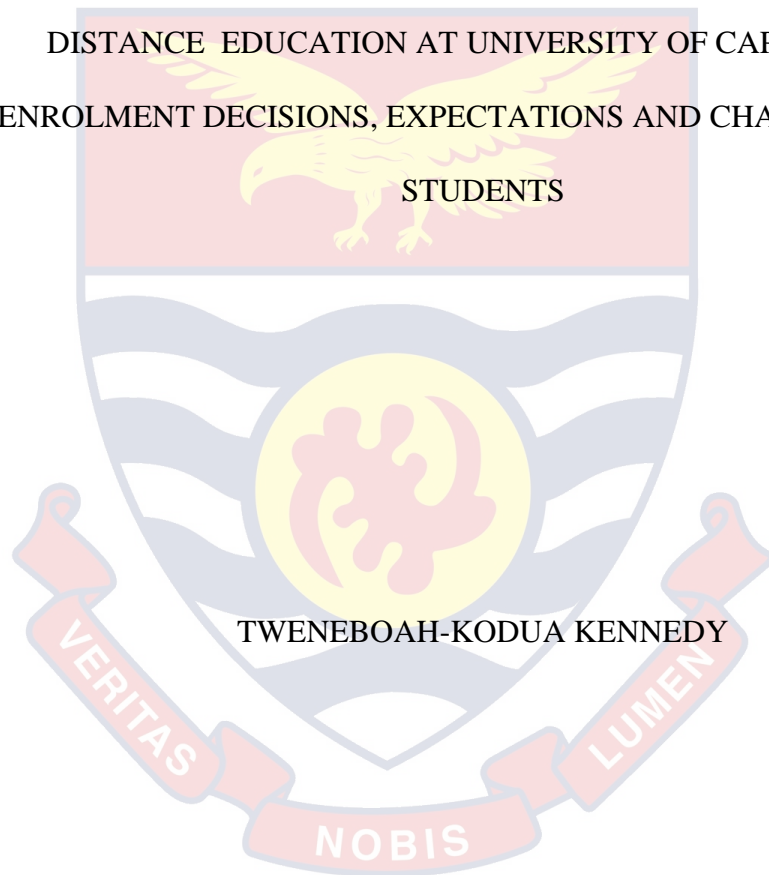


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DISTANCE EDUCATION AT UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST:  
ENROLMENT DECISIONS, EXPECTATIONS AND CHALLENGES OF  
STUDENTS

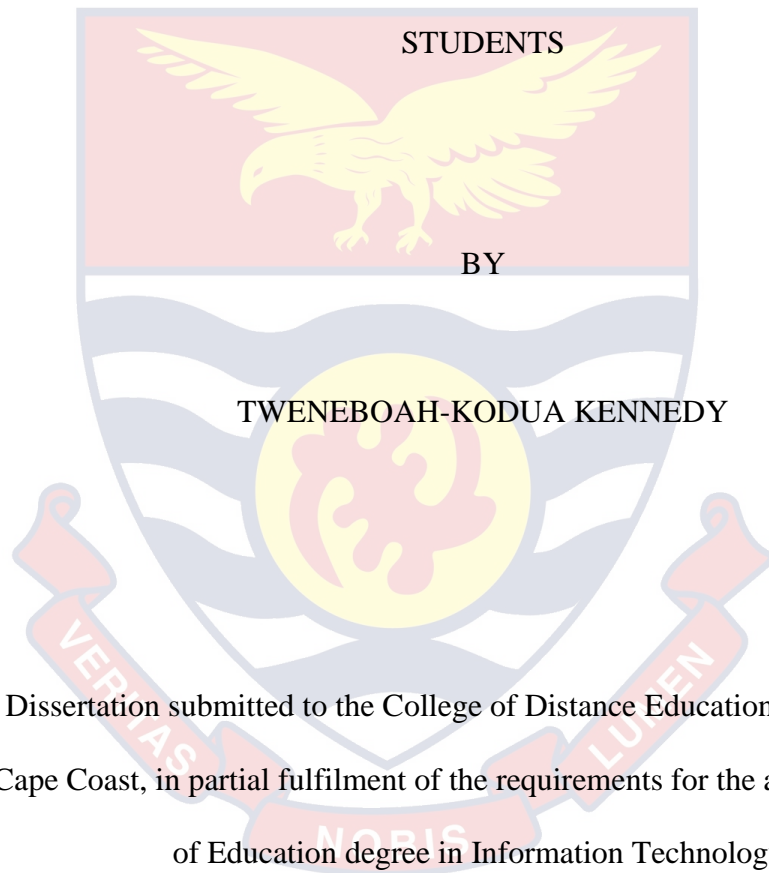


TWENEBOAH-KODUA KENNEDY

2020

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

DISTANCE EDUCATION AT UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST:  
ENROLMENT DECISIONS, EXPECTATIONS AND CHALLENGES OF  
STUDENTS



Dissertation submitted to the College of Distance Education, University of  
Cape Coast, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Master  
of Education degree in Information Technology.

SEPTEMBER, 2020

## DECLARATION

### Candidate's Declaration

I hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my own original research and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or elsewhere.

Candidate's Signature: ..... Date: .....

Name: Tweneboah-Kodua Kennedy

### Supervisor's Declaration

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of the dissertation were supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of dissertation laid down by the University of Cape Coast.

Supervisor's Signature: ..... Date: .....

Name: Dr. Simon-Peter Kafui Aheto

## ABSTRACT

The study explored the enrolment decisions, expectations and challenges of Distance Education students in the University of Cape Coast (UCC). The study employed descriptive survey research design. The population for the study was the post-diploma degree in education students of the college. The study was targeted at all final year students of the post-diploma in education programme. Cluster and stratified sampling procedure were employed to select 176 students to participate in the study. The study used a questionnaire as the main instrument for data gathering. Descriptive statistics (frequencies and percentages) was computed for the descriptive data. The study revealed that students of the College of Distance Education (CoDE), University of Cape Coast (UCC), were furthering their education to gain competence and skills. It was evident that the students expected the utilisation of modules or course books as the instructional medium for the distance education. It was revealed that the students had the expectation of becoming professional and skilful teachers in their field of study. The study found that the greatest challenge of students is limited time to study on their own. It is recommended that the management of College of Distance Education, University of Cape Coast, together with the Distance Education Students Association (DESAG) should organise seminars for students on time management especially where their learning is coupled with work.

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Thanks to my mother. The countless time you helped me throughout my journey to campus; all your effort will gain something great in the near future. Your encouragement when the times got rough are much appreciated and duly noted. It was a great comfort and relief to know that you were willing to provide everything you can give even though I know that you have struggled a lot.

To my family, I will not be this stronger without you as my inspiration as a mother and of course to my Lovely wife! You are the reason why I keep pushing; I keep facing all the struggles, pains and hardships. I love you all so much!

Above all, to the Great Almighty God, the author of knowledge and wisdom, for his countless love. I thank you. I also acknowledge all sources I cited in the work.

## DEDICATION

To my family.



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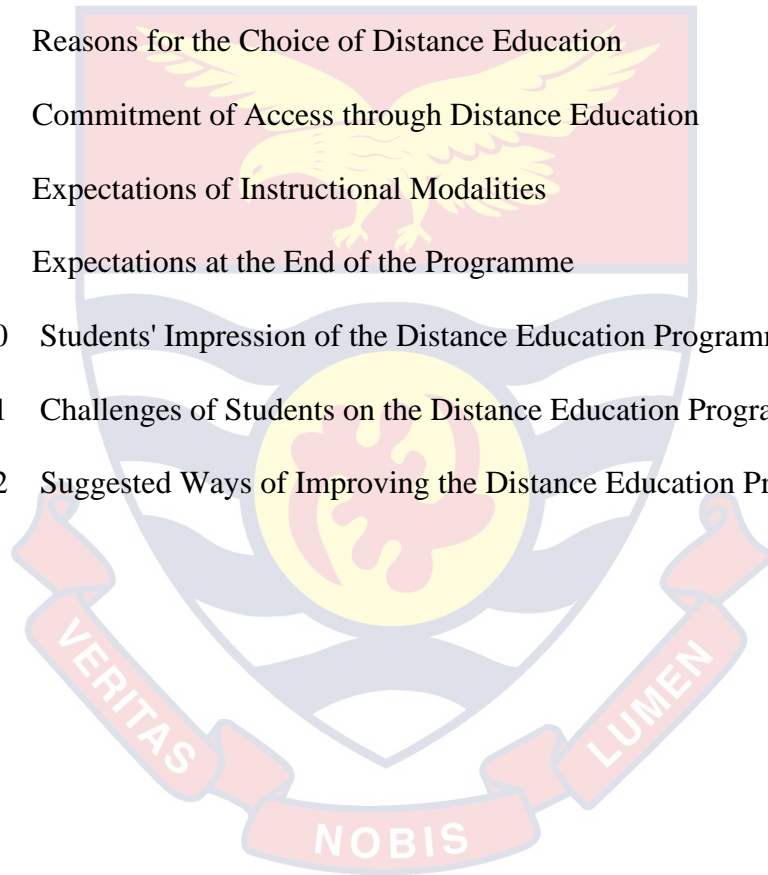


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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### Background to the Study

The period of knowledge-based society has encouraged the building of human capital internationally to be seen as a critical factor in economic and democratic development. This knowledge-based society determines a nation's competitiveness and destiny (Dunn, 2001) and represents a vision of the relationship between individuals and society in terms of their capacity. It also determines capacity for sustainable economic development, resulting in an environmental policy change that many nations are striving to develop at national level human resources and knowledge. The existence of increased growth in population and deep income inequality create demands on the physical environment and its resources (Beare, 2009).

The unbalanced interest in human training assets likewise blocks individuals from getting to advanced education. In the same way, as other developing nations, Ghana has about twenty percent of its populace practically uneducated and living beneath the neediness line. Separation instruction, in this way, could be utilised to help train Ghanaian natives. Without a doubt, lopsided characteristics and insufficient infrastructure at schools make it difficult for sufficient admission of progressively qualified students to be enrolled. Hence, governments worldwide are advancing increasingly more the utilisation of open and distant learning; a correlative way to deal with customary infrastructure difficulties to satisfy new and changing needs for training. It is similarly to restrict, perhaps the long-haul impacts brought about by deficiency in assets

(framework, speakers, and hardware) accessible and the uneven appropriation thickness of training in the geo-statistic of Ghana (Amenumey, 2007).

The challenge of continuing education and human development for teachers need versatile existing resources as a supplement to enhance their knowledge base (Centre for Continuing Education, 2006). This requires Distance Education to fill the gap of equitable access to education by all. For that reason, entry points to learning, training and retraining opportunities for personal enrichment, balancing inequalities between geo-demographic groups is improved (Amenumey, 2007). The continuing professional development enable teachers to expand knowledge base. Some professional development comes in the form of extended organised courses resulting in official qualifications (masters or bachelors or diplomas degrees).

Even though there is a wide-ranging acknowledgement that teacher training, education and professional advancement need to be incorporated to optimise lifelong learning in response to challenges current teacher advancement/education experiences. In the utilisation of a variation of technologies, the materials allotted are frequently insufficient and prospects too limited. The successful expansion of Distance Education provision has ensured lifelong amalgamation of education with family life and work (Beare, 2009). One main merit for conjoining study (learning) and work is that people continuously support and contribute to the economy by means of working and paying required taxes. It is perhaps cheaper to train people by way of Distance Education than to provide full-time training at considerable cost. The Distance Education programme plays a crucial role as it caters for the requirement of those who are on the job, helping the economic growth of a nation in meeting

its human resources development efforts and needs. Generally, an increase in students' numbers has not been harmonised with comparable growth in public funds (Dunn, 2001).

