

**THE INFLUENCE OF LEARNER SUPPORT SERVICES IN THE
IMPLEMENTATION OF DISTANCE LEARNING: A CASE OF KENYATTA
UNIVERSITY, KENYA**

By

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**A RESEARCH PROJECT REPORT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL
FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE AWARD OF THE
DEGREE OF MASTER OF DISTANCE EDUCATION OF THE UNIVERSITY
OF NAIROBI.**

2014

DECLARATION

This project report is my original work and has not been presented for a degree or any award in any other University.

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DEDICATION

To my loving parents, Cyprian and Agnes, for their great support and encouragement throughout my schooling and to my sons, Kelvin and Victor.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I am most grateful to the Almighty God for his unfailing love, provision and divine enablement as I did the course. My gratitude goes to the University of Nairobi for offering the masters in distance education course this enabling me to choose it. I appreciate the services of the University of Nairobi, Kikuyu library and the Odel computer laboratory services that have made my research manageable due to the availability of reading materials during the study.

My gratitude goes to my supervisor Professor David Macharia for his professional advice and guidance as I am writing the project proposal. His continuous communication and availability throughout the study time will help me finish my proposal in time.

I am particularly grateful to my sons for the support and encouragement during the study period. My sincere gratitude goes to Albert Ngare who has been of great assistance to me and the Mwea Apex College for accepting to typeset my work. To all I am very grateful

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ODEL	Open Distance and Electronic Learning
NCST	National council for Science and Technology
SPSS	Statistical Package of Social Sciences
ICT	Information Communication Technology

ABSTRACT

This study was set to assess the influence of learner support services in the implementation of distance learning in Kenyatta University. In doing so ,the study had four objectives, to establish the administrative support offered to the distance learning students on the implementation of distance learning in Kenyatta University to analyze the tutors' feedback in providing and promoting access to learner support services in the implementation of distance learning in Kenyatta university, was also to describe the learning resources in learner support in Kenyatta University and also to assess the infrastructure in the implementation of distance learning in Kenyatta university .The study was based on the theory of constructivism. The administrative support, tutors' feedback, learning resources and infrastructure was the independent variables whereas the effective implementation of distance learning was the dependent variable. The research design of this study was descriptive survey which sought to find answers to questions generated from the statement of the problem. The study population targeted students undertaking courses at Kenyatta University through distance learning in second and third years. Four regional centres were sampled randomly providing 10 % of the targeted number of respondents. The researcher used questionnaire to collect data that was analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively. The results of the data analysis were presented using frequency distribution tables. The study established that Kenyatta University has tried to alert students on the criteria by which their assignments and examinations are graded, there is a planned day for all distance learners to interact, there is need to be giving pre-enrollment counseling to the students, students acquire assignments through learning services, there is tutor-student dialogue and information is passed through computers, e-mails, telephone, video and mobile phone.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Distance education is interactive, educational processes between two people, student and teacher, separated by physical distance Paul (1990). In this model, the education provides equal opportunities to learner and reduces the distance among communicators for global, competitive learning environments among the countries. Open learning and distance education represents approaches that focus on opening access to education and training provision, freeing learners from the constraints of time and place, and offering flexible learning opportunities to individuals and groups of learners. In this essence, the learners do not necessarily have to be in proximity to the teachers and lecturers.

Open and distance learning institutions symbolizes the transformation of education from the stage of craft to technology, enduring it with high flexibility and vastly increased productivity, by transporting knowledge to the people, in place of transporting people to the place of knowledge (Shastree 2002). Shastree further argues that the Open and Distance Learning has become an integral part of higher education globally. In fact, the universal demand for education, thirst for knowledge and the failure of the mainstream education system in catering to the increasing popular demand for higher education were the major contributory factors behind the emergence of the ODL system.

The student support system may range from study centre counseling/tutorial support to administrative problem solving (Rumble, 1992). As far as the support services are concerned, there are several components, which play an important role in a distance education system. Among these components include student support services, management of the institution, financial services, and examination. These components are to be coordinated carefully for the institution to function properly, and the learners to learn effectively. Student Support Services is one of the major components of a distance education system. Therefore, studies on student support services in a distance education system are essential in maintaining a proper function of an institution.

The main aim of support systems for students in distance education is, to promote self-study or independent study among distance learners in the absence of regular face-to-face teaching. The distance learning system is required to extend support to their learners, which comprises of a cluster of facilities and activities that are intended to make the teaching - learning process easier and more interesting for the learners. These activities beyond the production and delivery of course material assist in the progress of students in terms of learning, interacting and effective communication (Simpson, 2000).

Studying through the Distance Learning system provides an attractive option for those with financial challenges, commitment to work or family, or lack of access to higher education on a full-time basis due to other reasons. This mode of delivery minimizes a learner's reliance on the lecturer by utilizing a mix of multi-media technologies augmented with limited face-to-face interaction to facilitate knowledge acquisition. The Kenyatta University has taken a more practical approach to pedagogy by incorporating advanced learning methods, thus fulfilling students learning needs. The University has established Regional Centres to serve as study and resource points for

students in the vicinity of the Centres. Nine such Centres have been established in each of the provinces at Nairobi, Mombasa, Nakuru, Garissa, Kisumu, Kakamega, Embu, Nyeri and Marsabit and are fully operational. The University is in the process of establishing other Centres in other parts of the country.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The development of students' learner support services provides many opportunities for distance learning students. The quality of both the learning materials and the support systems are critical to the success of a distance learning system (Prideaux 1989). This implies that the distance learning institutes ought to provide adequate student support systems to the distance learning students. These include Library services, Computer Laboratories and Tutorial services that are available at the main campuses or the regional centres. Other support services include guidance and counseling, practical lessons and interactive sessions with the lecturers. However, despite these efforts, many of the students undertaking this programme fail to understand the concepts in the tutorials, and with the tutors in absentia, it becomes hard for them to obtain help. There exists no feedback system, for the tutors to assess the level of effectiveness of the learning materials that they send to the students. This calls for a need to review the academic learner support systems offered in the distance learning programmes, with the aim of improving the services. This study therefore was set to assess the influence of learner support systems in implementation of distant learning at the Kenyatta University.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to assess the influence of learner support services in implementation of distant learning at : A case of Kenyatta University Institute of Open Distance and E-Learning.

1.4 Objectives of the study

The objectives of this study were;

1. To establish the influence of administrative support offered to the distance learning students on the implementation of distance learning in Kenyatta University.
2. To analyze the influence of tutors' feedback in providing and promoting access to learner support services in the implementation of distance learning in Kenyatta University.
3. To describe the influence of learning resources in learner support in the implementation of distance learning in Kenyatta University.
4. To assess the influence of infrastructure in the implementation of distance learning in Kenyatta University.

1.5 Research Questions

1. How does administrative support influence distance learners in the implementation of distance learning in Kenyatta University?
2. How does the tutors' feedback influence, provide and promote access to learner support services in the implementation of distance learning in Kenyatta University?
3. How does the learning resources influence learner support services in the implementation of distance learning in Kenyatta University?

4. How does the infrastructure influence the learner support in the implementation of distance learning in Kenyatta University?

