an apt strategy for the production of needed large numbers of skilled manpower. In particular, large numbers of teachers have been provided in-service education through distance methods.

The National Teachers Institute of Nigeria, a distance education institution established in 1976 has "trained some 26,000 primary school teachers without their leaving the classroom; Tanzania... took 45,000 trainees on to a programme in which they alternated training and classroom teaching; immediately after independence Zimbabwe used similar methods to expand its primary teaching force (Commonwealth Secretariat, 1987, p.13). Reporting on teacher training programme at a distance in Kenya, Kinyanjui (1990, p.4) stated that "approximately 20,000 primary school teachers have received inservice training under the programme."

In most African countries, tertiary educational institutions are few. It entails traversing long distances, sometimes of difficult terrain, for one to physically access higher educational institution. The capacity of distance education to break the barriers of distance and difficult terrain is, therefore, another reason distance education is burgeoning in Africa. Perraton (1982, p.16) observed that between 1960 and 1975 more than twenty distance education institutions were established in Africa. More recently, Njie (1992) reported that there are about thirty-nine distance education institutions in the four Commonwealth West African countries (The Gambia, Ghana, Nigeria, and Sierra Leone), and he added, "Distance education has aroused considerable interest as a strategy which can increase access to education and training even while costs are held down" (p. 2).

Although distance education in Africa is generally facilitated by three components of educational delivery, namely, course texts or correspondence; radio broadcasts; face-to-face sessions (Olumide, 1982; Kinyanjui, 1990), the correspondence component clearly dominates. Radio is not a reliable and significant medium of formal distance education in Africa because of the unreliability of public power supply, poor reception, and lack of two-way communication inherent in the radio. Perhaps, this is why Kinyanjui (1990, p.10) noted that radio is "used primarily to motivate" and to pace the learners through study materials.

Despite the fact that the use of distance methods in Africa is increasingly becoming pervasive, there are indications that, qualitatively, the performance of distance education on the continent is not satisfactory. In Jenkins' (1989) view, distance education in Africa "remains underdeveloped and undervalued" (p. 4). In apparent reference to

organisational and operational weaknesses in teacher training programmes carried out through distance education, Kinyanjui (1990) stressed the need for effective cooperation among the different departments and institutions that collaborate in the implementation of the programmes.

More recently, an evaluation team (Evaluation of the Distance Education Unit (1991)) recommended that the Distance Education Unit of the Department of Non Formal Education in Botswana move from its "static position to one where it can look ahead and improve performance in three dimensions: efficiency and effectiveness, capacity and sustainability" (p. xvi).

Added to the need for qualitative or effective performance is the problem of paucity of empirical data on distance education in Africa. Kabwasa and Kaunda (1973, p.3) noted the lack of "scholarly studies" on distance education in Africa. Jenkins (1989) articulated the lack of data in a more critical context: "For if we seek hard information on the contribution distance education institutions have made on the quality of education in their countries [African countries], we will find little to help us. Only patchy evidence is available as a basis for future strategies" (p. 60).

However, following the establishment of the Commonwealth of Learning in 1988 (The Commonwealth of Learning, 1990, p.1), its activities in the critical area of evaluation of distance education in Commonwealth countries are beginning to provide data on distance education in Commonwealth African countries.

Finally, in spite of their imperfections, distance education institutions in Africa are purposefully addressing national educational needs. Their various mandates are indicative of the national educational

needs distance education on the continent is addressing. For instance, Olumide (1982, p.63) stated that the establishment of the Correspondence and Open Studies Institute of the University of Lagos, Nigeria "has offered the University a chance to open its courses and facilities to a much wider public than is possible through the traditional face-to-face methods." According to Otiende (1988, p.351) the College of Adult and Distance Education of the University of Nairobi, Kenya, has as its cardinal aim the education of "the large majority of adults who were denied higher education opportunities during the colonial circumstances." In Tanzania, the National Correspondence Institute is established to contribute to manpower development in the country, and to help accelerate national development (Kiyenze, 1988, p.284); while in Botswana, the Department of Non-Formal Education established in 1973 as Botswana Extension College attempts to provide access "to secondary level education by distance methods to people who had not been able to receive it through the formal system" (Evaluation of the Distance Education Unit, Department of Non-Formal Education, 1991, p.8).

University goals, academic culture, and distance education

There is hardly any consensus on the goals of universities (Devlin,1976).To add to the lack of consensus are indications that university goals and strategies for pursuing them are not fixed-- they change, though slowly, in response to demographic, technological, political, and epistemological changes (Croft, 1992; Sharpe, 1992).

While noting the lack of consensus about university goals, Devlin

(1976, p. 53) however, stated that "North American universities have directed their efforts toward the achievement of three major purposes: the creation of knowledge through research, the transmission of knowledge through teaching, and the diffusion of knowledge through public service." Black (1992) claimed that teaching and research are the two major goals of universities but added that public service is seen as the third goal by United States and Canadian writers.

The ways university goals are pursued and the values lecturers hold about university education have resulted in the emergence, from medieval times, of professional behaviour among lecturers, and ethos in the university usually referred to as academic or collegial culture.

According to Jelinek, Smircich and Hirsch (1983) the culture and subcultures of organisations can be said to be a set of shared understandings and meanings that influence the behaviour of individuals who belong to the organisations. Culture encompasses the norms and values of the system which Katz and Kahn (1978, p. 385) differentiate as follows: "Norms refer to the expected behaviour sanctioned by the system and does have a specific ought or must quality. Values furnish rationale for the normative requirements." Becher and Kogan (1980) stated that universities have two interacting modes of functioning: the normative mode which monitors and maintains values within the system and the operational mode which accomplishes practical tasks and the allocation of resources.

Croft (1992, p. 50) attempted a characterization of academic culture: "Pure collegial culture values autonomous faculty work in teaching, scholarship and research. Promotion decisions are never based on direct

observation of the teaching performance in the classroom." Croft (1992) added that lecturers believe that true university education can only be conducted on campus through conventional formats: classes, laboratories, tutorials, seminars.

Academic culture as characterized above conflicts with distance education, hence lecturers tend to resist the inroad distance education is making into university (Perry, 1984; McQuire, 1988; Stinehart, 1987; Croft, 1992). University distance education, particularly, when it is organised within conventional universities generates conflict because of the differences between the traditional approach to university education, and the distance approach. Conventional approach seeks to restrict access and confines teaching-learning activity to on-campus delivery methods in an attempt to maintain quality and pursue excellence. On the other hand, distance education seeks to widen and egalitarianize access to education, without lowering quality (Holmberg, 1986; Commonwealth Secretariat, 1987; Rumble, 1989; Keegan, 1990). While academic culture emphasizes scholarship and research, distance education stresses teaching and learning (Croft, 1992).

Bergquist (1992) observed that the operations of distance education have given rise to a new culture on the campus which he described as developmental university culture. According to him, the culture is characterized by interdisciplinarity and teamwork in course materials development, participatory decision-making and planning, as well as emphasis on conflict resolution. This culture is at odds with mainstream university culture to the extent that despite the growth and relative success of university distance education since the 1970s, its credibility remains

controversial within academic circles around the world (Perry, 1984). Distance education is often viewed as second-best to classroom, face-to-face instruction. Perry (1984, p. 14) commented that "there is a strong feeling that on-campus teaching in the face-to-face situation is the one way of actually teaching." The view that effective education can only take place through traditional delivery formats has been described as "an elitist and restrictive vision of university education, with little or no relevance today or for the future" (Croft, 1992, p. 52).