For this reason, novel approaches and effectual techniques of teaching and learning have become essential. Distance Education signifies an approach that emphasis on training and education, liberalising students from restraints of space and time and provides less rigid opportunities of learning to groups of students and persons (Amenumey, 2007). Distance learning offers supplementary ways of reaching students in diverse geographical locations. These may be students with personal needs, work and family responsibilities. It is also for others who want improvement in their skills and knowledge for their present and future professions (Beare, 2009). The Distance Education programme supports the gaining of skills and knowledge via mediated instruction and information. It embraces all know-hows and other systems of learning. It plays a complementary role to the traditional education given to individuals' for development (Amenumey, 2007).

The learning and training opportunities transcend geographical barriers and contribute to widening access to higher education. The most valuable resource in the world is not gold, oil, or any unique mineral, but the people and the development of their human competencies. These are of great commercial value to a nation.

The University of Cape Coast is an institution established in 1962, mandated with the training of graduate specialised teachers for the nation's Senior High Schools and to assist in meeting the manpower accelerated needs of the nation at the time (University of Cape Coast, 2003). Its mission is to

produce highly qualified teachers with opportunities to promote upgrade the quality and output of teachers and also to train and educate the professional capability of in-serving teachers at all levels of education in the Ghanaian education system. Its inception has not realised the desired objectives due to a number of problems. Paramount on the list of the problems is financial constraints. This has led to pressure on the available resources hence the inception of Distance Education to assuage the problem. It has long been recognised in Ghana that the conventional or traditional campus-based education system can no longer accommodate the extremely high increase in the quest for university education.

In 1997, the Centre for Continuing Education (CCE), currently called College of Distance Education (CoDE), was established by the University of Cape Coast with the core mandate to train professional teachers and other professionals for the world of work, CoDE shares the vision of the University to be a university strongly positioned with worldwide acclaim. As part of the vision, CoDE wants to become a reference point for the delivery of quality Distance Education in Ghana and beyond (University of Cape Coast, 2010; 2009). CoDE also has a mission to pursue quality in the delivering, cost-effective, demand-driven, customer-oriented and innovative Distance Education programmes which is directed towards supporting persons in overpowering cultural, geographical, social, and economic barriers to learning and instruction.

College of Distance Education began with students' enrolment of 750 in 2001. Currently, the college has an enrolment of 48,622 undergraduate students in 73 study centres across the ten regions of Ghana and 1,427 postgraduate

students in five regional centres. It runs programmes in Education and Business leading to the award of Diploma, Bachelor's and Master's degrees. In all, the college presently runs 27 programmes (University of Cape Coast, 2018). The advent of distance or continuing education and its allied technology, now makes it possible for students to stay in the comfort of their homes and pursue higher education at their own pace with maximum time convenience.

Observations from the CoDE have revealed that students on Distance Education programmes have numerous reasons enrolling on the programme. Such decisions might include work, family, time and financial reasons. The majority of the students are workers and would have time to come over the weekends (Ohene & Essuman, 2014). With this commitment, the students expect to have all the benefits they need to have and believe that they have come to learn. As to whether this motive is achieved or not is unclear now. This suggests that the Distance Education students face several challenges which can be personal or institutional-based. These issues are purely based on observations of the investigator and therefore might not have empirical basis. Being a Distance Education student of the University of Cape Coast motivated me to conduct the study in my own institution. This follows my observations during my studies with the institution.

### **Statement of the Problem**

A developing nation like Ghana has a youthful and growing population that needs to be trained to attain knowledge for the development of the country. One way by which this knowledge can be attained is through making higher education equitable and accessible to the wider growing population (Amenumey, 2007).



Most of the universities in Ghana are concentrated in urban areas. Admittedly this does not mean that those in the rural or remote places are denied higher education but they do so at an economical cost with respect to transportation and accommodation thereby escalating poverty levels. These constraints do not motivate the rural folks enough to acquire higher education. It has threatened to make higher education look very much like a luxury rather than a necessity. Even though it is easy to state that universities should be established in the rural areas but there are inevitable challenges to contend with. In higher education, everywhere is confronted with boundless challenges. The challenges depend mainly on a political, social, technological, human, financial and infrastructural resource which makes conditions to access difficult (Amenumey, 2007).

For economic reasons, most lecturers leave for greener pastures leaving the burden of training on very few people in the educational sector of most developing nations, Ghana not being an exception (Sward 2016). For this reason, the University of Cape Coast finds it as a stakeholder's social responsibility to help alleviate the problem individuals' go through as they desire higher education. A relatively remote place like Jasikan in the Northern Volta, and Tumu in the Upper West Regions of Ghana would not have had more of its teacher population experiencing higher education had it not been Distance Education programme; because higher education is almost not in existence in these areas. By this, Distance Education programme, an alternative of the traditional form of education has evolved to restore dreams of these individuals.

Despite the university's success in bringing forth the Distance Education programme, there had been few challenges that need to be addressed. These are access to information other than the modules, inadequate course tutors for some programmes, a structure that needs to be decentralised to address administrative lapses, unavailability of permanent study centres and so the university spends considerable time locating a new centre each time they are evicted, inadequate distribution of information, and lack of strategic plan for the Centre for Continuing Education at University of Cape Coast for the Distance Education programme. These need to be addressed to bridge the educational gap between urban and rural folks (Best & Kahn, 2012).

According to Ohene and Essuman (2014), people who enrol on Distance Education programmes have their unique motives for enrolling on such programmes and as such if these motives are defeated by the challenges aforementioned, it becomes a concern for enrolment rates. Ohene and Essuman (2014) further indicated that these enrolment reasons are unclear and a study is necessary. The focus of the study, therefore, seeks to explore issues related to enrolment decisions, expectations and challenges of Distance Education students in the University of Cape Coast.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study is to explore students' enrolment decisions, expectations and challenges of Distance Education students in the University of Cape Coast.

### **Objectives of the study**

1. Identify the factors behind students' decisions to further their education through Distance Education.

2. Find out the expectations of students on the Distance Education programme.
3. Identify the challenges students encounter on the Distance Education programme.
4. Map out students' views on how best to resolve challenges students encounter on the programme.

### **Research Questions**

1. What factors influence students' decisions to further their education through Distance Education?
2. What are the expectations of students on the Distance Education programme?
3. What challenges do students encounter on the Distance Education programme?
4. To what extent do students' views help to resolve challenges students encounter on the programme?

### **Significance of the Study**

The findings of this study will be beneficial for major stakeholders in education, especially distance learning institutions. First, students would benefit from the study by unearthing the challenges they face. This will be beneficial to students if these challenges are resolved by authorities in charge.

The findings of the study will enlighten the management of the College of Distance Education of the University of Cape Coast on the reasons why people enrol on their programmes. This serves as an opportunity for the University Management to put in place strategies to attract prospective applicants who wish to further their education. Similarly, understanding the

expectations of students is also a great drive to successful planning and management of Distance Education.limited

This study will also serve as a reference point for other institutions who run Distance Education programmes to take caution of some of the activities they do. Obtaining information on the challenges of Distance Education students of the University of Cape Coast, for example, will provide an insight for the University of Education, Winneba on how to improve their Distance Education since both institutions have similar operation systems of Distance Education.

Lastly, the study will add up to existing knowledge in the area of Distance Education. This will serve as a foundation for further studies to be conducted.

### **Delimitations of the Study**

The study is restricted to the College of Distance Education of the University of Cape Coast. Specifically, the study was carried out in centres within the Central Region. Although the issue of accessibility of Distance Education has many facets, it was limited to factors behind students' decisions to further their education through Distance Education; expectations of students of the programme; challenges students encounter on the programme; students' view on how best to resolve challenges students encounter on the programme. Students were the sole respondents of the study.

### **Limitations of the Study**

Although every effort was made in the study to reduce the effect of every extraneous variable, some limitations were encountered. With these limitations in mind, explanations regarding the significance of the study should be handled

cautiously. In the first place, the study relied on self-reported data. As a result, the data was prone to distortion to the extent that the findings might not reflect actual fact on the grounds. Additionally, the findings of this study were derived from a sample of final year post-diploma students of CoDE, University of Cape Coast; therefore, the generalisation of the findings is limited.

### **Organisation of the Rest of the Study**

The rest of the study is organised into four chapters. Chapter Two focuses on the review of existing relevant and related literature on the study. Chapter Three also describes the methodology that is used in the study. This includes the study institution, approach to the study, research design, the population, sample and sampling procedures, research instruments, validity and reliability of instruments, ethical issues, data collection and data analysis procedures.

Chapter Four presents the analysis of data, results and the discussion of the findings. The final chapter, which is chapter five, presents the summary, conclusions, recommendations and implications of the findings. The chapter further presents the suggestions for further study.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter discusses the review of related literature pertinent to the issue under discussion. This chapter focuses on the review of existing relevant and related literature on the study.

#### **Concept of Distance Education**

Distance Education is the form of learning and instruction which does not necessarily takes place in a controlled environment and classes are organised at the convenience of students. From the view point of Knowles, Holton and Swanson (2008), grown-ups begin to study again, when life situations necessitate supplementary learning. Knowles et al (2008) limited their explanation to older peoples. This, however, appears not to be the case in contemporary times.

According to Rumble (2009), learning can be explained as the change in the thinking patterns, causing in the skills or knowledge acquisition, is classically dependent on the student and teacher collaboration and instructional procedure. The area of open and distance learning are expressions frequently utilized interchangeably, and literature overflows with corresponding vocabulary and incompatible perspectives. It has been reported that there is no difference between the dual (Rumble, 2009).

According to Lewis and Spencer (2006) posit that, distance education is a sub-category of open education; others preach that “open education is not identical with distance learning (Foks, 2007). From Garrison’s (2010) perspective, open education systems are not equal to distance education. There are important variances between the two concepts, much contemporary practice

emphasis the difference. Distance Education is described as a delivery method; self-governing learning at a distance by means of self-learning texts and non-contiguous interactions, whereas open learning comprises the ideas of both flexibility and openness; whereby students have individual independence over their educations and where access constrains and civil rights have been taken away and distance as in liberation from the lecturer (Garrison, 2010). These concepts appear to be used and applied interchangeable in many contexts. Several open and distance education are referred to as open and distance learning. Which ever the case might be, both concepts are applied to situation where people learn at their own comfort.

Speaking to the concept of Distance Education, Keegan (2000, p. 44) recognizes five central fundamentals of distance learning. These were:

1. the parting of learner and lecturer,
2. the effect of an educational group,
3. the utilisation of official media (typically print) to bond the learner and the teacher and to convey content of the education,
4. the delivery of dual and shared communication so that the learner may profit from it and
5. the likelihood of infrequent face-to-face interaction for both socialization and didactic reasons.

The formulation by Keegan is a valuable one (and it seems to have been commonly recognized or known by scholars, even though it has been condemned by Garrison (2010), as being too constricted) and is deemed to be appropriate because the Distance Education programme comprised these five dimensions.

Distance Education, in which the teacher is detached by place and time from the learner (McIsaac, 2003), originated as a substitute to the traditional educational system. It has been demarcated in the previous and present literature; the concept can be employed to designate any of the composite instructional circumstances. Though it is believed of as a new concept, Distance Education has been in existence for above hundred years. A single of the earlier methods of Distance Education was carried out via communication courses taking place in Europe. This remained the primary process of Distance Education till the mid of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century when instructional television and radio became much known (Imel, 2006).

The obligations and scarcity of lecturers in deprived schools created an atmosphere in the twilight of 1980s favorable to the quick growth of Distance Education (McIsaac, 2003). The concept of Distance Education or learning had been in varied utilisation for a number of years, but then again was created at a period when the technical potentials for distance learning were more restricted. Distance learning formerly comprised the customary, paper-based communication programme where students independently worked, submitted projects through email and then hanged on for written response from a lecturer. For some years now, as innovative technologies evolve, Distance Educationalists have established new educational frameworks to be used. Primary utilisation of educational television comprised transmissions of lesson. Students could observe the discourses and then do homeworks to submit.

