

**FACTORS THAT AFFECTS STUDENTS' ACADEMIC
PERFORMANCE IN DISTANCE EDUCATION OF SELECTED
UNIVERSITY COLLEGES/ UNIVERSITY IN ADDIS ABABA**

BY

ZEWDU TEKLEHAIMANOT HAILU

**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES OF
ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY IN PARTIAL FULFIMENT FOR THE
DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS IN EDUCATIONAL PLANNING AND
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ZEWDU TEKLEHAIMANOT

APPROVAL OF BOARD OF EXAMINERS

Keenise Dabi

Chairman, Department Graduate Committee

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H/selassie W/gerima (ASSt.PROF.)

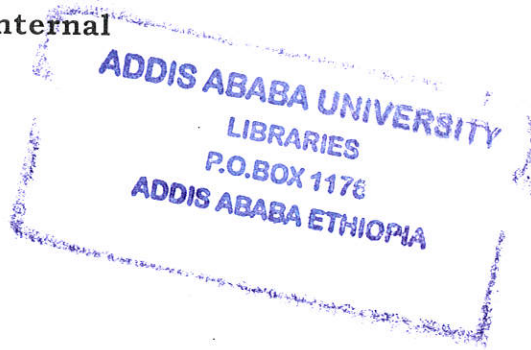
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Examiner, Internal

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

BPR	Business process Reengineering
COC	Competency of Occupational certificate
EGSLCE	Ethiopian School Leaving Certificate Examination
EPRDF	Ethiopian people's Revolution Democratic Front
ESLCE	Ethiopian School Leaving Certificate Examination
ETP	Ethiopia Training Policy
GPA	Grade Point Average
HERQA	Higher Education Relevance and Quality Assurance
IGNOU	Indira Gandhi National Open University
MoE	Minister of Education
SPSS	Statistical Procedures for Social Sciences
TV	Television
UNESCO	United Nations Education, Science and Cultural Organization
USA	United states of America

Abstract

Quality of Education is affected by different factors which could be directly reflected on graduates' academic performance. In order to alleviate these factors, the Government of FDRE established an agency HERQA to control the quality of higher education institutions. This study was conducted with the objectives of investigating the major factors that affect students' academic performance in distance education in light of internal and external factors like selection criteria, organization and management, assessment and follow up, and problems. Methodologically descriptive survey method was used. Data were gathered from 4 Academic Deans and 12 supportive workers, 43 instructors, 276 learners, and 2 HERQA experts, selected by using purposive, convenience, availability, systematic and purposive sampling techniques as appropriate. Data gathered by questionnaires, interviews, document analysis & focus group discussions were analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively. Frequency counts and the χ^2 test together with Fisher's exact test to test significant differences were used in the analysis. Regarding result of the study; the institutions did not follow the rules and regulations set by HERQA and HERQA did not establish controlling mechanisms. The findings also indicated that the total credit hours per term is more than nine, there is only one tutorial sessions per term, no orientation after registration, hand books did not given for learners. These weaknesses make learners not to have a clear understand to the environment and did not know how to use Guidance and Counseling, library and other services. Although, assignments and final exams are developed directly on the modules, most learners did not participate on tutorial sessions, they are grade oriented, lack reading skills. The society and employers have low attitudes towards distance education and even if learners family has low attitudes. The strengths in the institutions were provision of quality modules, establishments of library with adequate books and references and skilled man power. To alleviate these problems, the institutions has to follow the criteria of HERQA, provide adequate tutorial, gives proper orientations, prepare and give student hand book, develop book borrowing procedure. Besides the institution has to develop an attendance to make students attend tutorials and arrange programs for learners to communicate with instructors, counselors and other students to enhance their academic performance.

CHAPTER 1

THE PROBLEM AND ITS APPROACH

This chapter deals with background of the Study, statement of the problem, basic research questions, the significant of the study, objectives of the study, its delimitation and limitation as well as definition of key terms and the organization of the study.

1.1 Background of the Study

For continuous and sustainable development of a country, educated peoples are crucial. Also for proper utilization of a country's resources, education is the corner stone. To achieve a mission and vision of a country's technological, political, cultural, socio-economical and other aspects, expansion of higher education is important.

According to Teshome (2004:1), "Higher education has a paramount importance for economic and social development. Indicating relevant knowledge and advanced skills, higher education provides the human resource required for leadership, management, business and professional positions. By giving people access to knowledge and tools for increasing and diversifying their knowledge, higher education expands people's productivity, as well as national capacity and competitiveness."

For a country to develop, the importance of access to schools and skilled manpower is un-questionable. Also to achieve political sustainability, to develop democratic culture and Economic progress, higher education is the most important mechanism. That is why now a days' our government encourages education sectors, both governmental and private. The expansion of higher education sector is supported by law (proclamation No. 357/2003).

According to this Proclamation, WHEREAS, it is necessary to provide for by law the academic freedom and accountability of the higher education institutions as well as their administration”.

“WHEREAS, it has become necessary to determine by law the directions of the private higher education institutions in order to promote their contribution in expanding education and conducting research;”

Here, higher education is supported by law for conducting research and to expand education (access) within high quality staff members, administrators, teachers and supportive members.

Higher Education in Ethiopia is at the youngest stage. According to Teshome (2007:18) “The modern period of higher education commenced with the establishment of the Trinity College with twenty one students in 1949, with the assistance of Canadian Jesuits. In 1950, tertiary or higher education in Chemistry and Biology were started in the college which was later up graded to University College at Addis Ababa (currently Addis Ababa University). After this, different higher education institutions have been dramatically established by the government. Currently, 22 government Universities (Addis Ababa University, Adama University, Arbaminch University, Awassa University, Ambo University, Axum University, Bahidar University, D/brehan, University D/markose University, Dilla University, Diridawa University, Gonder University, Haromaya University, Jimma University, Mekele University, Medawolabo University, mizantepi University, Wollo University, wolayta University, wolega University, Jijega University, and semera University) in the country have established by government.

Addis Ababa City Administration is divided in to 10 sub cities identified as Arada, Bole, Kirkos, Nifas silk, Yeka, Kolfe, Lideta, Gulele, Addis Ketema and Akaki Kaliti. In Addis Ababa City Administration, one government University;

Addis Ababa University (4Kilo, 5Kill, 6Kilo, commerce, Debube building), kotebe teacher training college and TVET colleges are governed by government.

As HERQA's profile, currently there are 81 private Higher Education institutions in Addis Ababa offering of training at masters, degree, diploma and certificate level.

According to Wondwosen (2008:109-114), "In Addis Ababa there are 44 private institutions offering Business, IT and Law Training, 30 colleges which offer health related trainings, 14 colleges offering industrial and construction Technology, 14 colleges offer training at diploma level in the field of teacher education and 6 institutions offer trainings related to music, social Development work, Tourism, Therapy and Library science."

According to the profile of HERQA (2009), and abstract of MOE (2009), in Addis Ababa 11 colleges, University colleges and University have offered distance education: Admas University colleges, Alpha University colleges, St.mary's University colleges, Unity University, Ethiopias Distance Education College, 2020 open college, Yardistics international Open Learning College, IGNOU, Nelson Mandela Education College, Infonet College, and Symles College.

Distance education in Ethiopia is a new phenomenon. According to Teshome (2007:26), "The first private and non-governmental higher education institutions, Alpha distance Education College and Ethiopian Adventist College were started operations in 1981." From the institutions profile Unity University started 2000, St.mary's University colleges in 2003, and Admas University college in 2004 have been started the operation (distance division).

Admas University College, Alpha University College, St.mary's University colleges and Unity University have offered degree program at regular, evening, summer, and distance basis. The main offices for these institutions are in Addis Ababa. Also the institutions provide Diploma programs in all delivery modes.

1.2. Statement of the Problem.

For Amare (2006:88), "Distance education programs will continue to grow both in developed and developing countries. The main reason for this growth is related to the ever growing demand for trained human power with scarce resource /particularly financial/ in the existing educational systems."

Nowadays, the number of higher distance education institutions has increased in Addis Ababa Administrative City Government. Also the enrollment rate in higher distance education had increased. Distance education has its own contribution to the expansion of higher education and enrollment rate in the country.

According to MOE (2009:119), enrollment rate with government and non-government higher education undergraduate degree in distance streams are increasing year to year. But those who were registered fail to continue their education; there were a drop out. For instance in 1996 E.C (2003-2004 G.C), 5025 students were registered in private colleges, but in 1998 E.C (2005-2006 G.C) only 23 were graduated. It indicates more than 99 percent were dropped out, or suspend their program. One of the reasons indicated for this high dropout rate was the students' low academic performance.

In any level of education sector, the performance of students determined based on the quality of education system and necessary inputs. Now a day's Ethiopian government emphasis is not expansion, it is well done, but the quality of education. Qualities of education have been affected by different factors, but the institution should identify the weak parts of the systems and improve it for the sake of students' academic performance.

As to Mekasha (2005:121), the three very important factors which needs to be carefully examined as agents of securing Ethiopian higher education quality and relevance in the 21st century are curriculum, quality of teaching and pedagogical effectiveness and method of work.

Quality of Education, which is reflected in learners Academic Performance, is a major factor for social, Economic and Cultural development.

To expand quality of education, Ethiopian government established different packages within the quality of education like regular classes, summer programs, and extension classes. Now a day's in addition to face to face learning, means of teaching system has also undertaken by distance education.

However, there is a quality doubt for Distance Education for instance, in Addis Zemen News Paper (No. 68, 17:1), it had been stated that, in higher distance education there is a problem of academic performance of students for different reasons as shortage of time in tutoring, absence of qualified teachers in tutoring areas, inability of students to use instructional materials like CDs appropriately, unavailability of modules on time, students failure to work their worksheets by themselves and etc. It causes there is mismatch of performance of graduates and employers.

Through my experience, what I have found to be the major problem facing academic performance of distance student are institutional and Learner factors.

I have five years experience working in distance education institutions. From my observation, the major problems of the institutions are: lack of commitment, shortage of finance, shortage of personnel (skilled man power), shortage of means of communication, unclear students selection criteria for programs, poor follow up and assessment mechanisms and unclear organization and management of the institutions.

In learners side; lack of commitment, shortage of finance, inferiority complex (to give low value for their certificate), Socio-Economic factors and so on are possible factors.

From this, we can understand that there is an Academic performance problem in higher distance education.

Hence, the main purpose of this study is to examine the major factors affecting students' academic performance in distance education learners in selected University Colleges and University (Admas University College, Alpha University College, St.mary's University College, and Unity University) in Addis Ababa.

In order to attain its purpose, this study tries to answer the following basic questions:

1. What are the selection criteria of these University colleges / University is for join the program?
2. What are the program organization and academic performance in the selected university colleges/University?
3. What are the tutorial and learning support factors that affect learners' academic performance?
4. What is the assessment mechanism that affects learners' academic performance?
5. What other problems are perceived by learners; instructors, academic Dean's and supportive workers, which affect academic performance of learners?

1.3. Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this Study is to investigate the major factors that affect students' academic performance in distance education.

The Specific objectives of this study are:

1. To identify internal and external factors that affects academic performance of distance students.
2. To identify the basic selection criteria's used by these institutions.
3. To know how the institutions are organized and managed.

4. To identify the assessment and follow up mechanisms used by those institutions
5. To identify other problems which affect students academic performance and
6. Suggest some practical recommendations that could make the University Colleges and Universities and the working environments conducive for distance students to be successful in their academic performance.

1.4. Significance of the Study

This study will have the following significances:

1. To suggest possible methods to solve the problems of academic performance of distance students.
2. To suggest distance students to improve their own academic performance.
3. For Ministry of Education, it will help them to rank institutions based on their students' academic performance.
4. The study can provide ideas to colleges/universities and educational personnel to review their approach and enhance learners education
5. The study can provide information to policy makers, and the society at large so that they become fully aware of the reality of colleges /universities and the problem of students and.
6. To assist other researchers on similar studies.

1.5. Delimitations of the study

This study was focused on degree programs of distance education in Addis Ababa City Administration in selected three university colleges and one university: Admas University college, Alpha University college, St. Mary's University college and Unity University. These institutions are selected because relatively larger number of students, large geographic coverage (large number of branches), and financial strength. Besides, these organizations are the most

experienced private higher institutions which involve in providing distance education at a degree level. The Primary and Secondary data source for the study is delimited on Learners, Instructors, Academic Dean's, HERQA experts and data from record offices of the selected university colleges /University, reports, policies and strategies of HERQA's.

1.6 Operational Definitions

Distance Education: Refers to teaching and learning situation in which the instructors and learners are geographically separated, and therefore, rely on electronic device and print materials instructional delivery (Partwayanlane, 1994:295).

Academic performance: Refers to performance of learners in their academic Results.

Factors: A cause or determiner that underlies and influences performance (Good, 1973:233).

Tutorial: A seasonal program arranged for distance learners to communicate with a teacher and discuss the learning materials.

Private Higher Education: Refers to all non-public institutions offering post Secondary Education and training (Teshome, 2007:26)

1.7 Organization of the Study

This study is organized in to five chapters. Chapter one Deals with the introducing the problem; background and statement of the problem; objectives; basic questions and significance; and delimitation of the study; definition of key terms; and organization of the study are included. Chapter Two is left to the review of related literature so as to put the theoretical foundation of the study. Chapter Three is concerned with the research design and methodology under which the method, data sources, sampling techniques and the type of instruments used are discussed in detail. Chapter Four treats the analysis and Interpretation of the data gathered. Chapter Five presents the Summary of major findings, conclusion drawn upon the findings and possible recommendations. Finally are attached lists of reference materials used in the study, questionnaires and interview guides.

CHAPTER 2

Review of Related Literature

2.1. Overview of Distance Education

As the name implies, in distance education, there is a separation of teaching learning system in space and/or time. Many scholars define distance education in different perspectives.

For Manjulikas (1999:1), "Distance education is an umbrella term which indicates the tangible distance between the learner and the teacher where the process of teaching and learning is not confined within the four walls of the classroom, any more with its horizontal mobility.

To support the above idea, Moore (as cited in John, 1987:8), defined it as ". . . any formal approach to learning in which a majority of the instruction occurs while educator and learner are at a distance from one another." Both scholars agreed that, distance education has been practiced on a separation between teaching and learning process.

Hence, in distance education students and teachers are separated in space and /or time, not daily communication like conventional classes; Also in distance education, every person has a chance to participate or learn; not discrimination by other external factors like; religion, sex, time, space, and others.

