

**ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY  
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION  
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES**

**THE EFFECTIVENESS OF TUTORIAL PROGRAM IN DISTANCE EDUCATION AT  
THE TERTIARY LEVEL: THE CASE OF ALPHA AND ADMAS UNIVERSITY  
COLLEGE**

**A THESIS PRESENTED TO THE SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES OF ADDIS  
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**BY**

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## Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effectiveness of tutorial program in distance education at the tertiary level with reference to Alpha and Admas University Colleges. The populations of this study included administrators, tutorial coordinators, tutors and students. In this study a total of 266 participants were taken as a sample. From this sample 50 of them were tutors, 200 were students and the rest were administrators and tutorial program coordinators. For a better understanding of the situation a mixed research approach was employed. Questionnaire interview, FGD, observation and document analysis were used as means of data collection. Frequency, percentiles, standard deviation, mean value and t-test were used for analyzing the quantitative data while the qualitative data were thematically organized, categorized and examined to understand the emerging patterns of responses. The findings of the study reveal that the tutorial services provided by tutors were devoted largely to tutor's verbal explanation of descriptive facts. The current practice of distance education offering institutions of face-to face tutorials are provided on voluntary bases. Students' survey responses showed dissatisfaction with the inflexible nature of the resources, insufficient academic support provided and a preference for guided learning activities and participation in discussion. It was found with satisfaction that learners have positive attitude towards tutorial and distance education in general. Furthermore, from the responses of the tutors/students there is evidence that confirms students are benefited from face to face tutorial. The study indicated that the absence or shortage of the modules during students' registration was serious problem that negatively affects students' performance, causes delays in graduation and students' attendance and participation in tutorial sessions. The findings also reveal that visual aids were not employed in the tutorial session. In addition to this the study disclosed that no electronic media was employed to facilitate the student support service. The absence of practical exercise and demonstration was found to be the defects of tutorial session. Finally, based on the findings and conclusions recommendations were made to address the problem under study.

# UNIT 1: INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Background of The Study

Both developing and developed countries are using distance education extensively for various purposes. However, because of the increased demand for trained and educated manpower by various sectors in developing countries, the need to run distance education was widely realized. Mehrotra, Hollister and McGahey (in Zenebe, 2005:79) argue that there are several factors apart from advancement in communications technology that contributed to the expansion and development of distance education.

Development of new methods that can dramatically improve the existing education system has to be devised. In efforts to meeting the new and changing demands of education and training, open and distance learning may be seen as an approach that is at least complimentary and under certain circumstance and appropriate substitute for the contract methods that still dominate most education systems (UNESCO, 2002).

Inequality, inaccessibility, irrelevance and low quality are the problems that are faced by the Ethiopian education system. To alleviate the prevailing problems; the country has been under taking many innovative programs and projects. The new education and training policy document is one of the major initiatives the government has taken to alleviate some of the major educational problems, maintain quality, and update the education system of the country (MOE, 1994). The Prime objective of the expansion of higher education institutions is to transform the country's vast human resources into an educated and trained work force by formal, non-formal and through distance education.

Distance Education in Ethiopian is not a new phenomenon. Currently, there are governmental and private institutions providing distance education. In addition to

domestic providers, International Educational Institutions are also providing distance education programs. Hence, the focuses of this study are Alpha and Admass University College.

Alpha College of Distance Studies (ACDS) was established by a committed Ethiopian in 1981 G.C. ACDS has successfully carried out degree, diploma and certificate programs for 25 years through distance mode of delivery for which it has developed a great deal of popularity and positive image among the public in general and stakeholders in particular. Its success has been reflected in the large student enrolment and quality educational services offered through its 17 branches and 90 representative offices spread throughout Ethiopia. In addition, ACDS has launched its programs for distances learners residing abroad especially in the Middle East and neighboring East, Central and Southern African countries

Admas College commenced its operation on October 11,1998 G.C. With a name "Admas Business Training Center". The center started delivering training services in certain tailor made Six-month duration (short-term) programs. By undertaking deep objective assessments of further training needs and making preparation in terms of the required materials as well as human resources, the center was upgraded to a college level as of April 9,1999G.C. With the objective of expanding its quality service to the country, the college opened six campuses. The college's Distance Education Center has established more than 31 coordination offices in the regions and sub-cities respectively. The college offers both distance and on campus education, in a number of programs which are offered in number of levels: certificate, diploma and degree both in distance and on campus education, Admas has also started many e-Learning programs to develop the Ethiopian higher educational system. Recently the college will be upgraded to a university college and

is strengthening its ability of rendering training and education services with its fully accredited disciplines by the Ministry of Education, Education Bureaus, and Education Departments of Regions and Sub-cities.

Distance education institutions approach learning support system for students differently, depending upon the characteristics of their distance students, the availability of technology, the capacity of the institutions, and the learning cultures and styles of students. Learning support for distance students can be provided in face-to-face mode and mediated mode, such as through printed material, telephone, audio/video, radio, television and computer. The forms of learning support services to distance students can be categorized academic and non-academic support. Generally, academic support is provided to facilitate the development of cognitive, knowledge and learning skills aspects of the course. The non-academic support is provided to help the development of students' affective areas, advising and the administrative assistance to facilitate the students' learning process (*TOJDE, 2007*).

Student support service is the most important factor for the successful learning in distance education. This element of distance learning is a large and important component of instruction, and must be considered as one of the ingredients in planning the technology mixture.

Obanya, Shabini and Okekukolo (1999, in Teshome, 2001) indicated that tutorials and support services are important in answering the many needs students may have in distance education. Effective distance learning programs depend upon the good learning materials, effective student support and efficient logistics. Study materials must be distributed in a timely fashion, feed back on student performance should be communicated without delay in order to sustain student motivation and guide learning.

Academic services for distance education include tutorial services and study group activities. Face-to-face tutorial is a kind of learning support involving face-to-face sessions between a tutor and students. Mediated tutorial is kind of tutorial support involving the use of media, such as radio, television, telephone, internet or written. Face-to-face tutorials are organized by the institutions'. Distance students are encouraged to actively participate in study group activities, which can be initiated by the students themselves. These study group activities are supported and facilitated by the institutions', such as through the provision of study location in tutorial centers, networking with local institutions, and provision of qualified tutors and supervisors.

The student benefits from having a course developed for him and also from interaction with his tutors and other representatives of a supporting organization. The relationship between the supporting organization and the student is described as a guided didactic conversation. Guided didactic conversation is a critical approach to non-print media and the provision of face-to-face sessions as components of a system and a concentration on assignment marking and its importance (Keegan, 1996).on the other hand, (Sewart, 1988), states that the class tutorial in the distance education does have an important, if restricted part to play in the teaching system. Its original intention was that it should be remedial and supportive in nature. The main role of the tutor here is not to develop new themes and ideas, but to ensure that students understand the ideas and arrangements in the course units and broad casts, and to remedy students' academic weaknesses.

As it is clearly indicated in Balakrishna, (1995), when a distance –teaching institutions set up a net work of study centers, it has to decide on what criteria to locate. A major consideration will be the proportion of learners that can attend. The institutions will look for away to enable as many learners as possible to attend,

insofar as this is desirable. It is not easy to provide most learners with easy access to study center. Moreover, it is always impossible to set up study centers that are easily accessible for all learners for those students who cannot attend, or who can attend very frequently, it is necessary to think of alternatives, such as telephone contact or audio-tapes through the post.

Furthermore, It would be inequitable to equip urban centers which attract many learners better than rural centers which attract only a few ,and distance-teaching institutions generally try to make sure that all learners have access to equal resources by providing similar facilities in all study centers.

## **1.2 Statement of The Problem**

Distance learners come from a heterogeneous back ground in terms of age, experience, socio-cultural, educational and occupational backgrounds, sustaining their motivation to continue with courses till completion is a crucial issue. In this regard, the distance institution through its student support service department have an important role to play in providing for and facilitating the two way common interaction with staff and students. Other factors like personal, institutional and instructional do affect learners' adjustment with studies in varying degree.

Student support service is the most important factor for successful distance learning. There are common service needs for all learners but the basic types of student support services are tutorial and counseling. Therefore, distance learning systems need a net work of tutorial or study centers. In many distance -teaching universities, the tutorial centers are mainly located in the premises of the local colleges. They need to be accessible and with in reasonable distance to learners. It is also important that the centers have to be equipped with library, laboratory, audio-visuals, student

handbooks, and office and classroom equipment. Studies indicate only a few of the above are provided in the tutorial centers Raghunath (1994, in Zenebe, 2005).

Carefully prepared course materials are self-contained and can provide the utmost guidance to learners to pursue their education. However, this does not preclude the significance of tutorial support and counseling to learners. Distance education system set up tutorial centers and employs tutors to assist students in their learning. What matters to the institution is to find out the extent to which learners are satisfied with the support provided. The quality of the instructional materials that are used by the distance teaching institutions is found to affect the achievement and persistence. In relation to this, Sewart (1981) reported how the British Open University successfully improved the completion rate of students by increasing the quality of teaching materials.

Distance Education Institutions need to have clearly stated criteria for the selection of Tutors, course developers and counselors. In relation to this, (Rumble, 1992) stated that, the criteria for appointing tutors and counselors are different. The former being selected on the basis of their subject expertise, the latter for their human relations skills. All will need to have an interest in and commitment to distance learners and, in many cases, adult students. Appropriate selection procedures need to be devised.

Evidence on the effectiveness of study centers is contradictory. Some studies indicate that study groups are an important element in maintaining student motivation and preventing dropouts, particularly in Korea, Latin America and Africa. Other studies indicate that Study centers set up to provide access to media or tutorial help can be problematic, and can have low attendance due to the distance between students' homes and the centers, tutors' ineffectiveness or student apathy.

In addition, access can be difficult due to scheduling or overcrowding (Teshome, 2001).

There are some studies conducted in Ethiopia on distance education but they failed to adequately investigate the effectiveness of tutorial in distance education.

As it is indicated in Tesfaye(2002),the major problems which have significant impact on the success of distance learner at the secondary level are: the disparity between the needs of distance learners and the provision of tutorial services; The style of the presentation and delays in the distribution of the self learning materials (modules); Inefficient organization and administration; Absence of standard criteria to recruit tutors and course developers'; shortage of trained tutors in distance education and inadequate facilities. Thus, the primary purpose of this study is to address the above mentioned problems at the tertiary level.

With this general frame work, the study has attempted to provide answers to the following basic questions.

1. To what extent are the student support systems available and sufficient?
2. To what extent are learners satisfied in tutors support method and preparedness?
3. What is the extent of the benefits that students get from attending the tutorial program?
4. What are the problems related to administration of the two way interaction between the students and the colleges and between the tutors and the learners?
5. What mechanisms were used to evaluate the success of tutorial program?

### **1.3 Objective of The Study**

Literature in distance education shows that the quality and the effectiveness of tutorial service is significantly affected by low educational inputs, lack of skilled manpower, inadequate facilities, the capacity of the organization and administration.

Due to this fact, this study set its main objectives as to investigate the effectiveness of the tutorial practices/activities in distance education with reference to Alpha and Admas University College. With this in view the study will attempt to examine the tutorial effectiveness by considering the following specific objectives. This study was designed to:

1. find out if there is an attempt to maximize student support services specifically tutorials.
2. examine the nature and the adequacy of the tutorial session.
3. examine the usefulness of the tutorial session.
4. identify the problems encountered in conducting the program.
5. examine the evaluation mechanism for the effective functioning of tutors.

### **1.4 Significance of The Study**

Distance education can be an effective and cost effective means of providing education on a large scale. In order to meet this organizational objective efficient and effective system to provide quality service for its clients must be installed.

This study is believed to contribute to the overall improvement of the organizational structure of the distance offering institutions in the area of quality instructional material development, face to face tutorials and counseling support, and raising student's participation.

Therefore, the researcher hopes that the study will have the under mentioned significant purposes.

1. College officials, tutors, and coordinators will have better knowledge of the major problems that hinder the quality and the effectiveness of running the tutorial program.
2. The findings of the study would enable distance education management gain valuable information on the actual practice of tutoring so as to take corrective actions.
3. The findings of the study would contribute to the existing body of knowledge with regard to the nature of tutorial service in distance education.
4. The results of the study could provide valuable information for further investigation to researchers in the field.

### **1.5 Delimitation of The Study**

Currently, distance Education is offered in some governmental, private and International institutions in first degree and post graduate level. But this study is delimited to private institutions, especially in Alpha College of Distance Studies (ACDS) and Admas University College. The focus of the study is delimited to first degree level. Furthermore, in order to get a clear picture of the practice of tutoring third year students were involved in the study with the assumption that they have better experience than others. The study focused on six (three from each college) selected tutorial centers because of the large number of student's population.

Although there are different types of tutorial services, this study focused only on the face-to-face tutorial program.

The study tries to assess the learner's profile, extent of learner's satisfaction in tutor's support methods, extent of learner tutor preparedness, learner's attendance at the tutorial centers, content adequacy and style of presentation of the course materials, distribution of course materials, tutors method of support, and the mechanisms used to evaluate student's progress and the success of the program.

### **1.6 Limitation of The Study**

The absence of adequate research conducted on distance education program, in Ethiopia restricted the research to rely on the few available few materials repeatedly as sources of the study.

In conducting this study, financial constraints and shortage of time due to full time employment of the researcher had impact on the possibility of observing those distant centers. Another challenge that the researcher of this study faced is unwillingness of some private college to provide data as a result the researcher is forced to change one of his subjects of study. These situations may affect the reliability of the results of the finding to some extent.

### **1.7 Organization of the study**

This study is comprised of five chapters. The first chapter includes back ground of the study, statement of the problem, significance, limitation, delimitation as well as definitions of terms. The second chapter deals with the review of related literature. The third chapter embraces research methodology and procedures. The fourth chapter is presentation and analysis of the findings. Finally, summary, conclusions and recommendations are presented in the last chapter.

## 1.8 Operational Definition of Basic Terms

Tutorial Effectiveness: in this study effectiveness of tutorial refers to what extent distance learners are benefited or satisfied from the program. In other words it describes the success of distance education offering institutes in conducting the program.

- **Contiguous:** Is learning environment in which communication is personal and face-to-face
- **Non-contiguous:** is learning environment in which communication may be personal and face-to-face for limited periods of time, but it is largely written, mechanical, electronic or some other means of communicating at a distance.
- **Tutor:** A person whose main role in distance education is to facilitate learning, by supporting and guiding in different ways, by discussing problems generally and individually, and by providing the necessary resources.

