FACTORS AFFECTING STUDENTS' PERFORMANCE IN OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING: A CASE STUDY OF KINONDONI REGIONAL CENTRE

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A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS OF DEGREE OF MASTERS OF DISTANCE EDUCATION OF THE OPEN UNIVERSITY OF TANZANIA

2015

CERTIFICATION

The undersigned certifies that she has read and hereby recommends for acceptance by the Open University of Tanzania a dissertation titled: **"Factors Affecting Students' Performance in Open and Distance Learning: A Case Study of Kinondoni Regional Centre",** in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Distance Education of the Open University of Tanzania**.**

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Date

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DECLARATION

I, **Said Abdallah Lukwekwe**, do hereby declare that this dissertation is my own original work and that it has not been presented by any person and it will not be presented to any other University for a similar or any other degree award.

……………………………………………….
Signature

……………………………………………….
Date

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my beloved deceased child and parents namely: Harith Said Lukwekwe, Abdallah Salim Lukwekwe and Halima Twalib Cheleuka respectively. May the Almighty God rest their souls in the eternal peace, Amin.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ABSTRACT

This study critically examines the factors that affect students' performance in open and distance learning at the Open University of Tanzania- a case study of Kinondoni regional centre. The objectives of the study were; to establish the relationship between support service and academic performance of undergraduate students at OUT, to establish the relationship between social presence and academic performance of undergraduate students at OUT and to establish the relationship between gender and academic performance of undergraduate students at OUT. The study used questionnaires and interview guide to get the information from 80 students and 30 academic staff. Open University of Tanzania. The key findings were that most students had a lot of responsibilities and spent less time in studying, coupled with inadequate guidance in the distance mode of education. The study recommended that; educational institutions must communicate to course developers and program leaders what are acceptable rates of return on distance learning programs. While great instructors are often not focused on the bottom line of whether a course pays for itself, the reality is that courses should be self-sufficient and reap a return for the institution's investment unless there is a compelling reason to do otherwise.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

GPA	Grade Percentage Average
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
ODL	Open and Distance Learning
OUT	The Open University of Tanzania
PISA	Programme for International Students Assessment
SADC	Southern Africa Development Cooperation
SPET	SADC Protocol of Education and Training
TIMSS	Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study
UK	The United Kingdom
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1   Introduction

Open and distance education in Tanzania and in other sub-Saharan Africa countries is considered important avenue for provision of education and to remove barriers for many and increase access to education to as many people as possible. (Malaysian Qualification Agency, 2011). For example, many people including those living at remote areas, those who could not be allowed to leave their home or workplace to study or those whom otherwise could not have such access depend on open and distance education. The importance of open and distance education as an opening for more people to access education is also evident in the SADC Protocol of Education and Training (SPET) report. In the report, interests in raising demand for higher education through open and distance education to accommodate all those who need education are highlighted. According to Angara et al., (2010), open learning can remove all unnecessary barriers to learning, while aiming to provide students with a reasonable chance of success in an education and training system centered on their specific needs and located in multiple arenas of learning.

Distance education (sometimes referred to as "distributed learning" or "distance learning"), meanwhile, is any educational process in which all or most of the teaching is conducted by someone geographically removed from the learner, with all or most of the communication between teachers and learners being conducted through electronic or print mediums (UNESCO, 2006). In assessing the factors that affect students' performance in any educational system, two aspects are normally

considered. These are individual factors and institutional factors. Individual factors are those related to the learner such as interest, attitude, ability, social economic status, gender and the like. Those from the institution include availability of the materials, behaviour and competence of the instructor.

In Europe for example, Smith and Naylor (1993) examined determinants of degree performance of students leaving UK universities and found that degree performance is influenced significantly by personal characteristics. They also found that performance of female students is better than the performance of male students in some subjects such as Biological Science and Humanities and worse in Mathematics and Computing. Smith and Naylor observed that both men and women, married individuals do better than non-married students.

Cheesman et al., (2006) found that the performance of mature students is better than the performance of younger students. Erdem et al., (2007) concluded that the probability of getting a higher cumulative GPA was higher than the students who graduate from the standard high schools in Turkey. Naher et al., (2008) found that there is a direct link between attendance and marks awarded in Ireland.

In North America, Keil and Partell (1997) found that there is a strong negative relationship between class size and the likelihood of receiving high course. As class size increases, the probability of receiving an A is lowered. Durr (1999) found that the ability of students to perform well in principles of macroeconomics courses can be predicted to some degree by applying the student's scores on the first quiz, the percentage change from the first quiz to the fourth quiz, and where the student sits in

the classroom. Durr (1999) observed that the study skills of seniors are likely to be better honed through practice than freshmen have attained. Moreover, in Australia, Applegate and Daly (2006) examined the impact of paid employment on the GPA and found that there is no large negative effect of paid employment on average grades. They observed that doing some paid employment actually improves grades and students are able to manage their time to ensure there is no large negative effect of paid employment on grades. However, they found there is a positive correlation with the percentage of classes missed and a perception of a more negative effect of employment on grades.

In Asia, Kiamanesh (2004) provided evidence that Mathematics self-concept, home background, and teaching play significant role in determining the variance in mathematics achievement. Likewise Suryadarmaet al. (2004) found that student performance is strongly influenced by the education level of parents in Indonesia. Hijaz and Naqvi (2006) found there is a positive relationship between the level of mother education and students performance in Pakistan.

Hedjazi and Omidi (2008) found that female students' academic success was more pronounced than males in Iran. Ali et al., (2009) found positive relationship between students' performance and student's demographic, active learning, students' attendance and involvement in extracurricular activities in Malaysia. In Palestine, Naser and Peel (1998) found that student perceptions of factors associated with class size, the attributes of the lecturer, student effort and the complexity of the course are associated with student performance in first level principles of accounting course. In Saudi Arabia, Atieh (1997) found that the difficulty in exams and the complexity on

information processing in teaching accounting principles play significant role in explaining the low performance in principles of accounting. Atieh provided evidence that the majority of the students believe that the obstacles associated with the course refers to the lengthy material covered during the semester and the poor advices.

In Kuwait, Torki (1988) found that there were no differences between male and female academic performance in neutral condition. However, Al-Otaibi (1996) found that female students are better than male students in many academic subjects. Al-Otaibi observed that the performance of females did not change by academic levels while the performance of males did change in senior year than their peers in junior year. Al-Khader (1996) found that there is a significant correlation between the high school ratio and GPA. He also found that the GPA of the female students was higher than the male students, and the GPA for science division students was significantly higher than those in arts division.

As it can be seen from the above literature, these studies were done in other countries outside Africa and have focused on students' performance in traditional universities. Scholars in distance learning have also tried to determine the factors that impede learning in distance education, looking at students' support services (Reuben, 2010), challenges of teaching and learning in ODL (Muganda and Kabate, 2012); challenges of mixed mode of distance learning delivery (Muganda, Mwanongwa, and Kapalanaka, 2012); language as a problem in distance education (Msoka and Vuzo, 2012) and challenges that students face at the Open University of Tanzania (OUT) (Bitegeko and Swai, 2012). All these studies focus on certain challenges in distance education provisioning, but none has dwelled on how these challenges affect learners

performance. A study by Bitegeko and Swai (2012) for example, established challenges that OUT students were facing in the course of their learning. However, they did not care to assess how these challenges affect the students' performance. This study is set to fill this gap in the literature.

1.2   Statement of the Problem

The main motive behind taking this study is a down fall of educational standard in recent years in Tanzania and this is witnessed by poor performance in national examinations for primary and Secondary schools respectively, since 2005 – (Source: Haki Elimu Report, 2012). Fall in educational standard in Tanzania in one way or another has contributed to low performance of students at the OUT due to poor background of educational status in primary and secondary level respectively.