In an apparent reaction to charges that distance education is inferior, Perry (1984, p.15) gave a testimony of the success and quality of distance education programme of the British Open University:

Academics all over Britain accept that the Open University has succeeded, that distance learning works and that the Open University graduates are as good as any others. They (these graduates) have been accepted by every other British university in postgraduate courses without any question. The quality of courses is seen and is commended by the academic world. The quality of the students, the quality of the exams-they are all recognized by the academics in other universities. But emotionally, many of them don't accept it at all.

Like Perry (1984), Jevons (1990) claimed that distance education is often dismissed on the grounds of prejudice. Black's (1992, p. 195) research findings supported the view that the negative attitude towards distance education derives from prejudice:

Although most faculty were not very familiar with distance education, they had definite opinions about it that they were willing to express....Based on their overall lack of knowledge about distance education, the results of this study suggest that many faculty have a propensity to act in a prejudiced manner towards distance education proposals.

Furthermore, there is considerable evidence in the literature indicating that much of the negative attitude to university distance education is attributable to the entrenched academic culture whose adherents tend to

resist change (Adamson, 1976; Rishante, 1985; Stinehart, 1987; Black, 1992). Resistance to change, according to Berger and Luckmann (1966, p. 71) is due to "habitualization"-- the tendency to hold on to familiar ways of doing things:

Habitualization carries with it the important psychological gain that choices are narrowed. While in theory they may be hundreds of ways to go about the project...,habitualization narrows these down to one.

Habitualization, according to Jarvis (1992, pp. 201- 202) "relieves people of having to make decisions and having to learn new things;...Having learned something that works people presume that it will always do so." While noting that "change is found in every area of life", Jarvis (1992, p. 209) observed that "people habitualize their actions and often appear to treat their external world as if it were static and unchanging.

However, the view that lecturers' habitualization of conventional notions and practices of university education as the reason for their negative attitude to distance education is not supported by Johnson (1978, p.180) who contended that "the popular image of professors as conservative resistors of change appears to be a distorted and inaccurate representation of academic people." While describing the attitude of most lecturers towards university distance education, Johnson (1978) claimed that they are "interested, yet sceptical, positive with reservations." The main reason for the somewhat ambivalent attitude, according to Johnson is the conflict between the values of academic culture, and distance education.

In all, it can be said that the literature on university goals, academic culture vis-a-vis distance education is replete with views that distance education is marginal because of unfavourable faculty attitude towards it-- an attitude that derives from the conflict between the values of the

dominant academic culture and those of distance education (Halsey & Trow, 1971; Ballis, 1972; Adamson, 1976; Anwyl & Bowden, 1986; Siaciwena, 1989; Black, 1992).

The studies virtually neglect the relevance of formal organisational structure in the marginality of distance education in dual mode universities, and in perpetuating or changing organisational (academic) culture. Fox (1966) emphasized that formal organisational structure determines the form and functioning of organisation. He stressed that the structure of authority, communication, and status within which individuals and subunits are located, the system of punishments, rewards and other management controls to which they are subjected, and the various other aspects of the 'structure of the situation' shape behaviour and relations within organisations.

Recent reports on some dual mode universities where distance education can be said to be minimally marginal (Calvert, 1992; Chick, 1992; Croft, 1992), for instance, Deakin University, Geelong, Australia; University of New England, Armidale, Australia; Laurentian University, Sudbury, Ontario, Canada suggest that organisational structure determines to a large extent the degree of marginality of distance education units of dual mode universities.

The concept of marginality

Although distance education units of dual mode universities are generally marginalized (Daniel & Smith, 1979; Singh, 1979; Siaciwena, 1983, 1989; Rumble, 1986; Nyirenda, 1989) there is little systematic research of marginality in the literature of distance education. The literature is rather replete with anecdotal reports of the phenomenon.

Nevertheless, considerable studies of marginality have been undertaken in adult education and university extension (Moses,1971; Kolker,1975; Penfield,1975; Darkenwald, 1977; Beder, 1979; Devlin, 1982, 1985, 1986; Wolf & Waldron,1987; Donaldson, 1991).

Donaldson (1991, p. 121) posited that marginality is multi-dimensional. He outlined four dimensions of the phenomenon:

1. marginality stemming from the place of a subunit "at the organisational boundaries of the parent organisation";
2. marginality deriving from a subunit's physically remote location from the parent organisation, or deriving from the location of a subunit's clientele, "as in the case of off-campus courses";
3. marginality arising from a subunit's functions being marginal to the core goals of the parent organisation;
4. marginality that derives from regarding professionals of a subunit "as not as professionalized as other groups on campus."

Although Donaldson's formulation of four meanings of marginality is a worthwhile attempt to add to the studies of the subject, only the professional meaning of marginality which he labelled "the new marginality" (1991, p. 122) was elaborately discussed.

In an insightful conceptual treatment of marginality, Devlin (1982, p.5) noted that marginality "might be analyzed within the context of the politics of education." He cited Moses (1971, p. 21) to corroborate his view: ...in education, as in all social activities, there exists a variety of competing interests which pursue satisfaction in an environment of scarce resources. The lack of recognition accorded programs in the periphery (adult education) is a reflection of the power relations and distribution of influence and authority in the American educational system...There has grown up an 'educational establishment' which has a monopoly over resources of funding, the power of decision-making, and the authority of reward

dispensation (as represented in credentials and diplomas). It is in the interests of this 'establishment' to limit and downgrade the activities of outside competing interests.

Devlin (1982) provided three conceptual frameworks for understanding marginality: "strategic contingencies theory of organisational power,...Developed to account for the relative power of different subunits"; "leadership theory", and "organizational saga" (pp. 5 , 7).

While observing that "current understanding of marginality rests on a narrow basis" hence the consequences of "the phenomenon are obscured" Devlin (1982, p. 8) however, noted that the "quantity and quality of program output" of marginalized subunits is one effect of the phenomenon.

In spite of the ubiquity and persistence of the phenomenon of marginality (Devlin, 1982), studies of the subject focus almost entirely on its manifestations or symptoms, paying virtually no attention to how organisational structure accounts for the phenomenon.

According to Devlin (1986, pp. 5-6):

Several writers have suggested that agency marginality can be assessed by economic measures. Kolker (1975) identified seven "marginality" variables in Adult Basic Education organizations, of which four were economic in origin and varied together. Clark (1956) cites six manifestations of marginality in public school adult education, of which three flow from economic influences on agency operation.

Also concerned with measurement of variables of marginality, Wolf and Waldron (1987, p. 36) noted that most writers on the subject including "Devlin (1986) addressed the question of marginality by examining funding and budgets." Wolf and Waldron (1987) however, observed that "Money is not the only determinant of organizational power, particularly in hard times."

Apparent in most of the studies of marginality is perhaps the

tendency to regard its effects as if they were causes, or a tendency to fail to clearly establish that the indices of marginality discussed or measured, for instance, funding, support, programme quality, staffing, are really consequences of marginality, not causes.