Also keegan, (as cited in John 1987:11) give a general definition based on four elements selected:

1. The separation of teacher and learner during at least a majority of the instructional process,
2. The influence of an educational organization, including the provision of students evaluation,
3. The use of educational media to unit teacher and learner and carry course content, and

4. The provision of two-way-communication between teacher, tutor, or educational agency and learner.

Here, in distance education instructors with learners contact is periodical, an evaluation has been practiced not in a continuous way, and it is an arrangement and/or final examination. It must be a two-way-communication (learners with instructors); otherwise it will affect the students' academic performance. If it is a two-way communication, learners will ask what they do not understand the subject and solve the problems. If the interaction frequency will be higher, an increase in learners' participation will improve their Academic performance.

Generally, distance education as a field of education focuses on the andragogy and pedagogy, instructional systems, and technology which endeavor or to deliver an education to students who are not physically in a class room or compositing.

2.2. The Need of Distance Education

To the expansion /access/ to education, distance education has its own contributions in the building of nation by creating educated manpower. A country expands distance education for different purposes. Different authors have stated the advantages of distance education. Ezine, (article.com, 17 Nov 21/2008) has tried to extract the following Advantages:

1. Distance learning requires no commuting-saves your money and time,
2. You complete most of the classes at your own pace-no pressure,
3. You can live anywhere in the world, study from anywhere in the world, and pursue your choice of distance education course studies,
4. Gain extra knowledge while you are learning, thanking those computer and internet skills you gain and then applying them to other fact or face,

5. The self paced learning environment can be taken advantage of by the quickest or the slowest of learners-increase the satisfaction level while reducing stress in the process, and
6. Accessibility factors in distance education courses address the physical accessibility issues that people with mobility problems of ten times encounter while being enrolled in the traditional or campus class.

Amare (2006:78), also share some views in this regard that in Distance Education, greater number of students can participate in the program, students from remote rural areas can have access to the program, students can take courses while doing their jobs, students can organize their own study times to their own convenience; and courses are cost effective.

Besides, Distance Education transcends the barriers of time, space, sex, creed, community and religion, thus breaking the myth of elitism in conventional higher education,”

Based on the above explanations, it is clear that, distance education has its own contribution for socio-economic development of a country. Because distance education saves learners time and money that can be used for school fee and transportation, learners have free time to work and participate their social relations. In distance education where ever the student is, and whatever the student ability is, he/she may independently learn or study by themselves. This in turn helps them to develop a certain level of self-reliance and self confidence.

In general, in relation to the above idea, John (1987:27-8), Stated that, “. . . distance education offers the same opportunities for freedom of pace and individual study as does self directed, self-planned learning, while also providing the guidance, planning, and feedback during the learning experience, that is necessary for continued student motivation and completion of the course.”

2.3. Management and Organization of Distance Education

At any institution, the primary concern is students. In distance learning there is little or no direct contact between the institution and its students. So, the management must assure that students have adequately met what is going to be served.

According to Holmberg (1981:97), Distance education must be organized in such a way that includes: the development and technical production of distance-study courses, the distribution of course materials, the non-contiguous two-way communication between students and tutors, and counselors, record keeping, course certification units, exam centers and supplementary face to face contacts between students and tutors/counselors.

These organizational units have been mostly practiced in different world wide open universities. As any institution follows this organization structure to facilitate the services provided and enhances learners' academic performance.

Different authors also agreed that an organization has to arrange Guidance and Counseling, Tutorial class and facilities of Library services and information facilities are support systems that are critical component of the management of a distance learning system.

Guidance and counseling is an important aspect of education that can help the learner in their problems. It is a necessary service that can support instructional work to enables students to develop their ability.

A school library is an instructional resource that may significantly affect students' academic performance. According to Ukeje (1992:343), "one of the basic crucial services that should be provided in any educational institutions is a school library service."

At any level of education whether primary, secondary or tertiary, the institutions should provide digested books and other reference materials which are appropriate to educational level of the students attending in schools.

Education sector strategy's has ten objectives, off which, one is: to promote a higher education of good quality, relevance and focusing on research and development. Also the objectives of Education and Training includes producing literate and problem solving citizen, developing productive skills of citizen, develop citizens with creative and innovative minds and etc are also components. ETP(1994)

The management has also functions related to the control of the quality of services, modules, and teachers' performance. In different countries the focus area of quality assurance is different and depends on their situation of their education system.

According to Perraton (2004:197), "The scope of quality assurance system varies widely for some like (as in Scotland and England) monitor teaching effectiveness while in others (like in Hong Kong) focus on management processes and some rely heavily on accreditation systems for ensuring quality (like in the USA), others include the quality of research productivity, either of individual scholars' (like in Mexico) or of whole academic departments (as in the United Kingdom). As a whole, we observe quality assurance of a higher education of countries depend on the missions and visions of countries education and the levels of a country economy development.

Here, Distance Education providers have to focus on different quality related areas for its services to improve its services and increase learners Academic Performance.

Generally, to increased learners Academic Performance, the institutions have to develop their capacity and need to have well organized Tutorial centers, Libraries, Guidance and Counseling services, Student Affairs, and etc.

2.4. The Delivery Approaches in Distance Education

As we all know, in distance learning, learning takes place through both individual interaction with the self learning materials and social interaction with tutors. Face-to-face meeting as a form of tutorial therefore, is an accession for this social interaction. Many distance learners may find it difficult to manage themselves for study, do their assignments. So to solve these problems tutorial class have vital roles. At a tutorial time, there is two-way-communication between learners and instructors, learners with counselor and/or learners with the institution. It has a positive impact for their academic performance, if it is properly done.

Different authors stated that distance education have been delivered in different mechanisms. As to John, Manjulika, and Perraton agreed that distance education had delivered by; Audio cassette, Telephone, Radio, Audio media (Television, Tele course), satellite broad casting, video cassettes, computers and print. In addition to this, Holmberg (1981:61), “. . . the most important medium in distance education is printed world and other Medias such as radio, TV, audio and video tapes, film strips, are usually supplements which are introduced for special purposes or special points to support motivation, and provide illustration, etc.” Here, the delivery method for the program is selected by institutions appropriate for learners depending on criteria like economy of the country, background of the society, infrastructure of the country and the like. To deliver a program effectively services like Tutorials, Guidance and Counseling, and Library services have to be fulfilled by institutions.

According to Holmberg (1981:83), “two-way-communication has its own purpose. These are: to support students’ motivation and interest by contact with encouraging tutor and counselor, to support and facilitate student learning by having students, apply the knowledge and skills acquired as well as by tutors’ comments, explanation and suggestions, assessing students program

in order to provide them with an instrument by means of which they can judge their educational situations and needs and by means of which marks can be awarded.”

Keegan (1989), by sharing the above idea explains as “Occasional face-to-face sessions are organized for both didactic and socialization purposes unlike the conventional system, where it is a major teaching medium.”

What one can understand from here is that arranging enough tutorial time /program/ has a great impact for the academic performance of students. The part of delivery, assessment of learning is a process of gathering information about how learners are progressed in their learning. It gathers information about what learners know and can demonstrate as a result of learning process. Assessing by assignments (work sheets) and using one summative examination are mainly considered to be the tools for assessing the achievements and evaluation of the performance of the learners.

According to Brown (1997), “Assessments plays an important role in the learning process by providing feedback to students on their progress, giving students an opportunity to demonstrate what they have learned and helping students to prepare themselves. And it helps the student teachers to improve his/her learning.”

Thus, assessing has been given dual purposes i.e. for students to know where they are and institutions also to demonstrate where students scored low grade and improve their performance. From assessment the institution care for question types, difficulties and coverage of the courses.

According to Holmberg (1981:92), “Questions, problems and essay type items must not be chosen more or less at random, but should be carefully selected to cover essential course objectives in such a way that the students are led on his/her work in the most efficient manner.”

Holmberg also suggest that the main types of objective tests which have been used with success in distance study courses are:

1. Multiple choice tests: The student marks which of the several suggested answers are the correct one.
2. Re-arrangement test: The student numbers the various items of a series of events, a process of work, etc to demonstrate the right order between the items.
3. Completion test: The student fills in gaps, in sentences requiring figures, terms or other indications of fact or missing endings in a sentence in a foreign language, etc.

The same author, Holmberg (1981:92), suggest that “when a student shows in a diagnostic test that there is something he has not grasped or something he needs more practice in, then he can immediately be referred to the instruction sheet that deals with his own particular difficulty.”

In General, each delivering mechanisms have their own positive as well as a negative impact for learner’s Academic performance. For instance Printing materials (modules): It is inexpensive, portable, in any order, for any length of time. But it is not well write it has a highly affects learner’s Academic Performance. So, any institution has seriously analysis in different way and selects the best delivery method that enhances learner’s Academic performance.

2.5. Recruitment and Selection in Distance Education for Programs

The criteria for recruitment and selection in Distance Education for program not a universally agreement. It depends on the countries Educational policy, mission, vision and values of the country.

2.6. Problems in Distance Education

Different researches show that most students participate in distance education are in the age of above 25. Mostly these students are engaged and loaded in various activities, like family management, social relationship, political participation and soon. These in turn have their own negative impact of their Education. To solve these problems, Guidance and Counseling are essential and the lack of this service which constrains students learning.

According to Holmberg (1981:84) “. . . a number of every day circumstances influences their study. A proper counseling service must be in apposition after some kind of advice and help over such matters when students ask for it or in other ways show that they need it.” Distance students are busy for different social works, every day activities and others what they concern; so their business has its own negative impact for their academic performance.

To support the above idea, “counseling is about helping learners decide for themselves what is best for them as regarded choice of course and career, overcoming of obstacles and so on. So, it is entirely learner-dependent rather than knowledge-dependent.” (IGNOU E5313, 2001:9).

A counselor discussed with learners about what they want and needs or feelings rather than what is their knowledge's. Otherwise, if his/her discussion is based on his/her knowledge, learners' problems will not be solved. In general, guidance and counseling are essential for any educational institution. But in distance education, the lack of separate guidance and counseling section is the big problem.

But as to reality from experience no one distance education institutions have separate guidance and counseling offices. Any distance student needs to be counseled and the advice by the institution to go to regular class counselor is also not advisable as regular class and distance class students have different approach and different problems. So counselors should know the

characteristics of distance students otherwise, students problems will not be solved and also will contribute to low academic performance.

Some other problems directly related to affect students' academic performance according to Ezine articles. Com. is:

1. Sometimes that technology is complex and costly-despite the numerous opportunities of distance education, there are always accompanying costs
2. Advance planning is necessary both in the instructions and students of ten times need to make sacristies scheduling the times to get times done.
3. Beware of hidden costs-If you're in naval branch of the military for example, and you are out at sea, and difficult to receive study materials?
4. Distance learning does not often get immediate feedback in the traditional classroom setting where the student's performance is immediately assessed, whereas with distance education, the student has to wait for feedback while the instructor is reviewing their work.
5. Distance learning does not always offer all the necessary courses online. Students pursuing specific certificates or degrees may not be afforded all the necessary courses that are available through distance education programs so some programs are not suited for all course of study.
6. Distance learning may not be acknowledged by all employers. Most employers acknowledge distance education, but there are some who don't acknowledge.
7. Distance learning does not give students the opportunity to work on oral communication skills-students in distance education courses do not always get engaged in verbal communication with fellow students and teachers.
8. Social isolation more often than not, you study alone and distance education students of ten times feel isolated and miss the social interaction that accompanies the traditional classroom on campus.

Here, listed drawbacks can directly affect students' academic performance in that it makes learners not to continue their lessons, it makes difficult to cover the portion, and consumes time of instructors to give a feedback. It also blocks students not to practice verbal interactions with instructors and other students. It has its own impact to student's performance as learning is not only reading rather it also needs communication and participation in a practical sense.

Moreover, distance learners are socially isolated because in distance education students do not attend classrooms regularly; thus learners feel alone. It has its own impact to students' attitude and confidence, because students feel lonely, and they do not compare themselves with other students.

To conclude these, problems of distance education has to be considered by the institution to solve the drawbacks and the students must be planned to continue their education.

As John (1987:114) stated, "Societies attitudes towards distance education play an important role in decisions about who will use it and how and when it will be used."

In any types of education, attitudes towards the field of study are very important in achieving the country's mission. A negative or positive attitude develops for distance education related to its quality. As John (1987:116) further stated, "attitude play a large role in status, which intern can function to make the assumed inferiority of distance education a self fulfilling prophecy"

Here, a negative attitude of a society towards distance education has its own impact on students' status, even students perception is low compared to conventional study. As experience shows, the society feels that distance learners are not competitive for the face to face program/regular learners/.

According to Holmberg (1981:49), “. . . deep-learning and surface-learning habits is particularly important for distance educators for two reasons: first, like most distance learning it is based on reading; second, it has great operational important and bearing on the learning outcomes. Surface learning basically endangers the educational outcomes of distance study as it leads to priority being given to the external characteristics of the text concerned rather than to its contents . . .”

Distance students should develop their study skill and read their materials deeply, not on the surface. However, most of them are not interested to read deeply, because most of them only grade oriented and engaged different activities. These problems have a negative impact for students' academic performance.

It is generally believed that academic performance of any student is also significantly correlated with his/her study skills. Distance program has the highest form of student centered approach. So, any student should read more or cover each course modules. Otherwise, his/her academic performance will be very low.

At each module, the introduction part describes its credit hours of the course, so students should move against the time and cover the course. According to John (1981:27), “. . . Distance Education offers the same opportunities for freedom of pace and individual study as does self-directed, self-planned learning.”

As we have described above, most of distance students are more than 25 years old. Obviously at this age level they are expected to manage their life style and others. This expectation and other factors have affected their academic performance.

According to Schlosser and Anderson (1994), poor time management and procrastination of the distance students is an important factor related to their academic failure in distance education programs.”

Due to lose time management, distance students have deteriorated their academic performance. Because, they cannot manage their time and they are busy for other works. This also has a direct relation to their academic performance as it is one of the factors to minimize the time for their study.

2.2. Higher Distance Education in Ethiopia

As to ETP (1994:15), “General education will be completed at the first cycle (grade 10) the second cycle of secondary education and training will enable students to choose subjects or areas of training which will prepare them adequately for higher education and for the world of work.”

After accomplished grade ten, students will be assigned based on the standard that will be stated by MoE, at that year, for TVET or preparatory stream. The standard to students involved at distance education proclaimed by MoE, as it has (TGE, January 20, 1993:237), given power and duties to determine the educational curriculum offered at the level of higher education and also the entrance criteria. However, the criteria vary year to year, because of different government strategy.

From the abstract of MoE (2009), in Ethiopian enrollment rate in higher education has increased year to year and the need for enrolling higher education relevant has become more pressing than ever before.

In combination to this, distance education programs will continue to grow both in developed and developing countries. The main reason for this growth is related to the ever growing demand for trained man power with scarce resource (particularly financial) in the existing educational systems (Amare, 2006:88).

