

**RELATIONSHIP AMONG SUPPORT SERVICES,
MOTIVATION, APPROACHES TO LEARNING AND
ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF UNDERGRADUATE
DISTANCE LEARNERS, UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST,
GHANA**

BY

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**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL
PSYCHOLOGY AND COUNSELLING
AHMADU BELLO UNIVERSITY
ZARIA, NIGERIA**

November, 2014

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation titled Relationship among Support Service, Motivation, Approaches to Learning and Academic Performance of Undergraduate Distance Learners, University of Cape Coast, Ghana” has been performed by me and that it is a record of my research in the Department of Educational Psychology and Counseling under the supervision of Professor Musa Balarabe, Dr. Aisha Indo Mohammed and Professor E. F. Adeniyi. The information used for the literature has been duly acknowledged in the text and a list of references provided. No part of this dissertation had been used for another higher degree at any university.

Emma Dawson-Brew
Name of Student

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Signature

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Date

CERTIFICATION

This dissertation titled “Relationship among Support Services, Motivation, Approaches to Learning and Academic Performance of Undergraduate Distance Learners, University of Cape Coast, Ghana” has been read and approved as meeting the regulations governing the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D) of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria and is approved for its contribution to knowledge and literary presentation.

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my dear mother who did not live long to enjoy the fruits of her labour, and my children Joe, Nana, Maame, Obed, Ama, Papa and Fiifi.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This dissertation is made up of the results of a research undertaken with the assistance and guidance of many individuals without whom this work would not have been complete. Basically, not every name can be mentioned in the dissertation so those whose names cannot be mentioned, remember I owe you tons of gratitude for contributing in diverse ways to make the work complete.

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated the influence of support services, motivation and approaches to learning on academic performance of undergraduates distance learners, University of Cape Coast Ghana. The study was guided by eight objectives, seven hypotheses and seven research questions. The correlational research design was used for the study. A sample of 854, 300 level students was randomly selected from the Northern, Ashanti and Central regional study centres. This was made up of 530 education students and 324 business students. Eight hundred and fifteen (815) questionnaires were analysed since 39 students answered 50% of the questionnaire. Three sets of instruments were used to collect data for the study and these were the Students Support Services, Motivation and Approaches to Learning Scales. The Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient r , t-test and analysis of variance (ANOVA) statistical tools were used to analyse the data. The results of the analysis indicated that Learning Modules ($r = .071$, $P = 0.043$), Learning Environment ($r = .080$, $P = 0.022$), Academic Counselling ($r = .078$, $P = 0.026$) and Extrinsic Motivation ($r = .078$, $P = 0.026$) positively correlated with academic performance of distance education programmes in Ghana. On the contrary, the analysis revealed that there was no correlation between feedback, peer support, facilitator support and Intrinsic Motivation and academic performance of distance learners on the distance education programmes in Ghana. The study revealed that there was no correlation between Deep Approach to Learning, Surface Approach to Learning, Strategic Approach to Learning and Disorganised Approach to Learning and Academic Performance. Significant differences were found to exist in learning modules, learning environment, counselling and motivation with respect to students' assessment of support services. No significant difference was found with respect to peer support and academic performance. In students' assessment of support services by gender, no significant differences were found in feedback, learning environment academic counseling and peer support and academic performance. However, significant differences were found to exist in learning modules and facilitator support. T-test analysis of approaches adopted by students to learning by gender showed no significant differences in deep, strategic and disorganized approaches. A significant difference was established with respect to the surface approach. Among others, it was recommended that, the Centre for Continuing Education should as a matter of urgency employ and deploy more trained counselors to all the Regional Offices. The presence of these counselors will help alleviate some of the counseling needs of the students. It is also recommended that the praising efforts in strategic behaviours of facilitators of distance learners should be directed at helping them to focus on their learning goals. Again it is recommended that CCE should ensure that the marked quizzes and assignment scripts of students on both programmes are delivered promptly with comments. It is again recommended that facilitators should see both male and female students as equal competitors on their respective programmes and should therefore offer equal support.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AU:	Athabasca University
ATL:	Approaches to Learning
COL:	Commonwealth of Learning
CORI:	Concept-Oriented Reading Instruction
DAPQA:	Directorate of Academic Planning and Quality Assurance
ECCRN:	Early Child Care Research Network
EPA:	Environmental Protection Agency
FCAT:	Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test
ICDE:	International Council for Distance Education
IEA:	International Association for the Evaluation of Education Achievement
IVN:	Interactive Video Network
MOE:	Ministry of Education
NCTM:	National Council of Teachers of Mathematics
NICHHD:	National Institute of Child Health and Human Development
NPE:	National Policy of Education
NRC:	National Research Council
NSSC:	National Survey of Students Engagement
OECD:	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
QAA:	Quality Assurance Agency
SDT:	Self Determination Theory
SSBS:	School Social Behaviour Scale
SSS:	Students Success Skills
SSS:	Students Support Services

TACR: Tennessee Advising Commission on Intergovernmental Relationship
TISSA: Teachers in Sub-Saharan Africa
UCC: University of Cape Coast
UNDE: United Nations Department of Education
UNESCO: United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization
WASSCE: West Africa School Certificate Examinations

OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

Academic Counselling Services: These are the academic and social services designed by the counsellors at the Centre for Continuing Education, University of Cape Coast to help distance learners to adjust to their learning environment, develop the ability to set realistic goals, know the various approaches to learning and improve their academic performance.

Academic Performance: It is the accumulated end of semester one and two examination results of the education, commerce and management 300 level undergraduate students of the University of Cape Coast distance education Programmes used for the study.

Approaches to Learning: These are learning strategies students adopt in their studies to enhance their academic performance. The strategies are deep, surface, strategic and disorganised approaches to learning.

Facilitator Support: This includes the social and academic help offered by the University of Cape Coast in the form of facilitators to distance learners to enjoy their academic work, adjust to the academic environment and to achieve their goals in their programmes of study.

Feedback: It is the information the University of Cape Coast gives to distance learners on the education and business programmes on their academic performance to know how well or badly they have performed in a course or programme.

Learning Modules: These are the academic materials put together by professors and senior lecturers of University of Cape Coast in the various academic disciplines, such as Educational Psychology, Guidance and Counselling, School Administration and Supervision, Measurement and Evaluation, Science, Advanced Accounting, Financial Management, Auditing, Industrial Psychology, Entrepreneurship and

many more to supplement and compliment the verbal explanation by facilitators to enrich the understanding of distance learners for better academic performance.

Learning Environment: It includes buildings, classrooms, lighting, ventilation, type of relationship enjoyed by students and all academic facilities made available by the University of Cape Coast to distance learners to enhance their academic work.

Motivation: It refers to the academic motivation which is a student's level of interest and desire to persist in his or her academic work.

Peer Support: It includes the assistance, security and acceptance distance learners of the University of Cape Coast offer to course mates to cope with pressure at the work place, the study centres and academic work.

Support Services: These are structured academic facilities made available by the University of Cape Coast to help distance learners on the education and business programmes to succeed on their academic pursuits. These support services are; feedback, learning environment, facilitator support, peer support, learning modules and academic counseling.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

The success of every distance education programme depends on numerous factors for instance, student-centred support services, motivation, and approaches to learning. This implies that, institutions offering distance education programmes have to recognize and understand the various contexts and experiences of their students in order to develop support services, motivation strategies and approaches to learning that are responsive to students' needs. Institutions offering distance education programmes which understand the needs of their students could help policy makers, course designers and developers and facilitators, to develop support services that are student-centred, use motivation strategies and approaches to learning that assist learning and capable of addressing their needs effectively (Makoe, 2006).

Student support services, according to Molefi (1999) are systems or procedures that are purposefully created and effectively utilized by institutions offering distance education to support and to facilitate teaching. Molefi identified that students' support services to include academic calendar, modules, counsellors, study centres, time-table, study guide, face-to-face sessions, feedback and many others. According to Molefi support services play a significant role in directing students towards academic work and achievement.

The aim of student support service according to Steward (as cited in Makoe, 2006) is to develop in every student a sense of responsibility for his or her own learning by focusing on individual student's experiences, perspectives, background, interests, capabilities and needs. Steward therefore asserts that it is important to take

into consideration the different types of students' needs, the educational policies of institutions and the differences within the student body when developing support service for students.

An effective student-support service in distance education such as feedback, learning environment, learning material, facilitator support, peer support and counselling services are characterized by responsiveness to student's needs. That is, it makes the learning process personal; enhances learning within courses and it evolves continuously to accommodate new learner population, educational developments, economic conditions, technological advances and findings from research and evaluation. Steward (as cited in Makoe, 2006) suggests that students support services to be effective, they should be developed in accordance with the "infinite needs of the student; depend on the educational needs of the country and the institutions offering distance education programmes; depend on the location of the students, elements of resources and the curriculum which has been established to serve students" (pp.12 – 13). This indicates that the main focus of support services should be on students and what they bring to the learning environment. This is so, because the essence of providing student support services is to ensure that students derive maximum benefit from all experiences as students (Makoe, 2006).

Institutions offering distance education programmes have been instrumental in the design and development of support services that will enhance students' performance. The focus on the provision of student support services were derived from the need to address performance rate associated with distance learning. In distance learning, students receive their study materials and some attend face-to-face sessions to interact with their facilitators and peers, write quizzes and examinations and receive feedback to know their performance (Gilennire & Bialobrzaska, as cited

in Makoe, 2006). This indicates that students have the potential to work through the study material independently before face to face sessions (Makoe, 2006). However, research has indicated that students value the contact they share with peers, facilitators, counsellors, on-centre co-ordinators and resident tutors (Tait 2000 & Thorpe 2001). Studies have also shown that the contact hours students share with their peers, facilitators, counsellors and resident tutors have effect on students' motivation and academic performance (Patrick & Ryan 2003).

Educational psychologists define motivation as an internal process that activates, guides and maintains behavior over-time (Murphy & Alexander, 2000; Pintrich, 2003; Schunk, 2000; Stipek, 2002). Motivation is considered to be the element that gingers students' involvement in learning. When a student is highly motivated his or her efforts are directed towards the achievement of a set goal (Diaz, 2003). Also motivation is a key element in the educational setting which helps students to succeed academically. Similarly, Skaalvik, Valas & Sletta (cited in Dramanu 2012) stated that students who perceive themselves positively academically and motivated intrinsically strive to perform better than their peers without such opportunities and this brings about excellent academic performance. Thus a student who perceives him/herself positively academically and is academically motivated psyches himself or herself towards the mastery of his or her school work. Some educational research findings indicated that a positive attitude towards academic work and academic motivation affect academic behaviours, informed academic choices, educational aspirations and satisfying academic performance, (Marsh as cited in Scales, 2006). According to Seifert (2004), a mastery trend of student's behavior toward a specific academic set goal is

motivated by a strong sense of “self”. A set goal of a student might either be intrinsically or extrinsically motivated.

Isen & Reeve (as cited in Dramanu 2012) defined intrinsic motivation as the urge to engage in a task for its own sake and out of interest and enjoyment and not as a means of reward. Ryan and Deci (2000) state that intrinsic motivation positively affect behavior, performance and wellbeing of students. On the other hand, extrinsic motivation is when an individual engages in a task because of external factors either from a teacher or someone in authority. Extrinsic behavioural contingencies, are powerful determinants of a motivated behaviour (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Fallows and Ahmed(cited in Jenkins 2001) proposed a rather informal list of reasons why a student would be motivated either intrinsically or extrinsically to value learning. These are the desire to please the teacher; perceived need to understand the material presented; and degree of interest in the content.

Jenkins (2001) explained that students need to know that the locus of control in the attainment of their educational goals lies firmly with them and not the teacher. Also their academic success depends on their own efforts rather than on the decision of the teacher.

Richer & Valler (2001) explained that , when students are motivated intrinsically, he or she is moved to act for the fun or challenge entailed rather than external pressure or rewards. From birth, human beings in their healthiest states are active, inquisitive, curious, playful, display a sense of readiness to learn, explore and do not require extraneous incentives to do so (Ryan & Deci, 2000.). These variables according to Ryan & Deci are important indicators for active learning. Learning, according to Farrant (1992), is the process by which individuals acquire and retain

attitudes, knowledge, understanding, skills and capabilities that cannot be attributed to inherited behavior patterns or physical growth.

According to Kolb (as cited in Jenkins, 2001) students learn in varied ways. For instance some learn best by reading books while others prefer to learn by discussing and sharing ideas. Others receive and process information in various ways. For example, some students see and learn, others reflect, act, reason logically and intuitively, analyze, visualize and steadily deal with the material on hand. Students enter the learning environment with different approaches to learning to help them to achieve academically. The approach to learning used by students depend on the quality and of quantity of learning. How students approach learning plays a significant part in determining the result of their educational pursuits. Students adopt deep, surface, strategic and disorganized approaches to learning to enhance their academic performance (Subasinge & Wannichi, 2003). The approaches to learning students adopt are partly seen as the outcome of the learning environment (Marton & Saljo; Entwistle, Lawless & Richardson, Richardson & Price (as cited in Diseth,2007). For instance, a heavy work schedule calls for a surface approach to help the student achieve his or her academic goals (Kember & Leung,as cited in Diseth, 2007). Further, students who adopt a deep approach are urged by interest in the subject content with its professional relevance. The aim of a student who adopts a deep approach to learning is to understand, focus on concepts which can be used to solve problems, relate previous knowledge to new situations, theoretical ideas to day to day experiences and the task is interpreted as an opportunity to gain new grounds in learning. The deep approach to learning is also seen to facilitate the retention of factual details more effectively (Subasinghe & Wannichi, 2003). On the other hand students who use a strategic approach have

the intention of achieving high scores and they use both the deep and surface approaches to learning, depending on what they see to produce good outcomes (Subasinghe & Wannachi, 2003). Students who use the disorganized approach are those who wait till the last minute to rush through learning materials. Their aim is to get the border mark to see them through. Subasinghe & Wannachi (2003), further stated that several studies have indicated that, approaches students adopt for learning help them to become better learners and follow the outcomes and experiences of learning. Research work in education has revealed that the achievement of a positive academic motivation affects academic behaviours, well informed choices, educational aspirations and subsequently rich academic performance (Marsh as cited in Scales 2006).

Based on the role that academic support services, academic motivation and approaches to learning play in students' academic performance, some researchers and educational psychologists have shown great interest in analyzing the various types of relationships, both associative and predictive, that exist between students' support services, academic motivation, approaches to learning and academic performance.

In the light of this relationship, it is vital to investigate students support services, academic motivation, and approaches to learning of undergraduate distance learners of University of Cape Coast, Ghana, in relation to their academic performance. Even though a lot of work has been done in some parts of the world, just a few studies have been done in Ghana on the topic. The study, therefore, intends to make a contribution to fill the gap.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

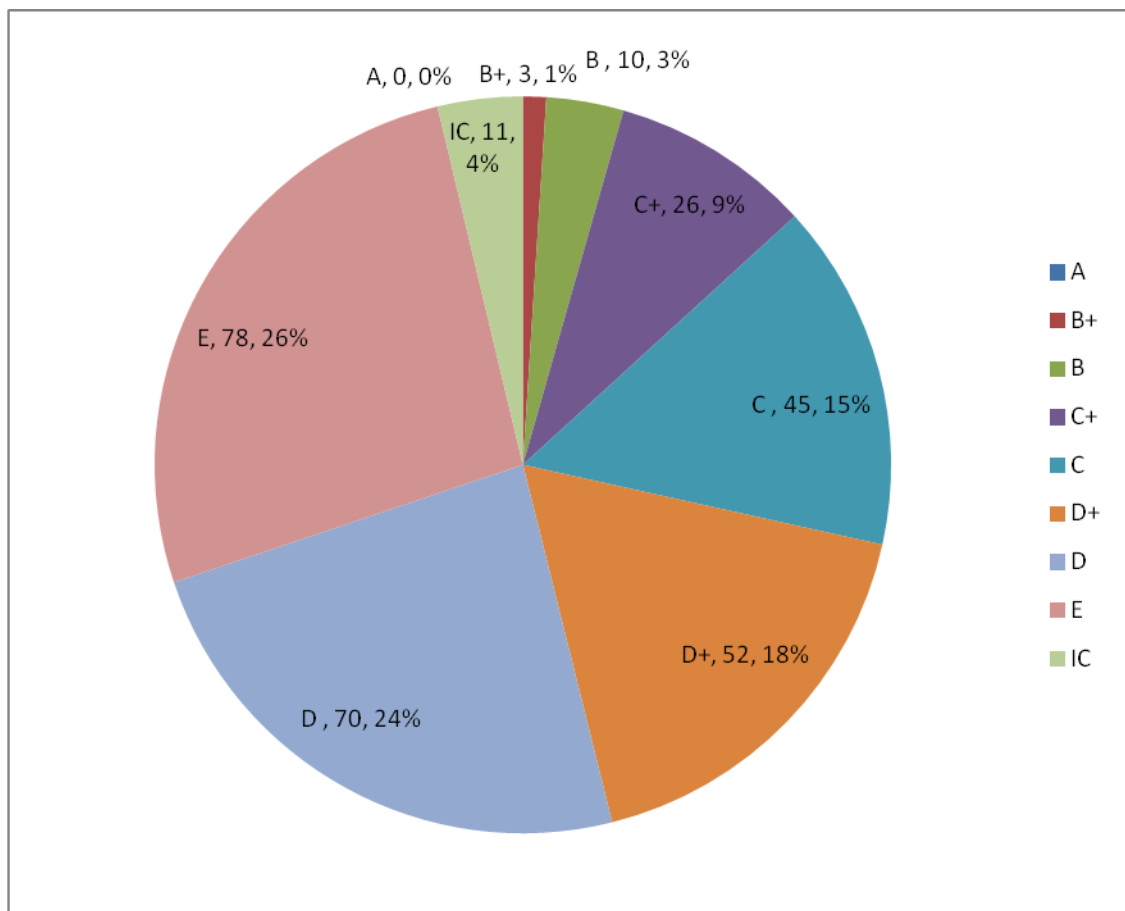
The academic performance of distance learners on the University of Cape Coast distance education programmes over the years was not encouraging. Most students had “E” in most of the subjects. For instance, in Principles of Marketing out of 752, 300 (39.89%) had “E”, 20 (2.66%) had “A”, 95 (12.63%) had “D”, 19 (2.53%) had “B+”. In Intermediate Accounting out of 752, 12 (1.60%) had “A”, 141 (18.75%) had “D”, 173 (23.01%) had “E”. Mathematics For Basic School Teachers, out of the total number of 3853, 34 (0.88%) had “A”, 38 (0.99%) “B+”, 338 (8.77%) had “D” and 2498 (64.83%) had “E”. (Source: Assessment Unit, Centre for Continuing Education, UCC, September 2012).

On the average the performance level was low so, a committee headed by Prof. Kobina Yankson was put in place to ascertain the causes of the large numbers of failures. The findings of the committee brought to light a lot of issues that needed immediate attention. For instance, it was realized that some students could not cope with their new status of combining the work load at their various places of work and academic work. Also, some students absented themselves from quizzes and end of semester examinations and students not notified of the change in quizzes and of semester time-table; inappropriate use of approaches to learning; students were also not motivated enough by facilitators and counsellors while some were also found not to be attending lectures.

To improve the academic performance of students some recommendations were offered by the committee. For instance, the schedule for face-to-face sessions was increased from once a month to twice a month for all levels. Also the facilitators were re-assessed by officials from the university and students were made to assess their facilitators by completing assessment forms designed by Directorate of Academic Planning and Quality Assurance (DAPQA) of the University of Cape

Coast. Facilitators who were identified as non-performers were withdrawn and the others were made to attend series of workshops on the use of the learning modules and other learning materials to improve their facilitating competencies and skills. Factors such as support services, motivation and approaches to learning play important role in the academic performance of students. It is against this background that the researcher investigated the influence of support services (feedback, learning environment, learning modules, facilitator support, peer support, and counselling) motivation (intrinsic and extrinsic) and approaches to learning (deep, surface, strategic and disorganized) on the academic performance of distance learners on the University of Cape Coast distance education programmes.

