European Journal of Business & Social Sciences
Available at https://ejbss.org/

ISSN: 2235-767X
Volume 06 Issue 10
October 2018

Acceptability of Distance and Online Learning among Professionals and Other Educational Stakeholders in Tanzania: Case of Rural Mbulu District

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ABSTRACT

Distance and e-learning education is a form of education in which there is normally separation between teachers and learners. The modes of interactions are enabled through uploading documents on internet learning platforms or panel discussion board or e-mail, telephones or videoconferencing. In spite of distance and online education having gained popularity and has been spreading to large parts of the world, in Tanzania, other parts of the country have not benefited from this modern educational technology. However, it is not yet known whether these professionals and other stakeholders accept this new mode of education as could persuade the required roles that the conventional education does. This study was aimed at evaluating acceptance of distance and online learning among professionals and other educational stakeholders of Tanzania. Non-interventional descriptive design with quantitative in nature was employed. Non-probability sampling was used. Two hundred fifty (N = 220) candidates were conveniently provided with questionnaire. Professionals, official members, community representatives and community members from a district level were involved for their opinions on distance and online education. The legally and ethically required procedures were efficiently considered and attempted as necessary.

The finding indicates that; the element of inadequate background knowledge of participants is not the reason for sluggishness of professionals towards enrolment into the distance and online learning. In general, professionals and other educational stakeholders at Rural Mbulu district accept distance and online learning as an accurate mode of educational delivery. There is hope that more learners would be enrolled into the distance and online courses in the future time. However, lack of and unfasten policies, plans, regulation and Sturdy institutional leadership's supports that fit on distance and online learning environment from the institutional to the national levels have been noted as key factors. Computer anxiety was literally among professionals. However, this study may not sufficiently reflect the real situation of Tanzania as it took place in only one district with a very small sample size. For this reason, the study may be a good platform for further study with adequate sample size.

Key words: *Acceptance; Distance; Online; Learning; Professionals*

1. INTRODUCTION

Like in other countries, Tanzania has adopted slogan "Education for All" as its motto in achieving a global Millennium Development Goal about universal education. It seeks to encourage every citizen regardless the age or any other status to learn at anytime and anywhere, aiming at

European Journal of Business & Social Sciences
Available at https://ejbss.org/
ISSN: 2235-767X
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fighting against three enemies namely poverty, disease and ignorance. If this would have achieved, the prominent crisis of inadequacy in human resource would have been covered. Yet, in spite of this call, the responses of many professionals seem still sluggish towards enrolment into the distance and online learning **(**Komba, 2009; Kambira, 2011). Specifically, while other parts of the world including urban areas of Tanzania gain and enjoy the fruits of this emerging modern distance and online learning through reduced cost of study, improved quality of educational process, and through reduced crisis of human resource in work, the professionals in Tanzania seem deprived of this privilege. It is not yet known whether those professionals and other stakeholders believe and see that learning through this mode can perform the same roles that the conventional class room education does. Since there are limited professionals that have examined or have taken interest in examining this problem (of distance and online learning) in the district (District Educational Bureau of Statistics, 2014), this study was aimed at evaluating acceptability of distance and e-learning education among professionals and other Stakeholders of Rural Tanzania, in Northern Tanzania. The study also assessed the physical factors that encumber professionals to join distance and online learning.

1.2. Significance of Study

Inadequate number of human resource in Tanzania is a critical issue that affects various economic and social affairs of the community. Distance and online learning could have contributed in reduction of this crisis because those enrolling in this education could work while studying. This mode is believed a cheaper option compared to the conventional on-campus education. Individuals with low income may afford to pay school fees by themselves in this mode. The mode is believed to be flexible for time-tightened learners. So it allows them to pursue their education as they contribute to their other personal, societal and work commitments (Bradley, 2009).

On the other hand, there was no notified study done in Rural Mbulu on this issue under study. So, this study intended to reveal and validate its applicability and generalizability to the rest of Tanzania, particularly Rural Mbulu district. Additionally, this study a partial fulfillment of the author's doctoral degree of healthcare administration. So, it needed to be carried out to fulfill this requirement. In one way or another, the results from this study may contribute in providing solution of distance education.

1.3. Research questions

The main questions in this study were:

- Do professionals and other stakeholders in rural Tanzania accept distance and online education as alternative to conventional education?
- What are the psychosocial behavioral aspects of professionals and other educational stakeholders towards distance and online education?
- What are the physical factors encumbering acceptance of distance and online education among professional? What is the role of individual self- efficacy on acceptance of distance and online learning
- Are there a Management support for distance and online Learning?
- Are there institutional sustainability strategies for implementation of distance and online learning?

1.4. Objectives

1.4.1. General objective

i. To evaluate acceptability of distance and online learning as an alternative to Conventional class-room education among professionals and other stakeholders of Rural in Tanzania
ii. To assess the factors encumbering the professionals to join distance and online learning

1.4.2. Specific Objectives

i. To assess the influence of Perceived usefulness (PU) and Ease of Use (PEOU) variables on acceptability of professionals and other stakeholders on distance and online learning
ii. Identify social behavioral norms / normative pressure of professionals and other educational stakeholders towards distance and online learning
iii. Assess the role of individual self- efficacy on acceptance of distance and online learning
iv. Assess the physical factors encumbering application of distance and online learning among professional in Tanzania

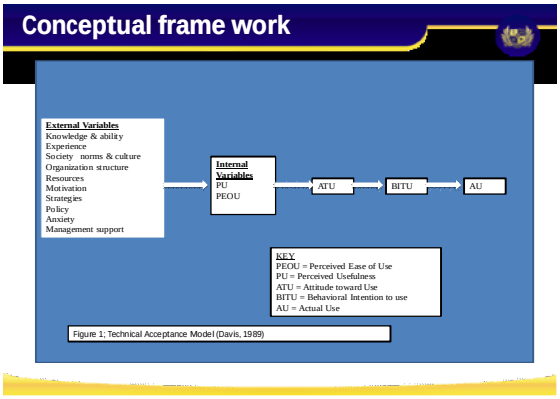
European Journal of Business & Social Sciences
Available at https://ejbss.org/
ISSN: 2235-767X
Volume 06 Issue 10
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v. Evaluate Management support for distance and online Learning

vi. Evaluate the sustainability strategies for implementation of ddistance and online Learning

1.4. Variables assessed

- Perceived usefulness (PU) of distance and online learning
- Perceived Ease of Use (PEU) of distance and online learning
- Social norms / Normative pressure of stakeholders on distance and online learning
- Background knowledge and experience of users
- Availability of power
- Adequacy of hardware/software resources and internet connectivity,
- Quality of instructors,
- Institutional and management support
- Sustainability of technological implementations
- Sustainability of technological implementation of for distance and online learning



2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Theoretical literature

One of the global initiatives among others in achieving the Millennium Development Goals is governments committing themselves to 'Education for All (EFA)'. This initiative was empirically proclaimed by African Governments in their forums through increased use of open and distance learning (ODL) (Aderinoye, Siaciwena, Wright, 2009; Komba, 2009). Distance and online learning in the study by Nartker et al. (2009) was described as any learning structured in the context where the learner (s) and instructor(s) are physically separated from each other in terms of time and physical place. It involves integrating the use of the internet, intranets/extranets, audio and videotape, satellite broadcast, interactive TV, and CD-ROM. In the current period, online or e-learning involves mobile and wireless learning appliances (Kinshuk, Suhonen, Sutinen, and Goh, 2003; Lehner, Nösekabel and Lehmann (2003) in Wagner, Hassanein, & Head (2008).

2.2. Empirical literature

Distance and online learning are fairly comparable with the conventional learning in the term of academic and professional achievement. Johnstone (1991) in Cakir, Solak (2014) affirmed that, there was no major difference between distance and traditional learners in terms of achievement, but only diversity of the students' attitudes and satisfaction levels**.**

When people feel that they have low or insufficient background knowledge and experience on modern computer technology, they tend to hate and reject to engage and adapt distance and online learning. In a study by Al-alak Alnawas, (2003), it was discovered that, teachers were unwilling to use computer-based teaching due to an inadequate teaching knowledge and experience on information technology. This eventually resulted in negative perceptions and personal psychological downbeats that influenced instructor's attitude towards adoption and use of distance and online learning compared to traditional one (Puripat, 2008).

2.2.1. Social norms / normative pressure (SN)

Apart from the known technological troubles, other different factors such as social and individual behavioral contexts are found to exist within trends of processes of distance and online learning (Tarhini, Kate, Liu, 2013). Social norms (SN) pressures are considered to have a positive influence on distance and online learning. Influence of social norm environments comes in when a person perceives that people who are important to him/her think his/her performance on certain phenomenon is questionable. This was significantly

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ISSN: 2235-767X
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October 2018

seen in the study done in Lebanon as SN having direct influence on distance and online learning (Tarhini, Kate, Liu, 2013). SN/Normative pressure is widely involved with an institutional or government support on technological acceptance. Willis (2008), said, educational institutions depend on institutional and governmental support to get the infrastructure and determine policies in the acceptance of

e-learning. These factors (infrastructure and policies) are considered as mediators affecting the relation between performance expectancy, beliefs and behavioral intention to use e-learning.

Thomas & Kobayashi (1987) in Cakir, Solak, (2014) says, ‘‘*the degree to accept a new technology by a society depends on how well the proposed innovation fits the existing culture*’’. As a summary, Al-alak, Alnawas, (2003) hypothesized that, *“SN/Normative pressure has a positive effect on behavioral intention to adopt e-learning system”*.

2.2.2. Technical Acceptance Model (TAM)

TAM is one of the most successful measurements for computer usage effectively among practitioners and academics. Kurniabudi Sharipuddin, Setiawan Assegaff (2014) said, TAM is based on two main assumptions: Perceived Usefulness (PU) and Perceived Ease of Use (PEOU). According to different literature, combination of internal and external variables that take big roles in acceptance of professionals and other educational stakeholders toward adaptation of new technology. The external variables are the conceptual variables standing behind the internal variables and intent behaviors towards the technological use by students and educators (Farahat, 2012; Davis, 1989; Chinyamuridi, 2014). Farahat, (2012) and Davis, (1989) said, students' perception of ease of use, usefulness, attitudes towards online learning and the social influence of students' referent group were identified as significant determinants of students to predict their behavioral intention towards practice online learning.

2.3. Hypotheses

Table 1 Hypotheses

	Research question	Hypothesis
1	Do professionals and other educational stakeholders in Tanzania accept distance and online learning as alternative to conventional education?	H_0 = professionals and other educational stakeholders in Tanzania accept distance and online learning as alternative to conventional education H_1 = professionals and other educational stakeholders in Tanzania do not accept distance and online learning as alternative to conventional education
2	What are the internal and external psycho-social norms that influence acceptance of professionals and other educational stakeholders on distance and online learning	H_0 = Internal perceptions and external psycho-social norms can influence acceptability of professionals and other stakeholders on distance and online learning H_1 = Internal perceptions and external psycho-social norms cannot influence acceptability of professionals and other stakeholders on distance and online learning
3	What is the role of individual self-efficacy on acceptance of distance and online learning	H_0 = Individuals who perceive themselves as highly self-efficacious tend to initiate a sufficient effort that may produce successful outcomes, H_1 = Individuals who perceive low self-efficacy are likely to close down their efforts hastily and fail to come in their prospective
4	What are the physical factors encumbering acceptance of distance and online learning among professional	H_0 -= Presence of physical factors like lack of power, inadequate hardware/software resources, poor quality instructors, insufficiency of institutional support and poor sustainability of implementations can encumber people to join distance and online learning H_1 = Presence of physical factors like lack of power, inadequate hardware/software resources, poor quality instructors, insufficiency of institutional support and poor sustainability of

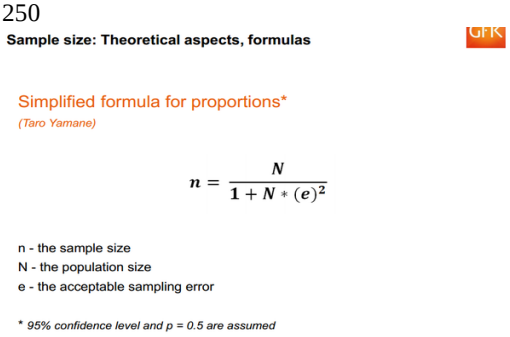
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ISSN: 2235-767X
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		implementations cannot encumber people to join distance and online learning
5	Are there a Management support for distance and online Learning	H_0 -= When users of the technology gain strong believes with view of the availability of organization resources, technical and managerial support, then this may facilitate the acceptance and adoption of particular technology. H_1 = When there is poor support, users of the technology tent to reject this technology
6	Are there an institutional sustainability strategies for implementation of distance and online learning	$H_{0=}$ Well defined institutional strategies on distance and online learning predicts long term sustainability of this mode $H_{1=}$ Poorly defined or no institutional strategies on distance and online learning barricade or delay long term sustainability of this mode

4. METHODOLOGY

Non-interventional descriptive design in nature with district cross - section was employed (Rhema, & Miliszewska, 2014). The study is a quantitative in nature that summarized descriptive data into statistical model. Non-probability sampling was preferably used to this study. Four wards from Rural Mbulu district were involved, where candidates were conveniently administered with questionnaires. All professionals were basically entitled to the study. However, other educational stakeholders like community representatives, government officials, institutional leaders/managers and community members were involved. Thorough explanation to the participants about the aim of study and their roles in the study was clearly made. The legally and ethically required procedures were considered and attempted as necessary by accessing research certification and letter from NIMR District Executive Director (DED). The sample size is derived from the entire estimated population of eligible professionals for higher education i.e. 1000 in Rural Mbulu District.

Taro's formula was applied to acquire sample of 250



Both types of variable (qualitative and quantitative) regarding their categories were captured. The primary data were collected from professionals, executives and community representatives, community members. Data were analyzed systematically using Excel and SPSS programs. Data presentation tools like tables, charts, and histogram have been used to summarize the coded data. The findings were interpreted and discussed in line with other studies.

5: RESULT AND DISCUSSION

5.1. Introduction

This study sought to evaluate Acceptability of Distance and Online Learning among Professionals and Other Educational Stakeholders in Tanzania. The study took place in Rural Mbulu district in northern Tanzania. The key variables assessed were perceived usefulness (PU), perceived ease of use (PEU), Social norms / Normative pressure, individual self- efficacy, resources required for e-learning and sustainability of technological implementation of distance and online learning in future time.

5.2. Respondents and their characteristics

The study involved 220 respondents, where 181 (82%) were professionals, 26 (12%) were executives (officials) including community representatives and 13 (6%) were community members. Of these, 100 (45%) were males while 120(55%) were females. In terms of rural-urban distribution, 150 (75%) were from the urban area

European Journal of Business & Social Sciences
Available at https://ejbss.org/
ISSN: 2235-767X
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while 80 (25%) were rural-based. In regard with participants' educational background, there are 109 with diploma, 77 with bachelor, 21 with masters, 12 with primary education and 1 with certificate level

5.3. Use of distance and online learning

Out of the 220 participants of this study, 30(26%) of them had used distance and online learning. Among these, 15(50%) of them had tried to pursue their education through this mode but failed to complete, 10(20%) of them were continuing, while only 5(6%) had completed. Of these, only 8(7%) were females while 28(93%) were males. In terms of the professions, the majority 25(80%) were teachers (20 primary school teachers) while 2(1%) were secondary school teachers, 1(0.5) was a farmer and 2(2%) were drivers. Among them, 20(75%) were urban-based while 10(25%) were in the rural.

5.4. Perceived usefulness (PU) of distance and online learning

5.4.1. Background knowledge of participants on distance and online learning

Professionals, executives, community representatives and community members' were asked on the background knowledge about distance and online learning. In the definition, if the respondent had included the element of distance or online definition, he or she was considered to have background knowledge of distance and online education. In this view, regarding their definitions, majority, 149 (71%) have integrated the use of the internet, (intranets/extranets), audio- and videotape, satellite, broadcast, interactive TV, and CD-ROM, e-conferences and the computer uses.

As it was defined by Nartker et al. (2009), distance and online learning is any learning structured in the context where the learner(s) and instructor(s) are physically separated from each other in term of time and physical place. On the view of Wagner, Hassanein, & Head (2008), online or e-learning is the one that integrates the use of the internet, intranets/extranets, audio- and videotape, satellite broadcast, interactive TV, and CD-ROM. In the current period, online or e-learning involves mobile and wireless learning appliances (Kinshuk, Suhonen, Sutinen, and Goh, 2003; Lehner, Nösekabel and Lehmann, 2003 in Wagner, Hassanein, & Head, 2008).

For the opinion of author; basing on this finding, the element of inadequate background knowledge of participants is not involved in sluggishness of professionals towards enrolment into the distance and online learning because majority of the respondents (149, 71%) have at least background idea about distance and online learning.

5.4.2. Distance and online learning as mode of education delivery

In this study, respondents 164 (78%) accepted this mode as an education delivery approach for the professionals who save technical works and services in the community. Some (53, 32%) say; it saves time, some others (37, 20%) say, is an adequate mode of the educational delivery in this era; and others (30, 17%) say, distance and online is cost effective.

Through the cross tabulation analysis, the likelihood that there is relationship between acceptances of distance as mode of education delivery versus age groups, a Pearsons Chi-square approx. Sig. 0.039. With the regression analysis, the degree of freedom indicates $P < 0.05$, so the association is statistically significant among age group 31-40. The acceptance in further analysis through cross tabulation in categories of professionals versus distance and online mode as relevant for learning and teaching indicated statistically significant by p value of 0.000.

People accept and practice certain phenomenon in their daily life as they have ascertained that it is valuable for their prospective. The data indicate that students strongly prefer dista nce education, largely because it allows them to bal ance their other commitments more easily. Respondents also perceive that they achieve higher quality educa tional outcomes in the distance learning environme nt. They do not believe that they sacrifice a quality education for the convenience of utilizing distance learning (Hannay and Newvine, 2005). The studies by Keller & Cernerud, (2002); Liu, Liao & Chung Yuan, (2005); UNESCO, (2002), have outlined benefits of distance and online learning as facilitating information exchange and collaborative learning, improving the quality of teaching and learning, improving access to education and training, realizing flexibility for time and place, responding to labor market conditions and to innovation technology itself, preparation for

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Available at https://ejbss.org/
ISSN: 2235-767X
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lifelong and self-paced learning while at the same time reducing costs of educational services.

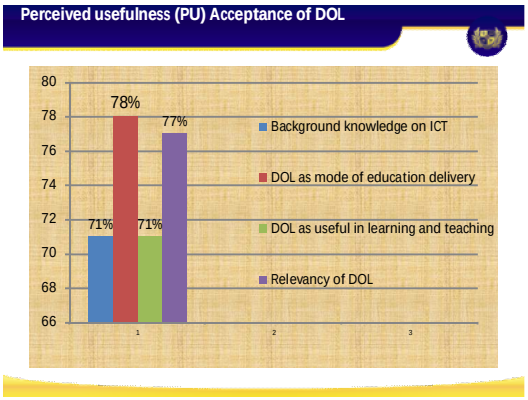
The finding of this current study argues that professionals and other educational stakeholders at Rural Mbulu district accept distance and online learning as an accurate mode of educational delivery.

5.4.3. Relevancy of distance and online learning

Distance and online learning has been regarded as relevant to this contemporary era of technology. In this study, majority of professionals i.e. 76(42%) agreed and 68(37%) strongly agreed that distance and online learning is relevant in this contemporary era in consideration with present technology, resource scarcity and costs reduction.

The study of Kentnor (2015) revealed that, distance and online learning in this era is no longer a trend, rather it is a mainstream. He identified that in the United States, of the total number of students enrolled in higher education, (18.2 million) in the fall of 2007, 3.9 million (21.4%) were at least in one online courses (Allen & Seaman, 2008 in Kentnor, 2015). This study advised all chief academic leaders to acknowledge online learning as critical modes in this era of global technological revolution (Kentnor, 2015; NCES, 2014).

In regards to the current study result and the findings from those other studies, author argued that professionals and educational stakeholders in Rural Mbulu district accept that distance and online learning is relevant in this era.



5.5. Ease of use *of distance and online learning*

In this variable participants view on different aspects toward ease of use of distance and online learning has been evaluated:

5.5.1. Distance and online learning is easier in various aspects

In term of study at preferable time to learn, among 181 professionals, 60 (33.1%) responded to agree that the learner studies at preferable time in distance and online learning, 54 (29.8%) were strongly agreed with the above statement. The total acceptance percent was 62.7%.

When they were further asked if the learner become easily competent in distance and online learning, 76 (42.0%) agreed, 44 (24.3%) strongly agreed, 36 (19.9%) thus make acceptance encompass 44.2% among other responses. As more equerry was made about easy access of instructional delivery in distance and online learning, 61 (33.7%) agreed that instructional delivery is easily accessible and 54 (29.8%) were strongly agreed. This make total acceptance on access of instructional to reach 63.6%. In easy use of IT tools and materials in distance and online learning, 72 (39.9%) were agreed, 51 (28.2%) were strongly agreed. The total acceptance percent on ease use of IT was 68.1%. On easy acquisition of mental ability in distance and online learning, 71 (39.1%) were strongly agreed, 54 (29, 8%) were agreed, 34 making the total acceptance of 68.9%.

Study by Wagner, Hassanein & Head, 2008, Gaba & Wei, 2015) revealed that distance and online learning usually provides the learners with the freedom to work at their own free will. The learners can easily get more time to communicate with other fellow learners and teachers via online notice boards or learning panels.

The study by Bigatel et al, (2012), broadly defined component of competencies to include knowledge, attitudes, skills, and values. Other studies further described these components as they can be observed on distance and online learners. Among other lists, the learners from this mode are evidently act competently on their own pace, they have confidence in their knowledge, skills, and performance; they learn how to create and manage a personal presence; they sense or exhibit needs for affiliation as a key to a successful and meaningful online learning experience (Dabbagh & Bannan-Ritland, 2005).

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Basing on the above discussion, author concludes that professionals and educational stakeholders at Rural Mbulu district accept that distance and online learning is easy to learn in term of preferable time to learn, gaining easily competency, access of instructional delivery, use of IT tools and materials and acquisition of adequate mental ability.

5.5.2. Participants ideas on different aspects of distance and online

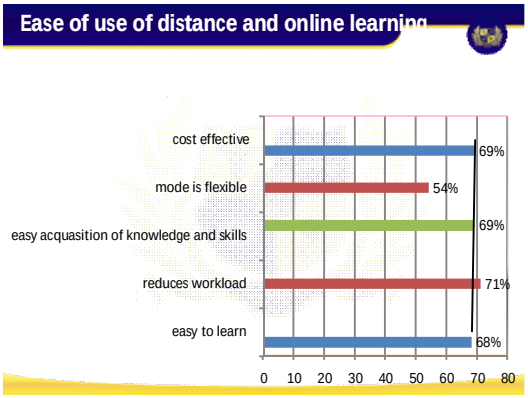
To identify the ease of use, respondents were asked about their idea on how admission of distance and online differs from that of conversional classroom admission. Among 209 responded to this question, 75 (36%) had no idea about distance and online admission. Of the total number, 54 (26%) said it is done through online and 50 (24%) said that admission in distance and online is simple compare to classroom once.