Nowadays, Distance Education has extended to comprise a diversity of educational media and systems. As technology has transformed, so has the characterisation of Distance Education. Recorded lessons have been a



customary in university and specialized courses for the past two years (Moore & Lockee, 2008). Recorded audiotapes and lectures mailed to students have been employed in communication courses in teaching subjects like international language for fairly some period (Teaster & Blieszner, 2009). Currently, the compressed video and Internet have replaced Distance Education in new instructions, permitting Distance Education to happen in real period. Live video taped teaching is the outmost fastest and prevalent growing mode of delivery in Distance Education in the United States (Ostendorf, 2007).

The growth of Distance Education, from the view point of Morabito (2009), is categorised into four groups: Web-Based teleconferencing, early technology, printed instruction, and online instruction. There are 3 diverse forms of schools in higher education describing Distance Education. They are correspondence schools, open universities, and virtual universities (Klesius, Homan & Tompson, 2007). The benchmark of Distance Education was in the late 1980s, when computers became mass media as the Internet was spread.

According to Webster (2002), computer technology started between 1945 and 1970 and it was mostly used in the field of big science and in national scale projects such as national defense and space exploration. It was gradually used in government, organisations, an schools, and most distance learning institutions added the Internet capabilities by the 1990s. In addition, new instructional methods based on computer technology (i.e. Computer-Based education, computer assisted education) were developed to improve students' learning environments for both conventional and Distance Education. In 1997, the University of South Africa which started distance learning programmes in 1946 (McIsaac, 2003), started offering programmes from certificate to doctoral

level degrees using instructional materials such as study guides, tutorial letters, audiocassettes, books, and the Internet services to help students with their learning (Morabito, 1999).

The United States (US) Department of Commerce on Computer and Internet use (2001), in their report, maintained that persons unceasingly increase their computer and internet usages. Dunn (2001) believed that so many university degrees and approximately ninety thousand university-level programmes are offered online, and around two-thirds of university education provides at slightest some online courses. The growth of online learning increases instructional settings tremendously, not just for education systems but also for business organizations, offering courses, funds, and performance systems of support. However, in many cases, interactivity of instructional materials and interactions between instructors and students and among students have been the biggest concern in online learning environments.

Currently, online information technology acts as a key feature in operating Distance Education classes, reaching people worldwide. Online education changes the concept of time and space by allowing global access to education and more advanced tools to provide optimal learning environments for students. People form learning communities with shared interests such as computer groups and discussion groups have fruitful social interactions. In addition, virtual learning environments in which students act like they are in a real classroom are introduced and tested by many universities. Moreover, traditional programmes tend to overcome its Distance Education machineries, and consequently the pedagogics more applicable to traditional instruction and

contradict the effectiveness and power of its distance learning dimension Rumble (2000).

Distance Education should preferably, be focused on pedagogical frameworks that best support learning and delivery approach. Litto (2001) strong-minded that amalgamation, that is the mixture of face-to-face and distance modalities of delivery, is nevertheless presently the paramount technique to knock into distance learning's competencies. Certainly, specialists in custody of distance learning in Brazil have only a theoretical understanding of distance learning with "their applied knowledge deeply entrenched in the traditional face-to-face systems of the present higher education establishments" (Romiszowski, 2005 pp 9).

According to Savery and Duffy (2005), there are two features that influence students' attitudes to learning: the understanding of the instructional process and their capability of making something important out of the presented material. In a study by Savery and Duffy (2005), they found that television showed to be psychologically less challenging than written text when equivalent content was utilised. When students do not make meaningful connection between instruction and their needs, it is hard for them to be motivated to learn.

In contemporary times, there have been significant changes in the field of instructional technology. Instructional activities have been upgraded with the integration of various technologies. Online network systems, multimedia and artificial intelligence are integrated into online instructional modules. They empower instructional presentation, interactions among individuals, students' engagement with a class and flexibility in time and space (Butzj Hua & Maghire, 2006).

In 1996, the Instructional Telecommunications Council described Distance Education as the procedure of lengthening education or conveying instructional resource-sharing chance to localities far from the traditional classroom, office blocks places, to a different building, site or classroom through the utilisation of video, computer, audio, hyper media communications or some amalgamation of these with other customary methods of delivery (Gross & Pirk, 2004). Today's Distance Education encourages students to become active students. The scope and target audience of Distance Education have been broadened as online technology became available.

Information online helps people with their everyday lives. Online instruction makes the purpose and functions of education to be expanded from academic levels of learning to managing our general problems. Online based performance technology proposes effective and efficient solutions for performance problems in workplaces, replacing traditional training (Wayne & Ramoro, 2006). Therefore, current trends suggest that Distance Education is replaced by online education.

### **Theoretical Review**

#### **Distance Education Learning Models**

Until recent years, Distance Education was hypothesised as concerning a teacher (T) asynchronously interacting (A) with an individual student (S), disconnected by distance- the student and teacher involved in a designed two-way conversation (Moore, 2003; Peters & Keegan, 2004; Keegan, 2006; Moore & Kearsley, 2006) intermediated by electronic and print technologies. Wedemeyer (2011) highlighted the liberation of student accomplishment within this framework and Keegan (2000) explicitly committed the learning group as

a principal setting for Distance Education teaching and learning, even though he recognized the likelihood of infrequent meetings for social and instructive purposes. This learning model was accepted in university communication or self-regulating learning courses in the United States during the 20<sup>th</sup> Century and was historically extended with the growth of open universities in the later part of the century. In Europe, United Kingdom, New Zealand, Australia and several other nations, audio cassettes, print-based materials and other learning materials were utilised in the creation of a joint framework for students to access degree programmes and university courses at periods and plans suitable to the students.

For more than two decades now, a huge number of nations, particularly, those with good education systems not able to accommodate the growing demand generated by quickly developing populaces and economic situations, have answered to this request by building open universities grounded on the independent learner framework. As well-known, several of these universities have very huge admissions, in the millions (Daniel, 2006). This growth informed Peters' suggestion that Distance Education could be labelled as an industrialized system of education, where bulk distribution, normalization, assembly-line procedures and division of labour were significant features (Peters & Keegan, 2004). Discussing the national open universities growth, Evans (2009) named these concentrated efforts "single-mode" distance teaching universities, in distinction to single-mode campus-based campuses or the mixed-mode campuses discussed by Rumble (2012).

Empire State (New York) and Thomas Edison (New Jersey) all from the United States, were developed based on the idea of providing degrees by means of the T:A:S:1>1 model (Hanna, 2003). Till the previous two decades, other

more recognized universities in the united states (US) run courses but typically not complete degrees by means of this model (Hanna, 2003).. In New Zealand and Australia, on the other hand, several campus-based universities in previous years begun running full-time degree programmes through Distance Education by means of the T:A:S:1>1 model; these campuses were recognised as dual-mode institutions, highlighting the fact that they run degrees both on-regular basis and by means of distance (Evans, 1999). In Australia, the concept of dual-mode has progressively been displaced by flexible learning nonetheless the universities structure have persisted and principally unchanged (Evans, 2009).

Coming from a policy dimension, this model adequately fit properly within customary universities in that it entailed slight curriculum transformation, placing negligible burdens on faculty and could be accounted in a manner as to be independent. Several scholars (e.g., Keegan & Holmberg, 2003; Holmberg, 2009) have indicated that the model depend on inherent autonomous learner enthusiasm for success. The University of Wollongong, for instance, describes flexible learning as permitting the intensity and duration, place, delivery medium and method of the teaching to be consistent with the learning goals, the needs of the learner, the course and subject eligibility, and the teacher judgment (Holmberg, 2009).

Wedemeyer (2011) have maintained that low accomplishment rates happens because grown-ups have directed learning objectives other than degree and course completion. Nevertheless, it is evident that, from a programme financial standpoint, low completion tolls of course have largely resulted in institutional profit per learner aided and such monetary reinforcement of negative consequences turns into an unsuccessful impediment to rectifying this

model faintness. In a new contemporary form of Distance Education programme, a teacher (T) is linked synchronously (S) with learner S2 in distant settings (T:S:S2:1>S2).

The outmost collective form of Distance Education predominant in the United States, includes linking a lecturer with off-campus students through video- conferencing, computer-conferencing or audio-conferencing, or programmed times. Most frequently, particularly when video networks are utilised, students still transport themselves to a central setting, like a communal location or a learning centre, to have technology access and to come into contact with other students (Holmberg, 2009). Hitherto this condition is quickly moving away as systems become more vigorous in their connective competences and access to technology in businesses and homes advance. All these forms of conventional structured nature of Distance Education and the related instructional approaches are deeply based on lecturer-directed instructional activities and objectives and have become relatively restrictive as the Worldwide Web and the Internet have advanced (Graves, 2007). Certainly, they generally denote Schlecty's first perspective of change, that of the implementation of practical changes that modify how the teaching task is achieved. Though the T:S:S2:1>S2 framework has been operative in addressing the matters of rates of completion and course comparability, its eligibility that students satisfy together in real time provides a grave weakness for several demanding adult students (Dede, 2000).

Currently, a third set of Distance Education programme models have been established. With this models, students are enthusiastically associated via the advanced technologies and Internet with one another, with faculty teachers

and with recognized academic maintenance framework in ways not fictional just some years back and the presented choices concerning culture, technology, pedagogy and approach are becoming progressively blurred and complex. Students are given regular and continuous chances of interacting with one another and with the lecturer but to asynchronously do so. The teacher (T) is asynchronously linked (A) with students (S2) who are capable of interacting with both the lecturer and with other students around cooperative team projects, assignments and discussions (T:A:S2:1>S2).

In these developing framework, what is off-campus? and what is on-campus?. The outmost customary institutions is increasing more challenging to separate and self-governing learning is gradually amalgamated with collective learning (Hanna, 2000). Technologies are also speedily joining, so that audio, video and print are all coming together by means of the Web in sustenance to learning and accessibility to these innovative technologies are increasing (Dede, 2000; Graves, 2007). Even nowadays, nevertheless, whether students in virtual web-based programmes are mandatory to interrelate only with their coaches or also with other students is a point of difference between teachers and between administrative models that are in session or under expansion at several universities (Hanna, Glowacki-Dudka, & Conceicao-Runlee, 2000). In fact, this may appear as a remarkable point of difference between degree courses and programmes presented at a distance, which then will probable become more and more alike from one organization to another in the field of technology utilised, accessibility modes, provided services and delivered content.



## Distance Education in Contemporary Times

Distance Education is the form of learning and instruction which does not necessarily takes place in a controlled environment and classes are organised at the convenience of students.

Greenberg (2008) delineates modern Distance Education as an organized learning and instructional experience that employs an extensive range of machineries to get access to students at a distance and is planned to inspire student- tutor communication and certification of education. Teaster and Blieszner (2009) believe that the concept of Distance Education has been useful to several instructional approaches: nevertheless, its key difference is that the student and the teacher are distinct in time and space perhaps.

McIsaac (2003) describes Distance Education as a substitute to the typical educational practice where the lecturer is detached by place and time from the learner. Keegan (2005) provides the outmost detailed description of Distance Education and detects that distance training and learning is caused by the technological detachment of learner and teacher which liberates the learner from the requirement of migrating to a permanent location, at a specific time, to come into contact with a particular person, in order to be educated. From the description, it is clear that the learner and the teacher are detached by space and not by time per se.

Moore (2003) presented the independent study theory. A significant under pinning of Distance Education, it proposes that efficacious teaching can be present although learner and teacher are detached physically throughout the learning process. Although this detachment can happen in numerous means dependent on the type of course delivery mechanism and content. Several

distance learning programmes use a mixture of audio and visual means in facilitating learning.