2.2.1. The Need of Distance Education in Ethiopia

It is obvious that Education has a significant role for cultural, political, and socio-economical development. To upgrade one's education status is unquestionable fact. Because, in upgrading oneself, his/her skills and knowledge, he/she is benefited and increased their monthly income.

For the growth of sustainable and rapid economic development, expansion of education is crucial. Therefore, expanding education through different mechanisms including distance education is vital. According to the experience of distance education relevance in Ethiopia is dramatically changed. From the abstracts of MoE (2009:119), the enrollment number of distance education both government and non government at the year 2005/6 was 21,982; and after two years, the enrollment number was increased by 11,149 which is a total of 33,131 students.

Although, the expansion of distance education program in Ethiopia has dramatically increased, but the implementation is not free from any problem or challenges. Therefore, the need for relevance has to become more important as the job saturation in the civil service, graduate unemployment and changes in the job market make it imperative that higher education institutions produce graduates, who are not only able to constantly upgrade their knowledge and learn new skills but also to create jobs instead of claiming them as right (UNESCO, 1998).

Even though, the relevance of distance education is dramatically changing, only the increase in enrollment rate could not indicate the relevance of the requirements of the country exact situation

According to Mugnai (as cited in UNESCO, 1998) "Relevance of higher education depends on the suitability of the impacts that its graduates make in relation. As to studies, most graduates in distance education have not felt confident and they lack knowledge on the subject matter. As a result the

society gives them low esteem. So, any institution that gives distance education must create different mechanisms to increase the relevance of graduates.

Today the emphasis of MoE is not only the expansion of higher education but also to maintain the quality and excellence of education in all levels. To this end, the MoE setup an agency called Quality Assurance Agency, which is responsible to monitor the quality of education, and enhancing trained manpower to keep the quality of education.

Quality assurance refers to the systems through which an institution demonstrates that conditions are in place for student to achieve the standardized set in educational programs. A quality assurance system includes all those planned and systematic activities which provide confidence that a product or service will satisfy given requirements for quality (HERQA, 1994:196).

Controlling of quality assurance worked internal or self regulations and external regulations and assessment has its own negative and positive aspects. According to Marew (2001:367), distance education program can lose its quality because of many factors. These include Poor infrastructure to support distance education (such as communications and transport), Weak planning, inadequate input from specialists, or poor preparation time in setting up program weak management, poor quality materials and acceptance of low standards and inadequate training of staff or the frequent re-deployment of trained staff to unrelated posts.

2.2.2. The Management of Distance Education

“Though Ethiopia has had no full-fledged education policies which were formally declared and published like that the 1994 education policy, however, the country has had full-fledged curricula at least for the past fifty years (Solomon, 2007:79).”

Before 1994, Ethiopia has been highly centralized and after 1991 EPRDF, promotes decentralization and autonomies for regional governments. This decentralization gives regional education offices to participate for formulation education policy. Before 1991, there was no clear and formally published education policy as a document.

The Education sector strategy also guides where distance education will be collaborated and coordinated. This strategy enhances and gives direction of distance education in the future.

However, there is no detail Distance education policy like for a basic and other higher education programs. This created red tape for implementation for distance education.

The organization of distance education is quite different from face-to-face learning. At any institution the organized system has its own goals. According to (IGNOU ES-314:27), the organizational systems of distance education have similar goals and share two common features:

1. They are designed to serve the needs of adult learners who are unable to attend campus based education;
2. Because they are not campus-based, the teaching-learning transactions require to be mediated by a variety of means.

Therefore, the organization system of distance education must consider these features.

As experience shows, the selected higher distance education in this study, are organized in centralized management; production of materials; distribution of course materials, record keeping of results and so on are found at a center (Addis Ababa).

As distance education is throughout a year, there has to be an academic year. Any students registered at any time continue his/her education. However, the

institution has to manage those, who are registered at any time, it is one the advantages of distance education.

According to HERQA's profile (2008), "In distance education program one semester covers 4-6 months. Any institution provide distance education have been established a resource center, mini library, computer center, information office, Guidance and counseling, Tutorial coordinator, and the like."

These institutions were focused mostly for business field areas like Accounting, Marketing Management, Management, Economics and etc. Each department has to work in an integrated way and has to manage by department heads.

Operational failures in distance learning systems and in the sub-systems for materials production, delivery assignment, and student administration and support services have directly affects the quality of distance education. These drawbacks have also directly affects academic performance of learners.

However, According to Robinson (2004:201), distance education has the following organizational differences which need to be addressed in quality-assurance arrangements. These includes involvement of more parties, stakeholders, specialist or sites in the development and delivery of a course or programmer, coordination of more separate activators, roles and players, longer chains of communication, large-scale programmer often provided over a wide geographical area, more detailed planning of production and budgets in advance of program presentation, great number of administrative tasks, and more divers target audiences with differing needs to be met and provision to be made.

Whatever these differences, any institution in quality assurance system has to establish the credibility of distance learning.

Among the responsibilities of HERQA are pre-accreditation, accreditation and re-accreditation of private higher education institutions and some other governmental institutions (HERQA profile, 2008).

HERQA (2008), has been established accreditation standard procedures. The document focuses on inputs, process and outcomes of the institutions. The standards contains: Institutional requirements like Institution name, contact person, owner, legality, organizational structure, accountability, administrative structure, and three years development plan, curriculum which includes objectives, assignment methods, program structure, and credit hours, facilities for program like, library, and computer center, staffing for program (academic staff and administrative staff), institutional rules and regulation for academic staff, administrative staff, and Students, and report on improvements.”.

Therefore, any institution which involves in distance education has to fulfill these benchmarks; otherwise HERQA has not approved the requested accreditation.

After 2008, the accreditation levels have been changed and only full accreditation given for three years and after completing these three years, the institution had required to full fill the above standards and required accreditations.

To facilitate distance education system, the institution must arrange student support services (tutorial, library and counseling). To induct these services and rules and regulations of the institutions an institution has to provide student hand book during registration time. Proper accomplishments of these student support services enhance academic performance of learners. That is why HERQA required these services. Resource centers (Computer, internet CD Room) must be organized in any Distance Education institution to provide quality service.

2.2.3. Delivery Methods of Distance Education

In distance education the main means of communication is printing materials. These printing materials include modules and worksheets.

To select the delivery method, the institution has to understand the economy of the country, background of the society, infrastructural facilities and etc. As we all know, Ethiopia is poor in aspects like infrastructural facilities and educated manpower. In distance education, here in our country it is difficult to use these different delivery methods (Radio, Tv, video, CD Rooms, print and etc) together. To this end the most commonly used delivery system in Ethiopia is printed material (modules).

The academic performance of distance students can be affected by a number of factors like quality of modules, lack of reference materials, module content, module format, and delay of delivering.

Amare (2006:74), explaining that “print is a foundational element of distance education program and the basis from which all other delivery systems have evolved, he tries to indicate the various print formats available including: text books, study guides, work books, course syllabus and case studies.”

As there is no direct interaction between instructors and learners in distance education the distance material should facilitate two-way communication. To create these types of communication, printed materials (modules) must be attractive and kept their quality. If it keeps its quality, the learners have attracted to read and enhance their academic performance.

To improve academic performance of distance students, modules must be prepared in student centered form. According to Tesfay (2005:108-121), the learning material which is prepared for distance education learners has to be a special reading material and should act like a live teacher. In general, a module for distance education learners should have the following unique characters:

1. The material should invite the learner to get them actively involved in it.
2. The learner should be able to learn from the material independently as it carries out all the functions of the teacher.
3. The notes must be written in a form of question and answer approach.
4. The content should be presented in a style that a learner can go through the material without much external support.
5. It should hold more activities that focus a learner's attention on a subject.
6. The examples have to be specific to grasp the learner's interest.
7. All the topics of the course should roughly be similar in terms of contents, density, learners' activities and length. And,
8. The contents should be logically arranged from simple to complex.

In general the material should be able to perform the role of a teacher because the learner's are guided only by it.

In the worksheet, some procedures and guidelines on how to work the items and the percentages out of which the worksheet is evaluated are included. Most distance institutions give 25-30% value for the assignments. The worksheet may contain different types of question items, like multiple choice types, true/false item, completion tests, and matching. If worksheet questions are directly taken from the modules it does not evaluate the status of the learners and affects students' Academy performance.

Therefore, worksheets must be requested to be diagnostic as worksheets are to be worked in home. Asking a direct question requests a student simply to respond by referring the module and it has a negative impact for students' academic performance. As to my experience, worksheets are prepared by course writers and most writers are not committed to cover what it is intended to achieve. Hence, it has a great impact on students' academic performance.

The assessment of distance students are outlined to consist of assignments (work sheet) which may cover 25-30% and final examinations which may cover 65-70%.

Although, the delivery method is assumed to be assisted by tutorials, from experience in almost all distance education institutions, tutorial program given for a semester is only for one week end with an approximate time of 2-3 hours. Due to this reason, the students' academic performance is highly affected as the time (2-3 hours) arranged is too short to cover a semester course.

Besides, most distance institutions are profit oriented and that they did not want to challenge their students. But for improving academic performance of distance students, the institutions must be take care for question types, level of difficulty and whether they adequately cover objectives of the course.

Most distance education institutions gave final examination after two or three weeks of the tutorial program. The exam types also are similar to worksheets with an exception that it includes essay type item. As to my experience, the exam question mostly focuses on summary of each unit. So, it has a negative impact for learners' academic performance, as it makes the learner to focus on the summary section. Thus, he/she will not acquire what is expected to the level.

2.2.4 Recruitment and Selection in Distance Education

The criteria for recruitment and selection in Distance Education for program not a universally agreement. It depends on the countries Educational policy, mission, vision and values of the country. In Ethiopia the criteria for recruitment and selection in Distance Education for program settled by HERQA (2008). The selection criteria for join any a higher education program:

1. Any applicant was graduated by diploma (12+2) for accredited college,
2. Applicants were graduated any accredited College or University by any filled in degree program,

3. For male 3.2 point and above ; for Female 3:00 point and above in ESLCE,
4. Completed two years preparatory,
5. Grade 10 or 12 completed and 2 years working Experience and,
6. Pass COC.

2.2.5 Problems in Distance Education

The expansion of distance education program in Ethiopia has dramatically increased. However, distance education implementation is not free from any problem or challenges.

According to Teshome (2001), there are multi dimensional challenges to implement distance education. These include: Low status is given to distance education, lack of awareness regarding the true potential of distance education (For example, the policy makers, faculty members of higher education institutions and the public at large generally see distance education as inferior to regular programs), There is acute lack of trained manpower in the field in most higher education institutions, and adequate budget is not allocated to run distance education.

Manjucika and Reddy (1998:205), also point out more or less similar challenges that hamper the program of distance education. Underscoring that there is: lack of adequate finance, shortage of communication and infrastructure facilities, no proper government policies, under utilization of the range of audio visual media available, shortage of personnel in media course ware production, lack of financial and academic autonomy (institution attached to conventional universities), degree awards have lesser value and acceptability and however, some pointes listed above has changed, others are still exist.

To support the above idea also, Mehretab (2000:280) has indicated as “the culture of the society has great impact on the provision of distance education. It is obvious that cultural factors can act to facilitate or constrain the

performance of organization. The society does not consider distance education as an educational system. It considers it inferior to the formal education system.”

Distance students have freedom to adjust their time to read their modules, but most of them are engaged in different activities. These different activities have their own impacts on their academic performance.

From the above literature the main problems of Distance Education provider institutions includes shortage of finance. This shortage limits institutions on using assessment mechanism, final exam and worksheets, and delivering modules and other facilities to be delayed. So it has a negative impact for Distance learners' academic performance. Student supporting services (Library, Guidance and counseling, Tutorial centers) have unquestionable impacts on any level of educational system but in a shortage of finance, the institutions might not provide well organized counseling services, library services, adequate books, reference materials and CD Rom's. It also impacts the institution not to give sufficient tutorials. Thus, the financial problem in the institutions may indirectly affect distance learners academic performance.

Working environment and family support has its own impact for academic performance.

CHAPTER 3

Research Design and Methods

This chapter deals with the method, data sources, sampling techniques, data gathering instruments and data analysis techniques.

3.1 Research Method

The purpose of this study was to identify the factors affecting academic performance of distance students of private university and university colleges (Admas University College, Alpha University College, St. Marys University College and Unity University) in Addis Ababa. The study has attempted to determine the factors that affect students' academic performance. The students' academic performance was viewed in terms of organization and management of distance education, selection criteria for the different programs, and compliance and commitment to the rules and regulations proposed by HERQA (Higher Education Relevance and Quality Assurance). Besides, analysis was done on the factors like follow up and assessment methods used by institutions, views of students regarding the program, and problems in distance education programs. Thus a descriptive survey method were used to best serve the intended purposes since it helps to describe the major factors and as well to compare the level of these factors in the different institutions. Besides, descriptive survey ascertains respondents' perspective or experiences on a specified subject (students' performance in this study) in a predetermined structured manner. It is also appropriate to answer the basic questions stated and to judge the strengths and weaknesses of the institutions understand in relation to busting the students' academic performance by doing on the factors.

3.2 Source of Data

The primary sources of data for this study were Academic deans and learners of selected university and university colleges, Supportive Workers of University

and University Colleges (Registrar works, Librarians, Receptionists and Tutor coordinators), HERQA experts, and instructors.

Secondary data were obtained through document analysis. For this purpose, synthesized information (From the University and University Colleges and HERQA profiles as a form of reports, policies and strategies) were used.

3.3 Sample and Sampling techniques'

The study has employed different sampling procedures to select the appropriate samples. The university and university colleges were selected by availability sampling as they were the only private higher institutions which involve in providing distance education at a degree level.

The total population of the four institutions providing education in degree program was 921 learners (240 in Admas University College, 251 in Alpha University College, 245 in St. Mary's University College and 185 in Unity University). Academic deans and HERQA experts were selected by purposive sampling method since they can give adequate and necessary data due to their positions. The student respondents' were by seating arrangement on tutorial session selected systematic sampling techniques as it gave equal chance for all of the respondents.

Instructors were selected by random sampling method at the tutorial site since it gives each respondent an equal chance of being included in the study and more over each chance is independent of another choice (Best and Kahn, 2003). Convenience sampling technique was used to gather data from supportive workers as they are believed to have relatively the same kind of information.

Accordingly, 4 academic deans and 2 HERQA experts for interview, 276 learners (66 out of 240 in Admas University College, 69 out of 251 in Alpha University College, 70 out of 245 in St. Mary's University College and 71 out of

185 in Unity University) and 43 instructors (10 from Admas University College, 12 from Alpha University College, 11 from St. Mary's University College and 10 from Unity University) for questionnaire and 12 supportive workers (3 from each institutions) a total of 337 were considered for the study.

