

**INFLUENCE OF STUDY HABITS AND DEMOGRAPHIC
VARIABLES ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE: THE CASE OF
BACHELOR OF EDUCATION (ARTS) STUDENTS,
UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI, KENYA**

BY

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REQUIREMENTS OF THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF
PHILOSOPHY IN DISTANCE EDUCATION OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI**

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DECLARATION

This research is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other university.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my late mother Ruth and father Canon Elias Njiru Chandi. They brought me up with Christian virtues and encouraged me in all my educational endeavours. They made me to be what I am today.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

B.Ed	:	Bachelor of Education
BAA	:	British Academy of Audiology
CAT	:	Continuous Assessment Test
CEES	:	College of Education and External Studies
CRTVU	:	Central Radio Television University
DE	:	Distance Education
DES	:	Department of Educational Studies
DLS	:	Distance learners' students
EDEN	:	European Distance Education Network
IGNOU	:	Indira Gandhi National Open University
NAEP	:	National Assessment of Educational Progress
ODL	:	Open and Distance Learning
RV	:	Ramkonhaeng University
SES	:	Socio Economic Status
SPSS	:	Statistical Packages of Social Sciences
SQ3R	:	Survey, question, read, recite and review
UN	:	United Nations
UNDP	:	United Nations Development Programmes
UNEP,		United Nations Environmental Programme
UNESCO	:	United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	:	United Nation Children Education Fund
USA	:	United States of America
VC	:	Vice Chancellor

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the influence of study habits and demographic variables on academic performance in distance learning students taking Bachelor of Education (Arts). The study investigated the influence of time management, learner-to-learner interaction, note-taking skills, reading skills, demographic variables and academic performance of distance learning students. Given the increasing numbers of post-secondary institutions offering degrees by distance learning, it is important to know the influence of study habits and demographic variables on academic performance of distance learning students. A total number of 347 students were selected using stratified random sampling technique from a population of 4,500 students who were registered for the B.Ed. degree in different years of study. A mixed mode method approach was used in data collection. The design used was descriptive survey with cross sectional data collected. The study focused on selected demographic variables which included age and marital status, gender and highest level of education, monthly income of the learners, and occupation of the learners. To capture the variables under investigation a set of questions was developed to assess the opinion of students about each variable of the study and the length of time the students spent on each. An interview guide was also designed for the resident lecturers. The study also used focused group discussions and observation in collecting data. The analysis of the data was done using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and Statistical Data Analysis (stata) package. Percentages, means, standard deviations, Pearson product moment correlation, Analysis of variance were used for the data analyses. The value of the coefficient of determination (r^2) was used to explain the proportion of the dependent variable that is accounted for by the independent variable. The findings indicated a strong positive influence of time management on academic performance ($r = 0.569$), There was a positive influence of notes-taking on academic performance ($r = 0.635$), influence of reading skills on academic performance ($r = 0.423$), and influence of highest academic qualification on their academic performance of adult learners ($r = 0.237$). There was however no significant influence of age, marital status, gender, type of occupation, students' highest secondary performance on academic performance in the programme. Based on the findings, the study recommended that students should be trained in time management skills and also they should be encouraged to meet regularly for discussions. Learners should also be trained on how to take notes.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the study

In the United Nations Report (2010) on the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals particularly Goal 2, education is considered a basic right and need. Quality education and good academic performance ensure well-educated, skilled and productive students. The World Bank (WB), United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and United Nations Development Bank (UNDP) have invested in education. They have identified education as a tool for economic development, and eradication of poverty and inequality (World Bank 2002, UNESCO 2006, 2005, 2003 UNEP, 2006, 2005). This position was reaffirmed during the Conference of Commonwealth Countries Education Ministers in Cape Town, South Africa in 2006.

UNESCO, in its vision of lifelong learning, promotes a wide spectrum of models by looking at education as a means of expanding individual freedoms and enabling people to have fulfilled lives in a variety of roles in the society. The same roles are enumerated in the five pillars of education as: learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together, learning to be and learning to change (Faure Report, 1972). The Republic of Kenya Ministry of Education, Science and Technology task force on re-alignment of education sector to the Constitution, (2010) and Vision 2030 singles out education and training as the vehicle that will drive Kenya into becoming a middle-income economy. In addition, the Constitution, 2010 has provided for Free and Compulsory Basic Education as a human right to every Kenyan child up to 18 years as per Articles 53, 54, 55, 56, 57 and 59 of the Constitution. The social pillar in Vision 2030 is expected to make Kenya become internationally competitive and

economically viable. The education system must produce a Kenyans: capable of lifelong learning and able to take the initiative to solve problems independently, learn new things quickly, perform more non-routine tasks, capable of more complex problem-solving, take more decisions, understand more about what they are working on, require less supervision, assume more responsibility, and as vital tools to these ends, have better reading, quantitative, reasoning and expository skills. Further, the education and training sector must respond to the development and blueprint period which aims at making Kenya a newly industrialized middle income country providing high quality standard of life for all its citizens by the year 2030. The priorities and policies outlined in the First Medium Term Plan: 2008 – 2012 (Kenya Vision 2030) programmes under Education, Research and Training component are designed to stimulate growth and development of critical human resources set to transform Kenya into a middle class society.

Vision 2030 (Republic of Kenya, 2007) reveals that there is massive wastage in the transition from secondary level of education to university education. It notes that secondary school enrolment has risen from 112,229 students in the 2006/2007 academic year to 118,239 students in 2007/2008 academic year to 1,507,564 students in the 2009/2010 academic year to 1,701,501 students in the 2011/2012 academic year. The transition rate rose from 60% in 2006 to over 74% in 2012. However, University cut-off points tend to leave out many applicants who meet minimum requirements for university education but cannot be admitted due to limited resources. The capacities of existing universities have been enhanced by upgrading existing middle-level colleges to degree-granting institutions. According to the University Act 2012, there are twenty two public universities with nine

constituent Colleges and seventeen chartered private universities with five Private University Constituent Colleges. There are twelve public and two private universities with letters of interim authority. University education has witnessed a tremendous growth in the last five years from 112,229 (68,345 men and 43884 women) between 2006 and 2012. The establishment of new universities has contributed to the growth because university education is accessible. Open and Distance Learning (ODL) has contributed to growth because it focuses on expanding access, to quality and equity to education. The philosophy of ODL is used in offering extramural studies. The ODL has been adopted to train teachers and other professionals. As a result, ODL is an alternative mode of delivery of a wide range of courses in Universities. Therefore, the study on the influence of study habits and demographic variables on academic performance in distance learning students was necessary.

The study was guided by theories developed on distance learning; theories of autonomy and independence from the 1960s and 1970, as argued by Wedemeyer (1977) and Moore (1973) reflect the essential component of the independence of the learner. Peter, (1971) work on a theory of industrialization in the 1960s reflects the attempt to view the field of distance education as an industrialized form of teaching and learning. Using the post-industrial model, Keegan (1986) presents three approaches to the study and development of distance education as academic discipline. The fourth approach integrates theories of interaction and communication formulated by Badth, (1987) and Daniel and Marquis (1979). Holmberg (1989) calls for foundations of theory construction around the concepts of independence. The fifth theory of Equivalency developed by Simonson (1995) advocates the concepts of

equivalency, learning experiences, appropriate application, students and outcomes. This approach to distance education advocates designing a collection of equivalent learning experiences, for distance and local learners, even though such experiences may be different for each student. The theoretical analyses of virtual education, however, have not yet been addressed by the literature.

Siemens (2004) proposes connectives which hold that learning is a socially enacted process, which promotes the principality of the individual; the ability to synthesize and recognize connections and patterns like technology. He provides insight into learning skills and tasks needed for learners to flourish in a digital era as a learning theory for the digital age, a successor to behaviourism, cognitive, and constructivism. He identifies three limitations of these theories: their intrapersonal view of learning; their failure to address the learning that is located within technology and organizations; and their lack of contribution to the value judgments that need to be made in knowledge-rich environments.

Learning and teaching distance learning is a concept that covers the learning-teaching activities in the cognitive and psycho-motor and affective domains of an individual learner and a supporting organization. It is characterized by non-contiguous communication and can be carried out anywhere and at any time which makes it attractive to adults with professional and social commitments. There is; therefore, a need to establish the influence of study habits and demographic variables on academic performance of distance learning students. Studying the following variables of study habits will shed more light on the topic of study.

1.1.1 Study Habits

Study habits refer to distance learning students' method and approach to learning. In this study, Study habits are perceived to include the action taken by distance learning students with regard to time management, learner to learner interaction, note taking skills and reading skills. It is assumed that study habits are a primary indicator of good academic performance because if students perform well, it is assumed that they have good study habits, and vice versa. Research conducted by Nonis and Hudson (2010) on the impact of study time and study habits on the Performance of College Students in Arkansas State University, found that the quantity of time and the study time spent by students had an impact on the students' academic performance.

1.1.2 Time management

In this study time management is defined as all the skills, tools, and techniques used by students to effectively plan their time and to accomplish specific tasks like completing assignments, revising for exams, and writing term papers for maximum gain. It is assumed that students with good time management will be more successful in many settings. George (2008) asserted that intelligence and study time are positively associated with academic performance. However, study time on academic performance can also be associated with early rising, sleeping early and having less accumulated sleep. Britton and Tessa (2008) in a study of university students in America found out that better time management skills are associated with higher GPAs. Therefore, time management practices are central to academic performance.

1.1.3 Learner to learner interaction

In this study, Learner to learner interaction is defined as interaction between students with each other or among several students in order to promote understanding of the

course content and stimulate critical thinking through group discussion, peer tuition and class presentation. Learner to learner interaction can be a very important tool for academic performance because comparing notes, explaining concepts to one another and critiquing each other's assignments can lead to better understanding of information. Learner to learner interaction contributes to adult learning because it socializes the students academically leading to improved performance in academics. However, learner to learner interactions can be affected by different characteristics such as age, gender, personality, motivation, self-concept, life experience and cultural background, all of which influence the way in which students go about the task of learning as observed by William and Burden (1997).

1.1.4 Note Taking Skills

Note taking is the skill used in writing down pieces of information in a systematic way, indicating the dates, main ideas, logical sequence and proper documentation as the lecturer teaches. Eliot (2002) found a significant difference between the students who received note taking training, taking notes at lesson and reviewing the notes and students who attended lessons without receiving note taking training. Note taking increases students' success in academics because they are able to store notes for revision and future reference.

1.1.5 Reading Skills

Reading is the process of extracting meaning from modules and other relevant texts. Entwistle (1960) and Rafoth, Leal and DeFabo (1993) have indicated that study skills should be taught in high school to help students succeed in school. Motivation, outlining/mapping, time management, test taking skills, note taking skills, survey question, read, reflect, and recite (SQ3R), preview, question, read, reflect, recite

and review (PQ5R), library skills, retention/memory, listening, comprehension and studying are study skills that are recommended for efficient reading.

1.1.6 Demographic Variables

Demographic variables refer to personal circumstances of the learner that are considered to have an influence on the academic performance. Demographic variables consist of age, gender, marital status, income and education background. Liu and Lu (2009) did a study in five provinces of western China and established that regardless of whether the sample is the aggregate sample of all the students or samples divided into different groups according to gender and ethnicity, there exists a positive correlation between the students' family socioeconomic status (SES) index and academic performance. The correlation is that: the higher the student's family SES index, the more likely he or she is to receive relatively high Mathematics or Chinese language scores. Students' Math's performance increased by 0.286 units and students' Chinese language performance increased by 0.275 units when SES index increased by one single unit. However, within the different gender and ethnic groups, the degree of impact of SES index on academic performance differed slightly; although, it always showed a trend of positive impact. They also noted that the effects of SES index on male students' academic performance was greater than that of the female students' academic performance, especially in Mathematics. As a result, they do not eliminate the possibility that the feudal Chinese traditional idea of severe discrimination against women still exists today. Furthermore, within the aggregate sample, regarding the comparison between the differences in the two school subjects, the effects of SES index on Mathematics performance were slightly greater than that of Chinese language. However, in the current study, it has been

established that demographic variables do have an influence on academic performance among distance learning students.

1.1.7 Academic Performance

Academic performance connotes achievement of scores and grades by the end of semester examination conducted by the university. Pedrosa, Dachs, Maia, Andrade and Carvalho, (2007), conducted a study on performance of undergraduate students admitted to Brazil's State University of Campinas from, 1994 to 1997 and found out that students coming from disadvantaged backgrounds in both educational and socioeconomic aspects have a higher relative performance than their complementary group.

Noel-Levitz, (2003), surveyed 350,000 students attending four-year public and private colleges. The results indicated academic advising as the most important aspect of their educational experiences. Students rated academic advising second to only instructional effectiveness in importance. Friedman, (1985); Romer, (1993); Van Warbeck, (2004), indicated that making lectures compulsory has no significant effect on improving academic performance and may, in fact, have a detrimental effect on a student's motivation. Another alternative would be to make the lecture notes available online.

Pogue, (2000), did a research project to determine why students fail and found out that students fail because they do not know how to study. He advocated for conducive academic environment to enhance performance. Mark, (2000), observed that successful students are able to balance social activities with good study habits. In general, the success or failure in higher Education is not explained by the students'

attributes or faculty teaching efficiency in isolation, but by the complex interactions between students and the learning environments they experience.

1.1.8 Bachelor of Education Arts by Distance Learning at the University of Nairobi

The programme is intended to equip teachers with the right knowledge skills, attitudes and proper pedagogical skills for the purpose of teaching in secondary schools. The course content for each subject is provided through a multi-media system approach. The instruction comprises self-instructional study modules, printed course material packages, assignments for assessment and feedback as well as supporting audio-video programmes. Learning materials are prepared by teams of experts drawn from different universities as well as an in-house faculty. The material is scrutinized by the content experts, supervised unit designers and edited by language experts before being sent for printing.

The programme is offered through distance study methods with print as the main medium of instruction. The print study materials are developed to cover almost forty five lecture hours, although they are self-directed and written in a manner that learners can study on their own. At the Extra-Mural Centres, learner support service is given, students interact with lecturers and other students, refer to books in the library, and interact with the resident lecturers on administrative and academic matters. Academic counselling include; tutoring in general to make the student decide for themselves what is best under the given circumstances. The face-to-face session covers 15 hours per semester. Tutoring is provided by face-to-face interaction with lecturers during the residential sessions in December, April and August. The continuous assessment tests and final examinations are done during the

sessions. The modules course content is equivalent to 45 lecture hours; the programme is divided into six parts of 8 weeks each. In order to provide individualized learner support services, learners are visited on a monthly basis by a lecturer from the School of Continuing and Distance Education.

The students joining University of Nairobi, Bachelor of Education (Arts) programme specialize in education and two teaching subjects. The compulsory courses are communication skills, HIV/AIDS and all educational units plus two teaching subjects. The course is taught and evaluated in terms of units taken. Evaluation of students' progress is made through term papers, continuous assessment tests and examinations. Grading is weighted at 30% term paper and continuous assessment tests and 70% for final examinations. The university uses the system of 'grading' for evaluating students' achievements on a five-point scale using letter grades A= 70% and above, B=60% to 69%, C=50% to 59%, D= 40% to 49% and F=39% and below. Given the nature of the university's academic programmes, a study on the influence of study habits on academic performance can help the administration organise the programme in a way that the students will be able to study more effectively on their own.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Distance education is one of the programmes offered at the University of Nairobi. According to the University of Nairobi Annual report (2012) there were 4,197 students enrolled in the Department of Educational Studies.

The distance learning students' population is mainly composed of adult students. Muchiri (2012) found that majority of learners are practising teachers who want to improve their teaching qualifications, but besides financing their studies they cater

for the financial needs of other family members. They have numerous and demanding commitments to work, family, social lives and career development ambitions (Finko, 2000; Holmberg, 1995; Thompson, 1998). The students are more vulnerable to factors encroaching on their academic progress because their education-related activities are not primary life objectives. Their other commitments assume a greater degree of obligation and necessity especially during home study periods. The learners are usually away from university libraries and out of reach of the vital library books to supplement course units; therefore, how these students study on their own, needs to be investigated because it likely to influence their performance.

Regional meetings are held once a month with the respective students to share their views with the resident lecturer and other visiting academic staff from the university. These meetings are seen as an integral part of guiding the learners on study habits on academic performance. Muchiri, (2012) found that majority of learners did not have time to attend regional meetings for learner to learner interaction, yet it is an integral part of learning. Given the challenges facing distance learners, the current study investigated the influence of study habits and demographic variables on academic performance in distance learning students. Other studies done on distance learning students at the University of Nairobi have investigated, the availability of ICT in teaching and learning science curriculum in Kenya secondary schools (Keiyoro, 2010); influence of perceived quality dimension and growth in distance education (Nzuki, 2012); effect of principals' transformation leadership characteristics on students' academic performance in secondary school in Nairobi County; (Nderitu, 2012); factors influencing university managers' participation in Distance Education;

(Gikonyo, 2012); an investigation of the influence of the courses delivery systems and learners' needs in Kenya, (Mbogori, 2007); factors influencing educational managers' support for distance learning mode of delivery, (Mbugua, 2012); the influence of learner support services on academic performance of distance learners (Bowa, 2008); exploration of women transformation through distance learning in Kenya, (Kithome, 2004); Comparisons of Bachelor of Education (Arts) on Campus students and distance education students, (Mboroki, 2007); learners needs and delivery media examined issues of interest to administrators of Distance programmes, (Rambo, 2007); but none investigated the influence of study habits and demographic variables on academic performance. This; therefore, justified the need for this study.

1.3 The Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the influence of study habits and demographic variables on academic performance in distance learning students in School of Continuing and Distance Education taking Bachelor of Education (Arts). The study investigated time management, learner to learner interaction, note taking skills, reading skills, demographic variables on academic performance of distance learning students.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The guiding objectives of this study were to:

- i. establish the influence of time management on academic performance of distance learning students
- ii. identify the influence of learner to learner interaction on academic performance of distance learning students

- iii. assess the influence of study habits of note taking skills on academic performance of distance learning students
- iv. analyse the influence of reading skills on academic performance of distance learning students
- v. examine the influence of demographic characteristics on academic performance of distance learning students.

1.5 Research Questions

This study endeavoured to answer the following questions:

- i. What is the influence of time management on academic performance of distance learning students?
- ii. How does learner to learner interaction influence the academic performance of distance learning students?
- iii. What is the influence of note taking skills on academic performance?
- iv. What is the influence of reading skills on academic performance?
- v. What is the influence of demographic characteristics on academic performance of distance learning students?

1.6 Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at the significant level of 0.05;

H₀₁: There is no influence of time management on academic performance.

H₀₂: There is no influence of learner to learner interaction on academic performance.

H₀₃: There is no influence of note taking skills on academic performance.

H₀₄: There is no influence of reading skills on academic performance.

H₀₅: (a) There is no influence of gender on academic performance of distance learning students.

H₀₅: (b) There is no influence of age on academic performance of distance learning students.

H₀₅: (c) There is no influence of marital status on academic performance of distance learning students.

H₀₅: (d) There is no influence of occupation on academic performance of distance learning students.

H₀₅: (e) Academic entry qualification does not influence the academic performance of distance learning students.

1.7 Significance of the Study

A research on study habits is very significant because the university can use the findings to advise the distance learners to acquire the desired study habits. It is hoped that the department will use the findings of this study to save time and resources which are used in supplementary examinations because if the students acquire proper study habits, there will be fewer cases of examination irregularities caused by lack of preparedness.

It is hoped that Universities can use the study to design the most appropriate study materials suitable for the learners in order to meet the desired standards. The University of Nairobi students can benefit from the findings of the study because it would provide the basis for awareness and better understanding of how their current study habits affect their academic performance. Likewise, it would make the student more focused and have clearer perspectives on how the specific behaviours related to their studies influence their study habits.

The Knowledge of evolving tendencies in study habits may serve as a baseline for university administrators in effective governance and management by elaborating extended education policies, designing and developing Students and improving students' support services. The social pillar in Vision 2030 states that education should be relevant with regard to content and delivery and the quality should match global competitiveness to address challenges of the 21st century. The study developed theories that are appropriate for the managers of distance learning. The theory developed would result in an attempt to understand students. The researcher has not come across any previous research in this area in the University of Nairobi; therefore this study will contribute to theory and practice in distance learning. The study will build and add theory on the area where case studies were acknowledged as providing suitable climate for data collection and theory construction.

This study will add to the knowledge and the understanding of study habits on academic performance by identifying variables contributing to and or impeding distance learning study habits on academic performance of the university of Nairobi students. It is hoped that the study will contribute to better understanding of how the study habits variables influence academic performance. Although there are other factors that influence study habits, for example, goals, social situations, working memory, age, gender, previous education and occupation, the current study focused on time management, note-taking skills, reading skills, learner to learner interaction and demographic variables on academic performance.