Kolker (1975) argued that marginality derives from resource deprivation: human, moral and material. But, if according to Salancik and Pfeffer (1983,p.424),power influences the allocation of scarce and critical resources in organisations, and if according to Devlin (1985, pp. 95 , 101) structure is the source of power in organisations, it follows that both resource deprivation, and marginality are consequences of organisational structure. Resource deprivation may be a characteristic of marginality, it cannot account for it.

Devlin (1982, p. 7) perhaps noticed this tendency to be preoccupied with effects as if they were causes when he observed that there is a propensity to "overlook the dual origin of the condition which is one of both value insecurity and organizational structure, particularly within universities." Devlin's apt observation has not however, had significant effect in turning attention from explication and measurement of the effects or manifestations of marginality to studies that seek to account for the marginality of subunits by examining the formal structural relationship between parent organisation and subunit.

Theoretical and analytical framework

Strategic contingency theory of intra-organisational power

Strategic contingency theory of intra-organisational power posits that the basis for power in an organisation derives from the ability of a subunit to take or not take actions that are highly desired by other subunits and the parent organisation (Salancik & Pfeffer, 1983).

Salancik and Pfeffer's (1983) approach to intra-organisational power is an elaboration of Hickson's *et al.* (1971) strategic-contingencies of intra-organisational power. Hickson *et al.* (1971) postulated that the power of a subunit is a function of a number of strategic contingencies accomplished by the subunit (1971, pp. 216-229).

In their elaboration of the theory, Salancik and Pfeffer (1983), based on their research findings, concluded that subunits that contribute to the critical resources of the parent organisations will gain power. The subunits will then use their influence to secure resources and latitude required for their activities. This view is based on their studies that indicated that power influences the allocation of scarce and critical resources in organisations (Salancik & Pfeffer, 1983, p. 424).

Although on the surface the theory appears to provide a framework for studying the fundamental factors that account for the marginality of distance education units of dual mode universities, it does not really address the problem. Since the theory emphasizes that intra-organisational power is contingent on subunits' contributions considered very critical to the sustenance and development of other subunits and the parent

organisations, the theory cannot be applied to account for the marginality of distance education units. Distance education units in most conventional universities are structured to be organisationally and functionally marginal to the core goals, and core goal-based activities of the rest of the organisation to the extent that they do not have the mandate and wherewithal to make the critical contributions that will result in their acquisition of power required to facilitate their movement from the periphery to the mainstream.

The view that structural disadvantages of subunits, like distance education units, limit their capability to make strategic contributions upon which their acquisition of intra-organisational power depends is corroborated by the scenario described by Moses (1971, p. 21):

...There has grown up an 'educational establishment' which has a monopoly over sources of funding, the power of decision making, and the authority of reward dispensation (as represented in credentials and diplomas). It is in the interests of this 'establishment' to limit and downgrade the activities of out-side competing interests.

At best, if strategic contingency theory of intra-organisational power is applied to account for the marginality of distance education units within conventional universities the result is likely to be that the units lack power and are marginal because they do not contribute to the strategic contingencies of their parent universities. The theory's failure to account for the incapacitating structural factors that make it difficult, if not impossible, for the subunits to contribute 'strategic contingencies' is its major weakness as a framework for this study. Furthermore, the theory does not provide a framework for understanding the nature and extent of subunit marginality which, as Devlin (1982, p. 9) aptly observed, is lacking in studies of the phenomenon.

Organisational structure approach

Definition of organisational structure

A number of writers on organisation have attempted to define organisational structure. Duncan (1983,p.447) defined it as "a pattern of interactions and coordination that links the technology, tasks, and human components of the organization to ensure that the organization accomplishes its purpose." Sproull, Weiner and Wolff (1978) stated that organisational structure defines relationships, channels communications and influences relationships with the internal and external environments. Wilson and Rosenfeld (1990, p. 215) defined organisational structure as "the established pattern of relationships between the component parts of an organisation, outlining both communication, control and authority patterns."

The definitions tend to be united in holding the view that organisational structure is basically the components that constitute the organisation and the procedural arrangements by which interaction or coordination are ensured.

Dimensions of organisational structure

While organisational structure is often described in general terms, analytical description atomizes it into component parts sometimes referred to as "dimensions" (Allinson, 1984). There is, however, no agreement in the literature on the dimensions of organisational structure (Allinson, 1984, p. 6).

Pugh *et al.*, (1969, p. 91) examined literature on organisations and

came up with six dimensions of structure, namely:

1. specialization-- the degree of division into specialized roles;
2. standardization-- the degree of standard rules and procedures;
3. formalization-- the degree of written instructions and procedures;
4. centralization-- the degree of decision making at the top of
organisation hierarchy;
5. configuration--the shape of the role structure in terms of its
"width" and "height" (width describes the reporting relationships
of roles, e.g. the number of people reporting directly to a supervisor; height
describes the number of roles from the lowest paid worker to the chief
executive);
6. traditionalism-- the degree to which procedures are standardized
but not written.

Lazarsfeld and Menzel (1969) identified three types of data that may be used to characterize an organisation and its constituents:

1. 'member data'-- concern characteristics of members which are obtained without reference to 'collective' or organisational characteristics and can be aggregated to indicate the analytical properties of the collective;
2. 'relational data'-- concern the linkages of members to each other, and are obtained from information about the substantive relationships among members;
3. 'global data'-- concern the 'macrocharacteristics' of the collective which are not based on information among individual members.

Allinson (1984, p. 7) noted that while efforts have been made to

measure dimensions of organisational structure by means of relational data (no. 2 above), for instance 'structural centrality', and 'degree of hierarchy', most studies involved the collection of member or global data (nos. 1 & 3 above). Allinson (1984) also noted that information collected through questionnaire surveys of rank and file members are used to measure analytical properties, while organisational/institutional documents are used to measure global properties.

Analytical and global measures are labelled variously in the literature. According to Payne and Pugh (1976) analytical measure is 'subjective' while global measure is 'objective'. Pennings (1973) labelled the two measures 'survey' and 'institutional' respectively. Sathe (1978) tagged them 'questionnaire' and 'institutional' respectively.

Global measures

Global data concern the macrocharacteristics of the organisation, such data are not based on information about individual members. Organisational documents are used to measure global properties, such as, goals/mission statements, policies, administrative structures, formal organisational activities (Lazarsfeld & Menzel, 1969; Allinson, 1984).

Organisational structure approach (collection and analysis of global data) promises to provide a suitable framework for the study of marginality of distance education units of dual mode institutions. Devlin (1982, p. 7) suggested that the causes of marginality of subunits, particularly those within universities are factors of "value insecurity and organizational

structure." The aptness of organisational structure approach to this study becomes more apparent when Donaldson's (1991, p.121) four dimensions of marginality are considered: organisational marginality; geographical/physical marginality; functional marginality; and professional marginality. Two out of the four dimensions of marginality, namely, organisational and functional marginality are considered by this study as the most significant dimensions of the phenomenon, academically and administratively. Organisational and functional marginality which the present study refers to as structural distancing can be accounted for by collecting from institutional records, and analysing, global data (macrocharacteristics of organisations). The two kinds of marginality account for professional marginality in the sense that only subunits that are organisationally and functionally marginal are likely to have practitioners that are considered to be "not as professionalized as other groups on campus" (Donaldson, 1991, p. 121).