1.6 Significance of the Study

The researcher hopes that the findings of this study will be of much significance to the universities and particularly institutes and departments of distance education, in that they will give light on the existing barriers to the effective learner support systems, and this information is vital in formulation of guidelines to the lecturers on the preparation and delivery of learning materials. The finding may also give the real situation data on the distance learning in Kenyatta University, and this information is important in highlighting the available rooms for improvement of the services.

The lecturers of the universities will also benefit from the findings of this study. The information from the study will contain the shortcomings of the existing learner support systems. This information is vital to the lecturers in terms of the improvement strategies, and how best to better their services.

The students undertaking a course through the distance learning programmes will also benefit from this study, in that the challenges they face will be brought to light. The recommendations of this study will be aimed at improving the student learner support systems.

Other researchers may use the findings of this study as a reference and a basis for carrying out more research in this area. Institutions of higher learning may also use the findings of this study to lay strategies on the improvement of distance learning services. This will directly benefit the students learning through distance education.

Policy makers and the government in general will also find it imperative to exploit the resource of this study in giving proper assistance and support to the institutions of higher learning in order to improve distance learning education.

1.7 Delimitation of the Study

This study is based on Kenyatta University where it focusses on Institutes of Open and Distance Learning at the Main Campus and also the Institute's Regional Centers targeting the second and third year students.

1.8 Limitations of the Study

It was expected that time and resources would be the limitation but the researcher was able to plan and carried the study well.

1.9 Assumptions of the Study

The study is based on the following assumptions that the respondents would to be available and provide true and accurate information as shown in 4.2 respondents were very cooperative with a high 78.8% questionnaire return rate.

1.10 Definition of Significant Terms

The following are the significant terms of the study

Implementation of Distance Learning: Use of print or electronic communications media to deliver university instruction when teachers and learners are separated in place and/or time.

Administrative support: these are the practices carried out to organize the work of the institution; it is concerned with organizing and managing the implementation of the distance learning.

Availability of Learning resources: these are the materials and equipment that are used to get knowledge after reading and studying item so as to achieve the expected goals.

Availability of Infrastructure: these are the basic systems and services that are necessary for the institution to run smoothly e.g., computers, reading materials, internet, physical facilities etc.

1.11 Organization of the study

The study is organized into five chapters. Chapter One contains the background of the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, objectives, research questions, significance of the study, limitations, delimitations, basic assumptions of the study, definition of significant terms and the organization of the study.

In Chapter Two, related literature is written in the following order, introduction, implementation of learner support in distance learning, administrative support, tutors' feedback, learning resources and infrastructure (print, radio, audio cassettes, telephone, television, video, computers, and infrastructure functions). The chapter also presents a conceptual framework showing the variables and the various indicators.

Chapter Three outlines the research methodology used in the study and includes research design, target population, sample size and sampling techniques, research

instruments, questionnaires , validity of the instruments, reliability of the instrument
the study presents the operationalization of variables table.

Chapter Four presents analysis, presentation and interpretation of data while Chapter
Five entails summary of findings, discussions of findings, conclusions,
recommendations and suggestions for further studies.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

According to Brookfield (1986) adult who mostly undertakes distance learning have mine characteristics. Adults maintain the ability to learn, they are highly diversified group of individuals with widely differing preferences needs, backgrounds and skills. Adults decline in physical and mental sensory situations gradually. The learners experience is a major resource in learning situations, self-concept moves from dependence to independence as individuals grow in responsibilities, experience and confidence. Adults tend to be set life – centered on their orientation to learning and are motivated to learn by a variety of factors. He contends that active learners' participation in the learning process contributes to learning and a comfortable, supportive environment is a key to successful learning. Brookfield (1986) explains that it is important to realize that adults past experiences of learning may act against them as well as acting in their favour and so implementing of distance learning should be effected with a lot of care.

2.2 Implementation of learner support in distance learning

Learner support according to Allan Tait (1995) encompasses all those interactive activities and services in education intended to support and facilitate the learning process. This includes tutoring, counseling and related services and administrative activities in service to learners such as admission and registration. In the context of

distance learning, learner support has taken on special importance because of the separation between learner and educational providers.

The student support system of the Open University in Great Britain (OUUK) which was founded in 1969 serves as a model for many distance teaching institutions (Tait 1995).

Thorpe (2003) acknowledges the interactive nature of learner support as well as the building of distinctions between learner supports by staff roles. She notes that learners need support in two contexts. The first is in regard to institutional system, such as knowing what is on offer, how to apply, how to claim a refund, make a payment, choose a course etc., before and after course study and the second is in the context of the course they are studying such as how best to complete contact and work with other students on the course, how to make sense of something in the course materials, whether their contributions to the course conference are relevant, well-conceived or otherwise.

Mills (1996) reveals the strong values base that is present in learner support practice. He emphasizes the need to avoid treating distance education only as a business and instead prompts the reader to focus on the learner and to use the available resources in the best possible way for students. He addresses the factors that influence services and how they are delivered as well as issues of quality assurance and how these are critical to how DE is regarded; ICT should be used carefully and correctly to improve teaching, learning and assessment and reminds us that systems must be such that they do not create barriers for students. Mills places his highest priority on reducing the digital divide to avoid social exclusion and promotes the sharing of resources between rich and developing countries.

New technologies are having an enormous input on the way in which learners support is conceptualized and practiced .Through the internet ,learners can instantly be in touch with other learners as well as with a variety of learner support personnel; their instructor a Liberian ,a registration clerk and an academic advice .

Traditionally learner support in distance education has been identified as being completely different set of activities from those associated with course production. However, with implementation of online learning this distinction does not always hold and the line between the two sets of activities has become much more blurred (Thorpe 2003).

Mills (1999) contends that it may no longer be useful to talk about distance learning education as if it's something totally different from other forms of education. ICT has led to the convergence of systems and the development of new approaches sometimes referred to as blended learning. He also puts five key issues forward for consideration which are all preferred by one essential point that we should not forget for a moment to historic role of distance education in widening participation and the underpinning role of learner support in meeting this objective. These five issues are: avoid the temptation to treat distance education solely as a business, be on the side of the student, use the resources in the best possible way for students, use ICT in a useful and creative way for improving teaching, learning and assessment and give absolute priority to reducing the digital divide.

The use of distance education to support universal primary education equality, reduction in child mortality and to address the Vision 2030 goals is the greatest challenge to distance educators.

2.3 Administrative support

Administrative support is the vital foundation to a sound online education programme. Administrative support includes assistance in the form of funding, guidance, oversight and assistance in removing the obstacles that hinder a healthy and well supported distance education programme (Ryan KayHodson – Carlton & Ali, 2005). A healthy support structure begins with university administration promoting a synergistic environment conducive to innovation and results in the enthusiastic buy-in from faculty. (Escoffery et al 2005).

Traditional administrative according to Restauri (2004) roles such as those of instructional designers, technology support specialist and administrative advisor frequently fall to already overburdened online teaching faculty. These support positions also need to be redesigned, adjusted and provided with timely training so that they can adequately fulfill the requirement for the services they provide in a distance environment.

Efficient and effective use of technology in a distance environment requires administrative support at all levels of the institution. Frith and Kee (2003) found that many faculty blamed the loss of students on the instability of the infrastructure and the inability of campus support personnel to work through issues that often frustrated online or distant students and prevented them from having a successful online experience.