Therefore, this study filled the gaps in understanding the issues of distance learning students' study habits on academic performance in their unique learning

environment. The study would contribute to research in distance learning. The main dimensions of the problem were: the influence of note taking, time management, reading materials, learner to learner interaction and demographic variables on academic performance.

1.8 Limitations of the study

The key limitation of a survey design is that it depends on cooperation and honesty of the respondents, which in turn affects the return rate. To ensure the cooperation, honesty and response rate the importance of the study was explained. Convenience sampling was used in the qualitative phase of the study. Some respondents were not reached on time because of the commitment of the learners and the staff.

The dependent variable which was academic performance depended on the scores at the end of the semester, however by the time the data was collected, marks for part 1, 2, and 3 were partly entered, thus they were partly included from the final analysis. The same learners in part 4, 5 and 6 had gaps because they had not submitted all the assignments and others did not have all the examination marks because of various commitments which made them to miss examinations and Continuous assessment test. The limitations were dealt with by crosschecking the marks and taking time with examination clerks to investigate the scores.

The total number of questionnaires issued to the respondent were 367 but only 341 were completed and received giving a respondents return rate of 93 %. There was an error caused by the difference between those who responded and those who did not respond. However, to ensure optimum co-operation, honesty and response rate, the importance of the study was explained, as was the need for truthfulness. Due to the

nature of qualitative research, the data obtained in the study could be subject to different interpretations by different readers. The researcher did not manipulate the independent variable, whilst the dependent variable was controlled with the aim of establishing the effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable.

1.9 Delimitation of the Study

The sample was taken from 4,197 University of Nairobi students who were registered for Bachelor of Education degree in different year; of study in the School of Continuing and Distance Education. The study was delimited with respect to method, sampling, tools, variables and techniques proposed for the study. The study was restricted to the University of Nairobi. It was difficult to generalize findings because it was not easy to find similar data. The study was delimited in terms of marks obtained by the students in the course work and examination scores per part.

Different researchers may have different interpretations of the same data; thus, adding research bias to the interpretations. The boundaries of the phenomena were not clearly evident. Due to the time factor and lack of comprehensive data base, the study was not able to locate all the students who were in various years of the programme. The study was delimited to the following variables: time management, learner to learner interaction and note taking skills, reading skills and demographic variables on academic performance of distance learners as visualized in terms of the marks obtained by the students in the course work and examinations.

1.10: Definition of Significant Terms

Academic performance: refers to the achievement of scores and grades in the end of semester examination conducted by the university.

Bachelor of Education Arts Programme: Refers to the external degree programme in the School of Continuing and Distance Education which uses the distance learning mode of study. The programme takes a minimum of four calendar years divided into six semesters each lasting for eight months. The tutorials are conducted during the months of December, April and August. They are supported by modules and learner support services in Extra Mural Centres.

Cohort: a group of students who progress through the same courses together in a specified sequence for every semester. These students begin the program collectively and graduate collectively.

Demographic Variables: These consist of age, gender, marital status, income and education background of the learners.

Distance Learning: A mode of learning in which the learner and the lecturer are separated in space and/or time, mostly it uses distributed learning resources.

Distance Education: an umbrella term referring to the programmes of study where learners and lecturers engage in the teaching and learning process separated from one another by time and space. It is a professional field of academic study.

Distance Learners: These are learners enrolled for an away-from-the-physical university premises and are separated from the lecturer most of the times but are supported by study modules, regional meeting and face to face tuition during school holidays.

Distance Education Student: Student enrolled for a course offered by Distance Education.

Learner to Learner Interaction: This is interaction between one student and another or among several students in order to promote understanding of the course content and stimulate critical thinking through group discussion, peer tuition, class presentation.

Note taking: Writing down pieces of information in a systematic way as the lecturer teaches indicating the dates, main ideas, logical sequence and proper documentation

Part of the Study: The stage of the learner in the four-year study programme. There are six parts in the study programme and each part lasts for eight months which is similar to a semester.

Study Habits: Refer to distance learning students' methods and approach to learning. This covers action taken by the distance learning students with regard to time management, participation, study groups, note taking, and reading skills.

Time Management: Are the skills, tools, and techniques used by students to manage time and to accomplish specific task like completing assignments, revising for exams, and writing term papers.

Reading Skills: This is the process of student extracting meaning from modules and text books.

Regional Meeting: It refers to a meeting organised in various learning or extramural centres of the University of Nairobi away from the university that brings the students to discuss issues of their studies and disseminate information from the university.

Resident Lecturer: Refers to an academic member of staff attached to the extramural centre to co-ordinate academic activities of the university.

Residential Session: This is a period of time when distance learners leave their place of work to go to the University for Face to face Interaction with lecturers for introduction, revision and examinations during the school holidays.

Year of the Study: Refers to the stage in the programme in relation to parts of study. Parts one and two constitute one academic year of the study. Parts three and four constitute second year. Parts five and six constitute the final year. So the three academic years translate to four calendar years.

1.11 Organization of the Study:

This study is organized into five chapters;

Chapter one consists of introduction and, background to the study which provides an overview of the components of the Study. This includes the development of context by providing background information and a summary of the state of existing research on the influence of study habits and demographic variables on academic performance. Purpose of the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, hypotheses, justification of the study, limitation of the study, delimitation of the study, definition of significant terms and the structure of the study.

In Chapter Two, the literature review is organised into two broad categories which include an analysis of published information related to study habits and demographic variables. The literature review is organised around the theoretical framework and an overview of open and distance learning, theories of distance learning, background to the study, studies related to study habits and demographic variables on academic performance and the conceptual framework. A review of the relevant literature in each of the broad categories used is critically analysed to select on the information which is directly related to the study.

Chapter Three presents the steps which were followed to meet the objectives of the study. These are research philosophy, research design, study location and target population from which data was collected. The steps are followed by the sampling method and data collection procedure. The data collection instruments are presented next, together with the collection of items and Selection of Items. The Preliminary Form of the Scale, Pre-try out, the Final Form of the scale, administration of the scale are presented next to the reliability of the instruments validity. The indicators of academic performance, data analysis, statistical techniques employed and operational definition of variables are also provided.

Chapter Four provides a summary of the survey of the data collected. The chapter is organized in sub-sections: first, in the instrument return response rate, the trends are explained using percentages, tables, figures and descriptions of data, to present the findings of the study. The findings are presented as per the objectives, research questions and hypotheses of the study are also discussed in this chapter.

Chapter Five presents the summary of the findings as well as a discussions of the research findings on influence of time management and how it influences academic performance, the influence of learner-to-learner interaction on academic performance, influence of academic performance on note taking skills, the influence of average academic performance on reading skills, the findings of the study on demographic variables, conclusions of the study, recommendations of the study and suggestions for further research on distance learning to facilitate deliberation on the options for the B.Ed (Arts) by distance learning.

1.12 Ethical considerations

In this study, ethical consideration was made by identification of the researcher to the respondents, giving reasons why the research was being carried out and the consequences of the respondents' participation in the study. The respondents were informed that the research was purely for academic purposes. They were assured the information obtained would be confidential, and they were required to provide information truthfully and honestly.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter gives a brief review of literature in the area related to the present investigation. The purpose of reviewing the earlier researches is not only to economize the historical perspective of the present work but also to take cognizance of related studies which have employed one or more variables included in this study. These studies would help to design this study and avoid pitfalls. Additionally, their findings of the previous researchers were utilized to substantiate and support the interpretation of the result of the present study. An intensive survey of the literature related to the present work was done by referring to a large number of journals, books, encyclopaedias, international dissertation, abstracts and national level publications. The literature review is organised around theoretical framework and an overview of open and distance learning, theories of distance learning, background of study habits and academic performance, studies related to study habits and demographic variables on academic performance and the conceptual framework.

2.2 An Overview of Open and Distance Learning

Rumble and Oliveira (1999) describe distance learning as an educative process in which a significant proportion of teaching is done by someone who is removed in distance, in space, or lives away, from the students. But it should also be pointed out that even the students are usually dispersed. Distance learning involves the use of a varying range of media, be it print, electronic, written correspondence, audio or computer-based. Modern electronic technology permits 'live' lessons to be delivered successfully without the lecturer's direct presence. Participants can practice 'time

shift' instruction at some time after the live lesson and place shift instruction at the same place away from the live lecture.

Moore (1990) stated that distance learning is not solitary but relational for its concept and mode of delivery may be interwoven with other literatures. It provides a form of education where the act of teaching can take place at the same time as learning delivery or can be separated from learning in terms of time (asynchronous). It is a form of education characterized by physical separation from the teacher, an organized instructional program, technological media, and two-way communication. These characteristics are some of the intervening variables which may influence the mode of study of distance learning students.

According to Moore, study skills was an important issue in the early 1900s. Scholars cite many works such as Supervised Study Hall-Quest (1916), and Directing Study of High School Pupils Woodring and Flemming (1935). In 1908 (reprinted in 1968), Huey proposed that study skills like library skills and note taking should be taught as early as possible in the elementary grades and in high school. Students should be given free rein to read widely on subjects of interest. Strang (1928, 1937, & 1962) published several texts and articles in the 1920s and 1960s about improving reading and study in high school. Robinson's introduction of the Study Strategy SQ3R (1946) is historically important because it was designed to put readers in charge of their own study of content material. Students were to Survey the material, create Questions to guide their reading, then Read, Recite, and Review. Robinson led the way to other similar study strategies presented over the next several decades, such as Preview, Question, Read, Reflect, Recite and Review (PQ4R) (Sanacore, 1982).

Dechant (1970) indicated that study skills were important in reading; however research declined markedly in the 1950s and 1960s. Teacher preparation textbooks continued to discuss study skills but Tierney and Cunningham, (1980), found almost no studies on how to retain information in their history of research on comprehension.

Sebasta (1997) noted the "Hot literacy topics of the past decades" at International Reading Association conventions from 1960 -1990s. Study skills require intensive reading and thinking; the more complex the strategy, the deeper the processing will be. If several tactics or behaviours need to be used, more energy is expended. For instance, to study, one needs to read the information and repeat the reading via note-taking, highlighting, mapping or other means of learning the information. Then one needs to organize that information by schematizing it and decide how the information applies to the learning goal, perhaps by generating questions and linking answers from the organized notations. From all the information given above, it is clear that during the time of study, the learner must be planning, monitoring and assessing how the study is progressing and when to alter a tactic for more effective and efficient study to occur.

Keiyoro (2010) studies on the availability of ICT in teaching and learning science curriculum in Kenya secondary schools found out that when ICT was effectively used, the learners would perform better than those who are not exposed to ICT. The study, found that there is need for policies that deregulate satellite communication and other communication links, regulate ISP and regulate government and cross-

border data needed in educational programmes. The use of ICT can be used to enhance distance learning because the learners can have learner to learner interaction as well as the learner-lecturer interaction. The use of online learning should be a major emphasis at the University of Nairobi.

Assey (2009) stated that the costs incurred during the face to face interaction, paper work, administrative duties, quality of teaching can be fast, efficient, effective and economical when ICT is integrated into the management of distance learning students. The study established that the university is prepared in terms of infrastructure and technical staff to adopt ICT in the learning process of distance learning students which will minimize the time learners waste searching for the material to use and also improve learner-support services.

Mulwa (2012) found out that the readiness to adopt e-learning is influenced by level of education and the availability of ICT infrastructure, thus the availability of ICT to distance learners at the UoN can make them to improve on their academic performance because of the accessibility of the reading materials.

Muchiri (2012) established that online learner support system had good information quality and system usage characteristics. The system meets the learner-support needs and students' satisfaction. It is crucial to the learning process and contributes to the quality of the whole learning experience. The studies indicated that learners express greater need for access to study groups as a peer support in the course of their study. Further studies noted that the learners' needs are influenced by gender, course of study, year of study, location and study environment.

Mbugua (2012) found the attitude of educational managers is positive towards philosophy in distance education. In regard to the level of awareness, it was found that some conceived it to be the traditional adult education aiming at dealing with illiteracy, while others conceived it as education for those who failed to join universities. These views contradict the aim of distance education which is to make education accessible to those who qualify regardless of their age, income, geographical, racial or health disparities.

Rambo (2008) found that the ability to afford distance learning depends on the socioeconomic background of learners, thus the distance learners are in need of financial support to enable them to pay fees. The majority of learners are low income earners. They spend their income on meeting family basic needs and those in the programme risk not completing their studies in time because of wealth financial base.

Mboroki (2007) noted that distance learners depend on the lecturers' notes and study modules which are written in didactic format, and seek the resources from friends and other fellow students. The study noted that there is a positive correlation between note taking on academic performance of 40.3% of the variation in average performance which was explained using note taking skills. The respondents showed evidence that they rarely used the library for research purposes, hence the reason to believe that they only relied on notes given during face to face interaction during residential sessions with their lecturers.

Gakuu (2006) found out that over 95% of lecturers support the use of e-learning in teaching. The university needs to offer training to lecturers in order to create the required level of awareness using different strategies for lecturers in various colleges. Thus, various needs can be addressed. The study recommended that both distance and face to face modes on learning should use e-learning. Thus, the needs in the current study can also be addressed.

Mbogori (2007) indicated that, the increased interactivity between the students and tutors at various centres is acceptable. The learners would be able to meet for discussion. The use of video conferencing can be useful to pass information or hold discussion. The studies recommended that the university should develop webs, containing all the course materials used by the distance education students and creation of the digital library. Mbogori noted that 60% of the learners were computer literate. Thus, they are able to access information at the regional centre. This can be better for the students with time constraints because of other commitments.

Moore and Kearsley (1996) and Evans and Juler (1991) have found that the world has hundreds of universities teaching distance learning, each being born because of a specific social need. The universities are not easy to supply, sustain, improve, plan finance or manage, as each has unique characteristics. The distance learning students experience many barriers to learning such as: study rooms within and outside the university, lack of feedback or contact with tutors, lack of support services, alienation, lack of finances to make copies of learning materials and to meet the cost of travel, lack of time to study, demands from the employer, and poor reading and

note taking skills. Distance learning students also lack an opportunity for learner to learner interactions. They should therefore be equipped with appropriate study skills.

2.3 Theories of Distance learning

Several theories on distance learning have been proposed which include: Holmberg (1986, 1989) and Peters (1988) who view distance learning theory in a manner different from traditional theory. Shale (1990), Simonson and Schlosser (1995) supported the theory that the concept of education is the same whether supported in distance from the lecturer, electronic media environment or whether it occurs in a classroom where the students meet face to face with the lecturer. This is the model referring to theoretical bases for distance learning. However, disagreements exist as to whether distance learning theory is distinct from traditional education theory (Kirby, 1995).

Numerous efforts have been made to provide a theoretical basis in order to describe the structural patterns inherent in distance learning that would allow explanation of its effects. Holmberg (1985) persisted on recognizing the need for a unifying theory of distance learning and developed his own theory that contained both predictive and explanatory features. In 1986 Keegan classified distance learning theories into three categories: theories of learner independence and autonomy, theory of industrialization of teaching and theories of interaction and communication.

Other theorists such as Garrison (1989) and Shale (1990) have offered a newer theory that is a synthesis of existing theories of communication and Education. For these individuals, the concept of education is the same whether it occurs in a

classroom where the students meet face to face with an instructor or is on distance learning. In both cases the study habit is transparent.

Kirby (1995) suggested that the differences between the group theories described by Keegan (1986) and those of Garrison (1989) and Shale (1990) are due to the context of the research contributing to the theory as well as to the attributes of existing distance learning system. The majority of the theories developed in 1960s and 1970s were reviewed by Keegan (1986, 1990). These theories were applied to educational systems serving adult learners that employed correspondence, supplemented by audio-visual or telephone delivery systems.

A critical issue facing education theories is whether what is defined as knowledge is a representation that is internally constructed by the learner (the constructivist view) or is the material that is transmitted by the instructor to the student via an external representation (the cognitive view). Bredo (1994) noted that two confounding theories pose a challenge for instructional designers working in distance learning programs as well as for those using traditional instructional delivery systems. One of the reasons that a unifying theory of distance learning has not emerged may well be lack of substantive research, semblance of cohesiveness or direction (Dean, Biner and Coenen 1996). A number of past studies have claimed that there is no influence of the means of delivery of instructions and their effectiveness (Clark, 1994). Most of this research is anecdotal in nature and does not employ strict methodology (Dean, Biner and Coenen 1996).

Qualitative approach may not be the best approach to use to derive a theory. Dean, Biner and Coenen (1996) have suggested that a better approach in addressing the

problems plaguing study habits evaluation research is to use a system approach. In this model learner to learner interactions, note taking skills, completion rate of assignments and reading skills potentially interact with one another in the context of the distance learning process. Other researchers such as Moore (1993) and Moore and Kearsley (1996) have argued for a system approach to distance learning students. They advocate that educational resources and processes using study habits should address the desired ends rather than being used just to transport a classroom teacher to a remote site.

Burge (1990); Morgan (1991) and Russell (1991) have noted the complex contextual factors operative in schools and in learning institutions. These writers have argued that qualitative research, emphasizing a conceptual context intertwined with interpretive inquiry, be included as a research methodology for distance learning. Traditional positive approaches emphasized on quantitative methods and failed to capture important teaching functions and the climate operative in different school settings.

Keegan (1995) suggested that electronically linking instructor and students at various locations creates a virtual classroom. Education at a distance should be built on the concept of equivalency of learning experiences. The more equivalent the learning experiences of distant learners are to those of local learners, the more equivalent will be the outcomes of the educational experiences for all learners. This approach to distance education, advocates designing a collection of equivalent learning experiences for distant and local learners though they may be different for each student. The objective of the instructional designer of distance education is to

provide for appropriate, equivalent learning experiences for each student. In elaborating on this theory, Simonson (1995) states that it should not be necessary for any group of learners to compensate for different, possibly lesser, instructional learning experiences. Students should have learning experiences that are tailored to the environment and situation in which they find themselves. Thus, those developing distance education systems should strive for equivalency in the learning experiences of all students, regardless of how they are linked to the resources or the instruction they require. There are several key elements to Equivalency Theory; they are the concepts of equivalency, learning experiences, appropriate application, students and outcomes.

Siemens (2004) proposed connectivism as a learning theory for the digital age, a successor to behaviourism, cognitive, and constructivism. It as a learning theory for the digital age. It characterizes connectivism as a successor to behaviourism, cognitivism, and constructivism. He identifies three limitations of these theories: their intrapersonal view of learning; their failure to address the learning that is located within technology and organizations; and their lack of contribution to the value judgments that need to be made in knowledge-rich environments. How people work and function is altered when new tools are utilized. The field of education has been slow to recognize both the impact of new learning tools and the environmental changes in what it means to learn. Connectivism provides insight into learning skills and tasks needed for learners to flourish in a digital era.

Recognizing that quantitative and qualitative approaches offer different insights into a research setting, a number of researchers are now combining the two

methodologies as stated by Von Prummer and Rossie (1990; cited in Burge, 1990). By employing mixed research methodologies design and triangulation and analysing the data from each source, researchers can show convergence in results. From Creswell's (1996) observation, mixed methods can be used to find contradictions and new perspectives and to add scope and breadth to a study. In the light of the studies on mixed methods cited here, the current study adopted a mixed research approach. This approach has helped the researcher to find a convergence of the results on the influence of study habits and demographic variables on academic performance in distance learning students.

2.4 Study Habits

Study habits refer to distance learning students' method and approach to learning. This covers action taken by the distance learning students with regard to time management, participation, study groups, note taking, and reading skills. The extent of distance learning students in academics may be determined by study habits for a period the student is in the university. It is assumed that study habits are a primary indicator of good academic performance. If a student performs well, it is assumed he or she has good study habits, but if a student scores low grades it indicates poor study habits. However, many experiences and studies such as those cited in the next paragraph have found out that there are several factors that would account for performance; no single factor can; therefore, be pointed out as a predictor of academic performance.

Research conducted by Nonis and Hudson (2010) on the Impact of Study Time and Study Habits on the Performance of College Students in Arkansas State University, found that the quantity of time and the study time spent by students had an impact on

the students' academic performance. In a similar research conducted earlier to investigate the influence of study time on the college students' performance by Krohn and Conner (2005); Lahmers and Zulauf (2000); and Schmidt (1983), no influence of the two variables was reported. Higher Education Research Institute (2003) in USA also noted that there was overwhelming evidence that students devoted less time to their studies as cited by Nonis and Hudson (2010). The study recommended that parents and educators should encourage and motivate their students to engage in productive study behaviour.