Just like the entertaining sector, radio, telephone, television, compact disc, video, audio cassette, computer and print materials are utilized in the delivery of instruction. The agility of today's employees; the necessity for regular proficiency advancement of workforces in detached workstations; the request for fairness of educational accessibility for all peoples; the necessity of an educated community to tolerate the course of democracy and commerce; and the overpowering longing by extremely individualistic for options, flexibility, and controller of one's life communicates Distance Education as a foreseeable growth (Holloway & Ohler, 2001).

The Distance Education, or education, is a arena of teaching that emphasis on the technological pedagogy and instructional structural design that are successfully combined in the delivery of education to students who are not materially "on-site" to have their education. As an alternative, instructors and students may connect asynchronously (at periods they prefer) by exchanging electronic or printed media, or via technology that permits them to converse synchronously. Various definitions have been suggested in defining Distance Education, depending on the emphasis of characteristics in delivery and instructional methods. Moore and Kearsley (2006) pronounced distance learning as a prearranged education through the utilisation of distinctive methods and techniques for delivering and designing teaching. The California Distance Learning Group describes it as a learning process which takes place at a distance by connecting students and educational resources.

In 2008, the United States Distance Learning Association (USDLA) described distance learning as a means of acquiring skills and knowledge via intermediated instruction and information that is conveyed by any forms of learning or technological medium at a distance. Keegan (2006) pronounces distance learning as “non-contiguous interaction between instructor and student facilitated by technology or print media. While most previous definitions concentrated on instructional medium, current descriptions appear to be more specific, dealing with the ease of access, utility and functionality of learning structures”. Distance learning became substantial because of its variance from the shared consolidated school model by transporting the school to the learner rather than taking the learner to the school.

Similarly, it has become efficacious since it occupied a requirement created by a growing amount of distance learning students. On a whole, the possible audience for Distance Education is considerable more different and much superior than any educational estimated establishment; desires for distance students depending on the quickly varying world that surrounds them. The amplified flexibility of the employees and the need for advancing knowledge and skills to stay modern with contemporary developing technologies necessitate a bendable and well-organized system of education that can quickly respond to the varying needs.

Illeris (2003) recommended that lifetime education does not only have a numerical emphasis on more learning for people, rather the author suggested that persons need to react to on-going social variations. The distance learning offers a substitute nonetheless corresponding route to higher education for basic school teachers where traditional university education productivity cannot

satisfy demand. The courses and certificates are equal to those of traditional students (Gilbert, 2008; Jacobs, 2001).

Threlkeld and Brezoska (2004) indicated that adulthood, high incentive levels, and self-control have been revealed to be essential features of efficacious, pleased students. Learning through distance is self-learning and the learner is not by themselves. As Holmberg (2009) pronounces distance learning is a form of dialogue where two-way interaction happens by means of written or otherwise intervened communication between the teacher and the learner and others attending the institution..

The matter of course supplies is proportionally significant to the present research as Kirkup and Jones (2006) consider that the achievement of distance learning programmes “cannot be assumed”. Sharp cut-off dates for tutor-marked homeworks, inflexibility of learning materials and content and strict learning edifices are all shared in distance learning frameworks (Keegan, 2000), and are issues which obviously will not satisfy the needs of all students. Kirkup and Jones (2006) highlights the greatest important flaws of distance learning as;

- a. its less ability to provide channel of communication in a manner which the traditional face-to-face education have;
- b. the obstinacy of its study method and content;
- c. the individualization and segregation of the learner.

### **Prospects and Enrolment Decisions of Distance Education Students**

Several undertakings of Distance Education programmes by most universities are monetary in nature. Universities always strive to save money by formally planning educational structure for students who are not able to enroll in the main-stream (regular) programmes of the university due to location

and time. Bollag and Overland (2001) stressed that unindustrialized nations are revolving to mount distance learning programmes to despite the continuously increasing admissions and inadequacy of facilities. Residences such as South American nations (e.g., Argentina & Brazil), Jakarta, and Beijing have all begun the utilisation of distance learning modus operandi to make education accessible to those who previously were not able to access education. Countries like China are shifting to mass education from elite and its customary universities are not able to satisfy the demand. China utilises a television and radio delivery structure in serving 1.5 million students, which is two-thirds of current students who are in various degree programmes.

Some universities in Australia, for example, utilize compacted video conferencing to easily make education and learning accessible to students in remote areas in Western Australia and to promote lessons in Business Studies by linking with students in Singapore. Several instances have been cited in Norway and United Kingdom (UK) where numerous locations have been interconnected to each other (Keegan, 1995). Indeed, there is similarly extensive utilization in the United States, both in the private and public regions. It should be understandable by these instances and by the description of Distance Education, that it can satisfy the promise of delivering classes to a diverse and wide people. Notwithstanding this, the need appears to be robust for such programmes. From the American Council on Education (2002), the total students in Distance Education doubled up from 1995 to 1998 summing 1.6 million (Dervarics, 2001). Horgan (2008) have argued that several universities are under stress to control their expenses, increase instruction quality, emphasize on the needs of client and respond to competitive pressures.

Distance Education technologies have the likelihood to support in problem solving. Basom and Sherritt (2002) interviewed higher education managers and national legislators to explore what they believed would be the key difficulties confronting higher education in America in the next era. The responses they most frequently acknowledged were: satisfying the increasing loads at a period of dwindled resources, maintaining or increasing accessibility, by means of technology more proficiently and resources allocation over state lines so that universities would not be everything to all persons. Distance Education appears to talk to all of these matters.

Managers expects that Distance Education approaches will assist in making higher education rather economical (Dibiase, 2000). This form of response may be understood as a rapid fix for numerous administrators. If not completely loomed nevertheless, the distance learning programme can rapidly become another rate. The ease of space and time is a great assurance provided by Distance Education. Students do not have to be present physically with the lecturer in space, and dependent on the technique employed, and they are not required to come together in time (Peters & Keegan, 2004). This is a prodigious benefit for distance students who are unable to attend lessons at frequent times. Satellite campuses such as the ones Arkansas State University had lately been established and are depicting a “concealed market” of adult students in small townships and current high school alumnae who do not desire to go away to a larger town to attain education. The satellite grounds could possibly assist the school’s admission to increase tenfold (Savoye, 2001).

Regarding efforts to meeting the innovative demands, Distance Education may be present not only as a supplementary but rather a substitute

technique of giving training and education, in contrast with the ‘traditional’ face-to-face approach of several educational systems. Its advantage can be assessed based on principally economic, social and technical standards. To the student, Distance Education signifies greater accessibility and thus a broader variety of chances for qualification and learning. The challenges that may be overwhelmed by Distance Education comprise not only topographic allocation, but then again other restraining conditions, like social constraints, personal and cultural barriers and inadequate educational facilities (Amenumey, 2007). It is frequently inexpensive to the learner as a substitute to tracking a course via traditional methods. It is significant that training and education may be joined with work, since numerous persons cannot absent themselves from their workplace. Open learning again denotes that a much more student-centred method, permitting better elasticity and content selection and the planning of the learning programme. For managers, open and Distance Education has numerous merits – it provides the likelihood of planning professional and learning growth in the place of work, which is frequently more elastic and substantially reduces travelling cost (Bullen, 2006).

The utilisation of Distance Education frequently places both the employees and organization in a situation of co-investment (of time and money) in order to follow common objectives, grounded on common culture and values (Jacobs, 2001). It raises efficiency and enhances communication development and other job-related abilities. With adequate records of workers being trained, Distance Education is typically cost efficient. Other benefits for the manager comprise the amplified accessibility of the worker throughout the course of the training programme and the transport ability of training processes and

programmes. The benefits to students and managers are imperative characteristics from the view point of managements (Savoye, 2001).

Currently, there is a growing acknowledgement of the place and the responsibility of distance education as a component in any country wide system of training and education (Berge, 2008). Some of the possible roles include: balancing disparities between age clusters, ranging topographical accessibility to education, dealing with educational movements and traditional education for huge spectators, offering efficient and speedy training for significant target individuals, offering training for then abandoned populaces, intensifying the volume for training in multidisciplinary and new topical areas, providing the amalgamation of education with family and work life, building numerous capabilities via continuing and recurrent education, augmenting the worldwide perspective of educational involvement, and refining the quality of present educational services (Rumble, 2009; Ljosa, 1992).

### **Expectations of Distance Education**

The issues discussed here include students' satisfaction and concerns of students. With student satisfaction, Garrison (2000) reiterates that, most of Distance Education is focused on satisfying the educational needs of grown-ups. Form Holmberg's (2006) perspective, distance learning provides support for students in terms of promoting pleasureable learning, learner motivation and efficiency if run in a manner to highlight on the relevance of the study to the needs of individual learner outlining and classifying the needs of adult students' is, nevertheless, a demanding mission. Distance learning provides students with a chance to learn and study in a peer-free milieu, when and if they desire it (Verduin & Clark, 1991), although offering support throughout the learning



experience regarding feedback, guidance and planning that is essential for continual learner motivation and accomplishment of the course.

An examination of previous studies have showed that whereas there is no substantial change in levels of achievement between traditional and distance students- there is significant difference in learner attitudes and levels of satisfaction (Johnstone, 2001, cited in Threlkeld & Brezoska, 2004). Satisfaction of students in distance learning has been surveyed by several Scholars (Beare, 2009; Hilgenberg & Tolone, 2000; Jones, 2002; McCleary & Egan, 2009). One of the utmost shared difficulties of several Distance Education programme is the dialogue restriction between students and lecturers, and among students themselves. It is of essence to emphasize that students require dialogue with their lecturers and with other colleagues in order to combine and regulate their self-learning (Kirkup & Jones, 2006). This observation was supported by Chen (2007), reiterating that finding learner-teacher discourse is a significant factor in Distance Education. Additionally, discourse permits students to evaluate their learning and build a sense of belonging with other students and also permits the institution to judge its teaching goals to find out if they are being satisfied. Not all students are suitable to this form of learning and not all courses are well delivered through this medium.

Several adult students have more chances of succeeding through Distance Education. The efficacious learner requires to have a number of features like ambiguity tolerance, a need for independence and a capability to be malleable (Threlkeld & Brezoska, 2004). Hardy and Boaz (2007) revealed that Distance Education, in contrast to the majority of face-to-face learning programmes, helps students to be more concentrated, enhanced management of

time and to have the capability to independently work and with colleagues. Several distance students are dissimilar from regular (on-campus) undergraduates in that they are present in occupations. They possess well distinct objectives and are more enthused (Dibiase, 2000). As previously discussed, distance learning education students require to have a feel as part of a community, Greenburg (2008) defines this as a computer-generated learning community.

Students in these communities frequently feel fewer burden in independently performing and more compression to cooperate and operate in teams (Kantor, 2008 cited in Greenberg, 2008). Being engaged in a cooperative process of learning is a significant part of building the base of a learning communal. When this is discouraged, involvement is largely little and discourse is less present (Palloff & Pratt, 2000). Students also require the attention of lecturers. This may be accurate in a distance learning education than in a regular school. In a condition where eye connection and immediacy are restricted, students cannot be self-controlled nor acknowledged by eye contact and language of the body (McKnight, 2000). Students may also have a challenging time understanding the responses of the distant location colleagues.

This non existence of communication can result in problems when there is a non conforming view that cannot be chosen with non-verbal prompts and is misconstrued as a voiced attack. This form of miscommunication can result in community complications as the class advances. It is reasonable to say that compacted video can augment the weaknesses and strengths of the lecturer. Students are susceptible to picking up on inadequate direction, organisation, and answer with absenteeism and apathy (West, 2004).

The previous two years have recorded substantial development in training and education. Nonetheless, the universe still grieves from unbearable disparities at the global level and occasionally within countries. Several nations are harassed with inadequate access to training and education for young people and children, and at similar time have to address the basic requirements of an adult cohort. At the origin is frequently challenged with funding suitable delivery of training and education. The quick growth of information and communication technologies and the change to a better knowledge-intensive, symbiotic community build novel challenges and chances for the delivery and design of education.

### **Summary**

The chapter touched on appropriate Distance Education learning models together with pertinent concepts in Distance Education. The literature revealed to me that students on Distance Education programmes have numerous reasons enrolling on the programme. Such decisions include work, family, time and financial reasons since the majority of the students are workers and would have time to come over the weekends or at their own convenience.

The literature has made it clear that students expect to have all the benefits they need to have and believe that they have come to learn. As to whether this motive is achieved or not is unclear now. This suggests that the Distance Education students face several challenges which can be personal or institutional-based. Unfortunately, the larger proportion of studies reviewed were conducted in the international world. Only one study was found done in the University of Education, Winneba. Even with that, the study only focused

on the challenges Distance Education students faced. Issues of enrolment decisions and expectations were not explored.



## CHAPTER THREE

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the research methods involved in the conduct of this study. The issues to be discussed in this chapter include the research design, population, sampling techniques employed, instruments used for data collection and analysis of the data collected. The statistical methods employed will also be described.

#### Research Design

The study employed descriptive survey research design as such the study was interventional and relied on a cross-section of the population. A vivid and critical analysis of the situation considering the nature of the research problem and purpose of study design were considered.

The descriptive survey was applicable because the investigator is interested in a description of some characteristics of a specific population through the selection of balanced samples which completed questionnaires or interviews. From Osuala's (2002) perspective, descriptive survey interprets, synthesises and integrates data by pointing out implications and relationships. The greater advantage of this survey design is its capability of providing large volumes of data from fairly a great number of persons.

Babbie (1990) recommends that the purpose of a descriptive survey is to generalise from a small selected sub-group of the population to the entire population so as to infer about some behaviour or characteristics of the population. Gay (1992) and Fraenkel and Wallen (2000) agree that a descriptive survey involves the collection of data through the use of the questionnaire. The survey was useful in investigating problems of the demographic information

and opinions. Polit and Hungler (1995) explain a descriptive survey as mainly documenting, observing, and describing characteristics of a situation as it occurs naturally rather than elucidating the situation. Descriptive actions or events were witnessed and described (what is going on?). Indeed, the worth of observation is fundamental, just like the issue of generalization. This design was employed because of its flexibility and a wider range of the population that it could cover for the study.

### **Study Area**

College of Distance Education (CoDE), University of Cape Coast, previously called Centre for Continuing Education (CCE) was founded in 1997, as one of the centres under the then Faculty of Education, now College of Education Studies of University of Cape Coast (Code, University of Cape Coast, 2016). The centre was later advanced to a college standing on August 1, 2014. Presently, CoDE, University of Cape Coast has three departments, namely: Department of Education, Department of Business Studies and Department of Mathematics and Science Education. Also, there are several units that serve as auxiliary departments to the main departments and the college as a whole. One of such units is the Counselling Unit, which exists basically to help students through counselling to make informed choices and decisions on their academics, career and social/personal issues.

The college, then began with an original students' enrolment of 750 in 2001. Currently, the college has an enrolment of 48,622 undergraduate students in 73 study centres across the ten regions of Ghana and 1,427 postgraduate students in five regional centres. It runs programmes in Education and Business

leading to the award of Diploma, Bachelor's and Master's degrees. In all, the college presently runs 27 programmes (University of Cape Coast, 2017b).

CoDE shares the vision of the University to be a university strongly positioned with worldwide acclaim. As part of the vision, CoDE wants to become a reference point for the delivery of quality Distance Education in Ghana and beyond (University of Cape Coast, 2017a). It also has a mission to pursue quality in the conveyance of demand-driven, innovative, cost-effective and customer-oriented Distance Education programmes geared toward assisting persons in overpowering cultural, geographical, social and economic obstacles to instruction. According to University of Cape Coast, 2016, currently, the college is made up of:

1. The Board of CoDE, University of Cape Coast
2. The Office of the Provost
3. Office of the College Registrar
4. Office of the College Finance Officer
5. Heads of Academic Departments
6. Coordinators of Administrative Units
7. Zonal Coordinators
8. Regional Resident Tutors
9. Study Centre Coordinators

CoDE provides students with support services in order to help them meet among other things, their learning styles and academic performance needs; and also be able to cope, adjust and adapt to the distance academic environment. The rationale behind the provision of these support services is to create an academic environment that ensures students' academic as well as psychological,

social and emotional well-being in a state of bliss for academic success. It is also to ensure that students complete their programme of study successfully and on time.

### **Population**

The population for the study was the post- diploma degree in education students of the college. The study was targeted to all final year students of the post-diploma in education programme. The study was targeted to only final year students because they had been in the system for quite a number of years and would be in a position to provide reliable information. 2018 year group of post-diploma in education final year students of CoDE, University of Cape Coast has a student population of 28,602. The accessible population was CoDE students of University of Cape Coast within the Central Region.

### **Sampling Procedure**

The sample size for the study was 200 students. The sample size chosen was obtained based on the recommendations of Frankael and Wallen (2000), for a study which employs a descriptive survey and has a population of between 10,000 and 30,000, a minimum sample size of 200 should be used. This means that the sample size should be 200 or more. In this study, 200 sample size was considered due to issues of time and resources.

First, a cluster sampling procedure was used to select three centres within the Central Region. Stratified sampling technique was then used to calculate the corresponding sample size for each centre with regard to the students' population. For each centre, the list of post-diploma students was taken and simple random sampling technique was used to select the respondents. In doing so, the names of all the students in a centre were written



on slips or pieces of paper, folded and placed in a container. The researcher then mixed them up thoroughly, and picked a piece of paper at a time from the container without looking into it (with replacement), to represent a student. This same process was repeated in the rest of the centres.

### **Data Collection Instrument**

The study used a self-developed questionnaire as the main instrument for data gathering. The questionnaire was appropriate because it is less expensive and can be administered to a huge number of respondents within the possible shortest time (Creswell, 2012; Neuman, 2007). Using the questionnaire, the investigator does not essentially need to be there to collect the data, however, the researcher can train other personnel to do the administration of the questionnaire on behalf of the researcher (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010). In this study, for example, the researcher recruited and trained six personnel to assist in the questionnaire administration.

Despite this significance in using a questionnaire, it can, however, be problematic. The self-reporting form of questionnaire gives the respondents the chance to provide information which may not be true and as a result can have an effect on the validity of the study (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010). In this study, the researcher, however, put in place strategies to assure the participants of confidentiality and anonymity of data collected, and sought for their consent, although participation was voluntary. Ensuring that, the researcher expects the participants to, at best, accurately provide responses to the questions on the instrument (Neuman, 2007).

The questionnaire comprised a number of sections. The items on the instrument was 22 in all. The opening section addressed issues on the

demographic characteristics of respondents such as sex, age, designation and study centre. The main data collected with this instrument centred on reasons for furthering education, perceived benefits, why the choice of Distance Education as a medium of education, and their commitment level towards the Distance Education, the expectation of students on the programme, challenges encountered by students, and suggested solutions.

### **Validity and Reliability**

In order to ensure the validity and reliability of the instruments that were used for the study, a pilot study was carried out. Validity, in the context of this study, refers to how accurately the questionnaire was able to collect the responses from the respondents as intended by the researcher to tackle the purpose of the study. In relation to content validity, the study ensured that the items on the instruments covered the domain that the instruments purport to measure. This was determined by the experts' judgment of the supervisor.

With regard to face validity, the study ensured that the instruments measured what they appeared to measure. The face validity of the study was granted by the researcher's peers and supervisor of the college. Construct validity, on the other hand, was ensured by making sure that the instruments related to the theoretical constructs that they purport to measure.

Pilot testing was done in one of the centres in the Western Region of Ghana. The Cronbach's Alpha reliability estimate was utilised to establish the reliability of the instrument used. A reliability coefficient of 0.81 was achieved. This statistical tool varies from zero to one, and though alpha has several interpretations, the cut-off value is more useful in determining whether a scale is reliable. The closer the coefficient is to 1.0, the higher the reliability. The

standard rule of thumb is that alpha must be or greater than approximately 0.7 to conclude that the scale is reliable. The Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient generated indicated that the various scales were reliable per the suggestion of Darren and Mallery (2014), implying acceptability of the scales.

### **Data Collection Procedure**

A period of seven weeks was used for collecting the data. Prior to administering the questionnaire, an informal familiarisation visit was made to the various selected centres for the confirmation of the number of respondents and additional information on the issues raised. The data collection process was carried out in three stages. Stage one was the collection of list of respondents from the Records Management Unit of the College. Stage two was the distribution of the questionnaire and stage three was the retrieving stage. Distributing the questionnaires to the respondents, the researcher and selected centre coordinators went through them with the students, after which they were required to respond objectively to the items.

### **Ethical Considerations**

The issue of ethics is an important consideration in research that involves human subjects (Best & Kahn, 2012). Ethical issues that were catered for in this study included a right to privacy, voluntary participation, no harm to participants, and confidentiality, deception and scientific misconduct. Furthermore, permissions were sought from the management of CoDE, University of Cape Coast after giving an introductory letter and requested for a support letter.

Approval was sought from the registrar of the college through the introductory letter. The consent of the respondents was sought through their

respective centre coordinators. Respondents were informed about the purpose of the research and what objective it sought to achieve. The instructions and questions were read to them and clarifications were made where needed. The privacy and consent of respondents were also negotiated and respected in the study. All these were done to ensure and secure the consent of the respondents.

Once the investigator was confident that the participants understood the content sufficient enough, the administration of the questionnaires started with some level of assistance from known centre coordinators of the college, who were conversant and familiar with administering of questionnaires. The respondents were meticulously informed earlier before commencing the study, and they were appropriately handled during the research period. Respondents were stimulated to be free in providing their own perspectives as accurately as possible, and that they had the right to decide whether to involve themselves or not. Respondents also had the right to retract their consent at any time without any manner of hostile consequence. They were guaranteed that the data they provided would be employed solely for research purpose and nothing else.

### **Data Processing and Analysis**

This stage involved describing, summarising and interpreting data in finding out what it revealed. Data collected was edited, coded, open-ended items put under themes, tallies and frequencies changed into percentages with the assistance of Statistical Product and Service Solutions (SPSS) version 25. There were also tables to represent issues where necessary. Descriptive statistics (frequencies and percentages) was computed and ranked for the descriptive data. The analysis was done systematically, based on the objectives of the study

using percentage, frequencies and graphs by describing and interpreting data obtained.

### Summary of Chapter

The study employed descriptive survey research design as such the study were relied on a cross-section of the population. A vivid and critical analysis of the situation considering the nature of the research problem and purpose of study design were considered. The study area was the College of Distance Education (CoDE) of University of Cape Coast. The study was targeted to only final year students because they had been in the system for quite a number of years and would be in a position to provide reliable information. 2018 year group of post-diploma in education final year students of CoDE, University of Cape Coast have a student population of 28,602. The accessible population was CoDE students of University of Cape Coast within the Central Region.

The sample size for the study was 200 students. The sample size chosen was obtained based on the recommendations of Frankael and Wallen (2010). Cluster sampling procedure was first used to select three centres within the Central Region. Stratified sampling technique was then used to calculate the corresponding sample size for each centre with regard to the students' population. The study used a questionnaire as the main instrument for data gathering. The validity and reliability of the instrument were used. Descriptive statistics (frequencies and percentages) was computed and ranked for the descriptive data. The analysis was done systematically, based on the objectives of the study using percentage, frequencies and graph by describing and interpreting data obtained.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the results of data gathered in the field. This section is concentrated on issues presented in two parts: demographic characteristics of respondents and substantive matters of the research objectives.

#### **Background Characteristics of the Students**

Out of the 200 questionnaires administered to the final year post diploma students of CODE, University of Cape Coast, 176 were retrieved corresponding to a return rate of 83.8%. The demographic variables of the respondents addressed are gender, age, marital status, designation, and study centre. These variables were considered because the respondents were matured men or women, old enough to settle down as spouse or remain single, occupying the status as early childhood teacher, basic school teacher, junior high school teacher, or even a headteacher. These student teachers of Distance Education were also from various centres.

