Abstract:

Distance Education is a common education approach in institutions of higher learning today, but the concept has not been fully adopted and practiced by women. The purpose of the study was to investigate the factors influencing the participation of women in distance learning. The objectives of this research were to investigate the social cultural factors influencing women participation in Distance Education, identify the family related challenges that women encounter as they participate in Distance Education, and to establish administrative factors influencing women's participation in Distance education. These factors were conceptualized in the conceptual framework as variables of the research as social cultural factors, family factors, and administrative factors influencing participation of women in Distance Education. The researcher used a descriptive survey research design. The design helped to answer the questions such as how, what, when, and where. Thus the design was suitable to answer the questions concerning the current status of women's participation in Distance education. The research focused on both female and male students of Kenya Methodist University (KeMU) enrolled for diploma, undergraduates, and postgraduate programmes. Kenya Methodist University (KeMU) was used as a representative institution of higher learning for all other institutions in Kenya because they all assume same values and practices of education. The study sample was selected from the target population using stratified random sampling method. Simple random sampling was used to take a sample in each group or strata. The study used self administered questionnaire to collect data and drop and pick method was used to administer the questionnaires. The data was processed and analyzed using the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistics such as means of occurrences or central tendencies and frequency percentages were used for data analysis. The results were presented in summary reports, and tables based on those tests and analysis of research dimensions. Research findings were used to answer the research questions and recommendations were given concerning those factors that influence participation of women in distance education.