On graduate products from distance and online, of all 209 responded; 84 (40%) said they are not sure whether product from distance and online learning is good or poor in term of competence. However, others 72 (34%) said the products from this mode of education is good. On costs of training learner in distance and online learning; among 209 candidates responded to this variable, 144 (69%) said distance and online is low cost compare to classroom learning.

Many studies have suggested that distance and online learning provides an attractive and increasingly highly regarded alternative way for learners who want more flexibility in organizing their work schedules and who need to reduce their travel while pursuing their academic goals (Dabbagh & Bannan-Ritland, 2005; Dringus, 2000; O'Banion, 2005; King & Hildreth, 2001).

The products (graduates) from distances and online courses are more or equally good to that of classroom courses (Means et al, (2010). An effect size of +0.37 was obtained, with online students performing better than their peers in conventional classrooms (Means et al, 2010). In the aspect of cost, for distance and online learning, no one of the study disagreed that it is cost effective compare to in-campus learning. Online learning is great for individuals who has family responsibilities or lack a flexible work schedule.

According to the findings of this current study in view of admission, flexibility, and products capability and cost of distance and online, as compared to classroom learning, there is no significant difference on those areas. Professionals and educational stakeholders at Rural Mbulu district accept that distance and online learning is ease on admission and cost. Nevertheless, graduate products from distance and online have been seen as equally capable as those of classroom learning.



5.6. Self- efficacy on distance and online learning

Distance and online learning increases individual efficiency

Professionals were asked if learning through distance and online can increase individual technical self efficiency as compared to classroom learning. Of all (181) responded to this variable, 119 (66%) accepted that distance and online can increases individual technical self efficiency. Professionals were further asked about possibility of learner's interactions between teachers and learners' groups in distance and online learning to get clarification of their doubts in reasonable manner. In this variable, 60 (33%) agreed that teachers and learners can effectively interact in distance and online learning. 44 (24%) were strongly agreed with this statement, 38 (21%). Here, acceptance level is about 57%.

Self□efficacy is defined as "beliefs in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments" (Bandura, 1997). Traditionally, the four main sources of self□efficacy development are enactive master experiences, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion, and physiological and affective state (Bandura, 1997).

For the result of this current study, majority of the professional beliefs that, individuals who studied on distance and online learning perceive themselves as highly self-efficacious and initiate a sufficient effort in technical and interactions efficiency. This is true with the study by Mendlinger (2011), Ngampornchai and Adams, (2016) which added that, individuals who perceive low self-efficacy are likely to close down their efforts hastily and fail to come in their prospective in technical and interactions. This study concluded that, individuals who have high technology self-efficacy were more likely reported to have higher positive perceptions of usefulness and ease of use this technology (Mendlinger, 2011, Ngampornchai and Adams, 2016).

5.7. Social norms / normative pressure on distance and online learning

5.7.1. Stakeholders influence learner's behaviors towards distance and online learning

Apart from the known technological and physical troubles that the learners face in distance and online learning, there are other different factors such as social and individual behavioral relationship which are found to exist within trends of whole processes of online learning (Tarhini, Kate, Liu, 2013). In the current study, professionals were asked if different educational stakeholders in their places of living or work have ever influenced them towards like or dislike distance and online learning. Of 181 participants responded to this question, 103 (57%) accepted that many stakeholders influence them towards like or dislike distance and online learning.

As per result of this study, social norms (SN) or normative pressure are considered to have a positive influence on distance and online learning. Influence of social norm environments comes in when a person perceives that people who are important to him/her think that his/her performance on certain phenomenon is in question. This was significantly seen in the study done in Lebanon as SN having direct positive or negative influence on distance and online learning (Tarhini, Kate, Liu, 2013).

5.7.2. Authority bodies insisting on distance and online learning

On this variable, majority i.e. 54(29.8%) were strongly disagreed and said government, professional bodies and institutional leaders do not insist on distance and online learning. Fifty three i.e. 53(29.3%) strongly disagreed that they insist. The degree of denial to this variable was 59%.

In Tanzania context, institutional bodies, local government authorities, professional council bodies, National Educational Authority, National Commission of Universities are in one way or another involved in decision for learners to go for further education. The study done in Tanzania by Kambiara, (2011) noted that institutions have ICT policy but lacks e-learning policy.

According to the review of these literatures, the main reason for professionals to lax joining on distance and online learning seems a lack and unfasten policies, plans and regulation on e-learning in the educational environment from the institutional to the national levels. However, in Tanzania and other countries, mainly the existing policy is the one that guides an ITC system rather than distance and online learning.

5.7.3. Equal opportunity to distance and online learning

When executives and community representatives were asked if graduate products from distance and online learning have the same employment market/opportunities as the classroom one in their institutions or our country. Of 26 respondent, 15 (58%) accepted that there are equal opportunity to both distance and online and classroom learning

The most important concern that learners have after they pursue a distance education degree is the worth of their degree when it comes to employment opportunities. For the learner's point of view, the worth they put on studied degree must relatively march with return on investment (ROI) after completion of their studies (Pittard, 2004).

Though the executives and community representatives were fairly accepted that there is equal opportunity for both distance and online and classroom learning, this goes contrarily with the result from professionals that says; government, professional bodies and institutional leaders do little efforts to insist and vividly put a fair environment for graduate products from distance and online to gain employment and benefits. This could be a contributing reason for them be reluctant joining this mode of learning.

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5.8. Availability of resources for distance and online learning

5.8.1. Availability of ICT resources

Of all responded on this variable, 88 (48%) accepted that ICT resources are available. However, about 52% were neutral, disagreed or strongly disagreed. In other hand, professional respondents were asked on their basic knowledge background on information technology (IT) particularly basic computer. Of all respondents, 82 (45%) accepted that at least they have background knowledge on ITC; 70 (39%) were either neutral or disagreed that they have background knowledge on ITC. However, when professionals were asked about their confidence and consistency of use of ICT in their daily works, 83 (46%) accepted that they are comprehended (anxious) of computer use, 98 (54%) were either neutral, disagreed or strongly disagreed that they are comprehended (anxious) of computer use.

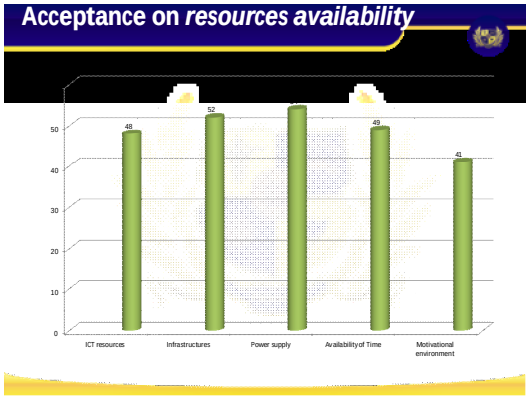
The role of information communication technology (ICT) has become a pivotal facet in nurturing distance and online learning. Baruah and Kanta, (2009), in their publication suggested that the role and the use of the information and communication technology (ICT) in distance and online learning has until recently relied mainly on the mailing of written materials, videos, cassette recordings, and radio or TV broadcasting techniques can be augmented, enhanced or replaced by new on-line tools and technologies which have the power to transform the learning environment.

In general views of these researchers, "*There is a relationship between the computer anxiety and behavioral intention to adopt distance and online learning*". In this current study, computer anxiety was literally significant among professionals in that 83 (46%) accepted that they are comprehended (anxious) of computer use.

5.8.2. Adequacy and reliability of power

Reliable electric power to supply electricity is important for distance and online learning. Of all (181) responded to this question, 97 (54%) accepted that there is adequate and reliable electric power to supply electricity and 84 (46%) were either neutral, disagreed or strongly disagreed that there is adequate and reliable energy power to supply electricity.

Over 70% of countries living in sub-Saharan Africa including Rural Tanzania do not have reliable electrical power to support distance and online technologies. This may have accounted for learners to exhibit sluggishness nature towards enrolment into the distance and online learning, thus acceptance of this technology may remain in question (Komba, 2009, Kambira, 2011, Adams, J. 2008).



5.9. Management support for distance and online Learning

When users of the technology gain strong believes with view of the availability of organization resources, technical and managerial support, then this may facilitate the acceptance and adoption of particular technology.

5.9.1. Presence of motivation environment for distance and online learning

When participants were asked if institutional management offers relevant motivational or incentive environments for students who intend or learn on distance and online learning as those of classroom once; among 181 responded to this question, 107 (59%) were either neutral, disagreed or strongly disagreed that institutional management offers relevant motivational or incentive environments for students who intend or learn on distance and online learning.

Motivating students is an important aspect in all forms of education even more so in distance and online education where students are alone in their efforts. Study by Gunnar, (2013), concluded that, factors affecting motivation can be divided into two categories: (1) Course process and structure, (2) Life situation and personal variables. Some apprehension toward acceptance of purely online

European Journal of Business & Social Sciences
Available at https://ejbss.org/
ISSN: 2235-767X
Volume 06 Issue 10
October 2018

graduates exists across all employment level by relating their quality and learning standard as incapable. The recent studies have investigated overall employers' opinions and found that there is a positive response regarding online courses and flexibility of the online modality, however, uncertainty existed with hiring candidates with degrees from online universities (Fogle C. D. and Elliott D., 2013).

In the reflection of the current study, the findings of both professionals and executives of Rural Mbulu district about motivational or incentive environments and market employment opportunity of graduate from distance and online learning do not equally compete the same level with those of classroom graduates. Most professionals feel that there is little motivation and low or no incentives for those learning or intending learning distance and online courses.

5.10. Sustainability of Technological Implementation of distance and online learning

5.10.1. Possibility for learners to join distance and online learning

There is hope among educational stakeholders that distance and online learning is now at its trend to become an official mode of educational delivery. In this current study, 115 (65%) accepted with this view and 65 (35%) were neutral, disagreed or strongly disagreed.

As distance and online learning continues to evolve and move from the trimming of higher education to the mainstream, it faces new challenges to go trough to reach accepted stage that the conversional classroom mode has achieved. Whether it has been relocated within the mainstream academic arm of institutions or where outreach and extension divisions have gained new attention and support, it is the fact that now a foremost focus at most institutions and Universities in the United States and in many other countries is on distance and online learning (Shearer R., 2015). In Africa, the Association of African Universities (AAU) in 2001 launched a project known as "the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in African Higher Education Institutions". With this initiative, many countries including Tanzania leaded by South Africa have taken active roles to implement distance and e-learning enrollment.

The result from this current study in Rural Mbulu district gives hope that the number of learners enrolment into the distance and online colleges and universities will optimistically increase in the future time. However, the challenges like lack of sound infrastructure, suitable policies and rigidity of educational stakeholders to change from mindset against distance and online learning mode would eminently be expected and delay the process.

5.10.2. Institutional strategies for distance and online learning

Though in this study, majority (50%) accepted that institutions have their strategies for distance and online learning on the future time, the rest 50% do not accept that there is institutional strategies.

A successful distance and online learning is that one involves all Key players in educational programs. The key players as were cited in the textbook of Barry, (1994), involve students, faculty, instructors, and administrators at all levels, etc. In spite of the educational background, the main role of the student remains to learn under the best environment with a facilitated motivation, planning, and enhancing their full capacity to analyze and apply the instructional contents being taught (Barry, 1994). Barry advices that, "Effective administrators are more than idea people. They are consensus builders, decision makers, and referees to the learners".

In the current study however, at Rural Mbulu district, the typical institution strategies plans for distance and online learning as emphasized by Barry may be in doubt, though half (50%) of respondents said there is strategies.

5.10.3. Sturdy institutional leadership supports on distance and online learning

Institutional and Management supports refer to the degree to which a person believes that organization and management support the use of the ongoing technical systems. Of all professionals responded to this variable, only 42% accepted that there is a sturdy support of leaderships on distance and online learning in the institutions. The rest 68% were either neutral, disagree or strongly disagreed.
Effective leadership is a key element in stabilization of distance and online educational ground around the local and regional level of any country. It takes the major roles of determining effective educational acquisition, educational development, and utilization of educational

products for today and tomorrow's societies benefits (Sonja A. I., 2002).

In the reference of this study findings and discussion on the above variable, there is inadequate institutional leadership supports on distance and online learning. This has been noted in both responses of professionals and executives and community representatives.

5.10.4. Funding for distance and online learning development

Sustainability of technology encompasses numerous number of factors with implication of cost in distance and online learning. In this variable, when participants were assessed to know if their institutions equally set funding for distance and online learning development as those of classroom learning, 55% of respondents were either neutral, disagreed or strongly disagreed..

Clayton and Wright at www.educause.edu/members said, "For proper sustainable implementation of distance and online technology, the educational technology project in the developing world must have at least two aspects in consideration; first, how does the technology or instructional method improve learning, and secondly, how will the technology or method be sustained once an initial funding has ended".

From the result of this current study, there is no evidence that executives in their institutions and local government at Rural Mbulu district have funds or plans set for distance and online learning. This has been substantiated in both responses of professionals, executives and community representatives.

6. CONCLUSION

This study aimed at evaluating acceptability of distance and e-learning education among professionals and other educational stakeholders of Rural Mbulu District, in Northern Tanzania. The major variables assessed were perceived usefulness (PU) of distance and online learning, perceived ease of use (PEU) of distance and online learning, Social norms / Normative pressure of stakeholders on distance and online education, individual self-efficacy, resources required for e-learning and sustainability of technological implementation of distance and online learning in future time.

The findings indicate that; the element of inadequate background knowledge of participants is not involved in sluggishness of professionals towards enrolment into the distance and online learning. In general, professionals and other educational stakeholders at Rural Mbulu district accept distance and online learning as an accurate mode of educational delivery. The results further give hope that the number of learners enrolment into the distance and online colleges and universities will optimistically increased in the future time. However, lack of and unfasten policies, plans, regulation and Sturdy institutional leadership's supports that fit on distance and online learning environment from the institutional to the national levels have been noted as key factors.

7. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Very sincere thanks to my supervisors Dr Aggry . Kihombo, Dr. Suguna S. and Kaushika V. my study co-guide. Very special thanks to my family for financial support, Haydom Institute of Health Sciences for granting study time. Thanks to all participants/respondents for their opinions

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