#### **Sex Distribution of Respondents**

With respect to sex, out of the 176 respondents, 110 (62.5%) were men while 66 (37.5%) were women (Figure 1). The wide disparity in sex could be concluded from the fact that married women would usually encourage their husbands to obtain higher education since they are breadwinners of the house. Women who are yet to marry would usually also encourage their prospective husbands to rather obtain higher education.

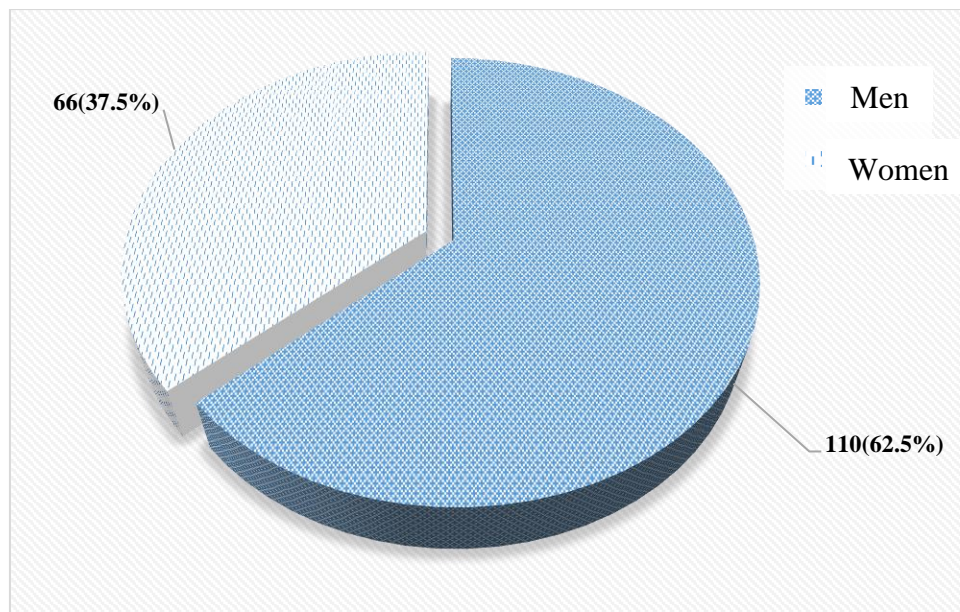


Figure 1: Sex distribution of respondents

On Age Distribution of respondents, the results are represented in Table 1.

**Table 1: Age Distribution of Respondents**

Age (years)	Frequency	Percent(%)
20-29	28	15.9
30-39	104	59.1
40-49	34	19.3
50-59	10	5.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>176</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2018

The age distribution of respondents in Table 1 indicates that most of the people who participate in the Distance Education programme are aged 30-39 (59.1%). Others are aged 40-49 (19.3%), 50-59 (5.7%) being the lowest age group on the Distance Education programme and 20-29 (15.9%). The largest proportion of the students were within the age bracket of 30 and 39. The majority of the students are people who are working and finds the need to further their education. Most of them have worked for some time and cannot leave or

resign from their work post to join the regular school. This might explain why most of them are in their 30's.

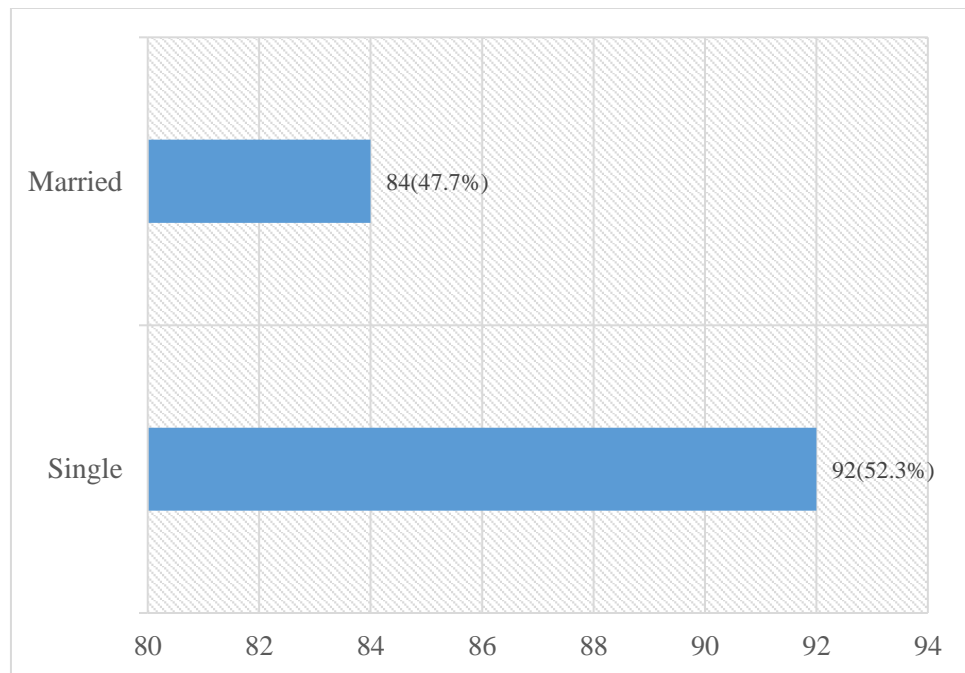


Figure 2: *Distribution of Marital status of respondents*

Response on marital status was categorised as single or married as shown in Figure 3. The result of the respondents came as 92 persons (52.3%) of the Distance Education programme were single and 84 (47.7%) were married. This concludes that almost all of the distance learning students are either married or single.



**Table 2: Designation of Respondents**

Designation	Frequency	Percent %
Early childhood teacher	17	9.7
Basic school teacher	114	64.8
Junior high teacher	14	8.0
Head teacher	31	17.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>176</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2018

The designation of the respondents is an early childhood teacher, basic school teacher, junior high school teacher or a headteacher was also considered. Out of the 176 respondents, there is relatively an uneven distribution of designation for teachers in the schools. Table 2 indicates basic school teachers 114 (64.8%) as the highest frequency of people on the Distance Education programme. The least category was 14 (8%) who are junior high teachers.

#### ***Distribution of Respondents by Study Centres***

It is realised that out of the 176 respondents in the seven study centres, Kumasi has the highest number of students 56 (31.8%). This is so because of all the study centres, it is only Kumasi that has two study centres for the education programme while the remaining centres have only one each. The table also indicates that of the remaining centres, Ho has the least number of students representing 9 (5.1%). The responses are shown in Table 3.

**Table 3: Distribution of Respondents by Study Centres**

Centre	Frequency	Percent %
University of Cape Coast	22	12.5
Takoradi	22	12.5
Accra	34	19.3
Kumasi	56	31.8
Ho	9	5.1
Koforidua	14	8.0
Sunyani	19	10.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>176</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2018

#### **Analysis of the Main Data**

This aspect of the report focuses on the analysis of the main data. For the main analysis, data were analysed and discussed in relation to the following objectives:

1. Identify the factors behind students' decisions to further their education through Distance Education.
2. Find out the expectations of students in the Distance Education programme.
3. Identify the challenges students encounter in the Distance Education programme.
4. Map out students' view on how best to resolve challenges students encounter on the programme.

### Research Question One

What factors influence students’ decisions to further their education through Distance Education?

This research question sought to identify the factors influencing students’ decision to further their education through Distance Education. A number of questions were posed to the respondents in order to address this research question. Issues discussed in this section of the report include reasons for furthering education, perceived benefits, why the choice of Distance Education as a medium of education, and their commitment level towards the Distance Education.

**Table 4: Reasons for Furthering Education**

Reasons	Frequency	Percent
More salary	66	18.5
Attain higher qualification	107	30.0
Become diplomat/graduate	75	21.0
Improve competence/skills	108	30.3
<b>Total</b>	357 *	100

\* Multiple responses; Source: Field Survey, 2018

Out of 357 multiple responses, most of the respondents’ reasons for furthering their education was for competence and skills 108 (30.3%). This was followed by the attainment of higher qualification, a very close margin of 107 (30%). The least 66 (18.5%) cited more salary as the reason(s) for learning again (Table 4).

It appears that at least, every respondent had a reason for continuing education. In the opinion of Knowles et al. (2008), individuals begin to further their education when certain life situation calls for that. In line with the findings

of this study, Knowles et al. (2008) asserted that most people go for further studies because they desire to acquire new knowledge and skills. This can clearly be related to the views of respondents. According to Stiles and Kulvisaechana (2003) believed that the performance of individuals depends on the capabilities, skills, and knowledge. An experienced and skilful teacher obviously is an asset and the importance these individuals need to access cannot be gain said. Answers to the benefits of obtaining higher education, responses were ranked as knowledge, professional development, good salary and have a graduate certificate or higher qualification. Other responses were competence, experience and skills, social status, high standard of education and serving society.

Following up from the reasons why respondents were advancing their education, the respondents outlined benefits they perceived to be derived after getting graduation. Of the multiple responses, 58 (32%) selected knowledge as the highest benefit to access higher education. This is in line with the opinion of the respondents who think of some benefits to be; effective discharge of duties, better job placement, job satisfaction, acquisition of knowledge, development of professional skills, competence and opportunity for further education. Some of the respondents were also of the opinion that an individual has his job, get paid, so they can support their families and as well as get education. Table 5 shows the details of the analysis.

**Table 5: Perceived Benefits of Furthering Education**

<b>Benefits</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent%</b>
Knowledge	58	32.0
Good salary	24	13.3
Competence/improve skills/experience	8	4.4
Professional development	33	18.2
Graduate/certificate/higher qualification	18	9.9
Promotion/Good job opportunities	12	6.6
Better life/comfortable life/good living	2	1.1
Social status/respect form society/acceptance	6	3.3
Serve society	6	3.3
Occupy high office/position	1	0.6
High standard of education	2	1.1
<b>Total</b>	181 *	100

\* Multiple responses; Source: Field Survey, 2018

As shown in Table 5, the leading benefits are proposed by the respondents were knowledge (32%), professional development (18.2%), and good salary (13.3%). It gradually becomes obvious that the countries welfare from social and economic viewpoints is reliant on the great measure on the ability of its citizens (Ashton, Green, James& Sung, 1999). This raises the need for training and development that links the gap between desired targets and real levels of performance (Davenport, 1999).

Further analysis was conducted to find out why respondents chose Distance Education as a medium of continuing education. Of the total responses, professional commitment 116 (33.9%) is considered to be the greatest reason for the choice of Distance Education as an option of higher education. Other

reasons are respectively family responsibility 83 (24.3%), convenience 77 (22.5%) and flexibility 64 (18.7%).

**Table 6: Reasons for the Choice of Distance Education**

Response	Frequency	Percent
Professional commitment	116	33.9
Family responsibility	83	24.3
Convenience	77	22.5
Flexibility	64	18.7
<b>Total</b>	342 *	100.0

\*Multiple response; Source: Field Survey, 2018

It can be deduced from the responses in Table 6 that people can hardly afford to resign from their work to obtain higher education at the expense of professional commitment, family responsibility, convenience and flexibility. People for that matter, are of the opinion that their reasons for pursuing higher education can equally be met by Distance Education.

The demands of family and professional commitments of many employers prevent them from accessing a regular and full-time education. This explains the reasons behind peoples' decision to enrol in Distance Education programme. Just like the findings of this study, Holmberg (2009) cited that the flexibility, convenience, and adaptability of the distance mode of education is suitable for employees who wish to further their education. Supporting this, Threlkeld and Brezoska (1994) indicated that learning through Distance Education is primarily for individuals who are unavailable for regular classroom teaching. Keegan's (2000) observations confirm that the schedules of distance learning favour those who are working and this make them prefer this mode. In the University of Cape Coast, for example, the Distance Education programme

is structured in a way that students attend lectures and write examinations only on the weekends. Since the majority of the students do not work on Saturday, they take the opportunity to go for face-to-face interaction of the distance learning programme.

