Does the University-Industry Link Affect Solving Challenges of the Job Market? Lessons From Teacher Education and the Ministry of Education in Malawi

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ABSTRACT: About half of the secondary school teachers in Malawi are professionally unqualified. Furthermore, the net enrolment of eligible pupils in secondary schools is at 36% per year. Hence, this study sought to establish factors affecting access to quality and relevant secondary education in Malawi with reference to coordination, collaboration, and feedback between secondary school teacher education institutions and the Ministry of Education. Officials from the Ministry of Education and secondary school teacher training colleges participated in the study. Findings suggest that there is weak collaboration, coordination, and feedback between teacher training institutions and the Ministry of Education which is affecting the quality and relevance of education in Malawi. The study has also established that the weak linkage has resulted into perceived mismatches between expectations of the ministry and those of the education institutions about the problem in question. Theoretical and practical implications of this study are discussed in this article.

KEYWORDS: University, industry, collaboration, feedback, secondary education, job market, relevance

Introduction

Background

A strong connection between pre-service teacher education and the needs or expectations of the workplace is critical in improving the quality and relevance of education.1,2 It is in this regard that the academic rhetoric about improving university-industry relations continues to be vehement.3,4 The debate is increasing because there is more understanding that effective and efficient feedback and collaboration between the training institutions and the employer are pivotal to promoting relevance and quality of the graduates who are trained.5,6 Furthermore, it is believed that such good feedback and synergy would help amass collective effort to deal with challenges in education before they get ramified.7 Nevertheless, there is insufficient literature and study initiatives delving into this area in Malawi. Furthermore, in the university-industry relations theme, most studies in the world have focused on the production of goods only resulting into insignificant literature talking about service industries.1,8 In Malawi, there have been calls recently asking local universities to be more innovative and align their programmes to the pertinent needs of the country and the job market by engaging the public.7 This study, therefore, sought to establish the nature and quality of feedback, coordination, and collaboration between the teacher education institutions and the Ministry of Education (MoE), as an employer. The study also sought to establish factors which affect attempts to address challenges in the education sector.

Problem statement

The quality of education in Malawi is said to be suffering from serious and critical challenges mainly in primary and secondary sectors.9,10 Among indicators for the challenges is that the number of qualified teachers for secondary education is small at about 48% of the total number of teachers in schools. This implies that more than 50% of the teachers are unqualified.11 Furthermore, transition rate to secondary education from primary is at 36% of the eligible pupils per year.12,13(p23) One argument explaining the cause of the shortage of teachers has been that the training institutions train inadequate numbers of teachers, whereas the demand for qualified teachers is high even outside teaching forcing some graduates to quit teaching in preference for more paying jobs.14 In addition, since 2014, the MoE stopped direct employment of fresh teacher graduates from training institutions opting for interviews. The researchers hence wondered whether the new employment system suggests that the ministry doubts the quality of graduates produced. A training needs assessment conducted by Malawi’s Mzuzu University ‘revealed that there is uneven distribution of teaching-subject specialization in secondary schools’ and so recommended that ‘teacher training institutions should balance the number of students taking various subjects’.12(p8) Nevertheless, before this study, it was not clear how the MoE and the universities (and colleges) that provide pre-service teacher education coordinate and provide feedback to each other on the
required quality and quantity of teachers in the schools. Yet it is believed that

Universities are vastly underutilized and potentially powerful vehicles for development in developing countries . . . If both universities and industry are encouraged to work actively together, universities will be able to assume new roles that could accelerate local and national development.15

From extant literature, it was apparent that the university-industry links are perceived to be pivotal to quality and relevance of education.7,16 Therefore, the researchers deemed it academically warranting to investigate into the quality of collaboration, coordination, and feedback between the secondary school education institutions (SSTEIs) and the MoE. Feedback from the employer (Ministry) was considered useful in understanding how the ministry and training institutions work together to address the educational challenges in Malawi. As review of world literature suggests on this topic, the uniqueness of this study is that ‘most studies focus on the United States and selected European countries while contributions covering other geographic contexts are rare’.17(p431) Furthermore, there is insufficient literature about university-employer relations in teacher education mainly from Malawi.17 It was hence believed that this study would add valuable literature to this topic from a different demographic and topical area. Based on some studies, such as the UK Lambert Review of Business-University Collaboration and the Leitch Review – ‘Prosperity for All in a Global Economy – World Class Skills’, we understand that some scholars have concluded that

There is often a gap between employers’ skill needs and the provision of further and higher education. Such a gap will have consequences and costs for business. Policy has often stressed the need to close the gap by promoting engagement between employer and HEI in order to influence curriculum, set standards, and to make the supply of high level skills demand-driven.18(p10)

In summary, the problem for the study was that much is not known on how higher education institutions (HEIs) that provide teacher education work together or fail to work together with the MoE in the thrust to address the many challenges rocking education in Malawi.