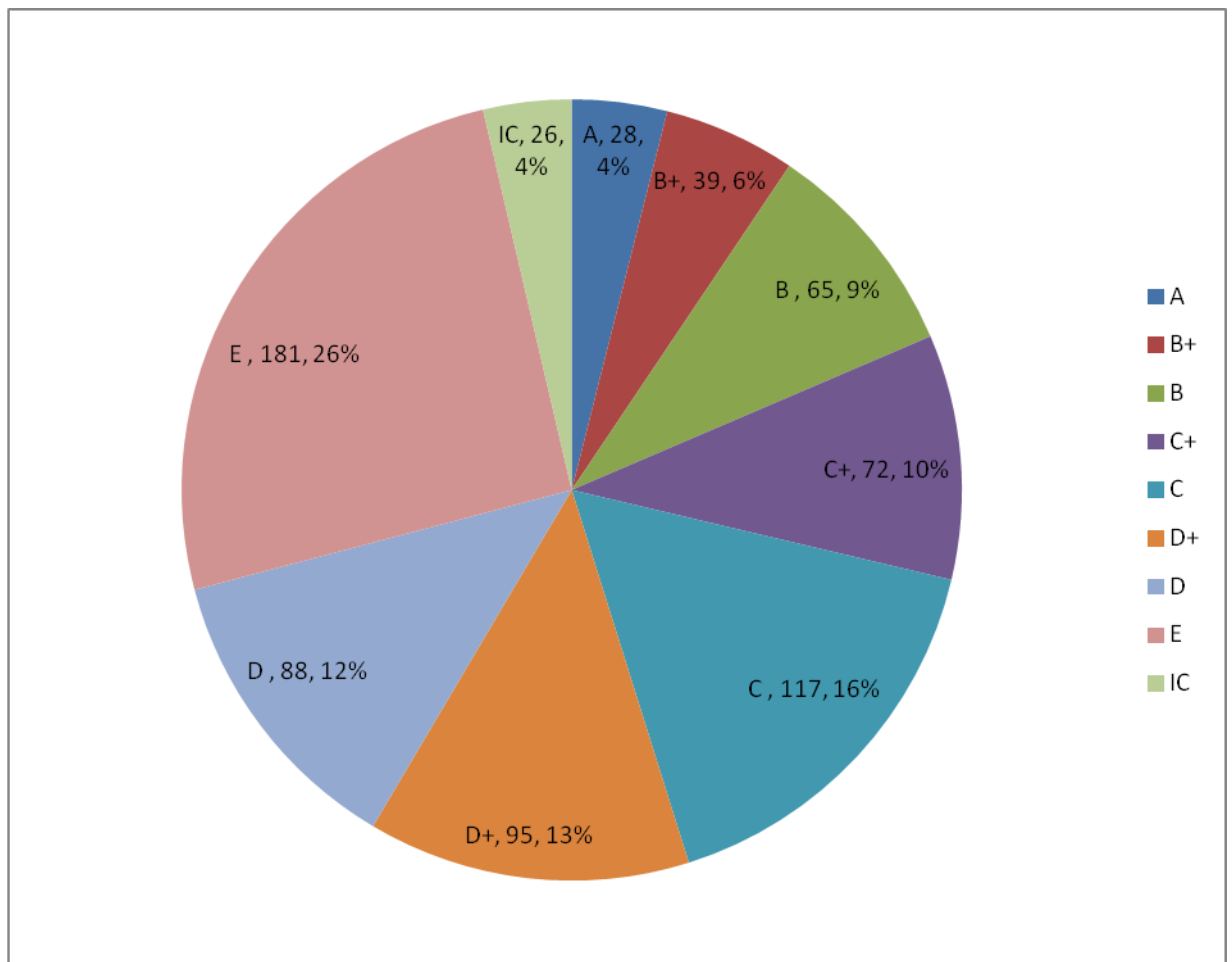
Performance list on Methods of teaching Basic School Mathematics



Pie Chart showing the performance of students in **Methods of teaching Basic School**

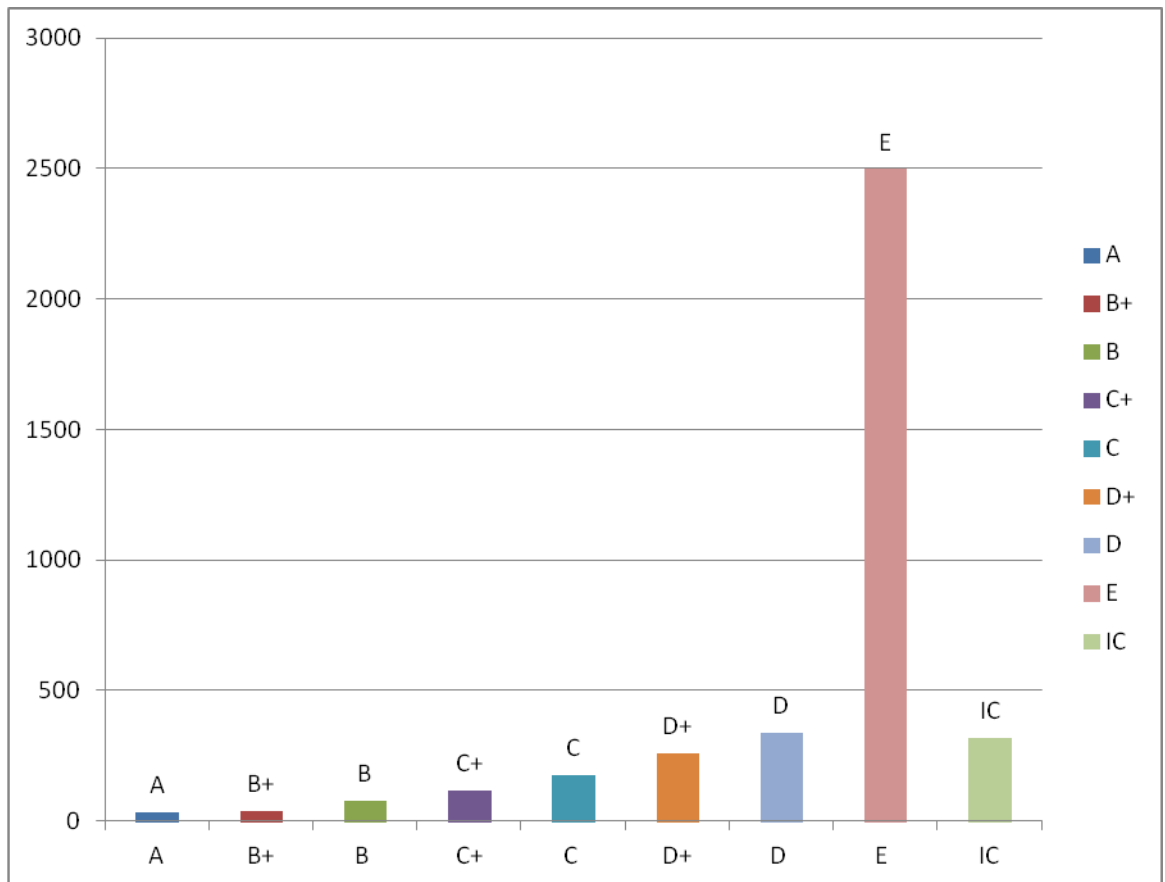
Mathematics It shows that majority of them numbering 78 (26.44%) failed the course as they had only E as grades, while none had A and only 3 representing just 1.02 % had B as grade.

Performance List on Principles of Marketing



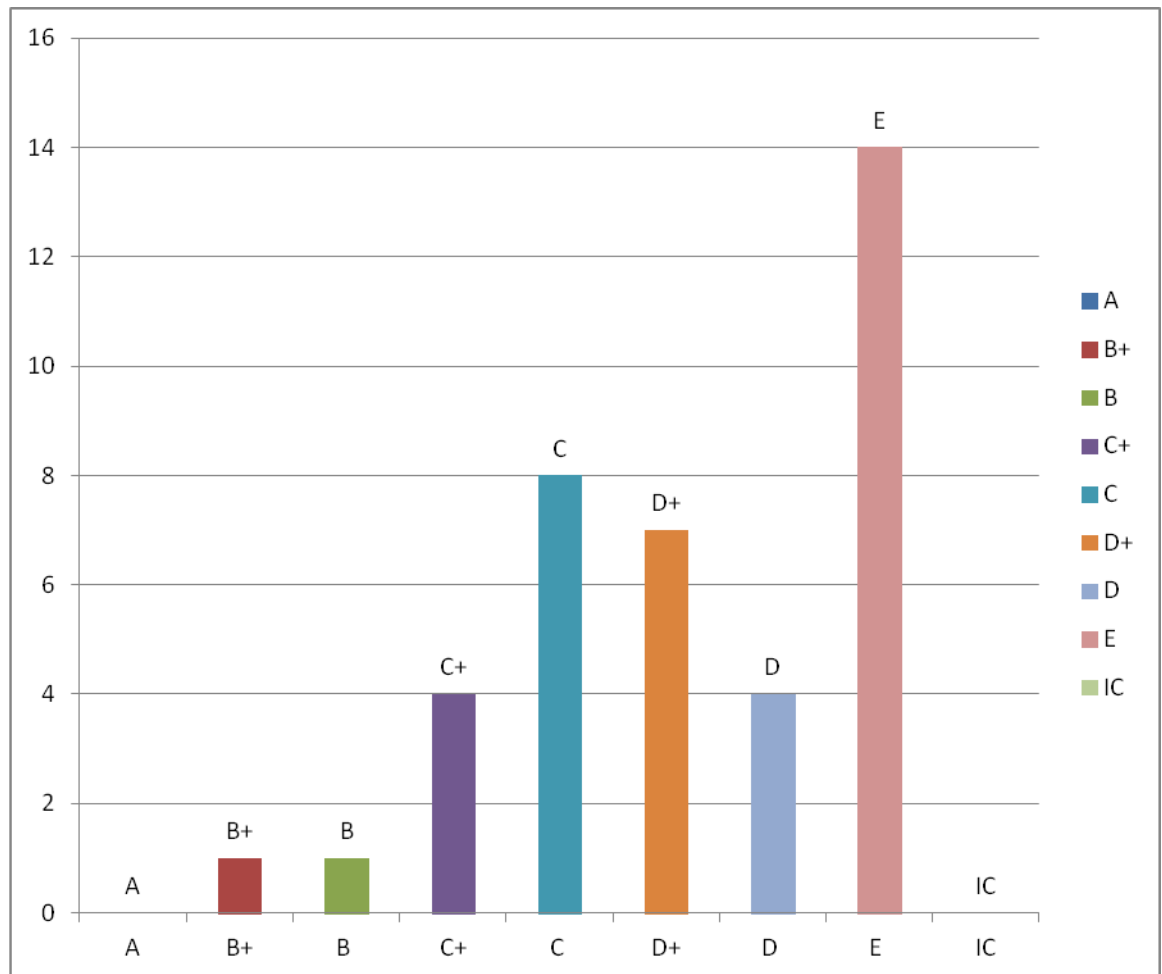
Pie Chart showing the performance of students in Principles of marketing. It shows that majority of them numbering 181 (26%) failed the course as they had only E as grades, while only 28 representing just 3.94% had A as grade.

Bar Chart showing the performance of students in Mathematics for Basic Schools



Bar chart above showed that majority of the students numbering 2498 (64.83) failed mathematics for Basic school teachers, while only 34 representing just 0.8% had A and just 38 (0.9%) had B+. This shows that an over whelming majority of students do fail this subject.

Performance list on Methods of teaching Vocational studies



Bar Chart showing the performance of students in Methods of teaching Vocational Studies shows that majority of them numbering 14 (35.90%) failed the course as they had only E as grades, while none had A and only 1 representing just 2.56 % had B as grade.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The study was guided by the following objectives. These were:

1. To determine the relationship between support services, (in terms of feedback, learning materials, learning environment, facilitator support, peer support and counseling), motivation (in terms of intrinsic and extrinsic) and approaches to learning (in terms of deep and surface,

strategic and desorganised) on the academic performance of 300 level undergraduate distance learners on the University of Cape Coast distance education programmes in Ghana.

2. To determine whether there were relationships between the three cohort of statements used for the study in terms of support services, motivation and approaches to learning.

Other objectives were to find out the relationship between:

3. Support services on the academic performance of students on the distance education programmes of University of Cape Coast, Ghana.
4. Motivation and the academic performance of learners on the University of Cape Coast distance education programme.
5. Approaches to learning and the academic performance of learners on the University of Cape Coast distance education.
6. Among education, commerce and management students' assessment of support services and motivation provided by facilitators of University of Cape Coast distance education programme
7. Between male and female students' assessment of support services provided by the University of Cape Coast distance education programme.
8. Between the approaches to learning adopted by male and female students on University of Cape Coast distance programme.

1.4 Research Questions

Based on the objectives of the study the following research questions were formulated to guide the study:

1. What is the relationship between support services and academic performance of students on UCC Distance Education programmes?

2. What is the relationship of intrinsic motivation and academic performance of students on UCC Distance Education programme?
3. What is the relationship between extrinsic motivation and academic performance of students on UCC Distance Education programme?
4. What is the relationship between approaches to learning and academic performance of students on UCC Distance Education programme?
5. What is the difference among education, commerce and management students' assessment of support services and motivation provided by facilitators of the UCC Distance Education programme?
6. What is the difference between male and female students' assessment of support services provided by the UCC Distance Education programme?
7. What is the difference between the approaches to learning adopted by male and female students on UCC Distance Education programme?

1.5 Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated to guide the study:

1. There is no statistically significant relationship between support services and academic performance of distance learners of University of Cape Coast in terms of:
 - i. feedback
 - ii. factuality of content of learning module
 - iii. facilitator support
 - iv. peer support
 - v. learning environment

- vi. academic counselling services
2. There is no statistically significant relationship between intrinsic motivation and academic performance of distance learners of University of Cape Coast.
 3. There is no statistically significant relationship between extrinsic motivation and academic performance of distance learners of University of Cape Coast
 4. There is no statistically significant relationship between approaches to learning and academic performance of distance learners of University of Cape Coast in terms of:
 - i. deep approach to learning
 - ii. surface approach to learning
 - iii. strategic approach to learning
 - iv disorganised approach to learning
 5. There is no statistically significant difference among commerce, management and education students' assessment of support services and motivation.
 6. There is no statistically significant difference between female and male students' assessment of support services in terms of feedback, learning modules, learning environment, academic counseling, facilitator and peer support.
 7. There is no statistically significant difference between the approaches to learning adopted by male and female students.

1.6 Basic Assumptions

The assumptions on which the study was based were:

1. The support services (feedback, facilitator support, peer support learning environment, learning modules, academic counseling services) offered by University of Cape Coast to distance learners has a relationship with academic performance.
2. Intrinsic motivation has a relation with academic performance of distance learners of University of Cape Coast, Ghana.
3. Extrinsic motivation has a relationship with academic performance of distance learners of University of Cape Coast, Ghana.
4. Approaches to learning (Deep, Surface, Strategic and Disorganised) has a relationship with academic performance of distance learners of University of Cape Coast, Ghana.
5. Education, Commerce and Management students' assessment of support services and motivation provided by facilitators of has a relationship with academic performance of distance learners of University of Cape Coast, Ghana.
6. Male and female assessment of support services in terms of feedback, learning modules, learning environment, academic counseling, facilitator and peer support has a relationship with academic performance of distance learners of University of Cape Coast, Ghana.
7. Gender has a relationship with academic performance of distance learners of University of Cape Coast, Ghana.

1.7 Significance of the Study

Distance Education currently plays a major role in the provision of tertiary education in Ghana. It helps workers to access quality tertiary education whilst still on their jobs. Distance education also offers professional education to

workers. Therefore carrying out research on support services, motivation and approaches to learning at the distance education level would be of immense help to institutions offering distance education and others yet to join. Also it is envisaged that the findings of the study would help the government of Ghana to put in place viable and workable policies that would help improve the quality of the Distance Education programmes and also develop the manpower base.

The findings of the study again would help the University of Cape Coast to develop better and quality support services such as the provision of learning materials to enhance the academic performance and learning of distance learners. Again, the findings of the study would identify the various approaches to learning that distance learners use in their studies at the tertiary institutions to enable their counsellors to give them quality guidelines.

It is anticipated that the findings of the study would expose students to approaches to learning namely, Deep Processing, Surface Processing, Strategic and Disorganised.

It is hoped that the findings would inform students to understand themselves better and make well informed choices regarding the approach to learning that would help them to succeed academically and improve their work performance. Further, the findings of the study if effectively disseminated would facilitate the work of psychologists, facilitate the work of educational psychologists and others to better understand their students and help them choose the appropriate approach to learning that would suit their level of intelligence and interest.

Since distance education has come to stay in Ghana, it is again envisaged that the findings of the study would be a working document for institutions already in the business of distance education and others yet to join, the appropriate support

services to give their students to enrich their learning and produce quality, broad-minded and versatile graduates for the country.

Again, it is expected that the findings of the study would serve as a guide for in-service training, workshops and seminar on support services, motivation and approaches to learning for universities who are into distance education, others yet to join and facilitators of the programme and other professionals who are interested in distance education.

Finally, it is envisaged that the findings of the study would contribute significantly to literature on the influence of support services, motivation and approaches to learning to enhance the academic outlook of students.

1.8 Scope and Delimitation of the Study

The study was conducted in Ghana which is made up of three geographical zones, the southern/coastal, middle and northern zones, and in all has ten regions. The study was delimited to three regions and these were randomly selected from the three zones. The regions were the Central, Ashanti and Northern (See Appendix vi)

Distance learners in 300 level during the 2011/2012 academic year pursuing degree programmes in business and education at the Centre for Continuing Education, University of Cape Coast, Ghana constituted the target population. The choice of 300 level undergraduate students was based on the assumption that, they have experimented with the various support services, motivation and tried the various approaches to learning since their admission onto the programme, and have settled on the ones they deem convenient and appropriate. It was also assumed that they would be able to read, understand and respond appropriately to the items on the

research instrument with little help. Also records of all the end of semester examination results would be available.

Academic performance of distance learners is affected by a lot of factors; some of the factors are intrinsic such as the level of intelligence while others are extrinsic such as facilitator support, counselling services. These dimensions and factors are not only great in number, but their influence is extremely complex in nature. However, the study is focused on support services, motivation and approaches to learning on the academic performance of University of Cape Coast distance learners. The study was however, specifically delimited to undergraduate 300 level distance learners for the purpose of which was to determine the influence of support services, motivation and approaches to learning on their academic performance. Any basis for assessment of the findings of the study is limited to items on the support services scale, motivation scale and approaches to learning scale which were the instruments used to collect data for the study.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

The review of the related literature covers three broad topics, namely conceptual framework, theoretical framework and review of related studies. Sub-topics reviewed are as follows:

- (a) Concept of support services which is made up of feedback, learning environment, peer support, facilitators, learning material and academic counselling
- (b) Concept of Motivation
 - (i) Intrinsic Motivation
 - (ii) Extrinsic Motivation
- (c) Concept of Approaches to Learning
 - (i) Deep Approach to Learning
 - (ii) Surface Approach to Learning
 - (iii) Strategic Approach to Learning
 - (iv) Disorganized Approach to Learning
- (d) Theoretical Framework
 - (i) Constructivists Theory
 - (ii) Socio Cognitive Theory
 - (iii) Cognitive Theory of Motivation
- (e) Distance Education
- (f) Review of Related Studies
- (g) Summary of Literature Review

2.2 Conceptual Framework

Three concepts have been discussed in this section. These are: the concepts of support services, motivation and approaches to learning.

2.2.1 Concept of Support Services

Makoe (2006) asserted that if distance education is to be successful, then support services should be totally student-centered. He went on further to stress that institutions offering distance education need to recognize and understand the varying

contexts and experiences of their students in order to develop support mechanisms that are responsive to students needs. A better understanding of students needs could assist distance education policy makers, course designers and developers and facilitators to develop student support systems that are student-centred and capable of addressing their needs directly. An effective student support services such as feedback, learning environment peer support, learning materials and counselling services in distance education are characterized by responsiveness to students needs. That is, it personalizes the learning process; encourages and facilitates interaction between students and stakeholders; facilitates learning within courses and it evolves continuously to accommodate new learner populations, educational developments, economic conditions, technological advances and findings from research and evaluations. Sewart (as cited in Makoe 2006) suggests that students support services must be constructed in the “almost infinite needs of the clients; should be dependent on the educational ethos of the region and the institution, also dependent of the dispersal of the student body, elements of resource and curriculum which has been set up to serve” (12 – 13). This, according to Makoe, (2006) shows that there is growing support of focusing on the students and what they bring in the learning environment. The purpose of providing student-centred support services is to ensure students derive maximum support from the whole experience of being a student.

The importance of the student-centred approach in the development of the effective student support service is based on principles of active and engaged learning. Thorpe (as cited in Makoe, 2006) describes students support service as “elements of learning capable of responding to a known learner or group of learners, before, during and after the learning process” (p. 201). This definition described the cross-functional, interactive, responsive and individualized nature of learner support.

Sewart (as cited in Makoe, 2006) equates student support services with service oriented programme where the students needs as customers are paramount Tait (2000) described student support services in terms of the inquiry, advice, admission services, tutorials, (individual or group) counselling, study and examination centres. All these resources serve to support students cognitively, affectively and systematically (Tait, 2000, p.289).

Makoe (2006) explains students support services in terms of the activities beyond the production and delivery of study materials. He divided student support services between academic and non-academic support given by the institution providing distance education. He further explained that academic support services are concerned with the development of cognitive and learning skills whereas non-academic support services deal with the effective and organizational aspect of students learning. The purpose of student support services in the University of Cape Coast Distance Education programmes is to meet the needs of distance learners (Thorpe, 2001). The University of Cape Coast has 47 study centres for both education and business scattered in all the ten regions and some districts of Ghana that provide support services such as facilitator support, feedback, learning materials (modules) conducive learning environment, peer group support and counseling services to enhance students learning. These study centres provide a place where students meet, attend face-to-face tutorials, hold group discussions, study register for the programmes, pick up their modules, academic calendar and time-table to guide their learning. The aforementioned are some of the support services provided by the University of Cape Coast to its distance learners. These support services from service providers must be smoothly integrated for students. According to Aden, Sybouts and Wess (1998), support services in the form of assessing cognitive and

affective skills, facilitating, counselling and similar resources are needed to insure a successful ratio equivalent or better academic performance of distance learners. If the contextual concepts of learning are ignored, attempts to enhance learning through the provision of appropriate student support services will not be successful. An effective student support services should be built around six core elements, according to Tait (2000). These are:

1. Student characteristics
2. Technological infrastructure
3. Course or programme demands
4. Scalability
5. Geography and
6. Management systems

Tait (2000) asserted further that, the characteristics of students are important and pivotal to the development of an effective student support services. Tait (2000) further categorized students support services as the learning of approaches to learning, peer support group, feedback concerning assessment and progress, language support and administrative problem-solving, with the aim to supporting students individual learning or groups. Student support service is a key issue in the provision of distance education and three services appear repeatedly and these are: timely student feedback, study centre support and access to learning materials (modules). In considering student support services, institutions that offer courses through distance learning must address the question of who their learners are and what their needs are. The institutions must then determine how those needs can be met with regards to constraints of costs, technologies and location (Tait, 2000). Also a British University, according to Makoe (2006), conducted an investigation

into student support services and identified five areas. These are local facilitators who provided and arranged study groups and individual meetings; intensive face-to-face meetings; the facility to communicate with facilitators; via e-mail; feedback from facilitators and access to learning materials (modules). He further stated that, these student support services are comprehensive in structure, but explained that all structures need to be implemented and monitored efficiently to achieve their aims of quality academic performance.