3.4 Instruments of Data Collection

The necessary data for the study were gathered through interviews, questionnaires, document analysis, and group discussion.

Questionnaires were developed from based on basic questions, which includes both open and close ended items with the aim of collecting data from relatively large number of respondents including learners and instructors. Questionnaires were preferred since they are economical in time, expense, enable reach large number of respondents at a time, and help explain the purpose of the study briefly.

The interviews were held with Academic deans and HERQA experts (semi-structured) to get the overall image of factors which affect students' performance as there number is relatively small and manageable.

To reinforce the data obtained from primary sources and to provide additional information, document analysis were also done with supportive workers. The document analysis were focused on organizational structures of the institutions, selection criteria's set by HERQA and the institutions, the assessment policies set by the institutions and reports from HERQA.

An observation has been done to identify statuses and conditions of some infrastructures inside the institutions which help students improve their academic performance.

The instruments prepared were pilot tested in other institutions which provide distance learning in diploma programs to examine and check the validity and reliability. The pilot tested instruments were modified and corrected based on

the information from pilot testing and were administered for the selected respondents.

3.5 Method of Data Analysis

The raw data obtained from the field work through questionnaires were organized by the computer software: Statistical Procedures for Social Sciences (SPSS). It were made because it makes (SPSS) computation precise, dependable and not time consuming. Depending on the nature of the variables, quantitative as well as qualitative data analysis methods were employed.

The qualitative data from interviews and document analysis were used to validate the responses of the questionnaire (quantitative data) from learners and instructors.

Different characteristics of respondents were analyzed using frequency counts and percentages. Frequency counts and percentages were calculated for those items prepared in likert type scale. For more advanced statistical operations and decision making as likert items are categorized under ordinal measurements and Yes/No items as nominal measurements, the non-parametric test, Chi-square were used to check whether there is a significance difference in the distribution of preferences among groups of respondents in the different institutions in terms of a given item.

Chapter 4

Presentation, Analysis and Discussion of Findings

This chapter deals with the presentation and analysis of the data obtained through closed and open ended questionnaire, Simi structured interview, group discussion, observation and as well as document analysis regarding learners' academic performance

A total of 320 questionnaire papers were distributed to learner respondents in both institutions and 86.25% (66, 69, 70 and 71 each out of 80 in Admas University College, Alpha University College, St. Mary's University College and Unity university respectively) were filled and returned. Among the 55 questionnaires distributed to instructors in both institutions, 78.18% (10, 12, 11 and 10 in each out of 15 in Admas University College, Alpha University College, St. Mary's University College and Unity University respectively) were filled and returned. In addition to that, four Academic Dean's of each University college/University and 2 HERQA experts interviewed.

The responses of learners and instructors to each of the questions were analyzed and interpreted. Group discussions were also undertaken with supportive workers (Registrar workers, librarians, and receptionist and tutor coordinators) of university colleges/University to triangulate the responses of learners and instructors.

Most of the Data gathered were organized using Tables and presentation of data is followed by discussion and interpretation in line with the major research findings. For the sake of convenience of interpretation, related questions were treated together. As a result, the responses were found to be sufficient to draw inferences for the study.

4.1 Characteristics of the Respondents.

Based on the data collected, the general characteristics of the respondents of the study were analyzed as follows:

As Table 1A of item 1 show, more than 57.6% of the total learners in both institutions were male. The females constitute only 35.1% of the total number. This is a reflection for concrete reality that the education sector is still dominated by males.

Concerning the Age range, the majorities (36.6%) of the learners in both institutions were found in the age group 20-30. At the age range 31-40 and 41-50, relatively the same (25.4% and 23.6% respectively) number of respondents were found. Only 4% of the respondents were found to be in the age range above 50 years old. It shows that only few number of learners continue or upgrade their educational level after their 50's. It might be because; most people's are busy for other social affairs at the age of 50 and above.

Although, 35.9% of the learner respondents were found to be single, (Items 3 of Table 1A), most of the learners (48.2%) were found to be married. This is an indication that marriage could not be an obstacle for education.

As to item 4 of Table 1A, more than three fourth (69.9%) of learner respondents were found to be employed in government institutions. This is a reflection that civil servants are motivated to continue their education with an increased demand of the countries educated man power to fill the gap caused by human capacity in implementing new and technology based work processes and management tools like Business Process Reengineering (BPR).

As to Item 5 of Table 1A below, majority (67.8%) of the learner respondents were failed to indicate their cumulative GPA and the range of cumulative GPA of 45 (16.3%) respondents were <1.9 while only insignificant number 11 (4%) of respondents were able to score a CGPA of 3.5 and above. The result from

document analysis of students mark list in each institution also supports the above data. It is therefore; fair to conclude that the academic performance of learners is very low.

Table 1A: Characteristics of Respondents

No	Item	Frequency	Percentage	
1	Sex	Male	159	57.6
		Female	97	35.1
		Missing	20	7.2
		Total	276	100.0
2	Age (in years)	20 -30	101	36.6
		31-40	70	25.4
		41-50	65	23.6
		51 and above	11	4.0
		Missing	29	10.5
		Total	276	100.0
3	Marital Status	Single	99	35.9
		Married	133	48.2
		Divorce	6	2.2
		Widowed	2	.7
		Missing	36	13.0
		Total	276	100.0
4	Employed in	Government	193	69.9
		Private	27	9.8
		Self employed	5	1.8
		Others	19	6.9
		Missing	32	11.6
		Total	276	100.0
5	Previous semester CGPA	<1.9	45	16.3
		2.00-2.50	5	1.8
		2.51-3.00	28	10.1
		>3.1	11	4.0
		Missing	187	67.8
		Total	276	100.0

According to the personal details show in Table 1B item 1 below, more than 76.7% instructor respondents were male. The females' constituent only 23.3%

of the total number. It can be inferred from this that the participation of female instructors is very low and therefore, still there is high domination of males over females in tutoring.

Regarding the instructors age, (as shown on Table 1B of item 2 below), most instructors (58.1%) were in the range 20-30, and 41.9% were in the age range 31-40. This mix of experienced and young teachers has its own advantages in that the youngsters will take some sort of experiences from the older ones. As most of the instructors are young and energetic, the probability to cover a large portion of the course with in the limited tutoring time will be high.

According to item 4 of Table 1B, the majority (58.1%) of tutors were first degree holders, while the remaining 41.9% had a master's degree. Although, it is assumed that those degree holders have necessary knowledge on the subject they were tutoring, some contradictions are created between the reality and the criteria set by HERQA (Higher Education Relevance and Quality Assurance) as tutors should be MA or PhD graduates.

As it is shown on the same Table below, the vast majorities (90.7%) of tutors have 1-5 years experience and the majorities (58.1%) are working on full time bases. Although, the low experience of tutors may have some drawbacks on the quality of instructing, majority being full time workers may contribute better as they could accomplish the program responsibly, suggest and improve problems on the module quality, and utilize the resources efficiently in the process of undertaking tutorials including time which could indirectly affect students academic performance.

Table 1B: Characteristics of Respondents

No	Item	characteristics	Organization				Total
			Response in percentage				
			Admas	Alpha	St. Mary	Unity	
1	Sex	Male	80.0	75.0	70.0	81.8	76.7
		Female	20.0	25.0	30.0	18.2	23.3
		Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
2	Age(in years)	20-30	60.0	58.3	60.0	54.5	58.1
		31-40	40.0	41.7	40.0	45.5	41.9
		Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
3	Marital Status	Single	50.0	50.0	50.0	45.5	48.8
		Married	50.0	50.0	50.0	54.5	51.2
		Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
4	qualification	MA/MSC/LLM	40.0	41.7	40.0	45.5	41.9
		BA/BSC/BED /LLB	60.0	58.3	60.0	54.5	58.1
		Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
5	Experience in this organization	1-5	90.0	91.7	90.0	90.9	90.7
		Missing	10.0	8.3	10.0	9.1	9.3
		Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
6	Experience in other organizations	1-5	80.0	91.7	80.0	90.9	86.0
		Missing	20.0	8.3	20.0	9.1	14.0
		Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
7	Total working Experience	1-3 years	40.0	16.7	40.0	18.2	27.9
		4-6 years	30.0	25.0	20.0	27.3	25.6
		7-9 years	10.0	25.0	20.0	18.2	18.6
		10-12 years	20.0	16.7	10.0	27.3	18.6
		>12years	0.0	16.7	10.0	9.1	9.3
		Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
8	On what capacity are you working as a tutor	full time base	50.0	66.7	60.0	54.5	58.1
		par time	50.0	33.3	40.0	45.5	41.9
		Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

4.2 Analysis of the Findings of the Study

Under this part, the Program Organization and Management of Distance Education, Student Support services, Attitudes of Society, selection criteria, Delivering system and the main problems of Distance Students will be presented and analyzed.

4.2.1 Organization and Management of Distance Education

A chi-square test was employed to test whether there is significance difference in responses for item 1 of Table 2 below and all the responses were found to be significantly different at a p-value less than 0.05.

Accordingly, although there are significant number of respondents to suggest a number of selection criteria like better results on EGSLCE/ESLCE, 36.4% of respondents in Admas University College has confirmed that the main criteria is passing COC evaluation. In Alpha University College (72.5%) and St. Mary's University College (72.9%), the major criteria for joining a program has been found to be completing Grade 10 or 12 working for two years. It was in Unity University that 35.2% learners indicate the criteria to be completing grade 10 or 12 and having two years experience, while 32.4% has indicated COC evaluation as the major criteria.

From the above data one can conclude that the major criteria for joining programs are two years experience successful completion of COC evaluation and good result in EGSLCE/ESLCE, which complies with the rules and regulations of HERQA.

Table 2: Responses on Criteria for join the program

Item	Characteristics	organization				Total	χ^2 Df p-Value
		Response in percentage					
		Admas	Alpha	St. Mary's	Unity		
Criteria to join the program?	Preparatory	13.6	7.2	4.3	9.9	8.7	86.319 12 000
	10/12+ & 2 years experience	9.1	72.5	72.9	35.2	47.8	
	COC evaluation	36.4	10.1	18.6	32.4	24.3	
	Preparatory & COC evaluation	4.5	.0	.0	1.4	1.4	
	Others	36.4	10.1	4.3	21.1	17.8	
	Total	100.	100.	100.	100.	100.0	

Df=degree of freedom ,significance at alpha 0.05 level (Other table follow the same explanation).

According to item 1 Table 3 is concerned, majority of respondents (45.5 % in Admas University College, 44.9 % in Alpha University College, 55.7 % in St. Mary's University College and 49.3 % in Unity) agreed on the unavailability of orientation after registration. An interview with academic Dean's and group discussion with supportive staffs show an agreement with the learners' response. Thus, the lack of orientation after registration has its own impact on the academic performance of students as there will not be clear understanding of organizational and management structure and there will not be clear communication.

Regarding the hand book,(as shown on table 3 of item 2 below) , a Chi-square test shows that there is no significant difference $\chi^2(6,n=276)= 7.812, P> 0.05$ among respondents in between institutions. Therefore, students' handbook is given for learners during registration in each of the institution. Information from Academic Dean's and Registrars both institutions has agreed that there is no handbook rather brochures are given and it contains definition of Distance Education, Type of fee and annual program. To conclude this, students are not aware about the environment, and hence learners academic performance is affected negatively.

As far as item 3 Table 3, the majority of learners; 54.5 % in Admas University College, 42.0 % in Alpha University College, 40.0 % in St. Mary University College and 45.1 % in Unity University has failed to indicate whether the student handbook contains distance education policy or not. It implies that the learners did not know the policy of distance education.

Table3:Responses on Registration for Programs

No	Item	Ch/c	organization				Total	χ^2 Df p-Value
			Response in percentage					
			Admas	Alpha	St. Mary's	Unity		
1	Orientation after registration.	SDIS	27.3	24.6	20.0	26.8	24.6	33.885 15 .004
		DIS	18.2	20.3	35.7	22.5	24.3	
		UND	9.1	15.9	2.9	5.6	8.3	
		AGR	22.7	15.9	4.3	15.5	14.5	
		SAGR	18.2	23.2	37.1	28.2	26.8	
		Missing	4.5	0	0	1	1.4	
		Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	
2	Hand book given during registration.	Yes	45.5	56.5	62.9	54.9	55.1	7.262 6 .297
		No	50.0	37.7	28.6	36.6	38.0	
		Missing	4.5	5.8	8.6	8.5	6.9	
		Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	
3	Does the hand book contain distance education policy.	Yes	36.4	39.1	34.3	39.4	37.3	7.812 6 .252
		No	9.1	18.8	25.7	15.5	17.4	
		Missing	54.5	42.0	40.0	45.1	45.3	
		Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	

*Ch\c Characteristics, Df=degree of freedom, SDIS-strongly Disagree, DIS- strongly Disagree, UND- Undecided, AGR-Agree,SAGR-Strongly Agree, significance difference.0.05 α levels. %,percentage, (Other tables follow the same explanation).

There is significance difference among learners' responses in both institution χ^2 (15, n=276) = 26.921, P<0.05) for the completion of the program within three years(Item 1 Table 4A below). The majority of learner respondents 59.15% in Admas University College University, 40.6 % in Alpha University College, and 42.3 % in Unity University reached a consensus while more respondents from St. Mary's University College (40%) were in confusion.

No significances difference among opinions of respondents was found on the presence of four terms per year(item 2 table 4A below).The data revealed that the majority (40.9% in Admas University, 46.4% in Alpha University College,

35.7% in St. Mary's University College and 39.5% in Unity University) learner respondents have expressed their agreements.