## **CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

### **2.1 Theoretical Foundations of Learning Support System In Distance Education.**

The design, development and provision of learning support system for distance students is based on the foundation and theories of distance education, i.e., theories of autonomous and independent study, theories of interaction and communication, and the theory of industrialization (Sewart, Keegan & Holmberg, 1988). These three classical theories of distance education have been widely referred to during the past few decades, and until today they remain relevant as underlying principles of distance education practice, and these have been further supported and strengthened by more recent theories (Anderson, Garrison, Gibson, and Sammons, as cited in TOJDE,2007). Theories of autonomy and independence lay the basic foundation of distance education practice. Independent study is an effort to organize instruction so that greater freedom in learning is possible for learners. It enables learners to carry out learning tasks and responsibilities on their own pacing and patterns, provide learners with opportunities to continue learning in their own environments, and develop learners the capacity to carry on self-directed learning.

Independent learning and teaching can be considered as an educational system in which the learner is autonomous and separated from the teacher by space and time, so that communication is mediated (Moore, 1973). In distance education, learner and teacher are connected by a variety of communication techniques through media. Distance is defined as “a function of individualization and dialogue”, rather than measured in terms of physical proximity. Distance education comprises the elements of learner independence, interaction between learner and instructor, and certain characteristics of course design (Moore,as cited in Holomberg,1967). More recent works on self-directed learning and on

learners and learning also support these theories. From the theories of interaction and communication, distance education is viewed as a natural means of instruction, involving two-way communication between the teacher and the student, if they are at a distance from each other (Holmberg, 1989).

Moore (in Rosenblatt, 1999) classified distance education programs as autonomous (learner-centered) or non-autonomous (teacher-determined) according to the following criteria: autonomy in setting the objectives; autonomy in methods of study; autonomy in evaluation. Some suggest that distance education does not perhaps need teachers at all. Carried to the ultimate, student autonomy would entail the end of teaching in distance education. For students with complete responsibility for their course, there is no need for teachers beyond preparation of study material. However, most scholars and practitioners believe that teachers have a firm and central role in distance education, and particularly in the frame work of fully fledged distance teaching universities. Evidently, Tutors in distance teaching universities need a variety of talents and abilities.

Daniel & Marquis (1979 as cited in TOJDE2007) draw attention to keep the balance between interaction and independence in distance learning, believing that all learning involves interaction, that is, activities where the student is in two-way contact with another person involving reactions and responses which are specific to the two party's requests. Interaction includes activities such as counseling, tutoring and contacting students; teaching over interactive telecommunication; bringing students together into discussion groups; and engaging in residential gatherings. Independence comprises activities such as studying written material; watching or listening to broadcasts; writing essays and assignments; working alone on a computer; writing essays and assignments; and conducting experiments, surveys and project work at home. More recent works on modes of interaction, on teaching and learning also support these theories.

According to (Peters as cited in IGNOU 1995) distance education refers to the industrial management style for its operations. He uses concepts and principles derived from the theories of industrial production to interpret distance education phenomenon, although the comparison is purely heuristic. He presents comparative interpretation of industrial production and distance teaching in terms of the following elements: rationalization, division of labour, mechanization, assembly line, mass production, preparatory work, change, objectification, concentration, and centralization. From the point of view of industrial theory, distance education is seen as a rationalized method of providing knowledge which, as a result of applying industrial principles and the extensive use of technology, allows a large number of students to participate in university study simultaneously, regardless of their place of residence and occupation.

Distance education includes both real and mediated communication processes, and the purpose of the two-way communication is to motivate and facilitate students in learning and to provide feedback (Holmberg, 1981). Education is based on communication between teacher and student, and on peer group interaction, and as a method of guided didactic conversation, distance education aims at learning and the conversation facilitates learning.

The separation of the teacher and learner and the general characteristics of distance education necessitate the provision of an effective learning support system for learners. Distance education institutions employ a variety methods of learning support system, such as residential courses, regional courses, face-to-face tutorials, guided study groups, mediated tutorials, computer mediated communications, internet, and web-based services, depending on the availability of resources and the students' needs, and the institution's capacities. Distance education institutions are confronted with limitations in the use of many forms of learning support for students.

In this regard a study conducted in Indonesia shows that, interactive teaching and learning process using new technology remains a major challenge, because of the poor quality of information and communication technology infrastructure. Learning support services should then be developed using these theoretical foundations. There are two different approaches to student learning support in distance education. One approach relies on non-contiguous communication, i.e., communication by media, such as written, recorded, broadcasted, and online communication. The other approach includes face-to-face direct as well as mediated contacts. Another form of student support is through counseling and general student support to facilitate students' learning process (Sewart, Keegan & Holmberg, 1988).

Moore (1983, as cited in IGNOU 1995) introduced the expression 'Transactional distance' which defines the nature and degree of separation of teacher and learner in educational process. The transactional distance is a function of two variables called 'dialogue' and 'Structure'. Dialogue describes the extent to which, in any educational program, learner and educator are able to respond to each other. This is determined by the content or subject matter which is studied, by the educational philosophy of the educator, by the personalities of educator and learner, and by environmental factors, the most important of which is the medium of communication. For instance, an educational program in which communication between educator and the independent learner is by radio or television permits no dialogue. On the other hand, Structure is a measure of an educational program's responsiveness to learners' individual needs. It expresses the extent to which educational objectives, teaching strategies, and evaluation methods are prepared for, or can be adapted to, the objectives, strategies, and evaluation methods of the learner. In a highly structured educational program, the objectives and the methods to be used are determined for the learner, and are inflexible. In a linear, non-branching

programmed text, for example, there is less opportunity for variation, according to the needs of a particular individual, than there is in those correspondence courses which permit a wide range of alternative responses by the tutor to individual students' questions and assignment submissions.

Moore discusses three types of interaction essential in distance education:

- Learner- instructor interaction: interaction that provides motivation, feedback, and dialog between the teacher and student.
- Learner-content interaction: method by which students obtain intellectual information from the material.
- Learner-Learner interaction: exchange of information, ideas and dialog that occurs between students about the course.

Distance education depends to a great extent on educational technology. As a means of open learning, the functioning of distance education depends on better utilization of instructional strategies. In other words, distance education banks on production of quality learning material, use of wide range of media emphasizing varieties of learning opportunities, and properly organized face to face contact programs leading to group interaction among learners themselves and with the instructors. Keeping in view these aspects of the instructional system, research is being conducted on two main areas of instructions i) management of instructional processes and ii) evolving suitable instructional methods and media inputs. These aspects will be explained in some detail as follows.

Educational media are similar in their effectiveness, but differ in the ways they can readily be distributed. This makes it possible to move away from the fixed staffing ratios necessary to face-to-face study, there by changing the role of the teacher

and making possible a reduction in costs. It is then possible to reach audience different from the traditional ones, through distance teaching, and to do so at a reasonable cost. The equivalence of the media however, presents us with problems of choice, best resolved by a multi-media approach which allows for feedback and encourages active learning. In working out the approach to be used, the organization of any face-to-face element is of key importance and leads us to consider how to use distance teaching to ensure dialogue-something which is facilitated if a concern with new audience and a new relation between education and the community lead to the use of groups as a basis for adult learning (Perraton as cited in IGNOU1995).

Studies on the potential values of different methods and the employing sound theoretical models can help academic decision makers to choose appropriate means of instruction. Studies on evolving multimedia packages for specific subjects, definite instructional objectives and heterogeneous learner groups (students with different educational and socio economic back ground) are particularly necessary to make the system effective. Besides, availability of recourses, time and feasibility are to be kept in mind while consolidating media inputs. How to facilitate flexible teaching –learning environments in which learner’s participation in the instructional processes could be enhanced is a major concern in distance education. With the emergence of new forms of educational technology, it is necessary that distance education keeps pace with them. Obviously, there is ample scope for studies in these areas to broaden the distance education base, so that the demands of education can be met.

Research on these aspects in India focus on the effectiveness of different methods and media in experimental situations, studying the existing processes of instructional and evaluation programs in distance education institutions, the usefulness of different components of instructional activities, evaluation system and participants’ reaction to the

functioning of instructional system. It is noted that major instructional activities of distance education have been restricted to print materials and occasional interaction between tutor and students through assignments and personal contact programs. In a few cases, instructional activities have been carried out through electronic media like radio, television, audio cassettes, video cassettes and computer programs.

## **2.2 Student Support Service**

In early times, the concern of distance education was confined to coordination, the course development and delivery methods. However, in recent years, there has been a growing importance of face-to-face contact in distance education, and therefore many distance education institutions are growing for quality student supports services to link the gap that has been created by separation of learner and teacher. The advancement of telecommunication technologies i.e. the innovation of print, telephone, teleconference, audio, video, broad casting, and computer by the use of one or a number of media make inter personal communication of distance education to be replaced by mechanical or electronic communication. As a result, distance learners benefit from dialogue with the institution that provides the learning materials, the students will not be just recipient of it (keegan, 1995: 21-34).

According to Kaye and Rumble (1982) the administration of distance education is classified in to two. These are: course development and Student support services. The student support subsystem comprises the planning, crystallizing, and recording of the teaching in mechanical or electronic form and the student support sub-system comprises the activities by the institution to focus on the students home or institutional center near the students home that will provide private and individualized presentation of the pre-recorded course content. Together with simulation of teacher and peer group clarifications

that normally accompany the presentation of courses in oral, group-based educational provision is required. These two characteristics differentiate distance form of administration from other forms of educational administration.

Systems and procedures for learning support system focus on meeting the needs of distance students living in diverse conditions and different circumstances. The aim of systematic learning support in distance education is to facilitate quality student learning process suited to students' learning needs and flexibility, and ensure that students proceed their learning activities through access to various means of learning support.

Distance education institutions approach learning support system for students differently, depending upon the characteristics of their distance students, the availability of technology, the capacity of the institutions, and the learning cultures and styles of students. Learning support for distance students can be provided in face-to-face mode and mediated mode, such as through printed material, telephone, audio/video, radio, television and computer. The forms of learning support services to distance students can be categorized academic and non-academic support. Generally, academic support is provided to facilitate the development of cognitive, knowledge and learning skills aspects of the course. The non-academic support is provided to help the development of students' affective areas, advising and the administrative assistance to facilitate the students' learning process.

Student support services have proved to be most significant in explaining the success rate of students at distance teaching universities. Support systems are essential for all students, but most particularly for students from underprivileged back grounds. Since distance teaching universities deal effectively with large number of students from widely differing back ground, it is indispensable to reinforce teaching and learning by efficient delivery and support (Millis, and Tait, as cited in Rosenblit 1999).

The technology infrastructure reports only one dimension of networked learning environments. Equally important, if not more important, is the human infrastructure that provides support services to the learners. The support services organization has a role like the customer services operation in a business enterprise. It provides administrative directions, emphatic listening, moral support, and conflict resolution services. Many learners today are still not comfortable with computer technology and will require some type of coaching to build up their confidence. By providing comprehensive support services to the learners, the educational providers will increase the learners' personal comfort zone to concentrate more on the subject and less on the technology. Learners expect the instructions they receive for course registration, course access, and evaluation to be accurate, efficient, and trouble free. If they have trouble accessing or using the network, they expect someone to be available to help them Thomas (1997).

According to (Goel, 2001) student support services in distance education system are of greater significance than other models of higher education since the students in this system suffer from many limitations and problems. Some of these are:

1. Lack of physical proximity resulting in lack of confidence and thus the need of constant support and guidance from the faculty
2. Lack of adequate infrastructure-extra books, good library and fellow students
3. Lack of guidance from any source and fear of examination

Distance Education system is never something apart from students and their needs. Rather it is the means by which these needs are met and the distance education system which thinks of its existence as something apart from the students will fail to recognize significant problems of the students and the Distance Educational system will not be in a position to deliver the goods).

Distance education students encounter problems and live with all sorts of anxieties. Very few of them can study effectively on their own. Distance education, therefore, needs qualified personnel to counsel. They need the chance to discuss what they don't understand and often what they think they do understand with people who know about the subject. Such a help, whether it is face-to-face or at a distance, is the basis of tutoring and counseling services. They relate not only to academic problems, but also to personal study difficulties; they also consist of encouragement and resource. They should begin before the student enrolls, continue throughout the course, and include assistance in finding ways to follow up and apply what has been learned.

Academic services for distance education include tutorial services and study group activities. Distance education offering institutions tutorial services include face-to-face and mediated tutorials. The mediated tutorials include written, online, radio and televised tutorials. Face-to-face tutorial is a kind of learning support involving face-to-face sessions between a tutor and students. Mediated tutorial is a kind of tutorial support involving the use of media, such as radio, television, telephone, internet or written. Academic services for distance students manage tutorial services for distance students. The different characteristics and needs of distance students have implications on the type of tutorial modes that they prefer.

Counseling is usually provided by correspondence and in some cases over the telephone and through occasional face-to-face sessions. Proper advice must be based on knowledge of students and on their expectations. The tutor has to respond not only to student's questions that refer to the subject matter but also to questions on the distance teaching system in general, for example dispatch, complaints and enrollment problems.

Therefore, tutors need knowledge of the institution they are working for. Student services may include 1) advice and help in respect to choosing what to study, which involves the

service of pre application enquires and course choice guideline; 2) tuition; and 3) the counselor may help them on health, psychological, material etc. problems that relate to their study and strictly to their personal life. For instance, he may advise students with disabilities on how to use equipment and aid 4) Career and further study.

This again may require the combined expertise of professional career advisors and education guidance. Depending on the guiding philosophy, the pedagogical method, the size, and other features of the intuitions; the approach that can be applied by distance education students may vary. Strategic options for planning and organization of distance education students service can be delivery at home versus in some local center; distant versus face-to-face; generalized versus individualized; level of student interaction; and Synchronous versus asynchronous delivery.

According to Rumble (1992:66), the management of tutors and counselors is one of the most important areas because they influence the success of the system, indeed. However, the management dependence on a number of key considerations. These are:

- the status of tutor and counselor; part-time or full time
- location of tutor and counselor; campus based or off- campus
- involvement in course development
- Assumed role; would the two roles be combined or separated?

Distance education system should provide a separate service for tutors for at least the following reasons:

- Tutors may lack the knowledge, competence and skills to deal with all the questions and concerns of enquires and applicants

- Counseling may involve playing advocacy role on behalf of the students, which is beyond the reach of the responsibility of a tutor.

The counselor may be the first contact for resolution of appeals against unsatisfactory or unfair performance of tutors. It is an accepted fact that adult learners have certain psychosocial needs, which may not be met academically, but are nevertheless important to consider when planning a learning experience, some of these are need for kindness; need for recognition; need for new experiences; and need for exercising leadership, decision making and responsibility. It is therefore, through the identification of learner characteristics that program organization can establish, the learning need of the target group of any given program, content and methodology to be used.