Also, the study explored the commitment of respondents in accessing education through distance learning. Table 7 shows the details of the results.

**Table 7: Commitment of Access through Distance Education**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Not very well	28	15.9
Not well	22	12.5
Not sure	17	9.7
Well	83	47.2
Very well	26	14.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>176</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2018

According to the response in Table 7, commitment of access is well on track with 83 (47.2%) out of a total of 176 holdings for that. The respective 28 (15.9%) and 22 (12.5%) are of the opinion that commitment of access is not very well and not well met while 26 (14.7%) answered that commitment of access is very well met.

### **Research Question Two**

What are the expectations of students on the Distance Education programme?

This research question sought to find out the expectations of students of the Distance Education programme. To achieve this, the respondents were asked about their expectations in terms of instructional medium preferred, and

anticipations at the end of the programme. The data was presented using frequencies and percentages.

**Table 8: Expectations of Instructional Modalities**

Medium	Frequency	Percent
Online internet	17	9.7
Module/course book on FTF tutorials	154	86.5
Electronic like goes on television	1	0.6
Online internet/modules/course book	2	1.1
<b>Total</b>	175 *	100

\* Multiple responses; Source: Field Survey, 2018

The summary on students expected instructional medium is shown in Table 8. It was evident from the response that 154 (86.5%) students expected the utilisation of modules or course books as the instructional medium of the Distance Education programme. As Keegan (2000, p.44) identified, the utilisation of official media (typically print) links the learner and teacher to convey educational content as one of the elements of Distance Education.

The response from respondents reveals that relatively more students might lack the technological know-how of the use of online internet and remote residence students lack electrical grid in most developing nations. The main argument echoed by the key informants is that the use of the module is the most expedient mode at the moment, cheaper to rural students, user-friendly, increase accessibility, and students also have the chance to enjoy the lecture-student tutorial.

This finding confirms the assertion of Savery and Duffy (1995) that students' attitude to learning is influenced by the acquaintance with the medium of instruction and teachers' ability in making sense of materials presented to



students. When students do not make a meaningful connection between instruction and their needs, it is hard for them to be motivated to learn. Learning materials resources are very important in teaching and learning.

Some students also expected the utilisation of online internet 17 (9.7%) as the mode of instruction, probably, because they had some competence in the use of the internet or most people are not technologically developed enough to use the internet and that the use of module or course book is best. Even though internet usage gives greater opportunity to access information, people who live in hinterland where internet facilities are unavailable and electricity is non-existent, the course module is most ideal (Romiszowski, 2005).

According to Dunn (2001), the development of online education improves instructional environments tremendously, not just for education systems but also for business organisations, providing courses, resources and performance support systems. However, the interactivity of instructional materials and interactions, between students and teachers and among students has been a major worry in online learning environments since the majority of the developing nations are yet getting abreast with electronic technology.

**Table 9: Expectations at the End of the Programme**

<b>Expectation</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Professional/skilful teacher	232	42.7
Improve academic competence	70	12.9
High salary	113	20.8
High qualification	24	4.4
Impact knowledge	55	10.1
<b>Total</b>	543 *	100

\* Multiple responses; Source: Field Survey, 2018

Out of the 543 multiple responses, 174 respondents (32%) had the expectation of becoming professional and skilful teachers in their field of job. Other expectations of students were to earn high salary 113 (20.8%), improve academic competence 70 (12.9%), impact knowledge 55 (10.1%) and finally, the least response is to acquire high qualification 24 (4.4%).

The findings in Table 9 was supported by the observations of Garrison (2000) who reiterated that the greater proportion of Distance Education programme concerns itself with satisfying the educational needs of grown-ups. In the same view, Holmberg (2006) indicated that teaching on distance programme helps promote learner motivation, support learning preference and efficiency if provided in a manner that makes the studying important to the students and their needs. Outlining and classifying the needs of students adult is, nevertheless, a challenging job. Distance Education provides students a chance to “learn and study in a peer-free milieu, when and if they wish to” (Verduin & Clark, 1991, p.27), even though also offering support in the course of learning in terms of planning, guidance, and comment that is essential for sustained learner motivation.

In addition, respondents were asked to provide their general impression with respect to the issues below. Out of the 176 multiple respondents, 36 (20.4%) were of the opinion that even though the Distance Education programme is very good and useful to students, most of them 90 (39.8%) believed that the use of module as delivery modality should be maintained, but were quick to add that its content should be corrected of typographical errors. Fifty-nine (30.5%) respondents did not give their opinion whiles 11 (6.3%)

think that the whole concerns of students have not been satisfactory considered.

The issues on the general impression are summarized in Table 10.

**Table 10: Students' Impression of the Distance Education Programme**

<b>Responses</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Useful to students	36	20.4
Maintain use of module but correct mistakes	70	39.8
Not satisfactory	11	6.3
<b>Total</b>	176*	100

\*Multiple responses; Source: Field Survey, 2018

In line with this study is an investigation conducted by Lagowski (1990), revealed that individuals maintain 90 percent of what they say as they do engage in Distance Education but 10 percent of what they read and only 50 percent of what they hear. It is thus imperative to help students develop a profound appreciation of the discipline or subject matter that they claim to instruct others about for them to teach more effectively. The usefulness of content of module as source of information which is accurately presented, structure of course that makes learning easy and promote self-learning, content of module being based on students' experience, objectives of module relating to its contents and it being current and finally, assessment and examination questions being comfortable and promoting critical thinking were questions also raised (Garrison, 2000).

### **Research Question Three**

What challenges do students encounter on the Distance Education programme?

This research question sought to identify the challenges students encounter in the Distance Education programme. On the assumption that

respondents are faced with challenges, they were asked to identify those challenges. The survey result is shown in Table 10.

**Table 11: Challenges of Students on the Distance Education Programme**

Challenges	Frequency	Percent
Lack of access to other information sources	17	3.7
Financial problems	58	12.8
Study centres too far for some people	69	15.2
Bad exams questions	35	7.7
Limited time for students to study by themselves	92	20.3
Bad facilitators, absenteeism, poor tutorial	52	11.5
Overloaded content of the module	27	5.9
Family responsibilities with studies	42	9.3
Delay in release of the result	21	4.6
Poor communication	41	9.0
<b>Total</b>	454 *	100

\* Multiple responses; Source: Field Survey, 2018

As shown in Table 11, out of 454 multiple responses, 92 (20.3%) agreed that their greatest challenge is limited time to study on their own, This may be attributed to their commitment to their family responsibility. Other responses are; financial problem 58 (12.8%), bad facilitators 52 (11.5%), students having to journey to reach the study centres 69 (15.2%), combining family responsibilities with studies 42 (9.3%), poor communication between the university and students 41 (9%), overloaded content of the module 27 (5.9%), delay in release of result, bad examination questions and short duration of quizzes were considered to be their challenges.

The weaknesses of the programme are the inabilities, inadequacies and the deficient performance of the Distance Education programme. It can also be considered as the actions and inactions of anything that had not worked well for the development of the programme and therefore the need to overcome shortcomings, correct mistakes and improve upon the limitations. This is linked to the most of the problems of financing education accords to present and future needs. Lack of infrastructure resources in developing countries is obvious and at the same time, demographic trends increase the need to expand educational provision. The issue of the weakness of the Distance Education programme is discussed with respect to the challenges students experience as they climb on the academic ladder. Unfortunately, working personnel have been overstretched as well as infrastructure in the regional capitals.

#### **Research Question Four**

To what extent do students' views help to resolve challenges students encounter on the programme?

This research question sought to map out students' view on how best to resolve challenges students encounter on the programme. Information was taken from respondents on how to improve the Distance Education programme. The views of the respondents were sought and tabulated. Table 11 presents the details of the analysis.

**Table 12: Suggested Ways of Improving the Distance Education Programmes**

Solution	Frequency	Percent
Provide more study centers and accommodation	78	18.0
Vary delivery method with (TV, seminars etc)	89	21.2
Examiners should be considerate	70	16.7
Access performance of facilitators	55	13.0
Government support fees	60	14.3
Reduce content of module	15	3.6
Provide CD to facilitate learning	27	6.4
Communication gap should be bridged	4	1.0
<b>Total</b>	421 *	100

\*Multiple responses; Source: Field Survey, 2018

As shown in Table 12, of the 421 multiple responses, the respondents reiterated the need to vary tutorial delivery method by adding seminars and making TV presentations as well 89 (21.2%), provide more study centres that will be very close to students place of residence 78 (18%), examiners to be very considerate 70 (16.7%), government give out bursary to students 60 (14.3%), the need for the university to critically access performance of facilitators 55 (13%).

An effective and possible means to improving students' motivation in teaching may be to plan lessons that comprise deliberations about social matters connected to the area of study and about the potential and actual application of the subject (Savery & Duffy, 2005). This method may also promote students' boldness towards the achievement of life desire. An opportunity for Distance Education is seen as a way of increasing flexibility and accessibility, together with combining education with work (Litto, 2001). In raising work efficiency,

it is significant that the challenges of Distance Education have to be considered. To ascertain what respondents perceive to be the opportunities of the Distance Education programme, they were queried how the challenges of Distance Education could be resolved (Klesius et, al., 2007).

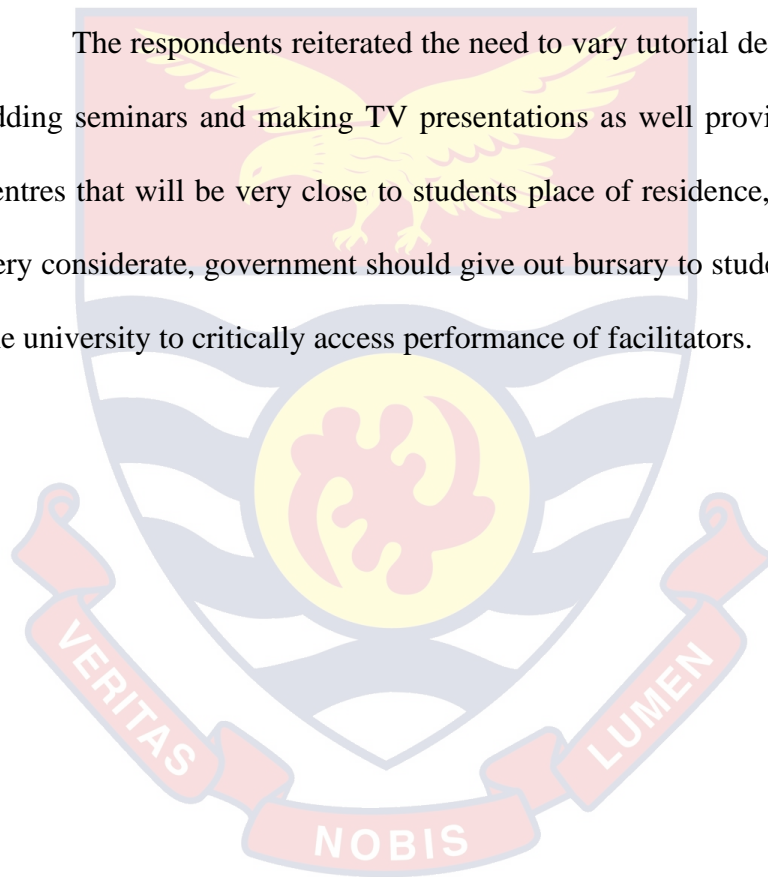
### **Summary of Chapter**

The study revealed that students of CoDE, University of Cape Coast, were furthering their education to gain competence and skills. This was followed by the attainment of higher qualification. Salary increment was the least reason for the students in furthering their education. It was revealed that knowledge was their perceived benefit of furthering education. It was further found that professional commitment was considered to be the greatest reason for the choice of Distance Education as an option of higher education. Other reasons are family responsibility, convenience and flexibility. As such, respondents were committed to access to Distance Education.