Table 4A: Responses on conduct on the program

No	Item	Characteristic	organization				Total	χ^2 Df p-Value
			Response in %					
			Admas	Alpha	St. Mary's	Unity		
1	Program completed within three years	SDIS	4.5	17.4	14.3	12.7	12.3	26.921 15 .029
		DIS	4.5	11.6	11.4	1.4	7.2	
		UND	31.8	26.1	40.0	40.8	34.8	
		AGR	40.9	29.0	15.7	28.2	28.3	
		SAGR	18.2	11.6	14.3	14.1	14.5	
		Missing	.0	4.3	4.3	2.8	2.9	
		Total	100.	100.	100.0	100.0	100.0	
2	There are four terms in a year	SDIS	13.6	4.3	10.0	9.9	9.4	21.282 15 .128
		DIS	22.7	23.2	7.1	14.1	16.7	
		UND	18.2	20.3	40.0	32.4	27.9	
		AGR	22.7	31.9	21.4	25.4	25.4	
		SAGR	18.2	14.5	14.3	14.1	15.2	
		Missing	4.5	5.8	7.1	4.2	5.4	
		Total	100.	100.	100.0	100.0	100.0	

Regarding item 3 Table 4B below, no significant difference among learner respondent were found in both institutions concerning the maximum number of credit hour per term $\chi^2 (12, n=276) = 20.1316, P > 0.05$. In the total respondents learners the majority 40.9% in Admas University College, 42% in Alpha University College, 40 in% St. Mary's University College and 42.3% in Unity University has shown an agree on that the maximum credit hours per term is nine. However, this opinion was conflicted with the academic dean's of each institution interviewed. As academic Dean's confirm, the maximum credit hours per term is 12 and in addition the result from group discussion indicated that most the credit hour for a term is in between 10-12. Although, the result from the questionnaire is supposed to support the rules set by HERQA for distance Education, the more convincing idea from Academic deans

interviewed, focus group discussions will lead us to the conclusion that the maximum credit hour for a term is not nine.

As it was found that more than 48.2% of learners were married and are busy for other social affairs, their academic performance is directly affected with a large number of credit hours due to lack of time to cover the whole of the subjects.

Regarding the number of tutorial session in a term (item 4 Table 4B) majority of respondents, 40.9 % in Admas University College, 42.0 % in Alpha University College, 41.5 % in St. Mary's University College and 43.7 % in Unity University has shown their disagreement. But the result from an interview and document analysis shows the presence of two tutorials for a semester/term. As to the deans more than 45 % of students are not attending tutorial programs. Therefore, it is fair to conclude that there are two tutorial sessions per term as students might not attend all of the tutorials because of their problems and it complies with the standards set by HERQA.

In item 5 Table 4B; majority of instructors (100 % in Admas University College, 83.3% in Alpha University College, 90.0 % in St. Mary's University College and 90.9 % in Unity University College) have agreed on the inadequacy of a tutorial sessions and they also indicate that majority of the students do not attend the tutorial session that is why learners academic performance is affected.

Table 4B: Responses on conduct on the program

No	Item	Characteristic	organization				Total	χ^2 Df p-Value
			Response in %					
			Admas	Alpha	St. Mary's	Unity		
3	Maximum number of credit hours per semester/term is 9	SDIS	22.7	15.9	4.3	15.5	14.5	20.316 12 .061
		DIS	9.1	13.0	18.6	14.1	13.8	
		UND	27.3	29.0	37.1	28.2	30.4	
		AGR	13.6	24.6	11.4	11.3	15.2	
		SAGR	27.3	17.4	28.6	31.0	26.1	
		Total	100.	100.	100.0	100.	100.0	
4	Two tutorial sessions in a term/semester	SDIS	9.1	18.8	18.6	16.9	15.9	12.977 15 .604
		DIS	31.8	23.2	22.9	26.8	26.1	
		UND	22.7	17.4	21.4	19.7	20.3	
		AGR	27.3	27.5	20.0	26.8	25.4	
		SAGR	9.1	10.1	11.4	9.9	10.1	
		Missing	.0	2.9	5.7	.0	2.2	
		Total	100.	100.	100.0	100.0	100.0	
5	Sufficient time for tutorial	Yes	.0	16.7	10.0	9.1	9.3	1.803 3 .614
		No	100	83.3	90.0	90.9	90.7	
		Total	100.	100.	100.0	100.0	100.0	

4.3 Student Supporting Services

For Holmberg (1981:84) “. . . number of every day circumstances influence students study. A proper counseling service must be in a position after some kind of advice and help, over such matters when students ask for it, or in other ways shown that they need it.”. A distance learner needs such services as most of them are busy for different social affairs and do not know how to adjust their time.

Concerning the students services, there is no significance difference among the respondents of each institution $\chi^2(8, n=276) = 30.76, P > 0.05$). The majority of respondent (36.4 % in Admas University College, 43.5 % in Alpha University College, 24.3 % in St. Mary's University College and 33.8 % in Unity University) indicates the availability of library services in their institution. A significant

number of respondents (22.7 % in Admas University College, 14.5 % in Alpha University College, 22.9 % in St. Mary's University College and 28.2 % in Unity University) agree on the availability of library and a tutor coordinator. I have also observed those services have provided in both institutions. These services help students to enhance their academic performance.

According to item 1 Table 5A, there is no significance difference among respondents $\chi^2 (6, n=276) = 29.156, P > 0.05$). Accordingly, different student supportive services (Library, Guidance and counseling and Tutor coordination) are not coordinated. The majority of respondents; 54.5 % in Admas University College, 53.6 % in Alpha University College, 51.4 % in St. Mary's University College and 53.5 % in unity University; have shown their disagreements on the coordination's of these services. I have also observed such disorganizations in tutorial programs that the learners are unable to identify their classes, and the courses delivered at tutorial times. Thus, such disorganizations directly affect students' academic performance.

As far as item 2 of Table 5A is concerned, guidance and counseling services are not available in the institutions. There is no significance difference between the institutions $\chi^2 (6, n=276) = 9.656, P > 0.05$). In contrary, the interviewed academic Dean's of each institute indicate that there is guidance and counseling service although, no one distance learner has used the opportunity. I was also able to see the guidance and counseling offices. Thus, one can conclude that the institution has guidance and counseling offices but the students are unable to use because they lack the orientations about the services in the institution and they also have not enough time for the process. The majority of instructors/tutors (90% in Admas University College, 91.7% in Alpha University College, 90.0% in St. Mary's University College and 90.9% in Unity University) have agreed on the availability of guidance and counseling services.

Table 5A: Responses on Student supports

No	Item	Ch/c	organization				Total	χ^2 Df p-Value
			Response in %					
			Admas	Alpha	St. Mary's	Unity		
1	Student supporting services are coordinated	SDIS	22.7	24.6	44.3	35.2	31.9	29.156 12 .004
		DIS	31.8	29.0	7.1	18.3	21.4	
		UND	18.2	7.2	15.7	12.7	13.4	
		AGR	13.6	20.3	7.1	12.7	13.4	
		SAGR	13.6	18.8	25.7	21.1	19.9	
		Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	
2	have you ever used the counseling service before.?	Yes	31.8	31.9	30.0	29.6	30.8	9.656 6 .140
		No	63.6	49.3	52.9	62.0	56.9	
		Missing	4.5	18.8	17.1	8.5	12.3	
		Total	66(100)	69(100)	70(100)	71(100)	276(100)	

Among those respondents who have indicated that they use guidance and counseling, (item 3 Table 5B below), 13.6 % in Admas University College, 11.6 % in Alpha University College, 15.7 % in St. Mary's University College and 14.1 % in Unity university have confirmed that they show improvements on their confidence, time management ability in studying, knowledge of rules and regulation of their institutions and as well they indicate the presence of improvements on their GPA.

Concerning item 4 and 5 of Table 5B, there is no significance difference among the learner responses in the four organizations and the majority of learners agreed in the unavailability of separate guidance and counseling service in the institution. Those learners also indicate that the merger of guidance and counseling services with regular students does not have an impact on their academic performance.

Table 5B: Responses on Student supports

No	Item	Ch/c	organization				Total	χ^2 Df p-Value
			Response in %					
			Admas	Alpha	St. Mary's	Unity		
3	Do you think guidance and counseling service you have taken resulted in better academic performance?	Yes	22.7	37.7	21.4	21.1	25.7	8.589 6 .198
		No	4.5	2.9	8.6	7.0	5.8	
		Missing	72.7	59.4	70.0	71.8	68.5	
		Total	66(100)	69(100)	70(100)	71(100)	276(100)	
4	Separated Guidance and counseling/?	Yes	13.6	11.6	15.7	14.1	13.8	3.752 6 .710
		No	13.6	11.6	20.0	11.3	14.1	
		Missing	72.7	76.8	64.3	74.6	72.1	
		Total	66(100)	69(100)	70(100)	71(100)	276(100)	
5	Un separated Guidance and Counseling service have an effect on your academic performance?	Yes	4.5	2.9	5.7	1.4	3.6	6.782 6 .342
		No	4.5	8.7	14.3	7.0	8.7	
		Missing	90.9	88.4	80.0	91.5	87.7	
		Total	66(100)	69(100)	70(100)	71(100)	276(100)	

As to Item 1 of Table 6A below, no significance difference among respondents of institutions is observed whether a library is accessible to distance learners χ^2 (6, n=17)=3.179, $p>0.05$). That they have agreed on the availability of library. According to item 2 of the same table, the majority of respondents, 39(59.1%) in Admas University College, 33(47.8%) in Alpha University College, 35(51.4%) in St. Mary's University College and 45(64.8%) in Unity University have reached on consensus as there is no separation of library service for distance learners.

Table 6A: Responses on Availability of library Service

No	Item	Ch/c	organization				Total	χ^2 Df p-Value
			Response in %					
			Admas	Alpha	St. Mary's	Unity		
1	is the library accessible for you?	Yes	36.4	49.3	45.7	46.5	44.6	3.179 6 .786
		No	22.7	17.4	15.7	19.7	18.8	
		Missing	40.9	33.3	38.6	33.8	36.6	
		Total	66(100)	69(100)	70(100)	71(100)	276(100)	
2	Is the library secured only for distance students?	Yes	9.1	18.8	10.0	7.0	11.2	8.404 6 .210
		No	59.1	47.8	51.4	64.8	55.8	
		Missing	31.8	33.3	38.6	28.2	33.0	
		Total	66(100)	69(100)	70(100)	71(100)	276(100)	

As far as item 3 Table 6B is concerned, most of the respondents has failed to indicate their choices whether the failure for the library not to be separated has an impact on their academic performance χ^2 (6, n=17) =3.179, p>0.05).

Distance learners were also asked about the frequency of library utilization and the benefit from utilizing libraries. Accordingly, with no significance difference among institutions, most respondents were unable to indicate their opinions. But, insignificant number of learners; 15(22.7%) in Admas University College, 17(24.6%) in Alpha University College, 13(18.6%) in St. Mary's University College and 14 (19.7%) in Unity University have agreed to use a library during tutorial programs and at a time of examination. From this one can conclude that distance learners have not a habit of using libraries.

A relatively large number of students from each institution have agreed on the positive contribution of using library. The students were also asked whether there are sufficient materials in a library and those who utilizes a library has agreed on the availability of reference materials and adequate books. The instructors have also confirmed the availability of sufficient reference material in the library.

Respondents were also asked to indicate the reasons why they fail to use a library. Although most learners fail to indicate what the reasons are some the absence of book loan system as a reason. This was also supported by librarians who were participants in group discussion.

Table 6B: Responses on Availability of library Service

No	Item	Ch/c	organization				Total	χ^2 Df p-Value
			Response in %					
			Admas	Alpha	St. Mary's	Unity		
3	does un separated library have an effect on your academic performance?	Yes	18.2	18.8	20.0	22.5	19.9	10.115 9 .341
		No	36.4	26	22.9	33.8	29.7	
		Missing	45.5	55.1	57.1	43.7	50.4	
		Total	66(100)	69(100)	70(100)	71(100)	276(100)	
4	How frequent did you visit the library?	Always	18.2	17.4	14.3	16.9	16.7	12.785 12 .385
		Sometime	22.7	24.6	18.6	19.7	21.4	
		Exam time	.0	11.6	8.6	5.6	6.5	
		never	18.2	8.7	15.7	21.1	15.9	
		Missing	40.9	37.7	42.9	36.6	39.5	
		Total	66(100)	69(100)	70(100)	71(100)	276(100)	
5	The library has useful	Yes	27.3	40.6	22.9	25.4	29.0	6.995 6 .321
		No	9.1	8.7	7.1	8.5	8.3	
		Missing	63.6	50.7	70.0	66.2	62.7	
		Total	66(100)	69(100)	70(100)	71(100)	276(100)	

As item 1 of Table 7 below, there is significance difference in number of responses of the four institutions. Therefore, learners in relation to tutorial services in their institution has achieved an agreement χ^2 (6, n=223) =16.245, $p < 0.05$. The tutorial program is delivered during registration time.

Besides, instructors of all institutions (100%) have agreed on the presence of tutorial services in each term. The number of tutorial sessions was also found to be two per term. During tutorial session the institution arranges students to communicate only with instructors.

The students were requested whether they attend all the tutorial services or not and the majority (45.5% in Admas University College, 49.3% in Alpha University College, 52.9 % in St. Mary's University College and 50.7 % in Unity

university) have indicated that they attend all tutorial sessions. In contrary to this, instructors of all the four institutions (100% in Admas University College, 83.3% in Alpha University College, 90.0% in St. Mary's University College and 90.9% in Unity University) were disagreed. For the instructors, significant number of students did not attend tutorial. As the time of data collection I have also found a small number of students attending a tutorial.

As item 3 Table 7 is concerned, agreement was observed on the insufficiency of time allotted for the tutorial in all the institutions with a proportion of 63.7%, 33.3%, 30% and 45.0 % respondent learners in Admas University College, Alpha University College, St. Mary's University College and Unity University respectively, a disagreement was observed among respondents concerning the time allotment for tutorials. A chi-square test were employed to check whether there is a significance difference among responses for each of the institutions and a significance difference was found at a χ^2 value of 51.912 and 15 degree of freedom where p value were found to be less than the significance level, 0.05. In contrary, the majority of instructors (70% in Admas University College, 66.6% in Alpha University College, 60% in St. Mary's University College and 72.7% in Unity University) strongly agreed on the adequacy of time allotted for tutorial. But in reality two hour for a course in a term is difficult to say it is enough. Therefore, the time allotted for a tutorial is not sufficient to cover a course.

A chi-square test were employed to check whether there is a significance difference among responses in each of the institution and is it has found that the p-value less than 0.05 and therefore, there is significance difference among opinions of the respondents from the institutions under study. Due to that, a greet disagreement was found in the three institutions except in St. Mary's University College from which a relatively large number of respondents were failed to indicate their opinions χ^2 (15,n=276) 51.912, p<0.05).

Learners were asked the reasons why they attend tutorials. Depending on that, the main reason identified were for getting clarifications of concepts on the course materials, for getting an opportunity to interact with other students and to motivate own self in the study, and for increasing knowledge. The information from the interviewed and from group discussion also supports the above idea.

Respondents were also asked to indicate the reasons why most students fail to attend tutorials and the major reasons indicated were lack of time, economic constraints, and irrelevancies of the tutorials Thus, the majority of students have low attitude for tutorial programs, and are constrained by time factors and economic problem.