Mills (1996) argues that a range of administrative support may need to be provided to learners at different stages may need to be provided to learners at different stages in their study career, these include sending out routine information, responding to routine enquiries, processing admissions, registering learners, keeping of various

records, initiating delivery of course materials and supervising assignment turnaround. Others include monitoring of the administrative support, administering examinations and issuing certificates. Mills also says in open and distance learning programmes, administrative systems are every bit as vital as academic provision for the success of the individual learners and the health of the organization as a whole. Because learners are studying at a distance, the institution relies far more heavily on the effectiveness of its administrative systems and its record systems for the support of its learners than does a face-to-face college.

According to Lewis (1995) records are of great significance in distance learning systems. These records he says should ensure each learner receives the correct materials at the right time, learner's grades and performance data are securely logged and that welfare and financial matters are documented in an informative way Lewis gives reason for keeping records as: to check progress of learners, to provide continuity regardless of changes of personnel. Records assist a tutor in his/her organization tutoring, for tracking individual learner progress, to enable comparisons to be made between courses, tutors, learners, sexes and years, to make analysis of learners as a cohort possible and to identify emerging trends and very importantly for ongoing planning. Records are important for historic proof of things done, for research, to verify regularity of attendance, to give feedback to learner's, tutors and other as well as to evaluate the system.

Management needs to keep the following records according to Lewis; assignment submitted, marks allocated to assignment, problems learners face. Problems in implementation of the programme, correspondence, feedback, attendance, register, learner personal files, issue of modules, financial records and notes regarding

meetings and counseling and tutorial session with reference to necessary follow-up action.

The distance education mode of delivery is not quite understood by senior management in the institutions. The programme managers on the ground often find it difficult to explain and justify, for example expending tuition revenues on the production and reproduction of study materials because the term tuition has a different meaning in the conventional mode.

2.4 Tutors' feedback

The role of the tutor according to Henry (1994) in distance learning can be very varied. It generally extends well beyond teaching the subject matter of the course. Indeed the tutor is specifically not expected to try to teach the course content that is left to the course writers to do through the course materials. The task of a tutor in one open and distance learning programme (The Guyana in-service Distance Education Programme or GUIDE) as identified by the tutors themselves includes: helping learners to develop study skills, evaluating and assess learners problems (offer solutions and referrals) (Lewis 1981). Marking, commenting and advising on tutor marked assignments, discussing strengths and weaknesses hence offer guidance and advice, liaising with mentor and helping learners master concepts.

Jenkins et al (1991) also supports Lewis and explains that tutors should keep records, help learners to learn, organize tutorials, encourage promptness, organization, planning work and studying ,they also give feedback to coordinators and learners, motivate learners , create and maintain good tutor-learner relationships.

According to Gibbs (1991) while in the process of dealing with the course's academic content, the tutor may fulfill one of the several roles depending on the design and nature of the course, how the tutor perceives himself in relation to the learners and the tutor's views of the teaching and learning process. Gibbs says the tutor role is in four different models, First, tutor as an expert where the tutor seeks to explain the course content and to act remedially if the learner has not understood. Second, tutor as a facilitator with the tutor guiding the learners in his or her studies in an enabling way without seeking to teach or explain directly. Third, we have the tutor as a reflective practitioner. In this regard, the tutor explores with the learner without presuming to possess superior knowledge in relation to the learner. Finally, we have the tutor as the assessor. In the capapcit, the tutor's relationship with the learner is seen primarily as that of an examiner or tester of the learner and what he or she has learned.

It is generally accepted that in distance learning learners should be in control of their experiences and take control of their learning wherever possible. Accordingly the tutor should neither be overly directive nor try to be the source of all knowledge (Evans, 1994)

According to Macharia et al (1992) distance educators need the following qualities in their work in supporting learners. They should be warm, that is be welcoming, respectful, comfort and willingness to give time to another, should be genuine (honesty and open), be able to accept another person for who they are. Lecturers must show empathy, have organizational skills. Another very important quality is explicatory skill which means ability to help learners break a problem into its component parts and finally have listening skills.

Rowntree (1994) and Macharia et al (1993) contend that tutors typically have to deal with administrative issues and also counsel learners. In terms of providing intellectual support and facilitating learners learning, they should provide and prompt access to learning materials. Learners need to be prompted in the learning materials to contact their lecturer at frequent intervals, by whatever means is made available. This contact they say might be to discuss a particular issue, to plan for a major assignment, to discuss a returned assignment. Lecturers need to give learners clear, complete and accurate information about when and how to submit an assignment, what to submit, where to send it and how long they can expect to wait before it is returned. In the learning materials lecturers should tell learners the criteria by which their assignment will be graded and which aspects of their answers will receive particular emphasis. The tutors who grade assignments must be explicit in grading according to these guidelines and provide comments and reasons for their grade.

According to a research finding by Gibson (1997) tutors in distance education assume responsibility for preparation and presentation of learning tests, they immediately consult with students to correct problems and keep them on task and be aware of students' needs and wishes, respond promptly to communication and tests. Tutors build student motivation combat prejudice of communicational barriers and lastly establish an effective environment for student - teacher and student – student interaction.

Learners are attracted when they see value in undergoing education through distance education. See learners come from a traditional system they are not able to appreciate the unique features of distance learning, counseling is therefore important before joining and an information approach has to be adopted to woo the learners. Timely feedback can help in increasing retention ratio and completion ratio (Tait, 2003).

2.5 Learning resources and infrastructure

Before (1995) says that learning resources that support distance as well as open learning over the years include print (mechanical and electronic publishing), radio, audio cassettes, telephone, television, video cassettes, video conferencing, computer – mediated communication, computer – based learning and multimedia.

2.5.1 Print Media

Despite the enormous range of media from which distance education have to choose Bates (1995) contends that print continues to be the most frequently chosen medium for distance learning programmes. This is because print is less costly to produce than most other media, it requires less time to produce than most other media, they are highly portable, require no other device to read them , are accessible in any order desired, print material can be read at a pace determined by the reader.

2.5.2 Radio Technology

Radio has proved to be a cost effective medium for distance education .Most radio is one way transmission though two-way radio for education do exist e.g. Wawatay communication in northern Ontario, Canada broadcasts secondary level course programming to learners in isolated aboriginal communities who listen to the broadcasts while following along with their print material and can ask questions of the radio instructor on air by telephone (Tait 2003). Radio programmes can be expensive to develop, but are cost effective if spread over large enough listening audiences .Radio is most effective when integrated with print and tutorials.

2.5.3 Audio cassettes technology

Audio cassettes are an easy medium to work with, in that they do not inhibit or intrude upon the learning process (Tait 2003).

Tait also says cassettes are convenient for they allow learners to choose where and when they will listen and can match their listening to their own learning pace .To fully support learning Rown tree (1994) said cassette recording should be designed in a way that takes advantage of human voice, its modulation, stress ,inflection humor and sense of presence. Cassettes are most effective when integrated with print and other media, especially a guide outlining the topic, and contents of the taped programme. Audio lessons are a central part of second- language learning and open in many open and distance learning programme.

2.5.4 Telephone Technology

Use of telephone in distance teaching takes two main forms according Cummings et al (2002) .These include one-on-one telephone tutorials and audio conference that link learners at several sites with each other and with an instructor who may have been at any of the sites .