**Purpose of the study**

The purpose of this study was to evaluate how linkage between the teacher education and the MoE affects attempts to address challenges of the education sector in Malawi.

**Specific objectives**

Ultimately, this study sought to

1. Examine factors that affect university-industry collaboration particularly between the teacher education institutions and the MoE.
2. Establish and assess the quality of feedback, collaboration, and coordination between the MoE and the training institutions as they work to promote quality of secondary teacher education.
3. Determine gaps that are not well satisfied in training by teacher education colleges from the assessment of the employer through the MoE.
4. Solicit suggestions that could be employed to improve feedback and collaboration between the 2 sectors to promote quality of secondary education.

**Study Context**

The need for a strong tie in HEI-employer relations and collaboration has been a case for a long time.19,20 Specifically, the enactment of Bayh-Dole Act in 1980 by the United States is often said to have ‘marked a breakthrough in the history of university – industry relations’ (World Intellectual Property Organization, 2002: 2).21 The purpose of this act was mainly to encourage universities and industries to collaborate with commercial enterprises in the commercialization of innovations and new technologies so that both the industry and universities optimally benefit from each other.22

The hub of concern here was that when there is weak link and collaboration, the industry would have many challenges that it would be worried with but these would remain unanswered, whereas at the same time the universities may be keeping useful innovations and technologies in files or offices or labs which are not used.23 Currently, many HEIs in the world have taken and continue to take different strides to make the linkages and collaboration symbiotically useful. In Africa, a study by the Association of African Universities4(p7) concluded that

Sadly, the skills, knowledge and training that students receive at many African universities do not prepare them adequately to meet the requirements of the industry and the job market. This mismatch . . . coupled with under-training in the critical skills of problem-solving, analytical thinking and communication – is blamed, at least in part, for the emerging high graduate unemployment and under-employment many African countries are witnessing.

The above findings suggest that African educational institutions should do more to ensure that their work addresses the needs of the people, their industry. But as Mariita23 also elaborates

the core business of a university is research and dissemination of knowledge . . . the industry exists to provide goods and services, generally for a profit, by applying knowledge generated by research institutions. There is, therefore, need for collaboration between universities and industry.

The foregoing background, therefore, establishes existence of the need to build strong synergies between the universities and the industry. Such synergies ‘can play a critical role in securing and leveraging additional resources for higher education, promoting innovation and technology transfer, and ensuring
that graduates have the skills and knowledge required to effectively contribute to the workforce.4(p11)

Calls for HEIs to align their programmes to the needs of society have been very resonant in Malawi of late. For instance, the third president of the Republic of Malawi, Bingu wa Mutharika, speaking as a Chancellor of public universities in Malawi, often bemoaned that there was a huge abyss of mismatch between the needs of the people of Malawi and what was offered by HEIs. In one of his public speeches, he argued as follows:

It is important to realise that Malawi has been producing what we don’t consume, and we have been consuming what we do not produce. There is high dependence on production and export of a few primary commodities for gross domestic product generation, and the country also depends on importation of all goods and services that could be produced in Malawi.7(p1)

Some scholars24 have therefore argued that as long as there is a weak collaboration between the HEIs and the industry, the nation risks to be where it shall be producing what it does not consume and consume what it does not produce. Mutharika hence called for strategic reforms to align programmes to the practical needs of public. Using this niche as a ‘focus of inquiry’, in qualitative studies,25(p59) it was assumed that the case of MoE and the teacher training institutions would be a good entry point to explore the challenges in the university/HEI-industry linkage.