Geographical or physical marginality may not be considered significant in the study of marginality generally because the location of a subunit could be physically distant from the parent organisation yet the subunit enjoys mainstream status.

Chapter 3

Methodology

Introduction

This chapter begins with a description of the design of the study. A description of the unit of analysis and sources from which data were collected follows. The technique used in data collection and the data collection and analysis procedures are also presented.

Design

The study is exploratory. Its approach is formal organisational structure analysis using the method of qualitative content analysis. Content analysis is a "multipurpose" method of documentary research for systematic investigation of problems in which the content of communication serves as the basis of inference (Holsti, 1969). Content analysis can be qualitative or quantitative depending on the nature of the research problem (George, 1959; Budd & Thorp, 1963; Holsti, 1969; Sepstrup, 1981).

In qualitative content analysis, "the analyst reads the materials, records his impressions and makes judgements or inferences on the basis of his impressions" (Budd & Thorp, 1963, p. 2).

Like other methods of systematic inquiry, qualitative content analysis must measure what it purports to measure (validity) and yield consistent results (reliability). Hence this study was designed to meet these requirements by taking the following steps. The use of content analysis which is an unobtrusive method of research in which the "content analyst seldom has any effect on the subject being studied" (Babbie, 1992, p. 329) was

a major first step to ensure objectivity, reliability and validity. Attempts were made to ensure that the process of data collection was as focussed as possible by defining and subsequently operationalizing organisational structure (see data collection technique).

The need to ensure objectivity, reliability and validity progressively guided the process of data analysis. Data were coded in categories that were considered as operational link between the conceptual framework and data. In reporting findings, the use of paraphrases and quotes from the sources of data was an attempt to guide against the intrusion of the subjectivity of the researcher. Efforts were made to ensure that interpretation of data and inferences were "rooted in the data themselves" and not a reflection of the researcher's imagination or bias (Guba & Lincoln, 1989, p. 243).

Unit of Analysis

The University of Lagos (which includes the Correspondence and Open Studies Institute (COSIT)) is the unit of analysis. It was represented by institutional records and documents that show the formal organisational structure of the University of Lagos in relation to COSIT: University of Lagos Act 1962; Senate Review Committee Reports on COSIT, 1978/79; Fagbamiye's case study on COSIT, 1990.

It is important to point out that the study encountered problem of general paucity of data and virtual lack of current documentation. (An elaboration on this is given in "Limitations of the study"). The few available sources of data are considered authoritative and dependable institutional documents and records of the University of Lagos and COSIT for the following reasons. The University of Lagos Act, being the enabling law of

the University is self-evidently an authoritative document of the University. The other two documents that served as sources of data (Bown, 1978/79; Fagbamiye, 1990) were studies respectively conducted for the University of Lagos and COSIT by two members of the Senate of the University of Lagos professors, Lalage Bown and E. Fagbamiye. The latter is also the current Director of COSIT.

Data collection technique

Data were collected from the following official documents and records of both the University of Lagos and COSIT :University of Lagos Act,1962; Senate Review Committee Reports on COSIT, 1978/79; Fagbamiye's case study on COSIT, 1990.

Data collection was approached by first attempting to operationalize organisational structure. There is hardly any indication in the literature about a consensus on the dimensions of organisational structure. Allinson (1984, p. 6) reviewed the literature and concluded that "there is little agreement, however, on what are the key dimensions of organisational structure."

For the purpose of this study, organisational structure was defined as the following concrete components considered to be useful in indicating the structural relationship between the University of Lagos and COSIT: goals; policies; administrative structures; and formal organisational activities. This division is consistent with what Lazarsfeld and Menzel (1969) called macro-characteristics of formal organisation and Allinson's (1984) 'structuring dimensions.' The present study also defined formal organisational activities as an element of formal organisational structure

which is consistent with the approach of Pugh *et al.* (1969) dimensions of organisational structure. Two, out of the six dimensions, 'standardization', and 'traditionalism', include procedures or processes as elements of structure. 'Standardization', according to Pugh *et al.* (1969) is the degree of standardized rules and procedures, and traditionalism is the degree to which procedures are standardized but not written (p. 91).

In sum, the fourteen (14) questions below were derived from the four components of formal structure: goals; policies; administrative structures; and formal organisational activities. The questions were formulated to guide the analysis of relevant data from official documents. Answers to the questions guided data analysis to the extent that they provided data with which the three purposes of the study were addressed. The answers were in the form of presence or absence of macro-characteristics of the organisational structure of the University of Lagos in relation to COSIT. The purposes of the study were:

- 1) to identify elements of formal organisational structure of the University of Lagos,
- 2) to investigate elements of formal organisational structure the University has in common with COSIT,
- 3) to identify areas the Institute is structurally distanced from the University, and to attempt to explain the marginality of the Institute on that account.

Questions that guided data collection and analysis

Goals

1. What are the goals of the University?
2. What are the goals of COSIT?

Policies

3. Is distance education mentioned in the mission statement of the University? If mentioned, in what context?
4. Is distance education included in the academic plan of the University? if included, in what context?
5. Is policy making for distance education left to COSIT or is it conducted by the University with COSIT actively participating?
6. Do distance students and their on-campus counterparts pursue the same curriculum?
7. Is the credentialing system for distance education different from that of conventional education at the University?
8. Are lecturers hired to teach both on-campus and at a distance?
9. Are promotion criteria of lecturers who teach distance students different from the promotion criteria of lecturers who teach on-campus?

Administrative structures

10. What are the day-to-day decision making bodies of the University of Lagos?
11. On which decision making bodies of the University does the Director of COSIT or his or her representative sit?

Formal organisational activities

12. Are outstanding distance students rewarded or recognized by COSIT

or does the University reward them as in the case of on-campus students?

13. Are distance education and on-campus students conferred degrees/certificates at different or the same graduating ceremonies?

14. Are distance students allowed access to resources/facilities (library, laboratory, sports) of the University?

Procedure

The institutional records were mailed to the researcher by the Director of COSIT. The problem and purpose of the present study including specific questions asked were made available to the Director in order to guide him in the selection of data.

Data analysis

The study yielded non-frequency, non-quantitative, dichotomous data -- data that indicated the presence or absence of characteristics in the formal organisational structure of the University of Lagos and in the structural relationship between the University and COSIT. It is important to point out that answers to the fourteen (14) questions derived from the four components of organisational structure (see "data collection technique") guided data analysis only to the extent that they were used to address the three purposes of the study which were the overriding concern of the study (especially, the third purpose).

Both University data and COSIT data were categorized separately into goals, policies, administrative structures, and formal organisational activities-an attempt to link the conceptual framework with data. Following the separation, the goals, the powers, the general and academic authority structures of the University relevant to addressing the first purpose of the

study were identified from the categories of University related data. The first purpose of the study was to identify the formal organisational structure of the University of Lagos. The same procedure was followed to examine the other two purposes. Each category of University data was juxtaposed with COSIT data of similar category in order to identify commonalties and gaps in the structural relationship between the University and COSIT. The marginality of COSIT was inferred from the structural gaps in the relationship.