2.5 Academic Performance

Refers to the achievement of scores and grades by the end of semester examination conducted by the university. Pedro, Dachs, Maia, Andrade and Carvalho (2007) conducted a study on performance, the socio-economic and educational background of undergraduate students admitted to Brazil's State University of Campinas from, 1994 to 1997. Their study which was based on a hierarchical model for the relevant variables involved found that students coming from disadvantaged backgrounds in both educational and socioeconomic aspects had a higher relative performance than their complementary group. Srivastava and Manjulika (1995) studied the effectiveness of distance education with special reference to Karnataka State at Mysore University and IGNOU Regional Centre, Bangalore. The findings indicated a significant imbalance in the distribution of distance education institutions region area-wise and also in the ratio of enrolment in distance education. Pugazhenthii (1991) studied the teachers taking Bachelor of Education and Master of Education through correspondence system in the Madurai Kama Raj University. The results indicated that the age of the teacher trainees ranged from 25 to 61 years. About half of the students comes from rural areas. The rate of dropouts was below 10 per cent.

Physical facilities provided and the methodology adopted during contact programmes were not found satisfactory. Most of the students found the functioning of the study centres inadequate and inefficient. The trainees found it difficult to find a place for teaching practice as well as suitable guiding teachers.

Beswick and Ramsden (1987) reported on 239 university students enrolled in business and economics courses at North Carolina State University and indicated that most students did not have sufficient time to read the textbooks and study, and that their absence from class was work related. Majority (56%) of students stated that they could not take lecture notes while listening and, 29%, said they could not understand the lecture. Noel-Levitz (2003) surveyed 350,000 students attending four-year public and private colleges. The results indicated academic advising as the most important aspect of their educational experiences. Students rated academic advising second to only instructional effectiveness in importance. Friedman, (1985); Romer (1993); Van Warbeck (2004) indicated that making lectures compulsory had no significant effect on improving academic performance and may, in fact, have a detrimental effect on a student's motivation. Another alternative would be to make the lecture notes available online.

However, Wentzel and Jacobs (2004) suggest reasons why students would not attend lectures. These reasons include undertaking part-time (or even full-time) work, transport problems, financial problems, accommodation problems, illness, family commitments, boring lectures or lecturers, the time of day of the lecture, or preparation for assignments. Addus (2007) states the main problems affecting students' academic performance include inadequate background, working long

hours, and lack of time to study and seek advice, lack of time management skills, bad study habits and skills, and lack of self-confidence. Many students are also faced with various impediments in their pursuit of higher education and career objectives, including financial problems, family responsibilities and social and extra-curricular activities. Some of these activities do not only take away from the time needed for sleeping, attending class and studying, but they also cause considerable stress resulting in negative effects on academic performance.

Mark (2000) observes that successful students are able to balance social activities with good study habits. In general, the success or failure in higher education is not explained by the students' attributes or faculty teaching efficiency in isolation, but by the complex interactions between students and the learning environments they experience. Entwistle (1990) recommends that students are in need of comprehensive advise, counselling and support services including time management, stress management, efficient study style, habits , skills, reading, writing, and lecture note taking skills, and other support services. These must help students enhance their capacity to master the relevant subject, self-confidence, verbal and written communication, academic performance, and to be competitive and productive members of the community.

Several studies have been conducted on distance learning students in the School of Continuing and Distance Education of the University of Nairobi ; for example, Gikonyo (2012) carried out a study on factors influencing university manager's participation in distance education, Mbugua (2012) also studied factors influencing educational managers' support for distance mode of delivery, Assey (2009) focused

on the impact of interacting ICT into students support services among distance learning students, Bowa (2007), studied learner support services, Mboroki, (2007), carried out a study on comparisons of Bachelor of Education (Arts) on campus students and distance study students in teaching practice, Rambo (2007) carried out a research on financing distance learning in Kenya and focused on Bachelor of Education (Arts) Mbogori (2007) investigated the influence of the course delivery systems and learners needs in Kenya. However, none has provided enough insight regarding study habits and academic performance. Yet distance learning has become a pronounced and viable alternative to regular face-to-face mode. It provides students great flexibility for learning opportunities as it does not use conventional constraints imposed by schedules for classes. It obviates the barrier to learning created by restricted class time. It tends to cultivate a distinctly different population, course design and instructional technique, (Moore, Kearsley and Albright, 1996; Zvacek, 2000).

Table 1.1 shows the disparity between the number of the students enrolled and those who graduated between 2001 and 2006.

Table 1.1 Students enrolled in the department of education studies UoN between 2001 and 2005 and successfully completed their course

Academic year	Student enrolment	No. Graduated	%
2001	682	399	58.50
2002	994	360	36.21
2003	1025	780	76.09
2004	2970	872	29.36
2005	682	399	58.50
Total	7450	3240	43.50

Source: Department of Des Strategic Plan 2011

Despite such concerns the top ranked universities like the Open University of Tanzania, the University of South Africa, Indira Gandhi Open University of India, and Open University of the United Kingdom have been confirmed to produce high quality graduates into the labour market. They have been rated on the basis of learner satisfaction. Some scholars believe that graduates of distance education are inferior (Fox, 1998; Mathews, 1999; Smith & Kelly, 1987) as cited by Wambugu (2012). The assumption is that students who are satisfied with teaching and learning process and who have a positive perception about the instructional methods are likely to perform higher than those with a negative perception (Hannay & Newvine, 2006) as cited by Wambugu (2012). This belief may not be true at the University of Nairobi. A review of literature has shown that there are no studies on study habits influence of on academic performance of distance learning students. Therefore, this study aimed at better understanding of the influence of study habits and demographic

variables on academic performance of distance learning students. The results of this study can improve management of distance education in Kenya and world in general.

2.6 Study Habits and Academic Performance

Good (1973) defined study habits as the way of study whether systematic, efficient or inefficient. Good study habits are perceived to be determinants of academic performance. Therefore, efforts should be made to develop and improve study habits in students. Students are drawn from different educational backgrounds. They face various challenges such as poor study habits leading to poor academic performance. In the literature review, study habits are defined as students' ability to manage time and other resources to complete academic tasks successfully. Study habit is the mode of reading which students use to study.

There are many factors affecting study orientation, namely expressive of study habits, time management, reading skills, note making, individual difference, lectures, family, and library skills. However, time management, note taking, learner-to-learner interaction, completion of assignment and reading skills variables are very important for this study. The effect of study habits on academic performance contributes to reduction of dropout rates because study habits reinforce the students' sense of self-confidence, self-esteem and progress. Subsequently, study habits can be explained as the way and manner in which a student plans his/her private reading outside the lecture hours in order to master a particular subject or topic.

However, several studies done by Holmberg (1987), suggested categories of distance education research in philosophy and theory of distance education, study of

motivation, subject matter presentation, communications, economies, and history and nothing much on study habits. The research agenda has expanded over the past decades with research emerging in a number of areas like the learner centred approach by Housou et al. (1996) and operational issues (Clark, 1993). While distance learning environment is changing, many questions remain unanswered. Research needs to focus on the context in which distance learning is developing with the inputs needed to effectively implement distance learning opportunities. This process needs to be evaluated, so that adjustments can be made. The outcome needs to be assessed to find out if educational needs across the country are being met. The current research was directed towards the influence of study habits and demographic variables on academic performance of distance learning students.

Marcus Crede and Nathan R. Kuncie (2008), in their research at the University of Albany found out substantial incremental validity in predicting academic performance. They did a meta-analysis which revealed that study skills inventories and constructs are largely independent of high school grades and scores and standardized admission tests but moderately related with previous theories. Study motivation and study skills exhibit the strongest relationship with both grade point average and grades individual classes. The two also observed that academic specific anxiety was an important negative predictor.

Graven (2008) did a study on the influence of an individual amount of caffeine consumption during his/her study session and the individual study habits. The study was done on the main effect of drinking caffeine on study time when preparation began and amount of information the participants believed they had retained. High

scores on anxiety level were included in a healthy study habits. Pearson correlation indicated no influence of the amount of caffeine consumed while studying and the individual performance.

Diana (2005) observed that the parenting style on the study habits of university students showed a negative correlation between authoritarian parenting style and academic confidence. There was a positive correlation between democratic parenting style and short and long term study habits. The long-term study habits contributed significantly to the prediction of democratic parenting style. Gender differences were found among the democratic parenting style which had a female rating higher than males and long study habits which also had females scoring higher than males.

Pogue (2000) did a research project to determine why students fail. He found that students fail due to lack of good study techniques. He advocated that students should ensure that they have a good study environment, good desks, study chairs, and good light, comfortable room temperature and a good atmosphere. Secondly, they should have a good overview of the assignment before embarking on it. They should know what skills, facts and ideas they are expected to master. They should start with the most difficult subjects while the minds are clear. However, the effective use of any of these systems depends on student's study habits.

Carr and Ledwith (1980) examined factors related to success of disadvantaged adults beginning studies with the British Open University. They took a sample of 332 students who had dropped out or failed. The two picked a random sample of 100 students who had completed their course work and also a random sample of students interviewed by telephone. The results indicated that only one-fourth of the

disadvantaged group received any academic counselling and two thirds of those who dropped out would have appreciated more assistance. The reasons stated by the students who had withdrawn varied according to the course type. Those who enrolled in the arts and social sciences were more likely to cite personal or domestic problems whereas those in mathematics, science and technology courses cited job-oriented reasons. At the UoN many distance learning students drop out or take long to graduate, thus this study was done to establish influence of study habits and demographic variables on academic performance in distance learning students.

2.7 Time Management and Academic Performance

George (2011) asserted that intelligence and study time are positively associated with academic performance. However, study time on academic performance can also be associated with early rising, sleeping early and having less accumulated sleep. The study assumes that students with good time management will be more successful in many settings. Motivational experts have identified time management skills as central predictor of success in many fields. Scholarly research backs the claims by Britton and Tessa (2008) in a study of university students which found out that better time management skills is associated with higher GPAs. They found out those students who have access to important external resources like computers, finances and transport are likely to be more academically successful. They indicated that time management skills predict success. These studies revealed that time management practices are central to academic success. They suggested that the selection committees for college and universities should assess a student's ability to manage time effectively as a criterion for entrance. The power of time management is the predictor of academic performances. Students are faced with a variety of decisions to make during study time. They have to prepare well for examinations

and in this case, they have to allocate a specific study time for each course unit. If proper time management is not practiced, students might allocate more time to the favourable unit at the expense of others.

Kornell and son (2009) on the research on met cognition indicated that students studying for examinations allocate time based on how well a topic is learned. Students spend time on items that are furthest from the desired state. On ordering, the students study the difficult items the longest. Thiede (2009) on studies meta-cognitive monitoring during reading observed that students must make decisions on the spacing or the amount of time that should elapse before restudy. The current study investigated the mummeries in which students unravel simultaneously the study habits on time allocation, ordering and spacing.

Kornell and Metcalfe (2006) on study on efficiency and the region proximal learning framework noted that student's needs to decide the order in which to study the materials because he/she might choose to study the easy material rather than the most difficult materials. However, Donlosky and Hertzog (1998) studies on aging and deficits in associate memory suggested that people choose to study the easier items first and shift to the difficult items afterwards. The current study assumed that students study along the continuum: easy, medium and difficult items for study.

Dempstar (1989) in spacing effects and their implications for theory and practice observed that students view spacing as harmful and not helpful. Students will choose to mess and undermine the effectiveness of their studies. Despite the importance of using spaced study schedules, very little is known about how students schedule their

study. However, the schedule strategies students' use vary from situation to situation. The researcher developed an ex-post facto study that mimics the real-world of study to understand the influence of study habits on academic performance. In the real world, students have the luxury of making isolated decisions about study habits.

Wagner (2007) stated that time is a dimension of interest for scientists through the ages. The first activities with this dimension can be traced back to Aristotle (384 – 322 B.C) and Augustine (354-430). Today, counsellors and advisors from a wide range of fields consider the efficient use of time management as anchored in numerous theoretical codes as a determinant for the learning success of students. However, in comparison to other determinants of academic performance, only a limited number of studies focus on time management. Most of the studies do not examine the work done at home study by students. The present study pursued the influence of study habits on academic performance on the question of how much time students invest on reading away from the university. The study also distinguished the activities students engage in while working out of the university.

An investigation on time spent on term papers and deadlines which must be completed by students was done. The studies indicated that females manage assignment better than males at 38.4% while male were at 23.9%. The study noted that the mean for female students is 55% which is slightly higher than the mean for males which is 53%. This reflects that the variations in academic performance abilities within the males are high. The disparity can be explained by societal demands whereby males are controllers of family wealth and they spend more time

planning about it. Further, more male chauvinism makes them not to care a lot because no one can dare question their performance.

Mark (2010) studied intelligence variations across time, race and nationality and noted that successful students are able to balance social activities with good study habits. A diversion from students will alleviate stress and help to prevent them from becoming fatigued. A student should make sure that he or she must take a break for an hour after studies to meet with friends, to play some cards, work out at gym or to make new acquaintances. Thus, the student concentrates on his or her studies if he or she is able to organize himself or herself socially, and then develop routine study habits. After organizing the reading materials both at home and library then the student should identify a conducive and serene venue to study for two or three hours. Several studies have focused on students studies on conventional face to face stations (Entwistle, 1990) on studies in approaches to learning, evaluations of teaching and preference for contrasting academic environment observed that comparatively little has been done to explore the issue with regard to influence of time management on academic performance in a different environment. Studies should be done to protect investments of time and money by students in distance learning in order to achieve educational goals. The Study habits are an important part of the learning process. The success or failure in higher education is not explained by the students' attributes or faculty teaching efficiency in isolation, but by the complex interactions between students and the learning environments they experience. Thus, students are in need of comprehensive advise, counselling and support services including time management, stress management, efficient study style, habits and skills, reading, writing, and lecture note taking skills, and other

support services. These must help students enhance their capacity to master the relevant subject, self-confidence, verbal and written communication, academic performance, and to be competitive and productive members of the community.

Norales and Addus (2003) and Kelly (2001) on the influence of sleeping length and grade point average classified college students into short sleepers (Individuals who slept less than six hours a day), average sleepers (individuals with seven or eight hours of sleep a day), and long sleepers (individuals sleeping nine or more hours a day). They found that the individuals who represented long sleepers reported higher GPAs than the first two groups. Students at UoN are admitted to the university as a result of their performance in Kenya National Examinations that do not demand the same preparation levels required to succeed as is the case in university examinations.

Jegede (1992) studied the students' anxiety in learning through distance education by collecting data from 222 students of the University of Southern Queensland enrolled in distance education. The findings revealed that students exhibited a high anxiety level and were generally more anxious about their studies after the semester than before. Gender, age, marital status and course of study were not significantly related to students' anxiety in learning through distance education. However, a significant increase was noticed for the factor of time between the students' pre-semester and post-semester opinions while some increase was noted inter-alia for the factors of employment and family support. It may be that while the students found ways to cope with the factors associated with content, environment, and readiness, the fact of time, employment and family support were likely to be associated with more problems than the students had expected.

The present study is geared towards budgeting time for classes, study time, career and lifestyle structure, missed lectures, forgotten lectures or being late for work as some of the common complaints of adult learners. Some of the reasons leading to a larger percentage of adult drop outs is lack of time due to commitments. Due to the distance learning students' nature of life, they are unable to complete their course of study because of how they budgeted time for classes, study time, careers and lifestyle structure. Most of the common complaints of adult learners revolve around missed lectures and lateness by lecturers. Adults who have prior learning experience in the work place and in life enrol with the intention of acquiring an undergraduate degree. They may have learned through personal study or other reading skills.

The study established that out of 159 respondents 63.8%, were P1 Teachers, 18.8% were Diploma holders, 17.5% were form four leavers who were left out by cut-off point set by Joint Admission Board, and they took advantage of distance learning. The trend could also indicate that those teachers with bachelor's degrees were motivated with salary increment and promotions.

2.8 Learner to Learner Interaction and Academic Performance.

Singh (1984) surveyed the study habits of high, middle and low achiever adolescents in relation to their sex, intelligence and socio-economic status by collecting data randomly from a sample of 1600 adolescent students studying in the ninth class in the rural and urban areas of Himachal Pradesh. The results show that adolescent boys had significantly better study habits than adolescent girls. Study habits were related to academic achievement significantly. High achieving adolescents had significantly better study habits than middle achievers. Middle achievers had significantly better study habits than low achievers. Study habits of adolescent boys

and adolescent girls differed significantly at different levels of intelligence, high, middle and low. The triple interaction among academic achievement, intelligence and socioeconomic status was not significant in relation to the study habits of either adolescent boys or girls.

Chauhan (1982) investigated the study habits of 10 to 12 years children with regard to their parental profession by taking a sample of 500 children from Hamirpur and Shimla districts of Himachal Pradesh. Parental profession was classified into 5 types like agriculture, government services, business, teaching and defence services. The main findings were: Urban students possessed better study habits than rural students; there was no significant difference in the study habits of boys and girls.

Gose (1998) observed that 39% of college freshmen worked 16 or more hours per week, an increase of 4% since 1993. Among all business majors, marketing students typically worked even more hours per week than did other students (Smart, Tomkovick, Jones & Menon, 1999). The 2002 survey conducted by the Higher Education Research Institute also found that 65.3% of entering freshmen have either “some concerns” or “major concerns” about not having enough money to complete their college degrees (Higher Education Research Institute, 2002). This was an increase of almost 1% from 2001 and was likely to increase in the years ahead because of reduced funding for higher education by state legislatures. Although more women (70.9%) were concerned about whether they would have enough funds to complete college than were men (58.3%), all students seemed to be working out of the need to make up for rising tuition and fewer available grants.

Distance learning students' with similar goals and objectives can study together. Study group can be a very important tool for academic success because comparing notes, explaining concepts to one another and critiquing each other's assignments can lead to better understanding of information. Study group contributes to adult learning because it socializes the students academically leading to improved performance in academics. Through group discussions, students are able to learn through others, learn new terms, technical terms and vocabulary as their colleagues take time to expound a point in the discussion. This enables the students to recall everything that has been discussed regarding the subject at hand; hence, they become more organized throughout their learning process. It is also a method of mentoring public speakers and self-confidence.

2.9 Note Taking Skills and Academic Performance.

Note taking skills is an important dimension of study habits. The students who use proper study habits can preserve knowledge for a longer time. Eliot (2002) studied the influence of psychosocial and study skill factor and college outcome and found a significant difference between the students who received note taking training, taking notes at lesson and reviewing the notes and students who attended lessons without receiving note taking training. Note taking increases students' success. However, many students prefer hand-outs and notes from friends. Ansari (1980) referring to his previous work on National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) in 1994, conducted a study on the influence of study habits and academic achievement. The study found a positive correlation between study habits and academic achievement of elementary and secondary school students. Ansori's study is relevant to the present one whose main objective is to examine the influence of study habits and demographic variables on academic performance.

Beswick and Ramsden (1987) reported on 239 university students enrolled in business and economics courses at North Carolina State University and observed that most students did not have sufficient time to read the textbook and study, and that their absence from class was work-related. The majority (56%) of the students stated that they could not take lecture notes while listening and 29% said they could not understand the lecture.

Jam (1967) developed an inventory to measure the study habits of college and university-going students of Uttar Pradesh. The inventory measured the study habits of an individual in 8 areas. It revealed different ways and means followed by a student in taking notes from the reading materials and making charts and graphs for better understanding.

Note taking is a skill that every student must learn and refine. Lack of note-taking is a constant deficiency in the study habits of distance learning students. Learning is the ingredient of good note-taking which the learners are supposed to apply in order to succeed. The researcher has observed that some distance learning students cannot read their own written notes a few days after taking them and they have little use of them. The lecture notes are essential, thus they need to be accurate and concise. The students need appropriate note-taking habits when they listen to the lecturers. The lecturers must learn to focus and concentrate on the main points of the lecture; the studies established that that about 40.3% of the performance was explained by good notes taking skills by the learners. This shows that 40.3% of the variation in average performance can be explained using the note-taking skills. The respondents showed evidence that they rarely used the library for research purposes, hence the reason to

believe that they only relied on notes given during their interaction with their lecturers.

2.10 Reading Skills and Academic Performance

Research on study skills has been ongoing since the late 1950s and early 1960s. Entwistle (1960) and Rafoth, Leal, and DeFabo (1993) on strategies for learning and remembering indicated that study skills should be taught in high school to help students succeed in school. Motivation, outlining/mapping, time management, test taking skills, note-taking skills, SQ3R, PQ5R, library skills, retention/memory, listening, comprehension, and studying are study skill techniques that they reviewed in their literature. To enhance the academic achievement of students, a dedicated academic magnet high school implemented a study skills course to help students attain the GPA criteria. African American freshmen have enrolled in this course since it was implemented in 1994. Reading skills is different in many ways because of social and communicative nature. Reading involves communication and requires suitable cognitive skills, reading environment and reading methodology. William and Burden (1997) emphasized that students bring to the task of learning different characteristics such as age, gender, personality, motivation, self-concept, life experience and cultural background, all of which influence the way in which students go about the task of learning.