The gap between the expectations and needs of the education ministry and the competencies exhibited by teacher graduates has been under discussion since the introduction of Free Primary Education (FPE) in 1994.26 Scholars14,27 assert that the calibre of teachers who went through FPE is watered down by the many challenges that came with it. For instance, the introduction of FPE resulted into the rise of pupil enrolment from 1.7 million to 3.2 million between 1994 and 1997.28 The FPE policy was necessary but it was implemented without proper planning and a clear policy framework to provide guidance.14 As a result, among other challenges, initially about 22 000 professionally unqualified teachers were employed.29 The previously stated mismatch between expectations and performance of teacher graduates is partly the one that led to the development of the 2015 National Education Standards for primary and secondary education.12,13

This study was therefore informed by the foregoing literature review which established gaps warranting the study as conceptualized in Figure 1.

Methodology
This study employed the qualitative approach. This approach was chosen because issues of in-depth understanding and perceptions were deemed more appropriately studied using the qualitative methodology. Bruce Berg30 argues that ‘Quality refers to the what, how, when, and where of a thing, its essence and ambience. Qualitative research thus refers to the meanings, concepts, definitions, characteristics, metaphors, symbols, and descriptions of things’. This research approach respected the advice of Miles and Huberman as quoted in Esch and Esch31 that in qualitative analysis, rather than explaining or predicting, sense-making must be the emphasis to understand the experience. In other words, this study was designed with the understanding that with this approach, the researcher ‘abstains from making suppositions, focuses on a specific topic, freshly and naively, constructs a question or problem to guide the study, and derives findings that will provide the basis for further research and reflection’.32(p47)

Sample area and sample size
The following HEIs participated in the study: Chancellor College, Lilongwe University of Agriculture & Natural Resources (LUANAR), The Malawi Polytechnic, Domasi College of Education, and Mzuzu University. The study also involved 2 private universities in the names of Livingstonia University and the Malawi Assemblies of God University. These institutions were purposefully sampled because of their central role in research, teaching, and knowledge dissemination on issues affecting education. The study also gathered information from relevant departments in the MoE and the Commission for Higher Education. Government departments and organizations were sampled because they represent the employers and consumers of education products from the university. They were also believed to be critical in providing appraisal feedback about the quality and relevance of products from the university. The Commission was consulted mainly because of its role of coordinating universities and helping them align trainings to needs of the people.

In terms of sample size, from the HEIs, 6 deans of faculties plus 6 heads of departments participated in this study.

Figure 1. The research gaps.
One director of educational research also from the HEIs was interviewed. These participants were purposefully selected based on their roles and experiences in developing, reviewing, and managing teacher education programmes. From the ministry, officers from the office of the Directorate of Planning and Policy, the Department of Inspectorate and Advisory Services (DIAS), and the Department of Teacher Education (DTED) were also purposefully interviewed because of their role in deploying teachers, appraising the teachers, and providing in-service training, respectively. School inspection reports were used as secondary data, whereas information gathered through in-depth interviews were the primary data.

Through snowballing sampling technique, 33 practising teachers were involved in the study to get feedback about their assessment of what they learned as teachers from their pre-service teacher education. Triangulation was achieved by consulting different groups of participants and also using both primary and secondary data. We used multiple sources to cross-check commonalities and differences in perceptions among the respondents about the quality of linkage between the MoE and universities in thrusts to solve challenges facing the education sector.

Data analysis

This study analysed data thematically based on the research questions of the study. Responses to research questions were first recorded as they were said by respondents, and then these responses were summarized before eventually interpreting the plausible meanings of those responses. The following template was designed and used for data analysis and interpretation of findings (Figure 2). The design drew a lot of wisdom from a 5-Step Model of Qualitative Research Analysis by Kvale, in Bjarte Folkestad’s Analysing Interview Data: Possibilities and challenges. Secondary data from school inspection reports were analysed through content analysis.

Findings and Discussions

This section presents the findings and discussions emanating from the study. The section is presented based on the thematic findings of the study which were derived from the research questions and the responses. The section is organized into 4 sub-sections as follows.

Trained teachers are perceived to be good at content and theory but not practice

One of the findings of this study was that trained teachers from the SSTEIs are perceived to have good command of content of the teaching subjects and educational theories but weak in pedagogy. Both groups of the sample from trained teachers and inspectors DIAS agreed that the training colleges helped the teachers during pre-service training to be of good command in the subjects that they learned. In fact, the teachers claimed that they learnt much content from other fields of specialization among the respondents about the quality of linkage between the MoE and universities in thrusts to solve challenges facing the education sector.