Table 7: Responses for Items Related to tutorial services

No	Item	Ch/c	organization				Total	χ^2 Df p-Value
			Response in %					
			Admas	Alpha	St. Mary's	Unity		
1	Does your institution provide tutorial services	Yes	68.2	69.6	67.1	69.0	68.5	16.245 6 012
		No	.0	14.5	14.3	5.6	8.7	
		Missing	31.8	15.9	18.6	25.4	22.8	
		Total	66(100.0)	69(100.0)	70(100.0)	71(100.0)	276(100.0)	
2	How often are you attending the tutorial session	All	45.5	49.3	52.9	50.7	49.6	25.089 9 003
		Only few	9.1	30.4	25.7	15.5	20.3	
		Never	13.6	2.9	.0	8.5	6.2	
		Missing	31.8	17.4	21.4	25.4	23.9	
		Total	66(100.0)	69(100.0)	70(100.0)	71(100.0)	276(100.0)	
3	The time allotted for the tutorial is enough	SDIS	36.4	13.0	15.7	22.5	21.7	51.912 15 000
		DIS	27.3	20.3	14.3	22.5	21.0	
		UND	13.6	1.4	4.3	11.3	7.6	
		AGR	13.6	11.6	7.1	8.5	10.1	
		SAGR	.0	18.8	25.7	11.3	14.1	
		Missing	9.1	34.8	32.9	23.9	25.4	
		Total	66(100)	69(100.0)	70(100.0)	71(100.0)	276(100.0)	

As to literature, distance education might be delivered through print medium, video, broad cast, TV, CD Rooms and so on. But it has an additional cost to be incurred and most of the students could not afford it. Due to this additional cost almost all institutions in our country uses printed materials (modules). Thus, modules should acquire the quality desired and it needs to be self directing.

According to Item 1 of the Table 8 below, the only delivery method of the institutions were found to be printed media. Among the learner respondents (50% in Admas University College, 63.8% in Alpha University College, 61.4% in St. Mary's University College and 60.6% in Unity University) have shown their agreements in this regard. As to the information from the academic dean's, assists the delivery method institutions have prepared CDs and web sites but the students were not in a position to use due to constraints like additional cost, and lack of access for information technology and 100% of instructor respondents has also share this idea.

Table 8: Responses on Delivery Methods

NO	Item	Ch/c	Organization				Total	χ^2 Df p-Value
			Responses in %					
			Admas	Alpha	St. Mary's	Unity		
1	The only delivery method is printed materials(learners)	Yes	50.0	63.8	61.4	60.6	59.1	47.495 6 .000
		No	45.5	8.7	7.1	25.4	21.4	
		Missing	4.5	27.5	31.4	14.1	19.6	
		Total	66(100.0)	69(100)	70(100.0)	71(100.0)	276(100)	
2	Module is the only delivery Method (instructors)	Yes	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	
		No	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
		Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	

As Denise (2005), "Quality assurance is indisputably to be placed at the heart of educational provisions of academic institutions. This is more so in distance education intuitions due to the fact that it is relatively new mode of delivery seems to have a long way to go to prove its equivalence and viability to the conventional mode of education."

In this regard, as to item 1 of Table 9, the major problems in distance education have been identified to be quality of instructional materials. This was supported by majority of learner respondents (31.8% in Admas University College, 72.4% in Alpha University College, 48.5% in St. Mary's University College and 38% in Unity University.)

Although, learner respondents were in a position that there are a number of problems on their instructional materials, the responsible bodies of the institutions declared that one of their strength is their module quality and they put an evidence that their modules are prepared by renowned professionals. For Tutors/instructors in each of the institutions, the modules of the respective University Colleges/University have its own problems. Here, it is fair to conclude that there is a problem in quality of modules in each of the organizations.

Table 9: Responses on Quality of Instructional Material

Item	Ch/c	Organization				Total	χ^2 Df p-Value
		Responses in %					
		Admas	Alpha	St. Mary's	Unity		
Modules have lower qualities	SDIS	9.1	5.8	7.1	7.0	7.2	47.164 15 .000
	DIS	22.7	2.9	8.6	18.3	13.0	
	UND	18.2	4.3	12.9	18.3	13.4	
	AGR	18.2	47.8	17.1	14.1	24.3	
	SAGR	13.6	24.6	31.4	23.9	23.6	
	Missing	18.2	14.5	22.9	18.3	18.5	
	Total	66(100.0)	69(100)	70(100.0)	71(100.0)	276(100)	

Variety of ways might be used in assessing students learning. In Ethiopian case the most commonly used methods of assessment are worksheet and final exams. To check what assessment mechanisms are used in the institutions under study, questions were raised for learners, instructors and logistics workers. With no significance difference in institutions, respondents have agreed on the presence of variety of assessment methods in their University/ University Colleges χ^2 (9, n=276)=13.082, p>0.05). The majority of instructors (90.0% in Admas University College, 75.0% in Alpha University College, 80.0%

in St. Mary's University College and 81.8% in Unity University) have supported the idea of the learners. The result from interview and focus group discussion has also a compliance with that of the learners and instructors response and some of the mechanisms described were worksheets, final exams and projects. From this, one can conclude that these institutions have used varieties of assessment mechanisms to check students learning.

Table 10: Responses on Assessment Methods

No	Item	Ch/c	Organization				Total	χ^2 Df p-Value
			Responses in %					
			Admas	Alpha	St. Mary's	Unity		
1	used Variety of Assessment Methods (<i>learners response</i>)	Yes	45.4	39.1	38.6	39.4	40.5	13.082 9 159
		No	27.3	31.9	45.7	35.2	35.1	
		Missing	27.3	29.0	15.7	25.4	24.3	
		Total	66(100)	69(100)	70(100)	71(100)	276(100)	
2	used Variety of Assessment methods (<i>Instructors Response</i>)	yes	90.0	75.0	80.0	81.8	81.4	827 3 843
		No	10.0	25.0	20.0	18.2	18.6	
		Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	

As item 1 Table 11 below has indicated a significance difference in response of learners from institutions show that the assignment questions are directly taken from modules for all institutions but for Admas the opposite was found to be true $\chi^2(15, n=276)=62.873, p<0.05$). The majority of instructors/tutors (70% in Admas University College, 83.3% in Alpha University College, 70.0% in St. Mary's University College and 81.8% in Unity University) have agreed on that the questions are directly derived from the modules of the students. This was also supported by academic deans interviewed and therefore, it is fair to conclude that the questions for final exam and as well for worksheets are taken from the modules.

Regarding item 2 Table11, respondents were asked whether the questions for assignments are difficult to undertake and majority of them (45.5% 50.7%,

40.0% and 35.3% in Admas University College, Alpha University College, St. Mary's University College and Unity University respectively) have shown their agreements.

Instructors with no significance difference indicated that the questions are not difficult for learner as they are developed directly from modules. In addition to this, the information from interview confirms that the questions are simple and are developed from the modules. Thus, one can conclude that the worksheet questions are not difficult.

There is no significance difference observed among learners response in organization concerning questions types included in an assignment. Thus, True /False, multiple choices, completion test, Matching's and/or Essay type questions are believed to be included in an assessment. The majority of instructors (100% in Admas University College, 83.3% in Alpha University College, 90.0% in St. Mary's University College and 90.9% in Unity University) has positively supported that their institution uses variety of question types in assessing students learning and as well care for the question types selected for examination.

Concerning the compliance of the questions with the objective and the content of the module; respondents (Item 6 of Table 11 below), 59 % in Admas University College, 82.6 % in Alpha University College, 77.1 % in St. Mary's University College and 66.2 % in Unity University have shown their agreements. Majority of the instructors (100% in Admas University College, 83.3% in Alpha University College, 90% in St. Mary's University College and 91% in unity) have supported this idea. Therefore, the questions developed for distance learners have compliances with the objectives and the contents of the learning material.

Table 11: Responses on sources of Assessment Methods

NO	Item	Ch/c	Organization Responses in %				Total	χ^2 Df p-Value
			Admas	Alpha	St. Mary's	Unity		
1	source of Assignments?	SDIS	27.3	1.4	2.9	19.7	12.7	62.873 15 .000
		DIS	18.2	1.4	4.3	11.3	8.7	
		UND	9.1	1.4	4.3	8.5	5.8	
		AGR	18.2	36.2	25.7	16.9	24.3	
		SAGR	13.6	23.2	21.4	18.3	19.2	
		Missing	13.6	36.2	41.4	25.4	29.3	
		Total	66(100)	69(100)	70(100)	71(100)	276(100)	
2	difficulty of Question for assignment?	SDIS	9.1	7.2	11.4	14.1	10.5	37.209 15 .001
		DIS	4.5	21.7	27.1	16.9	17.8	
		UND	13.6	10.1	18.6	18.3	15.2	
		AGR	36.4	46.4	28.6	26.8	34.4	
		SAGR	9.1	4.3	11.4	8.5	8.3	
		Missing	27.3	10.1	2.9	15.5	13.8	
		Total	66(100)	69(100)	70(100)	71(100)	276(100)	
3	Institutions care level of Difficulty of questions?	Yes	50.0	33.3	40.0	45.5	41.9	2.079 6 .912
		No	50.0	50.0	50.0	45.5	48.8	
		Missed	.0	16.7	10.0	9.1	9.3	
		Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	
4	care for question types?	DIS	.0	16.7	10.0	9.1	9.3	2.364 6 883
		AGR	40.0	33.3	30.0	45.5	37.2	
		SAGR	60.0	50.0	60.0	45.5	53.5	
		Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	
5	Directly from modules developing questions for a worksheet?	SDIS	9.1	.0	.0	4.2	3.3	63.016 15 .000
		DIS	13.6	.0	.0	9.9	5.8	
		UND	9.1	7.2	12.9	12.7	10.5	
		AGR	54.5	42.0	51.4	59.2	51.8	
		SAGR	4.5	40.6	25.7	7.0	19.6	
		Missing	9.1	10.1	10.0	7.0	9.1	
		Total	66(100)	69(100)	70(100)	71(100)	276(100)	
6	Institutions care for compliance with objectives Of questions?	DIS	.0	16.7	10.0	9.1	9.3	2.079 6 .912
		AGR	50.0	33.3	40.0	45.5	41.9	
		SAGR	50.0	50.0	50.0	45.5	48.8	
		Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	

An agreement from learners and instructors has achieved on consensus concerning whether the organization uses verities of assessment methods. In relation to final exam questions, the majority of learners in all institution have positively supported that the exam includes True/False items, multiple choice items, completion tests, matching and Essay type items.

The respondents were also asked to indicate if the final exam questions are developed from the summary of each chapter. Concerning that the majority, 36.4%, 59.4%, 55.7% and 42.2 % (Admas University College, Alpha University College, St. Mary's University College and Unity University respectively) agreed on that the final exam questions concentrates (focuses) on the summary of each chapter. This was also supported by instructor respondents (70% in Admas University College, 75% in Alpha University College, 80% in St. Mary's University College and 63.7% Unity University.)

Concentrating on the summary part during the preparation of a final exam will lead learners to read only these specific parts and therefore it will negatively impact the achievement of the desired goals.

Table 12: Responses on final Examinations

NO	Item	Ch/c	Organization Responses in %				Total	χ^2 Df p-Value
			Admas	Alpha	St. Mary's	Unity		
1	Exam questions are developed from summary of each course	SDIS	9.1	4.3	12.9	14.1	10.1	16.889 15 .326
		DIS	18.2	10.1	4.3	14.1	11.6	
		UND	4.5	1.4	4.3	7.0	4.3	
		AGR	27.3	29.0	22.9	22.5	25.4	
		SAGR	18.2	21.7	21.4	14.1	18.8	
		Missing	22.7	33.3	34.3	28.2	29.7	
		Total	66(100)	69(100)	70(100)	71(100)	276(100)	
2	final exam concentrates on the summary	SDIS	22.7	8.7	22.9	25.4	19.9	36.393 15 .002
		DIS	9.1	.0	.0	4.2	3.3	
		UND	9.1	4.3	4.3	9.9	6.9	
		AGR	27.3	34.8	45.7	35.2	35.9	
		SAGR	9.1	24.6	10.0	7.0	12.7	
		Missing	22.7	27.5	17.1	18.3	21.4	
		Total	66(100)	69(100)	70(100)	71(100)	276(100)	
3	Exam questions are developed from summary of each course (instructors)	UND	30.0	25.0	20.0	36.4	27.9	3.653 6 .724
		AGR	10.0	41.7	30.0	27.3	27.9	
		SAGR	60.0	33.3	50.0	36.4	44.2	
		Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	

According to item 1 Table 13, final exam is taken after a long period of time from a tutorial session in Admas University College but, in the remaining Colleges, the time of final exam is within a short duration from tutorials χ^2 (15, n=187)=77.509, $p<0.05$. The information from interview and group discussion within registrar workers confirms that the duration of time between tutorial session and final exam is a month. From this it is fair to conclude that each of the institutions arrange the exam time with a moderate duration from a tutorial sessions. As a tutorial might help students arouse their motives to study, a final exam has to be given within a short duration from a tutorial session and it is appropriately implemented in all of the institutions under study.

Concerning the announcement of examinations, the learner respondents (59.1% in Admas University College, 69.5% in Alpha University College, 60% in St .Mary's University College and 59.2% in Unity University College agreed that all the institutions inform the examination program ahead of time. Interviews with academic Dean's, documents reviewed like brushers also revealed that all the institutions were providing information regarding exam schedule during registration of learners and all the institutions used public media to inform learners about exam schedules. Thus, informing examination schedules ahead of time help students to read the modules with a prior program and cover the whole chapter of the material to succeed and achieve the desired goals.

Table 13: Responses on items Related to Final exam

NO	Item	Ch/c	Organization				Total	χ^2 Df p-Value
			Responses in %					
			Admas	Alpha	St. Mary's	Unity		
1	Examinations are given after several weeks from tutorial	SDIS	31.8	2.9	7.1	21.1	15.6	77.509 15 .000
		DIS	13.6	.0	.0	8.5	5.4	
		UND	4.5	.0	.0	1.4	1.4	
		AGR	.0	36.2	25.7	11.3	18.5	
		SAGR	18.2	27.5	34.3	26.8	26.8	
		Missing	31.8	33.3	32.9	31.0	32.2	
		Total	66(100)	69(100)	70(100)	71(100)	276(100)	
2	Exam date is announced ahead of time	SDIS	13.6	13.0	24.3	18.3	17.4	35.050 15 .002
		DIS	9.1	10.1	11.4	8.5	9.8	
		UND	.0	5.8	.0	.0	1.4	
		AGR	27.3	44.9	41.4	33.8	37.0	
		SAGR	31.8	24.6	18.6	25.4	25.0	
		Missing	18.2	1.4	4.3	14.1	9.4	
		Total	66(100)	69(100)	70(100)	71(100)	276(100)	

As to item 1 Table 14 below, most learner respondents (50.0% in Admas University College, 63.7 in Alpha University College, 60.0 in St. Mary's University College and 56.3 in Unity University) support that most of the distance learners are grade oriented. As most of learners are employed in governmental organizations, their ultimate goal is to have certificates in their career and take better positions and this in turn leads to poor academic performance of the learners.