In collaboration, Molefi (as cited in Doluweera, Biswas & Omaratng, 2012) explained students support services as any systems or procedures that are purposefully created and effectively utilized by distance education providers to support and to facilitate teaching and learning at a distance. Molefi, further indicated that student support services include, learning materials (modules) counsellors, facilitators, study centres, study guide, academic calendar, face-to-face interaction with facilitators, teaching methods feedback guidance and counselling services. These students support services play significant role in directing learners towards their academic work and performance. Again, these students support services enable distance learners and all students to plan their time properly and use the appropriate approaches to learning for better academic performance.

In connection with these explanations, Power et al (2000) identified the major task of student academic support services as

- creating an environment conducive to distance learning;
- facilitate the distance learning method;
- motivate students to complete their education;
- encourage socialization and to promote teamwork and team spirit and
- improve the educational standards of student.

The essence of these tasks is to enhance the academic performance of students and also help them to enjoy learning to achieve their individual goals.

In support of Power et al (2000) identification of the major tasks of students' academic support services to enrich performance of students, Tait (2000) indicated that, effective students' academic support services should be built around six core elements. These are:

- (1) students characteristics;
- (2) Technological infrastructure;
- (3) Course and programme demands
- (4) Scalability
- (5) Geographical location
- (6) Management systems.

Though Tait identified six elements, focus would be on the characteristics of University of Cape Coast, distance education students so their needs are understood better. Tait (2000) further asserted that, characteristics of students are very important and pivotal to the development of an effective student academic support services.

Tait (2000) proposed the main characteristics of students to include gender, age, domestic situation, nature of employment, income status, educational background, geographical location, language, ethnic and cultural characteristics. Rumble (2000) also argued that information about students characteristics should not be solely based on a collection of data, but should take into consideration the context in which learning take place.

Once distance education providers know who their students are, it becomes easier to look at the support services they can offer their students. The support

services should encourage students to be involved in an active and challenging way in the learning process. Analysis of the characteristics of students on the University of Cape Coast distance education programmes shows that students need support that is context specific. An effective support service system should motivate students, encourage group activities and offer feedback to students. The function of student support service is to ensure the successful delivery of learning experience at a distance (Makoe, 2006).

Based on these and many more students characteristics, the University of Cape Coast developed a variety of students academic support services to enhance students' learning and academic performance; the study would focus on a few and these are; feedback, learning materials (modules) learning environment (study centres), facilitator support, peer support and counselling services.

2.2.2 Support Service and Academic Performance of Students

Academic support services are facilities available at the University of Cape Coast to help distance learners to succeed. The aim of distance education at the University of Cape Coast is to promote self study or independent study among its distance learners in the absence of regular face to face teaching. To achieve this aim, it extends academic support services to its distance learners. This comprises of a cluster of facilities and activities that are intended to make the teaching and learning process easier and more interesting for the learners. All these activities assist in the progress of students in terms of learning, interacting and effective communication (Makoe, 2006). The academic support services given by the University of Cape Coast to its distance learners range from study centres academic counselling services, facilitator support, feedback to administrative problem-solving. The success or failure and the overall corporate image of distance education institution is determined by the strength and weakness of students academic support service. The major task of student academic support services include to:

- create an environment conducive to distance learning;
- facilitate the distance learning method;
- motivate students to complete their education;
- encourage socialization and to promote teamwork and team spirit and
- improve the educational standards of students (Power et al, 2000).

The University of Cape Coast offers a number of students academic support services to impart quality education to its distance learners, the few to be investigated in the study include:

- feedback;

- learning modules;
- learning environment;
- course tutor support;
- peer support
- academic counselling

According to Tait (2000) the focus of students support services for students on distance education are cognitive, affective and systematic. Many descriptions offered to learner support services are based on the effective characteristics of access to administrative processes and procedures and this includes registration of students for courses, and assessing their academic progress. Most often, the cognitive function of student support services such as guidance, counselling, assessment etc. are not catered for. Cognitively, students have various needs which include the need to belong, interact with each other and be part of a community (Maslow, (2005). This leads to the creation of a students support services programme where students feel at home, valued and which they find manageable, (Tait, 2000, p. 289). Thorpe (2001) stated that, this type of support services need three interrelated elements and these are:

Identity: This explains that, the students have the chance to interact with learner support services personnel on a one-on-one contact.

Individualization: This is the interaction the student engages with support services personnel which is individualized, and based on specific needs and goals of the student.

Interpersonal interaction: In this situation, the interaction is mutual and reciprocal, with learning and performance as goals rather than information delivery.

Support services given to students points at the cognitive aspects that Tait (2000) explains, assist students performance. Similarly, Molefi (cited in Doluweera, Biswas & Omaratne, 2012) explained student support services as systems or procedures that are purposefully created and effectively used by distance education institutions to support and facilitate teaching and learning at a distance. Molefi (as cited in Doluweera, Biswas & Omaratne, 2012) went on further to categorize support services into two, these include:

- academic support services which include; facilitation, advising and counselling services
- administrative functions which include; enrollment , admission, registration
- record keeping
- provision of information and delivery of learning materials.

Furthermore, students support services are basically offered to students:

- to enhance learning so that students can achieve their set goals.
- assist students to achieve the objects set by institutions to reduce the negative effects of isolation and lack of regular personal contact.
- to decrease the drop-out rate
- to encourage students to deal with the teaching institutions and to better the delivery of course materials
- to improve students learning experience

- to provide additional assistance to students with academic problems
- to provide counselling services to students with personal problems

(Global distance education, Net undated)

2.2.3 Feedback

Feedback is one of the major factors to determine what learning experiences to give to distance learners and all students. One cannot know what is needed, where and the extent without considering the time and expense of finding out. Feedback is a multifaceted process which requires different approaches and instruments (Aden, Sybouts & Wess, 1998). Feedback provides students and facilitators with valuable academic information which can be used to enhance the success rates of distance learners. Aden, Sybouts & Wess (1998) further stated that feedback helps curriculum developers with information to develop courses for programmes and training sequences which will help students to make long range plans with certainty so as to have access to the necessary learning experiences.

Constant feedback from facilitators and institutions that offer distance education programmes is necessary for the achievement of set goals, curriculum changes and the development of new learning experiences in a rapidly changing society. Aden, Sybouts & Wess (1998) stressed further that feedback helps students to know their affective styles, cognitive styles, interest and other characteristics which could impact their success as students.

Slavin (2006) also explained feedback as information on the results of one's efforts. Slavin again asserted that feedback is the information students receive on their performance, and that it serves as an incentive to students to enrich their performance. In collaboration, Adentwi (2002) indicated that feedback in the context of distance education may take many major forms and these include:

- Feedback is the performance of individuals that determines the success or failure of courses.
- Feedback may be in the form of an evaluation of programmes and courses where the success or failure are verified for modification or improvement when necessary.
- Items for feedback should cover everything covered during the semesters so that responses offered by students would bring to light successes and failures for immediate attention.

Adentwi (2002) further asserted that, feedback in distance education is mostly concerned with students' knowledge in their various subjects matter and also the academic performance as students. Adentwi, indicated that the issue of feedback in distance education is their certification. Adentwi cautioned that standards should be maintained in the conduct of examination on distance so that the aim of the institution offering distance education concerning the conduct of examinations is not defeated. Students on distance education programmes write examinations under close supervision just as their counterparts in the regular system. Papers written by distance education students must also be of same quality and standard as that of the regular students so that credibility is added to the certificates awarded them.

2.2.4 Feedback and Academic Performance

Students have been concerned about their grades in quizzes, and of semester examinations and all spheres of their academic journey. Student always become

anxious after writing any form of examinations to find out their performance. The reasons is that, students are always eager to know their strengths and weaknesses as to prepare for further examinations or to be free from psychological torture of non-performance or failure.

Feedback on any academic work is one of the important issues in the learning environment. Basically, every lecturer, tutor or teacher would like to give every student a comprehensive personal feedback on all quizzes or examinations to enable him or her follow the progress of his or her academic work. Feedback in schools can be either summative or formative. Summative feedback assists students to know how well or badly he or she has performed in a course or program at the end of an academic year. Formative feedback on the other hand, in forms students whether they are on the right track or need to improve their performance before completing a unit of module or programme.

Generally students of all categories expect immediate answers to questions, discussions quizzes and examination. Students do not appreciate the frustrations they go through when they wait for long weeks to get feedback on their quizzes and examinations written.

Every lesson or lecture should contain an assessment of the degree to which students have mastered the objectives set for the lessons. This assessment may be done informally by questioning students, or may involve a quiz. However, the effectiveness of the lessons must be assessed, and the results of the assessment should be given to students as soon as possible. Students need to know whether they are right or wrong if they are to use feedback to improve their performance. In addition to assessing the results of each lesson or unit in a module, facilitators need to test students, from time to time on their learning of larger units of information. In

general, more frequent results in greater achievement than less frequent testing could be done. Feedback is very important in the teaching and learning encounter so that revelation of serious misunderstanding in a lesson can be corrected or other steps taken to get students back on track (Slavin, 2006). Slavin (2006) further stated that students must receive feedback on their performance to indicate whether or not they have understood the lesson. This feedback according to him, serves as a reinforcer for successful performance. Again, Slavin (2006) asserted that feedback and rewards must be delivered frequently to students to maintain their best effort. For instance, it is unrealistic to expect most students to work hard for weeks or months hoping to improve their grades, this would be possible only when they receive frequent feedback.

The word “feedback” means information on the results of one’s efforts. It also means information students receive on their performance (Slavin, 2006). Feedback also serves as an incentive to students to enrich their performance. Research on feedback has found that provision of information on the results of one’s academic work can be an adequate reinforcer in some circumstances.

However, feedback must be clear and specific and given in time to be an effective motivator to students learning (Bandura, 1969).

Feedback of all kinds, particularly formative, provides important information on student progress. Feedback should be seen as part of the instructional process and used to improve instruction and guide students learning (Fisher, 1988). This means that feedback should be clearly communicated to students as soon as practicable. Teachers should use results of feedback to guide instruction, to locate strong and weak points in students’ understanding and set an appropriate pace of instruction as this is an important aid for learning and retaining knowledge.

Feedback in distance learning is very vital for both students and institutions offering the package. Feedback enables students know the performance and the institutions to improve upon their facilities. In distance learning course tutors serve as facilitators and as such much is expected of them, especially to encourage and enhance students academic performance. Slavin (2009) commenting on students feedback asserted that, learning takes place effectively when students receive immediate and continuous feedback. The ability of the Centre for Continuing Education University of Cape Coast, to provide frequent feedback offers students the opportunity to sit up, set achievable goals and use the appropriate approaches to learning to enhance their academic performance. In the distance learning environment, it is often not possible for facilitators to interact effectively after lectures to find out whether students understand the modules or the units discussed. It is worth noting that feedback has been identified as one of the important tools for effective distance learning. This is because distance learners are regarded as not part of the conventional classroom and other facilities in the institutions offering the distance programme are not available to them. Students in the distance learning programme become discouraged when they realize that feedback on quizzes and examinations written are not forthcoming. It is very vital to provide every student with immediate feedback, but for distance learning students, feedback is their life line.

2.2.5 Types of Feedback

Feedback in the educational setting, could be informational, immediate, delayed or corrective. Informational feedback, is the type that informs the students about their performance.

Immediate feedback, according to Bogen & Schuller (as cited in Musa, 2002) is the feedback that is immediately accessible to students as they engage in the learning process. For example, when marked quizzes are distributed to students, the discussion that follows enable them to know how to answer similar questions in the future. Also during the discussion, how to tackle questions during quizzes and examinations help students to understand issues better for good performance.

Corrective feedback is any comments or suggestions on score or grade which the examiner gives a student. Again, it informs the student on how to improve on the answers given or which additional material or information to read to enrich his or her learning. At times when students receive feedback, there is a tendency for them to gain a better understanding of the course module. It could therefore be argued that feedback should be given the learner with information about his or her performance and also equip him or her with self-assessment strategies (Looms, Deans as cited in Musa,2002) asserts that factors such as the amount and nature of feedback received from a distance learning programme play an essential part in the eventual success of the student.

Willis, (as cited in Musa 2002) indicated to improve feedback and to make it effective to enhance students' academic performance, the following guidelines should be followed.

- Facilitators should make detailed and constructive comments on quizzes and assignments and refer students to sources of additional information.
- Marked quizzes and assignments should be given to students without delay.

- Making available end of semester examination results to students on notice boards of all study centres is also very vital

2.2.6 Learning Materials

A distance learning text or module generally contains at least six sessions or sections, and these are; self-pre-test, advance organizer (objectives), body of content, activities, feedback and self-assessment questions with answers. Terms of objectives of distance learning texts or modules aim to help learners to learn by themselves. With the distance education module, the writer is mainly responsible to present the concept clearly. In general, topics in the traditional texts provide the subject matter without considering the learner's ability to learn by themselves to enhance understanding. This is where the text of distance learning differs from that of the traditional text. Further explanation stated that, content organization of distance learning text starts with content analysis, concept mapping and division of content into a definite pattern, using advance organizers, activities, feedback, self-pre-test and post-test.

It was further indicated that topics and sub-headings are clearly highlighted so that the learners would know where they have gotten to in their reading and the direction they are heading to do. The size of units, sections, sessions and lesson in a distance learning text (module) are very consistent with time, in other words, they are current. Each unit should consist of feedback on the activities assigned to the students so that they can check the result of their work themselves. The traditional text, on the other hand, tends to be too 'academic' in nature (Rahman, 2006).

Parer (as cited in Musa, 2002) asserted that distance learning courses are organized as a number of linked but discrete modules. Parer also stated that modules are self-sufficient study material. He further stated that "a module is a set

of printed learning material consisting of well-planned teaching notes and activities which have been carefully laid out for students to work on independently and at their own pace and time”. Modules may be divided into sub-modules, which may take the form of units, sections, sessions, chapter and lesson. A module is written and designed in a specific method. Basic characteristics of good modules are that, they are interactive, conversational, self-pacing and pedagogically sound. According to Dekkers (as cited in Farrant, 1992), the development of the best quality of instructional module requires input from a number of contributors who have a rich content knowledge in the required subject area. In collaboration with definitions offered already in the write up, Farrant (1992) explained modules “as self-contained units of study materials”. They are usually designed as part of a modular course so that each makes its own contribution, gradually building up an accumulation of related knowledge. Modules can take various forms such as booklets, packs of self-instructional material, sets of instructional games, instructional material with exercises and tests for self-assessment, unit and session objectives and answers for the self-assessment questions to help students to know their performance to work harder. A self-instructional module should meet the following criteria:

- Clearly stated objectives
- Clear instructions for students
- Short learning sequences followed by evaluation exercises and feedback
- General revision material with practice exercise
- Completion tests which assess the students knowledge of the whole module
- Suggestions for remedial work students who fail a test (Farrant 1992)

A major importance of the module is that, it is cheap to produce, flexible to use since it allows students within quite wide limits to study at their own pace. The module can also be revised and updated more easily than a textbook (Farrant 1992)

He further explained that, the place of learning materials (modules) in the effective implementation of any education programme cannot be underestimated. He went on further to state that learning materials (modules) perform such functions as the extension of the range of experiences available to students, supplement and complement the instructors verbal explanations thereby making learning experience richer and providing the learner and instructor with interest into a wide variety of learning activities. It was further explained that, learning materials (modules) supplement, clarify, vitalize, emphasis learning and enhance learning in the process of transmitting knowledge, ideas, skills and attitude. This calls for the instructor's resourcefulness and improvisation to make lessons more effective to improve students academic performance.

In support of the functions of learning materials (modules) Birch & Williams (2011) explained that, learning materials (modules) provide students with:

- means to revise
- opportunity to share knowledge with colleagues
- opportunity to catch up with lectures if they miss a face-to-face session

Based on the functions of learning materials (modules) and their essentials, various definitions have been offered. For instance, Adentwi (2002) viewed learning materials as didactic material things which are supposed to make learning and teaching possible. In addition, Abdullahi (1982) also explained learning

materials (modules) as materials or tools locally made or imported that could make tremendous enhancement of lessons and make an impact if intelligently used. He further referred to learning material as objects or devices, which help the instructor to make a lesson much clearer to students. Learning materials (modules) are again explained as concrete or physical objects which provide sound, visual or both to the sensory organs during the teaching and learning process (Akrofi, 2010).

There are different types of learning materials, such as audio or aural, visual or audio-visual. They again stated that audio learning materials refer to those devices that make use of the senses of learning only. For instance, the radio, audio-tape recording and others. Visual learning materials on the other hand are those devices that appeal to the sense of light only and examples are the board, chart, slide and filmstrip. Furthermore audio-visual learning material is a combination of devices which appeal to both the sense of sight and hearing.

Examples of audio-visuals learning materials are the television, motion pictures and others. Learning materials which are of great concern to the classroom are the visuals. They are effectively used by all categories of instructors to impart knowledge. Learning materials are very important when students are interacting with learning experiences, and as such they also need access to quality and content friendly learning materials for good academic performance (Aden, Sybouts & Wess, 1998) Students pursuing distance education have the same needs as students in a campus setting.

Writing is an art and writing for open and distance learning is even more difficult because styles and techniques used are different from the traditional writing. In designing and developing distance learning course materials, institutions have to ensure that writers are knowledgeable in learning theories and techniques.

Basically, without adequate training, the writer cannot develop instructional course materials for distance learners. Developing and designing instructional design and course material for distance learners involve extensive research, commitment, planning and evaluation. If the course materials development techniques are effectively followed and implemented institutions offering distance education programmes will surely be able to produce quality modules for distance learners.

2.2.7 Learning Materials and Academic Performance of Students

The place of learning materials in the effective implementation of any education programme cannot be under estimated. Learning materials perform such functions as the extension of the range of experience available to learners, supplement and complement the teachers verbal explanations thereby making learning experience richer and providing the learner and teacher with interest into a wide variety of learning activities.

Learning materials supplement, clarify, vitalize emphasise learning and enhance learning in the process of transmitting knowledge, ideas, skills and attitude. This calls for the teachers resourcefulness and improvisation to make lessons more effective to improve students' academic performance.

According to Coombs (1970) learning materials are inputs in the educational system and for that matter are very vital to the teaching of any subject in the school curriculum. Coombs (1970) also was of the opinion that the use of learning materials would make discovered facts stick firmly in the memory of students. In another development, he also asserted that a well planned, structured and imaginative use of visual aids in lessons should help do away with apathy, arouse students interest by using concrete, examples for students to handle and at the same time help to train them to think things out for themselves. He further said that,

selection of materials related to the basic contents of a course or lecture, helps students to gain an indepth understanding of the lecture, attract them to be part of the activities, capture their attention and enhance their motivation to learn. In the Nigerian National Policy of Education (NPE, 1981), it was stressed upon that schools should be well equipped to enhance effective learning and academic performance. Also suitable textbooks and well equipped libraries stuffed with current books should be provided for all schools. Scarcity of these, Coombs (1970) stressed will retard the educational system from attending to its new demands. To raise the standard and quality of education, its efficiency and productivity, good and quality learning materials should be provided to all schools. Coombs further stressed that “audio-visual materials, as an important part of the teaching and learning process help to bring about a permanent and meaningful experience. He said that they provide first-hand experience where possible or of vicarious one where it is feasible.

In support of the explanation of the importance of learning materials in learning, Birch and Williams, (2011) asserted that learning materials provide students with:

- means to revise
- opportunity to share knowledge with colleagues
- opportunity to catch up on lectures if they miss a face-to-face session.

In addition to this, the use of learning material by the distance learner to enhance his or her academic performance is very essential because they spend much of their time reading. Infact distance learners dependence on the use of learning material (learning module) is more than his or her counterparts in the conventional system, because his or her access to the teacher is limited. Consequently, he or she

has to most of the time, depend upon the learning module or learning material. The distance learning module is conversational in style. This helps learners feel that they are interacting with the writer teacher and questioning the text. The learning material (module) also provides questions-polemic or rhetoric-at crucial junctures to help raise further questions in the learners (Birch & Williams 2011). When students raise questions whilst reading the learning material they come to grips with the subject. Besides, the questions set in the self-assessment section, take the students through various stages of reading which enriches their academic performance. That is, some of the exercises require the students to infer ideas from the content, whilst others demand the students reaction to what is presented in the content.

Also, advanced organizers, introduction, statement of unit and session, aims and objectives help students to set themselves the purpose of reading the learning material (module) to enrich his or her knowledge and for better understanding of the content this in turn improves academic performance. The objectives and glossaries provided in the learning material (module) present what the text contains, what the text expects from students and to ensure easy and better comprehension of the content for the attainment of better academic performance. Distance learning materials, are designed in such a way to help improve the reading skills and academic performance of students.

As an important aspect of the teaching and learning process, the term learning material has been variously defined by authors. For instance, it is viewed as didactic material things which are supposed to make learning and teaching possible.

Abdullahi (1982), also explained learning materials as materials or tools locally made or imported that could make tremendous enhancement of lesson, impact if intelligently used. Isola (2010) further referred to learning material as

objects or devices, which help the teacher to make a lesson much clearer to students. Learning materials are also explained as concrete or physical objects which provide sound, visual or both to the sensory organs during the teaching and learning process (Agina-Obu, 2005).

There are various types of learning materials, some of these are audio or aural, visual or audio-visual. Thus, audio learning materials refer to those devices that make use of the sense of learning only, for instance, the radio, audio-tape recording and others. Visual learning materials, are those devices that appeal to the sense of sight only such as the board, chart, slide and filmstrip. Audio-visual learning materials on the other hand, is a combination of devices which appeal to both the sense of sight and learning and examples are the television, motion pictures and others. The learning materials which are of much concern to the classroom are the visuals. These are effectively used by all categories of teachers to impart knowledge (Popoola, 1980).