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and teaching skills taught in the college of teaching. This finding is also similar with many studies\textsuperscript{39,40} which report that teachers usually do not use some pedagogical knowledge and skills due to lack of resources and motivation.

**Gaps between the expectations of the teacher employer (MoE) and training colleges**

From reports of DIAS and general views from MoE officials, it was indicative that teachers produced by training institutions with baccalaureate degrees are generally very strong in content areas but need a lot of improvement on pedagogy.\textsuperscript{41} However, teachers who graduate with diplomas in education were perceived to be generally better at pedagogy. However, the study did not establish why there is difference in proficiency in pedagogy between the 2 types of graduate teachers. From analysis of inspection reports from DIAS, this study found out that there are many issues that DIAS assesses as strengths and weaknesses of the teachers that SSTEIs produce. For instance, one of the national reports which we sourced summarizes that the teachers produced by SSTEIs are good at content but that

- They are not comfortable and very incompetent in conducting science experiments
- They shun using current innovative teaching methods . . .
- They do not assess students’ work regularly; do not practice continuous assessment
- Most teachers do not use appropriate methods to support students with poor sight or hearing or physical disabilities
- Most graduate teachers . . . do not adapt teaching and learning to provide support to meet the needs of students who work more slowly than others
- Most of them do not prepare locally available materials to use as teaching and learning aids to explain concepts.\textsuperscript{12,13(pp3-4)}

Analysis of the feedback and other DIAS inspection reports indicates that there are few strong proficiency areas by the teachers and the schools. Rather, the reports suggest that the teachers and schools in general need great improvement. From the same sampled reports, there is an indication that the inspectors provided about 6 positive areas and 18 areas for improvement. This implies that inspectors identified more areas requiring improvement (weaknesses) at about 60%, whereas only 40% were areas where teachers’ performance was perceived as below standard. These findings imply that Malawi’s secondary education has more areas requiring improvement than the areas that are worth celebration as many other scholars also report.\textsuperscript{42,43} This low rating about the teachers’ pedagogy and attributes could mainly be due to the fact that about 50% of the teachers in the secondary education sector are said to be untrained teachers\textsuperscript{12,13} or it could be due to misdiagnosis of teaching by inspectors themselves, as we will argue later.

The other crosscutting finding from the sampled inspection reports is the emphasis that almost all the teachers observed did not prepare lesson plans (LPs). But this study was not able to understand what school inspectors really meant by lack of lesson preparation because we analysed the reports after meeting the participants from DIAS. However, because inspectors were supposed to be using the new 2015 education standards for Malawi, it was assumed that lesson planning is as defined in the standards. Nevertheless, one may wonder what indicators are used to diagnose whether a teacher is prepared for lessons or not according to inspectors. The other important question befitting answers is whether indeed teachers do not prepare for lessons and why. Such questions would help inform teacher education programmes, policy, and practice.\textsuperscript{44,45} From personal experience of being assessed by a school inspector while teaching, inspection in Malawi appears to overemphasize written LPs by the standards given to the teachers. We are sceptical if indeed teaching becomes better necessarily by having written LPs in class. Some research evidence does not agree that written LPs have significant impact on teaching and learning.\textsuperscript{46} For instance, some studies have shown that most expert teachers do not develop or use written LPs which inspection in Malawi emphasizes on.\textsuperscript{46} As a system, we believe that there must be a point when a professional teacher should be weaned off from dependency on strict written LPs. This teacher autonomy would mean that education monitoring, evaluation, and inspection systems should have other ways of showing, for example, which good teachers can be exempted from formal expectations such as having and using formal LPs in their teaching career. We think some of these orthodox views about teaching and teachers prevent teachers from being innovative and from enjoying their teaching as a noble profession. Otherwise, if teachers are given too orthodox rules, how do we expect them to help learners to think innovatively and freely?

This study also established that there is no deliberate provision where findings from the DIAS are shared with the SSTEIs. Furthermore, there is limited, if any, interface where the 2 institutions share their perceptions about the meaning and interpretation of ‘a good teacher’ and ‘good teaching’. For instance, one long-serving teacher educator observed as follows:

In my 20 years of teaching secondary school teachers, I have never seen a report or been formally informed of where improvement should be done in teacher training. We simply do not know what they make of our graduate teachers and so the assumption is that all is rosy for them.