Given that the technique of data collection was content analysis of institutional documents, the researcher had no control over the accuracy of data contained in the documents. Recognizing that the researcher is not responsible for the accuracy of data in content analysis, Holsti (1969, p. 135) observed that "Because the nature of the data is usually beyond the investigator's control, opportunities for enhancing reliability are generally limited" to improving coding and categories.

Limitations of the study

The study encountered data collection problems: paucity of data; and virtual non existence of up-to-date data. There is a general dearth of documentation on the organisation and operations of the University of Lagos and COSIT. Records that articulate academic and development plans of both the University and COSIT are virtually non-existent. The few available relevant records and documents are dated.

This situation of paucity of data and datedness of the few available documentation is not peculiar to the University of Lagos and COSIT or to

the present study. The problem of lack of documentary data in Nigeria and in Africa generally has been observed by researchers (Kabwasa & Kaunda, 1973; Jenkins, 1989; Mosley, 1992).

The problem of documentation at the University of Lagos and other Nigerian Universities and public institutions is mainly attributable to what has become a culture of political instability, particularly, since independence in 1960. The incessant military coups which often result in changing the leadership of universities (governing councils and Vice-Chancellors) and other public institutions by military fiat is, to say the least, not conducive to the bureaucratic process of developing policies, formulating regulations and articulating them in documents.

Chapter 4

Research findings

In this chapter, the findings of the study are presented using paraphrases and quotes from sources of data. Data were collected from the following sources:

- 1) University of Lagos Act, 1962,
- 2) University of Lagos Senate Review Committee Report on the Correspondence and Open Studies Unit of the University of Lagos, 1978/79. The Review Committee was chaired by L. Bown, a member of the Senate of the University of Lagos.
- 3) Correspondence and Open Studies Institute of the University of Lagos: A case study, 1990 by E. Fagbamiye, a member of the Senate of the University of Lagos and incumbent Director of COSIT.

Formal organisational structure of the University of Lagos

This study examined the goals, powers, and the general and academic authority structures of the University as part of its focus. The enabling Act sets for the University of Lagos the goal of encouraging the advancement of learning. The Act empowers the University to hold out to all persons without distinction of race, creed, sex or political conviction the opportunity of acquiring a higher education. The provision of courses of instruction and other facilities for the pursuit of learning to eligible learners is also a goal of the University, as stated by the Act. In addition, the University encourages, promotes and conducts research in all fields of

learning and human endeavour.

The goals of the University of Lagos are consistent with the usual goals that universities pursue: the generation of knowledge (research), the dissemination of knowledge (teaching), and public service (Gross & Grambsch, 1968; Devlin, 1976; Black, 1992).

The enabling Act empowers the University to establish Colleges, Faculties, Institutes, Schools, Extramural departments, and other teaching units. The Act also empowers the university to formulate and execute policies necessary for the functioning of the various units of the University, and for the pursuit of the goals of the University.

The powers of the University are exercised on behalf of the University by the Council and the Senate. While the Council is the governing body charged with the responsibility of general control and superintendence of the University, the Senate sees to the sustenance and development of academic activities at the University. Specifically, the Senate is responsible for the formulation of and execution of academic policies. It establishes, organizes and controls Faculties, Schools, Institutes and other teaching units, and allocates responsibilities for different branches of learning. The Senate promotes research at the University and is responsible for admission and discipline of students.

While the pro-Chancellor chairs the meetings of the Council, the Vice-Chancellor who is the chief executive and academic officer of the University chairs the meetings of the Senate.

The Council and the Senate are the two most important administrative structures with the responsibility of directing the development of the University, however, Congregation (meeting of all

faculty members under the chaimanship of the Vice-chancellor) and Convocation (graduation ceremonies) are University-wide fora provided by the enabling Act (University of Lagos Act, 1962, p. 272).

Elements of formal organisational structure the University
has in common with COSIT

This section presents findings about the structural relationship between COSIT and the University. The presentation is organized under the following headings: Establishment; Hierarchical superordinates; Goal; Board of Studies; Representation; Curriculum; Matriculation and Graduation, COSIT students' access to facilities.

Establishment

The Institute was established by the Senate (Senate Paper 74/95A in Bown, 1978/79) which is the body empowered by the University of Lagos Act 1962 to establish, organize and control Faculties, Schools, Institutes and other teaching units. On account of its establishment by the Senate, COSIT is a veritable part of the University of Lagos.

Hierarchical superordinates

COSIT is under the jurisdiction of and is responsible to the Vice-Chancellor, who is the chief executive and academic officer of the University; the Senate, which has the responsibility to organize and control the teaching of the University and the admission and discipline of the students, and to promote research; the Council, which is the governing body of the University.

Board of Studies

Each faculty, school, institute of the University (including COSIT) is under the direct control of a Board of Studies (University of Lagos Act, 1962, p. 275). The Boards advise and report to the Senate all matters relating to academic activities. The University Act empowers the Boards to propose to the Senate developments and innovations they deem necessary in their respective faculties, schools and institutes for the consideration of the Senate.

COSIT's Board of Studies proposes distance education courses and programmes to the Senate (Fagbamiye, 1990, p. 16). In effect, decisions on distance education policies and programmes at the University of Lagos are made on behalf of the University by the Senate with COSIT actively participating.

Goal

In assigning goals to COSIT, the Senate stated that the Institute "offers the University a chance to open its courses and facilities to a much wider public than is possible through regular face-to-face methods" (Senate Paper 74/95A in Bown, 1978/79; Fagbamiye, 1990). It follows that COSIT's goal is, in effect, a goal of the University since the provision of educational opportunity to "all persons without distinction of race, creed, sex or political conviction" is a goal of the University (University of Lagos Act, 1962, p. 238).

Representation

COSIT's Director is a member of the Senate if he/she is a professor. The incumbent Director of COSIT is a Professor. The staff of the Institute are members of Congregation. Similarly, the Institute's academic staff and

graduates are members of Convocation.

Curriculum

COSIT's students and their on campus counterparts in the participating Faculties take the same courses. Bown (1987/79) stated that COSIT "takes outside the University existing courses as taught to full-time residential students, i.e. it is charged with providing academic services to persons off-campus fully comparable to those provided to persons on-campus."

Matriculation and graduation

COSIT's students and on-campus students matriculate and graduate at the same ceremonies (Bown, 1978/79; Fagbamiye, 1990). At graduation ceremonies of the University of Lagos, graduating COSIT students are presented for conferment of degrees and diplomas, alongside their on-campus counterparts of participating faculties in COSIT programmes, by the Deans of the faculties. Outstanding students, including COSIT students, are recognized by the University at the ceremonies (Fagbamiye, 1990).

COSIT students access to facilities

Available data on COSIT students access to University of Lagos facilities are limited to access to library and laboratories (Bown, 1978/79; Fagbamiye, 1990). Since the establishment of COSIT in 1976, its science students living in Lagos have access to the laboratories of the University of Lagos. Prior to the Senate Review Committee Report on COSIT (Bown, 1978/79), COSIT students were not allowed access to the services of the

University of Lagos Library. Following the acceptance of the recommendations of the Committee that "The University Library should be made available to COSU [COSIT] students resident in Lagos, and its services should be sought to develop a nation-wide loan Scheme, with special COSU [COSIT] collections in Lagos and at the Study Centres" COSIT students resident in Lagos began to be allowed access to the services of Library (Fagbamiye, 1990).