Audio graphics technologies add a visual component and a focal point to audio conference sessions using equipment that is provided at each site which may consist items such as computers, electronic white boards, graphic tablets and light pens for writing to computer screens, tablets or whiteboards.

2.5.5 Television Technology

To support distance learners television can be delivered via broadcasts, satellite feed and cable feed .According to Salmon (2002) satellite and cable programming can also

incorporate interactive elements such as linking classroom via video and audio or via one-way video, two ways audio in which learners watching the programme can ask questions on by telephone. When appropriately designed education television programming takes full advantage of the features of the medium sound, notion, text and colour, High quality programming is expensive to develop and requires a large listening date to make it cost effective.

2.5.6 Video Media

Knight (2002) indicates video cassettes as easy to use for they are under the learners control in terms of pace and place of use. Learners with access to video recording equipment tend to record the educational broadcasts that are part of their learning package and watch them at their convenience .Video cassettes for their success need to be accompanied by print –based topic outlines to guide and focus learner’s attention and reduce the need for them to divide their attention between viewing and note taking ,video conferencing is the most expensive medium and is most effectively used when learning situation requires full motion ,synchronous visuals with accompanying audio .Video conferencing relies on a good telecommunications infrastructure.

2.5.7 Computers Technology

Salmon (2002) indicates computer-mediated communication and computer- based learning as very important learning resources in supporting distance education .They involve use of electronic mail, computer conferencing and access to the resources of the World Wide Web (www) which is being labeled as networked learning. Computer participants can read others contributions and make their own contributions at their own pace and place assuming they have appropriate computer hardware and software.

Computer –based learning packages that are effective learning tools and that take full advantage of the text graphics and animation capabilities of the altering software now available are relatively expensive to design and need to be used by a large number of learners to make them cost effective.2.5.8 Infrastructure Functions

Media differ in the extent to which they can represent different kinds of knowledge but some such as television are excellent for representing concrete knowledge (Cummings,(2002).Media also differ in the extent in which they can help different skills, for example computers are excellent for presenting and testing rule-based procedures or access of abstract knowledge. The existing technological infrastructure within a country as an institution is a major factor in influencing media selection for example if an existing broadcast network is under -used it is much easier to introduce television for distance purposes.

2.6 Theoretical Framework

This study was based on the theory of constructivism. The theory postulates that knowledge is a function of how the individual creates meaning from his or her experiences; it is not a function of what someone else says is true (Jonassen 1995). It further states that humans create meaning as opposed to acquire it. Both the learner and environmental factors are critical, and the interaction between these two issues is what creates knowledge. When developing a distance education program according to constructivism theory, designers must create stimulating environments that capture learners and enable them to formulate knowledge and derive meaning for themselves. These environments allow for collaboration (between learners and the instructor) and encourage meaningful dialogues so that understanding can be individually constructed. The theory is relevant to this study in that apart from the lecturers

delivering the learning materials to the distance learners, they are also obligated to make sure that the learners get to understand the content matter of the learning materials, so as to attain the objective of learning. This calls for the lecturers follow up, and the accompanying learner support services, which should include the feedback or monitoring system of the level of understanding, acquired by the student.

2.7 Conceptual Framework

Figure 1 presents the conceptual frame work on which the study is based.

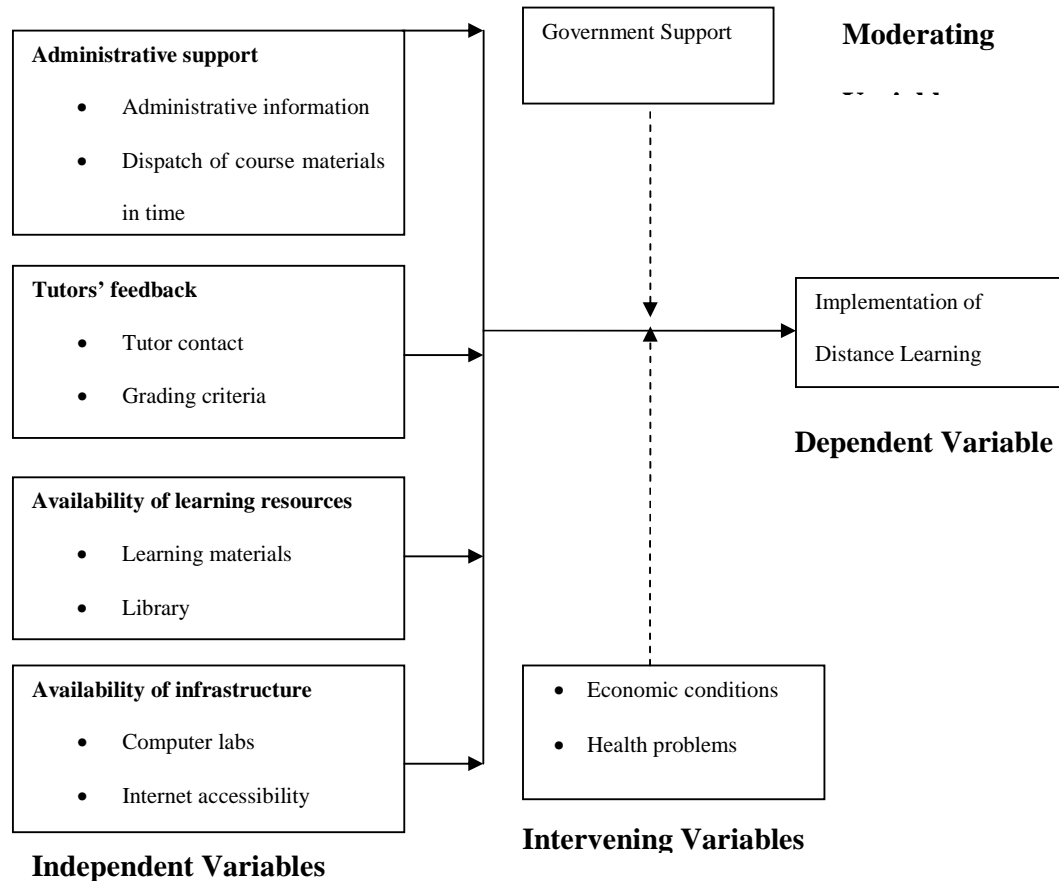


Figure 1: Conceptual framework

Figure 1 is a conceptual framework model, showing the relationship of the variable for the study. In the model, the independent variables include; administrative support, tutor's feedback, learning resources and infrastructure. The intervening variables include the government support. The dependent variable for the study was the implementation of distance learning in Kenyatta University.

2.8 Research Gap

The conceptual framework depicted in Figure 1 presents the influence of learner support services - that is, administrative support, tutors feedback, availability of learning resources and availability of infrastructure – on the implementation of distance learning. Based on this model this research intends to establish how this relationship operates as concerns distance learning at Kenyatta University in Kenya.

2.9 Summary of the chapter

The chapter looks at literature review on the influence of learner support services from a global perspective narrowing it down to Kenyatta University. The study has also presented both theoretical and conceptual framework on which the study is based.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter deals with research design that was used, the study population, the sample, and the instruments that were used to gather relevant data, data collection and analysis.