It is not strange, therefore, that sometimes there are reported differences between what is recommended by lecturers and what is expected by the ministry. For example, one fresh graduate employed by the ministry worried that
Sometimes what we learn during training is deemed wrong by the ministry or inspectorate team which is very frustrating. For instance, how we learned about lesson plans and schemes of work differ here somehow.

The cause of this mismatch and tension could be that the standards used have not been shared or that there may be some knowledge gaps between the lecturers in college and the supervisors in workplace. This difference could also be due to different orientations about what is right or wrong in the teaching profession due to changing times and paradigm shifts in education. Another study also revealed similar sentiments about the differences in expectations between training institutions and the workplace in Tanzania and Malawi.42

But one participant from SSTEIs argued differently that the problem is that we have different mandates that should not be confused. The mandate of the university is teaching, research and outreach. It is the duty of the consumer to complain to the producer if he is not satisfied with our product.

In her view, the employers are the ones who should take an initiative to demand what they need from the universities as consumers. But both of these sentiments corroborate that interface between the 2 stakeholders is weak. No wonder, response from the Commission for Higher Education showed worry that one of the commission’s biggest challenges is that ‘universities often treat us with suspicion and that makes our role of coordinating and helping in ensuring quality of education a little difficult’. The study learned that all stakeholders felt that there was need for DIAS to share findings they get from the performance of the teachers trained by the SSTEIs. They thought there should be some shared generic standards among stakeholders about what is to be a professional teacher in Malawi. Otherwise, systemic studies about the university-industry relations persuasively confirm that when parts of the whole do not speak to each other, the whole is bound to falter.47-49

The other part the findings is that it is paradoxical whether to take inspection reports of DIAS as they are or not. This is a dichotomy comes because, on one hand, we read from almost all the sampled reports that DIAS staff need capacity building on how to conduct inspection. This implies that their capacity in inspection is limited. If this is true, then one is persuaded to doubt their findings in the form that they are. It is plausible, therefore, that inspectors may not understand their inspection job well enough and yet they conduct assessment about the performance of education such as teaching and learning. They hence need to get capacitated like through further training. On the other hand, as other studies indicate, it is possible that it is this limited capacity which makes their inspection reports carry more negative comments about the teachers than positives.50,51 It is also possible that because there is limited feedback between DIAS and SSTEIs, there is knowledge gap between the teacher educators and the inspectors. This gap could lead fresh graduates with novel expertise to be misjudged by the inspectors who probably do not understand the current innovations, theories, and knowledge that may have changed in the training institutions.52,53 It is perhaps because of this thinking that some scholars in the university-industry relations would contend that if SSTEIs and DIAS were to learn from each other through stakeholder feedback within the interlocking triple helices, the interface would improve the teachers’ professional development.54 All put together, it can be contended that without genuine feedback between DIAS and SSTEIs, many inspection reports may be written by inspectors without making much positive change in the education sector.55 The argument for collaborative effort in improving quality and relevance of education is partly because of the understanding that no one part of a system has all the capacity to comprehend and thwart all challenges in the education sector. For instance, a study by Ng’ambi56(p48) reports that

The MoEST does have a Research, Monitoring and Evaluation Unit to monitor and evaluate education programmes. However, the unit is not doing well because some of the staff do not have the skills to analyse data and use it for planning purposes and at the same time the unit is understaffed and not well funded.

The foregoing background implies that DIAS and the Research Unit at MoE conduct their appraisal of education including the quality of the teachers and teaching produced by SSTEIs. However, these actors (DIAS and SSTEIs) need to share their work together and share ideas about the teachers that colleges produce and education at large if quality and relevance of education are to be advanced.

There is limited opportunity for feedback between MoE and SSTEIs

On feedback, both sets of stakeholders agreed that some opportunity exists among stakeholders for sharing needs, gaps, and suggestions to improve education. This was reportedly done mainly through the Annual Education Joint Sector Reviews which are designed to assess performance of all education sectors from early childhood development through to higher education.12,13(p20) Nevertheless, both also agreed that the reviews sometimes are erratic and do not provide enough opportunity for discussing the so many challenges that the different education sectors are facing. For instance, one academic participant said that

the problem with these meetings is that they have become a boring show of the ministry trying to justify where they have done well. All the agenda is theirs and the shows are more political than the feedback of technocrats to each other. (Participant at 2015 Education Performance Review, Lilongwe)

However, one ministry official argued that the problem with academicians is that
when they come for such functions, they are busy making their academic traditions of citations and the like instead of helping us solve the problems we face as a ministry. We are not in class. We practically solve real problems and we need practical solutions.