COSIT students outside Lagos make use of the laboratories and libraries of the institutions of higher learning COSIT's Study Centres are based (Fagbamiye, 1990).

The formal organisational structure of the University, and its common elements with the Institute have been presented. The next section presents findings on the areas in which the Institute is structurally distanced from the University.

Areas COSIT is structurally distanced from the mainstream

Although the Senate established COSIT as a part of the University of Lagos, and in spite of the fact that the University has a number of elements of formal organisational structure in common with the Institute as shown in the preceding section of this Chapter, there are structural gaps between COSIT and the mainstream that account for the marginality of the Institute.

Lack of Policy on University-wide Involvement in Distance Education

COSIT's programmes are not University-wide. COSIT runs five programmes with the cooperation of three faculties out of the ten faculties

of the University. The programmes and the cooperating faculties are:

1. Bachelor of Science (Business Administration) --- Faculty of Business Administration;
2. Bachelor of Science (Accounting) --- Faculty of Business Administration;
3. Bachelor of Science (Education) --- Faculty of Education;
4. Post Graduate Diploma in Education -- Faculty of Education;
5. Special Entry Preparatory Programme -- Faculty of Science.

There is no policy that makes participation in distance education mandatory for the faculties of the University. In effect, participation of faculties in the programmes of COSIT is voluntary. As put by Fagbamiye (1990, p. 16) "COSIT's programmes and qualifications are negotiated with other faculties." If the faculties agree to participate, "they provide the academic inputs necessary to launch the programme" (p. 16).

Relationship between COSIT and faculties

Although there is no policy that makes it obligatory on faculties and their staff to participate in COSIT's programmes, the Institute's dependence on the individual academic staff members of participating faculties in terms of course writing, marking and tutoring is enormous. Fagbamiye (1990) put the contributions of such staff as about 90% of the total academic input in COSIT's programmes.

Data indicate that there are no University regulations designed to elicit professional commitment of the staff to the sustenance and development of the programmes (Bown, 1978/79; Fagbamiye, 1990). Staff of participating faculties are hired by COSIT on a part-time basis for a fee.

There are no regulations by the University that provide for ways of disciplining individual faculty members who perform their duties inadequately or who leave COSIT and its students vulnerable by abandoning their commitments. COSIT by itself cannot discipline such faculty members neither can the staff be disciplined by their own faculties as there is no University policy to guide participation. Since COSIT pays individual faculty members for their services, the relationship with COSIT is practically a contract between faculty as individuals and the Institute.

In the absence of University regulations guiding faculty participation in COSIT's programmes, the Institute relies on its own subject specialists (5 academic staff) "for negotiating development and writing schedules with individual writers, together with the provision of guidance on writing patterns as well as responsibility for academic editing" (Fagbamiye, 1990).

The memorandum of appointment

Hiring conditions stipulated in the memorandum of appointment to the University are some of the reasons staff of faculties "do not see involvement in COSU [COSIT] as an activity of equal worth and importance with the teaching of full-time students" (Bown, 1978/79). The memorandum distinguishes between lecturers' participation in distance education and their obligatory responsibility of conventional academic activities. While the memorandum stipulates that duties of academic staff "shall be under the supervision of the Head of college, faculty or school and shall include teaching at day and evening classes, research, and the setting and conduct of examinations and the marking of examination scripts", it presents distance education as an activity in which staff can participate

voluntarily when it states that staff "may be requested to take part in the extramural work and extension services of the University." In contrast to the clear line of authority for regular duties, the memorandum does not state to whom faculty staff are responsible when participating in distance education.

Faculty participation in COSIT and their professional advancement

Promotion criteria for staff of participating faculties do not include courses written for COSIT. Distance education course writing is exacting (Woudstra & Powell, 1989; Holmberg, 1991), yet the University does not reward staff of faculties who write courses with promotions and by acknowledging such contributions as scholarly accomplishments (Bown, 1978/79; Fagbamiye, 1990).

The exclusion of distance education courses from the criteria for promotion and scholarly achievements is a structural factor that separates distance education from mainstream academic activities which count towards professional advancement and recognition of academic staff. Consequently, participation in COSIT's programmes becomes a veritable part-time pursuit for academic staff rather than their professional commitment to faculties which counts for both promotion and academic status.

The self-financing status of COSIT

Since 1990, COSIT has been self-financing -- independent of the University of Lagos in terms of funding (Fagbamiye, 1990). It generates revenue from student fees and sale of materials and services.

The self-financing status of COSIT structurally distances it from the mainstream. The Institute's approach to education has become

entrepreneurial since it gets no subvention from neither the government nor the University (Fagbamiye, 1990). This entrepreneurial approach is not consistent with the approach of the publicly funded mainstream which sees education essentially as social service and pursuit of excellence.

COSIT and the University's academic and development planning

Although there are no University documents articulating the strategic academic and development plan of the University of Lagos (see Limitations of the study), there are indications that academic and development plan of the University (though unarticulated in documents) does not include the development of distance education as a major concern of the University. The lack of policy on University-wide involvement in distance education, the absence of University regulations to guide faculty participation in COSIT's programmes, the reward system which excludes participation in distance education from the criteria for faculty promotion and scholarly achievements, and the self-financing status of COSIT are indications of the peripheral place of COSIT in the scheme of things at the University generally and in particular in the academic and development plan of the University. In addition, Bown (1979, p. 2) pointed out that "A proper place and status have yet to be found for COSU [COSIT] within the University structure. The needs of COSU [COSIT] are not yet fully taken into account in the University development planning." Furthermore, the fact that COSIT negotiates its programmes with faculties whose participation in distance education is voluntary (Fagbamiye, 1990, p. 16) is evidence that distance education at the University of Lagos rather than being the outcome of the University's academic and development planning, is characterized by bilateral negotiations and agreements between COSIT

and each participating faculty; and between COSIT and individual faculty members.

COSIT Students' Concerns

COSIT students do not have a sense of belonging to the University of Lagos (Bown,1978/79).Distance students who desire to transfer to full time campus programmes cannot do so because the University does not have a policy that guides such a transfer. According to Fagbamiye (1990, p. 15) "COSIT does not provide its students with the teaching materials -- or at least not with a high proportion of them -- which it advertises and for which they [the students] pay." Bown (1978/79) interviewed a number of COSIT students about their concerns and observed that "COSU [COSIT] students understandably feel that they are being treated as second-class". Bown (1978/79) saw that the students have "psychological needs for as full participation as possible in the life of the University, and ...academic needs for a wide variety of learning supports."

Chapter 5

Discussion of research findings

This chapter discusses the research findings. The discussion is guided by the organisational structure approach which sees analysis of the structure of an organisation as crucial to understanding the processes and relationships which occur within the organisation (Fox, 1966; Buchanan & Huczynski, 1985; Wilson & Rosenfeld, 1990). The limitation of strategic contingencies theory of intraorganisational power as a framework for this study is also discussed. The discussion focusses on the areas of the structural relationship between COSIT and the University of Lagos in which the Institute is distanced.