Wood (1996) recommends that the design of study materials must take into the account proportion of students who enrol with little or no experience of distance learning students. These students are at risk of dropping out of university or else they develop less effective reading skills for survival. The students are not well versed in the issues of technology or writing academic papers. They are typically offered

volumes of study material modules, which is a problem because nobody explains the materials to them. The students must be taught how to manage their reading as per the material offered. Distance learning is student-centred learning, thus knowing the influence of reading skills on academic performance can help us understand the potential barriers to performance. Although students' reading skills may not guarantee success in distance learning, it is easy to defend the variable as contributing to performance. Additionally, knowledge about reading skills will help us to understand who is likely to participate in distance learning and, conversely, why others choose not to participate.

Venkataiah (1989) suggested a course team approach for the preparation of course materials for distance learning. The major findings are that adequate attention must be paid to the writing of course materials, the course team approach of the British Open University, through a very expensive way of writing a course is feasible, economically viable and justified if the course material is used for a large number of students. In view of the large number of students for its courses, this course team approach will be feasible, economically viable and will also ensure good quality of the materials. Lack of proper guidance on reading skills because the students are not prepared to study in diverse environments could lead to failure in academics. Therefore, ways adopted by the students for learning the material, for better retention and to review what they have learnt to facilitate recall form the basis of understanding. To lead to the ability to interpret ideas which is affected by the students' background knowledge and the ability to use it play a very important role in distance learning students. It determines whether a student will succeed in academic pursuits or not. Entwistle (1989) studied the academic performance of

electrical engineering students and found that low course grades were associated with inadequate study skills and that many students had not established adequate independent study strategies required to succeed in higher education.

Eikeland and Manger (1992) looked into factors affecting students' achievement, especially those factors related to high failure and dropout rates. The findings showed that organized study habits had a positive impact on self-confidence during the students' first semester, but such study habits did not have a direct effect on grades until as late as their fourth semester in college. It reflects to the fact whether the students successfully focused their attention on lectures or reading the materials. The ways in which students adopt for better concentration and the sources interrupting their concentration at a particular study time are included in this category. The researcher feels that the SQ3R method can sharpen study habits whereby the students must get the best overall picture of what they are going to study by doing a survey. The learners need to have questions to answer which can help them to make sense of the materials offered by reading. The learners should read to answer questions, in order to develop what they have read in their own words and thoughts and to be able to connect things they already know by doing review. It shows whether the students are regular in study and have been continuously trying to complete the day to day work. It also covers the efforts put in by them during the examination time.

Entwistle (1990) noted that the success or failure in higher education is not explained by the students' attributes or faculty teaching efficiency in isolation, but by the complex interactions between students and the learning environments they

experience. Thus, students at UON are in need of comprehensive advice, counselling and support services including time management, stress management, efficient study styles, habits and skills, reading, writing, and lecture note-taking skills, and other support services. These would help the students enhance their capacity to master the relevant subject, self-confidence, verbal and written communication, academic performance, and to be competitive and productive members of the society.

Durden and Ellis (1995) clearly demonstrate that students who ‘always’ attend lectures show statistically significant academic performance advantages over students who ‘seldom’ or ‘never’ attend lectures. They found a similar result after students had missed four or more lectures during a semester. However, the results did not tell why high attendance at lectures conveyed academic performance benefits. It could be that missing a sufficient number of lectures could result in comprehension deficits or it could be that students with high ability also have high attendance habits. Naturally, academic performance is not only a function of attendance levels but also of good study habits.

Park and Kerr (1990), Federici and Schuerger (1976), Durden and Ellis (1995) and St Clair (1999) also observe that prior knowledge and motivation also play a significant role in predicting academic performance and in influencing attendance levels. Devadoss and Foltz (1996) note that additionally, the teaching style and levels of motivation engendered by the lecturer would also play an important role in determining students’ performance and attendance. Park and Kerr (1990) established that British Academy of Audiology (BAA) students were more systematic in their use of study tasks contained in the learning materials. They were more likely to

complete all the study tasks (28.4% compared to 15.6% of BAAs) and more likely to write formal answers to the tasks (53.2% compared to 29.6% of BAAs). HAA students were also slightly more likely than BAA students to use the prescribed textbook all the time. However, although HAA students appeared to take a more systematic approach to their study than BAA students, the results suggested that some BAAs might compensate for their lack of structure in study by studying longer. BAA students were more likely to report that they devoted 9 hours per week or more to the study of a subject (43.8%) than HAA students (31.3%) who seemed to devote relatively fewer hours to study than their lower self-rated peers.

The inference is that BAA students were more skilled at studying effectively than HAA students. Nearly a quarter of BAA students (22.4%) reported a high level of enjoyment from studying compared to only one intern (9.7%) HAA student. Learners determine to what extent these trends will be expected. On the whole they seem to adopt regular study patterns rather than studying only at times when assignments are due. Most of the students use the embedded study tasks, confirming Mishra and GABA's (2001) earlier findings that distance learning students make extensive use of self-assessment activities in their learning materials. Over a quarter of the responding students spent more time than that recommended by the University (which is eight hours per week per subject) on their studies. Most students worked quite methodically through their study materials and were not particularly driven by assessment tasks in their reading, although those that read less were primarily driven in their selection by assessment tasks.

While the study does not negate earlier studies by Carnwell (2000) and Clyde (1983), that found that students used different approaches to their study materials, it suggests that the majority fell into the methodical or 'systematic wader' category proposed by Carnwell (2000) rather than being distributed more equally among the categories. However, the finding that only one-half of students made notes from their learning materials suggests that half were not using strategies that would aid retention of the material. Relf and Geddes (1992) found that surface learners avoid making notes, preferring to highlight relevant sections. One interesting finding from this study is the heavy reliance that students placed upon the prescribed textbook, with students generally reading all parts of the textbook that were suggested in their study guides, and in some cases (16.3%) reading every word of the book. Since at the UON students are given materials to read at their own time, a study on the influence of study habits on academic performance is therefore in order.

Dominowski (2002) suggests that the choice of textbook is one of the most important teaching tasks that can be undertaken by students. In their use of additional materials that were self-located, books featured heavily, as did television and radio programs, with web sites less popular and journal articles rarely used. These findings have important implications for libraries in universities that have large numbers of distance learning students. Some further research questions are suggested by the results, such as how students choose which of the recommended further reading they should undertake, whether lecturers would be better advised to recommend books rather than journal articles, or whether students need additional assistance to be able to use journal databases.

Greenberg, (2007) observed that 14% of the adult population had difficulty with most printed materials while close to another 29% of the adult population has difficulty with any reading task that was not very basic. In U.S.A adults had difficulty with materials encountered in their houses, neighbourhood and work places. Adults who attended adult literacy programs often had problems with phonological awareness and decoding. The studies established that about 17.9% of performance was explained by good reading skills by the learners.

2.11 Completion of Assignment and Academic Performance

Figihi (1999) surveyed 297 students from three departments with college of education at an urban Southern University who had completed their course work and passed examination during 1987 to 1992, but had not completed their degrees by December 1997. He found that students' research, self-efficiency and their relationship with advisors contributed to completing assignments. At the same time, none of the students' background characteristics had significant effects on completion process.

Kwever (1997) did qualitative study by exploring personal and program experience affecting completion of dissertation. Students interviewed believed there was more structure and direction associated with courses than with the independent activity required to complete dissertations. They described the need for self-motivation and self-direction as important attributes for successful completion of their assignments. The study noted that 62.3% of the respondents were unable to manage the school and work assignments. The study indicated that academic performance is dependent on entry qualification because those with diploma and above performed better than the P1 and the form four leavers. However, the average mark for males was 53.40%,

which indicates the mean for males was in the interval (33.7, and 37.3) Further the maximum score was 64 giving a range of 25. This reflects the variations in academic performance abilities within the males was high. The mean for female students was 55 which was slightly higher than the mean for males which was 53. This indicates the interval (56, 56) with the maximum score for females at 50.1 and the minimum a 38. This gives a range of 26 which shows the disparity within the females was lower compared to their male counterparts.

2.12 The Influence of Demographic Variables and Academic Performance

Selected demographic characteristics of distance learning students and educational goals might have a relationship with academic performance. Several studies reported a positive influence of academic performance and student age. Cooper (1990) Dille and Isaac (1991), Fjotfofit (1996), Sounder (1994) and Fortof (1996), on a study of adult persistence in distance learning students post Baccalaureate professional programme in pharmacy noted that older students were less likely to persist than young students.

Liu and Lu (2009) did a study in five provinces of western China and established that regardless of whether the sample is the aggregate sample of all the students or samples divided into different groups according to gender and ethnicity, there exists a positive correlation between the students' family social economic status (SES) index and academic performance. That is, the higher the student's family SES index, the more likely he or she is to receive relatively high Mathematics or Chinese language scores. Students' Math's performance increased by 0.286 units and students' Chinese language performance increased by 0.275 units when SES index increased by one single unit. However, within the different gender and ethnicity

groups, the degree of impact of SES index on academic performance differed slightly. Nevertheless, it always showed a trend of positive impact. Note that the effects of SES index on male students' academic performance was greater than that of the female students' academic performance, especially in Mathematics. As a result, we do not eliminate the possibility that the feudal Chinese traditional idea of severe discrimination against women still exists today. Furthermore, within the aggregate sample, regarding the comparison between the differences in the two school subjects, the effects of SES index on Math's performance were slightly greater than that of Chinese language.

Gibson and Graft (1992) found higher levels of success for older students were based on maturity, self-discipline, life experience and financial responsibility for their educators. Demographic characteristics and prior experience are important in the completion of distance learning students. Numerous studies indicated drop-out was a multi-causal phenomenon influenced by a number of factors. Moore and Kearsley (1996) argued that dropout usually was of no causes but of an accumulation and mixture of causes. Therefore, there was no single reason for students' dropout.

Kember (1990), Woodley and Parlett (1993) found sex, age, previous educational qualifications, occupation and region of residence were related to persistence for U.K Open University students. Students with higher previous education qualification did better than those with poor qualification. Those who found it difficult to reconcile the conflicting demands: jobs, family and studies tended to do less well than those who found it difficult to direct their own learning. A number of

researchers developed formal models for predicting students' completion. They found students who made most progress and high entrance examination scores, had a supportive family and an intention to complete. Kember's (1989, 1990, 1995) study on longitudinal process model of dropout from distance learning students integrated all models (Bean 1980, 1985, 1990; Tinto 1975, 1987, 1993) in developing a model for conventional higher education. The model integrated findings on academic distance learning student's success and attrition. Kember's model is discussed in the theoretical perspective of this study.

2.13 Theoretical Basis of Study Habits and Academic Performance

A research on the influence of study habits and demographic variables on academic performance in distance learning students revolves around three theories: students' persistence by Tinto (1993), students' integration theory by Bean (1990), students' drop out model by Kember's (1995) Tinto's model on students' integration theory conceptualized persistence on outcome of students' interaction with their college and universities. Tinto described the influence of students' background characteristics and educational institutions. Students' background characteristics were seen as important predictors of persistence because they determined how students' interact with instructions, social and academic systems. Tinto's conceptual model represented background characteristics, academic and social integration, initial goal and institutional commitment, sequence goal, institutional commitment and withdrawal decisions. Tinto's theory, however, did not address study habit variables.

Bean (1990) presented the student attribution model, to expand on undergraduate students relations, taking into account the effect of external forces on intention to stay at their beliefs and attitudes which resulted from academic and social experience

with an institution. Positive college experiences led to favourable beliefs and attitudes towards an institution, which fostered an intention to persist external factors that affected both attitudes and decisions of students. The two theoretical models focused on undergraduate regular students. They assumed students would attend college as a primary responsibility and had no other commitments. In addition, they did not differentiate between younger (non-working, 18-22 yrs) students and older students with work or family commitments. Kember's model (1993) did not focus on adult students study habits on academic performance in distance education learning environment. He argued that distance learning students had more demanding commitments to work, family and social lives.

Kember's model of dropout from distance education includes the entry characteristics, good commitment and academic and social integration components. The entry characteristics included background variables like family and home situation, the work environments and educational history of the student. This study chose five variables to relate with academic performance. The variables were time management, learner to learner interaction, note-taking skills and Reading skills and demographic variables. These variables were chosen because they contribute to study habits and thus influence academic performance in distance education and since they fit Kember's dropout model. The model served as the foundation during the testing of the influence of study habits and demographic variables on academic performance in distance learning.

2.14 Summary of Literature Review

A summary of the literature review showing research findings of various studies and gaps in knowledge is presented in Table 2.1

Table 2.1 Summary of the literature review on empirical studies: Findings and gaps

Researcher(s)	Focus	Findings	Comments and Gaps
Saba and Shearer (1994) National assessment of educational progress (1994)	Influence of dialogue and structure in transactional distance. Influence of study habits and academic achievement	It is not location that determines the effect of instruction but the amount of transaction between student and lecturer. Positive correlation between study habits and academic achievement	Suggests that further research be done on the influence of study habits and demographic variables on academic performance in distance learning students
Britton of America College Health (2008)	Time management skills predict success	Power of time management is the predictor of academic performances.	They suggested that further studies be done the influence of study habits and demographic variables on academic performance in distance learning students
Graven (2008)	The influence of an individual's amount of caffeine consumption during his/her study session and the individual study habits	Found no relationship	He suggests that influences of the variables such as time management note -taking reading skills, completion of assignment ,leaner to leaner need to be studied
Singh (1984)	Surveyed the study habits of high, middle and low achiever adolescents in relation to their sex, intelligence and socio-economic status	Boys had better study habits than girls.	She suggests that research be done to determine the link between study habits and academic performance.
Venkataiah (1989)	Suggested a course team approach for the preparation of course materials for distance education	Adequate attention must be paid to the writing of course materials	Ability to interpret ideas which is affected by the students' background knowledge and the ability to use it.
Eikeland and Manger (1992)	Looked into factors affecting students' achievement	Organized study habits had a positive impact on self-confidence	They suggested factors related to high failure and dropout rates. During the students' first semester, but such study habits did not have a direct effect on grades until as late as their fourth semester in college. It reflects to the fact whether the student successfully focused his/her attention on -lectures

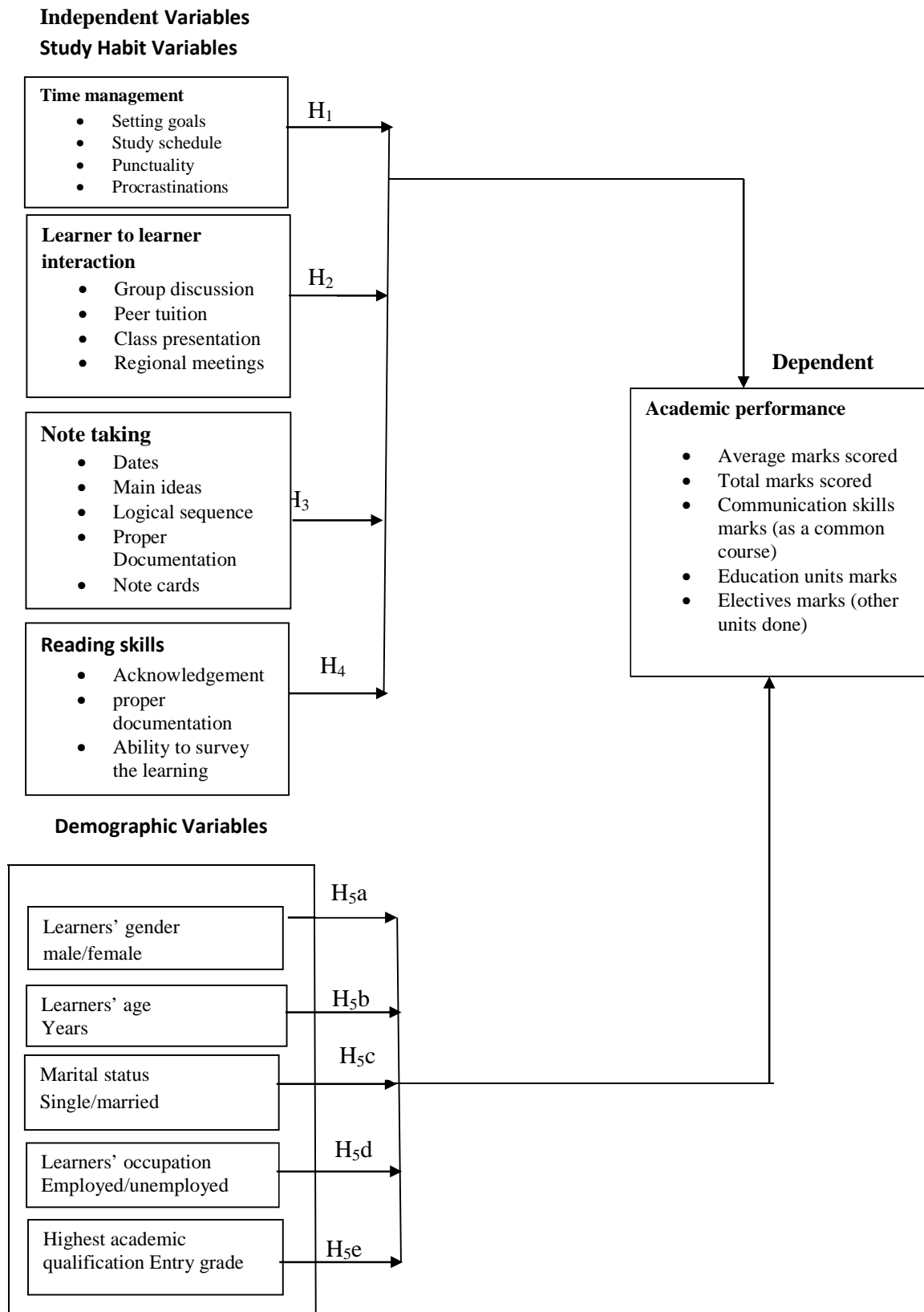
			or reading the materials.
Gibson and Graft (1992)	Found higher levels of success for older students based on maturity, self-discipline, life experience and financial responsibility for their educators	Demographic characteristic and prior experience are important in completion of DE Numerous studies indicated drop out was a multi-causal phenomenon influenced by a number of factors	They suggested further research in different settings the influence of study habits and academic performance
Kembers model (1993)	Adult student in distance education learning environments	Distance education has more demanding commitments to work, family and social life	The influence of study habits and demographic variables on academic performance in distance learning students was addressed

2.15 Conceptual Framework

The gaps identified in the literature were addressed in the study. From the literature review it is noted that the moderating effect of demographic variables relationship with academic performance have not been studied. However, the study noted that there is no influence of demographic variables and academic performance. Also the study established that there was a influence of time management, note-taking, reading skills, learner-to-learner interaction and demographic variables.

The gaps identified in the literature review have led to the conceptual framework presented in Figure 1. It usually shows how the variables of the study are related. In this study, there are independent variables, dependent variable and a moderating variable. Independent variables are those variables that cause changes in the dependent variable while a dependent variable is one whose outcome depends on the manipulation of the independent variable.

Figure 1 Conceptual framework on the relationships among variables



2.15.1 Summary of the conceptual framework

The conceptual framework in Figure 1 This chapter present the steps which were followed to meet the objectives of the study. These are research philosophy, research design, study location and target population from which data was collected. This is followed by the sampling method and data collection procedures, data collection instruments, collection of items and Selection of Items. The Preliminary Form of the Scale, Pre-try out, the final form of the scale, administration of the scale are presented next to the reliability of the instruments validity. The indicators of academic performance, data analysis, statistical techniques employed and operational suggests that there is interrelationship among the various variables of the study. The model suggests that each individual independent variable (time management, note taking, reading skills, learner to learner interaction and demographic variable), may have an influence of with academic performance (dependent variable) of distance learning students. The study determined there was a influence of them.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter present the steps which were followed to meet the objectives of the study. These are research philosophy, research design, study location and target population from which data was collected. This is followed by the sampling method and data collection procedures, data collection instruments, collection of items and Selection of Items. The Preliminary Form of the Scale, Pre-try out, the final form of the scale, administration of the scale are presented next to the reliability of the instruments validity. The indicators of academic performance, data analysis, statistical techniques employed and operational definition of variables are also provided in this chapter.

3.2 Research philosophy

The study used two research philosophies: positivism and interpretivists. This is because the phenomenon described is real and can be observed and described from the objective viewpoint without interfering with the phenomena being studied (Levin, 1988). The positivism philosophy contends that phenomena should be isolated and that the observations should be repeatable. This involved manipulation of reality with variations in a single independent variable to identify regularities and to form a influence of dependent and independent variables, which is the study of habits and demographic variables on academic performance.

However, the study applied the interpretivists' philosophy because interpretivists contend that only through the subjective interpretation of intervention in reality can the phenomena be understood. The subjects of the proposed study were studied in their natural environment. There are many interpretations of the reality of the influence of study habits and demographic variables on academic performance in distance learning students which is part of knowledge. The study used both philosophies. Recognizing the lack of objectivity sometimes associated with the interpretivist's research methods, the study adopted positivists, quantitative and qualitative approaches in the development of key research instruments on the variables. These variables were elaborated in the research design, instruments and operationalisation.

3.3 Research Design

This study used mixed methods approach which is a procedure for collecting, analysing and combining quantitative and qualitative data in the process of research. The rationale for using quantitative and qualitative methods was to capture the trends and the details of study habits and academic performance. The design used was descriptive survey with cross sectional data collected. When using quantitative research, the research relied on numerical data. The study used focused group discussion on selected demographic variables which included age, gender and highest level of education, age in years and marital status, monthly income of the learners, and occupation of learners. To capture the variables under investigation which are time management, reading skills, note taking skills, learner to learner interaction, a set of questions to assess the opinions of students about each variable of the study and length of time the students spend on each was used. An interview guide was designed for the resident lecturers. The guided interview contained

questions relating to study habits and demographic variables on academic performance. The study isolated the dependent and independent variables and determined the magnitude and frequency of their relationships. The dependent variable in this study was academic performance.

3.4 Study Location

The location of this study was at the University of Nairobi, College of Education and External Studies (CEES), Kikuyu campus. The University of Nairobi is situated in Nairobi city, Kenya. The city of Nairobi has a population of over 4 million people with the city centre covering over 700 square kilometres area and an altitude of 1,675 meters above sea level.

The student population is approximately sixty two thousand drawn from Kenya and other common wealth countries (umis/smis.uonbi.ac.ke 2013).

The College of Education and External Studies is one of the six colleges that constitute University of Nairobi. It began from Makerere College as an Extra- mural centre in 1956 which in 1986 changed to College of Education and External Studies. The College has gone through many re-organisation, restructuring, renaming and great expansion. Today its main undertaking is to offer degrees to undergraduate and post graduate students both in residence at Kikuyu and distance learning mode. The headquarters of the college is situated at Kikuyu campus, 25 km North West of Nairobi along Kikuyu Road. The College of Education and External Studies comprises School of Education and School of Continuing and Distance Education and Centre for Open and Distance learning.

The vision of the College of Education and External Studies is to be the leading centre of teacher education, open learning, research and community service for sustainable development. Thus the College of Education and External Studies offers innovative, relevant and market-driven academic programmes. The School of Continuing and Distance education is charged with offering distance learning programmes. The main mode of teaching is through distance learning method which is integrated with face to face teaching during school vocations, hence a research on the study habits on academic performance is necessary to keep abreast of new innovation in education as the University struggles with the issue of quality and relevancy.

3.5 Target Population

Table 3.1 indicates that There were about 4,500 distance learning students in 2012 in the Department of Educational Studies' cohort in years (referred to as parts or semesters) 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 which represents years 2012, 2011, 2010, 2009, 2008 and 2007 respectively, undertaking Bachelor of Education degree (Arts) in the College of Education and External Studies in the University of Nairobi.. All the respondents covering the entire population were contacted. The respondents were considered on a random list of candidates for inclusion in the sample. The parts were essential for the research because it consisted of students with considerable experience in the mode of the study.

The staff in the School of Continuing and Distance Education were interviewed and they included 12 resident lecturers who were interviewed to get information on how students used the library and learner-to-learner interaction in the regional study centres and how they conducted regional meetings and residential sessions during

examinations. The examination department provided the grades in order to establish influence of study habits on academic performance. Once the population was defined for the study, the next step was to select a representative sample from the population.

The enrolments of students in Bachelor of Education (Arts) between 2007 and 2012 is indicated in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1 Enrolments of Students in Bachelor of Education (Arts) Between 2007 and 2012

S/No.	Intake	No. of Students	%
	Part I (2012)	700	15.55
	Part II (2011)	900	20.00
	Part III (2010)	1000	22.22
	Part IV (2009)	700	15.55
	Part V (2008)	700	15.55
	Part VI (2007)	500	11.11
	TOTAL	4500	100

(Source: umis/smis.uonbi.ac.ke)

3.6 Sample Size

A sample size based on the target population was calculated using the methods provided by Cooper and Emory (1995) and Sekaran (2006) as indicated below.

Sample size,

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where n = sample size

N = Target population

e = acceptable margin of error at 5% (STD value of 0.05)

$$n = 4500/[1+4500(0.05^2)]$$

$$= 367.35$$

Therefore to calculate sample size for population per strata the following formula was used:

Sample size per strata;

$$n_h = (N_h/N^*)n$$

Where:

n_h = Sample of the stratum

N_h = Population of the stratum

n = Total Sample size (367)

N = Total Population (4500)

The analysis presented in Table 3.2 shows Sample size estimates for the number of students in each level of study

Table 3.2 Sample size estimates for the number of students in each level of study

Cohort	Population	Sample Size	%
2012 (part 1)	700	57	8.1
2011 (part 2)	900	73	8.1
2010 (part 3)	1000	82	8.2
2009 (part 4)	700	57	8.1
2008 (part 5)	700	57	8.1
2007 (Part 6)	500	41	8.2
Total	4500	367	48.8

The sample size for each level of study was calculated based on its respective student numbers taking into account the margin of error of five percent.

3.7 Sampling Procedure

A disproportionate stratified random sampling technique was used to obtain a sample size from the population. According to Orodho, (2003), sample procedure is the most definite plan determined before any data is collected by obtaining a sample size from the population. Sampling was done because it is not possible to obtain information from the universe or the whole target population to answer the research question accurately. Stratified random sampling was used to draw the target population and the universe and provide the same results. The sample was drawn from registered students in different parts: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 of academic semester. The list was compiled in order to determine the totals. The name of the parts was written on a piece of paper and a number was assigned to each student. A simple random sampling was conducted to select the students who completed the questionnaires within each part of the study.

3.8 Data Collection Procedure

Permission to conduct this study was sought from the University of Nairobi, through the Principal of the College of Education and External Studies, Kikuyu Campus. The mailing list of the students was obtained and then a covering letter was sent together with the list. The research tools were prepared to test the proposed variables. The general instructions were given, and the tools were prepared in English. Further, a general instruction was given in addition to the tools with specific instructions on how to respond to each question. The space to mark the responses was provided against each statement. The methods were suitable because the population was

literate and large while time was limited and information was easily described. The questionnaire was then administered.

3.9 Data Collection Instruments

The data collection instruments which were used in this study to collect the primary data are: the questionnaires and interview schedule. Primary data refers to the information which was obtained from the subjects in the sample. The selection of suitable instruments was very important in this research. Therefore, the study involved a personal information sheet which was developed to seek information on the main variables; namely the study habits inventory to measure the study habits of students on time management, direct observation used on note taking skills, the questionnaire instrument which was used to measure and collect information on reading skills and learner to learner interaction. An academic performance scale was developed to collect information regarding the dependent variable on academic performance, which was gathered from the examination office.

3.9:1 Questionnaire

The questionnaires were divided into three sections, as follows

Section A, focused on student's personal information sheet which asked respondents on their personal information on demographic variables, study habits inventory on academic performance scale on performance. Section B focussed on interview guide and sought the resident lecturers' reactions on the responses made by the students on the management of the programme. Section C, obtained a large amount of secondary data from a variety of sources as follows: the examination office, academic journals and publications on study habits on academic performance. Document analysis guide was used to collect examination marks awarded to the sampled students. The

performance was determined by finding the average score of each student in every part. The overall students' performance was determined by finding the average score in every part to get the mean score.

Time management variable was measured by the number of hours spent by the students in the library and doing private study. It was captured using questions. The cumulative number of hours spent on reading was correlated with the students' performance to establish if influence exists. Learner to learner interaction variables was measured by the number of 'session' students gathered together to discuss class work, assignments, term papers and revision for end of semester examinations.

The reading skills variable was measured using the study modules given to the learners at the end of the residential sessions to study at home. The module is designed in lecture form. A student is expected to read the module as per the guidelines following the stipulated timelines. The module also captures suggested reference books. The variable were quantified using the sum of the responses of the likert scale indicating the level of the students interacting with the study modules. The final used to correlate with their academic performance.

The note taking skills variable was measured by considering the level of organisation of student notes. This took the form of writing date topic and the notes contour as the lecturer presented the lesson. These items were listed in a questionnaire and the responses given by the student were rated on likert-scale. The highest score of the sum of the responses was correlated to establish the influence of note-taking on academic performance. The description of research instruments is as follows:

3.9.2 Interview Guide

An interview guide was administered to get resident lecturers' reactions on the responses made by the students. The interview focused mainly on the learner support services for Distance Learning' Students like field visits, library services, learner to learner interaction and the residential sessions.

3.9.3 Document Analysis Guide

Document analysis was used to collect examination marks awarded to the sampled Distance Learning' Students (DLS). The studies determined the performance of the students in all parts and the findings on the average of the scores were awarded in every part. The scores for Continuous Assessment Tests (CATs), term paper and examination formed the examination scores. The units' structure was analyzed to determine: The total number of units taken per part, the number of units a student is expected to register for per semester, the number of units a student covers in an academic year.

3.9.4 Focused Group Discussion Guide

It was used to triangulate responses from the questionnaire, observation guide and document analysis guide. There were separate discussions for males and females to ensure homogeneity. The discussions established the influence of age, gender, level of education, learning environments, marital status and academic performance.

3.9.5 Observation Guide

Observation guide was used to measure the teaching procedure. It was assessed by using the ISO procedure for teaching. By observing the lecture delivery

methodology and whether the learners were keen in note taking by observing dates, main ideas, logical sequence and proper documentation.

3.10 Data collection Items

Firstly, the researcher enlisted all possible areas of study habits. For example, previous small scale studies, like the completed Diploma projects in distance education offered by the University of Nairobi, some M.ed. and M.Phil. Dissertations and Ph.D theses in the area of distance education were consulted. These items were discussed with experts in the field at different intervals to determine the relevance of items to be included in each category in order to avoid replication. Efforts were made to improve the language and to remove ambiguity to make them understandable to the students in its first reading. The collected items were thoroughly screened and edited.

3.11 Selection of Items

Several scales were developed and scanned. A collection of items were developed and discussed with the experts in the area. Their comments were sought after item wise and the list was reviewed on the basis of the feedback received.

3.12 Preliminary Form of the Scale

Academic performance scale, study habits inventory for students, attitude scale towards distance learning students, personal information sheet, questionnaires, focus group discussions and direct observation of the distance learning students' scale comprised items on a five point rating scale. Each of the items provided alternative responses such as Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Undecided, (UD), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). It was a self-administered tool without any time limit.

For a positive item, a weighting of 5, 4,3,2,1 was given to SA, A, UD, D and SD respectively. Similarly for a negative item, a weighting of 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 was given to SA, A, UD, D and SD respectively. The summated score of all the items provided the total academic performance score of the students.

3.13 Pre-try out /Pilot

After selecting the items for the scale, the scale was pre-tried out on distance learning students on residential sessions at the University of Nairobi in order to find out the difficulties of the students in responding to the items and understanding the language. A Sample of 30 part 7 students was used in the pilot study since Part 7 students had completed the distance learning programme. Therefore this was an advantage since they were not to take part in the main study and hence they did not comprise the study done to prior information. After the pilot study, efforts were made to improve the language and remove ambiguity in understanding the items. After that the responses, were recorded for each student separately.

3.14 The Final Form of the Scale

The final form of the academic performance scale consisted of positive and negative items. Each item in the scale provided five possible alternative responses such as: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Undecided (UD), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD).

3.15 Administration of the Scale

The evaluation of the rating scale was self-administering tool. This scale was for students pursuing studies in the Department of Educational Studies.

3.16 Reliability of the Instruments

According to Orodho (2003) reliability of the measurements concerns the degree to which a particular measuring procedure gives similar results over a number of repeated trials. In this research, split-halves method was used to affirm the reliability of the instrument. This method was found practical in that it did not require two administrations of the same or an alternative form test. In the split-halves method, the total number of items was divided into halves (odd numbers and even numbers), then, those two total scores were correlated using the Spearman Brown correlation. The questionnaire was found to be reliable with a reliability index of 81.6% as indicated in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3 Reliability test index

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.757	.816	5

Table 3.3 shows a reliability index of 81.6%. This indicates a high level of consistency of the results obtained. Since the items used in the scale were on different metrics, we report the Alpha based on standardized items. The primary purpose of Cronbach's alpha is to provide an indicator of the internal reliability or consistency of items in a multiple item scale or index (Vogt, 1999).

3.17 Validity

Validity refers to the extent to which a tool measures the items for which it is intended to measure. This term has different connotations for various types of tools and, thus, a different type of validity evidence is appropriate for each. For validating the present tool, face and content validities were ensured which involved pre-testing

the instruments. In the process, a pilot study was conducted on a sample similar to the sample of distance learning students. The students were not included in the final research. Piloting was carried out on distance learning students in order to identify items that were ambiguous. The items were modified appropriately and in order to capture the required data, some items were restructured, piloting 30 students from each part who were selected randomly. These were students not included in the final study. The performance records of students who had finished their r studies awaiting graduation were not incorporated in the study. A document analysis was used to get student performance data.

3.18 Data Analysis

The data was coded before running the analysis. The analysis of the data was done using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and Statistical Data Analysis (stata) package. The scale value was considered as the code for a particular statement. Further, suitable codes on variables for each tool were available after analysis using the SPSS. The calculated percentages, means, standard deviations and Pearson's product moment correlation of academic performance were used for the analysis purposes. The Pearson's product moment correlation was used to determine the strength of the influence of independent and dependent variables finally, the value of r² to explain the proportion of the dependent variable that is accounted for by the independent variable was determined. A simple linear regression model was fitted on the data to predict the dependent variable given the independent variable in the form.

$$y = p + \beta_0 + \beta_1 x_1 + \beta_2 x_2 + \beta_3 x_3 + \beta_4 x_4 + \beta_5 x_5$$

Where;

y- Is the dependent variable

β_0 –is the intercept which explains the value of the dependent value given that the independent variable is zero.

$\beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3, \beta_4, \beta_5$ –indicates the proportion at which the dependent variable changes given a unit change in the independent variable.

x_1, x_2, x_3, x_4, x_5 - are the unit independent variables whose coefficient are represented by β_i . They include; time management, learner to learner interaction, note taking skills, reading skills and demographic characteristics.

e - Is the random error.

3.19 Data analysis Techniques

The following statistical techniques were employed for data analysis Percentages were used mainly to analyze the proportions of programme academic performance of distance learning students in parts/semester 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. Mean scores and Standard deviations were calculated to get the averages and deviation levels of variables. The analysis and interpretation of the data in the context of the objectives and research question of the study was attempted. Pearson's product moment correlation was computed to determine the strength of influence of the independent and dependent variables using the end of semester marks.

The hypotheses were formulated to test the Sample size estimates for the number of students in each level of study dependent and independent variables. It was tested at significant level of 0.05. These are shown in Table 3.4.

Table 3.4 Tests of Hypotheses

	Objectives	Hypothesis	Types of Analysis
1.	To establish influence of time management and how it influences academic performance	There is no influence of time management on academic performance	Correlation analysis anova, t-test, regression analysis
2.	To identify the influence of learner to learner interaction on academic performance	There is influence of learner interaction on academic performance	Correlation analysis
3.	To ascertain the influence of note taking on academic performance	There is no influence of note taking on academic performance	Correlation analysis
4.	To analyse the influence of reading skills on academic performance	There is no influence of reading skills and academic performance	Correlation analysis
5.	To ascertain influence of demographic characteristics (age, education, marital status occupation and gender) on academic performance.	There is influence of age, education, marital status occupation,gender on academic performance.	Correlation analysis

3.20 Operational Definition of Variables

According to Martyn (2008) operationalisation is defined as the process of strictly defining variables into measurable factors. Operational definitions of the dependent and independent variables were provided. The dependent variable was the academic performance of distance learning students and the independent variables were study habit. Operationalisation is achieved by looking at the behavioural dimensions, indicators, facets or properties denoted by the concept, translated into observable and measurable elements to develop an index of the concepts. Measures can be objective or subjective. It is not possible to construct a meaningful data collection instrument without first operationalizing all the variables.

Data was collected using both quantitative and qualitative indicators of the variables.

The significance level of the hypotheses was tested at 0.05. The indicators of the variables are described in Table 3.5.

Table 3.5 Operational definition of variables

Objectives of the Study	Variables Independent	Indicators	Measuring Scale	Data Collection Methods	Type of Analysis
To establish the influence of time management on academic performance	Time management	Grades, assignments, lecture attendance	Ordinal scale	Questionnaire and interview schedule	Correlation analysis anova, t-test, regression analysis
Influence of note – taking on academic performance.	Note- taking	• Grades, lecture attendance, carrying note books	• Ratio scale	Questionnaire and interview schedule	Correlation analysis
To analyse the influence of reading skills on academic performance.	Reading skills	• Grades • Reading Resources (libraries), availability of Modules, Revising their notes	• Ratio Scale	Questionnaire and interview schedule	Correlation analysis
To identify the influence of learner-to-learner interaction on academic performance	Learner to learner interaction	• Grades, attending regional visits, visits to Extra Mural Centres, Group discussion	• Ratio Scale	Questionnaire and interview schedule	Correlation analysis
To ascertain the influence of demographic variables on academic performance.	Characteristic of students	Average performance total marks scored, communication skills marks, educational units marks, electives marks	• Ordinal scale	Questionnaire and interview schedule	Correlation analysis
To establish the students' academic performance influence of demographic variables	academic performance	Marks	ordinal Scale	Records, content analysis	Mean, Median, Mode, Standard deviation

3.21 Indicators of Academic Performance

The data consisted of the dependent variable 'Academic performance' which was collected from the marks register maintained by the registrar. Keeping the nature of progress, the studies formulated an indicator as a measure of academic performance, which was based on the following procedures. For successful completion of a course, students had to acquire a required minimum percentage in the assignments and C.A.Ts of 30 per cent and semester examination of 70 per cent in all courses. The letter grade and percentages were calculated separately from assignments and term end examination and then added together to have the final grade and percentage. For the present study, the percentage of marks obtained for the courses which the distance learning students had successfully completed was taken. Then these were added together and computed. The obtained value was considered as the indicator of the academic performance.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter is organized in subsections; First, preliminary matters of instrument return response are addressed. Secondly, the results of data analysis and findings of the study are presented anchored on each specific objective and the corresponding research question and hypothesis. The objective of the study was to identify the influence of study habits and demographic variables on academic performance. The study was based on five objectives independent variables which were correlated with the dependent variable of academic performance which were; time management of the individual students; learner to learner interaction existing among students; individual skills and competence in note-taking; prowess in reading skills; the demographic attributes of the individual student.

The questionnaire was divided into three main sections. Section A focused on personal characteristics of the students in particular; demographic attributes, inventory of study habits and academic performance. Data for Section B of the interview schedule was obtained from focus group discussions and direct observation of administrators implementing the programme. Large amount of data in Section C were obtained from secondary sources and in particular the examination records detailing academic performance.

The subsequent results of the study are presented in two sections, namely: descriptive analysis and test of hypotheses. The chapter concludes by highlighting the main findings obtained from both quantitative and qualitative indicators of the

variables. The presentation of the findings integrates both the quantitative results and qualitative verbatim responses from focused group discussions.

4.2 Questionnaires Return Rate

The total number of questionnaires issued to the respondent were 367 and 341 were completed and received giving a respondents return rate of 93 % considered adequate according to Dilliman (2000). As shown in Table 4.1, the respondents were grouped into six different levels or parts of the bachelor of education program based on the year of admission. Out of 16 resident lecturers 12 were interviewed.

Table 4.1 Questionnaire Return rate

Parts	Questionnaires distributed	Questionnaires returned	%
2012	57	55	96.5
2011	73	70	98.9
2010	82	75	91.5
2009	57	53	93.0
2008	57	51	89.5
2007	41	39	95.12
Total	367	341	93.0

4.3 Demographic data of respondents

This section presented demographic characteristics for the respondents in particular; gender, age in years, marital status, and highest level of education attained at the time of the study, kind of occupation, and monthly income earned. This distribution is shown in Table 4.2

Table 4.2: Distribution of respondent students by gender

	Frequency	Percentage
Men	222	65.1
Women	119	34.9
Total	341	100

N=341

As shown in Table 4.2, majority of the respondents 222 (65%) were men with a ratio of approximately two men respondents to one woman. In secondary school there is gender disparity in the enrolment, which leads to inequitable access. Muraguri, 2012 established that there is inadequate number of secondary schools to ensure high transition rates from primary to secondary. There is also gender disparity against the girl-child with poor households preferring to support boys when resources are limited.

There is gender disparity in enrolment in tertiary colleges because of factors like poor performance of girls in mathematics and science at secondary level. This is not surprising in a country where girls and women are increasingly less represented in higher levels of formal education. This concurs with UNICEF (2014) findings which indicated that females are slightly higher in enrolment than males in primary school, at 84.5% enrolment for girls compared to 83.5% for boys. The survival rate to the last year of primary school is as high as 96.1%. The influence of male and female enrolment switches and widens in secondary school, 51.6% of enrolled students are male and 48.4% are female. This trend continues at university level as shown by the findings in Table 4.2.

4.3.1 Gender and Highest level of education

The analysis presented in Table 4.3 shows the level of education and gender. This was considered necessary because it could help to establish the influence of study habits on academic performance.

The study sought to establish the level of education for those who opted for distance learning.

Table 4.3: Distribution of Highest level of education attained by respondent student by gender

	Marital status		Single	All		
	Married					
Education level	No	%	No	%	No	%
Form 4	48	14.1	19	5.6%	67	19.7%
PI	139	40.8	15	18.5%	202	59.3%
Diploma or higher	35	10.1%	2	10.9%	79	21.0%
Total	222	65.0%	109	35.0%	341	100.0%

Table 4.3 categorizes the entry qualification of students. Out of 341 respondents, 59.3% had P1 certificate in teaching, 21.0% hold Diploma in teaching, and 19.7% had only form four certificates. This can be attributed to the fact that majority of the P1 teachers with a certificate in teaching had attained the minimum grade needed to qualify for public university admission, but could not meet the Joint Admission Board cut off criterion for joining public universities which is much higher depending on the number of students competing and available resources.

Therefore, distance learning programme gives P1 teachers an opportunity to pursue university education. Several advantages accrue from this opportunity, for example promotion by the employer is more likely and the accompanying monetary benefits are higher. Moreover, teachers boost their own self-esteem from the sense of accomplishment in addition to fulfilling the standing requirement by the Ministry of Education which requires them to undertake a refresher course regularly. The Minister for Education, said the government has developed a teacher proficiency course that is intended to improve school quality and performance by requiring

teachers to take refresher courses and be tested on their competence. Most teachers use the P1 certificate to enable them secure university admission to further their training in the teaching career and improve on their competency.

The study observed that diploma holders contributed only about 21.0% of all the admissions which can be explained by the fact that some of the middle level or diploma colleges have been converted to university colleges and in some cases fully fledged universities across the country.

Form four school leavers are about 19.7% and they form a noteworthy group. This can be attributed to the proportion of students who miss out on university admission due to the highly competitive admission criteria based on resources availability.

4.3.2 Age in years and marital status

Respondents were asked to indicate their age brackets and their marital status (married or single). The responses were used to identify possible links between family responsibility of the respondents and academic performance.

The findings are shown in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4 Age in years and marital status of respondent students

Age in years	Marital status				All	
	Married		Single		No	%
	No	%	No	%		
18 - 30	40	11.9	81	23.8	121	35.6
31-40	126	36.9	15	4.4	141	41.3
41-50	77	22.5	2	6	79	23.1
TOTAL	243	71.3	46	28.8	341	100.0

The (71.3%) of respondents were married, while 28.8 % were not married. The majority of married respondents were in the age bracket (36.9%) 31-40 while the single were in the 18-30 age brackets as shown in table 4.4. Therefore, the study sought to identify possible links between family responsibilities and academic performance.

4.3.3 Monthly Income of the Students

Respondents were asked to indicate their monthly incomes and the findings are summarized in Table 4.5

Table 4.5 Distribution of monthly income earned and gender of the respondents (Ksh)

Monthly income (Kshs)	Men		Women		Total	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
Below 10,000	24	15.1	16	10.1	86	26.2
11,000 - 20,000	48	30.2	26	16.4	159	47.7
21,000 - 30,000	25	15.7	10	6.3	75	22.0
31,000 - 40,000	3	1.9	3	1.9	12	3.5
41,000 - 50,000	2	1.3	2	1.3	2	6
TOTAL	102		57		341	100

Out of the 341 respondents 159 (47.7%) earn a monthly income of between Ksh. 11,000 – Ksh 20,000, while only 12 (3.5%) earned Ksh. 31,000 – K.shs 40,000. Thus, most of these respondents earn below Ksh 30,000 per month. Those earning the highest had between 41,000 and 50,000. Such modest pay can explain the reason why most of the students have challenges in payment of fees. It can also be noted that some students defer some units to reorganise their finances. Muchiri (2012) found that most of the learners are practising teachers who want to improve their teaching

qualifications, but besides financing their studies they cater for the financial needs of other family members. Rambo (2008) found that the ability to afford distance learning depends on the socioeconomic background of learners, thus the distance learners are in need of financial support to enable them to pay fees. The findings show that about 74% of the respondents earn less than sh.20,000. This implies that their income is mainly used on meeting family basic needs. This poses a challenge to those in the programme due to financial constraints in meeting fees payment deadlines. Therefore, demographic variables and study habits influence on academic performance of distance learners.

4.3.4 Occupation of the Students

The respondents were asked to indicate their occupation as shown in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6: Occupation of student and age in year

Age in years	Students occupation							
	Formally-employed		Self employed		Unemployed		Total	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
18-30	103	32.5	15	71.4%	2	100%	120	35.8%
31-40	138	43.8	4	19.0%	0	0%	142	41.5%
41-50	75	23.7	2	9.6	0	0%	79	22.6%
Total	316	100%	21	100%	2	100%	341	100%

The study shows that majority of the respondents at 316 (92.4%) were employed while only 21 (6.2%) were in self-employment and 2 (1.3%) were unemployed. Further, the employed respondents (40.3%) were between 31-40 age brackets while the self-employed (4.4%) were between 18-30 years. This implies that the majority of the distance learners were on formal employment, suggesting that they would be

unable to attend full time learning programmes. Moreover, their studies in the distance education learning programme had to compete with the activities of earning livelihood and of generating their own school fees. Moore and Kearsley (1996) and Evans and Juler (1991) found that the world has hundreds of universities teaching distance learning, each being born because of a specific social need. The distance learning students experience many barriers to learning such as: study rooms within and outside the university, lack of feedback or contact with tutors, lack of support services, alienation, lack of finances to make copies of learning materials and to meet the cost of travel, lack of time to study, demands from the employer, and poor reading and note-taking skills. Distance learning students also lack an opportunity for learner-to-learner interactions. However, majority of the distance learners are on full time employment, suggesting that they have to balance work and time to study at home which influences their academic performance.

4.4 The Influence of Study Habits and Academic performance

This study took the view that study habits of a student and their likely influence on academic performance are effectively captured in specific variables that is time management, learner-to-learner interaction, note-taking and reading skills as well as demographic variables. The effect of each of these variables on academic performance is considered in turn.

4.4.1 Academic Performance

The study analysed the performance of students in examinations and the results of the finding was as shown on Table 4.7. The average mark for the end of semester in the year 2012 for the cohort 2007-2012 was 53.5 for male students and 55 for female students. These marks were computed by adding raw scores for all the units taken, then divided by the number of units taken during the given period. The marks were used to promote the cohort to the next academic year.

Table 4.7 Average performance of both male and female students (%)

Average Performance	Male	Female
Mean	53.4952	55.0091
Median	53.3200	57.1600
Standard error	0.748	0.798
Std.Deviation	7.13119	6.63570
Minimum	39.10	37.80
Maximum	64.20	64.10
Upper boundary	54.90	56.60
Lower boundary	52.00	53.40
Range	25.16	26.28

Table 4.7 shows that males had a mean of 53.4952% marks, with a standard deviation of 7.13119; therefore we conclude with 95% confidence that the mean for males lay in the interval 52.0100 and 54.9803 marks with a standard error of 0.748. Further the maximum score was 64.29 marks and the minimum 39 which gave a range of 25.16 marks. This shows that the variations in academic performance abilities within the males was high.

From Table 4.7 the mean for female students was 55.0091 marks with a standard deviation of 6.63570 which were slightly higher than the mean for males which was

53.4952% marks. We can report with 95% confidence that the interval (53.4151, 56.6032 marks) with Standard error of 0.798. The maximum score for females at 64.11 marks and the minimum at 37.83 marks gives a range of 26.28 marks which shows that the disparity within the females was slightly the same compared to their male counterparts.

4.5 Hypotheses Testing

This section presents the results of the hypotheses testing and interpretation of influence. A total number of 341 students responded to the variables of the study habits on academic performance as presented in the research objectives. Academic performance data was retrieved from the information given by the examinations officer. The results were used to determine the influence of the study habits and academic performance. The hypotheses were non directional. They were stated in null and alternative forms at 95% confidence level. The study tested the following five hypotheses;

H₀₁: There is no significant influence of time management on academic performance.

H₀₂: There is no significant influence of learner to learner interaction on academic performance.

H₀₃: There is no significant influence of note taking and academic performance.

H₀₄: There is no significant influence of reading skills on academic performance.

H₀₅: (a) There is no influence of gender on academic performance of distance learning students.

H₀₅:(b) There is no influence of age on academic performance of distance learning students.

H₀₅:(c) There is no influence of marital status on academic performance of distance learning students.

H₀₅: (d) There is no influence of occupation on academic performance of distance learning students.

H₀₅ (e) There is no influence of entry qualification on academic performance of distance learning students.

To test the hypotheses the study utilised the Pearson's product moment correlation co-efficient. Each of the hypotheses was tested independently to establish if the strength of the influence is indicated by the co-efficient of correlation is statistically significant. The value of the coefficient of the correlation ranges from $-1 \leq r \leq 1$. A value less than Zero indicate a negative influence. Further a p value ($p < 0.05$) indicates that the results are not statistically significant and in such a case the null hypothesis is rejected. A p-value ($p > 0.05$) shows that the results are statistically significant. This means that the null hypothesis is not rejected.

4.5.1 Academic performance and Time management

The first hypothesis sought to establish the influence of average performance on time management. Using Pearson's product moment correlation, the results showed a strong positive relationship as indicated in Table 4.8.

Table 4.8 The influence of average performance on time management Correlations

		Academic performance	Time management
Academic performance	Pearson Correlation	1	.569**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	341	341
Time management	Pearson Correlation	.569**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	341	341

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The correlation coefficient test in Table 4.8 shows that while academic performance to academic performance is linearly correlated, there is a strong positive influence of academic performance on time management at $r = 0.569$. This means that the null hypothesis of no influence was rejected the conclusion was that there was a influence of academic performance on time management. The difference influence of male and female students within use of time and influence on academics performance was tested.

The results are presented in Table 4.9 which shows the difference between the mean academic performance of males and females and time management using T- test.

Table 4.9 Shows Independent T – test on average performance on timemanagement for male and females studies

		F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2- tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Differe nce	Lower	Upper
Performance	Equal variances assumed	1.68	.197	-1.37	339	.173	-1.514	1.105	-3.695	.6685
	Equal Variance not assumed			-1.38	341	.168	-1.51397	1.097	-3.677	.6474

The independent T – test shows that the difference between the mean academic performance of males and females is – 1.37. The test P value (P = 0.173) which is greater than 0.05 showing that there is no statistically significant difference between the performance of male and female students.

Table 4.10 shows the model summary of academic performance on time management using a linear regression analysis.

Table 4.10 Model Summary average performance on time management

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted Square	R	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.569 ^a	.324	.320		7.149

a. Predictors: (Constant), Time management

The value of $r=569$ reveals a strong positive influence. The value of $r^2= 0.324$ indicates that 32.4% of academic performance is explained by good time management.

The study further tested the coefficient of determination of time management and performance of distance learning students. The aim of this test was to deduce the proportion of the students' performance that could be explained by their time management. The results of this test indicated that the coefficient of determination (r^2) between time management on academic performance was 0.324. The study therefore concluded that 32.4% of academic performance is explained by good time management.

4.5.2 Analysis of Variance on average performance on time management

The study carried out an F-test in order to determine whether time management and average performance of distance learning students has an equal variance. The findings are illustrated in Table 4.11.

Table 4.11 Analysis of Variance on average performance on time management

		Sum of				
Model		Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	3875.353	1	3875.353	75.819	.000 ^a
	Residual	8075.926	339	51.113		
	Total	11951.279	341			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Time management

b. Dependent Variable: Average performance

The analysis of variance Table 4.11 shows that the value of $F=75.819$ and that the F – Test $F(1,365) = 75.81$ and the value of $P < 0.05$ ($P=0.000$). These results show that the model prediction of academic performance on time management is significant.

4.5.3 Coefficients on average performance and time management

Table 4.12 shows that there is a influence of the amounts of time spent reading on the marks scored.

Table 4.12: Coefficients on average performance and time management

Model	Un	Standardized		T	Sig.
		Coefficients	Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	23.196	2.710		4.869	.000
Time management	2.280	.032	.569	8.707	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Average performance

Table 4.12 shows that the value of the intercept ($\beta_0 = 23.196$), indicates that a student with poor time management skills can score 23.196% marks. This is a total failure according to the University guidelines on pass mark which is 40% and above. The value of $\beta_1 = 2.280$ shows that a unit increase in time spent reading would lead to an increase of 2.28 marks in performance. The value of t-test for both constant (4.869) and time management (8.707) is significant. The value of $P < 0.05$ ($P = 0.000$).

The model for academic performance and time management is illustrated as;

(Academic performance = $23.196 + 2.28 \times$ Hours spent on reading time management) However, during the interviews with the lecturers the study sought to find out whether the learners have enough time to read the study modules. One of the interviewed lecturer commented that;

“The students are not provided with all the required modules during the introduction to the unit. However, they are encouraged to borrow from others who are ahead of them we encourage them to visit the centre next to them the library to read the available books. But majority of the learners have no time to visit or they see no need. As result they rely on the lecture notes to do their continuous assessment and examination”.

All the lecturers interviewed agreed that majority of the learners are not prepared.

“They are normally reading in the examination rooms ‘a lecturer commented; The quotation below further confirmed the observation above

“We struggle a lot to ensure they don’t enter with their study modules in the examination room. The reason may be that they don’t have enough time to prepare or they have problem in the study habits.”

From the finding, it is evident that the learners seem to be having inadequate study modules and the learner support system is not adequate on the learner study habits.

The learner involvement theory postulates that the effectiveness of education is to increase student involvement. The university has not provided opportunities for study habits which may have influence on students’ academic performance.

4.5.4 The influence of academic performance on learner to learner interaction

Table 4.13 shows the correlation co-efficient between academic performance on learner to learner interaction.

Table 4.13 Influence of academic performance on learner to learner interaction

		Academic performance	Learner to learner interaction
Average performance	Pearson Correlation	1	.519**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	341	341
Learner to learner interaction	Pearson Correlation	.519**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	341	341

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 4.13 shows that the correlation coefficient [r =0.519] is statistically significant since P – value [P<0.01]. Therefore we reject the null hypothesis that there was no influence of average performance on learner to learner interaction; is nullified with 95% confidence it can be conclude that there was influence of learner to learner interaction on academic performance .We can further infer that 26.9% of the variation in academic performance was explained by learner to learner interaction. [r² = 0.269].

During the focused group discussion the learners felt that learner to learner interaction helped greatly in understanding the concepts, however, the explanation given by the learners varied.

One student commented,

“some students are not available for learner to learner interactions because of commitments. Anytime when a learner is free, they go for part-time work in order to make the ends meet. The groups are weak because some of us come unprepared to do any form of contributions”

Another student, said,

“Our Resident lecturer, encourages us to form group discussions and we keep together. This is the only way you can cover up for the time your away from the campus.”

During the interview the lectures felt that students were to blame for not having group discussions, the lecturer stated that learner to learner interaction is the most prudent way to assist learner in the learning process.

However, all the student concern that lecturer are not available for consultation because majority of them are part-timers and they do not have permanent offices within the university.

During the interview, the lecturer stated that the university takes field visits very seriously as confirmed by as quoted below:

“We (the university) cannot be satisfied with the student residential session, we visit our students in the field to follow up and advise them on how to conduct their studies away from the university. We get time to listen to them and share their experience in places where they were accommodated during the residential”.

On the study habits the researcher sought to find out whether the students attend the regional meeting and the following was observed:

“Majority of the students do not attend the meetings, therefore they do not benefit. They attend field visits as a casual meeting. As a result, the lecturers lose the enthusiasm to go for the field visits.”

During the focus group discussion one learner described field visits as a waste of time and demanded to be compensated. She said,

“The problem raised during the visits are never addressed by the university. There is no need of attending the meeting, we lose enthusiasm to attend the field visits.”

Surprisingly one learner commented;

“Field visits is a wonderful experiences. For me the support I got from the lecturer and my colleagues makes my learning smooth were it not for lack of time, I would wish to be on field visits on monthly basis”

Another learner stated;

“Field visits is exciting, during the visits I meet my colleagues and we organize learner to learner interaction, where we discuss, exchange notes and encourage each other. The meeting with the lecturer helps me to understand how to handle my studies away from the university. All in all field visits is the best experience because I express myself fully”.

Though the students are generally happy with the field visits, the researcher feels that the university should come up with a way of rewarding those who attend the field visits and penalize those who do not attend because it is the part of the learning process that needs to be taken seriously like any other academic work.

4.5.5 The influence of academic performance on note taking skills

The null hypothesis that there was no influence of average performance and note taking skills was tested and the results reflected in Table 4.14

Table 4.14 The influence of average performance and note taking skills

Correlations		Academic performance	Note taking skills
Average performance	Pearson Correlation	1	.635**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	341	341
Note taking skills	Pearson Correlation	.635**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	341	341

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The results indicated that there was a strong positive correlation between academic performance and note taking skills [$r=0.635$] and P – value [$P<0.01$], which is less than 0.05. In this case the null hypothesis was rejected and it was at 95% confidence concluded that there was influence of notes-taking skills on academic performance. Further $r^2 =0.403$ shows that 40.3% of the variation in average performance can be explained using the note taking skills.

The respondents showed evidence that they rarely use the library for research purposes, hence the reason to believe that they only rely on notes given during their interaction with their lecturers.

4.5.4 The influence of average performance on reading skills

The null hypothesis that there was no influence of average performance on reading skills was tested and the results reflected in Table 4.15

Table 4.15 The influence of average performance on reading skills

Correlations

		Average performance	Reading skills
Average performance	Pearson Correlation	1	.423**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	341	341
Reading skills	Pearson Correlation	.423**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
N		341	341

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 4.15 shows the results of the test statistic for the hypothesis that there was no influence of average performance on reading skills. The correlation coefficient [$r=0.423$] indicates that there was a weak positive influence of average performance on it is reading skills. However, the influence was statistically, significant since P-value [$P < 0.00$]. Therefore the null hypothesis is rejected and concluded that there was a positive influence of average performance on reading skills. The value of $r^2 = 0.178$. This means that about 17.8% of the variation in average performance was explained by reading skills. The learners who access the library in the centres are not contented because of insufficient resources and equipment. Majority of them stated that they do not have enough time to visits the library in the centres.

“We wish the university can equip the extra-mural centres with facilities. We are always encouraged to make use of our centres but when you go there you are frustrated because of lack of space and relevant books. If you are lucky you get one book which is shared among so many students. “From the discussion, the researcher concluded that there is need to equip the extra-mural centres in order to support the study habits.

During the interview with the lecturers on the invigilation of the examinations the lecturers were happy with the teaching and the learning process. However on the issue regarding examination invigilation the lecturers commented that:

“Some of us are not keen with examination invigilation, they create loop holes to allow cheating in the lecture rooms are not very urgent, the learners enter into examination rooms with their books with ‘iPads’ and ‘iPhones’ and student”

The learners agreed that there is cheating during the examinations because, the lecturers assume they are mature and may not be involved in cheating. One learner said,

“Kweli” we cheat because the lecturers are not able to monitor us and to flash out all the materials, while waiting for the examination we strategise on how to cheat because we don’t have enough time to revise, we enter with “mwakenya” (short summarized notes) we copy as the lecturers walk in and out to pick phone calls.

During residential sessions, students were provided with opportunities to interact and share experiences with each other. Due to lack of space at the campus, these meetings were held in different institutions which neighbours the Campus. Thus students were moved from one institution to another every time they came for residential sessions. This had its own problem, in that the students felt disoriented and there was a feeling of being second class students of the university.

4.6 The influence of demographic variables on academic performance of distance learners

This section deals with the finding on the influence of demographic variables on academic performance of distance learners. This section tested hypothesis five which sought to establish influence of age on academic performance, the influence of highest level of education on academic performance, influence of occupation on academic performance, the influence of marital status on academic performance, the influence of gender on academic performance. The study was able to establish the extent to which demographic variables had an influence on academic performance. The responses for these questions were collected by use of the questionnaire followed by focused group discussion guide. Each variable is presented by a table.

4.6.1 The influence of Gender on Academic performance

In this study, there were 222 males and 119 females. Table 4.17 presents the average marks per gender.

Table 4.17 Gender and Academic performance

Average Marks	Gender				Total	
	Male	Percentage	Female	Percentage		
20 and Below	13	3.8%	0	0%	13	3.8%
21-30	39	11.3%	17	5.0%	56	16.4%
31-40	88	25.8%	43	12.6%	131	38.4%
41-50	75	22.0%	60	17.6%	135	39.6%
51 and above	5	1.3%	1	6%	6	1.9%
Total	222	64.2%	119	35.8%	341	100%

Table 4.17 indicates that majority of the students are average performers. However, those between ages 31years to 50years perform better than those who are between ages 20 years to 30 years. In the light of these findings, it was the older students are more focused on academic performance because of work experience.

Correlation influence of gender on average performance is indicated on Table 4.18

Table 4.18 Correlation influence of on academic performance Correlations

	Average marks	Gender
Average marks	Pearson Correlation 1	.014
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.857
	N	341
Gender	Pearson Correlation .014	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.857
	N	341

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 4.18 shows that there was no significant influence of gender on average performance. The correlation coefficient is 0.167 at a significance value of alpha 0.005. In this case the null hypothesis was rejected and it was concluded that there was no influence of gender on academic performance. During the focused group discussion, learners indicated that gender has no influence on academic performance. The students were in agreement that both genders can perform well since the university does not discriminate in any way. The facilities are at the disposal to all the learners regardless of the gender.

However, a male student commented, regarding the performance on females;

“For me, I believe female do better than us. This is because generally, women receive favours and soft sport from administrators and lecturers. They don’t have to struggle a lot because culture dictates that males are providers. They spend much time on books, thus they perform better than us”.

This discussion has brought out an important issue that Female should not be threatened by their male counterparts in terms of academic performance. These findings also indicated that females did better than males. It can further be stated that all learners can perform well if they are exposed to the same environment. The University does not discriminate students on the basis of gender, thus, giving both the equal opportunities to the study.

4.6.2 The influence of age on academic performance

In this study, age was categorized into age group that varied between 18 years and below and 51 years and above with a mean of 32. These findings are presented in Table 4.19.

Table 4.19 The influence of age on academic performance

Age in years	Average marks						Total	Percentage
	18-30	Percentage	31-40	Percentage	41-50	Percentage		
20 and Below	4	6%	8	1.3%	11	1.9%	23	3.8%
21-30	6	8.1%	12	25%	8	16.3%	26	56%
31-40	49	13.8%	58	16.3%	29	8.1%	136	38.1%
41-50	43	12.5%	60	17.5%	33	10.0%	136	40.0%
51 and Above	6	6%	7	6%	7	6%	20	1.9%
Total	121	35.6%	141	41.3	79	23.1%	341	100%

The majority of the students were between 31 to 40 years because they tend to be older after taking a break into other engagements before resuming studies. There was only one student above 51 years because there is no systematic and planned investment in adult education sector thus many adults are reluctant to join bachelor of education because of pre-occupation, negative attitude and lack of understanding of value of adult education because of retirement age at 60 years. Thus, the study investigated the influence of age on academic performance.

Correlation influence of age on academic performance

Table 4.20 indicates the correlation coefficients influence of age on academic performance.

Table 4.20 Correlation influence of age on academic performance Correlations

		Age in years	
Average marks	Pearson	1	.048
	Correlation		
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.548
	N	341	341
Age in years	Pearson	.048	1
	Correlation		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.548	
N		341	341

Table 4.20 shows the correlation coefficient of 0.048. The value of correlation is greater than alpha level of 0.05 (0.548). Therefore statistically there was no significant influence of age on academic performance. This show that as long as an individual's entry point matches their academic experience, then they can perform well academically irrespective of their age. However, admission to successive level of education should not be strictly linked to age of the learner's. The finding of this study to confirm that education should be flexible and provide limitless opportunities for lifelong learning for all as stated in vision 2030.

4.6.3 Marital status on academic performance

Table 4.21 shows the influence of marital status on Academic performance

Table 4.21: The influence of marital status on Academic performance

Average marks	Married	Percentage	Single	Percentage	Percentage
20 and Below	10	3.1%	3	6%	13 3.8%
21-30	29	8.8%	26	7.5%	56 16.3%
31-40	87	25.6%	42	12.5%	129 38.1%
41-50	110	32.5%	26	7.5%	136 40.0%
51 and Above	3	1.3%	3	6%	7 1.9%
Total	243	71.3%	100	28.8%	341

Table 4.21 indicates that majority of the learners are married. Their performance is good which means they are able to balance the academic work and family activities. Those who are not married are 28.8% which indicates that married couples perhaps support each other to pursue education.

The correlation influence of marital status on academic performance

The correlation influence of marital status on academic performance is shown in Table 4.22.

Table 4.22 Correlation influence of marital status on academic performance
Correlations

		Average Marks	Marital status
Average marks	Pearson Correlation	1	-.147
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.064
	N	341	341
Marital status	Pearson Correlation	-.147	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.064	
	N	341	341

Table 4.22 shows the correlation of influence marital status on academic performance. The significance value is 0.064 which is greater than the alpha level of 0.05. This shows that there was no significant influence of marital status on academic performance.

4.6.4 Occupation and academic performance

The cross tabulation of average marks and kind of occupation is indicated in Table 4.23

Table 4.23 Cross tabulation of average marks and kind of occupation.

Average marks	Occupation							Total	Percent age
	Self Empl oyed	Percen tage	Empl oyed	Percen tage	Jobles s	Perce ntage			
20 and Below	13	3.8%	0	0%	0	0%	13	3.8%	
21-30	50	14.5%	6	1.9%	0	%	56	16.4%	
31-40	119	35.2%	9	2.5%	2	6%	130	38.4%	
41-50	131	38.4%	4	1.3%	2	6%	137	40.3%	
51and Above	2	6%	3	6%	0	0%	5	1.3%	
Total	147	92.5%	10	6.3%	2	1.3%	341	100%	

Table 4.23 shows that majority of the learners are employed which indicates they pay fees for themselves. Those who are jobless are 1.3 % which indicates that learners with job are motivated to learn. Education is preferred by those who are working to sharpen their skills.

Correlations influence of occupation on academic performance is shown in Table 4.24

Table 4.24 Correlations influence of occupation on academic performance
Correlations

		Average Marks	What kind of occupation are you in
Average Marks	Pearson Correlation	1	.008
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.919
	N	341	341
What kind of occupation are you in	Pearson Correlation	.008	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.919	

The study sought to find the influence of the occupation of the respondents on their academic performance. From the findings in Table 4.24, the significant value is 0.919 which is greater than that alpha level of 0.05 and therefore, we conclude that there was no statistically significant influence on the kind of occupation on academic performance of the students. This therefore shows that the type of job one does, does not hinder one from good performance.

During the focused group discussion the learners contended that maintaining a balance between work was challenging one learner stated;

“For us, we were informed of the challenges of learning away from the university. Our lecturers do not encourage us, to ensure we have understood during the residential, some never show up and we are left to struggle even without the modules to figure out what weare supposed to do. We struggle on our own with no-one to consult.”

In addition, age comes with responsibilities that compete with study time. The learners felt that family responsibility has influence on academic performance, one female learner commented;

“Being a mother, a wife and a student is difficult. It is difficult to balance the reading time and at times, I am exhausted to read”.

During the discussion with the lecturers, it was evident that distance learners are “strugglers” of the university because of their advanced age, and limited time with the learning facilities and the lecturers from the discussion, the researcher observed, learner are more committed in their work, whole heartedly and they are not distracted. From, the findings of the study, there was no influence of age on academic performance. The learner need to be encouraged to have confidence that over in thus advanced age: they have the potential to perform well.

4.6.5 The influence of highest level of education on academic performance

The university entry is determined by academic performance which is C+ and above primary teacher training and above for distance learning students. As indicated in Table 4.25

Table 4.25 Average marks highest level of education attained in years

Average marks	Form 4	Percentage	P1	Percentage	Diploma and Above	Percentage	Total	Percentage
20 and Below	3	6%	6	1.9%	4	1.9%	13	3.8%
21-30	15	4.4%	36	10.6%	5	16.3%	56	16.3%
31-40	27	7.5%	83	24.4%	20	8.1%	130	38.1%
41-50	19	4.4%	87	25.6%	30	10.0%	136	40.0%
51 and Above	2	6%	4	1.3%	0	6%	6	1.9%
Total	60	17.5 %	217	23.1%	79	23.1%	100%	100%

This study shows that academic performance was dependent on entry qualification because those with diploma and above performed better than the P1 and the form four leavers. The majority of the students are P1 with 25.6% while the form four leavers were 6%. Which means the course is not popular to the school leaver and thus the university should market the program to the school leavers who are left out by joint admissions board. The Correlations influence of highest level of education on academic performance is shown in Table 4.25.

Table 4.26 Correlations influence of highest level of education on academic performance

Correlations

Average marks highest level of education attained so far				
Average marks	Pearson Correlation	1	.237	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001		
N	341	341		
Highest level of education attained so far	Pearson Correlation	.237	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001		
N	341	341		

Table 4.26 shows influence of highest level of education attained on academic performance. The significance level is 0.001 hence, we failed to reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there was a statistically significant influence of the highest level of education attained on academic performance.

During focused group discussion, learners agreed that there is a strong influence of entry qualification on academic performance. To them, a good grade at form four is reflection of smart students who is self-motivated. However, one learner reputed the allegation and stated that:

“Performance is based on how much you have acquired knowledge well, you plan your reading time and how you take lecture notes. There are no skills tested other than cramming the notes and reproduce them in the examination paper”.

Another learner lamented,

“Lecturers discourage us from going to the library to research further on a concept. They insist face to face interaction notes taken are adequate to pass an exam. And true to their word, when you go to cyber café, their hand outs are lifted right from the internet not the library or the modules”.

The learners felt that performance at the university is pegged on good study habit and not on entry qualification; however, the findings indicated that those who join the programmes with better grades perform better. During the interview with lecturers they denied the allegations that they discourage them from going to the library.

However the university should re-evaluate the entry qualification because when students leave form four they come from different backgrounds which perhaps hindered them from scoring C+ if given the opportunity they can perform well.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY

5.1: Introduction

The overall aim of this study was to investigate the influence of study habits and demographic variables on academic performance in distance learning students. This chapter gives the summary of the findings, discussions of the research findings, conclusions and recommendations of the study and suggestions for further research on distance learning.

5.2: Summary of the findings of the study.

The study had five objectives and the findings of each of them have been summarized as follows:

Objective one was to establish the influence of time management and how it influenced academic performance. The null hypothesis being tested was there is no influence of time management on academic performance ($r= 0.569$).

The second objective was to establish the influence of learner to learner interaction on academic performance. The finding of the study indicated that there was a strong positive influence of learner to learner interaction on academic performance ($r=0.519$).

The third objective was to ascertain the influence of note taking on academic performance. The finding of the study indicated that there is no influence of note taking skills on academic performance.

The findings of the study indicated that there was a positive influence of note taking skills on academic performance ($r=0.635$).

The fourth objective was to analyze the influence of reading skills on academic performance was there is no influence of reading skills on academic performance. The findings of the study indicated that there was a positive influence of reading skills on academic performance ($r=0.423$).

The fifth objective was to examine the influence of demographic variables on academic performance. Each of the variables is analyzed as shown below:

- a) The first demographic variable was gender. The null hypothesis was that there is no influence of gender on academic performance. The findings of the study established that there was no significant influence of gender on academic performance ($r=0.014$).
- b) The third demographic variable was marital status. The null hypothesis was, there is no influence of marital status on academic performance. The findings of the study ascertained that there was no significant influence of marital status on academic performance ($r=0.147$).
- c) The second demographic variable was age and the null hypothesis, was there is no influence of age on academic performance. On testing this hypothesis, it was established that there was no significant influence of age on academic performance ($r=0.48$).
- d) The fourth demographic variable was the students' occupation. The null hypothesis was there is no influence of the type of occupation on academic performance. The findings of the study indicated that there was no influence of the type of occupation on academic performance ($r=0.008$).

e) The fifth demographic variable was the students' highest academic qualification at the previous academic level, before admission to university. The null hypothesis was there is no influence of highest academic performance of learners on their academic performance. On testing this hypothesis it was established that there was influence of the highest academic qualification on the academic performance of adult learners ($r= 0.237$).

5.3 Discussions of the research findings

Several variables determine the influence of study habits and demographic variables on academic performance in distance learning students. They include the influence of time management, learner interaction, note-taking skills, reading skills and the moderating effect between demographic variables of distance learning students.

5.3.1 The influence of time management on how it influences academic performance

There is a strong positive influence of time management on academic performance ($r =0.569$ at 0.05 level of confidence). The test revealed an association value of $r^2 =0.324$, which indicated that time management accounted for about 32.4% of the variation in academic performance. This is fairly a high proportion, although it can be seen that it was not the only factor that satisfactorily can explain performance. These findings support Britton of America College Health, (2008), who pointed out that that time management skills predict success. The power of time management was the predictor of academic performances. Students were faced with a variety of decisions to make during study time. They had to prepare well for examinations and in this case, they had to allocate a specific study time for each course unit. If proper time management is not practiced, one might allocate more time to the more

favoured units at the expense of others. Yet time management practices are central to academic success.

These findings are consistent with Wagne (2007) who found that time is a dimension of interest for scientists through ages. The first activities with this dimension can be traced back to Aristotle (384 – 322 B.C) and Augustine (354-430 B.c). Today, counsellors and advisors from a wide range of fields consider the efficient use of time management as anchored in numerous theoretical codes as a determinant for the learning success of students. However, in comparison to other determinants of academic performance, only a limited number of studies manage their time well. Most of the studies do not examine the work done at home study by students. Thus learners with better time management skills were associated with good academic performance.

5.3.2 The influence of learners to learner Interaction on academic performance

The learner to learner interaction is one of the major resources learners are encouraged to use when they join the programme. The study found out that there was a influence of learner-to-learner interaction on academic performance with a correlation coefficient ($r=0.519$) The test revealed an association value of [$r^2 = 0.269$].The conclusion drawn is that the leaner to leaner interaction influenced the academic performance.

These findings are consistent with Liu and Lu (2009) who did a study in five provinces of western China and established that regardless of whether the sample is the aggregate sample of all the students or samples divided into different groups according to gender and ethnicity, there exists a positive correlation between the

students' family SES index and academic performance. Distance learning students with similar goals and objectives can study together. Study group can be a very important tool for academic success because comparing notes, explaining concepts to one another and critiquing each other's assignments lead to better understanding of study materials. During focused groups discussion students agreed on how to balance learning and other commitments. They became more focused, self-driven and self-motivated to struggle to balance limited time and insufficient facilities and scarce lecturers' notes. In additions they counselled each other on how to perform better in their studies.

5.3.3 The influence of academic performance on note taking skills

The results indicated that there was a strong positive correlation influence on academic performance and note taking skills [$r=0.635$] and P – value [$P<0.01$] at alpha – level of 0.05. The respondents showed evidence that they rarely used the library services for research purposes, hence the reason to believe that they only read the notes given during their interaction with their lecturers. These findings are consistent with Eliot (2002) who found a significant difference between the students who received note taking training, taking notes at lesson and reviewing the notes and students who attended lessons without receiving note-taking training. Note-taking increases students' success. The educational background makes learners to have many ways and means of taking notes such as marking charts and graphs from the reading materials; for better understanding Note-taking is a skill that should be taught to all the students. Lack of note taking is a constant deficiency which can hamper the distance learning students' academic performance. The lecture notes are essential as they need to be accurate, concise and appropriate. The lecturers must

learn to focus on the main points of the lecture because learning is the ingredient of good note taking which the learners are supposed to apply in order to succeed.

5.3.4 The influence of average academic performance and reading skills

The study also established that there was influence of average performance and reading skills. The correlation coefficient [$r=0.423$] indicated that there was a weak positive influence of average performance on reading skills. However, the influence was statistically significant since P-value [$P < 0.01$]. The value of $r^2 = 0.178$. This means that 17.8% of the variation in average performance was explained by reading skills. The value of $R^2 = 0.179$ indicated that reading skills only contributed to 17.9% of academic performance. These findings are consistent with Venkataiah (1989) whose major findings suggested that adequate attention must be paid to the writing of course materials. Lack of proper guidance on reading skills leads to poor performance because the students are not prepared to study in diverse environments. The studies in the recommendation concurred with Entwistle (1960), Rafoth, Leal, and DeFabo (1993) who recommended that study skills should be taught in high school to help students succeed in school. Motivation, outlining/mapping, time management, test taking skills, note-taking skills, SQ3R, PQ5R, library skills, retention/memory, listening, comprehension, and studying are study skill techniques that they reviewed in their literature. To enhance the academic performance of distance learning students, a dedicated academic programme should be implemented on study skills course to help students attain the best grade.

5.3.5 Demographic variable and academic performance

The distance mode of learning attracted males more than female's. These findings concur with Shark et.al. (2012) studies which found that the number of female

learners enrolled in distance learning classes was higher than that of males because of the flexibility of the mode of learning. However, the findings of this study show that the programme was dominated by male with 64.2% against the female 35.8%. The higher percentage of males is a pointer that there is a gap in gender distribution. Despite the affirmative action that, all gender are given an equal opportunity on education and assumption that the teaching profession is dominated by the female gender, this is a major challenge, given the central role of education in the empowerment of women. This shows that there is need to encourage more female students and deliberately design programs to attract female students. This would go a long way in achieving gender equality as envisaged in the Vision 2030. Additionally it would give women a platform to compete fairly with their male counterparts in the society that would lead to a more fulfilling life.

For distance learning students, there exists gender disparity in access to high potential economic activities to enable women to save enough resources for financing studies. In Kenya, men are at a better position than women to earn income to meet family needs and pay fees for themselves. There is unfair cultural norms, values and practices which emphasize on unequal power status of men and women which may be attributed to their greater access to factors of production unlike women, because men are bestowed with property ownership right by culture. Thus, interventions should be made to support female students in order to correct historical inequalities in accessing economic resources. Liu and Lu (2009) did a study in five provinces of western China and established that regardless of whether the sample is the aggregate sample of all the students or samples divided into different groups according to gender and ethnicity, there exists a positive correlation influence of the

students' family social economic status (SES) index and academic performance. That is, the higher the student's family SES index, the more likely he or she is to receive relatively high Mathematics or Chinese language scores. Students' Math's performance increased by 0.286 units and students' Chinese language performance increased by 0.275 units when SES index increased by one single unit. However, within the different gender and ethnicity groups, the degree of impact of SES index on academic performance differed slightly. Nevertheless, it always showed a trend of positive impact. Note that the effects of SES index on male students' academic performance was greater than that of the female students' academic performance, especially in Mathematics. As a result, we do not eliminate the possibility that the feudal Chinese traditional idea of severe discrimination against women still exists today. Furthermore, within the aggregate sample, regarding the comparison between the differences in the two school subjects, the effects of SES index on Math's performance were slightly greater than that of Chinese language.

Another key finding was that the majority of the students; about 63.8% were P1 certificate holders. This implies that most of them were practicing teachers in Kenyan primary schools. This is a useful finding given that majority of the Kenya population live in the rural areas where most of these teachers serve. Empowering the teachers with education can transform the rural society by applying the entrepreneurial skills learned hence leading to an accelerated economic growth. Education is an important tool for sustainable wealth and employment creation as well as for better living standards (Republic of Kenya 1995).

The level of education is a key determinant of the occupation, income and ability to pay fees. Distance learning attracts students who may have met the maximum entry requirement but were locked out of university admission by the bed capacity. Education level is the determinant of entry qualification to the university. The B.Ed programme of the University of Nairobi programme was initially designed to meet the needs of teachers who were willing to further their education.

The findings concur with Keegan (1996) who pointed out that distance learning students have greater experience of life and bring considerable experience to academic work. Training as primary school teacher put students in a position where they are likely to perform better because of experience. It has been acknowledged that education level of the students is a key factor in performance. Scholars believed that trained students are more efficient and effective in their further studies than untrained ones.

The finding of this study shows that the majority of the students were between age 31- 40 with 50% while age 18 -30 is 35.8% and the rest are 23.3%. This implies that majority of the students were in the middle level and were trying to have career advancement. Also, perhaps they were willing to get a university degree but they were denied because of the stiff entry qualification and lack of finance. This is explained by Vision 2030 which reveals that the magnitude of wastage in the transition from secondary to university education is highly, whereby those who were left out during admission take advantage of distance learning. The trend could also indicate that those teachers with bachelor's degrees are motivated with salary increment and promotions.