As far as the second item of the Table below, attitudes of the society towards distance education was found to be low with a proportion of 45.5% in Admas University College, 55.1% in Alpha University College, 58.6 % in St. Mary's University College and 50.7% in Unity University. This low esteem makes distance learners to feel inferiority and not to concentrate on their study which in turn contributes to lower academic performance.

Moreover, Employers also have low attitude towards distance education graduates (Item 3 of Table 14). This idea was also supported by group discussion participants.

Table 14: Responses on attitudes of students and societies

NO	Item	Ch/c	Organization				Total	χ^2 Df p-Value
			Responses in %					
			Admas	Alpha	St. Mary's	Unity		
1	Most distance learners are grade oriented	SDIS	18.2	.0	.0	9.9	6.9	55.378 15 .000
		DIS	9.1	.0	.0	4.2	3.3	
		UND	4.5	1.4	4.3	4.2	3.6	
		AGR	22.7	50.7	47.1	32.4	38.4	
		SAGR	27.3	13.0	12.9	23.9	19.2	
		Missing	18.2	34.8	35.7	25.4	28.6	
		Total	66(100)	69(100)	70(100)	71(100)	276(100)	
2	Society has low esteem for distance education	SDIS	13.6	13.0	12.9	15.5	13.8	29.318 15 .015
		DIS	9.1	.0	.0	4.2	3.3	
		UND	9.1	.0	.0	7.0	4.0	
		AGR	27.3	37.7	30.0	26.8	30.4	
		SAGR	18.2	17.4	28.6	23.9	22.1	
		Missing	22.7	31.9	28.6	22.5	26.4	
		Total	66(100)	69(100)	70(100)	71(100)	276(100)	
3	Employers has low esteem for distance education graduates	SDIS	13.6	1.4	2.9	5.6	5.8	53.50 15 .000
		DIS	4.5	.0	.0	1.4	1.4	
		UND	27.3	1.4	4.3	18.3	12.7	
		AGR	18.2	42.0	42.9	32.4	34.1	
		SAGR	22.7	26.1	28.6	26.8	26.1	
		Missing	13.6	29.0	21.4	15.5	19.9	
		Total	66(100.0)	69(100.0)	70(100.0)	71(100.0)	276(100.0)	

According to Taylor (1997:43), “the most important environmental influence which affects learners; attitude towards the academic success is believed to be the support and sympathy, he/she was given at home.”.

As to item 1 of Table 15, low family support for distance learners was also found to be another factor to affect students’ academic performance. A significance difference at chi square value of 34.456 and p- value less than 0.05, shows that larger number of respondents in Alpha University College and

St. Mary's University College have shown more agreements than in Admas University College and Unity University lack of family support therefore, affects students' academic performance as the individual might be loaded with family related social affairs.

Table 15: Responses on Family Support

Item	Ch/c	Organization				Total	χ^2 Df p-Value
		Responses in %					
		Admas	Alpha	St. Mary's	Unity		
Lack of family support is one of the factor to affect academic performance	SDIS	9.1	.0	.0	7.0	4.0	34.45 15 .003
	DIS	4.5	.0	.0	2.8	1.8	
	UND	13.6	1.4	4.3	11.3	7.6	
	AGR	22.7	36.2	24.3	18.3	25.4	
	SAGR	27.3	30.4	41.4	35.2	33.7	
	Missing	22.7	31.9	30.0	25.4	27.5	
	Total	66(100.0)	69(100.0)	70(100.0)	71(100.0)	276(100)	

The learners, academic deans, instructors, and HERQA experts were asked to describe possible suggestions in improving academic performances of distance learners and alleviating problems related to academic performance. The forwarded ideas include:

- ⊕ A learner to sit for an exam, he/she has to attend all the tutorials
- ⊕ The institutions have to arrange sufficient tutorial programs
- ⊕ Module qualities has to be improved
- ⊕ Worksheets has to be evaluated with a score of not more than 20% as students might not do by themselves
- ⊕ Arrange library loan procedures of reference materials
- ⊕ Arrange group discussion with other students during tutorial session.
- ⊕ Arrange Guidance and counseling services at tutorial time
- ⊕ Delivering modules and assignment on time.

Chapter 5

Summary, Conclusion and Recommendation

This chapter deals with the summary of major findings of the study, the conclusion drawn up on the major findings and recommendations that are based on the conclusion arrived at.

5.1. Summary

The general objective of this study was to examine factors that affect academic performance of distance learners in selected private University college/University in Addis Ababa and forward the possible recommendations. To do so, the following specific objectives were set:

1. To identify internal and external factors that affects academic performance of distance students.
2. To identify the basic selection criteria's used by these institutions.
3. To know how the institutions are organized and managed.
4. To identify the assessment and follow up mechanisms used by those institutions
5. To identify other problems which affect students academic performance and
6. Suggest some practical recommendations that could make the University Colleges and Universities and the working environments conducive for distance students to be successful in their academic performance.

The following basic questions were the bases to obtain the necessary information.

1. What are the selection criteria of these University Colleges/University is for join the program?
2. What is the organization and Management of the selected university colleges/University?

3. What are the tutorial and learning support factors that affect learners' academic performance?
4. What are the assessment mechanisms that affect learners' academic performance?
5. What other problems are perceived by learners; instructors, academic Dean's and supportive workers, which affect academic performance of learners?

Taking the fact that academic performance is dependent on learners potential, examining the status of learners academic performance in institution significantly help the institution themselves and/or other concerned bodies to compare what should be found in principle and what actually is available in reality.

The study was conducted using a descriptive survey method. The study was carried out in four private University colleges/University (Admas university college, Alpha University college, St. Mary's University college, and Unity University. The University colleges/University were selected based on their financial strength, number of branches, experiences in distance education, and numbers of students.

The source of data for this study were distance learners, Tutors, academic Dean's, supportive workers (Registrar, Tutorial coordinators, Receptionist . . .) and Experts from Higher Education Relevance and Quality Assurance Agency (HERQA).

Relevant data have been gathered from different documents and observations. The learners were selected by systematic Random Sampling. Tutors and supportive workers were selected by availability sampling methods. Purposive sampling method was employed for academic Dean's and HERQA's Experts.

Data were gathered using questionnaires, interviews and focus group discussions and as well as from observations of the institutions environment. A total 337 (33%) out of 1021 respondents were considered for the study purpose and out of 320 questionnaire papers distributed 276 (86.25%) were filled and returned. Among the 55 questionnaire papers distributed for instructors in all institutions, 78.18% (10,12,10, and 10 each out of 15 in Admas, Alpha, St. Mary's, and Unity University college/University receptively) were filled and returned. In addition to that, four out of four Academic Deans of each institution were interviewed. Focus group discussions with supportive workers were also held. The Data gathered were analyzed using percentages and chi-square tests were employed to check whether there are significant differences under study. For those items which would have expected counts less than five, violating the assumptions of a chi-square test, fisher's exact test have been employed to test significance differences.

5.2 Characteristics of the Respondents.

As to the findings of the study, there are only few numbers of women in all institution under study. The majority of the respondents in each institution belong to the age group 20-30. Concerning employment of learners, the majority (69.9%) worked in government organizations. The majority of instructor respondents (90.7%) have 1-5 years of work experience and most instructors (58.9%) are first degree holder.

5.2.1 Major findings

5.2.1.1 Organization and Management of Distance Education

a. Criteria set by HERQA have been followed for both University colleges/University. A significance difference ($P < 0.05$) among institutions respondents on that learners in the institutions takes place. In both institution set that criteria set by HERQA in there broche and gives for any students have been registered on ahead of time.

- b. The total credit hour per term was found to be nine in the view of students. There was no significance difference ($P>0.05$) among respondent learners in both institutions for this item. But there was a disagreement with the opinions of learners for both academic Deans and supportive workers as there is 12 credit hour per a term in each of the respective institutions. Most respondents, 40.9% in Admas College University, 46.4% in Alpha University College, 35.7% in St. Mary's University College and 39.5% in Unity University agreed on that there four terms in a year. Learners with no significance difference among institutions and academic Dean's agreed on that a program will take three to four years to complete.
- c. The majority of respondent learners (59.1% in Admas, 40.6% in Alpha, 30% in St. Mary's, and 42.3% in Unity) agreed that there is one tutorial session for a term. This issue was also confirmed by academic Deans. The reason behind the deviation from the rule was that the majority of students did not attend the program. This was also strengthened by most of (100% in Admas University College, 83.3% in Alpha University College, 90.0% in St. Mary's University College and 90.9% in Unity University) instructors.
- d. The majority of learners respondents (45.5% in Admas University College, 44.9% in Alpha University College, 55.7% in St. Mary's University College and 49.3% in Unity University) have strongly agree on the absence of orientation programs after registration.
- e. There was no significance difference observed, for availability of student services and their provision (library, counseling and tutorial) in these institutions and as well their integrated coordination.
- f. For majority of learners (56.5% in Alpha University College, 62.9% in St. Mary's University College and 54.9% in Unity University), an agreement has been achieved on that the institutions provide a student handbook during registration time. But in Admas University College, most (50.0%)

disagreed that students did not given the hand book during their registration. For academic deans of all the institutions interviewed, it is not a hand book rather a pamphlet which is given during registration to introduce students with what distance education is, the type of fee, the programs, and yearly calendar. Therefore, it is fair to conclude that each of the institutions did not arrange student handbook which comprises of course offerings and distance education policies.

5.2.1.2 Student support.

- a. There is no a significance difference ($P>0.05$) among responses of respondents in the institutions concerning the provision of a Guidance and counseling. In this regard although, learner respondents were in a position to disagree with, there is a strongly agreement among instructors and academic Dean's interviewed as their institutions are providing a guidance and counseling. Among learners who were in a position to use the guidance and counseling services in their institutions, most indicate that the focus area of guidance and counseling is on learners problems (academic as well psychological) and they believe that the services help them to improve their studying skill and time management abilities.
- b. There was no significance difference ($P>0.05$) for accessibility of library for distance learners in both institutions. On this regard the majority of learner respondents (59.4% in St. Marollege and 64.8% in Unity University) agreed that there is no separation of library services from regular students and this. Although, the frequency to utilize a library was found to be very rare, for those who have responded that they utilize, they believe that it has a positive effect on their academic performance. It was confirmed that the libraries of each institutions contain adequate books, reference materials, and CD ROMs. But in contrary there is no procedure for distance learners to borrow books for the library.

- c. The majority of learners in all institutions agreed that there is tutorial service and they believe that the learners freely communicate with instructors at tutorial sessions. But in contrary, most of the students indicate the insufficiency of the tutorial time to cover the main part of a given course. However, instructors and academic deans strongly disagree with the opinion of respondents and the support the idea that the allotted time for tutorial is enough. For instructors and academic deans the major problem during the tutorial time is that the students are unable to attend do to different reasons like constraints of time, low attitude towards tutorials and some other societal activities.

5.2.1.3 Verities of Assessment methods

- a. There is no significance difference ($P>0.05$) among the responses of learners on whether the institutions use varieties of assessment methods. Majority of instructors (90.0% in Admas, 75.0% in Alpha, 80.0% in St.Mary's and 81.8% in Unity) also agreed with the opinions of learner respondents as there are these varieties of means's.
- b. Concerning the Verities questions types for worksheets or assignments, a common consensus is achieved among learners and instructors. Respondents were asked whether the assignment questions are developed from the modules. Accordingly, most learners from Alpha University College, St. Mary's University College and Unity University together with instructors and academic deans from each of the four institutions support the idea positively while a moderate number of learners from Admas University College were in a position to disagree. Supporting the compliance of the questions with the intended objective of the course, learners agreed that the questions are difficult to handle.
- c. It was also believed that the final exam Questions contain different item types with no significance difference ($P>0.05$), respondents agreed that the

questions of final exam covers the whole chapters of the modules. The respondents were also asked whether Final exam questions concentrate only on the summary of each chapter. Regarding this the majority (36.4% in Admas University College, 59.4% in Alpha University College, 55.7% in St.Mary's University College and 42.2% in Unity University) of respondent show their support. This was also supported by instructors.

- d. For all respondents involved in this study an agreement is achieved that final exam program is informed ahead of time.

5.2.1.4 Society attitudes towards distance learners.

- a. The majority of learners (50% in Admas University College, 63.7% in Alpha University College, 60.0% in St.Mary's University College and 56.3% in Unity University) agreed that most of the students are grade oriented. An agreement has achieved on that the attitudes of the society towards distance education is very low. Besides, it has found that employers have low attitude towards distance learners.

5.3 Conclusions

Based on findings of the study, it is possible to draw the following conclusions:

1. It has been found that students take 12 credit hours per term which did not comply with the rule set by HERQA. But the University Colleges/ University has complied with the rules in terms of the selection criteria for the programs.
2. In the entire institutions student support services (library, guidance and counseling, and Tutorial) are believed to be available. Although, there are adequate books, reference materials and CD ROMs in the libraries of each institution, distance learners did not have separated library and there are no procedures for distance learners to borrow books.

3. All institutions provide one tutorial per term. After registration, it is found that there is no orientation program and students did not given student handbooks. The time arranged for tutorials is not sufficient to cover the whole portion of the courses and therefore, affects students' academic performance.
4. The entire institutions use worksheets and final exams as assessment mechanisms and the questions for the final exam are developed from the summary of each chapter which does not encourage students to read the whole content of the course.
5. The main problems identified to affect students' performance are economic constraints, lack of sufficient time, low attitude of the society and employers towards distance education and low family support.

5.4 Recommendations

On the of the bases of its findings of study and conclusions drown, the following general and long term recommendations are suggested to solve the problems.

1. Twelve credit hour a term is much for distance learner and did not comply with the rules set by HERQA. To comply with and not to make students loaded, institutions have to minimize the credit hour for a term to nine. Because, delivering the courses with a breakdown of 9 credit hours for a term and four terms a year decreases the load and as well helps the program to be and completed within three to four years.
2. The institutions have to arrange at least two tutorial sessions a term which is also demanded by the rules of HERQA. And on this regard Higher Education Relevance and Quality Assurance Agency (HERQA), the current Education and Training Quality Assurance Agency has to develop a controlling mechanism like making institutions to report in every two

months of their movement, making institutions to submit their academic programs and undertaking sudden visiting during the tutorial and final exam, and enforcing institutions to develop internal quality control mechanism and strictly follow up for its implementation.