3.2 Research Design

The design of this study was descriptive survey design. This type of design usually seeks to find answers to the questions generated from the statement of the problem. According to Gay (1992) descriptive survey design was used on preliminary and exploratory studies to allow the researcher to gather the information, summarize, and present and interpret data. Therefore, it can be helpful in describing the current conditions and situations based on the impressions and perceptions of the respondents of the study (Creswell 1994). The design was therefore appropriate for this study since the researcher was to gather information without manipulation of variables.

3.3 Location of the study

The study was carried out in the Kenyatta University Institute of Open Distance and e-Learning. According to Singleton (1993), an ideal reason for setting any study should be the existence of a problem that the study hopes to generate solutions for. The study location has been chosen because it was established that the distance education programme learners were experiencing numerous academic challenges, in trying to understand the content in the learning materials provided by the lecturers. In

addition, no similar research to the best knowledge of the researcher has been carried out in the Extra Mural Centres.

3.4 Target Population

According to Mugenda & Mugenda (2003) target population refers to an entire group of individuals, events or objects having common observable characteristics. The target population was all the two thousand six hundred and fourteen (2614) second and third year students undertaking the courses in the Kenyatta University's Institute of Open Distance and e-Learning (ODEL) at the Main Campus as well as ODeL's regional centers around the country.

3.5. Sampling Procedure and Sample Size.

Orodho (2001) defines a sample as part of large population, which is brought to be representative of the larger population. Sampling is a process of selecting a number of individuals or objects from a population such that the selected group contains elements representatives of characteristics found in the entire group. In a descriptive research design, Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) assert that a ten percent representation is sufficient. 4 regional centres were sampled randomly. This sample of students was proportionately drawn from all the 4 regional centres. 10% of the students in second and third year from each of the 4 regional centres as well as the main campus were calculated and the students sampled randomly. The researcher obtained a list of all students in second and third year. This is because the researcher feels that the second and third year students have been in the university for a longer time, and can have past information on the learner support services. The sampling frame for students was a list of students that was provided by dean of students in the institutes. The names in the list were numbered and the researcher wrote these

numbers in small pieces of paper folded them and placed them in a container for each class and picked randomly the desired number of participants from each stratum. The total numbers of the sampled students were 261 forming 10% of the target population.

Table 3.1 Sample Table

	Target Population	Percentage	Sample
2 nd and 3 rd years	2614	10%	261

3.6 Research Instruments

The instrument used in this study was a questionnaire for the students. The questionnaires were used for data collection because as Gay (1992) maintains that questionnaires give respondents freedom to express their views or opinion and also to make any suggestions. Borg and Gall (1983) emphasize that whereas the open-ended type of questions give informants freedom of response, the closed ended types facilitate consistency of certain data across informants. The students' questionnaires contain both open and closed ended items.

The questionnaires were developed from the literature review and from personal knowledge and experience. The instruments have several sections derived from the research objectives.

3.7 Reliability of the Instruments

Reliability is a measure of the degree to which a research instrument yields consistent results after repeated trials (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). Prior to the data collection, instrument piloting was conducted in regional centers. This involved administering

the instrument only once to a sample of students. The split- halves method of measuring reliability was used to estimate the degree to which the same results were obtained within a repeated measure of the same concept. It involved splitting the pilot questionnaire into halves and finding the extent of correspondence or reliability between the halves; i.e. splitting the items in the instrument into two and giving each group half of the items to respond to. Scores from the two groups were then correlated in order to establish the extent to which the contents of the questionnaires were to be consistent in eliciting the same responses every time the instrument is administered.. The reason behind pre-testing was to assess the clarity of the questionnaire items so that those items that were be found to be inadequate or vague were discarded or modified.

3.8 Validity of the Instrument

According to Borg and Gall, (1983) validity is the degree to which a test measures what it purport to measure. In other words, validity is the level to which results obtained from the analysis of the data actually represent the phenomena under study. According to Borg and Gall (1983), validity of an instrument can be improved through expert judgment. Validity of the study instrument was as ascertained through discussion by supervisor and other experts at the University of Nairobi.

3.9 Data Collection Procedures

The researcher obtained an introductory letter from University of Nairobi and a research permit from the National Council for Science and Technology (NCST). The permit was be presented to the County Director of Education to be allowed to conduct the study. After this, the researcher booked appointments with the respondents to visit and administer the questionnaires. The researcher personally administered instruments

to all the respondents who were allowed a few hours to complete all the items adequately, after which the researcher collected the filled-in questionnaires. The whole data collection exercise was carried out over a period of four week.

3.10 Data Analysis

After collecting the data, the researcher conducted data cleaning, which involved identification of incomplete or inaccurate responses, which was corrected to improve the quality of the responses. This research yielded data that requires both qualitative and Quantitative analysis. Quantitative analysis entails analyzing numbers about a situation by choosing specific aspects of that situation. Descriptive statistics was used to analyze the qualitative data obtained. The statistics that was used included frequency counts, means and percentages. Quantitative data analysis was required the use of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS 17). As Martin and Acuna (2002) observe, SPSS is able to handle large amount of data, and given its wide spectrum of statistical procedures purposefully designed for social sciences. On the other hand, qualitative analysis entails analyzing in words or pictures by collecting data, recording peoples' experiences not selecting any pre-chosen aspect. The qualitative data obtained in this study was analyzed by organizing it into similar themes and tallying the number of similar responses. The results of data analysis is presented using frequency distribution tables.

3.11 Operationalization of variables

Table 3.2 represents the operationalization of variables.

Table 3.2 Operationalization of variables

Objectives	Variable	Indicator(s)	Measurement	Scale	Data collection method	Data analysis
To establish the administrative support offered to the distance learning students on the implementation of distance learning in Kenyatta University	Independent variable administrative support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Forms of administrative support services - Administrative information - Dispatch of course materials in time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Availability of administrative support service - Frequency of interaction with the institution 	Ordinal	Questionnaire	Descriptive statistics
To enable the tutors' feedback in providing and support services in the implementation of distance learning in Kenyatta University	Independent variable Tutors' feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mode of interaction used by tutors' to learners - Frequency of interaction between tutor and students - Examination feedback - Prompt results and grading 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Time taken for the student to receive the material - tutor-student contact hours - Results 	Ordinal	Questionnaire	Descriptive statistics
To describe the availability of learning resources in learner support in the implementation of distance learning in Kenyatta University	Independent variable Availability of learning resources e.g. manual, correspondence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Content of received material - Clarity of the reading material - Relevance of learning materials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Frequency of supply - Learners understanding of the content - Availability of the relevant required torts 	Ordinal	Questionnaire	Descriptive statistics
To access the availability of infrastructure in the implementation of distance learning in Kenyatta University	Independent variable Availability of the infrastructure e.g. computer labs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Forms of infrastructure available 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Infrastructure availability 	Ordinal	Questionnaire	Descriptive statistics

3.12 Ethical Considerations

During the study the researcher focused on certain ethical issues, which was to be considered during the data collection phase. These ethical include among others, privacy or voluntary participation, anonymity and confidentiality.

3.13 Summary

The chapter has outlined the research methodology used in the study and it includes research, design, target population, sample size and sampling techniques, research, instruments, questionnaires, validity of the instrument, reliability of the instruments and finally implementation of the research instruments. The chapter also presents the operationalization of variables table.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the results of the study are, analyzed, presented in tables and interpreted in the context of the objectives of the study.