Several students identified a need to know more about what is expected of them in a distance course. Prospective students need to know that a distance course requires self-discipline, self-motivation, the ability to work independently, and perseverance. Information concerning interaction in the distance course should also be provided. Most students surveyed indicated a preference to be able interrupt the instruction in order to ask a question but did not know that this technique was appropriate or permitted Thomas (1997).

A critical reflection on distance education practices clearly reveals the need for the students to regard student support services as an integrated part of distance education rather than as a marginal or supplementary one. Only then will the students effectively utilize the student support services offered by the open universities. In order to make the student support services really effective and efficient, it is necessary to give a good deal of thought to the quality of the services offered by the student support services. Therefore, systems for measuring the services have to be set up at the distance universities on a priority basis.

### **2.3 Process of Tutorial Service**

Tutorial is the most important aspect of a Distance Education system to bring together students and faculty face-to-face. A well organized tutorial has tremendous potentialities for a distance learner. After attending tutorial, he/she feels secure, comfortable, and motivated to learn and move ahead. Interaction between students and the instructor is a vital component of any educational program. But it takes unique characteristics in distance education. Tutoring refers to a process through which a student receives additional assistance with his course work or remedial instruction from either a trained student or professionals (Holmberg, 2000:106).

The management of face-to-face tutorials, including planning, recruitment of tutors and students, organizing and evaluation are under the responsibility of tutorial service department and tutorial coordinators. As part of quality assurance to standardize tutorial services, a manual of conducting Face-to-Face Tutorial has to be published as guideline and this manual has been evaluated, revised and improved continuously based on feedback from students and tutors. Socialization of tutorial service provision has been done using a variety of methods, such as sending memorandum to Regional Offices, poster, announcement through radio network, and sending leaflet directly to students.

Besides, dissemination of information about tutorial is also given during the New Student Orientation Program, in study group activities. In this regard the experience of countries like Indonesia shows that, conducting face-to-face tutorials in Regional Office involves the following steps. The first step is the identification of courses for face-to-face tutorials. For the Primary Teacher Training Program, this step is relatively simple because the courses for tutorials have been set up in the curriculum. The final decision about the actual courses with tutorials is based on the number of students registered for

participation in the courses with tutorials. The second step is the tutor recruitment process.

In conventional system of education, learning is greatly influenced by the dynamic interaction process that goes on between a teacher and his/ her students. In distance education system such face to face interaction is almost absent. Infrastructure, class room and laboratory facilities, availability of qualified teachers are the main criteria for the selection of a tutorial centre. Academic qualification and experiences are taken under consideration for selection of a tutor. Besides delivering lecture, they evaluate assignments called tutor marked assignments prepared and supplied by the institutions. The tutorial classes are conducted as per academic calendar for respective program prepared and supplied by the university college. Although, tutorial centers are at different places in the country, tutorial class begin and end according to the uniform schedule. There is a tutorial centre coordinator for each tutorial centre. The coordinators are responsible for monitoring the whole academic process throughout the semester and conduct examination. Indeed, learners depend upon the tutorial services. Performance of the tutorial centre is therefore very important to evaluate because it has impacts on the learners' performance.

### **Tutors Qualification, Experience and Tutor's Duty**

The tutor's qualification, training especially training in distance learning and experience play an important role in the learning process. Tutor's involvement in tutorial service activities apart from usual teaching shows their interest in distance education and distance learners. An efficient tutor is one who prepares lessons according to a precise plan and in a well-structured manner. Tutor should prepare assignments, evaluate and arrange special test for evaluating learners' performance. Also they should communicate results to the learner in time. The extent to which tutors are not engaged in tutorial centre related

activities after tutorial hours is a poor indication of tutor commitment to their learners, tutorial services and their profession.

Baath( in Keegan 1995, p.92) clearly indicated that there is evidence to show that distance learners need special help with the start of their studies and that they need help in particular to promote their study motivation. He sees the role of the tutor going well beyond that of correcting errors and assessing students' progress. This is the role of the distance tutor: he/she can have important pedagogical functions not only that of correcting errors and assessing students' papers. He may play a principal part in the linking of learning materials to learning-by trying to relate the learning material to each students' previous reinforcement patterns, to his previous knowledge and cognitive structure, to his previous comprehension of the basic concepts and principles of the curriculum or by concentrating on the task of establishing a good personal relationship with the learner.

A study conducted by Stevenson and Sander (1998) indicated that there is a difference between how students expect to be taught and how they would like, and not like, to be taught. In addition to this the findings of the study shows that tutor who has tutoring responsibilities and wishes to respond to their student expectations may benefit from applying the Expectations Led Planned Organization model (ELPO) to their tutoring. According to this model the tutor considers how the course might be structured and then accesses the student expectations of good tutoring.

Studies indicated that the value of having knowledge of individual learners is very important for optimizing the learning of individual students in conventional class rooms as it has been reported in a number of places (Marland1997).On the other hand, advocates of distance learning agreed that , the link between teaching effectiveness and knowledge of students apply to distance teaching. This is because knowledge of the individual

students allows us to individualize or particularize provisions for each learner and so enhance opportunities for learning. Moreover, such knowledge eventually can sharpen perceptions about the strengths and weaknesses inherent in the distance education materials and use the point to ways of improving them.

Some examples of the way in which detained knowledge of individual distance students can be used to good effect.

- ❖ Knowledge of a student's work context (many distance students are in full time employment) may provide insights in to the reasons for learning problems and orientation to study and provide a basis for choice of examples or terminology by the distance tutor in dialogue with the learner.
- ❖ Knowledge of a students study environment could influence the distance tutor's advice about resources to use, reaction to late submission of work and suggestions about gaining access to support.
- ❖ Knowledge of a student's conception of learning may be reflected in the nature of feedback provided on assignment work, negotiations with the learner about goals and techniques in project work for assessment and advice.

The tutor interrogates his/her tutorial plan to see if it can be modified to accommodate specific student expectations or preferences and whether he/she can adjust activities that students suggest are disliked or not helpful to their learning. The amended teaching plan is circulated to students explaining why the activities have been selected. Evaluation of the tutoring plan can be gained from traditional post event or post course evaluation.

### **Constructive Effects of Learning Support Services on Student Learning Success**

Effective learning support system has constructive effects on student learning success in distance education. Effective learning support enhances student learning. Learning takes

place in various format and modes. Students are motivated to learn through peer interaction, working on assignments, and interacting with tutors and peers. Distance students are well informed about the variety of learning support system from which they can choose to suit their needs and circumstance (Zulkabir & Thaib, as cited in TOJDE, 2007).

**Motivating students to learn:** Distance students are provided with diverse learning opportunities and activities in order to motivate them to learn. They are encouraged to actively engage themselves in various learning opportunities through study groups, tutorial sessions conducted in the face-to-face mode and the distance mode. The learning materials are designed systematically to encourage independent learning through clear objectives, description of concept and examples, use of cases, self-assessment exercises, formative and summative evaluation. The learning support system is designed to motivate students' learning in various ways using various modes and means. Students develop the motivation and willingness to learn (Darmayanti, as cited in TOJDE, 2007).

**Encouraging learning interaction:** The sharing of learning experiences in distance education takes place through various forms of learning interaction, social interaction, learner-tutor interaction, peer interaction and learner-content interaction). The provision of various learning support services facilitates constructive student learning interaction that eventually develops students' knowledge and abilities through distance education (Karnedi, as cited in TOJDE, 2007).

**Providing varied learning strategies:** Distance students develop a variety of learning experiences through the use of a variety of learning strategies, styles and media (Julaeha, as cited in Zuhairi 2007). They are exposed to different kinds of learning support system provided by the institution. Distance students learn in group, on individual bases, through scheduled learning activities, and on autonomous learning basis. Effective learning

support system should direct students on how to study the learning materials, how to answer self-assessment questions, how to work on assignments, and how to go through the tough requirements of distance learning successfully.

**Promoting independent learning:** Distance education is based on learner self-direction and independent learning, conducted in group as well as on individual basis. An important task for the institution is to ensure that the following learning requirements take place. The institution should effectively motivate students to learn, direct tutors to develop assignments, develop learning activities for students to follow up tutorials and group interaction, and design the learning materials in such a way that enhances independent learning (Harsasi, 2002). Distance education develops constructive learning culture through learner self-direction and independent learning habits.

## **2.4 Course Development and Distribution**

Course development for distance education implies the preparation of print and non-print materials plus the production of a total learning experience for the distance student that will parallel all the facilities that are characteristics of on-campus education, including additional homework, laboratory practices, and library research periods and all the activities of face-to-face study.

In principle, course development should follow the stages of course planning, preparation, and tryout for their usability and improvement activities. According to (Raghunath, in Zenebe 2005), it must follow a systems approach starting with identification of needs, then setting objectives to the curriculum, go for preparing the materials and finally evaluate their usability or effectiveness.

To be able to develop its own course material, a distance education institution must have an organization for educational editorial work. The development of course

materials requires an establishment that is a combination of a research institute and a publisher's editorial office, providing facilities for course developers to work with various media, in some cases including radio and TV and, as a rule, arrangements for recording.

The internal organization for course development can thus be limited to an editorial body with educational, subject-based and technical expertise that enables it to develop courses and to control and administer co-operation with external organizations. Distance-study institutions may decide to go beyond these limitations, for instance by creating their own research units and organizing teaching faculties of their own. At the tertiary level it may be important for distance study institutions to do this to ensure recognition as real universities equaling traditional universities in prestige.

Design of instruction to be delivered to distant learners is probably the most significant determinant of learning outcomes. Well-designed and developed instructional experiences are required in order for distance instruction to be successful.

Any subject material that is presented as learning material, is organized by the author in a special way so as to ease the learning. In distance education this organization is often carried further than what we find in a regular text book. Distance education school people sometimes talk about a "built-in—teacher", and what they mean is that the learning material is not only presented with a logically clear organization, but also that the student's way through the course is pointed out and all necessary guidance given his/her way through the course.

Over-structured materials may enhance passive learning, though all distance teaching universities devote much thought to the interactive dimensions in their texts. Thus, the

limitations inherent to distance learning technologies served as catalysts for the development of original methods in instructional design to increase interactive learning (Parer, Moore&Kearsely, as cited in Zuhiri 2007).Holmberg (1986) for example, developed the notion of guided didactic conversation in self-study texts. The principle underlying this concept is that simulated interaction, through the presentation of subject-matter in pre-produced courses, should replace part of the interaction of a regular face-to-face meeting, by forcing students to consider different views, approaches and solutions and generally interact with the course content. Course writers should then converse with students through special techniques inserted in the written discourse.

In practice, distance teaching differs from simply publishing and distributing books in three ways (IGNOU, 1995): that is in its use of a variety of different media, in its structure, and in its system for feedback.

1. The need to use a number of different media has led in turn to a concern with structure in distance teaching. In writing a book, an author can dodge questions of structures or can select the structure that he finds intellectually most rewarding. If, on the other hand, the objective is to produce a package of materials that will teach effectively, then we are forced in to thinking about the structure of the content and the structure of the media-the way in which the different media will relate to each other. The criterion then becomes educational effectiveness: the best course is the one that teaches most effectively.
2. Material offered to a student in the absence of a teacher needs to be structured in such a way that it encourages the student in to learning activities that go beyond passively reading or listening or watching. The development of an appropriate structure makes effective distance teaching possible; it also sharpens the distinction between it and the regular production of books or broadcast programs.

3. Good distance teaching also depends on a system of feedback. No matter how carefully educational materials are prepared, they will not meet the needs or answer the problems of all the students for whom they are intended. A system of feedback enables students who have problems with the pre-prepared material to receive some help; it also enables the producers of distance teaching materials to assess how far they have been successful in what they were trying to achieve. Feedback is necessary both for learners who cannot otherwise overcome their learning difficulties and for teachers who cannot otherwise see how effective their teaching has been.

Tutors involvement in course development: just as course developers should undertake some tutoring, so it makes sense to involve a few tutors in developing new course. This brings practical experience of teaching a course in to the course development process. However, most tutors will not be involved in developing courses. Course developers therefore need to develop briefing and training materials and sessions to orientate tutors to the underlying rationale for the course, and the pedagogic strategy it is planned to use. They will also need guidance on marking assignments and examinations, including bench mark scripts. Much of this can be done through a tutor's course manual.

The effectiveness of course materials can undoubtedly be enhanced by constructive thinking forwards to the kinds of help and interaction learners are likely to need. On the other hand, the effectiveness of the relationship between materials producers and facilitators feeds through to the effectiveness of learning and thus to the quality of the course as experienced.

For the distribution of course materials a very special organization is necessary. However, as print is a technically simple medium, the need for effective management systems to develop and deliver printed texts is often underestimated (World Bank, 1992:33 as cited in

Tesfaye 2002).Delays in sending texts to student and failure to deliver texts to all students on the course were a recurrent problem in a number of institutions. The dissemination of materials and the submission of assignment by students to tutors are for the most part by post. However, postal services are somewhat uneven. According to Holomberg, (1989:138), course units and other learning materials for distribution to students are handled in practice in three basically different ways.

## **2.5 The Effectiveness of Tutorial (Face-To –Face) Program**

Research on the field of distance education indicated that distance learning can be considered as effective as face-to-face learning. According to the studies that were compiled (Russell, as cited in Sander 1998), there is no significant difference between distance learning and traditional classroom learning. As a matter of fact, it is very clear that instruction delivered to distant learners is effective and that learning outcomes can be successfully attained when offered to students at a distance (Hanson, & Anglin, as cited in Michael 2002).

(Perraton, in IGNOU, 1995) developed a theoretical structure which effectively displays the argument in favor of distance education. His argument starts with the hypothesis that different media are similar in their effectiveness for teaching. This is based on the results of comparative studies of the use of print, radio, film, television, and live teachers.

Different comparative studies have been carried out on different media in their effectiveness for teaching and the general conclusions from them are that it is factors such as the pedagogical quality and clarity of presentation, the relevance of the content, and the motivation and interest of the learners, which are the significant variables, rather than the particular medium of instruction. In these regard, the face-

to-face teacher's or tutor's role becomes that of a facilitator of learning rather than a transmitter of information, and the group becomes a key forum for debate, discussion, and feedback.

A question that is under debate is to what extent face-to-face sessions should be used for the purpose of securing cognitive learning by discussion and application of the knowledge acquired to themes brought up in direct contact with tutors and fellow students. One school of thinking finds face-to-face sessions essential, another finds them unnecessary and even, in some cases, harmful. No conclusive proof has been established either to prove the necessity of face-to-face elements or to reject them as conventional embellishments. However, in cases where courses completion within a pre-determined period of time is a target, students using supplementary face-to-face sessions have often been found to be particularly successful (Holomberg, 1981).

It is clear from the research literature that distance education works. Why it works and how it works is important. However, the following conclusions about instruction delivered to distant learners are directly related to effectiveness.

