

ABSTRACT

In many countries distance learning has been adopted and has had significant success in terms of accommodating large number of students at the same time. Despite Distance Education (DE) mode of learning having been introduced in Kenya in the 1960s at the University of Nairobi only a few students are reported to have completed various courses through the mode. This study seeks to establish how level of awareness and some demographic factors of educational managers in Western Region of Kenya influence their support for DE mode of learning. This paper seek to address the following research questions: First to what extent do the educational managers' levels of awareness of DL mode of delivery influence their support for DL mode in Western Region of Kenya? Secondly the paper sought to establish to what extent some personal characteristics of educational managers, such as- Gender, professional qualifications, work experience and administrative position- held influence their support for DE mode of learning in Western Region? In addition to these questions six hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance to address the phenomenon. The data collected was analyzed using both qualitative and qualitative techniques which revealed that the educational managers' support for DE mode of learning was influenced by personal characteristics such as working experience, position held and subject specialization. Further the level of awareness of educational managers about distance learning mode was also found to be having a significant influence on their support for DE mode of learning. The study recommended that teacher training institutions should revise their syllabuses to include DE units in their new syllabuses. This would expose students undergoing educational courses to appreciate DE's strengths, weaknesses and situational application for suitability. Further a major campaign also needs to be organized to sensitize existing educational managers of the effectiveness and efficiency of DE mode of learning. A reasonable number of educational managers are not fully exposed to distance education mode of learning despite their background in education and their work experiences in education sector. More research needs to be facilitated to establish the situational effectiveness of various modes of learning. This would allow stakeholders to make informed decisions regarding appropriate mode of learning taking cognizance of prevailing circumstances. The government needs to review its policy on education to provide an enabling environment for employees / students undergoing DE programmes while working. DE learning mode option need to be made available during Universities and programmes selection at secondary level to increase access of education to all regardless of the age, gender, subject specialization or work situation.