4.2 Response Rate

The study administered the questionnaire as the research instrument to the respondents and the response was a high 78.5% Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) say any response above 60% is adequate for analysis.

4.3 Demographic Data of Respondents

The demographic data was collected to provide information about the sampled population structure, and helps create a mental picture of the subgroups that exist in the target population. Demographic information was obtained from the study subjects to understand sample characteristics and to determine if the samples were representation of the target population. In this study, the researcher investigated the respondents' characteristics by establishing their gender, age and the academic year.

4.3.1 Gender of the Respondents

The study sought to establish how the sample population was distributed by gender and enable tabulation of response in this light. Table 4.1 data reveals how the study subjects were distributed by gender.

Table 4.1: Gender Distribution of Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	128	62
Female	77	38
Total	205	100

The data in the Table 4.1 indicates majority 62% of the respondents were male as compared to 38% female.

4.3.2 Respondents' age

The study sought to establish the age distribution of respondents. The results are as per the Table 4.2.

Table 4.2: Age of the Respondents

Age Bracket	Frequency	Percentage (%)
20 – 25 years	3	1.47
26 – 30 years	17	8.29
31 – 35 years	89	43.41
35 years and above	96	46.83
Total	205	100

As would be expected in a distance learning programme, the majority of students are adults. Accordingly, almost all students, at 98.5%, were over 25 years of age with almost 50% of them being over 35 years.

4.3.3 Academic Year

The researcher targeted students in their 2nd and 3rd year in the distance learning.

Table 4.3 shows the distribution of students respondents in their academy years.

Table 4.3: Academic Year of Respondents

Year	Frequency	Percentage (%)
2 nd	100	48.78
3 rd	105	51.22
Total	205	100

Table 4.3 shows that the intake per year was constant at about 100 students per year.

4.4 Forms of Administrative Support Services Offered by Kenyatta University

The study sought to find the forms of administrative support services offered by Kenyatta University. To collect data, the questionnaire administered had items that required the respondents to strongly agree (SA), agree (A), be undecided (UD), disagree (D) or strongly disagree (SD) on the statements provided. The Table 4.4 shows the findings.

Table 4.4: Forms of Administrative Support Services

Statements	SA 5	A 4	UD 3	D 2	SD 1
The students are usually given the pre-enrollment counseling	1.95	12.2	0.98	18.54	66.34
The students are guided on the course to take as a form of learner support services	0.98	4.88	0.49	20.00	73.66
The students did get guidance on the mode of study for distance learning	2.44	37.07	1.95	35.12	23.41
The students support services are given in the form of guidance on the available programs	0.49	34.15	7.80	34.15	23.41
The students are given training on acquisition of the learning materials	-	35.61	4.88	42.93	16.51
The students do get updates on the school progress and developments	-	-	-	1.95	98.05
Learners are told the criteria by which their assignments and exams are graded	49.27	49.76	0.98	-	-
A variety of counseling booklets are prepared on common problems faced by learners	-	-	0.98	10.24	88.78
There is a planned day for all the students to interact with the institution	15.13	82.93	-	1.46	0.49

The data on the Table 4.4 indicates that majority 85.86% disagreed that students are usually given the pre-enrolment counseling as a form of administrative support service as compared to those who disagreed. The study also established that students are not guided on the course to take as a form of learner support service by the administration as illustrated by the majority (93.66%) of the respondents who disagreed on the statement. Majority of the respondents, more than half (60.48%) disagreed that students get guidance on the mode of study for distance learning.

Majority of respondents 64.4% did disagree they are given training on the acquisition of the materials. Just 35.6% who agreed. All of them (100%) disagreed that they get updates on the school progress and developments. However, they all (99.02%) agreed that they are told the criteria by which their assignments and examinations are graded.

On whether a variety of counseling booklets are prepared on common problem faced by learners, all of them (100%) disagreed with the statement but agreed there is a planned day for all students to interact with the institution.

4.5 How Tutors' Feedback Provide Access to the Learner Support Services

The study sought to find the influence of the tutors' feedback in providing access to the learner support services. Statements in line with this objective were formulated for the students who were the respondents to strongly agree (SA), agree (A), undecided (UD), disagree (D) or strongly disagree (SD). Table 4.5 shows their response in percentages.

Table 4.5: How Tutors' Feedback Provide Access to the Learner Support Services

	SA	A	UD	D	SD
Statements	5	4	3	2	1
Tutoring is done to the students who fail to understand the contents of the learning materials	-	-	2.44	93.66	3.90
The students have a few feedback channel to the teacher, on the usefulness of the materials	4.88	1.95	3.90	39.02	50.24
The students are able to acquire assignments through the learner support services	59.02	35.61	1.95	2.93	0.48
The tutors' can be able to monitor the progress of the learner through the learner support services	1.46	5.37	0.98	46.83	95.37
The students can give their feedback to the tutors while at the student support centres.	88.78	2.44	1.46	1.95	4.39
Learners are promoted to contact their tutors at frequent intervals to discuss a particular issue.	99.02	0.98	-	-	-
Students do practicals at home or at student support centres.	3.90	1.46	2.44	7.80	84.39

Students receive examination results remotely	18.54	7.51	0.49	-	1.46
Student-tutor dialogue takes place at the centres at pre-arranged times.	72.6	16.59	0.49	8.78	1.46
Students do get arrangements with tutors on revision of work covered.	65.37	0.98	4.39	5.85	23.41

The data on Table 4.5 shows that students generally felt that tutoring is not done to the students who fail to understand the contents of the learning materials as illustrated by majority 97.46% who disagreed. There was a very small number, 2.44%, who were undecided. On whether students have a feedback channel to the tutor, on the usefulness of the material 93.16% disagreed. only 6.83% who agreed with it.

Majority of respondents agreed (94.63%) agreed that students are able to acquire assignments through the learner support services. A very small number did not agree with the statement. On whether tutors monitor the progress of the learners through the learner support services, majority (93.18%) disagree. 6.83% agreed. A very high percentage of respondents (91.22%) agreed that students can give their feedback to the tutors while at the student support centres.

On the statement that, learners are promoted to contact their tutors at frequent intervals to discuss a particular issue, all of them agreed (100%). None disagreed. A large number of respondents (98.05%) generally agreed that learners receive examination results remotely. Only 1.46% did disagree. 89.27% agreed that student-tutor dialogue takes time at the centres at pre-arranged times the rest disagreed. Majority 66.35% agreed that students do get arrangements with tutors on the revision of work covered. 33.65% generally disagreed

4.6 Learning Resources in Learner Support Services

The study sought to find the learning resources available in learner support services. Table 4.6 shows the findings in percentage respondents. They were expected to strongly agree (SA), agree (A), undecided (UD), disagree (D) or strongly disagree (SD) with the statements provided.