- Training in effective instructional strategies is critical for teachers of distant learners.
- Distance education courses should be carefully designed and developed before instruction begins.
- Visualization of ideas and concepts is critical when designing instruction to be delivered to distant learners
- Adequate support systems must be in place to provide the distant learner with access to resources and services.
- Interaction between the instructor and students and among students must be possible and encouraged.

- Assessment should be designed to relate to the specific learning outcomes of the instructional experiences.

On the other hand, (Garrels, as cited in Gibbs 1976) describes five critical elements for successful teaching at a distance:

1. Instructor enthusiasm. This requires animation and comfort in front of the camera, or with the technology utilized. Faculty support and interest are critical to the success of distance learning endeavors.
2. Organization. Teaching materials must be prepared in advance; timing, variation, and smooth transitions must be planned. Instructors should allocate from 3 to 5 hours of preparation for each hour of distance instruction. Great attention to detail is required long before the actual classroom activity occurs (summers, as cited in Stevenson 1998).
3. Strong commitment to student interaction. Whatever the modality used to teach at a distance, the instructor must encourage and facilitate ongoing communication between the students and the instructor.
4. Familiarity with the technology used in the class format. Faculty development is important before beginning any distance activities, and instructors should be trained in video use, computer use, or other forms of instructional technology used.
5. Critical support personnel. Production staff, graphic designers, and technical staff members will help the instructional setting produce successful teaching at a distance.

Furthermore, (St. Pierre, as cited in Mielke, 1997) explained that Students in distance education settings perform as well or better on assignments, class activities, and exams when compared to campus-based students. Nevertheless, students must maintain persistence and a clear focus to succeed in a distance learning situation. Self-direction, a passion for learning, and strong individual responsibility are important influences on

achievement. There are indications that distance education works best for more mature, motivated, well-organized, and already accomplished learners (Rintala, as cited in Zuhiri 2007).

Distance education dictates changes in behavior for both the tutor and the learner. The successful student develops persistence and skills in self-directing work. The successful distance education tutor becomes conversant with new technology and develops new instructional styles, moving from creating instruction to managing resources and students and disseminating views (Strain, as cited in Mielke 1997). On the other hand, administrative and faculty support for distance education are critical to the success of this instructional method. Administrators should take note that the implementation of a distance education program may allow access to a greater number of students. However, the time and work associated with teaching at a distance exceeds the normal requirements of campus-based instruction (Mielke, 1997). Therefore, distance education can be as effective as any other category of instruction. Learning occurs and knowledge is retained. Students report that they have learned and they feel their distance learning experiences are as successful as more traditional education. The keys to successful distance education are in the design, development and delivery of instruction, and are not related to geography or time.

Learners come to the tutorial center to solve their course related problems, get necessary information and acquiring knowledge. Indeed, tutorial services play an important role for obtaining knowledge in-depth. The quality of education depends on what goes on in the tutorial centers and class room. Therefore, face to face interaction is significant. Conditions and infrastructure of the tutorial centre, tutor's qualification, experience and training in distance learning, teaching style and strategies are of importance in the process of acquiring education through distance mode of delivery.

The success of the tutorial depends upon micro-planning so that the benefits can be optimized. In line with this, the student support service and tutorial coordinators have to consider the following questions while they prepare a tutorial program. What should involve in planning tutorial programs? How to go about it? What constraints may be kept in mind?

Regarding improving learning output and outcome studies indicated that effective learning support improves learning output and outcome, in terms of improved grades, graduation rate, mastery of learning materials, improved skills and competencies (Wardani, as cited in Zuhairi 2007). Graduates of distance education institutions have survived the tough academic training that has required independent and autonomous learning process. So the graduates can develop themselves to become independent professionals and effective facilitators in any learning organization.

## **2.6 Evaluation of Tutorial Program**

Evaluation of distance education is necessary from the view point of justifying internal as well as external validity of the system. Since distance education is a society sponsored institution and aims at maximum involvement of people belonging to different cross sections of society, everybody would raise questions and seek answers with regard to the efficiency and effectiveness of the system from one angle or the other.

The criteria for evaluation may differ depending on the context of study. For instance, while social responsiveness of distance education can be considered as criteria for evaluation, the instructional comparability of distance education system with regular courses in terms of its products can be another criterion. Some may be interested in studying the effectiveness of the distance education instructional system with reference to

the achievement of different objectives meant for specific courses; in other cases, the evaluation criteria may be fixed with differential levels of long term impacts of distance education on its products, and match them with man power requirements at a given time and cost effectiveness. If the system does not achieve success in a specific case, it may be worthwhile to raise questions about its limitations on the specific concerned.

Evaluation is ultimately justified as a basis for decision making for distance education program. About the best means of attaining the ends of distance education, both the objectives and the processes however may differ from the intent. The possible decisions required in each of these areas are include the following.

- Decisions may have to be made regarding intended ends. They may require classification. Some may be unachievable within existing constraints; others more realistic and equally desirable may have to be found. In this area, the concern with the determination of needs and with the general nature and objectives of a program designed to meet those needs.
- Decisions may have to be made regarding intended means. Processes may be ineffective or require clarification or refinement.
- Better prepared tutors and revised materials may be needed. Costs may be too high. In this area we are concerned with appraising attainments, judging satisfaction, and establishing continuing quality- control arrangements.
- Decisions may have to be made regarding actual means. The processes used may differ from or conflict with those intended because of conscious adjustments and improvements or a regression to habitual or infers or practices. More refinement and more control may be required. Following alternations and adjustments (Lee, as cited in Thomas, E.1997).

With regard to management of instructional processes, it is crucial to have quality control on the production and improvement of learning packages, appropriate integration of work by subject's specialists and experts on communication technology and scheduling of production and dispatch of materials. Management of two way communication between learners and the instructors/institutions through assignment-responses, study center activities and personal contact programs is crucial for effective instructional processes in distance education. Moreover, synchronization of mass systems like radio and TV which remain mostly outside the purview of distance education institutions, with distance education is another challenge for the management of distance education. Evolving suitable alternative mechanisms of management for the instructional system and studying their effectiveness is one of the major concerns of research on education.

Students are increasingly being asked to make judgments on the quality of learning experience provided in the traditional university setting through course evaluation questionnaires. Quality assurance is sweeping into distance education systems too. But we suggest that satisfaction with distance tutoring received will be directly linked to the expectations those students had of tutoring when they "signed on". Since the tutor rarely accesses student expectations of tutoring, they run the risk of being judged as ineffective tutors against the students' hidden expectations.

It seems illogical to have students judge a tutor's performance on criteria that are hidden from the tutor. If the tutor were given the student expectations before the course begins he/she would have the opportunity to consider how to meet justified suggestions or in cases where particular student expectations are unrealistic, explain and manage the expectations to realistic levels. In either event the tutor is able to work with, and respond to, the students' expectations. Consequently, judgment by students of how well the tutor

Evaluation questions typically center on the completion of a specific activity and often are answered yes or no. questions such as the following are often asked:

- i) Was the appropriate number of class sessions held?
- ii) How many copies of program materials were produced, and how many were distributed? Accountability information is collected from program administrative records and staff.

The effectiveness component of the evaluation process attempts to place some value on the program's activities. Effectiveness questions often focus on participant attitudes and knowledge. Obviously, grades, achievement tests and attitude inventories are measure of effectiveness. Often raters are asked to review course materials and course presentations to determine their effectiveness and student course evaluations can be used to collect reactions from distant education participants. Examples of questions to determine effectiveness include:

- 1) Were the students satisfied with their distance education course?
- 2) Did the students learn what they were supposed to learn?
- 3) Did the teachers feel adequately prepared to teach distance learners?

During the impact phase of evaluation, questions focus on identifying the changes that resulted from the program activities, and they are tied to the stated outcomes of the program. What structures, policies, or events in the organization or environment helped or hindered the program in accomplishing its goals? is one of the questions in the organizational context phase of the evaluation. The Unanticipated Consequences component of the AEIOU approach identifies unexpected changes that occurred as a result of the program.

Brief analysis of the nature of the discipline, the aims of the course and some of the basic pedagogic principle that apply at the introductory level suggests a number of criteria for evaluation of distance courses. These are:

1. The criterion of appropriateness: - the course is appropriate to the student body for which it is intended; there preparedness for study, exceptions, aims and interest.
2. The criterion of engagement: - the breadth and depth of treatment of the subject-matter, and the level of discourse, are manageable; that students in trust are sustained. This raises the question whether students do infect find to courses they study interesting, pleasurable and challenging.
3. The criterion of performance: - teaching of the central processes and concepts of discipline enables students to study successfully at the level concerned.

Controlling is the process of measuring work performance, comparing result with objectives and taking corrective actions as needed. Controlling involves the process of monitoring performance and taking actions to ensure desired result. Distance education as an institution that involves various functions in its system, requires effective controlling mechanisms. Controlling in distance education may be more complex than conventional system for it hardly allows immediate supervision. However, the common management failure is unwillingness or inability to specifically measure the performance accomplishments of people at work. Controlling from distance education point of view should clearly identify who the students are, what their academic behavior is, what distance education program is? (Shermerhorn, as cited in Moore 1996 ).

## **UNIT 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN**

This study was aimed at investigating the effectiveness of tutorial program in distance education at the tertiary level. The study was conducted with reference to Alpha and Admas University Colleges. These institutions provide different courses in Certificate, Diploma and Degree programs through distance education.

### **3.1 Design**

A mixed research design is employed for this research work with the intent of addressing the issue in question. This method was selected with the hope that it will help answer the basic question of the study as desired by the researcher via producing a pertinent data.

In this type of design qualitative and quantitative data are used for supporting and validating each other. Responses from the questionnaires, interview, focus group discussion and experiences from class room observation and document analysis are analyzed and interpreted in a complementary manner with relation to conceptual frameworks and empirical evidences in the nature of tutorial in distance education.

#### **Major variables of the study**

Independent variables like educational levels, social class (income level, educational attainment), gender, age group, engagement (teacher or student); academic stream and place of origin (rural/ urban) could have been considered all in at once, however to make the study manageable and to use available literature within the reach of the researcher, only gender and occupation (teacher or student) are taken as the independent variable of the study. On the other hand, this study has taken extent of learner's satisfaction in tutors support method, extent of learners –tutors preparedness, learners' attendance at the tutorial centers, content adequacy of the course materials, and style of presentation of the materials, tutors methods of supports or presentation as the dependent variables.

### **3.2 Participants**

The populations for this study were made of administrators, tutorial coordinators, tutors and distance education students (3<sup>rd</sup> year) have been taken as a target group using availability sampling techniques. Third year students were selected with the assumption that they have reach experience in distance education as compared to others.

Due to the fact that registration schedule in distance education is continuous, it is difficult to know the exact number of students who are expected to complete in a given academic year. Based on the information obtained from the concerned body in the colleges under study in addition to the main campus located in Addis Ababa the researcher prefers Adama and A/Hawasa as the main site due to large population of the students.

#### **Sampling Technique**

According to the information obtained from the former Higher Education Relevance and Quality Agency (HERQA) but currently known as Education and Training Quality Assurance Agency (ETQAA), there are about 13 private distance education offering institutions. In this study the researcher selected the two colleges under study purposefully.

The selected two institutions conduct distance education program throughout the country. In addition to tutorial centers in the main campus the researcher selected purposefully only two tutorial centers from each college which are outside the capital. These two tutorial centers were selected due to their large population of students. For this study availability of sampling procedure were used because it is not possible to collect data from all participants at the same time at the given specific

area. Therefore, the researcher decided to collect the data while the distance learners are working on examination or attending face –to-face tutorial program.

The total sample size of this study was 266. That is 200 students, 10 academic staff, 50 tutors which are available at the selected tutorial centers from both colleges and 6 tutorial co-coordinators.

During the selection of 10 students (excluded from the sample size) who participated in the focus group discussion the help of tutorial coordinator at Hawasa campus of Alpha University College was very great especially in locating students who could give good information. This is to mean in the selection of students he attempt to have students that are from different places far from the tutorial centers. And this made it possible to have respondents that were from different backgrounds. In the discussion two female and eight male students were selected with availability sampling technique. Similarly, 5(2 from Alpha, 3 from Admas at Hawasa campus) volunteers male tutors, were selected purposefully with the help of the tutorial coordinators for interview. Furthermore, 6 volunteers' students were selected purposefully with the assumption that they could provide valuable information with the help of the tutorial coordinators from the main and Adama campus of Admas University College for interview.

### **3.3 Instruments**

In order to collect qualitative and quantitative data, from the primary sources, different instruments were developed, commented, pilot tested and were employed for gathering information. To this end questionnaire, observation, interview, and focus group discussion have been used as an instrument for data collection. Furthermore, from the document analysis pertinent information about the selection criteria of tutors and tutorial

centers were gathered. The statements below give a detailed description of instruments and the way the data were gathered.

For gathering quantitative data, the main sources of information were distance learners and tutors. Survey questionnaires were distributed to 200 students and 50 tutors. A structured questionnaire is constructed separately for the learners and tutors of the colleges under study. The questionnaire has three separate parts in accordance with the objective and significance of the study. Part one of the questionnaire contained personal information about the respondents.

Part two contained close-ended questions (18 items) for students and 12 items for tutors. Both groups of the items were constructed on a five-point adopted Likert-type rating scale. The attitude scale is followed by five responses such as 5(Strongly agree) = SA, 4(Agree) = A, 3(Undecided) = U, 2(Disagree) = D, and 1(Strongly disagree) = SD. The closed type questions give a maximum of five alternatives to the respondents to select one or more according to her/his feeling of the learners and tutors about the tutorial.

Finally, in the third part of the questionnaire open ended items were included that thought to give more freedom for the respondents to write his/her feeling about the tutorial program.

For qualitative study, the researcher made observation at the selected centers for availability and adequacy of the required educational facilities, Interview was conducted with the administrative staff, tutorial coordinators, and tutors in planning and management of academic, educational facility issues, the problem encountered and the evaluation mechanism of running tutorial service. In order to triangulate the data interviews were made with distance learners. From the document analysis the criteria how tutors are recruited to deliver tutorial sessions, how quality instructional

materials are prepared and distributed timely, issues related with training will be assessed.

### **Questionnaires**

To cover larger data source questionnaires were developed for tutors and students. For both groups items were constructed for the variables and presented in a five point scale and open ended forms. The preparation and construction of items were done by reviewing the literature on concepts of student support service in general and tutorial services in particular. The researcher developed all items with a five point Likert scale forms together with some open ended items. Items were constructed in English language for both tutors and students. Then it was commented by the advisor of the research and was presented to a colleague who has graduated from the department of Measurement and Evaluation at a post graduate level. The comments given enabled the researcher to revise questions that are not focused to the research questions. As a result some items were dropped and some were added and some were improved.