It was evident that the students expected the utilisation of modules or coursebook as the instructional medium of the Distance Education programme. Some students, however, expected the utilisation of online internet as the mode of instruction. It was revealed that the students had the expectation of becoming professional and skilful teachers in their field of job. Other expectations of students were to earn a high salary, improve academic competence, impact knowledge and finally the least response is to acquire the high qualification. Even though the Distance Education programme is very good and useful to students, most of the respondents believed that the use of module as delivery modality should be maintained, but were quick to add that it content should be corrected of typographical errors.

The study found that the greatest challenge of students is the limited time for self study. Other challenges are; financial problem, bad facilitators, students having to journey a distance to reach the study centres, combining family responsibility with studies, poor communication between the university and students, overloaded content of the module, delays in release of results, poor examination questions and short duration of quizzes were considered to be their challenges.

The respondents reiterated the need to vary tutorial delivery method by adding seminars and making TV presentations as well providing more study centres that will be very close to students place of residence, examiners to be very considerate, government should give out bursary to students, the need for the university to critically access performance of facilitators.





## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This final chapter gives a summary of the study, conclusions and recommendations.

#### Summary of the Study

The study explored the enrolment decisions, expectations and challenges of Distance Education students in the University of Cape Coast. In order to achieve the main objective, the following sub-objectives were set:

1. Identify the factors behind students' decisions to further their education through Distance Education.
2. Find out the expectations of students on the Distance Education programme.
3. Identify the challenges students encounter on the Distance Education programme.
4. Map out students' views on how best to resolve challenges students encounter on the programme.

The study employed descriptive survey research design as such the study was relied on a cross-section of the population. A vivid and critical analysis of the situation considering the nature of the research problem and purpose of study design were considered. The study area was the College of Distance Education (CoDE) of University of Cape Coast.

The population for the study was the post-diploma degree in education students of the college. The study was targeted to all final year students of the post- diploma in education programme. The study was targeted to only final year students because comparatively, they have been in the system for quite a number of years and would be in a position to provide reliable information.

Currently, the final year students of post-diploma in education of CoDE, University of Cape Coast has a student population of 28,602. The accessible population was CoDE students of University of Cape Coast within the Central Region. The sample size for the study was 200 students. The sample size chosen was obtained based on the recommendations of (Frankael & Wallen 2010). First, a cluster sampling procedure was used to select three centres within the Central Region. Stratified sampling technique was then used to calculate the corresponding sample size for each centre with regard to the students' population. The study used a questionnaire as the main instrument for data gathering. The validity and reliability of the instrument were tested. Descriptive statistics (frequencies and percentages) was computed and ranked for the descriptive data. The analysis was done systematically, following each objective of the study using percentage, frequencies and graph by describing and interpreting data obtained.

### **Summary of Key Findings**

The study revealed that students of CoDE, University of Cape Coast, were furthering their education to gain competences and skills. This was followed by the attainment of higher qualification. Salary increment was the least reason for the students in furthering their education. Following up from the reasons why respondents were advancing their education, the respondents outlined benefits they perceived to be derived after getting educated. It was revealed that knowledge was their perceived benefit of furthering education. It was further found that professional commitment 116 (33.9%) was considered to be the greatest reason for the choice of Distance Education as an option of higher education. Other reasons are family responsibility 83 (24.3%),

convenience 77 (22.5%) and flexibility 64 (18.7%). As such, respondents were committed to access to Distance Education.

It was evident that the students expected the utilisation of modules or course books as the instructional medium of the Distance Education programme. Some students, however, expected the utilisation of online mode of instruction. It was found out that the students had the expectations of becoming professional and skillful teachers in their field of job. Other expectations of students were to earn a high salary, improve academic competence, impart knowledge and finally the least response is to acquire high qualification. Even though the Distance Education programme is very good and useful to students, most of the respondents believed that the use of module as delivery modality should be maintained, but were quick to add that its content should be corrected of typographical errors.

The study also found that the greatest challenge of students is the limited time to study on their own. Other responses were; financial problem, bad facilitators, students having to journey a distance to reach the study centres, combining family responsibility with studies, poor communication between the university and students, overloaded content of the modules delay in release of result, bad examination questions and short duration of quizzes were considered to be their challenges.

The respondents reiterated the need to vary tutorial delivery method by adding seminars and making TV presentation as well as providing more study centres that will be very close to students' place of residence, examiners to be very considerate, government should give out bursary to students, the need for

the university to critically assess performance of facilitators and also engage committed ones.

### **Conclusions**

The Distance Education programme has become important and proven to be a great means through which teachers can develop themselves without the need to leave students in the classrooms. It could also be realised that individuals' desire to excel to a higher academic ladder is assured and that individuals' competences or skills are being improved through University of Cape Coast Distance Education programme. Students are also able to realise the benefits of attaining higher education.

The established strengths and opportunities to be applauded are seen to be individuals' feelings of empowerment, individuals' having their own share of educational impact, conceiving knowledge and impacting the knowledge to their students in the classroom, also geographical distance and other confining circumstances such as personal constraints, culture and social barriers and lack of educational infrastructure are being removed. Meanwhile, it is an underscoring factor that every organisation is faced with challenges. The study recognises and submits some weaknesses and threats to the Distance Education programme. These are seen as the university engaging some course tutors who are not committed enough in tutoring, visible typographical errors in modules.

The concerns of students relate to the late release of quizzes scripts, short duration of quizzes, poor examination questions and the occasional time wastage in search of a venue for classes. The findings have emphasised that these concerns when managed well will be of credit to the university's image.

## Recommendations

1. The management of College of Distance Education, University of Cape Coast, together with the Distance Education Students Association (DESAG) should organise seminars for students on time management especially when their learning is coupled with work. Students should do well to get involved with a group discussion where they will have a better chance of utilizing their little time to understanding the subject content from their own colleagues.
2. Teaching should be made very practical. Students should be allowed to recommend the replacement of uncommitted course tutors by officially writing to inform the university about acts of such course tutors. By this, it will be of great importance for both teachers and students to be motivated to teaching and learning. Incentives to keep encouraging course tutors to give off their best and should be continuously facilitated by the management of the Distance Education programme whiles students who excel are to be given scholarship for further studies.
3. In order to experience variation in the delivery modalities which results in significant changes in learning, students should recommend to the authorities of the programme to include modalities like seminars and Television presentation in their face to face tutorial delivery
4. As a long term measure, the university authority in collaboration with the government should create an ideal learning environment by erecting infrastructures that would serve as the university colleges outside the main campus. These satellite campuses should be furnished with technological

materials so that students who lack these tools can conveniently visit the campus for learning purposes.

5. The students' representative council should be really functional since challenges were reported which were related to institutional lapses. The association should be encouraged to participate fully in the formulation of decisions that affect students' well-being.



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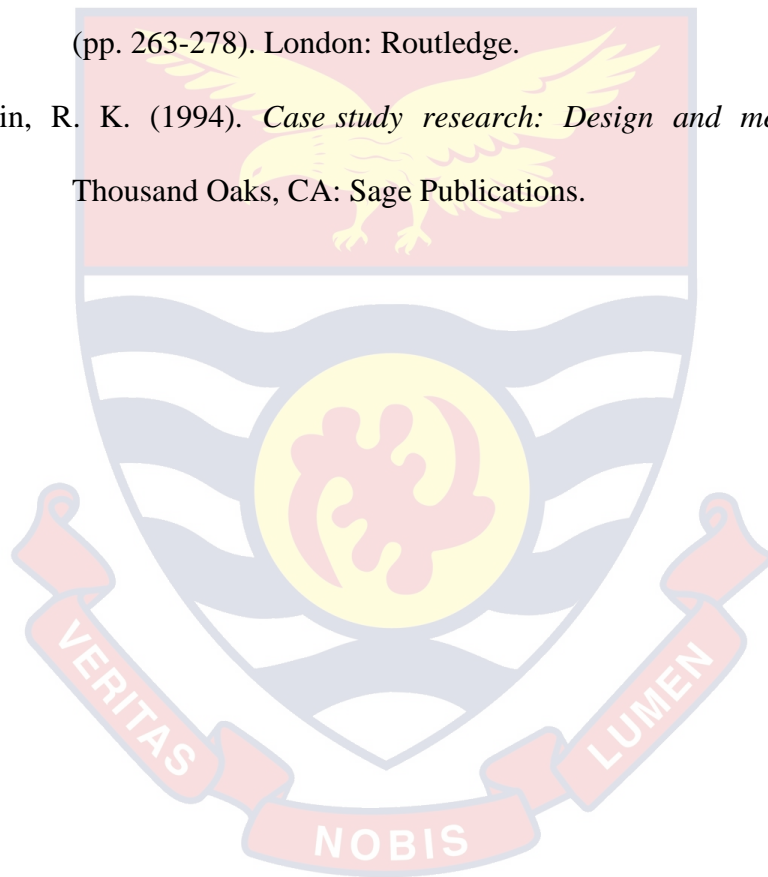
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**APPENDIX A**  
**QUESTIONNAIRE**

The purpose of the study is to examine students' enrolment decisions, expectations and challenges of Distance Education students in the University of Cape Coast. Please respond to the items as frankly as possible. Responses provided will be kept strictly confidential and be used solely for academic purposes.

**Please provide the appropriate responses to the following set of questions by ticking [√]**

**Section A: Demographic Characteristics**

1. Gender. Male [ ] Female [ ]
2. Age. 20-29 [ ] 30-39 [ ] 40- 49 [ ] 50-59 [ ]
3. Marital status. Single [ ] Married [ ] widowed [ ]
4. Designation. Early Childhood Teacher [ ] Basic School Teacher [ ]  
Junior High Teacher [ ] Head teacher [ ]
5. Study centre.....

**Section B**

6. What encouraged you to choose distance education as an option? Rank in order of 1-4, 1 been highest preference and 4 least preference.

- Professional commitment [ ] Family responsibility [ ]  
Convenience [ ] Flexibility [ ]

7. Can you afford to leave your work and obtain higher education?

- Yes [ ] No [ ]

8. Are your reason(s) for pursuing distance education being met?

- Yes [ ] No [ ]. Give reason.....

9. How does distance education support your motivation regarding further studies? Not very well[ ] Not well[ ] Not sure[ ] Well [ ] Very well [ ]

10. In my estimation the distance education programme has had positive impact on students. Not very well [ ] Not well [ ] Not sure [ ]  
Well [ ] Very well [ ]

11. Mention three (3) challenges of the distance education programme?

.....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....

12. How do you think the challenges can be resolved?

.....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....

**Section C: Concerns of students on Distance Education Programme**

Complete the responses for the following items by ticking in the box.

No.	Statement	Not Very Well	Not Well	Well	Very Well
13	Tutorials during Face-To-Face are presented in a coherent way that engages learners' attention				
14	Concepts and issues in the module are explained to the understanding of students				
14	The structure of course content makes learning easy and promote self-learning				
16	Learner gets enough time to learn content of the module				
17	Assessment and examination questions are comfortable and promote critical thinking.				

18. Provide your general impression with respect to the above issues.

.....  
.....  
.....

19. Do you think distance education programme is going to improve your teaching skills?      Yes [ ]                                      No [ ]

20. How would you describe distance education programme to be helping to raise your competencies as a classroom teacher or your job.

Not very credible [ ]                      Not credible [ ]                      Not sure [ ]  
Credible                      [ ]                      Very credible [ ]

21. Do you think distance education programme is committed enough to training and developing the human resource for manpower development of the country?    Not very well [ ]    Not well [ ]    Not sure [ ]  
Well [ ]                      Very well [ ]

22. What is your expectation at the end of the distance education programme?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....