Scholars in distance learning have also learning in distance education looking at students support services (Reuben, 2010), challenges of teaching and learning in ODL (Muganda and Kabate, 2012), challenges of mixed mode of distance learning delivery (Muganda, Mwanongwa, and Kapalanaka, 2012), language as a problem in distance education (Msoka and Vuzo, 2012) and challenges that students face at the OUT (Bitegeko and Swai, 2012).

All these studies focus an certain challenges in distance education provisioning, but none has dwelled on how these challenges affect learners performance. This study is set to fill this gap in the literature. If these factors affecting students' performance will not be well addressed, educational standard in the country will still be poor and will have the following negative impact. Firstly, the country will continue to be poor

because education is the source of development in any country. Without education, different natural resources of the country will not be fully extracted due to poor proficiency hence fall of national economy. Secondly the youth will not be able to combat with their environment due to lack of adequate education. Thirdly, this is a group that will not only find it very difficult to secure employment but will also be unemployable due to lack of basic numeracy and literacy skills. Lastly, the consequences of these failures are immersed and far reaching as the youth will not be able to compete with millennium challenges, that is global economy.

1.3 General Objective

The objective of this study is to assess factors affecting students' performance in open and distance learning taking Kinondoni regional center of the OUT as a case.

1.4 Specific Objectives

The study focused on the following three research objectives.

(i) To assess the effectiveness of students' support service on students' academic performance at OUT.

(ii) To determine the relationship between social presence and academic performance of undergraduate students at OUT.

(iii) To determine the relationship between gender and academic performance of undergraduate students at OUT.

1.5 Research Questions

(i) How effective are the students' support services on students' academic performance at OUT?

(ii)   What is the relationship between social presence and academic performance of undergraduate students at OUT?

(iii)   Is there any relationship between gender and academic performance of undergraduate student at OUT?

1.6   The Scope of the Study

The delimitation of this research was to provide a clear picture that portrays factors affecting students' performance in open and distance learning in Tanzania. Furthermore, the study shall also presents suggestions that shall be used to improve students' performance in open and distance learning in Tanzania. The study was carried out in Dar es Salaam (Kinondoni regional center of the OUT). The location was selected due to presence of the headquarter and richness in terms of information needed for this research as well as having good number of university staff and students who are enrolled in open and distance learning who are the target of this study.

1.7   Significance of the Study

One of the agenda of the government of Tanzania has been to improve the access and quality of education at all levels. It is with focus that the government established and sustainably improves the open university of Tanzania as the major institution that offers open ODL services to various levels. The commitment of the government can also be seen in various policy and strategic documents. However, the performance of students who have been enrolled in open and distance learning are affected with a number of factors which have not well researched and presented though it still affect

students' performance.   Taking Tanzania Kinondoni regional center as a case, this study aims at portraying factors that affect students' performance in open and distance learning and hence have the following significance:

(i)   Provide necessary information to stakeholders of open and distance learning including factors that drawback students' performance in open and distance learning in Tanzania for planning

(ii)   The study came up with proposed empirical measures that need to be taken to improve students' performance in open and distance learning in Tanzania

1.8   Limitation of the Study

The major limitation of this research is that, its findings cannot be directly used to generalize the situation in other institutions that offers open and distance learning outside Tanzania. This is due to the variations in learning environment, policy issues, learning culture and other factors that differ from the environment in which this study is to be carried out.

Some of the institutions might have more strong or weak supportive environment over the other. On the other hand, policy issues and learning culture might be more or less supportive to open and distance learning. As the three factors (variations of policies, learning environment and learning culture) are out of the scope of this study, the application of the findings cannot be applied for other institutions with different situations. Thus the findings can be used to generalize the situations only for OUT and other similar institutions keeping other factors constant.

1.9   Chapter Summary

This chapter discussed the background information to the study, defined the problem, objectives of the study, significance of the study and the research questions that were answered by this study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1   Introduction

The literature review covers definition of terms, the theoretical and empirical literature of this study. The overview of the OUT, Review of the Open University Act, Review of Tanzania Education Regulatory Frameworks, Review of the Tanzania Education and Vocational Training Policy, Review of the Tanzania Education and Vocational Training Laws, Review of the Tanzania Education Strategic Plan and Educational Reforms in Tanzania are some of the issues that have been examined. On the other hand, the empirical literature presents the overview of various researches on the subject under study in various institutions. It is from the Empirical Literature Review that the research gap was identified.

2.2   Definition of Terms

2.2.1   Open Learning

Open learning is an approach that provides learning in a flexible manner, organized around the geographical, social and time constraints of the learner rather than the institution (Bates, 1995). Open learning has been described as a goal or educational policy, the provision of learning, in a flexible manner, built around the geographical, social and time constraints of individual learners, rather than those of educational institutions (Siddiqui, 2004).

2.2.2   Open and Distance Learning (ODL)

Unesco (2002) defines ODL a approaches that focus on opening access to education and training provision, freeing learners from constraints of time and place and

offering flexible learning opportunities to individual and groups of learners. However, Unisa defines ODL as a multidimensional concept aimed at bridging the time, geographical, economic, social, educational and communicative distance between student and institution, student and academics, student and courseware and student and peers. ODL focuses on removing barriers to access learning provision, student centeredness, supporting students and constructing learning programmes with the expectation that student can succeed.

The Commonwealth of learning (COL) (2000) maintains that there is no one definition of ODL. Rather there are many approaches of defining the term. Most definitions, however, pay attentions to the following characteristics: a way of providing learning opportunities characterized by the separation of teacher and the learner in time or place, or both time and place, and learning that is certified in some way by an institution or agency. The use of variety of media is employed, including print and electronic two-way communications that allow learners and tutors to interact, the possibility of occasional face – to - face meeting and a separated division of labour in the production and delivery of course. Moon, Leach and Stevens (2005) define ODL as the open learning approach, which when combined with distance education methodologies, is often referred to collectively as Open and Distance Learning (ODL).

2.3   Theoretical Literature Review

The literature surrounding open and distance education consistently bring in self esteem as important individual factor for success in open and distance education. According to Rosenberg and Simmons (1975) self-esteem is an individual's overall

attitude, either positive or negative towards himself or herself. Harmon-Jones et al. (1997) define self-esteem as somebody's beliefs concerning how well they live up to the value standards set by the society which they live, while according to Branden, (2001) self-esteem refers to a perspective compromising an individual's value while postulating his or her self-evaluation and self-description in a variety of fields.

Moreover, Baumeister et al. (2003) considered successful performance in a learning task as an essential component to achieve a considerable rise in one's self-esteem. Byrne (1984) and Marsch (1990) concluded that self-esteem is tightly linked with academic performance while the results of the research of Lane et al. (2004) on the relationship between self-esteem, self-effectiveness and academic performance revealed significant correlations between self-esteem and academic performance. In addition, self-esteem was considered by Peixoto and Almeida (2010) as a strong outcome predictor regarding the academic performance. Moreover, self-esteem was devised as a significant factor as it is tightly linked to psychological well-being (Neff, 2011). Self- esteem is also related to academic drop out (Finn, 1989; Weinner, 2000). Griffiths, Sharkey and Furlong (2009) have considered self-esteem as a fundamental factor which might affect student engagement. Self-esteem has been associated with the satisfaction that learners get from the course, too. Individuals with high levels of self-esteem have been considered to be more satisfied with the course that they attended as well as with their personal life in general.