The questionnaire for assessing tutors' opinion had 12 scaled items and 3 open ended items, while the questionnaire for assessing students' opinion had 18 scaled items together with 15 open ended items. The response sets for the scaled items were Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree Undecided and Strongly Disagree. This five point scale was selected because this will help in making respondents give a directional response.

### **Interview**

This method was used by the researcher with the assumption that the method enables to gather in-depth data that substantiate the data obtained from other methods.

### **Observation**

This method of data collection was employed for tutors while they were tutoring. It was done with the purpose of grasping the actual class room practices of tutors. Observation checklist was developed to enable the researcher have insight in to points to be focused. In this process the researcher conducted the observation by taking a non participant observer's role.

The observation was conducted in the main campuses of the institutions under study. With the consent of the tutors the researcher observed five different classes (2 observations from Alpha, 3 observations from Admas). Alpha University College uses the main campus where as Admas uses Abyot Ermija primary and secondary school located in Olompya.

### **Focus Group Discussion**

The intention of the focus group discussion was to triangulate or have perfect information regarding the expectation of students from attending the tutorial sessions and the role of tutors. The focus group discussion was formulated with 4 semi structured questions. These items were used in order to explore different views for facilitating the discussion so that the participants can revolve around the theme of the study.

### **Document analysis**

This method of data collection were used for the purpose of checking the availability of written documents which show the criteria for the selections of Tutors, the evaluation mechanism of the performance of tutors and issues related with training.

### **3.4 Procedures**

On informed consent of the colleges under study the above mentioned ways of data collection were employed. All the participants of the study were informed by tutorial coordinators and partly by the researcher about the purpose of the study before the questionnaires were distributed. Furthermore, during the administration of the questionnaire clarifications were given on some points which were not clear for students. After administration of the questionnaires 97% from Admas and 93 % from Alpha return rate was secured from students and 100% return rate was secured from tutors of both University Colleges.

#### **Pilot Study**

After the preparation of the instruments on variables of the study, tryout was done on the items to get validity and reliability information. The preparation and testing the relevance and consistency of the items were done by consulting pertinent bodies that have knowledge and experience in testing and measurement.

The test try out was conducted in Alpha University College. From this institution 7 tutors and 19 students (excluded from the sample size) were selected as participants from students who were available for their problem through availability sampling procedures. For ascertaining the reliability and consistency of the questionnaires, the software Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 16 was used. In the process it was found that the items reliability needs to be improved by dropping some items. As the result some items were dropped from both tutors and students. Finally, the items for measuring the opinions of tutors and students gave the Cronbach reliability level 0.78 and 0.79 respectively.

The table below shows the distribution of the final version of the questionnaires for the selected sites.

Table 1: List of distributions of the questionnaires

Center	Students	Tutors
Addis Ababa	100(50 for each college)	30(15 for each college)
Adama	50(25 for each college)	10 (5for each college)
Hawasa	50(25 for each college)	10 (5for each college)
Total	200	50

### **3.5 Methods of Data Analysis**

Before commencing the data analysis the questionnaires were checked for response accuracy. And it was found that almost all of tutors' responses were good to be included where as some of the responses of students (5 questionnaires from each college) were not filled properly as the result they were rejected. After the questionnaires were returned from the respondents, the process of encoding was carried out using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 16. The data collected through closed-ended questions were organized coded, and presented.

Then the data obtained through different methods of data collection were organized, categorized and interpreted. For this purpose different statistical tools were used to analyze the data. These statistical tools were used to quantify, and describe similarities and difference between different groups of respondents. T- Test was used to analyze the significance of differences between the responses of the two colleges.

Conclusion/summary was drawn based on the discussion which is expected to answer to the basic questions and finally feasible recommendations were forwarded.

## **CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF DATA**

The objective of this section is to present, analyze and discuss the data that is received through the instruments. Based on self report of the respondents, their background information and responses on the itemed scales, opens ended items, the focus group discussion, interview, document analysis and facts from the observation conducted are discussed. The presentation and discussion are organized and presented in such a way that the demographic information is discussed first followed by the responses to the scaled items coupled with responses from the open ended questions ,interview, and focus group discussion, document analysis as well as themes from the observation undertaken.

### **4.1. Demographic Information**

In this study tutors and students from two private higher institutions who engaged in offering distance Education throughout the country are taken as a sample and their demographic characteristic is presented in tables and discussed down here. The presentation will discuss tutors' background first followed by the students'.

#### 4.1.1. Tutors' Background Information

**Table 2: Gender of Tutors**

Name of the University College	Gender		
	Female	Male	Total
Alpha	3	22	25
% of Total	6.0	44	50
Admas	5	20	25
% of Total	10	40	50
Total Count	8	42	50
% of Total	16	84	100

From Table 2 it can be observed that the total number of tutors taken as a sample was 50 and the number of tutors is seen to be equal from both institutes. As a result 25(50%) of the samples are taken from Alpha University college, from which 22 are male and 3 are female. From Admas University College 5 female and 20 male tutors are taken as a sample and they constitute 50% of the total sample.

**Table 3: Qualification of Tutors**

Name of the University College	Qualification		
	BA/BSC	MA/Msc	Total
Alpha	15	10	25
% of Total	30	20	50
Admas	19	6	25
% of Total	38	12	50
Total Count	34	16	50
% of Total	68	32	100

The educational level and year of service of tutors and the management were among the most important areas of focus in distance education, because they influence the success of the system.

The data in table 3 show that, the total number of tutors, 34(68%) were first degree holders. And 16(32%) of the total number were second degree holders. Unfortunately, there were no PhD holders in the sample.

**Table 4: Experience of tutors**

Institutions	Years of experience							
	1-5	%	6-10	%	Above 10	%	Total	%
Admas	5	20	8	32	12	48	25	50
Alpha	4	16	10	40	11	44	25	50
Total	9	18	18	36	23	46	50	100

In general, it is indicated in the table above that tutors have an experience that ranges from one up to above ten years. From this range of experience, from the total number of tutors 9(18%) have an experience of teaching from one to five years and 18(36 %) of them have an experience from six to ten years while 23(46% ) self reported that they have above ten years of teaching experience.

**Table 5: Tutors field of specialization**

Name of the University College	Field of specialization					
	Education	%	Other	%	Total	%
Admas	8	16	17	34	25	50
Alpha	9	18	16	32	25	50
Total	17	34	33	66	50	100

Regarding the discipline they have taken as a major program of specialization 17(34%) have self reported that they have graduated majoring in Education. On the other hand, 33(66%) have replied that they have graduated majoring in programs other than Education.

#### 4.1.2. Students' Background Information

**Table 6: Gender of Students**

Name of the University College	Gender		Total
	Female	Male	
Alpha	26	62	88
% of Total	14.4	34.4	48.9
Admas	28	64	92
% of Total	15.6	35.6	51.1
Count	54	126	180
% of Total	30	70	100

As shown in table 6, from the total of 88 students from alpha, 26(14.4%) were females, 62(34.4) were male. On the other hand, among the total sample students from Admas, 28(15.6%) were female students and 64(35.6%) were male students.

**Table 7: Educational Background of Students**

Name of the University College	Qualification		Total
	BA/BSC	Diploma	
Alpha	10	78	88
% of Total	5.5	43.3	48.9
Admas	14	78	92
% of Total	7.7	43.3	51.1
Count	24	156	180
% of Total	13.3	86.6	100

As it can be seen from the table 7, from the total number of students, 156 (43.3%) from each were Diploma holders and 10(5.5%) from Alpha, 14(7.7%) from Admas were degree holders.

There is no limitation as regards educational back grounds and qualifications to attend distance education. The social and economic back grounds of the students are diverse, from the low, middle to high income groups of the society. These unique characteristics have implications on the opportunities and constraints for participation in tutorial program. In this regard, an interview with tutorial coordinators and tutors revealed that the academic back ground of the students was not up to standard as a result students lack motivation and showed little effort and achievement.

**Table 8: frequency and percentage distribution of respondents with field of specialization**

Institutions	Field of study	male	%	Female	%	Total
Alpha	Accounting	15	17	13	14.7	28
	Management	20	22.7	8	9.0	28
	Economics	10	11.4	4	4.5	14
	Law	17	19.3	1	1.1	18
Total		62	70.5	26	29.3	88
Admas	Accounting	28	30.4	20	21.7	48
	Management	20	21.4	3	3.3	23
	Economics	8	8.7	1	1.1	9
	Law	8	8.7	4	4.3	12
Total		64	69.2	28	30.4	92

From Table 8 it can be observed that, field of specialization of the sample students were mixed. This diversified field of study is important to entertain different or similar perspective from the point of view of students.

#### 4. 2. Presentation, Analysis and Discussion of Data on the variables of the Study.

The objective of this section of the paper is to present the analysis and discussion of the data obtained through the five methods of data collection; questionnaire, interview, document analysis, FGD and observation. The analysis and discussion is organized in such a way that the information gathered from tutors is presented and discussed first followed by students. The discussion is presented based on the data gathered from the field together with scholarly views and empirical experiences from different sources. All discussions are expected to show the attempt made to answer the basic question of the research in relation to the variables of the study.

**Table 9: Tutors' rating of quality of infrastructure and class room facilities**

Name of the University College	Infrastructure and classroom of tutorial center facilities are quite suitable for teaching.					Total
	St.disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	St. Agree	
Alpha	0	2	3	9	11	25
% of Total	0	4	6	18	22	50
Admas	1	1	3	9	11	25
% of Total	2	2	6	18	22	50
Total Count	1	3	6	18	22	50
% of Total	2	6	12	36	44	100

Among the total of the respondents, the majority 22 (22 % from each) strongly agree with this statement. Some of the respondents, 18 (18 % from each) agreed. But 6 (6% from each) were undecided. However, 3 (4% from Alpha, 2 % from Admas) that disagreed, 1 (2% from Admas) strongly disagree with this statement.

The majority of the tutors' responses in the table 9 indicate that tutorial center facilities were adequate and convenient. Contrary to this, the minority of the respondents responded that tutorial centers were not convenient. In addition to this, in response to the open ended questions some of the tutors indicated that tutorial center lack facilities for the courses which requires training and demonstration.

In general, as it is indicated in Goel (2001) distance education institutions is never something apart from students and their needs; rather it is the means by which these needs are met. Therefore, distance offering institutions are expected to fill the gap so as to optimize the benefits of their students

**Table 10: Tutors' rating of the training policy adopted by the college**

Name of the University College	There is specific training policy adopted by the college for improving teaching skills					Total
	St.disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	St.Agree	
Alpha	5	2	9	6	3	25
% of Total	10	4	18	12	6	50
Admas	4	0	6	11	4	25
% of Total	8	.0	12	22	8	50
Total Count	9	2	15	17	7	50
% of Total	18	4	30	34	14	100

The data in table 10 show that from the total number of the respondents, 7(6% from Alpha, 8% from Admas) strongly agree with this statement, 17(12 % from Alpha, 22% from Admas) agreed, 15(18% from Alpha, 12% from Admas) undecided, 2(4%) of the respondents from Alpha disagreed but none were disagreed from Admas. However, 9(10 % from Alpha, 8% from Admas) strongly disagree with this statement.

Distance education system requires a variety of academic and non- academic staff involved to run the program adequately and effectively. The training program designed for the specific groups can serve several purposes. It can update their knowledge and skills to play their role up to the standard. It can also increase their motivation and commitment.

**Table 11: Tutors' rating on receiving training**

Name of the University College	Training has been given in a specific area based on the training policy of the college				Total
	St.disagree	Undecided	Agree	St.Agree	
Alpha	0	5	10	10	25
% of Total	.0	10	20	20	50
Admas	2	4	7	12	25
% of Total	4	8	14	24	50
Total count	2	9	17	22	50
% of Total	4	18	34	44	100

The data in table 11 show that, from the total number of respondents 22(20% from Alpha, 24% from Admas) strongly agree with this statement, 17(20% from Alpha, 14% from Admas) agreed.furthermore, 9 (10%fromAlpha, 8% from Admas) were undecided.2 (4%) from Admas strongly disagree but there were no response that strongly disagree with this statement from Alpha. However, there were no responses that disagreed from both colleges.

In this regard, from the responses of tutors in the open ended question it is indicated that the majority of the total respondents didn't receive formal training in distance education. Similarly, interview with tutors confirm that there is lack of training. The researcher asked one of the tutors whether he received training in distance education. He replied that,

*“No, but he believed the majority of the tutors and many students apparently do not understand the concept of distance education and still use the traditional methods of teaching and study.”*

An interview with another tutor revealed that training in distance education is very important. When asked about the importance of knowing student’s back ground and training in distance education he said that *“Knowing about the educational back grounds of students and an awareness of distance education can help tutors to be effective in classroom presentation and discussion in every direction or every issue. I don’t have any training or awareness on this issue but I just always tried to build common understanding as a way of avoiding an imbalanced educational process. But it would have been better if I was more trained on the issue”*.

In general, distance education institutions should provide a separate service for tutors for at least the reason that they may lack the knowledge, competence and skill to deal with all the questions and concerns of distance education.

**Table 12: Tutors’ rating on readiness for tutorial**

Name of the University College	Tutors are well prepared before lecture			Total
	Undecided	Agree	St. Agree	
Alpha	0	5	20	25
% of Total	.0	10	40	50
Admas	2	6	17	25
% of Total	4	12	34	50
Total Count	2	11	37	50
% of Total	4	22	74	100

As it can be seen in table 12, from the total number of respondents, 37(40% from Alpha, (34%) from Admas strongly agree.11 (10% from Alpha, and (12%) from Admas agreed with this statement, and 2(4%) were undecided. There were no responses that disagreed and strongly disagree with this statement from Admas.

In this regard, responses of student's survey and interview of students supported that the majority of the tutors came to the tutorial center being well prepared. Furthermore, the personal observation of the researcher at the tutorial center confirms that tutors were well organized while they present the lesson.

**Table 13: Tutors' rating on attitudes towards distance learning**

Name of the University College	Tutors have positive attitude towards distance learning					Total
	St.disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	St.Agree	
Alpha	1	0	1	8	15	25
% of Total	2	.0	2	16	30	50
Admas	0	1	1	10	13	25
% of Total	.0	2	2	20	26	50
Total Count	1	1	2	18	28	50
% of Total	2	2	4	36	56	100

From table13 it can be observed that, 28 (30%from Alpha, 26%from Admas) of the total respondents strongly agree.18 (16% from Alpha, 20% from Admas) agreed with this statement. But 2 (2% from each institute) were undecided. And 1 (2%) of the total respondents strongly disagree. However, there were only 1 (2%) of the respondents that disagreed from Admas and no response that disagreed from Alpha.

According to Rumble (1992), it is an accepted fact that adult learners have certain psycho-social needs. Therefore, it is through qualified, experienced, motivated and

enthusiastic tutors that any distance providing institutions can meet its objectives. Tutor's involvement in tutorial service activities apart from usual teaching shows their interest in distance education and distance learners. The extent to which tutors are not engaged in tutorial centers related activities after tutorial hours is a poor indication of tutor commitment to their learners, tutorial services and their profession.

**Table 14: Tutors' rating on the presence of assignments**

Name of the University College	Written form of assignments is given			Total
	Undecided	Agree	St. Agree	
Alpha	4	5	16	25
% of Total	8	10	32	50
Admas	2	6	17	25
% of Total	4	12	34	50
Total Count	6	11	33	50
% of Total	12	22	66	100

The data in table 14 show that the majority of total respondents 33 (32% from Alpha, 34% from Admas) strongly agree with this statement. Some of the respondents, 11 (10% from Alpha, 12% from Admas) agreed. But 6 (8% from Alpha, 4% from Admas) were undecided. However, there were no responses from both institutes that disagreed and strongly disagree with this statement of the questionnaires.

From the data obtained in the document analysis and responses of interview with the management it is indicated that tutor marked assignment, project work were given to students. In the focus group discussion, the researcher asked to value the advantage and disadvantage of the tutor marked assignment. Accordingly, the majority of the students confirm that they benefit while doing the assignment. However, they suggested that the

mark allotted to the tutor marked assignment should be minimized so as to increase students' participation in the tutorial.

**Table 15: Tutors' rating of the importance of course module to learners**

Name of the University College	Course module gives enough support to learners for acquiring knowledge				Total
	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	St. Agree	
Alpha	1	0	9	15	25
% of Total	2	0	18	30	50
Admas	0	1	7	17	25
% of Total	0	2	14	34	50
Total Count	1	1	16	32	50
% of Total	2	2	32	64	100

From Table 15 it can be observed that, from the total number of the respondents 32(30% from Alpha, 34% from Admas) of the respondents strongly agree where as 16(18% from Alpha, 14% from Admas) agreed. The minority, 1(2%) from Admas was undecided but there were no undecided responses from Alpha. 1 (2%) of the respondents from Alpha disagreed and there were no response that strongly disagree from both institutes.

In this regard, the majority of tutors' response in the open-ended question revealed that, the content adequacy of the modules in both institutes was prepared so as to fit for distance learners.

**Table 16: Tutors' rating on the availability of audio-video materials**

Name of the University College	Tutorials are supported by learning module and audio-Video materials				Total
	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	St. Agree	
Alpha	2	4	14	5	25
% of Total	4	8	28	10	50
Admas	1	11	5	8	25
% of Total	2	22	10	16	50
Total Count	3	15	19	13	50
% of Total	6	30	38	26.0	100

The data in table16 show that, from the total of the respondents 13 (10% from Alpha, 16% from Admas) strongly agree, the majority, 19(28% from Alpha, 10% from Admas) agreed. But 15(8% from Alpha, 22% from Admas) were undecided. The minority, 3(4% from Alpha, 2% from Admas) of the total respondents disagreed with this statement. However, there were no strongly disagree response from both institutes.

In this regard, an interview with the administrative management show that there was an attempt made by the institute to optimize the tutorial service. He explained that "*We have completed the preparation of audio-video materials. That would distribute to students with the assumption that students' at all tutorial centers would have equal access of qualified tutors*".

**Table 17: Tutors' rating on receiving course modules**

Name of the University College	Tutors receive all of the modules prepared for the courses which they offered			Total
	Undecided	Agree	St. Agree	
Alpha	1	3	21	25
% of Total	2	6	42	50
Admas	1	9	15	25
% of Total	2	18	30	50
Total Count	2	12	36	50
% of Total	4	24	72	100

From table 17 it can be observed that, 36(42% from Alpha, 32% from Admas) of the total respondents strongly agree with this item and 12(6% from Alpha, 18% from Admas) agreed. But 2(2% from each) were undecided.

It is obvious that having the course material ahead of time would affect tutors preparedness positively. That is to mean, tutors may prepare themselves so as to meet the interest and expectations of students. In this regard, interview with tutors revealed that, shortage of modules is not big issue for tutors. He added that, *“The problem is much serious with students; students came to the tutorial session without any preparation due to shortage of the course material”*.

In this regard, students in the FGD expressed their dissatisfaction about the availability of course material. Furthermore interview with tutorial coordinators confirmed that some of the students may take the final exam without adequate preparation.

In general, availability of adequate course modules is one of the factors that would affect the effectiveness of tutorial program.

**Table 18: Test of significance of mean differences of tutors**

Groups	N	Mean	St. deviation	t - calculated	df
Alpha	25	4.3	0.5	0.5	22
Admas	25	4.2	0.4		

**\*Significant at an alpha level 0.05**

**\*Two tailed independent t- test.**

From table 18 it can be observed that the mean difference between the two groups which is 0.1, from this one can understand that there is a difference which is not statistically significant. In addition the value of the calculated independent t test for the significance of difference which is 0.5 at 22 degree of freedom where  $p < 0.05$  is less than the value of the t critical which is 2.00 and this shows that the presence of a statistically insignificant difference.

As it can be seen from the above table, the grand mean of the Alpha and Admas were 4.3 and 4.2 respectively. There was no significance difference between the two groups of respondents. Furthermore, the standard deviation of Alpha was 0.5 and that of Admas was 0.4 respectively. Scattering of responses from the grand mean were not significant.

In general, the data from interview, document analysis and the result of test of significance shows that there was unanimity in the institutes with regard to the issues under study.

**Table 19: Students rating of satisfaction in learning at tutorial centers**

Name of the University College	Students enjoy learning at tutorial centers because it serves their purpose					Total
	St.disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	St.Agree	
Alpha	9	2	6	22	49	88
% of Total	5	1.1	3.3	12.2	27.2	48.9
Admas	3	2	6	32	49	92
% of Total	1.7	1.1	3.3	17.8	27.2	51.1
Total Count	12	4	12	54	98	180
% of Total	6.7	2.2	6.6	30	54.4	100

The data in table 19 show that, 98 (27.2% from each) of the total respondents strongly agree where as 54(12.2% from Alpha, 17.8% from Admas) agreed.12 (3.3% from each) were undecided. The minority, 4(1.1% from each) disagreed and 12 (5% from Alpha, 1.7% from Admas) of the responses were strongly disagree.

From the responses of students in the above table, the majority of the total respondents from both institutes replied positive with regard to this statement. This implies that they are benefited or satisfied from attending the tutorial.

**Table 20: Students rating for receiving the modules**

Name of the University College	Students received all the modules prepared for the semester on time					Total
	St.disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	St. Agree	
Alpha	11	5	18	27	27	88
% of Total	6.1	2.8	10	15	15.0	48.9
Admas	3	6	16	29	38	92
% of Total	1.7	3.3	8.9	16.1	21.1	51.1
Total Count	14	11	34	56	65	180
% of Total	7.8	6.1	18.9	31.1	36.1	100

From table 20 it can be observed that , 65 (15% from Alpha,21.1% from Admas) of the total respondents strongly agree where as 56(15% from Alpha,16% from Admas)agreed.34(10%fromAlpha,8.9%fromAdmas)were undecided.11(2.8% from Alpha,3.3% from Admas) of the respondents disagreed and 14 ( 6.1% from Alpha,1.7% from Admas) of the responses were strongly disagree.

The survey result in the table above shows that the majority of the total respondents' response was positive. However, contrary to this an interview with students and response to the open ended items indicate that due to shortage and delay of course materials there were students who were forced to delay their graduation. This problem is even more serious in some departments for instance teacher education.

In general, the data obtained from students revealed that course materials were not distributed to the distance learners adequately.

**Table 21: Students rating on the difficulty of course module**

Name of the University College	Course module are generally difficult to understand so students depend on tutorial center					Total
	St.disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	St.Agree	
Alpha	16	9	16	23	24	88
% of Total	8.9	5	8.9	12.8	13.3	48.9
Admas	10	13	19	24	26	92
% of Total	5.6	7.2	10.6	13.3	14.4	51.1
Total Count	26	22	35	47	50	180
% of Total	14.5	12.2	19.5	26.1	27.7	100

In the table above it can be seen that, from the total of the respondents 50 (13.0% from Alpha, 14.4% from Admas) of the respondents strongly agree. 47(12.8% from Alpha, 13.3% from Admas) agreed.35 (8.9% from Alpha, 10.6 % from Admas) were undecided.

but 22 (5% from Alpha, 7.2% from Admas) disagreed and 26 (8.9% from Alpha, 5.6% from Admas) strongly agree.

In this regard, survey result of tutors reveals that the majority of the course modules were well prepared. The effectiveness of course materials can undoubtedly be enhanced by constructive thinking forwards to the kinds of help and interaction learners are likely to need (Lock Wood,1994).

**Table 22: Students' rating on the status of tests and examinations**

Name of the University College	Tests and examinations are up to the standards of the students					Total
	St.disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	St.Agree	
Alpha	9	4	11	28	36	88
% of Total	5	2.2	6.1	15.6	20	48.9
Admas	6	3	17	32	34	92
% of Total	3.3	1.7	9.4	17.8	18.9	51.1
Total Count	15	7	28	60	70	180
% of Total	8.3	3.9	15.5	33.4	38.9	100

From table 22 it can be observed that, from the total of the respondents, 70 (20% from Alpha, 18.9% from Admas) of the respondents strongly agree. 60 (15.6% from Alpha, 17.8% from Admas) agreed.28 (6.1% from Alpha, 9.4% from Admas) were undecided. The minority, 7(2.2% from Alpha, 1.7% from Admas) disagreed and 15 (5% from Alpha, 3.3% from Admas) of the respondents strongly disagree

In this regard student's responses in the interview and FGD indicated that with exception of few tests and examinations were up to the standard of the students.

**Table 23: Students' rating on the availability and sufficiency of the necessary infrastructure**

Name of the University College	Conditions and infrastructure, Lab, equipment are generally poor					Total
	St.disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	St.Agree	
Alpha	20	7	14	18	29	88
% of Total	11.1	3.9	7.8	10	16.1	48.9
Admas	16	9	16	23	28	92
% of Total	8.9	5.0	8.9	12.8	15.6	51.1
Total Count	36	16	30	41	57	180
% of Total	20	8.9	16.7	22.8	31.7	100

The data in table 23 show that, 57 (16.1% from Alpha, 15.6% from Admas) of the respondents strongly agree. 41 (10% from Alpha, 12.8% from Admas) agreed. 30 (7.8% from Alpha, 8.9% from Admas) were undecided. 16 (3.9% from Alpha, 5% from Admas) of the respondents disagreed. 36 (11.1% from Alpha, 8.9% from Admas) strongly disagree.

The survey responses from students and tutors indicated that tutorial programs depends up on tutors' verbal explanation. Furthermore, tutors explained that there are courses which require practical session. And the total absence of this would have negative impact on the quality of distance education in general and tutorial in particular.

Research has indicated that, improved distance education practices have the potential to enhance educational outcome, especially when the amount and kind of learner interaction is increased using technology supported collaborative learning.

**Table 25: Students' rating on the importance of a well organized tutorial service**

Name of the University College	The stronger tutorial services make a possibility for learning in a better way					Total
	St.disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	St.Agree	
Alpha	19	2	6	23	38	88
% of Total	10.6	1.1	3.3	12.8	21.1	48.9
Admas	11	2	8	24	47	92
% of Total	6.1	1.1	4.4	13.3	26.1	51.1
Total Count	30	4	14	47	85	180
% of Total	16.7	2.2	7.7	26.1	47.2	100

The data in table25 show that, from the total of the respondents, 85 (21.1% from Alpha, 26.1% from Admas) strongly agree. And some of the respondents 47 (12.8% from Alpha, 13.3% from Admas) agreed. But 14 (3.3% from Alpha, 4.4% from Admas) were undecided. With regard to disagreement, the response rate was 4 (1.1% from each).But 30 (10.6% from Alpha, 6.1% from Admas) of the respondents, were strongly disagree.

As it is indicated in Goel (2001), the success of the tutorial program depends on micro-planning so that the benefits can be optimized. What should involve in planning a tutorial program? How to go about it? What constraints may be kept in mind?

The implication of this is that distance education institutions should address these questions to provide a well organized tutorial.

In this regard, 100% of the respondents from Admas replied that they received tutorial service once in a semester. On the other hand, the 100%response rate is observed from Alpha which confirms that they received twice in a semester. In FGD, open ended part

of the questionnaire and interview respondents indicated that the two hour contact was not adequate to discuss issues other than content of the module.

Research in this regard indicated that effects of tutoring programs on the students can be seen from the point of view of students achievement as measured on examinations, favorability of student attitudes towards the subject matter and favorability of student self concept.

**Table 26: Students' rating on usefulness of audio-video support**

Name of the University College	The audio-Video support make a possibility for learning in a better way					Total
	St.disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	St.Agree	
Alpha	23	5	10	18	32	88
% of Total	12.8	2.8	5.6	10	17.8	48.9
Admas	16	6	13	21	36	92
% of Total	8.9	3.3	7.2	11.7	20	51.1
Total Count	39	11	23	39	68	180
% of Total	21.7	6.1	12.8	21.7	37.8	100

From table 26 it can be observed that from the total of the respondents, 68 (17.8% from Alpha, 20% from Admas) of the respondents strongly agree, 39 (10% from Alpha, 11.7% from Admas) agreed and 23 (5.6% from Alpha, 7.2% from Admas) were undecided. But 11 (2.8% from Alpha, 3.3% from Admas) and 39 (12.8% from Alpha, 8.9% from Admas) of the respondents disagreed and strongly disagree respectively with this statement of the questionnaires.

Students' responses to the open ended item indicate that audio-video support could enhance their learning. With regard to this, research has indicated that students benefited and learn in a better way if they were supported by technology based instruction.

During the FGD students suggested that their education should include more practical exercise and the use of multimedia training materials. But it is unfortunate, that rural students cannot take advantage of the wide range of multimedia learning material available. Therefore, the researcher of this study encourages the attempt made by the institutions under study that would make students' beneficiary especially those who are far from the tutorial centers.

**Table 27: Students' rating on readiness before the actual tutorial session**

Name of the University College	Students are well prepared before coming to the tutorial sessions					Total
	St.disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	St.Agree	
Alpha	13	13	16	29	17	88
% of Total	7.2	7.2	8.9	16.1	9.4	48.9
Admas	7	13	17	33	22	92
% of Total	3.9	7.2	9.4	18.3	12.2	51.1
Total Count	20	26	33	62	39	180
% of Total	11.1	14.4	18.3	34.4	21.6	100

As it can be seen in table 27, 39 (9.4% from Alpha, 12.2% from Admas) of the total respondents were strongly agree, 62 (16.1% from Alpha, 18.3% from Admas) of the respondents agreed with this statement. However, 33 (8.9% from Alpha, 9.4% from Admas) were undecided about this statement. 26 (7.2% from each college) of the respondents disagreed and 20 (7.2% from Alpha, 3.9% from Admas) of the responses strongly disagree.