From the above perspectives of research participants, one thing clear is that there is blame-shift on why feedback between the teacher education institutions and the MoE is facing challenges in Malawi. It should be noted that in a useful collaboration between the university and industry,

Parthers pursue goals that are broader than the narrow confines of conducting research for the sake of academic publishing, and seek to generate some kind of utility for the non-academic partners. For instance, the academic may offer his/her expertise to provide new ideas on application-oriented issues, solve problems and suggest solutions to collaborating organizations.3,57

Nevertheless, extant scholarly literature shows that tension is not peculiar to Malawi in the engagement between the university (SSTEIs) and the industry (MoE) but it can be reduced through symbiotic and open engagement.3,57 Research also indicates that there are so many causes of tension in the links between the university and the industry or employer of graduates.57,58 For example, this kind of blame-shift could be due to mistrust or lack of open and effective communication among these stakeholders. The other possibility is that the tension could be due to lack of clarity among stakeholders on who ought to initiate engagement. For instance, the study learned that there is tension among MoE departments on who should spearhead secondary school teacher education initiatives among the DTED, the Planning Section, and the Directorate for Secondary Education as sometimes there is confusion. This therefore suggests the need for clarity in the policy and practice on role division as far as promoting quality of education is concerned.

On the part of the ministry, collaboration is viewed as necessary but financial constrains are the ones that often limit the freedom. This view is similar to what was found out in a UK study that

employer engagement with HEI is sub-optimal, with employers put off by relatively high transactions costs, but that there is a substantial if latent demand for the services HEI provide. What is lacking is a channel that will allow employers with limited resources to engage more fully with HEI18(pvii)

One other finding was that the weak linkage between the MoE and the SSTEIs has resulted into many unresolved challenges. Ministry of Education official thought that the current approach to teacher education requires innovations. For instance, they wondered that while pre-service training is very critical, there should be innovative ways from the universities on how to train the more than 50% of the total number of teachers in secondary schools in Malawi who are deemed not qualified by existing standards. This finding about challenges facing the linkage between the training institutions and the industry is similar to what was learnt in a study done in Tanzania.59 In a nutshell, this study established that there is weak linkage and engagement between SSTEIs and MoE which is threatening attempts to promote quality and relevant education in Malawi. These findings have universal and local implications about the role of feedback, collaboration, and coordination between the teacher education and the educational job market.

Conclusions

This study sought to assess the nature and quality of linkage between the MoE and the university departments that train secondary school teachers with the aim of determining how that relationship helps or fails to help solve myriad needs and challenges facing education in Malawi. Findings of the study indicate that there is perceived weak coordination, collaboration, and feedback between the 2 institutions and that this scenario contributes to failure to solve challenges in the education sector. The study also established that there are many perceived mismatches between expectations of the employer and the training institutions mainly due to limited interface between the training institutions and the MoE, who is the main employer. These findings agree with systems theory that when there is weak collaboration, engagement, and feedback between the university and the industry, quality and relevance of educational products can become compromised.3,57 The finding that there is weak collaboration between the university and the employment world questions the relevance of education offered and suggests to the world the need to improve interface between universities and employment worlds of graduates. In other words, the study hence recommends for improved coordination, collaboration, and feedback between the university and the job market so that there is increased and improved symbiotic benefit between the 2 institutions. It is only when training institutions and the employer meaningfully engage with each other about their needs that the quality and relevance of graduates could be ensured.60

Finally, because the inspectors of schools appear to have limited capacity to do their job as expected, universities in Malawi should consider establishing tailor-made programmes in educational inspection and supervision. Currently there appears to be a gap in this area as teachers become inspectors not by training but experience and promotion interviews. This hence questions how the education system could improve the use of school inspection as a means of linking promoting (not demotivating) professional development of teachers while in their workplace.

Author Contributions

First, the authors have gathered, presented and interpreted data which suggest that there is weak nexus between teacher education institutions at public universities and the MoE, which is the key employer of teachers. The authors have also contributed to theory by adding weight to Systems Theory, particularly with the assertion that when there is weak connection
between the education institutions and the employment world, there is likelihood of dissatisfaction on relevance of education that universities provide. The methodological angle used in the study has also added avenues for future studies.

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