2.2.8 Learning Environment

Environment of both home and school contribute to the development of the student's perceptual styles. Beside the home, the school is the most important experience in the process of development of the students. The school to which the child attends in urban or rural also influences the academic achievement of the student (Wikipedia, 2012). The school environments as perceived by students have an advantage of characterizing the setting through the eyes of the actual participants. Students have a good advantage point to make judgements about classrooms because they have encountered several learning environments and have enough time in a class to form impressions (Wikipedia, 2011).

In the school system, the learning environment or the classroom is the most important venue for the transaction of academic business between the school and society. The uniqueness of the learning environment is due to the type of membership enjoyed by students or members. As a work group, they meet for the purpose of learning, which is held deliberately and in a planned manner.

The learning environment is made up of favourable attitude towards teachers, curriculum facilities available in the classroom and student-teacher relationship. They further stated that, the classroom is the student's immediate learning environment, where a unique face-to-face group backed by interpersonal relationships among members takes place. The academic activities that take place influence social relationships. Two types of social interactions occur in the learning environment. These are teacher-students and student-students. The learning environment aids the development and effective achievement of students. As an agent of intellectual stimulation a good learning environment is an important factor to strengthen the students level of education.

Furthermore, the learning environment refers to facilities that are available to facilitate students learning outcomes. It includes size of the classroom, seating position and arrangement, tables, chairs, good light, air, ventilation and many more (Farrant, & Fanombi, as cited in Owoeye & Yara, 2010). Eccles, Wigfield & Schiefele (Wikipedia 2010) posited that, positive learning environments are essential to facilitate adaptive student outcomes and these include learning, motivation, adjustment to school and academic achievement. Also, according to Patrick and Ryan (2003) learning environment comprises of students perception about how they are encouraged to interact with classmates and teachers.

In support of these definition, Hallak (1990) asserted that the learning environment contribute to academic achievement in the school system. This includes the school building, classroom, furniture and many more. He went on further to say that their availability, relevance and adequacy contribute to academic achievement. He added that unattractive school building and over-crowded classrooms, poor ventilation among others contribute to poor academic attainment.

Farrant (1992) indicated that, the learning environment sets realistic objectives concerning what one wants to achieve through teaching. He further stated that, the learning environment is an educational laboratory where teachers test their ideas and prove which teaching and learning methods are efficient and therefore worth extra effort. Farrant further defined learning environment as the design of different types of learning environments can depend on the learning objectives, target audience, access (physical, virtual and or both, and the type of content. It is important to know how the learning environment is used, and the influences of the tools and techniques that distinguish the differences in learning outcomes as the technology evolves.

Learning environment enables students to study online in their own time at their own pace, from their own location. This mode of learning provides the learner autonomy to proceed at their own pace, while their progress is monitored to assess their achievement. Furthermore, Akinsanmi (2008) in support also stated that learning environments were often designed to support some particular learning theories that can explain the learning process. He further stated that take, most learning environments are based on physiological, psychological and sociological changes that take place when learning occurs. Akinsanmi (2008) again indicated

that, many learning environments were often described in terms of social climate, curriculum design and pedagogical philosophy.

In collaboration with Akinsanmi's (2008) explanation of learning environment, Vandiver (2011) report on modernizing American schools indicated that good learning environments and facilities should be important precondition for student learning, provided other conditions such as good ventilation, good lighting, good seating arrangements, toilets, good sanitation and much more, were present to support strong academic programmes in the schools.

Lackney & Pious (2008) supported Vandiver's (2011) claim and ascertained that a good learning environment should be safe, secured, comfortable, accessible, well-ventilated, well-illuminated, aesthetically pleasing and should be an integral component of the conditions of learning.

2.2.9 Learning Environment and Academic Performance of Students

Learning environment as perceived by students has an advantage of characterizing the setting through the eyes of the actual participants. Students have a good advantage to make judgement about the learning environment because they have encountered several learning environment and have formed impressions. Students' perceptions towards the learning environment has considerable influence over their mental health. The learning environment includes favourable attitude towards teachers or course tutors, curriculum facilities available in the classroom and student-teacher relationship.

In the school system the learning environment or classroom is the most important for the transactional business going on between school and society. The uniqueness of the learning environment is due to the type of membership enjoyed by

students or members. As a work group, they meet for the purpose of learning, which is held deliberately and in a planned manner.

Students' immediate learning environment is the classroom, where a unique, face-to-face group backed by interpersonal relationships among members takes place. The academic activities that take place influence social relationships. Two types of social interactions occur in the learning environment. These are teacher-students and students-students. The learning environment aids the development and effective achievement of students.

The student is the product of environment, if the school is able to create a congenial, pleasant and favourable environment for learning, the student is likely to enjoy schooling experience. A supporting institutional learning environment is likely to create a positive attitude that facilitates learning, whereas a non-supportive environment is likely to create a negative attitude that impedes learning. To facilitate effective learning environment, it would be expedient to include the development of a possible and healthy attitude in students towards school and learning.

The learning environment is of great significance as learning is the outcome of the environment. As an agent of intellectual stimulation a conducive learning environment is an important factor to strengthen the students' level of education. This leads to considerable significance to the study of critical issues of classroom teaching. The behaviour of course tutors and teachers is one of the factors which makes the learning environment favourable or unfavourable, gratifying or discouraging to students (Musa, 2002).

The classroom is a learning environment where interaction occurs among teachers, students and learning takes place. The learning environment needs to be constructivist in nature engaging students in reasoning. Learning environment is

defined as the conditions, processes and psychological stimuli which affect educational achievement of the student.

The learning environment implies a measure of the quality and quantity of the cognitive, creative and social support that has been available to the students during their school life in terms of teacher-student interaction. The learning environment consists of a course tutor/teacher support, learning materials, task orientation, clique, approaches to learning, involvement, empathy, friction, disengagement, etc. Furthermore, the learning environment refers to facilities that are available to facilitate students learning outcomes. It includes size of the classroom, seating position and arrangement, tables, chairs, good light, air, ventilation etc., (Farrant & Farombi as cited in Owoeye & Yara, 2010).

Aside these factors, there are other factors that contribute to effective learning achievement in the learning environment.

For instance, positive learning environments are essential to facilitate adaptive students outcomes and these include learning, motivation, adjustment to school and academic achievement (Eccles, Wigfield & Schiefele, 1998). The learning environment according to Patrick and Ryan (2003) comprise of students perception about how they are encouraged to interact with classmates and teachers, and encompasses dimensions of: course tutor support, mutual respect, student task-related interaction and promoting performance goals. Current studies have indicated that these dimensions of the learning environment relate significantly to students motivation, self-regulated, classroom behaviour (both positive and negative), social relationships and academic achievement (Ryan & Patrick, 2001).

The emphasis on the importance of the learning environment, including support, mutual respect, task-related interaction among students, is apparent in

reform recommendations. For instance, the National Science Education Standards include explicit references to teachers creating a social and intellectual environment with support, respect and collaboration as central features (National Research Council, (NRC) 1996). The National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) (2000) advocated that students should be “encouraged to share ideas and seek clarification until they make meaning of any learning material. To achieve this kind of learning environment, course tutors need to establish an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect. When course tutors build such an enabling learning environment, students especially distance learners understand that it is acceptable to struggle with ideas, make mistakes and to be unsure of learning some facts. This attitude would encourage distance learners and all learners to participate actively in order to understand what they are to learn because they know that no one would criticise them subjectively” (p. 271). Studies have revealed positive links between perception of course tutor support and learners adaptive motivational beliefs and engagement behaviours. For instance, when learners view their course tutors as supportive, they report higher levels of interest, value, effort and happiness in their academic work (Fisher, 2008). Also perceiving the facilitator as supportive, it encourages distance learners to ask for help when the need arises, use of self-regulated learning strategies and a desire to adhere to rules in the classroom (Ryan & Patrick, 2001) .

In a learning environment where learners respect each other it is perceived that, course tutor would encourage learners to value opinions of one another and contribute to make life in the classroom relaxed and friendly. Also learning environments that are perceived as respectful are likely to be the ones in which learners can focus on understanding learning tasks, without having their attention

diverted by concerns that they would be mocked at when they make mistakes. Further, respectful learning environments are also more conducive to students problem-solving, cognitive risk-taking and understanding.

Perceptions that facilitators promote respect in the classroom contribute to distance learners feeling of psychological safety and comfort. Thus, a perception that the facilitator promotes respect in the learning environment is linked positively to increase academic work and more self-regulated learning (Ryan & Patrick, 2001).

Hallak, (as cited in Dramanu 2012), asserted that the learning environment contribute to academic achievement in the school system. This includes the school building, classroom, furniture, etc. He went on further to say that their availability, relevance and adequacy contribute to academic achievement. He added that unattractive school building and overcrowded classrooms, poor ventilation among others contribute to poor academic attainment.

Lackney (as cited in Vandiver, 2011) argued that academic environment is critical to the teaching and learning process. He also took a standpoint that “factors responsible for students achievement were ecological – they acted together to shape the context within which learning takes place. The physical setting – the school building was an undeniably integral part of the ecological context for learning” (p.2). The physical factors that had a profound impact on the teaching and learning process were:

- a) natural lighting
- b) reduction and control of noise
- c) the location and sighting of schools
- d) School size and class size, and
- e) condition of the school building (Lackney, as cited in Vandiyer, 2011).

Research had shown that there was an explicit relationship between the physical characteristics of learning environment and educational outcomes. Facilities in the school and the classroom environment must be flexible enough to accommodate changing learning patterns. According to Tennessee Advising Commission on Intergovernmental Relationship: Staff Information Report (TACR) (2003), that there was growing evidence of a correlation between learning environment, students behaviour and performance. Research studies that were conducted in the past three decades found that there was significant relationship between learning environment and students performance (Berner, 1993; Cast, 1993; Earthman cited in Vandiver, 2011; Hines 1996; Lanham 1999; TACR, 2003). Research had shown that good light, clear air, small, quiet, comfortable and safe environment were very important for academic performance (Buckley, Schneider, Shang, 2004a; Earthman & Lemasters cited in Vandiver, 2011; Lackney as cited in Vandiver 2011; Schneider, 2002). According to Chan (as cited in Blincoe, 2008) the learning environment had a direct and indirect impact on students academic performance, direct impact included: lighting, controlled acoustics and air ventilation (Chan 1996). A good learning environment freed students from physical distress, made it easy for students to concentrate on academic work and induced students to think logically. Chan (1996) further indicated that students responded to good and poor learning environments by expressing positive and negative attitudes. With a positive attitude towards their learning environment, students learned with high motivation and were able to demonstrate better performance.

Research studies of Anderson (1999), Berner 1993), Cash (1993), Earthman (as cited in Vandiver, 2011), Earthman (2002), Hines (1996), and O'Neil (2000) had supported other research work that found out that the conditions of the learning

environment including school building had a sizeable and measurable influence on the academic performance of students. The United States Department of Education (2000) found that the learning environment of schools, which included inoperative heating system, inadequate ventilation, and poor lighting, affected the health and learning outcomes as well as the morale of students and the staff. Lizzio, Wilsons and Simons (2002) studied the relationship between university students perception of their academic environment approaches to learning and academic performance. The result indicated that students perception as influencing both “hard” (academic achievement) and “soft” (Satisfaction, development of key skills) academic performance, both directly and immediate through their approaches to learning, perceptions of heavy work load and inappropriate assessment influenced students towards surface learning. The perceptions of good teaching towards deep approach to learning and students perception of their current learning environment were a stronger predictor of learning outcomes at the university.

Similarly, Yee-Yuen and Watkins (1994) reported that, the result of a research they conducted in Hong Kong indicated that students perceived their learning environment to be relatively competitive and teacher controlled. The students indicated further that, they preferred a friendlier atmosphere where students and teachers collaborated to provide a greater variety of interesting but challenging activities, such a learning environment would promote a deeper, more oriented approach to learning. The relationship was stronger between preferred deep approach to learning and a good learning environment.

Studies about students academic performance and learning environment concluded that the quality of the environment affects students performance. There is also sufficient research results that indicated that the learning environment students

spend a great deal of their time learning influence how well they learn and their academic performance (Earthman, 2004:18). Some studies were conducted to examine the effect of the learning environment which included seating, furnishings, privacy, noise and acoustics, climate, air quality, windowless classrooms, light, etc., on students achievement and well-being (Keep 2002, Higgins, Hall, Wall, Woolner and McCaughey 2005; Lackney & Jacobs 2004; Gump, 1987; McGuffey as cited in Vandiver, 2011; Earthman 2004).

The findings indicated that, temperature, heating, and quality of air are the most important individual elements of student achievement. Also chronic noise exposure impairs cognitive functioning and noise-related reading problems. There is an considerable amount of literature relating to lighting in the learning environment. In relation to student achievement, it is argued that day light offers the most positive effect as day light produces biological effects on the human body (Earthman, 2004; Heschong Mahone Group 2003).

Jago and Tanner (cited in Woolner, Hall, Higgins, McCaughey and Wall, 2005) argues that the visual environment affects a student's ability to perceive visual stimuli and affects his/her mental attitude and thus performance. Knez (2001) found evidence that lighting conditions in the learning environment that induced negative effect reduced performance, and therefore, lighting conditions that induced positive effect improved performance. In another study Knez (2001) studied the effect of lighting and gender and academic performance and it was found that females were more perceptive to light than males. Further, Knez (2001) found that males and females performed differently academically in different kinds of lighting.

In another study, Higgins, Hall, Wall, Woolner & McCaughey (2005) found that physical elements in the learning environment can have discernible effects on

teachers and students. For instance, inadequate temperature control, lighting, quality of air and acoustics have detrimental effects on concentration, mood, well-being, attendance and ultimately attainment.

Padhi (1991) conducted a study on effects of learning environment and academic achievement. The sample consisted of 636 students drawn, from fifteen schools randomly. The findings revealed that learning environment affects academic achievement of students significantly. There was a growing research literature that there is a relationships between students achievement and the conditions of the learning environment (Buckley, Schneider & Shang, 2004a; Lewis, 2000; Filando, 2008; Hunter, 2006; Schneider, 2003b). Akinsanmi (2008) found that students in learning environments with large windows, natural lighting and well-designed skylights performed 19% to 26% better than their peer in learning environments without these features. Oslon and Kellum (2003) found out in a study that a sustainable learning environment with good qualities of lighting, site planning, quality of indoor air, acoustics, healthy building materials and the use of renewable energy benefited students academic achievement.

Akinsanmi (2008) indicated that learning environments were often designed to support some particular learning theories that can explain the learning process. Many learning environments were often described in terms of social climate, curriculum design and pedagogical philosophy.

In his study Akinsanmi (2008) explained three theories of how learning can take place and the conducive learning environment. The schools of thought included behaviorism, cognitivism and constructivism. The learning environments of the behaviourists were designed to include teacher-focus, structure, lecture based and

the use of reward and punishment to promote academic achievement. The physical learning environment provided little room for flexibility.

The cognitivist theory, focused on the study of mental processes and used it to explain learning (Akinsanmi, 2008). This learning theory viewed the learner as an information processor (like a computer) (Brunner, 1966). The learning environment encourages curiosity, provides inquiry and houses students according to their grades (Akinsanmi, 2008; Brunner, 1996).

The constructivist viewed learning as an active process of making meanings from experience (Akinsanmi, 2008; Sample, 2000). The learning environment designs based on this theory was student centered collaborative, cooperative and experiential. Caine & Caine (1991) cited in Vandiver (2011) noted that, the learning environment should be safe, challenging, comfortable, social and enriched.

According to the Clinton-Gore Administration (as cited in Vandiver 2011) report on modernizing American schools indicated that good learning environments and facilities should be important precondition for student learning, provided other conditions such as good ventilation, good lighting, good seating arrangements, toilets good sanitation etc., were present to support strong academic programmes in the schools. Researchers had found that poor academic achievement was attributed to noisy learning environment, polluted air, poor condition of classroom furniture etc. (Cash, 1993; Clinton-Gore Administration, 2000; Earthan, 1996, Edwards, 1992, Hines, 1996).

Tanner and Lackney's (2006) study identified numerous trends that influenced the design of learning environments that includes site and educational space, principles for shared school and community facilities, community spaces,

character of all spaces (e.g. air, light, noise etc), site design and outdoor learning space (Wilson, 2008 as cited in Vandiver, 2011).

Earthman (cited in Vandiver (2011); Edwards (1992), Edwards (1996), Hines (1996) had indicated in their research that school learning environment orderly appropriate and safe educational facilities which were conducive to teaching and learning, to be determinant of academic achievement. Edwards (1992) investigated the relationship between conditions of a learning environment and students achievement in schools in Washington D.C. The results showed that learning environments have an effect on students academic achievement.

Bowers & Burkett (as cited in Vandiver, 2011) investigated the differences in behaviour, attendance and achievement of rural Tennessee students. They found that there was a relationship between learning environment attendance, behaviour and students academic achievement.

According to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (2000, as cited in Vandiver, 2011), research had demonstrated that there was a relationship between student performance (achievement and behaviour) and the learning environment. School personnel can improve the educational opportunities for their students by ensuring that buildings are in good condition and to provide the best learning environment that influences the educational opportunities of all students. According to Lackney and Picus (2008), learning environment should be safe, secured, comfortable, accessible, well-ventilated, well-illuminated, aesthetically pleasing and should be an integral component of the conditions of learning.

Chan (as cited in Blincoe, 2008) noted that learning environment including school facilities played a significant role in shaping students learning

process. According to Chan (1996), there had been seven research studies in the past that found a relationship between learning environments and student academic achievement. This finding is consistent with the findings of research studies conducted by Lewasters & Schneider (2002) which indicated that students achievements and behaviour are fostered by good lighting in the classroom environment.

In another research findings showed that lighting in the learning environment, significantly increased students test scores and promoted better health and physical development. Theorizing about the effect of quality air or good ventilation on students performance and achievement, Energy Star (2003), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) (2000), Schneider (2002) asserted that there is a link between students performance and achievement and good ventilation. This research result is supported by Schneider's (2002) finding which indicated that poor air quality made students as well as teachers sick. This meant that students and teachers could not perform well academically. Poor ventilation in the learning environment had been associated with increased student absenteeism which affects performance (EPA, 2000; Rosen & Richards, 1999; Schneider, 2002; Smedje & Norback, 1999).

In support of these findings, Olson & Kallum (as cited in Vandiver, 2011) suggested that quality air in the learning environment has direct effect on students performance. Research had also shown that good quality of air in the learning environment had lessen students absenteeism and improved students academic achievement (EPA, 2000); (Olson & Kellum, as cited in Vandiver, 2011). These results are consistent with other findings, which pointed out that the quality of air

found inside public schools learning environment significantly affected students ability to concentrate during teaching and learning.

Current research findings had also indicated the role noise play in the learning environment (Earthman (2000). He stressed that a good learning environment devoid of unwanted noise was very important to efficient students performance. Further, Earthman (2002), explained that proper and accurate hearing in the learning environment was essential to a student's ability to learn. Research which dates as far back as Morgan (as cited in Akuamoah-Boateng & Boadu, 2013) showed that, noise was a distraction that interfered with learning and that students learn more when the classroom noise level is reduced drastically. Again according to Earthman (2002), the ability to clearly hear and understand what is being spoken is a pre-requisite for effective learning. When this ability is impaired through unwanted noise, students do not perform well.

One of such factor that contribute effectively to the learning environment is the facilitator. In recent studies, educational researchers have placed great emphasis on the influence of course tutor attitude, support and psychological functioning on distance learners academic performance (Dramanu, 2012). In most of these researches, course teacher support was investigated under categories such as academic support, social support affective support and expressive support. Affective support of course tutors refers to behaviours, attitudes and practices made up of care, respect, concern, interest, value, recognition, fair treatment, encouragement, high expectations and offering a listening ear. Based on that, important concerns came to light, and those were the quality and frequency of the affective interaction between course tutors and distance learners.

Stipek, Salmon, Givvin, Kazemi, Saxe MacGyver (as cited in Dramanu, 2012) indicated that effective learning environment was the most effective indicator of students academic motivation and was linked to students learning goal orientation, help seeking risk-taking behaviour and positive emotions. Tucker, Zayers, Herman, Reinke, Tryilles, Carraway, Wallack & Ivery (as cited in Dramanu,2012) identified that course tutor involvement which is made up of expressing concern, interest in distance learners and caring was the most significant and unique predictor of distance learners classroom learning at all levels of education.

Perceived facilitator affective practices, including caring, respect, valuing and listening are prominently associated with learners sense of belonging in tertiary institutions (Poeser, Midgley & Urdan as cited in Dramanu, 2012). Belongingness is seen to be a highly critical human need stimulating motivation for learning. Most educational researchers agreed that the need for belonging is one of the first requirements to ensure individuals effective functioning within the learning environment (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Connell & Wellborn, 1991; Goodenow, 1992; Finn, 1989; Osterman, as cited in Bakari Dramanu 2012). Distance learners sense of belonging includes the “sense of being accepted, valued included in learning activities encouraged and seen as active members in the learning environment (Goodenow,1992, p. 25). Finn (as cited in Gonul-Sakiz, 2007) indicated that greater perceived sense of belonging may decrease at risk students alienation from school and may negatively be linked to students decision to drop out of school. Researches often bring to light that learners who experience a sense of belonging in the learning environment are more motivated, more engaged in the learning activities, dedicated

to school, increased self confidence in their academic work and improvement in their academic performance (Osterman, 2000).

Available studies indicate that learners who feel they are part of a rich learning environment report of greater interest high self-esteem, greater self-confidence, happiness, joy and enthusiasm in learning activities, whereas those who feel rejected and dejected report high anxiety, mood swings, boredom, frustration, low self-esteem, low self-confidence, during learning and this affects academic performance (Furrer & Skinner, as cited in Dramanu, 2012).