On the other hand, 101 (56.1%) of the total respondent in the open ended item indicated that students attend tutorials with adequate preparation. However, contrary to this an interview with tutors indicated that one of the reasons for tutors to depend only on teacher

dominated lecture method is that students lack motivation. He added that *“the expectation of the students is to cover the course material focusing on specific points. Students would not be happy whenever I give chance to ask questions if they have. This shows that they were not prepared.”*

**Table 28: Students’ rating on tutors’ knowledge of the subject matter**

Name of the University College	Tutors have enough knowledge of the subject matter					Total
	St.disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	St.Agree	
Alpha	15	7	16	30	20	88
% of Total	8.3	3.9	8.9	16.7	11.1	48.9
Admas	10	10	22	29	21	92
% of Total	5.6	5.6	12.2	16.1	11.7	51.1
Total Count	25	17	38	59	41	180
% of Total	13.9	9.4	21.1	32.8	22.8	100

The data in table28 show that, from the total of the respondents, 41 (11.1%from each institute) of the respondents were strongly agree, 59(16.7% from Alpha, 16.1 from Admas) of the respondents agreed and 38 (8.9% from Alpha, 12.2% from Admas) were undecided. However, 17(3.9% from Alpha, 5.6% from Admas) of the respondents disagreed and 25 (8.3% from Alpha, 5.6% from Admas) were strongly disagree with this statement.

An interview with the management regarding the selection criteria for tutors, tutorial centers and course to be offered indicated that academic qualification with the necessary field of specialization was used for the selection. Tutorials are designed for some courses. These courses are based on their level of difficulty as determined from low examination scores and the number of students enrolled in each course. Furthermore, he

said that, “the majority of the tutors in the main campus are course developers, course editors and exam developers, this situation can have a profound effect on the subsequent academic performance levels of students as compared to students far from the main campus. Therefore much is expected from the University College to maintain uniformity in all tutorial centers”.

**Table 29: Students’ rating on methods of evaluation**

Name of the University College	Examination and other evaluation methods are fair					Total
	St.disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	St.Agree	
Alpha	6	5	13	35	29	88
% of Total	3.3	2.8	7.2	19.4	16.1	48.9
Admas	5	5	15	36	31	92
% of Total	2.8	2.8	8.3	20.	17.2	51.1
Total Count	11	10	28	71	60	180
% of Total	6.1	5.6	15.5	39.4	33.3	100

From table 29 it can be seen that, from the total of the respondents, 60 (16.1% from Alpha, 17.2% from Admas) of the respondents strongly agree, the majority, 71(19.4% from Alpha, 20%from Admas) agreed. Some 28 (7.2% from Alpha, 8.3% from Admas) were undecided .but 10 (2.8%from each) disagreed and 11 (3.3% from Alpha, 2.8% from Admas) of the respondents were strongly disagree with this statement.

In this regard, from response in the open ended part both tutors and students confirmed that the evaluation method of the distance offering institutions were faire. The assessments of the performance of students in their course were made by all methods (tutor marked assignments and final examinations) since all methods of evaluations

indicted in the study were employed, it can be ascertained that students benefit from the evaluation methods employed.

Interview with students revealed that with the exception of few, the majority of the examinations prepared by the institutions were in accordance with the distributed self learning materials.

Concerning issues related to the evaluation mechanism of the performance of the tutors, from the document analysis in both University College revealed that there is a written document which serves for the selection of tutors, course writers and Editors, evaluation format to be filled by students.

**Table 30: Students' rating on the quality of tutorial service**

Name of the University College	Students are happy with overall quality of the tutorial service					Total
	St.disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	St. Agree	
Alpha	10	7	28	21	22	88
% of Total	5.6	3.9	15.6	11.6	12.2	48.9
Admas	11	5	25	28	23	92
% of Total	6.1	2.8	13.9	15.6	12.8	51.1
Total Count	21	12	53	49	45	180
% of Total	11.7	6.7	29.5	27.2	25	100

The data in table 30 show that, 45 (12.2% from Alpha, 12.8% from Admas) of the total respondents strongly agree with this statement .49 (11.6% from Alpha,15.6% from Admas) agreed. But 53 (15.6% from Alpha, 13.9%from Admas) were undecided. The minority12 (3.9% from Alpha2.8 %from Admas) of the respondents disagreed. But 21

(5.6% from Alpha, 6.1% from Admas) of the respondents strongly disagree with this statement.

Research has indicated that the quality of service in distance education is judge from by the students' satisfaction. The quality indicator in distance education services can be accessed through accessibility and satisfaction of students.

As explained by tutorial coordinator in Hawasa campus, Student attendance and participation in tutorial sessions vary, but the number of participating students in voluntary face –to- face tutorials tended to decreases in the past. Therefore, increasing the participation rate of students in the tutorial is a challenging task for distance offering institutions. In this regard, in FGD it was suggested that the mark allotted to the tutor marked assignment should be minimized.

**Table 31: Students' rating on comparing course result**

Name of the University College	Students score better result in those tutored course than the untutored					Total
	St.disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	St.Agree	
Alpha	17	2	11	28	30	88
% of Total	9.4	1.1	6.1	15.6	16.7	48.9
Admas	21	3	9	28	31	92
% of Total	11.7	1.7	5.0	15.6	17.2	51.1
Total Count	38	5	20	56	61	180
% of Total	21.1	2.8	11.1	31.2	33.9	100

The data in table 31 show that, among the total number of respondents, 61 (16.7% from Alpha, 17.2% from Admas) of the respondents strongly agreed with this statement .56( 15.6% from each) agreed. But 20 (6.1% from Alpha, 5% from Admas) were undecided. The minority 5 (1.1% from Alpha, 1.7% from Admas) of the respondents disagreed.38

(9.4% from Alpha, 11.7% from Admas) of the respondent strongly disagree with this statement.

The majority of the total respondents in the table above indicated that attending tutorial increased their academic success. Students survey result indicated that attending the tutorial have impact on their level of confidence. Furthermore, an interview with students indicated that students were benefited from the tutorials. He added that *“tutorial sessions are very useful because it enables students where to focus which intern impacts students’ achievement in final examination. I am satisfied with what tutors actually provide”*. He further indicated that *“tutorial is not offered in all the subjects for which I registered for the semester. There is also a big difference student’s academic result between tutored and untutored courses”*.

In general, student’s constraints to actively engage in tutorials are attributed to factors relating to the cost of transportation and limited accessibility of tutorial centers in the nearby area. However, the researcher suggests that attending tutorial should be compulsory.

**Table 32: Students’ rating on teaching style and method**

Name of the University College	Teaching style and method are acceptable					Total
	St.disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	St.Agree	
Alpha	21	3	9	31	24	88
% of Total	11.7	1.7	5.0	17.2	13.3	48.9
Admas	26	2	10	32	22	92
% of Total	14.4	1.1	5.6	17.8	12.2	51.1
Total Count	47	5	19	63	46	180
% of Total	26.1	2.8	10.6	35.0	25.5	100.0

As it can be seen in table 32, 46 (13.3% from Alpha, 12.2% from Admas) of the total respondents strongly agree. The majority, 63( 17.2% from Alpha, 17.8% from Admas) agreed. And 19 (5% from Alpha, 5.6% from Admas) were undecided about this statement. The minority,5 (1.7% from Alpha,1.1% from Admas) of the respondents disagreed.47 (11.7% from Alpha ,14.4% from Admas) were strongly disagree with this statement of the questionnaire.

In this regard the personal observation of the researcher show that , regardless of the subject that tutors taught and the number of students in the class the methodology used by the tutors in both cases was the same. This is to mean that tutors applied teacher centered approach. Students were not given chance to ask whether they have problem in connection with their study skills and how to use the course module. The researcher observed tutors were inclined or focuses on preparing students to final examination. The interaction of tutors and students were limited. This shows that the role of the tutor is exactly the same as teachers in the conventional classroom situation.

In the literature part of this study mention was made about knowing the knowledge of students is very important to meet their expectations. FGD Respondents were offered the chance to testify on their tutors on how they should teach students that have different educational back ground. The majority of the students have declared that tutors should teach in ways that will facilitate the academic achievement of students. In general as the above responses of the students have exhibited one can understand that there are tutors who have problems of accommodating the expectations the students they teach.

**Table 33: Students test for significance of difference**

Groups	N	Mean	St. deviation	t - calculated	df
Alpha	88	3.6	0.24	-1.5	34
Admas	92	3.7	0.27		

**\*Significant at an alpha level 0.05**

**\*Two tailed independent t- test.**

From table 33 it can be observed that, the mean values of the two groups are 3.6 for Alpha and 3.7 for Admas respectively. The mean difference between the two groups is 0.1; from this one can understand that there is a difference which is not statistically significant. The t test result has an obtained value of 1.5 while the t critical is 2.00 at 34 degree of freedom where  $p < 0.05$  and this assures the presence of a statistically insignificant difference, because the calculated value is smaller than the t critical value. Furthermore, the standard deviation of Alpha was 0.24 and that of Admas was 0.27 respectively. Scattering of responses from the grand mean were not significant.

In general, the data from interview, document analysis and the result of test of significance shows that there was unanimity in the institutes with regard to the issues under study.

### **4.3 Discussion**

From the total numbers of tutors the majority 42(84%) were males while 8(16%) were females. Here, even if the female respondents were indicated by small amounts opinions were drawn from both sexes. This difference might be caused due to several reasons. In this regard, much is expected from distance offering institutions to bridge the gap. As far as the tutors' field of study is concerned, it is exhibited that they were from diverse

educational background. Therefore, this enables to evaluate and judge ideas from different perspective.

Literature in this field revealed among the factors that describe the effectiveness of the educational institutions is the availability of experienced and qualified teaching staff and management. In general, this level of experience is necessary to give deal of thought to the quality of service offered by distance education providing institutions. Furthermore, from the document analysis in both University College with reference to tutors profile indicated that the qualification and field of specializations of the majority of the tutors were up to standard. More than 75 percent of the tutors have at least completed first degree. But they have no experience in distance education

Similarly on the part of students, the number of degree holder students shows that distance education provides education not only for students who have not been accepted to a conventional university or were not accepted in the field of their choice due to scarcity but also it is a means to extend students potential in their career.

With regard to the efficiency of tutors the majority of the total of the respondents, 155(86%) showed that tutors were efficient and the minority 25(14%) said that tutors were not efficient. Distance education institutions should provide a separate service for tutors for at least the reason that they may lack the knowledge, competence and skill to deal with all the questions and concerns of distance education. According to Rumble (1992), it is an accepted fact that adult learners have certain psycho-social needs. Therefore, it is through qualified, experienced, motivated and enthusiastic tutors that any distance providing institutions can meet its objectives. In line with this, the majority of the tutors who are the subject of this study they are found to qualify the above qualities of good tutors.

on specific or limited areas, as the result they missed the contents of the subject matter so that they will not be competent in their work place.

There is strong variation in the quality of tutorial center infrastructure, equipment and laboratory facility in distance learning. According to this survey study, it is found that, 44 percent of tutors have reported to have a classroom for their students. But the condition of the classroom varies from tutorial center to tutorial center. Contrary to this the majority of the tutors and students have stated their dissatisfaction regarding laboratory facilities, conducting laboratory classes.

Interviews with the academic administrators in both institutes regarding the effort made by the institutions to optimize student support service indicated that efforts to adapt to the specific needs of distance education students are being made. In this regard research has indicated that improved access to services is high on priority agenda, and this includes improved access to a variety of learning support services by distance students. Quality learning process goes hand in hand with quality learning support services provided by the institution. From the total number of the respondents, 145(80.6%) confirmed that tutors and administrative staff were cooperative in solving students problems.35 (19.4%) expressed that they were dissatisfied with the services they obtained from the administration staff.

The principal purpose of the tutorial programs is to provide opportunities where by students receive immediate feedback on their learning progress and also on their performance in solving the assignment questions (Holomberg, 1989).The results of this study have shown that the majority of the respondents feel that learners didn't receive immediate feedback on the tutor marked assignments.

In distance education system where print medium is employed as the sole means of content delivery, students should receive the course module long before the exact date of

tutorial program. In relation to this, some of the respondents reported that students did not receive some of the modules at all. In general, delay in instructional materials negatively affects student's purpose of learning. This is to mean that delay in instructional materials would result delay in graduation. According to the report of some students and tutorial coordinators students who have been registered for three or four courses may not take the courses registered due to incomplete course materials.

An attempt has been made in this study to assess the views of the respondents regarding the level of difficulty of the modules. About 53.9 percent of the respondents agreed that the modules were difficult to understand. The remaining 26.6 percent of the respondents said that the contents and the style of presentation of the module fit with the levels of the students. In this regard, in response to whether the self learning module makes a possibility for learning in a better way, tutors expressed that: The modules are very useful, self contained, friendly and are best suited to the distance mode of delivery but some of them were insufficiently updated so as to fit the changing curriculum, the contents of some of the modules need to be revised, examples and illustrations given in some of the modules did not reflect the existing situations and needs to be updated, unnecessary duplications of topics in successive year materials.

From FGD and students survey result the principal services of a tutorial program such as involvement of the students in enquiry based tasks and discussion, individualized academic support and counseling were completely overlooked.

## **CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

This study aimed at investigating the effectiveness of tutorial in distance education at the tertiary level with the focus of Alpha and Admas as the subjects of the study. The final part of this thesis deals with summary of the major findings, conclusions and the recommendations which the researcher assumes to be operational are also forwarded on the basis of the findings.

### **5.1 Summary of the major findings**

After the retrieval of the data relevant quantitative and qualitative method of analysis was used, and it enabled the researcher to reach at some findings that are thought to be the answers to the basic questions of the study. The findings of the study are listed below here.

- The demographic characteristics of students who participated in this study indicate that from the total respondents 126 were male and 54 were female. As to their educational background from the total of the respondents 24 were BA/BSc holders. And the majority 156 were Diploma holders.
- As to the demographic characteristics of tutors who participated  
In this study indicate that from the total respondents 42 were male and 8 were female. As to their educational background from the total of the respondents 34 were BA/BSc holders. The rest 16 were Second degree/MA holders. As to their experience from the total of the respondents, 9 have 1-5 years of experience, 18 have 6-10 years of experience and 23 of them have experience of above 10 years. As to their field of specialization out of the total respondents 17 were graduated majoring education and the rest 33 were graduated other than education.