As the findings indicate, there is no University-wide policy on distance education. The lack of policy stipulating that distance education be adopted University wide in order to enable the University of Lagos to more effectively pursue the goal of making educational opportunities available to a much wider public than is possible through on-campus provision leaves COSIT and consequently distance education on the periphery of the mainstream academic activities of the University. This is so because the University's goal of widening access to education now appears to be a goal of COSIT alone.

Closely related to the lack of University-wide policy and its impact in marginalizing COSIT is the lack of University regulations ensuring the professional commitment of faculty members participating in COSIT's programmes. In the absence of University regulations guiding the participation of the faculties and their staff, the Institute relies on its own

subject specialists (5 academic staff) "for negotiating development and writing schedules with individual writers, together with the provision of guidance on writing patterns as well as responsibility for academic editing" Fagbamiye, 1990).

Noting the dysfunctional effects of the lack of structural provisions committing staff of faculties to professionally participate in COSIT's programmes, Bown (1978/79) stated that "A continuing difficulty is that staff of the faculties who are involved in course writing often do not see involvement in COSU [COSIT] as an activity of equal worth and importance with the teaching of full-time students." This dysfunctional situation confirms Gross and Grambsch's (1968) stress on the necessity for a shared commitment by all organisational members in order to ensure harmonious functioning of the organisation. "The members must be required to conform to explicit rules. Only through this means can the organization's special advantages of precision, division of labor, predictability be enjoyed" (p. 7).

The memorandum of appointment at the University of Lagos which presents distance education as a voluntary activity in which staff "may be requested to take part..." is a major University policy document that inducts and orients staff into the University and guides their professional behaviour as long as they work for the University. In contrast to the voluntary participation in distance education expected of staff, the memorandum clearly stipulates that participation in the various aspects of on-campus educational activities at the University are staff's contractual obligations.

Aside from being one of the conditions that point to the structural

distancing of distance education at the University of Lagos, the memorandum of appointment, together with the other structural conditions presented in the last section of the preceding chapter, initiates and sustains a process of 'organisational socialisation' (Allinson, 1984) that results in the conscious or imperceptible acquisition by staff of attitudes consistent with the University's expectations of them as articulated in policies and regulations and practised in unwritten traditions.

The unfavourable attitude of lecturers at the University towards distance education which is one of the implications of this socialization can be said to have its roots in the prevailing structural conditions. This view is supported by Hall's (1972, pp. 12-13) characterization of the far-reaching influence organisations have on the behaviour of their members:

When a new member enters an organization, he is confronted with a social structure-- which includes the interaction patterns among organizational members and these members' expectations toward him.-- and a set of organizational expectations for his own behavior. It does not matter who the particular individual is; the organization has established a system of norms and expectations to be followed regardless of who its personnel happen to be, and it continues to exist regardless of personnel turnover.

The lack of commitment of faculty staff to COSIT's programmes noted by Bown (1978/79) and Fagbamiye (1990) is largely attributable to the evident absence of professional and career stakes for the staff in COSIT's activities. According to Bown (1978/79):

The difficulty is that the COSU [COSIT] system depends largely on the help of staff in the Faculties who at present regard COSU [COSIT] course writing and marking and the face-to-face teaching of COSU [COSIT] students as a chore. They do it because they are paid, but they still do not take it as seriously as the teaching of full-time students and they feel a grudge since the promotion system takes no account of COSU

[COSIT] work.

According to Fagbamiye (1990, p. 13) "They [participating faculty members] have proved very reluctant to do this [course-writing, tutor-marking] also because of lack of credit for such work and what they see as unattractive levels of fees."

The organisational structure distances COSIT from mainstream academic activities by not ensuring that participation in distance education by staff of faculties can be an avenue for professional advancement and honour, even when COSIT depends on the staff for about 90% of the academic input into its programmes (Fagbamiye, 1990). The prevailing situation at the University whereby staff of participating faculties in COSIT's programmes are not motivated to professionally take part is not in keeping with Gross and Grambsch's (1968) stress on the need for organisations to provide inducements in order to ensure concerted pursuit of organisational goals. "It is necessary to offer each person an inducement to participate, so that he may attain his personal goal through the group goal of the organization. He must be motivated to the extent that he will give up any dissonant goals of his own for the organization as a whole" (p. 5).

Since the University reward system does not take account of participation of the staff in COSIT's programmes, the staff participate without professional commitment. By not regarding participation in distance education worthy of professional academic rewards and recognition, the reward system constitutes a structural disincentive to the staff.

The study identified the self-financing status of COSIT as another

structural factor that distances the Institute from the mainstream. The entrepreneurial educational programming of the Institute which is a consequence of the Institute's self-sustaining efforts is characteristically distinct from the social service and pursuit of excellence approach of mainstream educational programming. The reality of quasi-autonomy or separateness which self-financing requires of COSIT makes it more of an educational marketing unit of the University. This invariably distinguishes and distances it from mainstream academic activities.

In the circumstances, COSIT students have difficulty identifying fully with the University of Lagos. Some of the students who as a result of changes in their personal circumstances, or who for psychological reasons have sought to transfer to on-campus programmes, could not do so on account of lack of University guidelines for such a transfer (Bown, 1978/79).

Wilson and Rosenfeld (1990, p. 215) stated that "the most immediate and accessible way to describe any formal organization is to outline its structure." In addition to organisational structure approach, this study also sought guidance from strategic contingencies theory of intraorganisational power (Salancik & Pfeffer, 1983). Strategic contingencies theory proved inadequate for explaining the marginality of COSIT. The theory could not go beyond indicating that the Institute is marginal on account of its inability to meet the strategic contingencies criteria (substitutability, centrality, and uncertainty) necessary to the acquisition of intraorganisational power (Salancik & Pfeffer, 1983).

When the theory is applied to COSIT, the following conclusions are reached. Firstly, it is not difficult to locate a substitute subunit for the Institute given that the Institute already depends heavily on staff of

participating faculties for the critical aspects of its function: course-writing, marking and tutoring. Secondly, the findings indicate that the functions of the Institute are not considered critical to the existence and operations of the University. In view of the status of COSIT within the University, the University can afford to do without the Institute. Thirdly, marginal and dependent on the faculties as it is, the Institute cannot cope with uncertainties for other subunits and the parent organisation.

Organisational structure approach can be said to be adequate for this study. Guided by the approach, the study found that COSIT is marginal as a result of incapacitating structural factors that make it difficult if not impossible for the Institute to manage strategic contingencies. The study reveals that COSIT is engaged in an activity (distance education) that is structurally determined to be peripheral and ancillary to the mainstream. In effect, distance education is "structured out" by the lack of University-wide policy that commits faculties to collaborate with the Institute in distance education. On account of the lack of policy, the University goal of widening access to education using distance delivery strategies devolves on COSIT. In addition, the study reveals that COSIT depends on the voluntary cooperation of staff of faculties without University institutionalized mechanisms formalizing and coordinating the relationship.

The marginality of COSIT adversely affects the development of distance education at the University and relates to the organisational and operational problems facing the Institute. Fagbamiye, (1990, p. 27) summarized the problems:

...serious breakdowns in development, production and supply of printed and audio materials; the almost total failure of the correspondence tutorial system; the inability to provide adequate supervision of and support to study centres....
All of these have seriously limited the quality of the teaching/

learning system and its potential to expand and to provide educational opportunities to the very large number of its potential students. Similarly the programme has failed to expand its course offerings to other Faculties and other subjects as well as to other levels. All these things have seriously affected COSIT's ability to realise and demonstrate the economies of scale to which distance education lays claim.

The problems of COSIT as articulated above by Fagbamiye (1990) support Devlin's (1982, p. 2) assertion that the marginality of "extension divisions or other such adult subunits" affects the quality and quantity of their programmes.

In the light of the foregoing discussion, the marginality of COSIT appears to derive from the structural gaps in the University's relationship with the Institute, particularly, from the gaps between the faculties and the Institute. The gaps give rise to a condition of quasi-structural disparateness between the University with the faculties on one hand, and COSIT on the other.

Chapter 6

Summary, recommendations and conclusion

Studies of the marginality of distance education units of dual mode universities tend to attribute the marginality of the units to unfavourable attitude of lecturers towards distance education (Halsey & Trow, 1971; Ballis, 1972; Adamson, 1976; Anwyl & Bowden, 1986; Siaciwena, 1989; Black, 1992). The studies virtually neglect the relevance of formal organisational structure to the phenomenon.

This study shows the relevance of the structural relationship between distance education units and their parent universities in the marginality of the units. Organisational structure is the framework in which people work. The importance of organisational structure towards understanding the marginality of distance education units is further underscored by Wilson and Rosenfeld's (1990, p. 215) definition of organisational structure: "the established pattern of relationships between the component parts of an organisation, outlining both communication, control and authority patterns."

Guided by the above views on organisational structure, this study investigated the structural relationship between the Institute and the University of Lagos by examining global data/macro-characteristics (goals, policies, administrative structures, formal organisational activities) contained in institutional records and documents, using the technique of content analysis.

The study reveals critical gaps in the relationship between the University and the Institute from which the marginality of COSIT derives.

The organisational structure does not provide policies and coordinating mechanisms that commit the faculties of the University to professionally collaborate with COSIT in distance education programmes. Since the organisational structure does not require obligatory participation of faculties and their staff in the pursuit of the University's goal of widening access using distance education strategies, COSIT alone pursues the goal with the voluntary cooperation of any interested faculty and staff. As a result, the Institute's position within the University appears to be that of a unit pursuing a goal that is different from and subordinate to the goal of the mainstream.

The study found that the self-financing status of COSIT distances it from the mainstream. The entrepreneurial approach of the Institute to education which is the result of its self-accounting status is not in harmony with the pursuit of excellence and social service approach of the mainstream.

The structural conditions at the University of Lagos which account for the marginality of COSIT are invariably part of the organisational milieu that provide socialization for staff of faculty on whom COSIT heavily depends for academic input into its programmes. Organisational members tend to display attitudes that conform to the expectations of the organisation (Hall, 1972; Allinson, 1984). At the University of Lagos, the expectations are articulated in University documents such as the memorandum of appointment, and the reward system. The implication of this socialization for COSIT is that by presenting distance education as an activity in which staff can voluntarily participate, the memorandum of appointment, being a socializing document, orients faculty members to perceive that distance

education is structurally assigned a subordinate position at the University. Similarly, by not taking account of the participation of faculty staff in distance education, the University reward system gives indication that participation in distance education does not worth their professional commitment. The result is that the staff are socialized to regard participation in distance education as worthy of only part-time attention.

In effect, the unfavourable attitude of faculty towards distance education to which the psychologistic studies attribute the marginality of distance education in dual mode universities (Halsey & Trow, 1971; Ballis, 1972; Adamson, 1976; Anwyl & Bowden, 1986; Siaciwena, 1989; Black, 1992), could be the result of organisational socialization brought about by prevailing structural conditions since organisational members tend to display attitudes consistent with the expectations of their organisation (Hall, 1972; Allinson, 1984).

The findings of the study point to structural factors in the relationship between COSIT and the University as the source of the marginality of the Institute. This conclusion is both consistent with Devlin's (1985, p. 101) view emphasizing "structure as source of power" and with the views of Fox (1966); Buchanan and Huczynski, (1985); Wilson and Rosenfeld, (1990) underscoring the primacy of organisational structure in determining the form and functioning of organisations and their subunits.

In order to obviate the structural conditions from which the marginality of COSIT derives, there is the need for a restructuring of the relationship between COSIT and the University of Lagos with a view to integrating distance education into the mainstream. The absorption and mainstreaming of distance education will enable the University to pursue

more effectively the goal of making "educational opportunities available to a much wider public than is possible through on-campus provision."

(Senate Paper, 74/95A in Bown, 1978/79).

Democratization of educational opportunities is increasingly becoming a global necessity and distance education is much better equipped than campus based delivery strategies to pursue this goal (Rumble, 1989; Sharpe, 1992). In this regard, Lynton and Elman (1987, p. 98) argued that "universities should merge the activities that used to be subsumed under the label 'continuing education' into the mainstream institutional organization of the institution so as to make them a central and integral part of the institutional mission."

The need to democratize educational opportunities by harnessing the potentials of distance education is particularly urgent in Nigeria where there is need for skilled manpower and educated citizenry (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1974; Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1977). The University of Lagos as a pioneer in university distance education in Nigeria has a duty to overcome the marginality of its distance education programme in order to play a more effective role in addressing Nigeria's needs for higher education.

Recommendations

In view of the foregoing, the study offers the following recommendations that flow from the research findings and discussions:

- 1) the University should formulate a policy committing its faculties to adopt distance education as a delivery strategy complementary to the traditional modes of delivery;
- 2) following from 1 above, the University should assign the academic functions of COSIT to faculties so that it would be the direct responsibility of each faculty to organize distance education programmes in its disciplines and it would be incumbent on all lecturers to undertake distance education alongside their conventional campus-based responsibilities;
- 3) similarly, the administrative and accounting functions in COSIT should be inherited by the Registrar and the Bursar respectively;
- 4) the reward system should recognize lecturers' involvement in distance education as professional academic endeavours and dispense rewards and recognitions accordingly;
- 5) COSIT's new function should be the University's "repository of current knowledge of the theory and practice of distance education" (Renwick, 1992, p. 141) and should in that capacity provide staff development services on distance education to the faculties and their staff, and manage the University's distance education resource centre.

Conclusion

This study shows that organisational structure provides the framework within which people work and, as such, determines the form and dynamics of organisations. The study has also indicated that organisational structure more or less shapes the attitude of organisational members through a process of organisational socialization. The implication of this view for the marginality of distance education units of dual mode universities is that the reported unfavourable attitude of faculty towards distance education could be the result of the socialization process the organisational structure overtly or insidiously initiates and sustains.

Devlin (1982, pp.4,8) observed that "current treatments of marginality are too narrow...."and that "current understanding of marginality rests on a narrow basis." Therefore, the concept of structural distancing formulated by this study is put forward as an analytical framework for investigations of the phenomenon.

Since organisational structures are mutable social constructs that should be modified to address new needs and challenges (Lawrence & Lorsch,1969; Duncan, 1983; Lorsch, 1983), the marginality of COSIT can be addressed by restructuring the University of Lagos with a view to adopting distance education University-wide as a complementary delivery strategy that better equips the University to respond more effectively to the higher education needs of Nigeria.

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Title of Thesis: The Marginality of Distance Education Units of Dual-mode Universities

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