Further studies affirm that the feeling of belonging shows the relationship between the learning environment, for instance the classroom goal structure and teacher-student relationship and students self-efficacy beliefs (Eccles & Sameroff, 2000).

Osterman (2000) reviewed literature extensively on feeling of belonging and it came to light that satisfaction of the need to belong in the learning environment is essentially linked with academic and social behaviours, motives and attitudes, goals and values, emotional functions, development of fundamental psychological processes (for instance intrinsic motivation, self-regulation, internalization and autonomy) and psychological results such as self-esteem, self-efficacy and self-concept.

Goodenow (1992) conducted a study into the relationship between the sense of school membership, expectancy of success, effort and value of university students, the results indicated that sense of school membership was essentially linked with expected academic successes and educational value. Goodenow again suggested that motivation might have a relationship between sense of school memberships and academic success and performance.

In another study, Goodenow (1992) investigated the link between learners sense of academic motivation, effort and success. The results indicated that being part of a learning environment and enjoying support from course tutors was a powerful and essential indicator of learners educational values and expectancies to excel. Another revelation from the study linked with learners efforts and successes was the perception of learners about their course tutors in terms of interest, support and respect. According to existing literature, when course tutors focus on supporting distance learners interests, needs, preferences, personal goals to guide their learning and activity these instructional acts support learner participation by presenting interesting and relevant learning activities, providing needed challenges, highlighting, meaningful goals and supporting learners good classroom behaviour and academic performance. Again when facilitators provide a good instructional atmosphere by communicating clear expectations and framing distance learners learning activity with straight forward directions and guidance, these instructional acts support distance learners participation by keeping them on the learning activity and managing their behaviour (Skinner & Belmont, as cited in Dramanu, 2012). All these instructional and learning activities in the classroom bring about good relationship and interactions between course tutors and distance learners which in the long run enhances academic performance. Distance learners experience learning environments through the relationships with course tutors and this contribute to a dynamic and cordial interactions characterized by regular and consistent patterns (Painta & Stuhlman, 2004). This set of relationships constitute the culture and learning environment for all students. Teacher-student relationships are a joint function of the unique characteristics of students (e.g. their social-cognitive attributions and problem-solving style) and teachers (e.g. their social-emotional

abilities and experiences) and the cultural, norms, values and practices they bring to the relationship and to the learning environment. All these characteristics contribute to the climate of the learning environment.

Earlier researches on learning environment vary in definitional features but asserts that the learning environment influences students social-emotional and academic performances. Positive learning environment has been associated with greater esteem, perceived cognitive competence, internal locus of control, mastery, motivation school satisfaction, academic performance, whereas a poor-learning environment have been linked with poor peer relations, poor academic focus and high levels of aggression. (Ryan & Grolnick, as cited in Dramanu, 2012).

In an intensive review of eight thousand researches on how students learn best, (Walberg, as cited in Adentwi, 2002) asserted that good interaction between teachers and students is very important to students academic performance. Walberg further explained that students who perceived their learning environment as friendly, satisfying, goal directed and challenging tend to learn more and perform excellently. On the other hand, students who perceive students cliques, disorganization, apathy, favouritism and friction learn less and for that matter perform poorly academically. This assertion was supported by Pressley, & McCormick (1995). They asserted that students who find themselves in learning environments that encourage academic improvements use varied approaches to learning, are more open to challenging academic tasks, very positive towards lessons and believe strongly that their academic work would improve if they put in a little effort.

2.2.10 Facilitator Support

A facilitator is an individual with expertise who help a group to analyze issues, learn from experience, and work as a team to draw conclusions. In the

educational sector and other institutions of learning, a facilitator is an instructor who conveys information to students, trainees and evaluate their performance (Dismukes, McDonnel, Kobe & Smith, & Dewey as cited in Akuamoah-Boateng & Boadu, 2013). Dismukes, Mc Donnel, Kobe & Smith, & Dewey as cited in Akuamoah-Boateng & Boadu, 2013) indicated that, facilitators provide a setting for learning that is conducive. Dewey (nd) further stated that, learning is something students do for themselves, so once the facilitator has provided the conditions that stimulate learning, the rest lies with the student. In later writings, Dewey (nd) described facilitators as leaders of group activities, who survey the needs and capacities of individual students and create the conditions that meet these needs Dewey (nd) again stated that facilitators share insights that come from their own experiences without imposing their own views on the leader. In support of Dewey's explanation of a facilitator, Rogers (as cited in Akuamoah-Boateng & Boadu 2013) developed the concept of a facilitator as a catalyst, one who use skilled questioning techniques to help students draw their own conclusions from their personal experiences and create their own prescription for change. Rogers often worked in self-help and group therapy settings: in these settings, Rogers indicated that, the facilitator plays a key role in establishing the initial climate that shapes how the group will function. The facilitator helps elicit and clarify the purposes of the individual members and the group itself. Basically, the facilitator is a flexible resource to be used by the group, a counselor or advisor to the group.

Schwarz (as cited in Vidal, 2001) defined a facilitator as a guide or "discussion leader" for a group. Furthermore Schwarz stated that, the process of facilitation is a way of providing leadership without taking the reigns. A facilitator's job is to get others to assume responsibility and take the lead. He further defined the

term facilitator as a person who is acceptable to all group members, substantively neutral, and has no decision-making authority, helps a group to improve the way it identifies and solves problems and makes decisions. Schwarz again stated that a facilitator is to ensure fruitful group processes whether it is a brainstorming session to acquire new ideas or using some tools to structure a complex situation. Also Schwarz indicated that the role of a facilitator is to ensure that a group works as a constructive collaborative, creative and cohesive unit.

According to Bens (as cited in Akuamoah-Boateng & Boadu, 2013) a facilitator is the “one who contributes structure and process to interactions so groups are able to function effectively and make high-quality decisions. A facilitator is also a helper and enabler whose goal is to support others to achieve exceptional performance. Facilitation according to “like Minded People of Indianapolis (as cited in Akuamoah Boateng & Boadu, 2013) is an art and it encourages those involved in the process to become experts while the lead facilitator guides the discussion. These experts went on further to describe a facilitator as one who:

- leads a discussion but does not dominate it.
- is knowledgeable enough about a topic to able to provide guiding questions.
- is not an answer provider but rather a guide who brings the group to find the answer themselves.
- promotes the concept of “safe space”. Opinions, particularly based on more “sensitive” topics could vary. The facilitator may find that he/she needs to assist group participants in determining their opinions. With this in mind, probing questions become more important.
- asks questions that provides students thinking on topics.

- connects with others and helps them connect with themselves, and meaning begins to emerge.

In support of the experts, Vidal (2001) described a facilitator as a designer, planner, a manager; and an agent of change. Vidal further described a facilitator as a promoter, and makes things easy for students and simplifies issues. The facilitator was further compared to a coach and conductor. As a coach, the facilitator is supposed to know the students very well and guide them to achieve set goals. As a conductor, the facilitator he/she has to conduct students or a group to perform to accepted standard. It is precisely the need for flexibility and the unpredictability of the group processes which make the facilitation task as management (Vidal, 2001). In collaboration, Schwarz (as cited in Vidal, 2001) indicated that the facilitator ensures fruitful group processes be it a brainstorming session for new ideas, or tool to structure a complex situation. The role of the facilitator therefore is to ensure that, the group works as a constructive, collaborative creative and cohesive unit.

Again, Schwarz, indicated that the task of the facilitator is made up of three elements and these are leadership, referee and neutral. The leadership role usually demands the following activities:

- Focus: to provide a focus for the group.
- Stimulate: to encourage constructive debate between the participants.
- Support: to bring out information from introverted participants and to allow new ideas to be submitted.
- Participate: when the group is interacting poorly or is going in the wrong direction, the facilitator must be willing to promote new discussions.
- Team building: to form a cohesive, interactive dynamic and creative group.

The referee role also demands the following activities:

- Regulation: to maintain order of the group discussion discouraging participants from talking at the same time or dominating the floor.
- Protect participants: to ensure that all contributions to the discussion are treated equally and that no-one is rebuffed for their input.
- Deal with conflicts; to identify conflicts and to create space for a fruitful discussion.

Finally, the neutral task of the facilitator demands the following activities:

- Pramatic: to take detached look at the discussion viewing each issue on its merit.
- Encourage feedback: to promote discussion of each selected issue, by all members of the group.
- Impartial: to be neutral to the discussion, this frees the facilitator to focus on the process rather than the content of the discussion and hence asking pertinent and stimulating questions.

In conclusion, the facilitator is said to be an individual, who has the job of empowering students to learn in an experiential group. An experiential group is one in which learning takes place through an active and consciously involvement of the student. In all situations of learning a facilitator is appointed to help solve problems.

2.2.11 Facilitator Support and Academic Performance of Students

Studies have also revealed that teacher-student relationship as an important process feature contribute to quality learning environment (National Institute of Child Health & Human Development (NICHD), Early Child Care Research Network (ECCRN), 2003; Pianta, Hosnre & Stuhlman, 2003). This finding collaborates with

that of (Patrick, Ryan & Kaplan, 2007) that students who see their teachers as caring and responsive are more likely to see themselves as academically capable, and for that matter set higher academic aims for themselves.

Positive relationship between teachers and students has been found to provide a very critical development resource for students. This happens because students are very likely to seek for help when the need arises and so develop a variety of competencies, when they feel academically and emotionally supported by teachers (Crosnoe, Johnson, & Elder, 2004; Pianta, Hosnre, Stuhlman, 2003).

OldFather and McLaughlin (1993) established a longitudinal study which investigated into students motivation identified that efforts of teachers in the learning environment should encourage students to discover passion for academic work, discover what they care about, create their own approaches to learning and above all experience meaningful links between self identity (who they are) and their capabilities and abilities. They explained further that, when students are taught in this direction, they always feel eager and anxious to learn because they firmly believe that each of them possesses:

- passions to be awakened
- knowledge to be activated and connected
- curiosity to be aroused, sustained and released
- understanding to be tapped and nurtured, and
- special potentialities and abilities to be unveiled (Oldfather & McLaughlin, 1993, p. 1-25).

Students see their teachers as the main source of support, guidance and motivation. Roffin (as cited in Gonul-Sakiz, 2007). Studies by some researchers identified a positive association between perceptions of teachers support and students motivation

beliefs. For instance, when students see their teachers as being supportive they report very good levels of interest and enjoy their school work and exhibit good academic performance. (Flammery, Blankmeyer, Flammery & Vazsonyi, 2002; Fraser & Fisher as cited in Patrick & Ryan, 2003)

Studies available indicate that teachers who offer support to students exhibit caring behaviours, reinforce effort of students, show concern for students welfare, express, fair and firm attitudes and show genuine interest in students, value their ideas, set achievable expectations, exhibit the attitude of listening, show respect and are always ready to respond to students problems and are enthusiastic (Adalsteinsdottir, 2004).

The importance of a caring relationship between teachers and students and the effect of caring interactions on students academic performance and motivational behaviours in a learning environment was assessed in an educational review by Weinstein (2006). Available literature on teacher support revealed that a cordial relationship between teacher and student can affect performance on other educational outcomes.

This assertion is supported by Zehm and Kottler (1993) who explained that students work seriously on their academic work to achieve better results when they see that their teachers are willing to help them to learn. They went on further to say that teachers with such ambition enquire about students abilities and problems and offer the needed motivational strategies and support to be self-directed and take care of their learning.

Encouragement has been found to be a powerful teacher support which enhances positive academic performance. Apart from its influence in improving students academic performance, teacher encouragement (trust students ability and

shows that the students is liked and appreciated even under failure circumstances) plays a major role in establishing a positive student teacher relationship at all levels of learning (Boser & Poppen as cited in Gonul-Sakiz, 2007). This assertion is supported by the fact that, a learning environment where students are exposed to autonomy-supportive teacher behaviours are intrinsically motivated to learn. On the other hand, when students are exposed to controlling teacher behaviours they are not motivated intrinsically to learn. Self Determination Theory SDT (Deci & Ryan, 2002) proposed that education contexts influence the extent to which psychological needs for autonomy competence and relatedness are met.

Hence, teachers who listen attentively to their students and appreciate their line of thinking, offer meaningful reasons for learning tasks, gives them the opportunity to exercise their academic right strengthen their intrinsic motivation for learning. On the other hand, teachers who always direct or give commands, ready to offer solutions before students have time to reflect on issues, or motivate students by putting pressure on them (e.g. by using threats, criticism and deadlines) undermine students need for autonomy and this minimizes their intrinsic motivation for learning (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Research studies by Forsback, Yanowitz & Fiala, (2002) indicated that there is a relationship between teacher support and African-American students academic performance. Their findings support the fact that positive student-teacher relationships increased higher academic performance among African-American students. The importance of teacher support is again exhibited in the finding of other significant researchers who found out that low teacher expectation and negative student-teacher relations can lead to poor academic performance in schools (Bowen & Bowen, 1998).

Forsbach, Yanowitz, Fiala (2002) in a study interviewed African-American students to identify factors that promoted or inhibited their academic performance. The respondents identified teacher support as secondary. Majority of the respondents noted that teachers attitude towards their students and their readiness to help and spend enough time with them who needed help could have an impact on the performance of African-American students.

In various quantitative studies, Rosenfield, Richman and Bowen (2000) realized that, students who enjoyed the support of teachers, parents and colleagues earned better grades in their school work. Rosenfield, Richman and Bowen (2000) noted that although higher teacher support is seen to be a necessary condition, for positive school behaviour and academic outcomes, it is not enough condition (p. 219) to affirm a maximum consensus among researchers that teacher support influence academic performance.

Furthermore, current studies that delved into within group, group differences among African-American students had inconsistent results about the influence of teacher support on academic performance. Sameroff and Eccles (2002) found out that students who had lower scores (this was based on reports from their mothers, about their level of education, emotional state, mental status, family size and history of family stress during the previous years) were less likely to report on teacher support.

In another study on teacher support, Fisher (2000) found out that females reported having relied on teacher support than males. Sanders and Herting (2000) studied African American students and realized females reported greater teacher support than their male counterparts; however teacher support had a significant influence on the behaviour of male students in school. Saunders and Herting again

identified that teacher support greatly predicted achievement philosophy (student perception of the significance of school and academic performance for future success) for both male and female students.

These inconsistencies in research findings and the opinion of Rosenfield, Richman and Bowen (2000) that even though perceived high teacher support seemed to be a necessary condition for positive school behaviour and learning outcomes, it is not enough condition to assert that there is a firm consensus by researchers on the influence of teacher support on students academic performance. Therefore there is the need for extensive studies to be conducted on the topic. Also, though some studies have been done on the influence of learning environment and teacher support on the academic performance of students in the western world very little studies or none has been conducted in Ghana to find out the influence of learning environment and facilitator support on the academic performance of distance learners on the University of Cape Coast, Centre for Continuing Education, distance education programme and other distance learners in Ghana. Furthermore, there is very little literature or none at all on the learning environment and the relationship between facilitator support and academic performance of distance learners in Ghana. Hence, this study intends to contribute to the literature on the influence of learning environment and facilitator support on academic performance of distance learners on the University of Cape Coast, Centre for Continuing Education distance education programmes and all distance learners in Ghana.

2.2.12 Peer Support

In every learning environment, students form relationships with colleagues/peers to promote academic success.

Peer group as a small group of similar age, same ambition and fairly close friends who share similar activities. In general, peer group provide a sense of security, acceptance and help members to build a sense of identity. In support Slavin (2006) also defined peer group as a group of people who are equal in age or status, share same ideas interact and help each other to establish self identity. He went on further to indicate that peers relate to assert themselves, present their personal views and argue on different views.

In similar direction Austin (as cited in Dramanu, 2012) sees a peer group as a “collection of individuals with whom the individual identifies as affiliates and from whom the individual seeks acceptance or approval”. Austin presents two important elements in the definition, these are collection and acceptance. He indicated the peers are a group of people with whom an individual spends time and feels a sense of connection. Gibson, Gandara and Koyama (2004:4) underscore this aspect of Austin’s definition by arguing that participate in particular types of behavior of behaviours and activities”. Maslow’s (2005) hierarchy of needs, indicates that seeking acceptance from others is among the most essential need for survival and happiness. Maslow stressed that individuals seek to fulfill increasingly complex set of needs. This fulfills the basic physiological needs such as shelter, food and personal safety, the next issue is to secure love and acceptance. For young adults, this most of the time takes the form of seeking acceptance from peers. Tierney and Colyar (2005) asserted that identifying with and seeking acceptance from peers go hand in hand. They further indicated that “affiliation and acceptance are exclusively interrelated”, each generates the other (p. 51). It does not necessarily mean that because students are members of their institution’s student body, they identify with their institutions or belong to any peer group. Being a member of a peer group

explains that a student feels a sense of identification with his/her peers (Tieney & Colyar, 2005). Being accepted by one's peers leads to improved social relationship. Improved peer social relationship according to Ganlund cited in Agba, Iko, & Noah (2010:180) enhances the freeing of students from emotional tension, helps to concentrate on tasks assigned, increases students motivation to learn and clarified and reinforces classroom learning experiences. Lorber cited in Agba, Iko & Noah (2010) asserted that students who are not socially accepted by their peers tend to exhibit undesirable characteristics such as showing off, attention seeking, nervousness, emotional instability and restlessness.

Peer groups are networks of interacting individuals who spend time together and share activities. The groups usually range in size from three to more than ten individuals which mostly is made up of same sex members. The peer group is made up of two types, the clique and the crowd. Whereas the clique is relatively smaller, the crowd is reputation based a collective of similarly stereotyped individuals who are defined by primary attitudes or activities their members share (Brown, 2004).

Unlike dyadic social relationship the peer group represents a social context that is developed through the collective functioning of members based on group norms and values. Specifically, interactions between peer groups provide extensive opportunities for students to learn from others. Social connections and networks that students establish and maintain with peers may constitute a major source of social and academic support for students to cope with emotional stress, academic and adjustment difficulties. During social interactions, constant peer evaluations and reactions may regulate and direct students behaviours and thus, affect developmental processes and pathways (Chan and Kasper, in press).

2.2.13 Peer Support and Academic Performance of Students

The life of every human being is spent in an interwoven relationship with others in the society. This relationship is complex in nature. As children grow up, they look up to adults or parents for support in order to relate with others in this complex society. As they move to the puberty stage of development, support, from parents and other adults change. That is, the opinions and suggestions of parents and other adults reduce in value and these young adults turn to their peers and age mates for acceptance. Pressure from these peers become very important in all spheres of their lives, from social situations to academic performance.

In the learning environment, distance learners especially form relationships with peers that promote academic success because of their peculiar situation (that is, not meeting every day for lectures, to interact and share ideas concerning what was taught). However, since distance learners share almost similar characteristics with other students on the regular programmes, some might join peer groups that do not encourage academic work. Castrogiovanni (2002) defined peer group as a small group of people who share similar age, same ambition, and fairly close friends who share similar activities. In general, peer group provide a sense of security, acceptance and help members to build a sense of identity. Slavin (2006) also defined peer group as a group of people who are equal in age or status, share same ideals, interact and help each other to establish self identity. He went on further to indicate that peers relate to assert themselves, present their personal views and argue on different of views.

A peer group as a “collection of individuals with whom the individual identifies and affiliates and from whom the individual seeks acceptance or approval”. These are two important elements in the definition, these are collection and acceptance. It is indicated that peers are a group of people with whom an

individual spends time and feels a sense of connection. Gibson, Gandara and Koyama (2004:4) underscore this aspect of definition by arguing that, peers “participate in particular types of behaviours and activities”. According to Maslow’s (2005) hierarchy of needs, seeking acceptance from others is among the most essential needs for survival and happiness. Maslow stressed that individuals seek to fulfill increasingly complex set of needs. Immediately an individual fulfills the basic physiological needs such as shelter, food and personal safety, the next issue is to secure love and acceptance. For young adults, this most of the time takes the form of seeking acceptance from peers. Tierney & Colyar (2005) asserted that identifying with and seeking acceptance from peers go hand in hand. They further indicated that “affiliation and acceptance are exclusively interrelated”, each generates the other (p. 51). It does not necessarily mean that because students are members of their institution’s student body, they identify with their institutions or belong to any peer group. Being a member of a peer group explains that a student feels a sense of identification with his/her peers. Researchers have continued to discuss the association between social interaction and social support among peers in institutions of learning and academic performance for years. Very detailed literature explains that an individual’s peer group influences social and academic success and these influences start at the beginning of formal education. Parents, teachers and important others with whom distance learners and their peers interact closely with, also influence their motivation and behaviour and these behaviours include approaches to learning and academic successes. However, because of the quantum of time they spend with their peers each day, the influence on an individual can be substantial. Social support is the experience of being valued, respected, cared about, and loved by others who have a close link with an individual’s life, it may come

from various areas such as family members, friends, teachers or the social group he/she is a member. In the learning environment of the distance learner, social support from peers can be in the form of tangible assistance, which may include appraisal of different situations, effective coping strategies, academic support and emotional support (Dzulkifli & Yasin, 2009). It has been realized that being a member of a peer group in the classroom environment offers the distance learner the opportunity to learn a lot of skills, such as interacting with group members, how to resolve conflicts and build trust in others. Without a positive and rich peer group interaction grievous social and academic problems may develop.

Literature on social support indicates that close relationship with peers promote competence in a number of situations including academic motivation and academic performance in the learning environment of distance learners (Connell & Wellborn; Cotterel; Stiller & Lynch as cited in Clayton, 2008). Also there is enough evidence to support the assertion that, the link between peer dimension, engagement and academic performance is greatly influenced by behaviour of close friends. Epstein (1983) investigated the relationship between attitudes of close friends towards achievement and academic performance over a period of one year, it came out that, the achievement of students declined or improved depending on the friends achievement and attitude towards academic work.