- Students' survey responses expressed dissatisfaction with the inflexible nature of the resources, insufficient academic support provided and a preference for guided learning activities and participation in discussion.
- From the responses of the tutors/students there is evidence which confirm that students are benefited from the face to face tutorial.
- Students agreed that attending the tutorial sessions help them to understand the contents of the modules and score better result in the final examinations. They value the opportunities that the tutorial provides to communicate with tutors and class mates about how to study and understand the material. As the result most distance learners have a positive attitude to distance education. Contrary to this, As the study reveals some of distance students were not beneficiaries of tutorial program mainly due to the selection criteria of course to be offered which mainly depend on the number of students and availability of qualified professionals, long distance of the tutorial centers from the students locality and the absence of tutorial program in some of the courses for which students registered.
- The nature of the tutorial services provided by tutors does not follow the fundamental principles of distance education. The tutorial programs were devoted largely to tutor's verbal explanation of descriptive facts which is the typical feature of conventional face to face instruction
- The two hour face to face tutorial services provided by the distance offering institutions was not adequate or insufficient to cover the content of the course module. The majority of the students reported that they liked to go to tutorial centers and they recommended for increasing contact hours.
- It is found with satisfaction that learners have positive attitude towards tutorial and distance education in general.

- From the responses of the tutors and tutorial coordinators there is evidence which confirm that adequate training was not given to tutors that enabled them to meet the expectations of students.
- The findings reveal that visual aids were not employed to enable students be able to understand abstract concepts. In addition to this the study disclosed that no electronic media was employed to facilitate the student support service. The absence of practical exercise and demonstration was found to be the defects of tutorial session. Tutors and students have stated their dissatisfaction regarding laboratory facilities, conducting laboratory classes.
- Document observation reviewed by the researcher also proved that proper feedback was not given to students for those incorrect answers. Feedback from students and tutors were used as a source of information so as to take corrective measure in order to evaluate the success of the program.
- The absence or shortage of the modules during students' registration was serious problem that negatively affects students' performance and causes in delay in graduation, students' attendance and participation in tutorial sessions.
- The FGD/interview conducted with students revealed that some of the tutorial services such as distribution of course materials, face-to face programs, counseling services have to be decentralized. By doing so, it could be possible to respond quickly to students requests and speed up the two way communication between students and distance education institutions. Furthermore, efficiency in the management of services could be enhanced.

## 5.2 Conclusions

Based on the findings presumed from the study, the following conclusions were drawn.

- Distance students faced many problems, among this the major ones were, the delay in getting feedback for assignments and examination results, and the delay issuing the diploma and degree. Students of conventional universities receive feedback on their assignments and examinations based on the already established schedules of their institutions. They can easily contact and ask their teachers if there is any inconvenience
- The most common complaint from students was the delays and distributions of instructional materials delivery, which may be a cause for delay of graduation, create additional cost to students and the institutions. Distance education institutions are required devising ways so as to minimizing these problems is crucial to maximize the support service.
- The non-availability of audio visual aids in supporting system makes students to fully depend only on print material. Furthermore, the data obtained from the different instruments employed in this study indicated that there is a big gap between the needs of the distance education students and tutors coupled with inadequate facilities, such as shortage of course materials, inefficient technology based instruction, facilities for practical sessions.
- Tutor marked assignment are not properly managed. Assignments are not properly corrected and marks are not correctly filled. Furthermore feed backs are not given for those wrong answers. The absence of feedback is one of the major drawback/limitation of tutor marked assignments.

- Lack of or the absence of training for tutors in distance education is the cause for tutors to stick on lecture method which is the typical characteristics of traditional /conventional teaching.
- A two hour contact is not adequate for tutors to convey the content of the subject matter and discuss on matters such as how and when to study the course materials.
- The selection criteria set by the institutions for tutorial center and course to be offered may hinder students from being beneficiary of the program.
- The current practice of the distance offering institutions of face-to face tutorials are provided voluntary bases.

### **5.3 Recommendations**

Based on the findings and conclusion, the following recommendations have been forwarded.

- ❖ The provision of learning support system is crucial to ensure student learning success at a distance. It is important that distance education institutions implement effective learning support system for students that suit their needs, characteristics, accessibility, availability of technology and institutional capacity.
- ❖ Attendance of training, workshops and conference in distance teaching is recommended to help tutors in developing and acquiring rich distance learning knowledge, teaching methodology and skills, which paramount for the effective teaching. Therefore the authority of the college and policy makers should think over the necessity of training in distance teaching methodology for tutors.
- ❖ Active counseling should be provided in addition to face to face tutorial in the tutorial centers with tutors charged with responsibility of sensitizing, educating and encouraging learners in developing positive attitude towards distance

learning. In addition and more importantly, there should be mutual cooperation and collaboration among tutors and the management of the university colleges so as to share common goal.

- ❖ Tutors are indispensable factors in the achievement of educational goals and objective. Distance learning tutors should develop and acquire innovation skills and strategies of teaching in distance mode to obtain meaningful learning. For this purpose, active monitoring in the teaching process at the tutorial center is highly recommended.
- ❖ Number of contact hours at tutorial centers should be increased. It is very required to overcome existing weakness and lacking. It should be also strengthened tutorial supports and develop strong infrastructure with solid laboratory environment
- ❖ Students support service should be framed and focused on resolving academic problems as well as personal study difficulties. Therefore, much is expected from the institutes to design a mechanism to make tutors available other than the tutorial session.
- ❖ The new educational technologies have enormous possibilities and potential to serve distance learners. In this regard the current practice of distance education neglects to establish and implement the technology assisted instruction. Thus the ministry of education (MOE), and Education and Training Quality Assurance Agency (ETQAA) should set appropriate policy, rules and regulations based on the existing situation of the country that compels distance offering institutions to use the technology based instruction.
- ❖ To increase student's participation in the face to face tutorial attendance in the tutorial should be compulsory further more tutorial should be given in all the courses for which students registered.

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## Appendix 1

### Part I. Personal Information

This section deals with the bio data of the respondents. Please, put "x" mark in the boxes.

1. Name of your College /University

Alpha University College      Saint Mary's University College   
 Admas University College      Civil Service College

2. Sex of respondents.

Male       Female

3. Academic qualification.

BA/BSc       PhD       Diploma  
 MA/MSc      If other, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

4. Year of study \_\_\_\_\_

### Part II. Learner's Opinion

This section deals with several factors which contribute to the success of face to face program.

A) Please rate the extent to which you feel these items affect the success or the usefulness of face to face program.

Strongly agree = 5, Agree = 4, Undecided = 3, Disagree = 2, and Strongly Disagree = 1.

NO.	Factors which contribute to the effectiveness of face-to-face tutorial	5	4	3	2	1
1	Students enjoy learning at tutorial centers because it serves their purpose					
2	Students received all the modules prepared for the semester on time					
3	Course module are generally difficult to understand so students depend on tutorial center					
4	Tests and examinations are up to the standards of the students					
5	Conditions and infrastructure, Lab, equipment are generally poor					
6	The self-learning module make a possibility for learning in a better way					
7	The stronger tutorial services make a possibility for learning in a better way					
8	The audio-Video support make a possibility for learning in a better way					
9	Students received all the modules long before the tutorial sessions					
10	Students are well prepared before coming to the tutorial sessions					
11	Tutors have enough knowledge of the subject matter					
12	Examination and other evaluation methods are fair					
13	Students prefer to go to tutorial center than study self-learning module at home					
14	Location of tutorial center impacts on learners (students) study					
15	Students are happy with tutor's attendance, and cooperation					
16	Students are happy with overall quality of the tutorial service					
17	Students score better result in those tutored course than the untutored					
18	Teaching style and method are acceptable					

**Part IIB. Open ended questions for students**

Your department \_\_\_\_\_

1. What differences did you observe in your performance in understanding the contents of the module after attending the tutorial?
2. How do you express the importance or the usefulness of attending the tutorial programs?
3. Do you think that the method of teaching or counseling by the tutor was satisfactory? If No, why?
4. Do you think your tutors come well prepared and willing to help you? If No, why? Do your tutors attend the tutorial center on time? Yes, No
5. How often are face-to-face tutorial classes given per semester?
6. What are the challenges that you face during face-to-face tutorial classes?
7. Do you attend the entire face-to-face tutorial program scheduled for you? Yes, No If No, why?
8. Do you like your face-to-face tutorial program? If your answer is 'No' explain your reason
9. How often do you take exam in a semester?
10. Are the exams prepared according to the distributed materials? yes, No
11. Did your level of confidence increased after attending the tutorial? Yes, No
12. Did you find your tutors effective and enthusiastic? Yes, No
13. Did your tutors and administrative staff help you in solving your personal problems? Yes, No.
15. Please write any other problem or suggestion you think is important.

## Appendix 2

### Part I. Personal Information

This section deals with the bio data of the tutors. Put "x" mark in the boxes.

1. Name of your College /University  
 Alpha University College      Saint Mary's University College   
 Admas University College      Civil Service College
2. Sex of respondents. Male  Female
3. Academic qualification.  
 BA/BSc                               PhD  
 MA/MSc      If other, please specify \_\_\_\_\_
4. Field of specialization \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Service year \_\_\_\_\_

### Part II. Tutors Opinion

This section deals with several factors which contribute to the success of face to face program.

- A) Please rate the extent to which you feel the conditions stated in each item affect the success or the usefulness of face to face program.

Strongly agree = 5, Agree = 4, Undecided = 3, Disagree = 2, and Strongly Disagree = 1.

NO.	Factors which contribute for the effectiveness of face-to-face tutorial	5	4	3	2	1
1	Infrastructure and classroom of tutorial center facilities are quite suitable for teaching.					
2	There is specific training policy adopted by the college for improving teaching skills					
3	Training has been given in a specific area based on the training policy of the college					
4	Tutors are well prepared before lecture					
5	Tutors have positive attitude towards distance learning					
6	Written form of assignments is given					
7	Course module gives enough support to learners for acquiring knowledge					
8	Tutorials are supported by learning module and audio-Video materials					
9	Students receive all the modules before the tutorial sessions					

10	Students receive all the modules prepared for the semester					
11	Tutors receive all of the modules prepared for the courses which they offered					
12	Tutors receive all the modules long before the actual tutorial session					

B) Questions which are related to course materials

Please write your short and precise answers

1. Do you get the course material (s) on time? Yes, No
2. How do you find the usefulness of course material to distance learners?
3. What do you comment on the content of the course material (s)/modules you are currently using?
4. How do you evaluate the difficulty of the units interims of language?
5. Is the style of presentation of the course materials self-explanatory?
6. Are the course materials appropriate?
7. How do you evaluate the understandability of the course materials (module)?
8. Please identify the major weaknesses of the modules

8.1 \_\_\_\_\_

8.2 \_\_\_\_\_

8.3 \_\_\_\_\_

9. What are major problems observed in relation to arranging tutorial sessions?

9.1 \_\_\_\_\_ 9.2 \_\_\_\_\_

9.3 \_\_\_\_\_

9.4 \_\_\_\_\_

### Appendix 3

#### Interview guides with Tutorial Coordinators and Academic Staff

Would you tell me:

Your institutes or College \_\_\_\_\_

Your experience \_\_\_\_\_

Your field of specialization? \_\_\_\_\_

1. Do you have criteria for the selection of tutors, tutorial centers and courses to be offered?
2. What criteria are used to select tutors, tutorial centers and courses to be offered?
3. Do you use these criteria in all the branch offices uniformly?
4. What do you think is the role of a tutor?
5. Do you have a mechanism of evaluating the performance of the tutor?
6. What mechanisms were used to evaluate the performance of the tutors?
7. Do you use these criteria in all the branch office uniformly?
8. Who are tutors in your institutions?(course developers, course editors, experienced teachers)
9. Who are exam developers? (course developers, course editors, experienced teachers)
10. Does the college provide training related to distance education especially about tutoring to the tutors?
11. What efforts have you made to improve the quality of the tutorial service?
12. What are the major strengths of your College/University in the tutorial program?

## Appendix 4

### Interview guides with tutors

Center name \_\_\_\_\_ Sex \_\_\_\_\_ Qualification \_\_\_\_\_  
Experience as a tutor \_\_\_\_\_ years Subject \_\_\_\_\_

1. How often do you give face-to-face tutorials? Which method of teaching do you prefer? And Why? Is there any specific orientations/training given to you about your roles and responsibilities? Yes, No
2. How do you express the importance of the training to provide better service?
3. Do you think the time allotted for your course enables you to cover all important points of the modules? Yes, No
4. What mechanism should be used by the tutors to utilize the time allotted to meet the expectation of the students? In your opinion, what supportive services are essential for conducting tutorial classes?
5. What challenging problems have you faced while you are conducting face-to-face tutorial program?
6. Do your students have a chance to contact with you other than in face-to-face tutorial classes? Yes, No
7. In your opinion, what measure the college should take to make tutors available other than tutorial session
8. What do you suggest to improve the tutorial program?

Appendix 5

Center name: \_\_\_\_\_ Subject \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Total hours of observation  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Observation check list**

S.NO.	Activities	Yes	No	Remark
1.	The tutor is available in the tutorial center on time			
2.	The tutor introduce the topic of his /her presentation			
3.	The tutor attempts to relate the past and the present of his/her lesson			
4.	The tutor gives chance for the students to ask questions and express their opinions			
5.	The tutor tries to increase participation of students			
6.	The tutor attempts to solve the tutor marked assignments and questions in the modules			
7.	The tutor prepares his/her lesson before the actual session started			
8.	The tutor receives comments and feedback from the students			
9.	The tutor effectively manages the time for introduction, presentation and stabilization			

## Appendix 6

### Interview Guides with students

Center name: \_\_\_\_\_ Occupation \_\_\_\_\_

Department \_\_\_\_\_ Date of interview \_\_\_\_\_

Year \_\_\_\_\_

Would you tell me your Department \_\_\_\_\_

1. How do you express the method of teaching adopted by the tutor?
2. How useful are the contact classes?
3. How often do you attend tutorial class per semester?
4. To what extent did you get assistance or help from your Tutor in writing your assignment?
5. How do you evaluate the comments given by your Tutor for your work?
6. How do you evaluate the evaluation techniques of the institutions?
7. What are major problems you faced in doing your tutor marked assignment (TMA)?
8. What are the major strengths of the tutorial program?
9. What are the major weaknesses of the tutorial program?
10. What do you suggest as a strategy to improve the tutorial program?

## Declaration

The thesis, my original work, has not been presented for a degree in any other university and that all sources of material used for the thesis have been duly acknowledged.

Name: Dereje Tefera

Signature  \_\_\_\_\_

Date, 29 June 2010