2.4   Self-esteem and Loneliness in Distance Learning

Self-esteem and loneliness motivate similar hypotheses related to the field of distance education, which should be examined. Workman and Stenard (1996)

underlined the important role of self-esteem in distance learning. They claimed that rising students' levels of self-esteem is very important in distance learning courses and they related this rise with reduction of the possibility of academic drop out. Moreover, according to von Prummer (1990) learners, mainly female ones choose to enroll in a distance learning course while Kurtz et al. (2009) reported that there is a positive correlation between self-esteem and students' attitude toward distance learning. It should be noted that Pullmann and Allik (2008) suggested that low self-esteem can be triggered by loneliness and a signal of poor academic performance.

Dillon, Gunawardena and Parker (1992) reported that interpersonal communication is a very important factor by students as it reduces the feeling of loneliness. Angelaki and Mavroidis (2013) concluded that both tutor-student and student-student communication play an important role in alleviating the intensity of negative emotions such as loneliness and solitude experienced by HOU students. Moreover, according to Tinto (1993) loneliness in distance learning is related to academic drop out. He reported that when students experience loneliness and they do not feel part of the learning community, it is highly likely that they will drop out. He also concluded that the sense of belonging to a group makes them feel engaged toward the distance learning provider. However, the study of Kurtz et al. (2009) suggested that there is no correlation between loneliness and students' attitude towards e-learning.

2.5   Loneliness

Loneliness is another concept that keep coming up in the literature of open and distance learning. In this context, loneliness to learners is theorized as an issue that crops up due to physical and social distance is normal. According to Weiss (1973),

there are two types of loneliness; a) social loneliness, that is defined as the lack of social relationships connecting a learner with other learners in the learning institution, and b) emotional loneliness, defined as lack of specific interpersonal relationships. Furthermore social solitude is a tool for measuring human social interaction which represents the presence or absence of interpersonal relationships, the latter called loneliness.

The need of belonging is listed high in the rank in Maslow (1971) Hierarchy of Needs. Tajfel and Turner (1986) claimed that being a part of a group within which somebody shares their interests and goals will probably boost their self-esteem, a fact that is considered to be significant for one's well-being according to Branden (1969). Loneliness has been examined in the framework of education and learning. School performance is inversely related to the feeling of loneliness and social dissatisfaction at school (Valas, 1999). Loneliness was also found to be associated with social interactions and self-esteem according to Cheng and Furnham (2002).

2.6   Social Presence and Academic Performance

Social presence has been considered as a fundamental element of raising self esteem and lower loneliness in distance learning. Social presence has been defined by Short et al. (1976) as "the degree of salience of the other person in the interaction and the consequent salience of the interpersonal relationships". In other words this can be interpreted as the extent to which a person is perceived as "real" and able to mediate communication that has, otherwise been created by distance (Richardson & Swan, 2003). More recently, Garrison et al. (2000)) defined social presence as "the ability of participants in a community of inquiry to project their personal characteristics into

the community thereby presenting themselves as real people". Regarding the latter definition, Rourke and Kanuka (2009) underlined that operationally, it is a devise to ensure frequency of emotional stability, cohesiveness and open communicative action, while Hratsinski (2009), So and Brush (2008) and Richardson and Swan, (2003) highlighted the important effect of social presence on the learning process as it enhances students' performance as well as satisfaction with the course and the instructor. Activities boosting perception of social presence have also been found to be positively related to learning and students' satisfaction with the course (Garrison et al. 2000; Whiteman, 2002; Shin, 2003; Garrison & Arbaugh, 2007).

Gunawardena and Zittle (1997), having examined social presence as a predictor of students' satisfaction in teleconference learning environments, concluded that social presence is a critical predictor of students' satisfaction in online learning environments. Gunawardena et al. (2001) reported that social presence facilitates the development of confidence and self-revelation in an online learning environment, while Garrison (2011) considers it as a substantial construct in a collaborative constructive approach of learning. Finally, in relation to the interconnection of technological and social parameters in distance learning, Bayne (2014) notes that "casting the technological and the social as isolated from each other in the context of digital (and post-digital) education merely robs the field of its complexity and richness.

2.7 Support Service and Academic Performance at ODL

Support services to distance learners has been considered as a single most effective strategy to remove isolation, raise self esteem and create instructor presence in the

lives of the learners. Students support was described by Vygotsky (1978) as potential for raising zone of proximal development, where a learner is supported to reach his or her maximum learning potential.

Learner support assists learners to attain levels of understanding impossible for them to achieve without assistance. Learner support provide learners with more structure during the early stages of a new learning and gradually turn responsibility over to them as they internalize and master the skills needed to engage in more complex learning.

De Jager (2015) studied the impact of library service on students' academic performance at the University of Cape Town, South Africa. She used a report generated from the library circulation system that indicated how many items from the open shelves and from the reserve collection were borrowed by the identified students during the academic year. Jager found that there was not any relationship between books borrowing and academic performance.

From this study, it became 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 failed in the final examinations. This implies that, student service through library borrowing may not contribute much in academic performance. Thus, to perform, there are other issues that can contribute to academic performance. However, this study is useful in the sense that library and library use is among the most focused students support services at the open and distance learning institutions.

2.8   Social Economic Status and Academic Performance

In most of the studies done on students academic performance social economic status normally is associated to it. Hansen and Mastekaasa (2006) for example argue that families with high cultural are also those who are closest to the academic culture, and thus, are more inclined to send and support their children in school. Supported children have a more chance to succeed in studies than unsupported children (see for example Eamon 2005; Jeynes, 2002). Earlier study by Graetz (1995) shows that social economic background remains one of the major sources of educational inequality and adds that one's educational success depends very strongly on the social economic status of one's parents.

Considine and Zappala (2002) looked into the influence of social and economic disadvantage in the academic performance of school students in Australia. They found that families where the parents are advantaged socially, educationally and economically foster a higher level of achievement in their children. They also found that these parents provide higher levels of psychological support for their children through environments that encourage the development of skills necessary for success at school.

Morakinyo (2003) carried out a study to find the factors on high academic performance in senior secondary schools in Kenya. He found that passing level of academic achievement is attributable to teachers' use of verbal reinforcement strategy, he also found that attitude of teachers towards their jobs was reflected in their good attendance to lessons, early arrival at school and savory comments about students' performance.

Jencks and Barbara (1979) traced progress in school through two academic years and found family factors and financial background have high effects on what children learn in schools in Scotland. High income families met cost sharing required in secondary schools, this enable the students to participate well in various academic activities. As a result students from wealthier families continued to make intellectual gains, whereas low socio-economic status students lost ground.

Cookson (2000) conducted a research on the family factors contributing to academic performance in Uganda. He used qualitative approach so as to explain the matter. He found that teachers worked as a team as well as the students attended the classes on time. He further recommended that early fees payment and parents' involvement in school sustained an acceptable performance to students.

Family income, according to Escarce (2003) has a profound influence on the educational opportunities available to adolescents and on their chances of educational success. Escarce (2003) adds that due to residential stratification and segregation, low-income students usually attend schools with lower funding levels, have reduced achievement motivation and much higher risk of educational failure. When compared with their more affluent counterparts, low-income adolescents receive lower grades, earn lower scores on standardized test and are much more likely to drop out of school.

King & Bellow (2009) used parents' occupation as a proxy for income to examine the relationship between income and achievement and found that children of farmers had fewer years of schooling than children of parents with white-collar jobs. They

also determined that the schooling levels of both parents had a positive and statistically significant effect on the educational attainment of Peruvian children. They argue that how much education a child's parents have is probably the most important factor in determining the child's educational opportunities. They observe that the higher the attainment for parents, then the greater their aspirations for children.