Table 4.6: Learning Resources in Learners support services

Statements	SA 5	A 4	UD 3	D 2	SD 1
The students are sent some learning materials via on-line channel.	-	-	7.80	12.68	79.51
The students have an on-line feedback channel to the tutor.	1.46	8.78	-	48.29	46.34
The mode of learning materials is also a fact that affects the access of learning resources.	-	1.95	15.12	39.51	43.41
Mobile phone technology and network availability is vital in the learner support services.	25.85	42.44	20.00	8.29	3.41
Learning materials are clearly understood by the student.	11.85	29.76	24.39	27.32	7.32
Scatterdness of the student (isolation) makes it difficult for them to form group discussions	11.22	2.93	0.49	0.98	0.49
Lectures use radio to pass information	0.98	1.46	9.27	84.39	3.90
Tutors use computer and e-mails to pass information	54.15	45.37	0.49	-	-
Telephone is used in passing information	35.61	46.34	3.41	8.29	6.34
Video is usually used to pass information	27.32	35.12	28.29	5.37	3.90
Print media is used to pass information	11.22	18.54	36.10	23.90	10.24

The data from this Table 4.6 shows that all of the respondents (100%) were of the opinion that they are not sent some learning materials via online channel. No single subject agreed with this statement. On the ones with online feedback channel to the

tutor, most of them fall under those who disagreed (94.63%) with 10.24% agreeing. The data also shows that majority (98.05%) disagreed that, the mode of learning materials is a factor that affect the access of learning resources the rest agreed (1.95%).

Mobile phone technology and network availability is vital in the learner support services as illustrated by majority of respondents who agreed (68.29%), a few did disagree (31.71%). 59.02% of the students disagreed that learning materials are clearly understood by the learners, only 40.98% agreed. Majority (98.05%) agreed that scatteredness of the students makes it difficult for them to form group discussions.

The study also shows that lecturers do not use radio to pass information for majority (97.46%) did disagree with the statement. Just slightly more than 2% who agreed. However, most (99.51%) of the respondents agreed that tutors use computers and e-mails to pass information. Another 81.95% did also agree that telephone is used in passing information, just 14.63% who negated. On video passing information the respondents opinion was 62.44% agreed and 37.56% disagreed, hence majority agreed. Print media is rarely used to pass information for majority 70.24% disagreed and just 29.76% agreed.

4.7 Infrastructure in the Implementation of Distance Learning

The researcher also sought to find out the infrastructure usage in the implementation of distance learning. Table 4.7 therefore shows the data collected, where the respondents were to strongly agree (SA), agree(A), undecided (UD), disagree (D) or strongly disagree (SD) with the given statements on the table.

Table 4.7: Availability of the infrastructure

Statements	SA 5	A 4	UD 3	D 2	SD 1
The students do receive the revision materials from the students support centres.	25.85	43.41	10.73	14.63	5.37
Distance from the students geographical location to the centres at times hinders access to computer services	40.00	47.32	0.98	6.83	4.88
The infrastructure of the students residence for example internet enhance learner support services	6.83	38.05	1.46	33.66	20.00
Inadequate infrastructure makes it difficult for students to access services like internet	40.00	45.37	1.46	7.80	5.27
There are adequate infrastructure that support students in learning	7.80	11.22	0.98	43.90	36.10

From the data on Table 4.7 majority (69.26%) agreed and (30.74%) disagreed that the students do receive the revision materials from the students support centres. It is also noted that distance from the students' geographical location to the centres at times hindered access to computer services as stated by majority (87.32%) of the students.

Majority (55.12%) disagreed and 44.88% agreed that the infrastructure of the student residence, for example, internet enhance learner support services. Those who felt that the infrastructure inadequacy makes it difficult for students to access services like internet were the majority (95.37%).

Majority of the students disagreed (80.98%) that there is adequate infrastructure that support students in learning. Those who agreed were only 19.02%.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS, DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS.

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, a summary of the main study findings is represented together with the discussion and conclusion of the study. The chapter further covers recommendations of the study as well as suggestions for further studies.

5.2 Summary of the Findings

The study was to access the influence of learner support services in the implementation of distance learning: a case of Kenyatta University, Kenya. This section presents the key findings of the study based on each objective.

5.2.1 Influence of Administrative Support Services on Implementation of Distance Learning

The study established that students need to be given pre-enrolment counseling which is rarely done in the university. Students are not guided on the course to take, and were hardly given guidance on the mode of study for distance learning. In order to make the programme successful the university needs to put this into consideration. On the acquisition of learning materials training, the study revealed that it was minimally done (35%). The students do not get updates on the school progress and developments but they are told the criteria by which their assignments and examinations are graded. A variety of counseling booklets need to be prepared to identify and alert students the common problems they expected to face. The

university should continue holding a day for all the learners to interact with the institution. Because learners study from a distance the institution mostly relies on well laid administrative support systems to positively influence the learners towards the achievement of their academic goals.

5.2.2 Influence of tutors feedback in on Implementation of Distance Learning

The study revealed that in Kenyatta University tutoring is not done to the students who fails to understand the contents of the learning materials. The data also showed that there is need for the university to have students' feedback channel to the teacher. The students, however, are able to acquire assignments through the learner support services. The tutor are not able to monitor the progress of the learner through the learner support services according to what the data revealed. It is encouraging that the students give feedback to the tutors while at the students support centres. They are also encouraged to contact their tutors frequently to discuss a particular issue pertaining to their learning..

5.2.3 The Influence of Learning Resources on Implementation of Distance Learning

The study revealed that there is need for the university to start sending learning materials to students via on-line channel. There is no set on-line feedback channel to the tutors and the mode of learning materials is not a factor that affects the access of learning resources. The mobile technology plus the network available has been vital in learner support services and the students largely appreciates it. There is need for the university to make the learning materials more understandable to the learners. Since students are drawn from diverse locations this makes it difficult for them to form discussion groups hence a mode of identifying students from one area may assist

much. Lectures have hardly been done through radio but frequently through computers and emails as well as telephone and video but scarcely through print media. .

5.2.4 Influence of Infrastructure on Implementation of Distance Learning

The study realized that the students in Kenyatta University do receive the revision materials from the support centres, although the distance from their geographical location to the centres sometimes hinders their access to computer services. Inadequate infrastructure according to the subjects of this study makes it difficult for them to access services like internet

5.3 Discussion

This section discusses the main findings following the objective of the study.

5.3.1. Influence of Administrative Support Services on Implementation of Distance Learning

The study established that students are not given pre-enrolment counseling, they are not guided on the course to take and are hardly guided on the mode of study. These findings contradict Mills (1996) who argues that a range of administrative support need to be provided to learners at different stages in their study period in order to make their programme successful. However, it is encouraging to find that learners are told the criteria in which their assignments and examinations are graded and there is usually a day for all the students to interact with their institution this is in line with Lewis (1995) who asserted that records are of great significance in distance learning system and need to be well kept and transmitted to learners as expected. For the success of administrative support there is need for the university to dispatch course materials and right examination papers in good time, inform learners when the course

begins and ends, how does each course cost and when and where course tutorials would take place. It also calls for the university to keep accurate and complete records for the learners.