This finding of Epstein was collaborated with the findings of Powers, Bowen and Rose (2005) who in a research found out that peer acceptance and behaviour of friends have effects on one or more positive outcomes that met or exceeded minimum standard. Behaviour of friends was seen to be positively associated with three dimensions of school attitudes and behaviour (these are, school engagement, (p. 11), avoidance of trouble (p. 19) and academic performance (p. 101). Further

studies have established a significant link between relations with peers and academic performance. Students who are not accepted by their mates tend to have low grades (Guldmond as cited in Lubbers, Van Der Werf, Snijders, Creemers, & Kuyper, 2006; Wentzel 2003; Zettergren 2003; Wigfield, Eccles, & Rodriguez, 1998), score low on achievement tests (Buhs, Ladd & Herald, 2006; Diehl, Lemerise, Caverley, Ramsey & Roberts, 1998) low number graduate (Risi, Gerhardstein & Kistner, 2003, and a very high dropout rate. Making friends at institution of learning enhances involvement and engagement in learning activities.

Connell and Wellborn (1991) saw the important contribution of social wellbeing in motivating academic performance. They asserted that human beings have fundamental needs for structure, autonomy and relatedness, and the extent to which these needs can be fulfilled within a specific context will predict their engagement in that context and eventually their academic performance. In the context of education, the model indicated that interpersonal relations within the learning environment (with teachers and peers), offers students a varying degree of structure, autonomy support and relatedness. This self-system process can be synthesized to be a catalyst for engagement versus dissatisfaction towards learning which is considered as the main motivational influence on student's academic performance. Connell and Wellborn (1991) used their model within various learning situations, and it showed that relatedness with classmates was linked with students engagement which in turn, is related to academic performance. However, no inclusion was made about peer relations in their analysis, so it is not clear whether these produced relatedness and for that matter indirectly associated with engagement and academic performance.

Again, in Connell and Wellborn's model, student engagement in academic work plays a mediating role. Connell and Wellborn (1991) identified three dimensions of students engagement as, behavioural emotional and cognitive. Fredricks, Blumfeld and Paris (2004) asserted that behavioural engagement pertains to involvement in learning positive conduct and participation learning related activities. Research results show that peer relations are linked with some aspects of behavioural engagements such as truancy, delinquency, lying (Kupersmidt as cited in Lubbers, Van Der Werf, Snijders, Creemers, & Kuyper, 2006), socially approved behaviour and academic effort (Wentzel, 2003). Emotional engagement on the other hand, is student's affective reactions to the university, classroom and the teacher/lecturer. Parts of emotion engagement that shows to be related to peer relations are attachment in the learning environment (Moody & White, 2003) satisfaction (Wentzel & Asher as cited in Lubbers, Van Der Werf, Snijders, Creemers, & Kuyper, 2006) and achievement motivation (Kindermann; Wentzel & Asher, as cited in Lubbers, Van Der Werf, Snijders, Creemers, & Kuyper, 2006; Wigfield, Eccles & Rodriguez, 1998). Cognitive engagement focuses on psychological investment in learning and self-regulation. For instance, peer relations is seen to have a link with self-regulated learning (Wentzel, Asher cited in Lubbers, Van Der Werf, Snijders, Creemers & Kuyper, 2006). Ryan (2000) found that peer relations was influential regarding changes in students intrinsic value for school as well as achievement. It was realized that interacting with friends who have a positive affect toward academic work enhanced individuals own satisfaction academic work, on the other hand interacting with friends who have a negative affect toward academic work decreased academic interest (Ryan, 2000).

Available literature has shown ways socializing experiences and social encounter in schools are connected with students motivation and academic performance. Academic outcome, student's perception of academic self-efficacy and competence is based on what they learn by watching and interacting with teachers and peers (Butler, 1993; Schunk, Hansen & Cox as cited in Wentzel & Wigfield, 1998). Direct communication of educational goals, values and expectations on the part of peers has been realized, can influence educational goals, values and expectations of students (Eccles, 1993; Juvonen, 1996; Weinstein, 1989). Collaborating this assertion, Diaz (2003) indicated that peer influence on an individual's development occur by similar mechanisms as those used by older people; reinforcement, modeling and direct teaching and skills. Hence, distance learners who associate with peers who transmit the values of education and achievement to them are very likely to imitate them. Students who work closely with their peers have been seen to have enormous academic and social benefits. In terms of academic benefits, peers-assisted strategies have been seen by Slavin (2006:290) to have substantial positive effects on the achievements of students. This finding by Slavin is supported by the observation of Harris, Rosenthal & Snodgrass (1986) that when taught by peer teachers or classmates their academic performance was enhanced. This is because the interaction is associated with a high amount of praise, warmth, no interruption during the lesson, positive feedback is offered and the understanding of what was taught is good because both the peer-teacher and the colleagues operate on the same level. Researchers who investigated within group variations among African-American students came out with results that indicated that peer-support correlated better with educational outcomes (Cooper & Datnew, 2000; Forsbach, Yanowitz & Fiala, 2002; Laguna 2004).

Scholars such as Cooper and Datmnow (2000); Forsbach, Yanowitz, & Fiala, (2002); offered evidence that, peer support is very beneficial to high achieving African-American students. In their research study of African-American students (n=31) who attended various institutions in Baltimore, realized that opportunities cultivate and maintain peer relationships with African-American students appeared to influence their academic performance. Seventy-two percent (72%) of the students investigated indicated that peer relationship in the learning environment was an essential factor in their academic success. The researchers again realized that African-American peer networks in institutions of higher learning worked perfectly to boost the academic performance of students. In a qualitative study of high achieving male students, accepted the finding of Meyerhoff Scholars Programme which indicated that most of the students interviewed stressed the importance of positive peer influence on their academic work. The researchers also, identified that students formed close links with other high achieving students who were African-American and this enhanced their academic performance.

In the academic arena, peer support among students has been studied frequently in relation to academic adjustment and academic achievement. Wentzel (1994) investigated the relative effect of peer support as well as other environmental factors on the academic performance of students from immigrant families (most from Asian Countries), and found that peer support and achievement had no independent effect on academic achievement. In contrast, other researchers have results of negative relation between peer support and academic achievement (Cauce, 1986). For instance, Cauce, found a positive relationship between informal peer support and school absenteeism as well as negative relationship between peer support and grade point average. However, it was found that peer support is

positively related to achievement through their sample of African-American Latino and European American students.

Various evidence indicates that the relationship between peer support and academic achievement related outcomes is more social in nature. Wentzel (1994) found out that academic support from peers was positively related to the pursuit of academic pro-social goals, as well as effects to achieve academic goals. Hence, students in this study who had support from their peers exhibited socially responsible behaviour in the learning environment. Accepted social behaviour has been seen as an essential factor in peer acceptance which in turn is related to academic achievement.

In a research conducted by Newton & Mwisukha (2009) it was found that there was a statistically significant relationship between peer group attitude towards scores and students academic performance. This showed that students who were positively influenced by their peers obtained high levels of academic performance, while those who were influenced negatively by their peers achieved low academic scores. These findings collaborated with others found in many related researches. The findings Rosenthal & Fieldman (1991) asserted that there was a positive significant relationship between peer group influence and students academic performance. However, the findings were different from that of Steinberg and Levine (1992) and Kirk (2000). They asserted that, peer influence which is negative could have a negative effect on an individual's academic performance. Newton and Mwisukha (2009) also identified a positive and very significant relationship between selected peer group activity scale score and students academic achievement score. The selected peer group activity was made up of academic and non-academic activities. Their results indicated that students from peer groups that engaged

actively in academic activities like course work discussion achieved high academic results. On the other hand, those whose peer groups indulged in non-academic activities like sports invariably scored less in their course work. The findings of Newton and Mwisukha (2009) is in line with the finding of Hansen and Ginsburgh (1988) that the involvement of peers in extra reading of learning modules doing assignments and having discussions on course content, made individual students obtain high scores in their academic work. The findings that peer support is correlated with positive academic achievement outcomes was not confirmed in Fisher's (2000) study of urban college students. Fisher (2000) established that correlation between peer support and academic achievement was low and not significant, however, the correlation between the support scales that is teachers and peers used in the research were strong.

In studies on the achievement of African-American students, some researchers generally hold the assumption that, peers exert a negative influence on each others educational outcomes (Hill, 1999). This perception has been bolstered by the ethnographic research of Fordham and Ogbu, (as cited in Clayton, 2008) who identified that African-American students who decided to become academically successful were rejected by their African-American classmates. Fordham and Ogbu indicated that peer influence is one of the major social factors that contribute to the problem of under achievement among African-American students. Although the thesis of Fordham and Ogbu has generated a great deal of attention from the public, it has not found conclusive support in the empirical literature (Hill, Perry, Dormbusch & Brown, & Wilson et al as cited in Clayton, 2008).

Current studies on peer influence as it relate to academic performance especially of African-Americans has offered a plausible, but incomplete picture of

the role of peer group. However, there is evidence to support both positive and negative interactions among students and their peers, in general, researchers focused mainly on the negative side of peers interaction when investigating African-American students. Depending on this a lot of scholars Cauce, (1986), Samenoff, & Eccles, (2002) argue that more knowledge is to be gained on the relationship between peer support and academic performance of African-American students. Not only is there lack of information on peers who offer support, for instance their ethnic orientation, also little is known about the differences that exist with regard to the types of peer support that African-American students receive. Since most of the studies were conducted among African-American students, there is the need for more studies in the area especially in Ghana that will help researchers to understand better how peer support effects may differ in various geographical locations.

2.2.14 Academic Counselling Services

Distance learners as well as conventional students require the services of an academic counsellor to make wise decisions, adequate plans and utilize their skills to the maximum (Egbochuku, 2008). She further explained that guidance and counseling are services given to individuals based upon the needs of each individual, an understanding of his or her immediate environment, the influence the environmental factors of the individual and the unique features of each school. Guidance and counselling services are designed to help each individual adjust to his or her environment develop the ability to set realistic goals for himself or herself and improve his or her academic performance.

According to Gururani (2006) as cited in Mehmood, Rashid & Azeem 2011), guidance is commonly understood as leadership, instruction or direction. He further explained counseling as a psychological process of helping an individual to achieve

his or her self-direction, self-understanding and mental balance necessary to make the minimum adjustment to the school, home and society. Bhatnagar and Gupta (as cited in Mehmood, Rashid & Azeem, 2011) view guidance as a process of helping individuals to find solution to their problems. They further indicated that guidance and counselling are an integral part of education a continuous service, both generalized and specialized service, for the 'whole' individual and is not confined only to some specific aspect of his or her personality. Guidance and counselling has been conceptualized as a programme of activities which has provided the gateway to the existing numerous problems in our present age of complex scientific and technological development (Okobiah & Okorodudu, 2004). Nwachukwu (2007) also indicated that guidance consists of information services, placement services appraisal services vocational services, counselling services, evaluation, follow-up consultancy and research services. As a vital component of any type and level of education, the absence of and non utilization of these services in the present day educational system have led to the unprecedented rise in the crime wave, violence among students, cultism, wrong career choice and wrong subject combination among other issues.

Egbochukwu (2008) stated that guidance and counselling is a term coined by Truman, Kelly & Makinde (1998) to mean the provision of assistance to students, in their choices and adjustment to the curriculum and school life in general. Educational guidance is therefore, essential in the counselling service. Guiding young people to pursue the right type of education is necessary while ensuring that the right balance is kept in order to meet human resources needs of a nation. Counselling sessions are of two types, individual and group counselling. Individual counselling sessions involve only one person with peculiar problems and the group

counselling session is made up of two or more students with almost the same problems.

Group counselling, is an effective intervention for treating students and it is more cost and time effective than individual counselling. In another development, Mapfumo (2001) defined guidance as the provision of information to groups or individuals with common problems so that those individuals can reach informed choices. He further indicated that, counselling in the context of distance learning systems means “the advice, help and support given to students to enable them to make satisfactory progress in the system”. Similarly, Anagbogu (as cited in Essuman, Forde & Asamoah (2013) explained counselling as “a process by which a troubled person is helped to feel and behave in a more personally satisfying manner through interaction with a counsellor. The counsellor in this situation provides information and reaction which stimulates the counsellee to develop behaviours which enable him/her to deal more effectively with is environment. In Anagbogu’s definition, he made it clear that counselling is a process that is, it is a continuous event; and it involves two people the counsellor and the counsellee. Anagbogu, further stated that:

- The counsellor provides information and reactions to what the counselee says and feels about his problem.
- The counsellor’s behavior helps the counselee to examine his problem ore closely. This eventually enables the counselee find ways to solving his problem.

Basically, counselling as a concept deals with solution of human problems, assistance in the choice of subjects and occupation, encouragement and giving of information (Koomson, Brown & Anyagre, 2010) in collaboration, Thompson &

Poppen (as cited in Koomson, Brown & Anyagre 2010) explained counselling as a person to person relationship in which one person helps another to solve a problem.

They further identified three key issues in the definition as follows:

- It is an interaction that occurs between two individuals, these are the counsellor and the counselee;
- It takes place in a professional setting; and it is started by a person who needs help and maintained by the counsellor as a means of facilitating positive change in the behavior of the counsellee. Based on the Thompson & Poppen's definition of counselling services, Koomson, Brown & Anyagre (2010) expatiated further that counselling services are designed to help an individual to know his capabilities, achievement, interests and mode of adjustments to what new decisions he/she has to make. Koomson, Brown & Anyagre further underpinned that counselling services are concerned with the feelings, attitudes and emotions of an individual himself/herself and the situation facing him/her.

2.2.15 Counselling Services and Academic Performance

The onset of technology and its indiscriminate use by everybody especially students at all levels of education has made the world a complex society. To cope with the use of these technologies the need for organised guidance and counselling services has become more imperative. Counselling plays a major role in the day to day activities of all human beings and because of this every individual needs the services of a counsellor to move on with life. This include the distance learner who stays at home to grapple with social problems, family problems, problems at the work place and apart from these has to find adequate time for his or her academic work. Distance learners and all students on the conventional programmes of

education require the services of a guidance counsellor to be able to make wise decisions, adequate plans and utilize their skills to the maximum (Egbochukwu, 2008). She went on to explain that guidance and counselling are programmes of services given to individuals based upon the needs of each individual, an understanding of his or her immediate environment, the influence of environmental factors of the individual and the unique features of each school. Guidance and counselling services are designed to help each individual adjust in his or her environment, develop the ability to set realistic goals for himself or herself, and improve his or her academic performance. According to Gururani (as cited in Mehmood, Rashid & Azeem 2011), Guidance is commonly understood as leadership, instruction or direction. He went on to explain counselling as a psychological process of helping an individual to achieve his or her self-direction, self-understanding and mental balance necessary to make the maximum adjustment to the school, home and society. Bhatnagar & Gupta (as cited in Mehmood, Rashid & Azeem, 2011) view guidance as a process of helping individuals to find solution to their problems. They further said that guidance and counselling are an integral part of education, a continuous service, both generalized and specialised service, for the “whole” individual and is not confined only to some specific aspect of his or her personality. Guidance and counselling has been conceptualized as a programme of activities which has provided the gateway to the existing numerous problems in our present age of complex scientific and technological development.

In Pakistan where the literacy level is falling below the desired level, and dropout ratio is alarming, an optimistic scenario could be arisen by applying guidance and counselling techniques to improve the academic performance of students (Mehmood, Rashid & Azeem, 2011). Olayinka (1996) & Yahaya (2003)

assert that the passing of examination, securing of certificate either for admission into higher institutions of learning or secure good jobs is the main goal of education to many people and not the acquisition of knowledge and skills through studying. Many students perform poorly because they lack the right attitude to study and do not have the right orientation from home and the society.

Nwachukwu (2007) also indicated that guidance consists of information services, placement services, appraisal services, vocational services, counselling services, evaluation, follow-up consultancy and research services. As a vital component of any type and level of education, the absence of non utilization of these services in the present day school system has led to the unprecedented rise in the crime wave, violence among students, cultism, wrong career choice and wrong subject combination among other issues. According to Braddock (2001) the aim of guidance and counselling services for students are to:

- improve academic achievement
- foster positive attitude towards school learning and work
- increase acquisition and application of conflict resolution skills
- decrease dropout rate
- develop good approaches to learning.

According to Egbochukwu (2008) educational guidance and counselling is a term coined by Truman Kelley in 1914 (Makinde, 1988) to mean the provision of assistance to students in their choices, and adjustment to the curriculum and school life in general.

Educational guidance is therefore, essential in the counselling service. Guiding young people to pursue the right type of education is necessary while ensuring that the right balance is kept in order to meet the human resources needs of

a nation. Secondary school, college, university students as well as distance learners need valid and useable information that relate to their developmental and experience levels concerning all types of present and future educational opportunities and requirements and problems of students life. She went on to outline the role of the counsellor in the educational system as to help students to:

- Understand appropriate combination of school subjects or courses. With the distance learner the counsellor need to assist them to choose their major and elective subjects and to explain the prospects of these subjects.
- Assist students in developing realistic plans for the future.
- Assist students in developing realistic plans for the future. In this way students can benefit from their education (Egbochukwu, 2008).

Mukherjee (2002) also indicated that an important role of the counsellor in the school is to guide underachievers to realize their potentials in academic achievements. He said the counsellor is also concerned with those cases of “mobility pessimism” where students are pushed to achieve something beyond their capabilities to make up for their parents having missed these opportunities in their lives.

The role of the counsellor of distance learners is varied, complex, enormous and cuts across many dimensions of life, that is from academic to social, financial, marital and so on. For instance, most of them have the problem of how to learn, the type of approach to learning to use, how to manage time effectively for good academic performance and how to combine their tight schedules at the work place with their academic work. In order to solve these problems, the distance learner needs an experienced person to help him or her.

The study centres of the distance learners have many functions, and the learner returning home after a face to face session may well best remember a particular discussion or an excellent video clip he or she had watched. It is the study centre, however, that the learner has the best opportunities for counselling of all kinds, as there is access to advice from subject specialists, help with choice of approaches to learning, information about choice of courses, and assistance with non-academic problems.

The environment of the study centre, the resources available and the way in which the contact programmes is organised all contribute to providing opportunities for counselling to take place formally informally and naturally (Module of Indira Gandhi National Open University, 2001, p. 68).

Counselling sessions at the study centres and all counselling sessions are of two types, individual and group counselling. Individual counselling sessions involve only one person with peculiar problems and the group counselling session is made up of two or more students with almost the same problems. In the group counselling sessions students help each other in the solution of problems. Guidance and Counselling sessions in schools have been perceived to help students overcome problems which usually militate against students good academic performance. Once the students are helped to adjust to academic work, emotional and social problems discipline will improve which in turn will enhance good academic performance. A study conducted using 720 Kenyan secondary school students and counsellors to determine the relationship between counselling programmes and academic performance found that the guidance and counselling programmes had positive impact on students' academic performance and the impact of the guidance and

counselling programmes on academic performance is not gender influenced (Nkatha as cited in Essuman, Forde & Asamoah, 2013).

In another research by Brown (2004) to ascertain the relationship between a good school climate and academic performance, the results showed that academic work was improved. In a counselling session with students who worked hard to improve their academic achievement, tried to extend support and assistance to others who were striving to achieve, exert energy to achieve even if the result were not extraordinarily were encouraged by the counsellor (Brown, 2004).

Other interventions school counsellors used to help to improve the academic performance of students include approaches-to-learning groups (students who use the same approaches to learning), time management training, classroom guidance units aimed at improving skills for writing quizzes and achievement motivation groups. School counselors, according to Brown (2004), also established peer and volunteer tutoring programmes, assignment support networks and refusal skills groups. Refusal skills groups are aimed at helping students resist the pressure often applied by low achieving students on achievements to minimize their academic achievement. All these interventions according to Brown (2004) improve academic performance, of students.

Group counseling, according to Bemak, Chung, Smoskey-Sabdo (2005) is an effective intervention for treating students and it is more cost and time effective than individual counselling. Within schools, small group counselling is the most effective means to provide counselling and help students learn appropriate developmental skills (White & Rayle, 2007). Group counselling has been shown to increase achievement scores and improve interpersonal relationships (Bemak, Chung & Siroskey-Sabdo 2005). Most students spend much of their time in groups

at school, have social events or work, groups are a familiar setting to promote discussion and problem solving (Bailey & Bradbury-Bailey, 2007). Group counselling provides a safe environment for youths to talk about common difficulties (Bailey & Bradbury-Bailey, 2007) most students have benefited from peer groups, reference groups for assessing personal, social and academic achievement.

The Student Success Skills (SSS) programme was structured for counsellors to help students to gain essential academic and social skills (Webb & Brigson, 2007). The three main skills sets targeted in the SSS group were selected based on thorough reviews of research and include cognitive and meta-cognitive skills (goal setting, progress monitoring and memory skills), social skills (interpersonal, social problem-solving, listening and team-work), and self-management skills (managing attention, motivation and anger) (Webb & Brigman, 2007). Students for the group was based on specific academic social and self management needs identified by teachers and participation was voluntary (Webb & Brigman, 2007). The group consisted of one 45 minutes session each for eight weeks, plus additional first session which included (a) developing a caring, supportive, encouraging group environment, (b) learning skills to help with school work and in relationships and (c) sharing successful application of learned skills (Webb & Brigman, 2007). Outcomes were measured using pre-test and post-test students scores on the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT). Participants were randomly assigned to either treatment or comparison groups. Mathematics scores on the FCAT improved 30 points on average by 86% of SSS participants and FCAT reading scores improved 25 points on average by 78% of the participants (Webb & Brigman, 2007). Efficacy research also indicated that scores increased for group participation

regardless of ethnicity (Webb Brigman, 2007). Research conducted with African American using group counselling revealed that group counselling is effective with African American males, especially when the importance of both group goals and individual accountability are stressed (Bailey&Bradbury-Bailey 2007). Another research using, the School Social Behaviour Scale (SSBS) developed for counsellors by Marrell (1993) to ascertain the impact of group counseling on academic performance, used 1,865 students from 22 different schools in 18 districts in the United States. The ratings were completed by 688 teachers. The sample represented a mixture of urban, suburban, small town and rural communities. The ethnic groups made up of the sample 87.1% Caucasian, 8% African-American, 2.7% Hispanic, 9% Asian-American, 6% Native American and 8% described as “others”. The non-Caucasian made up of the sample was 13% compared to 30% of the general U.S. population. The result revealed positive impact on academic performance.