The study established that 92.4% of the respondents were employed while only 6.3% were in self-employment and 1.3% was jobless. This implies that Distance learners are in working class and are committed both to studies and work, and they have no time to attend the full-time programme. Thus, they took the advantage of distance learning. Adults who have prior learning experience in the work place and in life enrol with the intention of acquiring an undergraduate degree. Other scholars had found similar trends. Clinton (2005) describes distance learners as working adults between averages of 32 years. Okah (2010) noted that distance learning students perform better because the cognitive development and maturity which are associated with age are necessary for worthwhile performance of the students. The older students tend to be more focused, self-driven and self-motivated. During focused groups discussion students agreed that to balance learning and other commitments was a big challenge because age comes with responsibility that compete with academic work. The majority of the students struggled to balance education and other responsibilities because of age, limited time and insufficient facilities and scarce lecturers. To cope this challenge the students need to be confidence and more focused on their studies.

There were also variations in marital status. The married category of students' recorded higher proportion of 71.1% compared to single category students with 28.9%. However, marital status can act as an impediment because of family responsibility that competes with study habits. This implies that marital union stands a better chance to raise resources; married students could be boosted by the support from the family members. Marital status is capable of providing the required support because the partners can pool resources together to make the programme

affordable. All in all, students who are single may not have enough income to support the education and their basic needs. This implies that the majority of students who undertook the programmes had other social commitments and family responsibilities that may compete with their studies. This finding concurs with Powell et al. (1999) who observed that non-conventional students were adults who had completed their formal education and may have families and have community responsibilities since it is assumed that married learners are stable and able to participate in the programme over the holidays. Studies carried out by Kember (1989, 1990, and 1995), found that students who made most progress and high entrance examination scores had a supportive family and an intention to complete.

The ability of the distance learning students depends on the level of income. This study established that the monthly income of the students was between Ksh. 11,000 – Ksh. 12,000. The monthly income of the respondents was proved to be having a relationship with some variables of the study habits such as time management. The implication is that the income level is a critical factor affecting the ability of the students to study effectively because they spend more time looking for finances. Kember (1990), Woodley and Parlett (1993) found sex, age, previous educational qualifications, occupation and region of residence were related to persistence for U.K Open University students. Students with higher previous education qualification did better than those with poor qualification. Those who found it difficult to reconcile the conflicting demands: jobs, family and studies tended to do less well than those who found it difficult to direct their own learning. A number of researchers such as who developed formal models for predicting students'

completion. They found students who made most progress and high entrance examination scores, had a supportive family and an intention to complete.

5.4 Conclusions of the study

A key finding of this study was that, on average 64.2% of all the students who attended the distance learning program were males while 35.8% of the students are females. This is a major challenge, given the central role of education in the empowerment of women. This shows that there is need to encourage more female students and deliberately design programs to attract female students. This would go a long way in achieving gender equality as envisaged in the Vision 2030. Additionally, it would give women a platform to compete fairly with their male counterparts marking former to lead a more fulfilling life.

Another key finding was that majority of the students; about 63.8% were P1 certificate holders. This implies that most of them were practicing teachers in Kenyan primary schools. This is a useful finding given that majority of the Kenya population live in the rural areas where most of these teachers serve. Empowering the teachers with education can transform the rural society which would provide the environment where they can apply the entrepreneurial skills learned and this in turn would lead to an accelerated economic growth.

Another finding was that the age cohort 31years – 40 years contributed 40.9% of the students' population. The findings also indicated that the program popularity decreased with increase in age. There were also variations in marital status. The married category of students recorded a higher proportion of 71.1% compared to single status category students with 28.9%.

The research findings show that note-taking skills had the highest contribution on average academic performance. The findings indicated that note taking skills accounted for about 40.3% of academic performance. The finding was confirmed by the coefficient correlation which showed that there was a positive correlation between note taking skills and academic performance. The correlation coefficient was 0.635 at 95% confidence interval.

Time management was also found to have a positive correlation with academic performance. This was also revealed by the proportion of 32.4%, that showed that time management was a key component of good performance. Similarly, the study found that, there was a positive influence of learner to learner interaction and academic performance. The value of $r^2 = 0.269$, indicated that learner to learner interaction contributed to about 26.9% of academic performance.

Reading skills indicated the least contribution to academic performance. There was a weak positive correlation influence of reading skills on academic performance. The value of $r^2 = 0.179$ indicates that reading skills, only contributed about 17.9% of academic performance.

On the moderating factors, the findings showed that, age was not an important factor in determining academic performance. The study also showed that there is no influence of gender on academic performance. It was also noted that there was no influence of education background on academic performance for as long as all the students met the university academic qualification admission criteria.

This study identified four major factors that determined academic performance of distance learning students. In order of importance they were ranked as follows, note taking skills, time management, learner to learner interaction and lastly reading skills. The results also showed that gender and education backgrounds were not important in determining academic performance of distance learning students.

The results further indicated high disparity in the importance of factors determining academic performance for distance learning students. Whereas note taking explained 40.3% while reading skills explained a mere 17.9% of contribution to academic performance, there also existed gender disparity in admission with males at 64.2% and females at 35.6%.

Finally, the results of the study show consistency and reliability. This is so because the results obtained using the correlation coefficient to study the strength of the influence of the variables gave similar results with the value of r^2 obtained while fitting the best line of fit in the scatter plots showing the direction of the influence.

5.5 Recommendations of the study

Based on the data collected and analyses, the study suggests the following recommendations: The findings of this study indicated a strong influence of time management on academic performance. Most students were studying on part time basis. It is recommended therefore that for students to succeed in the distance learning programme, there is need to train students in time management techniques because of their competing demands.

The findings of this study indicated that learner to learner interaction had a positive influence with learners' academic performance. Learners should therefore be encouraged to meet together for discussions. An official scheduling should also be put in place to ensure that the exercise is done effectively.

Learners who had good reading and note taking skills performed better than those without. Based on these findings, learners should be trained on how to take down notes. The lecturers should also not rely on the notes that students take down in class but should provide comprehensive modules and hand-outs for students to read during home study.

The findings of the study indicated that there was no influence of demographic variables (age, gender, marital status and type of occupation) on academic performance. Distance learning should therefore be recommended for all irrespective of their demographic orientations.

5.6 Suggestions for further research

For further research, the study suggests the following:

- (i) A study can be replicated in other universities in Kenya to find out if there is a influence of study habits on academic performance to improve the generalizability of the results.
- (ii) The study was carried out among distance learners in UoN. A similar study can be carried out to establish if there is the influence of study habits and demographic variables on academic performance in distance learning students among regular students.

(iii) The study sought to establish if study habits had any effect on academic performance. There is need to explore other variables such as home environment, family size, geographical distance and their influence with academic performance.

(iv) The study used term scores and CATs as a measure of academic performance. Use of other measures for example evaluation on job performance by employers after graduation can be studied.

(v) A correlation method was used to measure the influence of the study variables. Use of other methods such as experimental study can be used to establish the influence of study habits and demographic variables on academic performance in distance learning students.

(vi) The study revealed there was a positive influence of note-taking skills and reading skills which was highly significant. Since this was outside the scope of the study, the study suggests further research to establish the strength of the influence.

(vii) The study revealed there was a significant influence of note-taking skills and learner to learner interaction which was significant. Since this was outside the scope of the study, we suggest further research to establish the strength of the influence is recommended.

(viii) The study revealed there was a positive influence of notes taking skills and time management which was highly significant, since this was outside the scope of the study, the study suggests further research to establish the strength of the influence.

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APPENDICES

Appendix (I): Introduction Letter

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

21st August 2012

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRES

I am student in University of Nairobi at the School of Education and Continuing Studies pursuing a PhD in Distance Education.

This questionnaire is intended to collect personal ideas and opinions about the relationship of study habits on academic performance of Bachelor of Arts student's. The information given will be treated as confidential.

Kindly complete the attached questionnaires and return to me as soon as possible.

Thanks in advance.

Yours faithfully,

Chandi John Rugendo.

Appendix (II): Questionnaire

SECTION A

General Information on Demographic Information

Your honest answers to the following questions will greatly enhance the quality of this research. Your responses will be kept confidential and will only be used for the purpose of this research. Your co-operation is highly appreciated.

1. Registration number.....Tel. Number.....
2. What are your teaching subjects.....?
3. Which level are you in?
4. Indicate the name of your extramural centre? ✓

Tick appropriate the box

1. Gender
 - Male
 - Female
2. What is your marital status?
 - Married
 - Single
3. Indicate your Age in years
 - 18 – 30
 - 31 – 40

- 41 – 50
- 51 – 60
- 61 and above

4. Highest level of education attained so far

- Form 4
- P1
- Diploma and above

5. Is that level of education applicable to what you are taking in distance learning?

- Yes
- No

6. How often do you study?

- On daily basis
- Once in a month
- Once a week
- Several times in a week
- Hardly

7. Where do you study (You can have more than one answer)

- Place of work
- Home
- Library
- Under a tree

8. Do your family members support you in your studies?

- Yes
- No

9. Please explain your answer

.....
.....

10. Which is your priority?

- Paying school fees
- Family upkeep
- Any other

11. What do you do when a family member is sick and you have an exam the following day?

- Continue preparing for exam
- Go and take care of them
- Prepare for exam and also take care of them
- Ask someone else to take care of them

12. What do you do when a friend comes to visit and you have an exam to read for or an assignment to do?

- Entertain the friend
- I let the friend know that I have school work to do
- I leave the friend with someone else and continue with school work

13. Is it easy to study from home?

- Yes
- No
- Any other (specify) _____

14. What distract you most of the time when studying at home?

- Family members
- Friends

- Work related activities
- Church activities
- Community activities
- Any other _____

15. Has it been easy for you to manage home activities and your studies?

- Yes
- No

16. How has management or lack of it affected the way you perform in your studies?

- Very serious
- Moderately
- Does not affect

17. What kind of occupation are you in?

- Employed
- Self-employed
- Jobless

18. In your work place, are you given time to study?

- Yes
- No

19. Is it easy to manage your school assignments and work related assignments?

- Yes
- No

20. Are you tempted to do your school assignments during office hours?

- Yes
- No

21. How do you manage assignment related to work and studies?

- I create time for each
- I do them all during work time
- I request for time to do my study assignment
- I handle them as they come with no problem
- It has been very hard for me to manage
- Other specify.....

22. Do you get support from your employer?

- Yes
- No
- Any other (specify)_____

23. If yes which support do you get

- Time to study
- Pay school fees
- Other specify.....
- If no which support do you need

24. How far are your work place and the university?

- Very far
- Moderate distance
- In the neighbourhood

25. Do you access library in your work place that you utilize to do your school assignments?

- Yes
- No
- Other (specify)_____

26. What is your monthly income in Ksh?

- Below 10,000
- 11,000 – 20,000
- 21,000 – 30,000
- 31,000 – 40,000
- 41,000 – 50,000
- Above 51,000

27. What is the expected school fee in Ksh?

- Below 20,000
- 21,000 – 30,000
- 31,000 – 40,000
- Above 50,000

28. How many dependants do you have?

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- Above 5

29. How do you manage the funds between your studies and dependants?

- They are enough for all of us
- I struggle a lot because they are never enough
- I usually borrow loan at times
- I sacrifice my studies sometimes
- The dependants suffers sometimes
- Other specify.....

30. Do issues to do with your finances affect your performance?

- Yes
- No

31. Do you get to a point when you do not have school fees?

- Yes
- No

32. Do you forfeit some of the necessities in order for you to get enough fees?

- Yes
- No

33. Where do you usually get your stationeries to use in your studies from?

- I buy
- I get them from my work place
- I am given by other people
- Other specify.....

34. Do you usually have enough money to do the things you always need to do when you go for your studies?

- Yes
- No

35. Does that affect how you perform in your studies?

- Yes
- No

36. Where do you get accommodation?

- In campus
- Outside campus
- I stay at home

37 .Do you have enough time to study during the session you come to the university?

- Yes
- No

38.Where do you usually take the residential sessions?

- Inside the university
- Outside the university
- Other (specify)_____

39 .Do you access the university library?

- Yes
- No

40. Do you feel prepared adequately to sit for your exams?

- Yes
- No

41.Why do you feel so?

- Lack of enough time to prepare for the exam
- Anxiety
- Lack of study material
- Because I always prepare well for the exams
- Other specify.....

42. Do you usually get enough time to rest before start of lectures?

- Yes
- No

43..Does that affect your performance?

- Yes
- No

SECTION B

2.1: Time management.

Please answer questions using the following scale

Strongly Disagree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

1. I always plan a head of my studies..... 1 2 3 4 5
2. I get less time for studies 1 2 3 4 5
3. I am able to do my home work and assignments in time 1 2 3 4 5
4. I spend a lot of time in library for the study purpose..... 1 2 3 4 5
5. I feel difficult in sparing time for studies at home..... ... 1 2 3 4 5
6. I am over burdened with my home work 1 2 3 4 5
7. I do my work in advances 1 2 3 4 5
8. I appear in the examination without sufficient preparation.... 1 2 3 4 5
9. I think I am not getting proper in my studies 1 2 3 4 5
10. I am always delayed in sending my assignments 1 2 3 4 5

11. I spend much of my time worrying over my future..... 1 2 3 4 5
12. I study daily at a definite place and time 1 2 3 4 5
13. I studying until I complete the work decided for the day 1 2 3 4 5
14. My study time is short that all not to concentrate on my studies 1 2 3 4 5
15. I the maximum possible time in my studies 1 2 3 4 5
16. I keep my studies complete during residential session 1 2 3 4 5
- 17.I fail to understand the subject matter if I continue studying For how long time
..... 1 2 3 4 5
18. I study on daily basis 1 2 3 4 5
- 19.How much time do you spend in reading per day 1. (0hours)2.(1-5hours) 3.(6-10
hours) 4.(10 and more hours)

2.2: Learner to learner Interaction

Please answer questions using the following scale

Strongly Disagree 1	Agree 2	Undecided 3	Disagree 4	Strongly Agree 5
---------------------------	------------	----------------	---------------	------------------------

1. I feel loneliness in my studies through distance mode..... 1 2 3 4 5
2. I think distances mode is not suitable for me.....1 2 3 4 5
3. I do most of my studies with help of my classmates..... 1 2 3 4 5
- 4 .Generally, I fully get involved in group discussion.....1 2 3 4 5
5. I concentrate on group discussion for a short period only.....1 2 3 4 5
6. I study each unit of the syllabus with my group members..... 1 2 3 4 5
7. I consult my group members about study related problems..... .1 2 3 4 5
8. I do not receive much help from my group member..... .1 2 3 4 5
9. Group discussion sessions are generally hopeless..... ...1 2 3 4 5
10. Ground discussion is starred of necessary facilities and equipments.....1 2 3 4 5
11. Group discussion helps to remove isolation in studies..... ...1 2 3 4 5
12. Group discussion should be made compulsory..... 1 2 3 4 5
13. Generally at extra-mural centre there no adequate space for discussion....
..... 1 2 3 4 5
14. Generally the extra-mural centre is located at inconvenient places.....1 2 3 4 5
15. The staffs at extra-mural centres generally assist in group discussion.....1 2 3 4 5
- 16.Extra- mural centre fail to provide the university climate Group discussion..... 1 2 3 4 5

17. In group discussion is the avenue for gossiping..... 1 2 3 4 5

18. How much time do you spend in group discussion per day 1. (0hours)2.(1-

5hours) 3.(6-10 hours) 4.(10 and more hours)

2.3: Reading skills

Please answer questions using the following scale

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5

1. I learn with proper understanding of definitions..... 1 2 3 4 5

2. I use knowledge of one subject in other areas..... 1 2 3 4 5

3. I understand the main points of a chapter during its

First reading..... 1 2 3 4 5

4. I remain puzzled at what should I read..... 1 2 3 4 5

5. I think useless things while reading..... 1 2 3 4 5

6. I am unable to study completely because I feel tired

As I started studying..... 1 2 3 4 5

7. I remain worried while reading..... 1 2 3 4 5

8. I do not show enthusiasm in reading interesting subject..... 1 2 3 4 5

9. While reading I frequently repeat in the mind the main

Points and principles..... 1 2 3 4 5

10. I consult the dictionary to find the meaning of the words..... 1 2 3 4 5

11. Generally the study materials are not available in time..... 1 2 3 4 5

12. Self-instructional materials do not help in reading..... 1 2 3 4 5

13. Modules provided are too bulky and burdensome..... 1 2 3 4 5

14. The language used in lecture series is quite comprehensive..... 1 2 3 4 5

15. Supplementary materials are supplied to encourage further

reading..... 1 2 3 4 5

16. I have study strategies for reading the text books..... 1 2 3 4 5
17. How much time do you spend in lecture modules per day 1. (0 hours)2.(1-5hours) 3.(6-10 hours) 4.(10 and more hours)

2.4: Note - taking skills

Please answer questions using the following scale

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5

1.While writing the answer in the examination I pay attention in studies....
.....1 2 3 4 5

2.After reading the subject matter I write down its main points..... 1 2 3 4 5

3.I carefully take down notes pertaining to each subject..... 1 2 3 4 5

4.While studying I note down such subject matter which proves useful after words.....1 2 3 4 5

5.While reading I take notes that are highlighted distinctly.....1 2 3 4 5

6. I prepare notes from the book in my own words.....1 2 3 4 5

7. I note down new words in order to improve my vocabulary.....1 2 3 4 5

8.I memorize the chapter which I do not understand..... 1 2 3 4 5

9. I have no problem with writing my assignments..... 1 2 3 4 5

10. My lecturers affected the writing of my assignment.....1 2 3 4 5

12. How much time do you spend in my assignment per day 1. (0 hours)2.(1-5hours) 3.(6-10 hours) 4.(10 and more hours)

2.6 Academic Performances

Please answer questions using the following scale

Strongly 1	Agree 2	Undecided 3	Disagree 4	Strongly Disagree 5
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1. I am confident of getting a good grade in my examination. 1 2 3 4 5

2. I am very worried about the examinations..... 1 2 3 4 5

3. I gave more importance to my studies than any other work..... 1 2 3 4 5

4. I think I could perform better in regular class..... 1 2 3 4 5

5. I plan the answer to the examination sequentially..... 1 2 3 4 5

6. Before attempting to answer question I collect the related subject matter
..... 1 2 3 4 5

6. I burn midnight oil during examination days..... 1 2 3 4 5

7. The worry regarding failure in the examination is an obstacle in my
studies.....1 2 3 4 5

8. In general grading of assignment is not done properly.....1 2 3 4 5

9. The assignment is not returned back before the turn and
Examinations..... 1 2 3 4 5

10. Remarks made by the lecturers on the assignments are not
educative..... 1 2 3 4 5

11. Attempting an assignment helps in getting good grades in examination..... 1 2 3 4 5
12. How much time do you spend in looking for the results per day 1.(0 hours)
2.(1-5hours) 3.(6-10 hours) 4.(10 and more hours)

Appendix (iii): Document Analysis Guide for Students

1. Review the course structure. Total units a student is registered for the whole course number of the units a student's registers for per semester. Number of units covered by academic year
2. Review the scores of the students
3. Analyze the scores
4. Indicate examination marks awarded to students coded

Student Reg. No	Part	Communication skills Scores	Educational courses Scores	Teaching Subject Scores

Appendix (IV): Observation guide

This observation Guide observed the following:

1. The punctuality of the learners to attend the lectures (lateness, leaving the class)
2. The note—taking skills (dates, ideas, sequence)
3. The concentration during the lecture session (noise making, copying from each other)

Section one observed – lecture delivery methods,

Using student’s attendance

Course Unit _____

Date _____

S/No.	Surname	1 st Name	Other names	Reg.No	Student signature
1.					
2.					
3.					
4.					
5.					
6.					

(Class attendance) Course/lecturer evaluation

Appendix (V): Focus group discussion guide for distance learning students

Main Discussion Question:

- (1) Is there any influence of age, gender, qualification, occupation and marital status learning environment and academic performance?

Possible Probing Questions

1. In your opinion, is there a influence of age, gender and academic performance? Explain?
2. What is your occupation? Do your work interfere with your academic work?
3. In your own opinion, how would you rate the learning in this course in terms of the availability of lecturers for consultation, supervision/invigilation of examinations

Appendix (VI): Interview guide for the lecturers

The following guide was used to direct the interview discussion

1. Please explain the extent of learner to learner interaction in the extramural – centres?
2. During field visits explain how the following are done to guide the learners on ,time management, learner to learner interaction, note-taking skills, reading skills
3. During the residential session how the learner's manage habits time management, learner interaction note-taking skills, reading skills
4. During examination period do the learners have challenges on time management, learner to learner interaction , note-taking skills, reading skills ,