5.3.2. Influence of tutors feedback in on Implementation of Distance Learning

In Kenyatta University the study established that tutoring is not done to students who fail to understand the content of the learning material, the tutors do not monitor the progress of the learners through learner support services and students rarely do practical at home or at learner support centres. The University has really tried to make students acquire assignments through the learner support services, they are also promoted to contact their tutors at frequent intervals to discuss particular issues and they are sent results remotely. This is in line with Rowntree (1994) who contends that tutors need to help learners to consult them at frequent intervals by whatever means. This should be to discuss a particular issue, plan for a major assignment or even discuss a returned assignment. The university has put in place mechanism where student receive examination results remotely, and student–tutor dialogue takes place at the centres at pre-arranged times. Students get arrangements with their tutors on the revision of work covered. Tait (2003) asserts that learners are attracted when they see value in undergoing education and where there is timely feedback from the tutors

5.3.3. The Influence of Learning Resources on Implementation of Distance Learning

The study established that mobile technology and the available network have played a great role in the continuing success in the learner support services. The university greatly uses computer and e-mails, telephones and video to pass information making

learning materials via on-line channel to learners. Tutors would use audio cassettes to introduce themselves to learners, radio programmes where learners can phone into 'chat' shows with questions, learners can e-mail their queries to the tutors and tutors and learners could exchange letters.

5.3.4. Influence of Infrastructure on Implementation of Distance Learning

The university has made it possible to send revision materials from the students support centres to the learners. It does not however have adequate infrastructure to allow students access services like internet easily. Cummings (2002) asserted that the existing technological infrastructure of a country in which the institution is located is a major factor in influencing media selection for example existing broadcast network. More is needed to be done to adequately provide infrastructure that support students in learning. A growing number of institutions have Web Sites on which they post up-to-date information on course programmes, fees, and staff as well as institution's library catalogue, hence Kenyatta university need to try the same to improve the infrastructure.

5.4. Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, the researcher concludes that Kenyatta University has greatly tried to alert students on the criteria by which their assignments and examinations are graded. There is also a planned day for all the distance learners to interact with the institution. However, there is need to be giving pre-enrolment counseling to the students, guide the students on the course to take, give proper training on the acquisition of the learning materials and facilitate students to get updates on the school progress and development. The institution has made it possible for students to acquire assignments through learner support services, they do also

contact their tutors frequently to discuss particular issues, there is student-tutor dialogue and they arrange with tutors on the revision of work covered. Some of the learning resources are well used and others need improvements. Most information is passed through the computers, emails, telephone, video and mobile phone. Students need to be sent information via the on-line channels and be made to understand clearly the provided learning materials.

5.5 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the researcher recommends:

- i) Kenyatta University should endeavor to provide timely information to distance learning students on the course selection, enrollment and registration procedures.
- ii) The university should be effective and efficient in giving information about tutorials, vacation schools, examination programmes and results.
- iii) The university should put in place the use of teleconference to give learners opportunities to interact with each other and their tutors hence reduce isolation.
- iv) Kenyatta university should send learning materials via on-line channels.

5.6 Suggestions for Further Research

The researcher suggests the following areas for further research.

- i) A comparative study of the gender factors influencing distance learning, in Kenyatta University.
- ii) The distance learning products job acquisition in comparison with regular studies products.
- iii) An evaluation of education quality offered to distance learning students.

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APPENDIX A:LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

I am a Master of Distance Education Student at the University of Nairobi. I am carrying out research on the above topic. I kindly request you to assist me by filling in the questionnaire as correctly and honestly as possible. Be assured that your identity and response will be treated with utmost confidentiality. For this reason, do not write your name on the questionnaire.

Thank you in advance for your willingness to participate in this important exercise.

STUDENTS QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire is intended to collect information regarding the influence of learner support services in the implementation of distance learning case of Kenyatta university ,Kenya .the information you give will be treated confidentially ,and you are advised not to write your name anywhere in the questionnaire .please be as truthful as possible and respond to all relevant items.

SECTION A: Demographic information.

1. Your gender

Male ☐

Female ☐

2. Your age in yearsyrs.

3. Academic year

1st ☐

2nd ☐

3rd ☐

4th ☐

SECTION B: Forms of Administrative Support Services Offered by Kenyatta University

4. Below are statements regarding Administrative Support Services Offered by Kenyatta University. Please indicate your opinion regarding distance education by reacting to the statements in the table. Tick the appropriate number or response after each statement. Use the scale provided.

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

Forms of Administrative Support Services	5	4	3	2	1
The students are usually given the pre-enrollment counseling.					
The students are guided on the course to take as a form of learner support services					
The students did get guidance on the mode of study for distance learning.					
The student support services are given in the form of guidance on the available programmes.					
The students are given training on acquisition of the learning materials.					
The students do get updates on the school progress and developments.					
Learners are told the criteria by which their assignments and exams are graded.					
A variety of counseling booklets are prepared on common problems faced by learners.					
Video cassettes of learners talking are produced to create awareness to other learners in the same programme.					
There is a planned day for all the students to interact with the institution.					

5. State any other form of Administrative support which is provided by your school to the distant learning students.

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SECTION C: How Lecturers' Feedback Provide access to the learner support services.

6. Below are statements regarding how lecturer's feedback provides access to learner support services. Please indicate your opinion regarding distance education by reacting to the statements in the table. Tick the appropriate number of response after each statement .use the scale provided.

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

How lecturer's feedback provide access to learner support services	5	4	3	2	1
Tutoring is done to the students who fail to understand the contents of the learning materials.					
The students have a feedback channel to the teacher, on the usefulness of the materials.					
The students are able to acquire assignments through the learner support services.					
The lecturers can be able to monitor the progress of the learners through the learner support services.					
The students can give their feedback to the lecturers while at the student support centres.					
Learners are prompted to contact their tutor at frequent intervals to discuss a particular issue.					
Students do practical at home or at student support centres.					
Students receive examination results remotely.					
Student-lecturer dialogue takes time at the centres at pre-arranged times.					
Students do get arrangements with lecturers on revision of work covered.					
The university provides free telephone calls for students to interact with lecturers online.					

7. Name any other form of lecturer's feedback which provide learner support services

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SECTION D: availability of learning resources in learner support services

8. Below are statements regarding the availability of learning resources in learner support services. Please indicate your opinion regarding distance education by reacting to the statements in the table. Tick the appropriate number or response after each statement .use the scale provided.

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

Students receive the learning materials through the learners support services	5	4	3	2	1
The students are sent some learning materials via the online channel					
The students have an online feedback channel to the lecturer					
The mode of the learning materials is also a factor that affects the access of learning resources					
Mobile phone technology and network availability is vital in the learner support services					
Learning materials are clearly understood by the student					
Scatteredness of the student (isolation) makes it difficult for them to form group discussions					
Lectures use radio to pass information					
Lecturers use computer and emails to pass information					
Telephone is used in passing information					
Video is usually used to pass information					
Print media is used to pass information					

9. What other ways can the learning resources be provided to the learners

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SECTION E: Availability of the infrastructure in the implementation of distance learning

10. Below are statements regarding how the availability of infrastructure contributes to the implementation of distance learning. Please indicate your opinion regarding distance education by reacting to the statement in the table. Use the scale provided.

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

Availability of the infrastructure	5	4	3	2	1
The students do receive the revision material from the students support centres					
Distance from the students geographical location to the centres at times hinders access to the computer services					
The infrastructure of the students residence for example internet with the learner support services					
Inadequate infrastructure makes it difficult for students to access services like internet					
There are adequate infrastructure that support students in learning					

11. Suggest other important infrastructure that can be used in the implementation of distance learning

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SECTION F: Ways that can be used to improve on the learner support services.

12. Suggest any way that can be used to improve on the learner support services

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