Whiston and Sexton (1998) also conducted a study to examine the impact of school counsellor led interventions on students academic achievement and school success behaviour. The results revealed that the combined school counsellor intervention of group counselling and classroom guidance were associated with a positive impact on students achievement and behaviour. The fact that the interventions were targeted on specific skills associated with school success and that school counsellors used research based techniques to teach these critical skills were seen as central to the positive outcome of the study. To collaborate these findings, series of studies documenting the impact of school counsellor led interventions is important to support the conclusion that school counsellors can have a substantial positive effect on student performance.

2.3 Motivation

Motivational theorists in educational psychology tried to explain motivation from various dimensions of behaviour. As a theory motivation is used to explain the initiation, direction, intensity and persistence of behavior especially behavior that is goal oriented. In the learning situation, motivation as a concept is used to explain the extent to which students use attention and effort in different pursuits which may or may not be the ones desired by facilitators (Brophy as cited in Koomson, 2008).

According to Aggarwal (2008) motivation is the pivot of all learning activities. He further stated that adequate motivation does not only set in motion the activity which brings about learning, but also sustains and directs it. Aggarwal again explained that, motivation is one of the most important pre-requisites for learning. Slavin (as as cited in Koomson, Brown, Ahiatrogah & Dawson-Brew, 2012) stated that motivation may vary in both intensity and direction. For instance two students may be motivated to play games, but one may be more strongly motivated to do so. On the other hand, another may also be strongly motivated to play video games, while the other would equally be motivated to play football.

In another development, it was indicated that when students are motivated to learn, academic achievement is significantly increased. Motivation towards learning can stem from numerous sources; for example, from external sources such as assessment requirements or the expectations of parents or teachers. Also motivation for learning can also be internal such as the enjoyment of learning and the problem solving in a particular subject area.

Another point is that, motivation is considered to be an element that gingers an individual's involvement in learning. For instance when a student is highly motivated, all his/her efforts and personality are directed towards the achievement of a specific goal thus bringing to bear all his/her resources (Diaz, 2003).

Similarly, Jenkins (2001) indicated that two major issues involving motivation are the attributes of students (that which makes them succeed or makes them to work and learn), and the teachers role in motivating students. Some views of motivation attempt to define how or why a student values a learning opportunity and for students to be adequately motivated, they must be able to expect success. A crucial assumption regarding the nature of the student concern is the level and source of motivation for learning. According to Von Glaserfeld (as cited in Koomson, Brown, Ahiatrogah & Dawson-Brew, 2012) sustaining motivation to learn, is strongly dependent on the student's confidence in his or her potential for learning. These feelings of competence and belief in the potential to solve new problems, are derived from firsthand experience of mastery of problems in the past and are much more powerful than any external acknowledgement and motivation Pravat and Floden (as cited in Koomson, 2008). This links up with Vygotsky's "zone of proximal development" where learners are challenged within close proximity, yet slightly above that current level of development. By experiencing the successful completion of challenging tasks learners, gain confidence and motivation to embark on more complex challenges (Vygotsky as cited in Koomson, Brown, Ahiatrogah & Dawson-Brew, 2012). Vygotsky, went on further to postulate that motivation is an inherent abstract concept that is difficult to measure or identify in any meaningful way. It is possible to observe behavior and from that infer an individual's motivation but it is not possible for an observer to be certain. Motivation is a deeply personal concept.

Bandura (1986) explained motivation as a multidimensional phenomenon index in terms of selection of pursuits from competing alternative intensity of effort and persistence of exertion (p. 158). From the definition it could be explained that

motivation does not only affect what individual's learn but also the intensity and the duration of the learning activities. In his socio-cognitive theory, Bandura (as cited in Bouffard & Couture, 2003) explained that, students motivation is neither an innate concept or a trait of personality but rather a construct that is built out of an individual's learning activities and experiences and that it differs from one situation or context to another. Additionally Sam-Tagoe, (2008) asserted that, motivation involves a constellation of beliefs, perception, values, interest and actions that are closely related. As a result, various approaches to motivation can focus on cognitive behaviours (such as monitoring and strategy use), non-cognitive aspects (such as perceptions, beliefs and attitudes) or both.

Based on Bandura's socio-cognitive theory (as cited in Bouffard & Couture 2003) a number of investigations on the relationship between student's motivation and academic performance, have been conducted it has been highlighted that the concept of motivation is multidimensional and situation construc. In line with this contextual perspective, motivation is based on a variety of elements, whose relevance and strength differs depending on various dimensions. Hence the efficacy of motivational determinants and achievement of individuals may differ based on their culture, the context in which they are called on to act and their personal characteristics (Bouffard & Couture, 2003).

2.3.1 Intrinsic Motivation

Richer and Vallerand (1995) asserted that intrinsic motivation is the doing of an activity for its inherent satisfaction rather than for some consequences. When intrinsically motivated a person is moved to act for the fun or challenge entailed rather than because of external pressures or rewards. In humans, intrinsic motivation is not the only form of motivation, or even of volitional activity, but it is

pervasive and important. From birth onward, human beings, in their healthiest states are active, inquisitive, curious, and playful creatures, displaying a readiness to learn and explore and they do not require extraneous incentives to do so. This natural motivational tendency is a critical element in cognitive, social and physical development because it is through one's inherent interest in novelty, to actively assimilate, and to creatively apply skills not limited to childhood, but a significant feature of human nature that affects performance persistence and well-being across life (Ryan & LaGuardia as cited in Richer & Vallerand, 2001). People are intrinsically motivated for some activities and others are not. Because intrinsic motivation exists in the nexus between a person and a task, some authors have defined intrinsic motivation in terms of the task being interesting while others have defined it in terms of the satisfactions a person gain from intrinsically motivated task engagement. In part, these different definitions derive from the fact that the concept of intrinsic motivation was proposed as a critical reaction to the two behavioural theories that were dominant in empirical psychology as far back as the 1940s to the 1960s. As far back as 1943, Hull asserted that all behaviours are motivated by physiological derives (and their derivates). Intrinsically motivated activities were said to be ones that provided satisfaction of innate psychological needs. Thus researchers explained that basic needs are satisfied by intrinsically motivated behaviours.

Despite the evidence that human beings are liberally endowed with intrinsic motivational tendencies, this propensity appears to be expressed only under specifiable conditions. Research into intrinsic motivation has thus placed much emphasis on these conditions that elicit, sustain and enhance this type of motivation versus those that subdue or diminish it (Richer & Vallerand, 2001).

Self Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, as cited in Renninger, Hidi and Krapp, 2014) is specifically framed in terms of social and environmental factors that facilitate or undermine intrinsic motivation. Thus language reflects the assumption that intrinsic motivation being an inherent organic propensity, is catalyzed (rather than caused) when individuals are in conditions that are conducive toward its expression. Several early studies showed that positive performance feedback enhanced intrinsic motivation (Deci, 1971), whereas negative performance feedback diminished it (Deci, 1971). Others (Vallerand & Reid, 1984) showed that perceived competence mediated these effects, and still others supported the hypothesis that increases in perceived competence must be accompanied by a sense of autonomy in order for the enhanced feelings of competence to result in increased intrinsic motivation (Ryan, 1982).

The significance of autonomy versus control for the maintenance of intrinsic motivation has been clearly observed in studies of classroom learning. For example, several studies have shown that autonomy supportive (in contrast to controlling) teachers catalyze in their students greater intrinsic motivation, curiosity and the desire for challenge (Deci, Ryan & Grolnick 1986). Students who are overly controlled not only lose initiative but also learn less, especially when learning is complex or requires conceptual, creative processing (Benware & Deci, 1984; Gronlnick & Ryan, 1987).

However, unlike some perspectives Self Determination Theory proposes that extrinsic motivation can vary greatly in the degree to which it is autonomous. For example, a student who does his homework only because he fears to be sanctioned for not doing it is extrinsically motivated because he is doing the work to attain the separable outcome of avoiding sanctions. Similarly, a student who does the work

because she or he personally believes it is valuable for her chosen career is also extrinsically motivated because he or she is doing it for its instrumental value rather than because he or she finds it interesting. The two examples involve instrumentalities, yet the latter case entails personal endorsement and a feeling of choice, whereas the former involve compliance with an external control. Both represent instrumental behaviour, but the two types of motivation vary in their relative autonomy. Intrinsic motivation again refers to motivation that is animated by personal enjoyment, interest or pleasure and is usually contrasted with extrinsic motivation which is manipulated by reinforcement contingencies. Manipulation of extrinsic motivation is affected by the provision of rewards, which can be tangible (money, grades, privileges etc.) or intangible (praise). Educators typically consider that the learning outcomes of intrinsic motivation are better obtained under extrinsic motivation (Ryan, Connell & Plant, 1990).

2.3.2 Extrinsic Motivation

Motivation is divided into two major types: extrinsic motivation and intrinsic motivation. Motivation is said to be extrinsic in nature when the force of the motivation comes from outside the learner. Generally, this means that there is some external goal that is more important to the learner than the process of reaching that goal, thus making the goal the reason for the behaviour (Examples of extrinsic motivation include praise, reward be it tangible or intangible, etc. Motivation is said to be intrinsic when the force of the motivation comes from the wish to do something for the pleasure of engaging in the activity. In this case, the activity itself is rewarding (Stipek, as cited in Snowman, McCown & Biehler, 2009) and the learner is wholly in the activity itself without necessarily a great deal of concern for reaching external goal (for example, getting paid for a completed task).

Intrinsic motivation is said to be another way to change a negative behaviour into positive behaviour through self-awareness and self-concept. The definition of intrinsic motivation is described by Isen & Reeve (as cited in Koomson et al. 2008) as “the motivation to engage in a task for its own sake out of interest and/or enjoyment and not as a means to another reward”. Extrinsic motivation on the other hand is the motivation when an individual engages in a task because of an external force either from the teacher or someone in authority. According to Ryan and Deci (as cited in Renninger, Hidi & Krapp, 2014), intrinsic motivation, deriving from within the person or from the activity itself, positively affects behaviour, performance and wellbeing. But externally administered consequences or extrinsic behavioural contingences, are also powerful determinants of motivated behaviour.

Extrinsic motivation according to Richer & Vallerand (2001) is a construct that pertains whenever an activity is done in order to attain some separate outcome. Extrinsic motivation, thus contrasts with intrinsic motivation, which refers to doing an activity simply for the enjoyment of the activity itself, rather than its instrumental value.

Fallows and Ahmed (as cited in Jenkins 2001) propose a rather informal list of reasons why a student might value learning (that is, why a student would be motivated either intrinsically or extrinsically to value learning):

- the learner’s desire to please the teacher.
- perceived need (to understand) the material presented.
- each learner’s degree of interest in the subject material
- the personal philosophical values and beliefs of the learner.
- the learner’s attitudes to the materials being delivered
- the academic and career aspirations of the learner.

- incentives and rewards which are expected to accrue from the learning.

Clearly some of these factors are stronger than others (and some are unlikely in the higher education context where it is hard to imagine many student setting out mainly to please their lecturer). The degree to which each factor will have an influence over a particular student's motivation will be different in such case. It is also likely that for some students some factors will be completely absent.

The main task of the teacher faced with this complex situation is to inspire the students by maximizing the positive effect of each of these factors for each individual. Entwistle (as cited in Ditcher & Hunter in 2003) takes a more general view and so describes three generic types of motivation (or reasons for valuing learning).

- Extrinsic – the desire to complete the course for some expected reward.
- Intrinsic – deriving from interest in the subject
- Achievement – based on a desire to “do well” and (sometimes) perform better than peers.

It is clear that students motivated primarily by anyone of these three types of factor will have very different approaches to their studies. A student motivated primarily by extrinsic factor, for example, would probably do very little for which there was no summative assessment credit. Students with intrinsic motivation could be expected to read around the subject and form their own views on the material that they were learning. If achievement is the prime motivator the student will adapt whatever strategy they think will gain the best rewards, or the approach that will allow them to perform “best” (as measured in the final summative assessment). All those students will engage and will probably learn. It is their reason for engaging (and learning) that is different.

Control in an academic context is crucial. In this setting it is the student's basic responsibility to demonstrate to the teacher that they should be awarded a pass. Correspondingly, it is the teacher's responsibility to ensure that the students achieving a pass do indeed merit it. This raises the issue of where the control in this relationship lies. The idea of locus of control addresses this. Individuals may be internally oriented and view success as a direct result of personal efforts or they may be externally oriented and view success as being the gift of some powerful individual. Thus, internally oriented students will believe that they will succeed if they work hard whereas externally-oriented students will see success as a gift bestowed by the teacher (Jenkins, 2001).

For effective learning, students may feel in control or else they will quickly become disillusioned. They must feel as if the locus of control lies firmly with them and not the teacher, and also that their success (or otherwise) depends on their own efforts rather than on the arbitrary decision of the teacher. Students must be persuaded to take control and accept responsibility for their own learning.

2.3.3 Motivation and Academic Performance of Students

Distance education is rapidly becoming an increasingly important and even preferred method of instructional delivery for many educational contexts. In spite of the many student benefits surrounding distance learning programmes, however, a great number of distance learning courses suffer from extremely low student completion rates when compared to their traditional classroom-based counterparts. Although it may be tempting to point to instructional context and methods as the source of low distance learning completion rates, it can be shown that it is often motivational problems and not the instruction itself.

Prior research has indicated that lack of motivation is an important cause of dropouts when students choose to study at a distance (Wolcott & Burnham, 1991; Zvacek, 1991). The result of such research speak to the need that instructional designers and course tutors or facilitators understand motivational principles and be able to apply validated motivation – enhancing techniques to overcome the frequent motivational issues surrounding the distance learning community (Walcott & Burnhan, 1991, Zvacek, 1991). The challenge in motivating distance learners is complicated by the fact that it is generally easier to detect and correct motivational problems in conventional teaching and learning settings than in distance education settings. In the face to face context, instructors have more frequent contact with learners, a fact which helps instructors identify and address less motivated students. In addition, the traditional learner’s face to face participation in group work as well as often times, frequent contact with peers can also directly enhance motivational levels in students. In distance education settings, however, students’ motivational problems go unnoticed and undetected for extended periods, and neither do students directly benefit from the personal contact experienced by traditional students. As a result, distance learners may not receive the timely help that would bring about higher levels of motivation when it is truly needed most by these students.

Technological advancements have improved distance learning delivery but have not addressed students motivation needs. It is indeed true that today’s internet-based communication technologies are rapidly becoming a fact of life in many parts of the world and are increasingly penetrating the learning environment, but in spite of the potential for these technologies to offer interesting, efficient and effective opportunities for learning it should be recognised that human beings continue to have the same motivational requirements in today’s technology-based world that

were present in the past. In papers presented at the World Conferences of International Council for Distance Education (ICDE) between 1988 and 1995, the number of presentations focusing on motivation issues occupied a small proportion of all presentations made in spite of the critical importance of the subject to distance learning.

Papers dealing with motivation presented at four ICDE conferences are as follows:

Year	Papers Presented	Papers Related to Motivation
1988	102	2
1990	77	2
1992	346	-
1995	276	2

This corroborates Keller's (1999) that motivation of distance learner is not attended to. The condition of being motivated has been described as an autonomous disposition, a state of being which the learner himself controls and which can be affected by outside influences only to the extent permitted by the learner (Visser, 1989). Bohlin (1987) is convinced that motivation is the backbone of effective instruction, while Zvacek (1991) writes that the role of motivation in the distance education process cannot be overstated.

The discipline of Educational Psychology has seen the development of a number of motivational theories and models over the past few decades. Deprivation and reinforcement was the basis of behavioural theories intrinsic motivation and attribution that formed the basis of the cognitivist view (Graham & Werner, 1996; Stipek, 1996). Rogers (1969) believed that the central motivating force for people is the actual process of growth and achieving wholeness, while Maslow's (1954) theory of need gratification emphasized motivation as a condition to develop one's

full potential. Maslow, again holds that individuals will not be interested in satisfying their higher level needs (such as achievement, recognition and advancement) until their lower level needs (for example, food and warmth) - have been met.

It has been argued that, students who are very much motivated to learn, are likely than others to consciously plan their learning, carry out a learning plan, and retain the information they obtain (Zimmerman, 2000). For instance, students with high reading motivation are very likely to read on their own and to use good comprehension strategies provide immense effort and persist longer at academic work than do students who are least motivated (Wolters & Rosenthal, 2000). In cognitive models of motivation, putting in more effort and being persistent in an academic work is seen to result mainly from varied beliefs, attitudes and perceptions of the student (Weiner, as cited in Ozkay, 2003). Among these beliefs the length to which students value the material or skills they are learning, students perceived self-efficacy and the goals are reasons students use for finishing an academic work. These ideas have been adapted to understand and enlighten students motivation, effort persistence for academic work (Wolters & Rosenthal, 2000).

Motivation, as has been recommended is essential not only in getting students to engage in academic activities, but also in determining how much students will learn from activities they perform or from the material they are exposed to. Students who are motivated to learn something use higher cognitive processes in learning about it, and absorb and retain more from it and are very likely to transfer their learning to new situations.

Wentzel and Wigfeld (1998) asserted that students who are motivated tend to persist on their academic task, focus on academic activities and display classroom

behaviours that enhance their academic performance. Wentzel & Wigfield (1998) itemised the essential psychological processes that mediate students persistence, choice and classroom behaviour to include, students competence related beliefs, central beliefs achievement values, achievement goal orientations and social and academic goals (Wentzel & Wigfield, 1998; p. 169). In a research to investigate the phenomenon of different types of academic performance of students. Schweinhart & Weikart (1980) saw that a student's performance and progress lie to a large extent in the student's own motivation and will to work seriously and succeed.

Investigations have brought to light that students who perform well academically have high levels of achievement motivation. Pintrinch & De-Groot (as cited in Hung 2014) described students with high achievement motivation as these who are likely to spend a lot of mental effort during learning and employ cognitive strategies they believe will enhance learning. These students again, organize and rehearse information, monitor their level of understanding and relate new material to prior knowledge. These students are termed as deep processors by Entwistle (as cited in Ditcher and Hunter, 2003)

To stress the importance of achievement motivation in a student's academic work, Durojaiye (1984, p. 24-25) explained that:

Individuals with achievement motivation see problems as hurdles to be cleared and challenges to be met. They have enormous persistence efforts. People with these characteristics exercise some degree of mastery over the learning environment beyond the minimal survival needs. Students with achievement motivation tend to work hard at school even when there is no external reward or demand.

It has been identified that students who are intrinsically motivated stay in school than those who are not intrinsically motivated (Deci & Ryan, 2002). Zimmerman

(cited in Schunk, 2011) in a study realized that a student's scholastic achievement could be predicted with 93% accuracy based on the student's measured self-regulation. Self-regulated learning and motivation according to Sprinthal, Sprinthal & Oja (1994) are an interdependent process. According to Zimmerman (as cited in Schunk, 2011) a student's perception of personal academic self-worth is both a cause (motive) of learning as well as effect (outcome) of learning. Self-regulated learners are said to initiate activities designed to enhance self-awareness of their learning and their increased motivation helps them into setting increasingly higher learning goals Zimmerman & Martinez-Pons (as cited in Schunk, 2005).

Gottfried (1990) saw a positive link between motivation and achievement. Specifically, students with higher academic intrinsic motivation had significant higher achievement and intellectual performance. Again, she realized that early intrinsic motivation correlates with later motivation and academic success and that later motivation is predictable from early academic achievement.

Gottfried's (1990) results have some link with the Self Determination Theory (SDT) by Deci & Ryan, 1994; Deci, Vallerand, Pelletier & Ryan, 1991). This theory identified three psychological needs that have an influence on intrinsic motivation; the need for competence, the need for autonomy and the need for relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 2002). The need for competence (Deci & Ryan, 1994) is the need to experience satisfaction in improving an individual's ability. The need for autonomy is the need to engage in self-directed behaviour (de Charis; Ryan & Grolnick cited by Areepattamannil 2006). The need for relatedness is the need to feel related to significant others (Levesgue, Zuehlke, Stanek & Ryan, 2004). When there is harmony between the three psychological needs in the learning environment, students are intrinsically motivated to be serious with their academic work.

Closely linked with intrinsic motivation is the concept of mastery motivation (Jennings & Dietz, 2002), Dweck, (2002); Dweck & Leggett, (1988); Dweck, Mangels & Good (2004); Henderson & Dweck (1990) have found that students exhibit two distinct answers to challenging circumstances, a mastery orientation or a helpless orientation. Students with a mastery orientation focus on the task rather than on their ability, have positive affect and generate solution-oriented strategies that improve their performance (Santrock, 2008).

Students who are mastery oriented, often order themselves to be attentive, think critically and recall strategies that worked for them in previous years (Anderman, Maehr, & Midgley, as cited in Hung, 2014). On the other hand, students with a helpless orientation focus on their personal inadequacies, often blame their academic difficulties on lack of ability and display negative affect including boredom and anxiety, this orientation negatively affect their academic performance (Santrock, 2008).

Essentially, mastery orientation in students academic performance has been explained by Eccles, Wigfield and Schiefele (1998, p. 120) that:

Successful mastery attempts that are positively reinforced lead to internalization of the reward system. They also promote perceptions of competence and perceived internal control over outcomes, give the individual pleasure and ultimately increased mastery motivation. Aside this, when mastery attempts fail, the need for approval by others persists with a corresponding increase in external control beliefs, lower competence beliefs, high anxiety in mastery situations and eventually, lower mastery motivation.