3. Most learners are absent in tutorial programs to get some explanations on the courses which in turn affects their academic performance. So, the institution has to develop an attendance system and a rule that prohibits the learner not to sit on an exam if he/she does not attend one of the two tutorial classes. To implement this the institution has to distribute an attendance sheet of students of a particular department for tutors to take attendances.
4. The institutions have to give students handbooks and has to arrange an induction session for learners to make them aware about distance education, the institutions management system, students support services and their functionalities and the policies of distance education during registration time.
5. Students supportive services especially guidance and counseling has to be isolated from regular students as all aspects of the distance learners are different. Besides, a counselor assigned for distance learners should know the behavior, characteristics and life experience of distance learners by referring students profile, attending tutorial session to have an overall image of learners, and undertaking discussions with instructors and students about distance learners.
6. The institution should expend extra effort on the quality of modules, worksheets and exams. It has to collect feedbacks from students and improve the quality depending on the feedback.

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Annex A

ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES

**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PLANNING AND
MANAGEMENT**

A questionnaire to be filled by learners

Dear learner

The purpose of this questionnaire is to assess factors that affect students' academic performance in distance education of selected university /university colleges in Addis Ababa at Degree program . It is so as to forward some suggestions to improve the academic performance. Your experience, attitude, and suggestions are worthwhile for the study and I am confident that I appreciate the efforts and cooperation's you offer honestly.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation!

Direction: put an "✓" mark in the box () of your choice or write your answer on the space provided

Personal Information:

1. Name of University/University College where you are studying

2. Sex A. male B. Female
3. Age (in years)
 A. 20-30 C. 41-50
 B. 31-40 D. 51 and above
4. Marital Status
 A. Single B. Married C. Divorce/widowed
5. Employed in
 A. Government C. Self employed
 B. Private D. another (Specify) _____
6. Previous semester cumulative Grade Point Average -

7. What are the criteria's asked, when you join this program?
- a. Completion of two year preparatory program
 - b. 10 or 12 grade complete and 2 years related work experience
 - c. COC evaluation
 - d. Others (specify)

Note: For statements in the table, use the likert scaling by putting a “√” mark on the cells(1 for strongly disagree, 2 for disagree, 3 for undecided, 4 for Agree and 5 for strongly agree).

No	Item	Scale				
		1	2	3	4	5
8.	The maximum number of credit hours per semester/term is 9					
9.	There are four terms in a year					
10.	One program is completed within three years					
11.	There are two tutorial sessions in a term/semester					
12.	The number of tutorial sessions per term are enough to assisting learning					

13. List some other opinions of yours own regarding the compliance of your institution to rules and regulations of MoE and HERQA (Higher Education relevance and Quality Assurance) _____

14. The following student services are available in your institution

- a. Library
- b. Guidance and counseling
- c. Tutor coordinator
- d. Others (specify)

No	Item	Scale				
		1	2	3	4	5
15.	These different student supporting services are coordinated in your institution					

16. Have you given a student hand book during you registration time?

- Yes No

17. If your answer for question No 16 above is yes, Does the hand book contain distance education policy. Yes No

No	Item	Scale				
		1	2	3	4	5
18.	The institution arranges orientation (induction) program after the registration time.					
19.	Your institution informs the examination program ahead of time					
20.	Coordinators in the institution have the capacity and knowledge to coordinate distance education program					

21. If your institution has guidance and counseling service, have you ever used the counseling service before in your institution? Yes No

22. If your answer for Question No 21 above is yes, which of the following are the focus of the counseling program (Multiple response is possible)

- A. Issues related to study skills
- B. Issues related to rules and regulations
- C. Issues related to different complaints
- D. Issues related to personal life
- E. Other (specify)

23. Do you think that the guidance and counseling service you have taken resulted in better academic performance of yours? Yes No

24. Is the guidance and counseling office for distance learners separated from regular class learners? Yes No

25. If your answer for question No 24 above is No, does it have an effect on your academic performance? Yes No

26. If your answer for question No 25 above is yes, please specify the effects on your academic performance

27. If your institution has library services, is the library accessible for you? Yes No

28. Is the library secured only for distance students? Yes No

29. If your answer for question No 28 above is No, does it have an effect on your academic performance? Yes No

30. If your answer for question No 29 above is yes, please specify the effects on your academic performance _____

31. How frequent did you visit the library?

A. Always B. some times C. Rarely D. Never

32. If you are visiting the library, do you find it useful Yes No

33. If your answer for question No 32 above is yes, does the library consist of

- a. Adequate books
- b. Reference materials
- c. Research papers and journals
- d. CD ROMs'
- e. Others (specify)

34. If your answer for question No 32 above is No, please identify the reasons

(Multiple answers are allowed)

- A. Could not find related books
- B. Most of the time the library remains closed
- C. Cannot borrow books to study at home
- D. The library filings are not suitable
- E. There is no enough space in the library to sit and study
- F. Any other (specify) _____

35. Teaching learning activities are mediated by variety of means's

Yes No

36. If your answer for question No 35 above is yes, what means's are used to mediate the teaching learning process

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____
- d. _____
- e. _____

37. Does your institution provide tutorial services Yes No

38. If your answer for question No 37 above is Yes, how many tutorial sessions are conducted in a term?

- A. One B. two C. three D. more

39. During tutorial time, institutions arranges a session for learners to communicate with (multiple response is possible)

- a. Instructors
 b. Counselors
 c. Other students
 d. Others (Specify) _____

40. How often are you attending the tutorial session

- A. All the sessions B. Only few sessions C. Never attend

No	Item	Scale				
		1	2	3	4	5
41.	The time allotted for the tutorial is enough					

42. If you attend the tutorial, what is the reason for attending (Multiple response is possible)

- A. To get clarification of concepts on the course materials
 B. To get an opportunity to interact with other students
 C. To motivate own self in the study
 D. To increase knowledge
 E. Any other (specify) _____

43. If you have never attend, please select the reason (multiple response is allowed)

- A. Lack of time
 B. No prior information on tutorial sessions
 C. Economic problem
 D. Tutorial not much necessary for my study
 E. Inappropriate location of study center

F. Poorly organized and managed tutorial sessions

G. Any other (please specify) _____

44. Which factor do you think are the most to affect your academic performance

a. Quality of modules

b. Lack of reference materials

c. Module content

d. Module format

e. Other (specify) _____

45. The only delivery method of your University or University college is printed materials (modules) Yes No

46. If your answer for the above question is No, list other delivery methods used in your institution.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

47. Modules of your institution (put a "✓" on one or more of the appropriate statements)

a) Invites the learner to get involved in it

b) Enables the learner to learn from the material independently

c) Have notes written in a form of question and answer approach

d) Have contents presented in a way that make learners to go through the material without much external support

e) Hold more activities that focus learners attention

f) Have examples that grasp learners attention

g) Contain topics which are roughing similar in terms of

- Content density

- Learners activity

- Length

h) Have contents logically arranged form simple to complex

48. Please write some other opinions of your own related to instructional materials of your institution _____

49. The institution under takes variety of assessment methods Yes No

50. If the answer for the above question is yes, list all the assessment methods used by the University college/university

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

51. Worksheets as an assessment method in your University/University college uses one or more of the following item types (Multiple response is allowed)

a. True/ False

b. Multiple choice

c. Completion tests

d. Matching's

e. Essay type items

f. Others (please specify) _____

52. Final exam of your institution includes one or more of the following Item types

a. True/ False

b. Multiple choice

c. Completion tests

d. Matching's

e. Essay type items

f. Others (please specify) _____

No	Item	Scale				
		1	2	3	4	5
53.	Questions raised in the assessment process are carefully selected to cover essential course objectives					
54.	Worksheets prepared for different courses in your University/university college contains direct questions.					
55.	In developing questions for a worksheet, institutions care for	Question types				
		Level of difficulty				
		Compliance with objectives				
56.	Examinations are given after several weeks from tutorial					
57.	Exam questions are developed from summary of each course					
Learner attitude						
58.	Most distance learners are grade oriented					
59.	Society has low esteem for distance education					
60.	Employers has low esteem for distance education graduates					
61. The major problems in distance learners						
	Shortage of time to study					
	Shortage of time to use library					
	Lack of study skills					
	Engagement in different social affairs					
	Working environment					
	Lack of family support					
	Poor social-economic stats					
	Lack of community support					
	Less opportunity to be recruited					
	Quality of instructional materials					
	Insufficient tutorial time					

62. If there are other problems related to your study please specify on the space provided

Thank you!

Annex B
ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PLANNING AND
MANAGEMENT

A questionnaire to be filled by Instructors

Dear Instructor

The purpose of this questionnaire is to assess factors that affect students' academic performance in distance education of selected university /university colleges in Addis Ababa. It is so as to forward some suggestions to improve the academic performance. Your experience, attitude, and suggestions are worthwhile for the study and I am confident that I appreciate the efforts and cooperation's you offer honestly.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation!

Direction: put a "✓" mark in the box (□) of your choice for true/false or multiple alternative items and on the cells with the appropriate agreement of yours (**1-strongly disagree, 2-disagree, 3- undecided, 4-agree and 5-strongly agree**) or write your answer on the space provided

Personal Information:

1. Name of University/University College where you are working

2. Sex A. male B. Female
3. Age (in years)
 A. 20-30 C. 41-50
 B. 31-40 D. 51 and above
4. Marital Status
 A. Single B. Married C. Divorced/widowed
5. Qualification A. PhD B. MA/MSc/LLM C. BA/BSc/BEEd/LLB
 D. any other (Specify) _____
6. Experience: In this institution _____ in other organization _____ Total _____
7. On what capacity are you working as a tutor?
 A. On full time base B. on part time/contract base

No	Item	Scale				
		1	2	3	4	5
8.	Different student supporting services are coordinated in your institution					
9.	Detailed distance education policy is available in the institution					

10. Teaching learning transactions are mediated by variety of means's
 Yes No

11. If your answer for Question No10 above is yes what means's are used to mediate the teaching learning process (Please specify)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

No	Item	Scale				
		1	2	3	4	5
12.	The institution informs time of examination a head of time					
13.	Coordinators in the institution have the capacity and knowledge to coordinate distance education program					

14. Does the institution have guidance and counseling service Yes No

15. Does the institution arrange a library for distance students? Yes No

16. If your answer for question No 15 above is yes, does the library posses relevant materials. Yes No

17. Does your institution provide tutorial services for distance learners?
 Yes No

18. If your answer for question No 19 above is yes, how many tutorial sessions are there in one term? A. one B. two C. three D. more (specify) _____

19. Did all students attend both tutorial services? Yes No

20. If your answer for the above question is NO, what measures are taken by the institution on a student who does not take both tutorial sessions?

No	Item	Scale				
		1	2	3	4	5
21.	The time Allotted for the tutorial is enough.					

22. During tutorial time, institutions arranges a session for learners to communicate with (multiple response is possible)

a. Instructors

b. Counselors

c. Other students

d. Others (Specify) _____

23. Does your institution under take variety of assessment methods? Yes No

24. If the answer for the above question is yes, list all the assessment methods used by the institution

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

25. Worksheets as an assessment method in your college/University college uses one or more of the following item types.

A. True/False

B. Multiple choices

C. Completion test

D. Matching's

E. Essay type items

F. Others _____

No	Item	Scale				
		1	2	3	4	5
26.	Questions raised in the assessment process are carefully selected to cover essential course objectives					
27.	Worksheets prepared for different courses in your college/University college contains direct questions					
28.	In developing questions for a work sheet, institution care for	Question types				
		Level of difficulty				
		Compliance with objectives				
29.	Examination are given after several weeks from tutorials					
30.	Exam question are developed from summary of each course					

31. Is only delivery method of your college/University college is printed material (Module) Yes No

32. If your answer for question Number 33 above is No, what other delivery methods are used in your institution? _____

33. Which factors do you think are critical to affect distance students academic performance

- a. Quality of modules
- b. Lack of reference materials
- c. Module content
- d. Module format
- e. Student factors
- f. Others (specify) _____

Thank you!

Annex C

Addis Ababa University

School of Graduate Studies

Department of Educational Planning and Management

The purpose of this interview is to assess factors that affect students' academic performance in distance education of selected university /university colleges in Addis Ababa. It is so as to forward some suggestions to improve the academic performance. Your experience, attitude, and suggestions are worthwhile for the study and I am confident that I appreciate the efforts and cooperation's you offer honestly.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation!

Interview guide for university /university College Deans

1. What are the criteria's used to select students for the different programs?
2. How the courses are distributed through out the academic years?
3. What student services are there in your institution?
4. Does students get a student hand book during registration?
5. Is there orientation program for new entrants?
6. What are the delivery systems in your institution?
7. What are the characteristics included in the teaching material (module)?
8. What type of assessment methods are used in your institution?
9. What factors do you think are critical to affect distance learners academic performance?

Annex D

Addis Ababa University

School of Graduate Studies

Department of Educational Planning and Management

The purpose of this interview is to assess factors that affect students' academic performance in distance education of selected university /university colleges in Addis Ababa. It is so as to forward some suggestions to improve the academic performance. Your experience, attitude, and suggestions are worthwhile for the study and I am confident that I appreciate the efforts and cooperation's you offer honestly.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation!

Interview guide for HERQA Experts

1. Does an institution comply with rules and regulations set by HERQA to select students?
2. Do you have information's on the distribution of courses in a semester/term and year?
3. What student services are available in these institutions?
4. What information did you have on the following areas:
 - Delivery methods of the institutions
 - Number of tutorials per term
 - Number of terms per year
 - Teaching material
 - Assessment

DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, declare that this thesis is my work and that all the sources of the materials used for the thesis have been fully acknowledged.

Name Zewdu Teklehaimanot

Signature _____

Place and Date of Submission _____

SUBMISSION APPROVAL SHEET

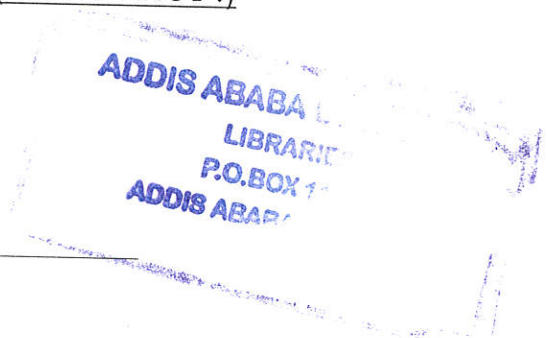
This thesis has been submitted for examination with my approval as a university advisor.

Name H/selassie W/gerima (ASSt. PROF.)

Title _____

Signature _____

Date of submission _____



ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY