Roles of Instructors in Enhancing Open and Distance Learning (ODL) Towards Learners' Academic Progress in Iringa Municipality, Tanzania

Camillus A. Mwila [a*]

[a] University of Iringa, Tanzania.

Original Research Article

ABSTRACT

Most of the Open and Distance Learning students face the challenges of poor academic progress when they relay on private and self-learning without any assistance from the teachers (instructors). Therefore, this study assessed the role of Instructors in Enhancing Open and Distance Learning (ODL) Towards Learners' Academic Progress in Iringa Municipality, Tanzania. Specifically, the study had two research questions namely: What are the services performed by instructors in enhancing learning through ODL in Iringa Municipality? What are the impacts of instructors in facilitating ODL learners toward academic performance? The study was methodologically operationalized by qualitative research approach and was guided by case study design. The target population was the Regional Resident Tutor, instructors and students from Open and Distance Learning (ODL). The total sample size involved 40 respondents. Data was collected through interview and focus group discussion methods. The data were analysed through the use of thematic analysis. The findings of this study revealed that provision of study materials such as modules and notes for further reading, face-to-face meetings, and guidance and counselling services are the

_____

Corresponding author: Email: mwilacamilius@yahoo.com;

services provided by ODL. Furthermore, this study revealed out that instructors have a great role in Open and Distance Learning leaners since, the guidance and counselling services provided to the students help them in various ways such as improving their studying skills and techniques. It is concluded that Tanzania government under the High Education Students Loan Board (HESLB) should provide loans even for ODL students to reduce the cost of education such as tuition fee, stationery, accommodation and meal. Finally, the government should oversee again the cost of ODL if possible, there is also a need to reduce the tuition fee and improve the infrastructure and resources such as libraries, classes and ICT facilities and services.

Keywords: Education; instructors; open distance learning; learners; academic progress/ performance.

1. INTRODUCTION

UNESCO (2014) defines Open and Distance Learning (ODL) as an approach that focus on opening access to education and training provision, freeing learners from constraints of time and place and offering flexible learning opportunities to individuals and groups of learners. In this study, Open and Distance learning is the provision or receiving an education through a home or non-formal environment, hence the students/ learners being free from formal systems (school/collage) of time and place.

Open and Distance Learning (ODL) has grown into an important global strategy in resolving problems of access to education (UNESCO, 2014). In the 21st century, many educational institutions, especially in developed countries, have moved from being purely campus centred models of higher education to Open Distance Learning (ODL) models particularly through information and communication technologies.

The major benefits of ODL are related to its flexibility, accessibility, affordability and life based education opportunities. It is affordable since it involves less cost per student (Pityana, 2004) and on the other hand, its greater flexibility enables its courses to adapt to specific students' needs or work requirements, thereby enabling greater relevance [1]. Moreover, ODL can effectively reach learners who have been denied access to education, for example, women, marginalized groups and the imprisoned [2].

Among the challenges facing ODL includes inadequate information dissemination skills especially in developing countries. ICT technical competence is needed in order to have effective access to ODL (Muilenburg and Berge, 2001). Moreover, distance learners face other challenges such as programme costs and financial issues (Cohen et al.,2014), multiple responsibilities (shah & Cheng,2019), lack of equipment and infrastructure, instructional concerns and poor technical assistance, unfriendliness and isolation, poor support from families and employers as well as poor students' support services (Muilenburg & Berge, 2001); [3].

In Tanzania, the concept of ODL was introduced in the year 1983 but became functional in 2002 with the establishment of several studies in open distance learning. The vision was to provide highly accessible and enhanced quality education anchored by social justice, equity and national cohesion through a comprehensive reach that transcends all barriers [4].

Academic performance in Open and Distance Learning students in Tanzania also face different challenges like other contraries. It is true that performance of learners is closely intertwined with the quality of facilitation received. Studies have shown that irrespective of the technology used, facilitation is a determinant of learning outcome [5]. Learners learn through interaction with their environment (consisting of people, things and ideas) and it is a well-known fact that interaction and collaboration are potentially relevant to learning, and enhance students' academic development. Walberg (2010) says that much of a learner's performance can be attributed to the classroom-learning, instructional variables and interactions. As it has been shown, Walberg (2010) revealed that high rates of poor academic progress of ODL learners are due to the feelings of isolation, lack of interaction and motivation to participate in classroom discussions, poor technology such as lack and poor software and online information, poor networking as well as shortage of text books and laboratories. This study therefore intended to assess the contribution of facilitators in enhancing ODL students' academic progress in Tanzania. The study guided by the following research questions:

1. What are the services performed by instructors in enhancing learning through ODL in Iringa Municipality?
2. What are the impacts of instructors in facilitating ODL learners toward academic performance?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This subdivision presents the review of related literature reviews as conducted by different researchers.

2.1 Services Performed by Instructors in Enhancing Learning through ODL

Support services to distance learners has been considered as a single most effective strategy to remove isolation, raise self-esteem and create instructors' presence in the lives of the learners. Students support is described by Vygotsky (1978) as potential for raising zone of proximal development, where a learner is supported to reach his or her maximum learning potentials. Instructors support assists learners to attain levels of understanding impossible for them to achieve without assistance. The support provides learners with more structure during the early stages of a new learning and gradually turns responsibilities over to them as they internalize and master the skills needed to engage in more complex learning.

For instance, De Jager [6] studied the impact of library services on students' academic performance at the University of Cape Town, South Africa. The findings were that there was no any relationship between books borrowing and academic performance, instead, learners needed support from their instructors to broaden their knowledge. Hence, instructors provide more clarification and moral support and psycho-therapy which are used to develop and enhance students' academic performance. It obvious from this study therefore that a mere provision of materials and resources may not be enough to enhance the ODL students' academic progress. Instead instructors' support is one of such crucial issues.

From this study, it has been made obvious, for example, that odd students could obtain first class passes (75% or more) without ever borrowing a single book throughout the entire year. Some students on the other hand borrowed more than sixty books but failed in the final examinations. This implies that students' services through library borrowing may not contribute much in academic performance. Thus, to perform, there are other issues which came from instructors that can contribute to students' academic performance which come from instructors.

Kamau [7], conduct a research in Kenya on Retraining primary school teachers against diminishing resources: Is distance education the answer? The findings found that effective learners' support services system that provides in Kenya ODL are onsite face- to- face, material support, moral support and timely feedback on students' performance, students' achievement. These services improved studend academic progress and decreased dropout rates as well aspostponement.

2.2 The Impact of Instructors in Facilitating ODL Learners toward Academic Performance

Today, open and distance learning (ODL) calls upon an impressive range of technologies to enable distance teachers and Distance Learners who are separated by distance to communicate with each other in real time (synchronous) and delayed time (asynchronous). This means that open and distance learning (ODL) can access education and learning opportunities at a time, place, and pace to suit their individual lifestyles, learning preferences and personal development plans. Such separation according to Idrus & Lateh [8] gives rise to "an impressive and innovative array of media mix resulting in the application of technology in education. Such development offers a radical new direction for open and distance teaching enthusiasts, teachers and learners alike, incorporates flexible and open learning methods as well as modified and specially created learning resources.

Dzakiria' [9] found that the main task of any ODL provider (instructors) is to design and offer distance educational experience that encourages learning. As such, open and distance learning (ODL) providers need to understand that its educational products and services are to service the open and distance learning (ODL) and provide an encouraging educational experience for the learners. In doing so, many factors need to be considered in developing and delivering open and distance learning (ODL) courses to achieve effective and efficient implementation of distance education courses and programmes. Moreover, the major benefits of instructors in

ODL are related to its flexibility, accessibility, affordability and life-based education opportunities. ODL enables an expansion of tertiary enrolments at less cost per student than under the conventional residential campus system [10]. Greater flexibility enables ODL courses to adapt to specific student needs or work requirements, thereby enabling greater relevance [1].

Rumble [2] found that ODL instructors also accommodate the growing demand for lifelong learning more easily than do residential programmes. Moreover, ODL instructors can effectively reach by advising those learners who have been denied access to higher education, for example, women who are unable to attend traditional educational programmes because of household responsibilities or cultural constraints, economically marginalized groups, and the imprisoned.

Another study by Ryan (2015) on Tutor Support in an Open Distance Learning (ODL) Environment for Upgrading Teachers, found that, tutor support in open distance learning (ODL), which is beyond the scope of course material, is very important as it fosters collaborative learning and support in students. This support could be extended to that of an educational counsellor or tutor counsellor, career guidance, manager, assessor, facilitator, demonstrator, role model or pastor and the tutor could also act as a friend and advocate for the student within the ODL system. To this end, action research studies in the United Kingdom with Open University students have shown that students come to ODL courses with varying expectations of the levels of service and support they will receive from their tutors. It has been further established that specific expectations-led quality assurances that enable the sharing of these expectations before a course starts could be of mutual benefit to the student and the tutor, as well as generally improving the overall quality of tutor support provided by the distance learning organization. This process, it is argued, would be appreciated by the students as it would help to shape their future and have beneficial effects on student satisfaction with tutor support, consequently reducing student drop-out and increasing course completion rates.

3. METHODOLOGY

This part presents the methodology used in this study. It includes research design, population

and sampling, data collection instruments and ethical considerations.

3.1 Study Approach

The qualitative approach was adopted for this study. Given the nature of the approach, it was useful in obtaining detailed information from the informants in their natural settings regarding their various constructed meanings, opinions, values, behaviours and perspectives [11,12], in relation to the role of Instructors in Enhancing Open and Distance Learning (ODL) Towards Learners' Academic Progress in Iringa Municipality, Tanzania. Qualitative approach takes place in natural settings and involves interpretation of facts based on multiple meanings that people bring to them [13]. The flexibility of the qualitative research in data collection was also important to allow probing using interview and focus group discussion to capture the informants' perspective adequately [14].

3.2 Study Design

The study made use of the multiple case study design to guide the collection of data. This is the type of the case study design which uses more than one case for the purpose of exploring the unique experiences of similar cases. It has the advantage of increasing the scope of the investigation and the degree of freedom thus making the study more robust (Merriam, 2009). Through this design, it was possible to take the Institute of Adult Education and the Open University of Tanzania Iringa centres as case studies for this study since they both have similar characteristics deemed relevant for this study.

3.3 Area of Study

The study was conducted in Iringa region which is in the Southern Highlands zone of Tanzania involving the Open University of Tanzania and the Institute of Adult Education Centres. The area of study was chosen purposively among the education institution in which there are open and distance education centres, though there are other university which are not provide Open and Distance Learning such universities are; University of Iringa, Mkwawa University College of education as a branch of University of Dar es Salam, Ruaha University Collage and Moshi Cooperative university. The selection of the study area based on the following reasons: Firstly, there are little studies conducted on the instructors' contribution towards enhancing Open

and Distance Learning in Iringa Municipality in Tanzania. Secondly, since Iringa Municipality is within Iringa region which is involved in the provision it involves the provision of Open and Distance Learning under Institution of Adult Education, hence, it helped to open eyes of the stakeholders on the issues related to input process and output of instructors on students' academic progress.

3.4 Sample and Sampling Techniques

The sample included 16 instructors, 8 from each of the centres. These were selected using purposive sampling basing particularly on their roles to the ODL students. The study also made use of 24 Open and Distance Learning (ODL) students, 12 from each of the centres. The sampling of students was done in two stages. First, snow ball sampling was used to establish a list of students that could be selected for the study. Since in snowball sampling new units are recruited by the aid of other units [14] the first and readily available students helped to identify their fellow students. This helped to establish a list of students. Both female and male respondents were included in the samples although the sampling process itself was planned in such a way that it was not gender sensitive. However, in general, the male participants outnumbered the female participants.

3.5 Data Collection Methods

Interview and focus group discussions were used as a method of data collection. The interview was face to face and was recorded by using a smartphone and notebook. In a focus group discussion, the researcher established specific topics to be discussed; 6-8 participants (teachers, students and parents) were selected.

Interview: Face-to-face and semi-structured interview was conducted for the instructors. This was appropriating so as to allow in-depth responses to explore the real situation in relation to the topic under study (Gillham, 2005). Upon the consent of the subjects, the interviews were recorded for further analysis.

Focus Group Discussion: Focus group discussion was used to solicit relevant information from the students in which groups of 6-8 participants were used accordingly. The researcher controlled the discussion by acting as a moderator to make sure that the participants

concentrate on the theme of the study. Care was taken so that the information arises out of the interaction between group members, rather than from interaction between the researcher and the group [11].

Data Analysis Plan: Data analysis is a process that involves coding, editing, classification and tabulation of data [15]. In this study, the data were analysed thematically. Thematic analysis is a method for analysing qualitative data that entails searching across a data set to identify, analyse, and report repeated patterns (Kiger &Varpio, 2020). Summary and direct quotations from participants were recorded. Thematic analysis tailored this study because it is used to analyse classifications and present themes (patterns) that relate to the questions. Bryman [16] provided the following steps to be considered;

Familiarisation with the Data: This phase involves reading and re-reading the data, to become deep and well familiar with its content. This stage helped the researcher to be familiar with the data which related to the questions.

Coding: This phase involves generating summarizing of the main themes of the data that might be relevant to answering the research question. It involves coding the entire information, and after that, collating all the codes and all relevant quotations, together for later stages of analysis.

Generating Initial themes: This phase involves examining the codes and organized data to identify significant broader patterns of meaning (potential themes). It then involves organizing data relevant to each candidate theme, so that researcher can work with the data and review the viability of each candidate theme. This stage assisted the researcher to generate the general themes and organizing relevant data to the related questions.

Reviewing themes: This phase involves checking the candidate themes against the questions, to determine that they tell a convincing story of the data, and one that answers the research question. In this phase, the researcher developed themes, which sometimes involves themes being split, combined, or rejected. This stage helped the researcher to determine the relevant or irrerevent themes as provided by participants through checking or reviewing them again.

Defining and Naming themes: This phase involves developing a detailed analysis of each theme, working out the scope and focus of each theme, determining the story of each. It also involves deciding on an informative name for each theme. This stage helped the researcher to analyse themes according to the scope of the content.

Writing up a Report: This final phase involves weaving together the analytic narrative and data extracts, and contextualizing the analysis in relation to existing literature.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This part presents findings and discussion in the light of related literature review. It was guided by the following research questions.

Research Question 1: What are the services performed by instructors in enhancing learning through ODL in Iringa Municipality?

This study also sought the information on the type of services provided by instructors in enhancing Open Distance learning. To get the relevant information, students were asked to list types of services provided to them. The findings of this study found that the provision of study materials such as modules and notes for further reading, face-to-face meetings, and guidance and counselling as moral services were the services provided by Open and Distance Learning in Iringa Municipal.

During the interview with students, one of a student said;

Guidance and counselling services and reading materials are provided for us. Also, various guidance on different aspects such as the selection of courses, studying skills, time management as well as encouraging students not to give up in our studies are among the services provided by ODL system.

In the same content, during Focus Group Discussion one of the students supported this by saying;

Other services that we receive include, online and mobile phones communication and consultations, social media such as WhatsApp groups interaction in which various information is communicated between instructors and students and between students themselves as well as

research supervisions. This usually helps us to be aware of what is going on.

Responding on the question of face-to-face meetings between students and instructors, most of the respondents agreed that the service was provided. They however highlighted that the frequency of meetings was very low that it was not enough for them to progress academically. Face-to face meetings was reported to be done in weekends only.

During FGD with the students, one of them quoted when she said;

We are happy that face to face meeting is among the service provided in our system. Provision of this service is very low hence, it offered at once per week. We meet our tutor face to face at the weekend which is not enough for use. Though this system helps us to improve academic progress.

The results above show that of all the services provided by the ODL instructors in the study area, provision of study materials was agreed by largest number of the respondents, this was followed by face-to-face meetings, and guidance and counselling services. Guidance and counselling services was explained to be on various aspects such as selection of courses, studying skills, time management as well as encouraging students not to give up on their studies. Other services that respondents agreed to receive included, online and mobile phones communication and consultations, social media such as *whatsApp* groups interaction in which information was communicated between instructors and students and between students themselves as well as research supervisions.

Regarding guidance and counselling services, Armstrong and Taylor [17] give the view that, the role of the tutor in distance learning is substantially different from a traditional teaching role, in that it is more of a "pastoral" and guidance role, rather than a direct teaching role. Indeed, an ODL instructors needs to guide and counsel students, among other things, on factors or obstacles which may affect a student's ability to study and work at the same time, social responsibilities as well as knowledge and advice on dealing with these. A tutor in ODL has to foster collaborative learning and support in small groups [18].

Furthermore, this study corresponds to the student attrition theory by Martinez [19]. This Theory has been considered as a relevant to this study. The theory has especially placed emphasis on the provision of adequate support services to open and distance learners. This theory explains attrition of non-traditional students including distance learners and describes that service provided to open and distance learners contribute in their academic progress during Open and Distance learning.

Research Question 2: What are the impacts of instructors in facilitating ODL learners toward academic performance?

Under this objective, the aim was to find out the contribution of instructors in facilitating ODL learners toward academic progress. Students' responses indicated that the guidance and counselling services provided to them helped them in various ways such as improving their studying skills and techniques.

This was supported by the learner of ODL from Institute of Adult Education when he said;

Instructors support and assist us to attain levels of understanding. They assist us, especially when we encounter difficulties in learning process, they encourage us, provide guidance and counselling as a way of making learning process in a smoothly way.

In the same context during focus group discussion, student from The Open University of Tanzania affirm that:

Indeed, instructors has a great impact in our study since, we are slow learners due to the different reason such as age, responsibilities as a civil servant as well as family care. Thus we face difficulties to handle academic matters and other activities without any assistance. Instructors take a crucial role to diminish our stress and temper which make as in positive line to learn.

The above explanations indicate that; it is impossible for students through ODL to achieve good academic progress without assistance. Instructors' support provides learners with more structure during the early stages of a new learning and gradually turns responsibility over to them as they internalize and master the skills needed to engage in more complex learning.

Moreover, it was reported that instructors develop students' knowledge and skills through face-to-face meetings and mobile phone interactions. The researcher found that instructors have been explained to assist students, for example, in clarifying difficult concepts, guiding students' group discussions and advising students on appropriate ways to tackle questions, particularly essay questions together with writing and presenting scholarly works. Hence, it increases knowledge and skills in their relevant courses. In relation to this, one of the students said the following during the focus group discussion sessions.

During face to face meetings, our instructors help to clarify difficult concepts that we encounter in the modules they give to us. They also advance our skills by advising us on the appropriate ways to tackle questions. They teach us how to write good essay which helps us very much in writing our assignment and examinations.

This implies that face-to-face meeting conducted by instructor is an essential component of ODL. Indeed, face-to-face interaction between instructors and learners promotes learning by joint problem solving and meaning negotiation between partners working with independence and equality on each other's ideas. They learn from each other gaining important knowledge and skills.

Regional Resident Tutor was also the opinion that assistant from the instructors help to increase the number of students who reached their goals. He had the following to say;

I advise students to join various courses in our institution and therefore increase the number of students. Our centre also allows students to make use our premises and infrastructure such as rooms, furniture and library for their personal and group studies.

With references to the above quotation, it implies that assistance from the instructors in different centres, such as guidance, counselling, and proper advising help a student to reach the goals. This makes them become ambassadors who use to invite others as results of increasing the number of students. This makes the improvement in the students' completion rates through the ODL towards the same direction.

The findings also associate with the study done by Daweti [18], points out that teachers in Open

and Distance Learning provide the basic understanding and knowledge in their course through the supplementary materials such as reference books and articles, as well as encouragements which used to broader understanding of the courses in addition to the information they got from their modules. The same, Mahai [20] added that since there are always limited face-to-face contacts between distance learners and their tutors, tutors should make sure that they provide learners with adequate study materials and guide them on how to effectively interact with them. This will have a positive implication in the depth and width of understanding of the materials [21,22].

Kamau [7] who found that, teachers are the one who can improve students' academic progress by giving different assistance such as guidance and counselling. It is very important to make students improve their academic performance. He found that guidance and counselling services helped them in the selection of the programs, being active and cooperative as well as being encouraged not to give up and withdraw thus completing their programs successfully. Also, Pityana [10] found that major benefits of instructors in ODL are related to its flexibility, accessibility, affordability and life-based education opportunities. ODL enables an expansion of tertiary [23,24].

According to Kamau [7] this is very important to make students improve their academic performance. They also mentioned that guidance and counselling services helped them in the selection of the programs, time management, being active and cooperative as well as being encouraged not to give up and withdraw thus completing their programs successfully. According responses from the director of one of the centres, as the result of counselling students on consistent continuation with programs, there had been improvement in the students' completion rates through the ODL. Towards the same direction, Armstrong and Hedge (1996) emphasizes that as a counsellor, the tutor should be flexible, trustworthy, approachable and well organized. A tutor should help learners with social challenges, empathize with learners' personal issues that may affect learning and be a friend to the learners providing them with the necessary information and giving them moral support [25]. An ODL instructor should also advice learners on course choices for continuing or completing a study program and specific qualifications.

5. CONCLUSIONS

This section provides the conclusion of the study basing on the research question as presented earlier in the part of the findings and discussion that were anchored to examine services performed by instructors in enhancing learning through ODL in Iringa Municipality, and to find out the impact of instructors in facilitating ODL learners toward academic performance. Each of the objectives is presented individually.

5.1 Services Provided by Instructors in Enhancing Open and Distance Learning

With regard to the first objective; the findings of the current study found a variety of services provided by Instructors in Enhancing Open and Distance learning. The services include among others; provision of study materials such as modules and notes for further reading, face-to-face meetings, and guidance and counselling services were the services provided by ODL. It is concluded that the frequency of face-to face meeting should be increased. Moreover, other services that were provided and mentioned by the respondents included: provision and marking of assignment, provision of past examinations and test papers as well as research supervision. Research supervision was mentioned by the Open University instructors which were done particularly to masters and some undergraduate students. Students also explained that they were allowed to use the centres' premises and infrastructure such as classes and furniture for face-to-face meetings, discussions and self-studies.

5.2 Instructors' Impact in Facilitating Open and Distance Learning

The second objective was to find out how the services provided by ODL instructors enhanced ODL and students' academic progress. Basing on the findings of the study; it was revealed that, the guidance and counselling services provided to them helped them in various ways such as improving their studying skills and techniques something which also revealed that, it is impossible for students through ODL to achieve good performance without assistance in guidance and counselling services. It is concluded that ODL instructors should increase and maintain the interaction with learners to promotes learning by joint problem solving and meaning negotiation between partners working

with independence and equality on each other's ideas as they learn from each other gaining important knowledge and skills. Basically, instructors' assistance to students in different ODL centres, such as guidance, counselling, and proper advising help a student to reach the goals and making them able to advocate their colleagues to join for the programme hence afterwards increasing the number of students and promotes students' completion rates as the desire of many educational institutions.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

Open and Distance Learning Instructors should create friendly relationship, trustworthy, approachable and well-organized way of delivering materials to the learners. Also, the government through heads of schools should develop good and friendly support including allowing the workers for further studies as well as giving them moral and material support which will make them mentally fit during their studies.

ETHICAL APPROVAL AND CONSENT

Ethical issues are very important for the researcher to observe in the whole process of any research, especially those involving human beings (Creswell, 2014). The researcher has to ensure that research is going to be conducted ethically. The research participants were treated following standards and norms which confirm their humanity (Oliver, 2003). Leedy and Ormrod (2001) categorized ethical issues in research into; informed consent, the right to privacy of professional colleagues, and protection from harm. In this study, the researcher adhered to all ethical issues relating to human rights as well as the national rules and regulations.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Author has declared that no competing interests exist.

REFERENCES

1. Saint W. Tertiary distance education and technology in Sub-Saharan Africa. Washington DC: The World Bank: ADEA Working Group on Higher Education; 1999.
2. Rumble G. The globalization of open and flexible learning: Considerations for planners and managers'. Online Journal of Distance Learning Administration. 2000; 3(3):1-15.
3. Zirnkle C. Access barriers in distance education. The journal of Contemporary Education. 2001;72(2):39-42.
4. Aleazi O. Open University as a Model of Excellence (Online); 2013. Available:fromhttp://people.usi.edu/schri/onlinelearning/2011/10/nationalopenuniversityof Nigeria as html
5. Fozdar B, Kumar SA, Kannan S. A Survey of study on the reasons responsible for student dropout from the Bachelor of Science programme. Indira Gandhi National Open University: IGNOU Press; 2006.
6. De Jager K. Library use and academic achievement. South African Journal of Library and Information Science. 2015; 65(1):26-30.
7. Kamau J. Retraining primary school teachers against diminishing resources: Is distance education the answer? Conference paper, UNESCO, second regional seminar for Africa, Accra Ghana; UNESCO; 2017.
8. Idrus RM, Lateh H. Online Distance Education at the University Sains Malaysia: Preliminary Perceptions, International Council for Education Media. 2000;197-201.
9. Dzakiria H. The Role of Learning Support in Open & Distance Learning: Learners experiences and perspectives. Turkish Online Journal of Distance Education. 2005;6(2):1302-6488.
10. Pityana BN. Open distance learning in Africa: Access, quality and success. South Africa: UNISA; 2004.
11. Kombo KD, Trompo ALD. Proposal and Thesis Writing; an Introduction. Nairobi: Pauline's Publications Africa; 2006.
12. Creswell JW. A concise introduction to mixed methods research. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage; 2014.
13. Bulayi M. Research Proposal and Report Writing Guidelines. Tanzania: University of Iringa; 2018.
14. Kruger RA, Casey MA. Focus Groups: A practical guide for Applied Research, 3rd ed. London: SAGE; 2000.
15. Kothari CR. Research methodology and techniques, New Delhi: New Age International (P) Ltd, Publishers; 2008.
16. Bryman A. Social Research Methods (4thed). United States: Oxford University Press Inc; 2012.
17. Armstrong M, Taylor S. Handbook of Human resource management practice.

Hong Kong: Ashford Colour Press Ltd; 2014.

18. Daweti AM. Tutoring in open and distance learning. British: Commonwealth of Learning, Vancouver; 2015.

19. Martinez M. High Attrition rates in e-learning: Challengers, Predictors and Solutions. The E-learning Developers Journal; 2013.
Available:http://www.elearningguild.com/pd f/2/071511MGT-L.pdf

20. Mahai L. Provision of institutional support services to students. A case study of Mwanza and Kagera Regional centres of the Open University of Tanzania. Unpublished M.A dissertation of the University of Dar es Salaam; 2015.

21. Howell SL, Williams PB, Lindsay NK. Thirty-two trends affecting distance education: An informed foundation for strategic planning. Online Journal of Distance Learning Administration. 2003; VI(III).
Available:http://www.itu.int/ITU-D/ict/statistics/ict/index.html

22. Leedy PD, Ormrod JE. Practical Research: Planning and Design. New Jersey: Pearson Prentice Hall; 2001.

23. Mwita SM. Human Skills by Heads of Secondary Schools towards Effective School Management in Makambako Town, Tanzania. East African Journal of Education and Social Sciences. 2021; 2(4):31-37.

24. Oliver p. The students Guide to Research Ethics, Maidenhead: Open University Press; 2003.

25. Wang AY, Newton MH. Online lectures: Benefits for virtual classroom. The Journal. 2001;29(1):17-24.
Available:http://portal.unesco.org/educatio n/en/ev.php html
Retrieved on 4/10/2011.