2.9   Gender and Academic performance

Linver (2002) studied the influence of gender on academic achievement focusing on the average math grade trajectories look like, from 7th to 12th grade, the different predictors for young women and young men, for those in high versus low math tracked classes. She found that overall, young women had slightly higher grades than young men. For both young men and women math grades start out fairly high (around a B+ or B), and then decline throughout high school, ending up at about a B- or C+. She suggested that in order to encourage more women into math, science, and information technology fields, interventions need to be designed to focus not on the academic achievement but in how to make math- and science-related occupations more interesting for young, high achieving women. She also suggested that this type of intervention should start early in the academic careers.

Arulampalam et al., (2003) examined the probability that an individual medical student will drop out of medical school during their first year of study in UK and found that male students are about 8 percent more likely to drop out than female students. Díaz (2003) observed that older students show the highest failure index and women perform better than men in Spain.

Cheesman et al., (2006) found that the performance of mature students is better than the performance of younger students. They also found that students who receive for financial assistance outperform others who do not receive financial assistance in the Anglophone Caribbean region. Erdem et al., (2007) concluded that the probability of getting a higher cumulative GPA for students who have graduated from science high schools is higher than the students who graduate from the standard high schools in Turkey. Psalidaset al., (2008) used semi-structured interviews to examine the performance of students toward the Programme for International Students Assessment (PISA) in Greece and found that the performance of students in the PISA tend to be independent of the student's gender.

Suryadarma et al. (2004) found that student performance is strongly influenced by the education level of *parents in* Indonesia. Hijaz and Naqvi (2006) found there is a positive relationship between the level of mother education and students performance in Pakistan. Wong and Lai (2006) observed that female student-teachers taught better than male student-teachers and female student-teachers' instructional strategies were more creative and well designed than male student-teachers in Hong Kong.

Abdullah (2005) used a sample of 126 male and 111 female students to examine the main determinants of student performance in the Principles of Financial Management course. He found that gender has a significant impact on performance in financia*l* management which indicates the difference in performance between male and female students. He found the performance of the male student depends upon the accounting courses while the female student depends upon economic courses. Alnaeem (2010) added that internal environment plays significant role in the student's performance.

Al-Twaijry (2010) observed that the load of weekly registered hours has no negative impact on the student performance.

In Kuwait, Torki (1988) examined the gender on student's performance in Kuwait and found that there were no differences between male and female in neutral condition. Al-Otaibi (1996) investigated the impact of gender on student's performance and found that female students are better than male students. Al-Otaibi observed that the performance of females did not change by academic levels while the performance of males did change in senior year than their peers in junior year. Al-Khader (1996) found that there is a significant correlation between the high school ratio and GPA. He also found that the GPA of the female students was higher than the male students, and the GPA for science division students was significantly higher than those in arts division.

Al-Rashed, (2001) used 183 students as a sample of accounting students' to examine the factors associated with performance of the accounting majors graduated from Kuwait University. He provided evidence that GPA earned by accounting majors at the end of second year is the single most important variable associated with their overall performance. Al-Rashed (2001) concluded that GPA and Grade, earned in the second introductory accounting course in admitting students into accounting program, to be more useful than the current reliance on secondary school scores as the main admission criterion.

2.10   The Conceptual Framework

According to Rossenberg and Simmons (1975), self –esteem is an individual's overall attitude either positive or negative, towards himself or herself. Harmon-

Jones et al. (1997) define self-esteem as somebody's beliefs concerning how well they live up to the standards set by the society which they live, while according to Branden (2001) self –esteem refers to perspective compromising an individual's value while postulating his or her self-evaluation and self-description in a variety of fields. Moreover, Baumeister et al. (2003) considered successful performance in a learning task as an essential components achieve a considerable rise in one's self-esteem. Bryne (1984) and Marsch (1990) concluded that self-esteem is tightly linked to academic performance while the results of research of Lane et al. (2004) revealed the correlation between self-esteem and academic performance.

According to Peixoto and Almeida (2010) self-esteem is a strong outcome predictor regarding the academic performance. Self-esteem was devised as significant factor as it is tightly linked to psychological well-being (Neff, 2011). Griffiths, Sharkey and Furlong (2009) have considered self-esteem as a fundamental factor which might affect students' engagement. Self-esteem has been associated with the satisfaction that learners get from the course, individuals with high level of self-esteem have been considered to be more satisfied with the course that they attended as well as their personal life in general.

Social Presence has been considered as fundamental element of distance learning and has been defined by Short et al.(1976) as "the degree of salience of the other person in the interaction and the consequent salience of interpersonal relationship". Richardson and Swan (2003) highlighted the important effect of social presence on the learning process as it enhances students' performances as well as satisfaction with the course and the instructor.

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Demographic differences such that gender, age and marital Status has been used to determine academic performance. Smith and Naylor (1993) examined determinants of degree of performance of students leaving UK universities and found that it is influenced significantly by personal characteristics. They also found that performance of female students is better than the performance of male students in some subjects such as Biological Science and Humanities and worse in Mathematics and Computing. They observed that both men and women, married individuals do better than non-married students, and also they found that performance of mature students is better than younger students.

On the basis of literature review and theoretical background, the following conceptual framework is proposed to show self-esteem, social presence and demographic differences are variables affecting academic performances in ODL contexts.
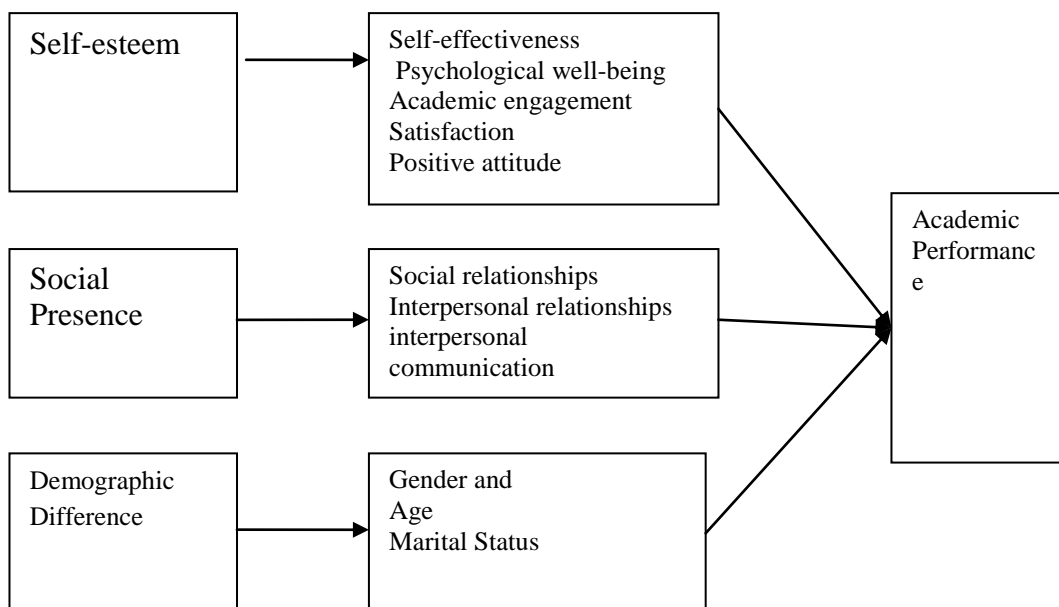
Figure 2.1: Conceptual Frameworks

Source: Modified from Vakoufari et al. (2014)

2.11   Conclusion and the Gap

As it can be seen from the literature review, these empirical studies have focused on students' performance in traditional universities. Since there are educational and cultural differences between traditional universities and open learning university, Arab Open University- Kuwait, in our case, and since such differences may play a role in shaping the factors that affect performance, it is important to examine those relevant factors to Open University of Tanzania.

2.12   Chapter Summary

The literature above has shown that self-esteem, loneliness and social presence are possible factors that affect students' performance in ODL. From the literature reviewed it is evident that though various studies have been conducted on the factors affecting students' performance in OD, it is important to examine those factors to OUT.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1   Introduction

Research methodology is the way through which the research problem can be solved (Kothari, 2005). This chapter therefore, provides the framework within which this study on factors affecting students' performance in open distance learning was carried out.

3.2   Research Design

Kothari (2005) defines research design as the conceptual structure within which the research is conducted. Research design allows the researcher to draw conclusions about relations about variables. Thus a research design can be viewed as initial decisions, which involves the selection of different research approaches, procedures and methods. This study adopted a descriptive survey design, which suite the objectives, conceptual framework and research questions intended to be covered. This design was selected in order to investigate the factors which affect the students' performance in ODL.

3.3   Study Area

This research was carried at the OUT. The OUT conducts its operations through 29 Regional centers, 8 Coodinating Centres and 69 Study centers that have spread all over the country. Also OUT has two coordination centres located in Kenya. However, the researcher has chosen to conduct this research at Kinondoni study

center in Dar es Salaam, expecting that the findings may represents other regions too with slightly difference. Also this study area has been selected due to a number of factors which includes the possibility of accessing a good number of students, time and budgetary constraints.

3.4 Population

The population in this study involves all academic staff and undergraduate students at OUT Kinondoni center. OUT has a total number of 348 academic staff of whom 223 are males and 125 re females. Undergraduate students at OUT counts to 4724 of which 771 are enrolled in faculty of education.

3.5 Sample Size

The sample population for this study was 110 respondents. According to Kothari (1985), when field studies are undertaken in practical life, the consideration of time and costs leads to the selection of few respondents and items to be included in the sample.

3.6 Sampling Techniques

Purposive and random sampling techniques were used in this study. Academic Staff were purposively selected according to the criteria that they are in faculty of education and being involved in ODL. The simple random sampling (probability sampling) technique was used to select the sample population among students. Using available list of all students studying at the OUT Kinondoni center, a sample of 80 students mainly from faculty of education was drawn.

3.7 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Table 3.1: Marital Status (Staffs& Students)

Status	Staff	Students	Total	Percentage (%)
Married	16	34	50	45.45
Single	6	39	45	40.91
Widowed	4	1	5	4.55
Divorced	4	6	10	9.10
Total			**110**	**100**

Source: Field data (2015)

Table 3.2: Gender (Staffs & Students)

	Males	Females	Total
Staffs	20	10	30
Students	46	34	80
Total	**66**	**44**	**110**

Source: Field data (2015)

3.8 Data Collection Methods

The researcher collected and made use of both primary and secondary data. Jamal (2007) state that, primary data is one which the researcher collects himself from the field while secondary data is obtained from already published documents. For the purpose of this research, both primary and secondary data sources were used in collection of necessary data and information.

Primary data was collected through use of questionnaire with open ended questions while secondary data was obtained from use of data that researched by the earlier researchers from the relevant books and journals from the library and online research databases.

3.9   Data Collection Tools

3.9.1   Questionnaires

Questionnaire with open ended questions was designed to get the information that was needed from the respondents. Two questionnaires, both containing 11 items was designed to collect information from respondents, first was questionnaire for academic staffs (Appendix 1) and the other was questionnaire for OUT students (Appendix 2). Open ended questions enabled the researcher to get in depth information.

3.9.2   Interviews

After examining the data obtained from the questionnaire, a series of semi-structured interviews were arranged to obtain more information pertaining to those factors which affect students' performance in open and distance learning. The researcher randomly chose students for interview in order to clarify points raised from the questionnaire.

3.10   Data Analysis and Presentation

The data was processed and analyzed in accordance with the purpose of use. The process included data cleaning, editing, coding and the data analysis. Data cleaning was done to ensure that, the data available are those which can be edited and used for the aimed purposes. The process involved examining the collected raw data to detect errors and omissions. This was done at the field so that, any missing data could still retrieve from appropriate sources.

After the collected data had been edited, the next step was to assign numerals numbers to each question and answers. This was done for the purpose of simplifying

the work of capturing the data, creating some uniformity and hence facilitates the analysis stage. The collected data were analyzed using tables, charts and graphs from the primary data which was mainly quantitatively as well as explanatory of qualitative information from both secondary and primary data.

3.11 Ethical Considerations

The researcher made sure that all ethical issues are taken care of all the time and at all stages. The tools that were used to collect the data did not in any way put identification of the respondent whether disclosing his or her name or put any sign and hence confidentiality was assured. Before any interview with any respondent, the respondents were given explanations on the purpose of the study and their consent sought. The data collection procedures started after getting permission from office of the dean, faculty of education at OUT.

3.12 Validity and Reliability of the Data Collection Tool

The validity tests performed by the developers of the initial questionnaires which is used in this study, can guarantee the validity of the survey tools used for the present study. Concerning the self-esteem scale, Heatherton and Polivy (1991) refer to studies confirming the psychometric aspects of the scale as well as the high levels of construct validity of this scale for measuring self-esteem. Russel (1996) paper provides strong evidence regarding the validity of Loneliness Scale since it has been proved to be strongly correlated with other scales measuring loneliness. Finally, Gunawardena and Zittle (1997) also proved the validity of their questionnaire on the perception of social presence.

3.13   Chapter Summary

This chapter described the research methodology that was used in the study. The study adopted descriptive research design, mainly focusing on obtaining on information on factors that affect students' performance in open and distance education at OUT. Data were collected using questionnaire with open ended questions and informal interviews. One hundred and ten respondents including academic staff and students were involved. Collected data were edited, coded and analyzed using Microsoft excel to form tables, charts and graphs.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.1   Introduction

This chapter presents the findings on the factors affecting students' performance in ODL presented according to the objectives developed in chapter 1: To assess the effectiveness of students' support service on students' academic performance at OUT; determine the relationship between social presence and academic performance of undergraduate students at OUT; and determine the relationship between gender and academic performance of undergraduate students at OUT. The first part presents demographic characteristics of the research participants. Part two presents the data and part three is the summary of key findings.

Table 4.1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents both Academic Staff and Students (110)

Demographics	Males		Females		Total no. of respondents	Total percentage
	No	%	No	%		%
Tutors	20	66.67	10	33.33	30	100
Students	46	57.5	34	42.5	80	100
Total					110	

Source: Field Data (2015)

From the Table 4.1 show, 20 (66.67%) respondents were male academic staff while 10 (33.33%) respondents were female academic staff. On the side of the student respondents, there were 46 (57.5%) of male student respondents and 34 (42.5%) female student respondents. This is totaling to 80 student respondents, the above data

clearly shows that more male than female who responded positively to the questionnaires than female respondents. This is graphically represented below:
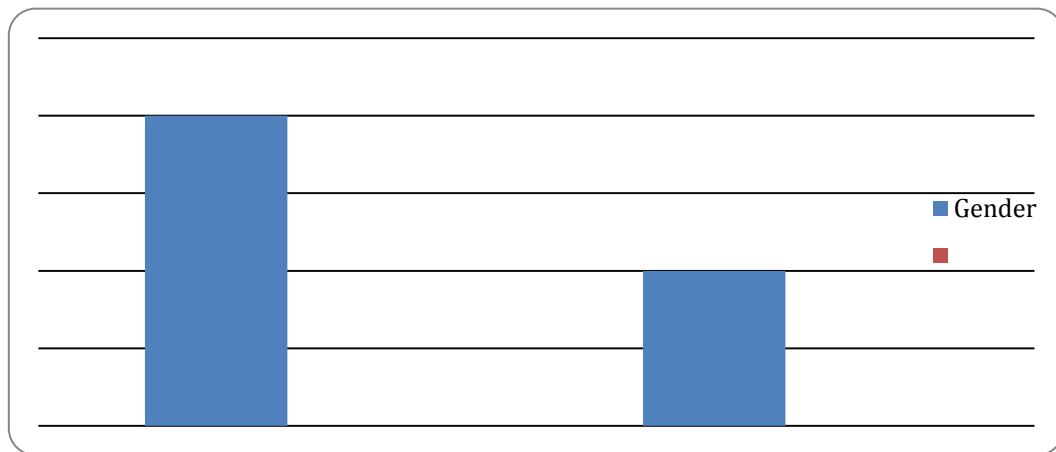
Figure 4.1: Graphical Representation on the Demographics

Source: Field Data (2015)

Table 4.2: Marital Status (Students & Academic Staffs)

Status	No. of respondents	Percentage (%)
Married	50	45.45
Single	45	40.91
Widowed	5	4.55
Divorced	10	9.10
Total	**110**	**100**

Source Field Data 2015

From the table above, married respondents dominated the list with 50 respondents, followed by single respondents with 45, then divorced respondents with 10 respondents and finally widowed respondents with 5 respondents. The above results are presented graphically below:

Figure 4.2: Graphical Representation of Marital Status (Students & Academic Staffs)
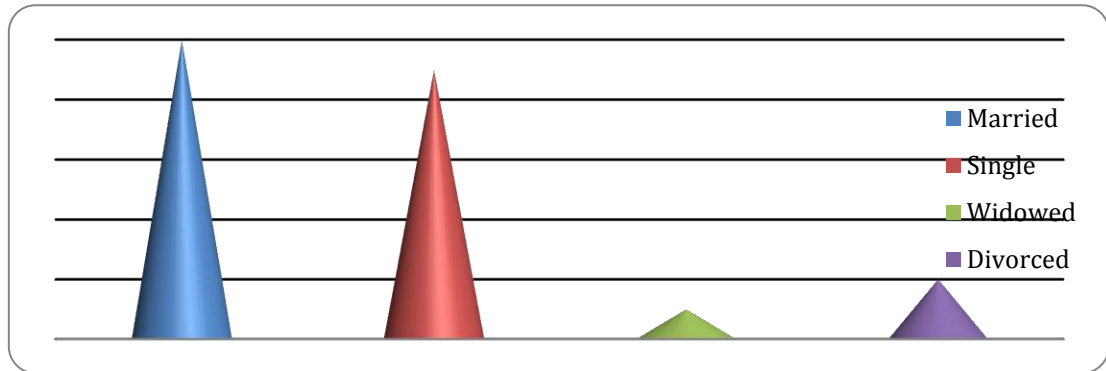
Source: Field Data (2015)

The above results explain that most of the students at OUT are married people, implying that the majority are mature people and were kind enough to respond to questions.

Table 4.3: Age Range

Age	No. of Respondents (Students & Academic Staffs)
Less than 20 years	10
20-29	30
30- 39	40
More than 39	30
Total	**110**

Source: Field Data 2015

From the table above, the majority of the respondents are of 30- 39 years which is represented by 40 respondents, followed by respondents over 39 in age and 20- 29 which is represented by 30 as well and lastly less than 20 years are represented by 10 respondents. The above data shows that the majority of the respondents are relatively mature adults which include both academic staff and students who are of mature age and are having families. This is graphically represented below:
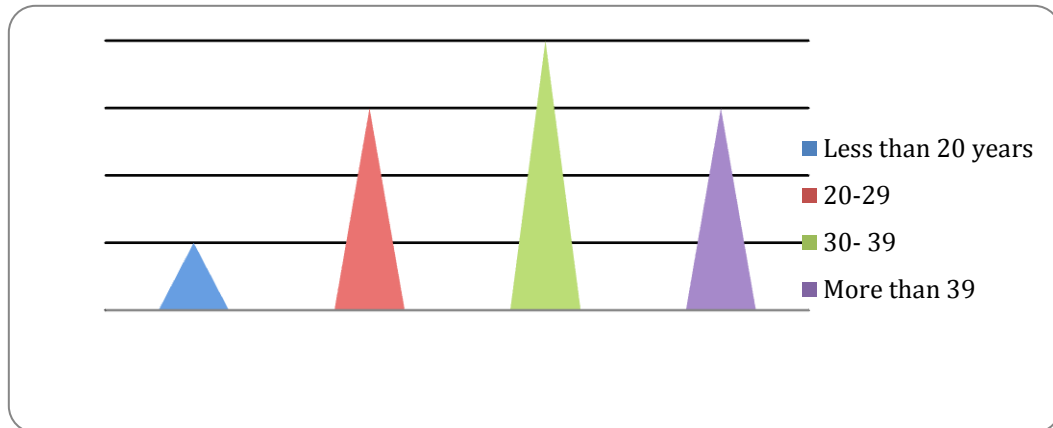
Figure 4.3: Graphical Representation of Respondents (Academic Staffs & Students) Age Range

Source: Field Data (2015)

4.2 Effectiveness of Students' Support Service on Students' Academic Performance

The first objective was to determine the effectiveness of students' support services on students' academic performance. However, before asking this question, it was deem important to determine the availability of students' support services. Questionnaire was used for this purpose. The question was: Are the following students support services available at OUT? Questionnaire was used to solicit information from 110 participants who responded to this objective. The following are the responses:

Table 4.4: Responses on Effectiveness of Students Support Services at the Open University of Tanzania

Items	No. of Respondents (Academic Staff& Students)	Percentage (%)
Appropriate Mode of course delivery	25	22.73
Good study materials	25	22.73
Conducive area of the study	25	22.73
Online reading	35	31.82
Total	**110**	**100**

Source Field Data 2015

4.3   The Findings

From the table, all the materials provided were available at OUT, although the responses varied. 35(31.82%) of the respondents recommended on the access on online reading materials, 25(22.73%) felt that the materials were of good quality, 25(22.73%) were of Conducive area of the study while 25(22.73) suggested that Appropriate Mode of course delivery is needed. This implies that, although the materials were available, they were of low quality.

The second question was set to determine the relationship between support service and academic performance of undergraduate students at OUT. Total of 80 participants responded to this question (Table 4.5). The question was: Which support service do you consider to be available and support students' performance at the OUT, the following are the responses:

Table 4.5: Support Services that Raise Students' Performance

Items	No. of Respondents (Students)	Percentage (%)
Use of latest ICT	30	37.5
Use of reference books	20	25
Use of online teaching	20	25
Close guidance through face-to-face	10	12.5
Total	**80**	**100**

Source: Field Data 2015

From the Table 4.5 shows 30 Students (37.5%) are of view that improvement and innovation in the ICT are among the top innovations that the university has fought to improve in the campus and this has led to students accessing reading material that are being sent by their facilitators on net.

20 students (25%) are as well on the view that availability of reference books given by their lecturers are of great importance to their academics as well as online teaching method where by most of the students access most of the reading materials as well as modules as soft copies all these help them perform higher. Students also agree that close supervision during face-to-face program has contributed to the higher performance of the students at the campus. These findings are in line with Vygotsky's (1978) idea that certain tools are potential for raising zone of proximal development, where a learner is supported to reach his or her maximum learning potentials.

As 20 students (25 %) of the learners indicated that the latest ICT were present and they considered them to have the potential to raise their academic performance. As Vygotsky suggested, learner support provide learners with more structure during the early stages of a new learning and gradually turn responsibility over to them as they internalize and master the skills needed to engage in more complex learning. 10 Students (12.5%) argued that, there are available face-to-face students' support services at the OUT, and the services available are able to raise the academic performance of students.

4.4 Social Presence and Academic Performance

The second objective was set to determine the relationship between the social presence and academic performance. The question was: Is there a relationship between lack of presence of the instructor and students low performance at OUT. Informal Interview with some academic staff and students were held in order to clarify the points raised from the questionnaire. The following are their responses:

Student 1:   Yes, lack of instructors lead to low students' performance because students feel alone and lose interest in learning (   ).

Student 2:   Some students need instructors to instruct them what to do, what to read and where to find the materials. All these are needed for one to perform.

Academic staff 1: Students who do not attend orientation tend to score lower than those who attend because they lack direction on what to read.

Academic Staff 2: Social presence is very important because instructors have a chance to explain and clarify to students difficult topics. Even if the students can access these materials, without the instructor to explain to them difficulty areas, students are left to figure out for themselves, and in most cases, they fail.

Majority of the respondents do agree that social presence has a strong impact on the students' performance. In the discussions students had a view that participation in group discussions, team work, face to face interactions help them clarify issues and in answering examination questions. From these responses from the students, it seems that the presence of the instructor is crucial for their performance. In these responses we are seeing concepts such as 'alone,' 'lose interest.' Such responses are in line with Weiss (1973), views that distance learners are encounter with two types of loneliness: social loneliness, and emotional loneliness. As the responses from the students, distance learners at OUT face loneliness due to lack of social presence of their instructors.

However, there were few students who had a different view. These consider social presence as distracter to academic performance. This pessimistic view can be deduced from this statement:

Student: Social presence may influence performance either better or worse depending on the kind of the social group that one engages in. Some students join bad discussion groups that may result into doing other things than studying and thus slow learning, and affect their performance (   ).

All in all, although there were few who considered social presence detrimental to learning and performance, the majority considered social presence as important for boosting students' interest, clarification on difficulty topics and encouragement.

4.5   Gender and Academic Performance

The third objective was to determine the relationship between gender and academic performance in OUT. This objective was set to confirm or disconfirm the literature in ODL that gender is an issue. The question was: Is there any relationship between gender and academic performance of undergraduate students at OUT? The following were the responses:

Student 1:   I think there is, because male tend to perform higher than females. But I think this is also because males have all the time to study if they want. But females have too many things they must attend to

Student 2:   I think males perform better because they concentrate, females do not.

Academic staff 1:   Not necessarily. Nobody has come up with a clear difference between males and females academic performance. There are

fields that females outperform males, such as language and social studies. Some scholars have attributed this with what each sex is engaged more with. But there is no clear cut that because you are a male, you will perform better.

Academic Staff 2: indeed male tend to perform higher because they believe in themselves and have high self-esteem.

It clearly shows that the participants had a feeling that males outperform the females. This, as one of the instructors suggested, has not been established. Also his study Abdullah (2005) found that gender has a significant impact only in some fields. For example, in the field of financial management, females outperformed males, while in accounting, males outperformed females. Also it was found that internal environment as important determinant of gender difference in academic performance. Conclusively it can be suggested that gender is not a positive determinant of academic performance.

4.6 Chapter Summary

On the first objective which stated; establish the relationship between support service and academic performance of undergraduate students at OUT. The study summarized that support service is very important as far as academic performance is concerned. It showed that students who have supportive facilitators tend to perform higher and therefore this has a positive relationship on the students' performance. Also on social presence was considered as important for helping the students learn and raise their academic performance. On gender as determining factor for academic

performance, many students felt that male students did better than females, but the instructors felt that this was not true because there were subjects that female students have consistently outperform the males.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1   Introduction

This chapter summarizes the major findings obtained from the study on the factors affecting Students' performance in ODL. The conclusion and recommendations are drawn from the findings.

5.2   Summary

This study aimed to view the factors affecting students' performance in open and distance learning. The study used three variables: support services; social presence and gender to determine academic performance at OUT. The first chapter presents the background for this study, showing the significance and limitations of this study. Chapter two presented related literature focusing on theoretical and empirical literature. Theoretical literature covered the theories of self-esteem and loneliness as they pertain to distance education. Empirical literature was reviewed around the three objectives developed in chapter one, which was: effectiveness of students support service; social presence and gender and their relationship to academic performance.

Chapter three is confined to research methodology; both purposive and simple random sampling was employed to get 110 respondents including both academic staff and undergraduate students. Open-ended questionnaire and informal interview was used to collect data on factors that affect students' performance in ODL. Chapter four presents the findings of this research. The key findings were that, students'

support services were available at the OUT, and the services available were effective to raise the academic performance of students. Further, the study found that social presence was important for boosting students' interest, because instructors could make clarification on difficulty topics and this would encourage the students to learn and raise their academic performance.

However, there were few who considered social presence as a nuicance but the majority would appreciate the presence of instructors in their learning. The last finding was that, although the majority of students felt that males outperformed students, the views from the instructors were that gender was not a positive determinant of academic performance. Generally, the findings of this study support the literature.

In the light of objectives and findings of this study it can be concluded that male students tend to perform higher than female students this is because male students have a lot of time to revise and read on their own than ladies. It is concluded that most female students have a lot of responsibilities at home and that make have no time to revise or read on their own. It is concluded that men have a higher self-esteem than female and thus this makes them isolate freely to lecturers for consultation and thus perform higher than female students who have low self esteem.

The major contributing factors for the failure of students in the academics programme offered through distance learning were the lack of guidance, unfamiliarity of the study system, and difficulty in changing over from conventional classroom teaching to self-learning. Further, students may be guided by irrelevant

factors in selecting a most fitting study programme for their capabilities and backgrounds. But they should have continuous untiring commitment and self-motivation to come to the same status as those who have good academic background.

As far as faculty is concerned, course materials must be delivered on time and students' momentum for learning requires a higher level of support, especially during the transition to distance education. Lack of student support and poor presentation of course content contributed to student failure. Faculty need to focus attention on redesigning the total course delivery system paying the attention to the profile of students. In such an attempt the faculty should devise an efficient means to identify and support students who need special assistance.

5.2 Overcoming Major Barriers to Offering Quality Distance Learning Courses

Perhaps one of the best ways to evaluate good distance learning courses is to consider how the institutions have overcome the major barriers to offering them. Simonson, Schlosser, & Orellana (2011) list the ten most substantial barriers institutions have to overcome to offer quality distance learning programs. The barriers are presented in their rank order.

(i)   Increased time commitment. Distance learning courses may very well take longer for instructors to manage than traditional classroom courses. Quality courses are facilitated by trained instructors who know how to maintain the quality of the course and not be overwhelmed by new requirements and loads they may not be used to.

(ii)   Lack of funds to implement distance learning programs. Budgetary constraints do not go away with distance learning. Unless the program can take advantage

of the economies of scale and earn a return on investment that is greater than or equal to the development and delivery cost, distance learning programs can easily lose money.

(iii) Organizational resistance to change. Institutions with highly independent departmental territory may find it difficult to work collaboratively with other departments or institutional service centers to bring quality education online. Good distance learning courses result from a team effort between different parties across the institution.

(iv) Lack of vision for distance education in the organization. Quality distance learning programs result from an overall institutional vision. Quality standards are also passed down from the leadership of the institution to the different departments providing distance learning.

(v) Faculty compensation. Given some distance learning courses can take longer to facilitate than the classroom equivalent, attracting qualified instructors can be a challenge. To address this issue, many large institutions are leveraging larger numbers of adjunct instructors to help meet demands. Adjunct instructors usually cost less than maintaining full-time faculty and used just-in-time to facilitate periods of varying course demand.

(vi) Difficulty keeping up with technological changes. Good distance learning courses use relevant and current technology. Upgrades, new features, improved capability are rolled out regularly within high quality distance learning tools. Organizational culture should promote an ongoing and unceasing commitment to preparing faculty and students to continually take the next steps forward.

(vii) Lack of infrastructure or support. Distance learning courses are as only as good as the infrastructure and staff that support them. For example, one institution the author consulted for provides several cloud based web applications to assist instructors in facilitating online courses. However, no onsite training or support is available for the faculty. As a result, the applications are only used by a minority of instructors who have taken the time to train themselves. The administrators who procured the applications suggested the programs were intuitive enough for faculty to learn without training. Interestingly, leadership at the institution later found that the primary issue behind the low number of instructors adopting the tools was not the instructors' ability to learn the software applications. The primary issue causing lack of adoption was the instructors not knowing that the programs were available and how they served to achieve the course objectives.

5.3   Recommendations

Basing on the above findings the following recommendations are made:

(i)   The Open University of Tanzania need to strengthen its students' support services by acquiring the most current ICT to enhance students' learning;

(ii)   The Open University of Tanzania need to strengthen its orientation and face to face interactions to help social presence of the instructors and students.

(iii)   Students at the Open University of Tanzania need to inculcate a sense of independent so that they can learn independent of their instructors.

(iv)   Further studies should be conducted with a wider coverage as this study was only confined to OUT Kinondoni center.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Questionnaire for Selected Open University of Tanzania Academic Staff

Introduction

This research is conducted only to meet academic purpose as part of completion of Master Degree Program. The researcher is a master's degree student at the Open University of Tanzania (OUT) who is obliged to prepare a thesis in order to finalize his studies. The research aims to identify factors affecting student's performance in open and distance learning in Tanzania, Taking the Open University of Tanzania (OUT) as a case. The research shall also come-up with proposals for further actions with the aim of improving open and distance learning in Tanzania.

The findings of this study shall be useful to both, the researcher and other stakeholders that are working or interested in open and distance learning including the government. Thus your participation is highly appreciated;

Kindly respond to all questions with accuracy. All information provided shall be treated and used only for the stated objectives.

Part A: Demographic Characteristics

Please circle the appropriate response(s)

1.   Gender

    1 = Male

    2 = Female

2.   Marital status

   1 = Married

   2 = Single

   3 = Widowed

   4 = Divorced

3.   Age range

   1 = Less than 20 years

   2 = 20-29 years

   3 = 30-39 years

   4 = More than 39 years

4.   Level of Education

   1 = doctorate level

   2 = masters level

   3 = degree level

   4 = Other (Please specify)

5.   Number of years working at the Open University of Tanzania

   1 = Less than 1 years

   2 = between 2-5 years

   3 = More than 5 years

Part B: Open ended questions

1. What do you consider are the factors that support students' performance in open

   and distance learning at the Open University of Tanzania?

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   ....

2. As academic staff, what do you consider are the things that make open and

   distance learning much easier?

   …………………………………………………………………………......

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3. As an academic staff, are there any innovations that are in place to support open

   and distance learning to your students?

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4. What factors that drawback students' performance at the Open University of

   Tanzania?

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What are the challenges that you have ever encountered when supporting

students of the Open University of Tanzania?

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5. How did you manage to address those challenges that you encountered?

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6. What measures need to be taken to improving students' performance in open and

distance learning at the Open University of Tanzania?

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7. What can you say on the coverage and effectiveness of the policy and strategies

for developing and strengthening the open and distance learning in Tanzania?

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8. What other general comments do you have regarding the open and distance learning in Tanzania?

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9. What do you think are the impacts of social presence on students' performance at Open University of Tanzania?

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10. What is the relationship between self esteem and students' performance at Open University of Tanzania?

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Thanks for your cooperation

Appendix 2: Questionnaires to Open University Students

Introduction

This research is conducted only to meet academic purpose as part of completion of Master Degree Program. The researcher is a master's degree student at the Open University of Tanzania (OUT) who is obliged to prepare a thesis in order to finalize his studies. The research aims to identify factors affecting student's performance in open and distance learning in Tanzania, Taking the Open University of Tanzania (OUT) as a case. The research shall also come-up with proposals for further actions with the aim of improving open and distance learning in Tanzania.

The findings of this study shall be useful to both, the researcher and other stakeholders that are working or interested in open and distance learning including the government. Thus your participation is highly appreciated; Kindly respond to all questions with accuracy. All information provided shall be treated and used only for the stated objectives.

Part A: Demographic Characteristics

Please circle the appropriate response(s)

1.   Gender

     1 = Male

     2 = Female

2.   Age range

     1 = Less than 20 years

     2 = 20-29 years

3 = 30-39 years

4 = More than 39 years

3.   Level of Education enrolled

1 = Master Degree

2 = Bachelor Degree

3 = Diploma

4 = Foundation

5 = Others (Please specify)

4.   Marital status

1 = Married

2 = Single

3 = Widowed

4 = Divorced

Part B: Open ended questions

1.   What do you consider are the factors that support students' performance in

open and distance learning at the Open University of Tanzania?

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2.   As a student, what do you consider are the things that support or make open

and distance learning much easy?

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3.   As a student, are there any innovations that you have designed to support open
     and distance learning or things that make your study much easy?

     ....

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     ....

4.   What factors that drawback or challenge students' performance in open and
     distance learning at the Open University of Tanzania?

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     ....…………………………………………………………

5.   What are the challenges that you have ever encountered during your study at
     the Open   University of Tanzania?

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6.   How did you manage to address those challenges that you have encountered?

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7. What measures those need to be taken to improve students' performance in open and distance learning at the Open University of Tanzania?

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8. What can you say on the coverage and effectiveness of the policy and strategies for developing and strengthening the open and distance learning in Tanzania?

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9. What other general comments do you have regarding the open and distance learning in Tanzania?

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10. What do you think are the impacts of social presence on students' performance at Open University of Tanzania?

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11. What is the relationship between self esteem and students' performance at

Open University of Tanzania?

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Thanks for your cooperation

Appendix 3: Sample Estimation Table

Table for Determining Sample Size From a Given Population

N	S	N	S	N	S	N	S	N	S
10	10	100	80	280	162	800	260	2800	338
15	14	110	86	290	165	850	265	3000	341
20	19	120	92	300	169	900	269	3500	246
25	24	130	97	320	175	950	274	4000	351
30	28	140	103	340	181	1000	278	4500	351
35	32	150	108	360	186	1100	285	5000	357
40	36	160	113	380	181	1200	291	6000	361
45	40	180	118	400	196	1300	297	7000	364
50	44	190	123	420	201	1400	302	8000	367
55	48	200	127	440	205	1500	306	9000	368
60	52	210	132	460	210	1600	310	10000	373
65	56	220	136	480	214	1700	313	15000	375
70	59	230	140	500	217	1800	317	20000	377
75	63	240	144	550	225	1900	320	30000	379
80	66	250	148	600	234	2000	322	40000	380
85	70	260	152	650	242	2200	327	50000	381
90	73	270	155	700	248	2400	331	75000	382
95	76	270	159	750	256	2600	335	100000	384

Note: "N" is population size

"S" is sample size.

Krejcie, Robert V., Morgan, Daryle W., "Determining Sample Size for Research Activities", Educational and Psychological Measurement, 1970