Another major factor that explains students academic performance is locus of control. Students who are high in internal locus of control, do score better grades in

tests than students who have the same intelligence but low in internal locus of control (Weinstein & Zimmerman 2000).

The effort a student spends on his/her academic work has been seen as an essential part of internal cause of academic success. Unlike various causes of academic performance, effort as is explained is controlled by the student himself or herself and is amenable to change Schunk (2005); Skinner, Wellborn and Connell, (1990), in a research with some identified students reported that most of their respondents felt that effort was the most effective strategy for better academic performance,

In a research to find out the psychological factors that affect the mastery and helpless achievement motivation with some college students realized that students who believed their intelligence is inalienable and who are confident in their abilities earned higher grades than their colleagues who believed that their intelligence was fixed, had higher levels of anxiety than those who believed it is changeable. This result buttresses the recommendation that lack of ego strength and motivation can interfere with academic success (Sprinthall, Sprinthall & Oja as cited in Snowman, McCowan & Biehler, 2009).

Hummel & Sprinthall, Sprinthall, Sprinthall & Oja, cited in Snowman, McCowan & Biehler, 2009) explained that academic achievement has been realised to be extensive as a result of a student's reality orientation or ego-strength. They asserted that successful students possess strong ego, willing to postpone pleasure, not so easily distracted, and are generally able to pursue tasks in an organized fashion. Underachievers on the other hand, have low ego strength, less able to control their impulses and are especially unable to postpone gratification

2.4 Approaches to Learning

The ways students approach their learning in the learning environment has been followed extensively Biggs, (1987), Entwistle & Ramsden (1983) explained that, the construct “approach to learning is made up of a set of motives and strategies employed by students to achieve desired learning outcomes. The “motive-strategy set is also made up of the student’s motivation towards the work and the strategies used to complete the set learning goals. Biggs saw that students approach learning with specific expectations which serve as the motives for engaging in the learning. Aiming for a certificate (extrinsic motive), learning a material because it is interesting (intrinsic motive), and achieving high grades (achievement motive) are common motives for learning.

Motives tend to be associated with types of approaches to learning (Biggs, 1987). Individuals who are motivated by the urge to gain qualifications use approaches to learning which aim to reproduce important information. Learners who pursue a course based on interest tend to use approaches which help them understand the material, while those who are motivated by high grades focus on optimising efforts in their studies. “Approaches to learning”, then, refers to the learner’s motives towards, and conscious use of approaches in the pursuit of, identified learning goals.

Approaches to learning, again is described as what students do when they go about learning and why they do it. Three main dimensions of approaches to learning are known as “surface” “deep” and “strategic” or “achieving” and a less popular one the “disorganized” or “underachieving” (Biggs, (1987); Entwistle & Ramsden (1983). The main distinction is between a deep approach to learning where students aim towards understanding a surface approach to learning, where they aim at reproducing material in a test or examination than understanding it,

strategic approach to learning is where students are motivated by competition and “self-enhancement and disorganized approach to learning is when a student is in school not for the academic pursuits but to make friends and socialize. Students approaches to learning do not exist in a vacuum but are influenced by the learning environment.

In relation, it is asserted that success in academic achievement relies on more than exposure to facts and content knowledge. Studies conducted earlier on showed that one of the major the approaches to learning or motives. (Allen, Lerner & Hinrichsen; Goldman & Warren; Biggs, Gadzella & Williamson; Gaballos & Esteban; Entwistle, as cited in Yip & Chung, 2002, 2005; Diseth & Martisen, 2003; Yip, 2007, 2009). The consensus among these scholars is that students employed various approaches to learning in their learning and these approaches to learning were related to their various academic performances. They agreed that students who earn higher grades (higher academic results) would learn in a way that differs from that of students who earn lower grades (lower academic results).

Importantly, the concept of approaches to learning is made up of a variety of behaviours and activities, such as note-taking, organizing information, scheduling, concentrating ability, personal motivation and ways of mentally storing information. Moreover, researchers in the discipline of education asserted that a successful set of approaches to learning must take into consideration, the following four factors: nature of the task; nature of the materials; cognitive and affective characteristics of students; and motivation (Entwistle, 2000). Therefore, how to manipulate those behaviours to make a better blend, would be the key to performing well at school and this is one of the major issues in the field of educational psychology.

Most importantly, the way these approaches to learning are described indicate that some are “better” than others. It sounds good to be a “deep” or strategic learner; and seems not so good to be a “surface” or “disorganized” learner. However, the main issue is that, everyone is capable of becoming a strategic, deep, surface or disorganized depending on the situation. For instance, if you have to pass an examination, earn a qualification or understand what is being taught, then the strategic approach to learning is most appropriate. On the other hand, the deep approach to learning would be useful, if you want to get new ideas, be more interested in knowing the prospects of the new ideas, and for personal development (Michael, 2012). Basically, the value of these different approaches to learning is that, it opens up the chance to use different approaches in different situations. For instance, the surface approach could be used, if one needs to learn a lot of information to pass an examination. Entwistle’s studies show that when students know their respective approaches to learning, they are in a better position to make well informed choices on what they want to achieve from their learning and to understand the implications of adopting deep and surface, or strategic and disorganized approach to learning.

Also, the approach to learning students adopt is based on a combination of their prior experience and their perceptions of their immediate learning environment. The approaches to learning used by a student is not characteristic of the student but some environmental factors also come into play. These environmental factors that relate to approaches to learning are; the perceived quality of teaching (approachability and making the subject interesting) perceived workload (time available) as well as the assessment demands and the clarity of goals of the course and standards set.

2.4.1 Approaches to Learning and Academic Performance of Students

Kolb's (as cited in Jenkins, 2010) cycle highlights the fact that different students learn best in different ways (or at least that different people will excel in different quadrants of Kolb's cycle). Some can learn effectively from reading books while others prefer to learn by discussing materials with others.

Others also take in and process information in different ways: by seeing and learning, reflecting and acting, reasoning logically and intuitively, analyzing and visualizing, steadily and in fits and starts. Also, some learning task may be best approached in a particular manner. (For example, the alphabet, is something that can only be learned by rote and memorized). More complex learning requires a more complex process, the development of an understanding. For example in history, it is possible to memorise the dates of the events leading to some battle but it is far more complex to develop an understanding of the causes of the battle. The transition to more complex learning is a process which will develop in any learner over a period of time (and will develop over a students course becoming more specific to the chosen area of study) (Jenkins, 2011:117).

In the early stages of any educational endeavour simple learning by rote is likely to be considered acceptable and a necessary precursor to more sophisticated learning (Kolb, 1985).

The manner in which material is conveyed or taught can have a strong influence on the approaches to learning adopted by students (104). If material is covered as a litany of dates or facts, then students will be encouraged to concentrate on memorizing those facts, especially if the assessment focuses on the ability to recall them quickly and accurately. On the other hand, if a subject is taught in a more discursive or analytical way, and this is mirrored in the assessment, students will

focus more on understanding. While some approaches to learning is a very personal attribute of a learner, a teacher can exercise some influence over the learner's activities. This in turn can influence the way in which the learner learns. Students given lists of dates will memorise them, while those engaged in more complex activities will come to achieve an understanding. "To assume that one must teach to a particular approach to learning misses the point that a given student may be best taught by one method early in learning and by another after the student has gained some confidence (Kolb, 1985:104). It is too simple to suggest that any single activity will promote a particular type of learning (149). The same applies to teaching since it also varies in method.

Some teachers lecture, others demonstrate or lead students to self-discovery. Some focus on principles and others on applications, some emphasise memory and others understandi. Felder, (1993) went on further to explain that, when mismatches exist between approaches to learning of most students in a class and the teaching style of the professor, the students may become bored and inattentive in class, do poorly on test, get discouraged about the course, curriculum and themselves and in some cases change to other curriculum or drop out of school. Learning is highly an individual concept and each learner can be expected to take something different from each learning experience. What is important is that all learners are encouraged to engage in the activities that result in the best and most appropriate learning for them. There is no implied quality judgement here that more complex levels of learning are in some sense better than learning by rote. The way in which learning will be assessed has a significant influence on the sort of approach that is best in any learning situation. If a learner is to be assessed in a way that

requires precise recall of facts there is no point in the learner aiming for understanding (Jenkins, 2010).

In support of Jenkins's (2010) findings, Entwistle (2001) is also concerned with the ways in which individuals approach learning. His main focus was on how individuals go about learning a body of knowledge. This contrasts with community of practice theory which is more interested in how groups of people together create knowledge or understanding. Entwistle's (2001) ideas draw on those of Saljo (as cited in Richardson, 2005) in what became known as the Gothenburg Study. Saljo interviewed 90 people about their approach to learning. He found that there were important differences in how people saw their own learning. He suggested that some had a "taken for granted": perspective in which learning was seen as memorizing activity where the task of the learner is seen as that of "getting all the facts into your head" (Saljo, 446). This perspective contrasted with one which the people used for the study which said that they were "becoming aware of the influence of the context of learning on what one should learn and how one should set about it ... adapting their learning to various kinds of demands (teacher tests ...)" (Saljo, 1979:448). Saljo also points out that learners who use this "thematic approach to learning also thought that there was a difference between "learning for life" and "learning for school". Many saw learning in school as an activity which to a large extent has become stereotyped and routine ... a particular type of learning ... that is not perceived of as being related to anything outside the school situation" (Saljo, 449).

These 'thematic learners' also reported that they had started to think about what they learned. As Saljo commented, that the people he interviewed introduced a new dimension and that was a distinction between either learning and real learning or between learning and understanding. The main feature of "real learning" is that

in some way involves the abstraction of meaning from learning materials rather than a mere reproduction of them, the nature of what is learned is seen as more complex and more holistic; it is a perspective, a point of view, an interpretation, a general principle rather than plain 'facts' which people previously report having perceived as what is to be learned (Saljo, 449).

Research into learning and teaching in higher education has provided a variety of concepts, methods, and findings that are both of theoretical interest and practical relevance. It has revealed the relationships between students approaches to learning, their conceptions of learning and their perceptions of their academic context. It has also revealed the relationship between teachers approaches to teaching, their conceptions of teaching and their perceptions of the teaching environment and influence on students academic performance (Richardson, 2005).

Distance learners in general adopt some approaches to learning to enhance their academic performance and the study is to investigate some few and these are:

- Deep processing approach;
- Surface approach
- Strategic or Achievement approach
- Disorganised approach

Research of the past 25 years (Marton and Saljo, as cited in Richardson, 2005; Marton, Hounsell & Entwistle, as cited in Ditcher & Hunter 2003; Prosser & Trigwell, 1998; Biggs, as cited in Richardson, 2005) has seen learning and the learner as central importance in the teaching/learning interaction – that is, what the learner does has become more important for student learning than what the teacher does. This has led to the redefinition of teaching as the facilitation of student learning. One of the outcomes of this shift has also been the redefinition of course

objectives in terms of learning outcomes rather than of teaching inputs (Dublin, 2003). A major concept from this research was the idea that students can take different approaches to learning. These approaches are not stable traits in individuals, although some students will tend towards taking a deep approach while others will tend towards taking a surface approach (Biggs, as cited in Richardson, 2005). It is suggested that good teaching can influence students to take a deep approach, while poor teaching in the widest sense can pressure students to take a surface approach. Biggs defines good teaching as the encouragement of a deep approach to learning (as cited by Lublin, 2003).

Marton & Saljo's (as cited in Cassidy, 2004) publication introducing the idea that when university students undertook an academic task they could adopt either a learning approach focused on understanding or a learning approach focused on reproducing. At the same time in Australia and the U.K. other researchers found similar approaches.

These researchers also identified an achieving or strategic approach in which students aim to maximize their study effort. These studies led to a great deal of further research and the idea that students adopt different approaches to learning is now well known (Prosser & Trigwell, 1999).

Researches on university students approaches to learning have been collaborated in a survey they conducted using college and university students. They realized that colleges and universities are devoting substantial effort to design active learner-centered teaching and learning environment. Finding from the National Survey of Students Engagement (NSSC) (2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005) suggest that these efforts are paying off in that the vast majority of students at least

“sometimes” engage in various forms of active and collaborative learning activities during a given academic year.

A fundamental goal of the redesign is to utilize student’s full learning potential, which is not often captured through traditional pedagogical methods. In particular, the shift from passive, instructor-dominated pedagogy to active, learner-centered activities promises to take students to deeper levels of understanding and meaning as they apply what they are learning to real life.

The concept “deep” learning has drawn more attention in recent years as institutions attempt to tap their students full learning potential. Deep is not a new concept in higher education. Much of the research on deep and surface approach to learning stems from seminal research of Marton & Saljo (as cited in Yip 2010). Their study explored students approaches to learning in a particular task. Students were given an academic text to read, and were told that they would subsequently be asked questions on that text. The students adopted differing approaches to learning. The first group adopted an approach where they tried to understand the whole material, tried to comprehend and understand the academic work. These students were identified with adopting a deep approach to learning. The second group tried to remember facts contained within the text, identifying and focusing on what they thought they would be asked later. They demonstrated an approach that was recognized as rote, or superficial surface approach.

Deep and Surface approaches to learning are words that most academics know. In fact the idea that students can and do take deep or surface approach to their learning is probably one of the most used bits of educational research in higher education.

Deep approach to learning involves the critical analysis of new ideas, linking them to already known concept and principles and leads to understanding and long term retention of concepts so that they can be used for problem-solving in unfamiliar contexts. Deep approach to learning promotes understanding and application for life. Deep approach to learning is a product of active processing that is intrinsically motivated, reflective and uses higher-level meta-cognitive strategies. Critically, understanding of this principle is that students should not be identified with a fixed approach to learning, but it is design of learning opportunity that encourages students to adapt a particular approach.

On the contrary, surface approach to learning is characterized by attempts to memorise material so that it can be repeated verbatim in assessment and is extrinsically motivated. Ramsden and Entwistle (1981) have shown that deep approaches are more likely to adopt disciplines that have a fairly low formal work load (notably arts related courses).

Conversely students are much more likely to adopt surface approaches where the work load and contact time is higher – this approach is commonly used in discipline like the sciences and engineering. They also indicated that departmental culture can significantly affect students approaches to learning. For example, a deep approach is more likely to be fostered in an open and friendly teaching department.

Biggs (1993), later reported having extracted a third factor in factor analysis studies and he termed it the “achieving” or “strategic” approach to learning. The strategic or achieving approach to learning is based on the ego enhancement of aiming at the achievement of high grades. Like the surface approach to learning, the focus is not task-centred but on the recognition gained from top performance. The strategy is to organize time, workplace and syllabus coverage cost-effectively, with

much use of are seeking systematic use of study skills, planning ahead and allocating time according to tasks importance. On the other hand, disorganised approach manage their time poorly, do not make time to study and spend too much time on social and extracurricular activities both of which had a negative impact on their academic performance. Affected students noted that their poor use of time negatively influenced their academic performance because they failed to devote sufficient time to school work, getting behind in classes, continually having to “catch up” and not learning well to perform well in tests (Amenkhienan, 2000).

Amenkhienan (2000) asserted again that many students difficulties with managing time was believed to have negatively influenced their academic performance. The study also brought to light that if students do not put in enough time and effort into their academic work, their academic performance would be below expectation.

These findings are consistent with a follow up of Biggs study, conducted by Watkins and Hattie, 1985, Watkins and Ismail, 1994, in different cultures. The results showed that students who used disorganised approach to learning do not perform creditably. Further studies, have found association between the approaches to learning used by students, teachers instructional processes, form of assessment and academic performance. Past studies suggest that Asian students rely on surface approach to learning while Western students such as those from Australia employ deep approach to learning to learn (Watkins & Hattie, 1985; Watkins & Ismail, 1994; Watkins, Regmi & Astilla, 1991). However, in a later study of Hong Kong Chinese students approaches to learning researchers introduced a new concept of learning called ‘deep memorization (referred to by Tang) as a way to enhance understanding (Watkins & Tang, 1997). Subsequently Biggs argued that the

perceptions of Westerners who took rote learning by Chinese students as a surface approach to learning might be inappropriate. Instead, rote learning as adapted by Chinese students might be an adaptive strategy with assessments and in enhancing understanding (Watkins & Biggs, 1996).

The approach to learning (whether deep, surface, strategic/achieving or disorganised) adopted by a student possibly influences how he or she acquires and integrates knowledge and experience from the course or programme. The importance of understanding the nature of the learning process adopted by students and the factors associated with students motivation and approach to learning enhances performance.

Lizzio, Wilson and Simons, (2002), studied the relationship between university students perception of their academic environment, their approaches to learning and academic outcomes. The results indicated that students perception as influencing both “hard” (academic achievement) and “soft” (satisfaction, development of key skills) learning and outcomes, both directly and mediated through their approaches to learning perception of heavy workload and inappropriate assessment influenced students towards surface, the perceptions of good teaching towards deep approaches to learning, students perceptions of their current learning environment were a stronger predictor of learning outcomes at university than prior achievement at school.

Subsequent studies have demonstrated that these different approaches to learning emerge across a wide range of academic tasks. Also the studies have found that students who have adopted deep approaches to learning have quality learning outcomes (Prosser & Trigwell 1999).

Nevertheless, students still vary significantly in their approaches to learning even when variations in their perceptions of their courses have been taken into account (Saljo & Richardson, 2003). One possibility is that students may adopt one approach rather than another, depending upon their conceptions of learning and their conceptions of themselves as learners. To explain why different students adopted different approaches on the same course, Marton (1976) argued that students who adopt a deep approach to learning take an active role and see learning as something personal. Saljo (1979) asked 90 people aged between 15 and 73 at institutions of further and higher education in Sweden what “learning” meant to them. He found five different conceptions:

- Learning as the increase in knowledge
- Learning as memorizing
- Learning as the acquisition of facts or procedures
- Learning as the abstraction of meaning
- Learning as an interpretation process aimed at the understanding of reality (p. 10).

Van Rossum & Schenk (1984) carried out a study with 69 psychology students at a university in the Netherlands. They were asked to read a brief text and later interviewed on the approaches to learning they used. Van Rossum & Schenk were able to classify these students into Saljo’s five conceptions of learning. Most of the students showed conceptions 1-3 and they were seen to have used the surface approach to learning. Others used the deep approach to learning and they fell into conceptions 4-5. This showed that the approaches to learning that students adopted in particular tests are linked to their conceptions of learning. In support of this findings, Van Rossum & Taylor (1987) interviewed 91 arts students at a university

in the Netherlands. They confirmed Saljo's five conceptions of learning, but found a sixth conception they characterized as:

- A conscious process, fuelled by personal interests and directed at obtaining learning and happiness or changing society (p. 19).

Van Rossum & Taylor 1987 found that men and women were equally likely to hold these various conceptions of learning, but that older students were more likely than younger students to hold the more sophisticated conceptions (conceptions 4-6).

In another study, Morgan, Gibbs & Taylor (1981) also confirmed the existence of Saljo's five conceptions of learning in 29 students who were taking courses via distance education with the Open University in the United Kingdom. Marton, Dall'Alba & Beaty (1993) followed 10 of these students through their studies with the Open University over a period of six years. In their later years of studying, some showed the six conception of learning found by Van Rossum & Taylor, which Marton, Dall'Alba & Beaty as cited in Richardson, 2005 called "Changing as a Person". They argued that the sixth conception constituted a hierarchy through which students proceed during the course of their studies in higher education.

In a further research by scholars (Biggs, cited in Richardson, 2005, 2003 Entwistle, cited in Ditcher & Hunter in 2003, Ramsden, 2003) generally agree that deep learning is represented by a personal commitment to understand the material which is reflected in using various strategies such as reading widely, combining a variety of resources, discussion, with others, reflecting on how individual pieces of information related to larger constructs or patterns and applying knowledge in real world situations (Biggs, as cited in Richardson, 2005).

Surface and deep approaches to learning are not unalterable behaviours, though they may be influenced by personal characteristics such as ability (Biggs, as cited in Richardson, 2005). But using one or the other approach is also affected in part by the learning task itself and the conditions under which the task is performed (Biggs, as cited in Richardson, 2005; Ramsden, 2003). Thus students may use both surface and deep approaches at different points in their studies. Although students may adopt different approaches in different situations, the general tendency is to adopt a particular approach and stick to it (Biggs, as cited in Richardson, 2005, Entwistle, as cited in Ditcher & Hunter, 2003, Ramsden, 2003).

The reason deep approach to learning is important because students who use such an approach tend to earn higher grades, and retain, integrate and transfer information at higher rates (Biggs, 1988; 1989; Entwistle & Ramsden, as cited in Richardson, 2005; Prosser & Miller, 1989; Ramsden, 2003; Van Rossum & Schenk, 1984). Additionally, deep approach to learning is associated with an enjoyable learning experience which surface and disorganised tend to be less satisfying. Further interviews on everyday studying drew attention to the pervasive influence of assessment procedures on learning and studying. Their suggestion on the additional category strategic approach with the intention to achieve the highest grades by using organized study methods and good time management (Entwistle & Ramsden as, cited in Richardson; 2005). This approach involves monitoring one's study effectiveness (Entwistle, 2000) and an alertness to the assessment of process, aspects which are akin to metacognitive alertness and self-regulation. Interviews with students suggest that strategic students have two distinct focuses of concern- the academic content and the demands of the assessment system. The interest in the content is typical of deep approach but the alertness to the assessment system is

typically strategic (Entwistle, 2000). Whereas the distinction between deep and surface approaches to learning was derived from analysis which focused on extracting meaning from text, the strategic approach together with its opposite the disorganised approach (Tact & Entwistle, 1996), indicate how students act in everyday learning situations. There are indicators that the deep, and strategic approaches to learning, without any elements of surface and disorganised approaches to learning, is generally associated with successful academic performance (Entwistle, 2000).

Generally, a deep and strategic approaches to learning is related to high levels of academic achievement, where assessment produces emphasis and reward personal understanding (Marton & Saljo, as cited in Cassidy, 2004).

The importance of the learners approach to learning becomes apparent in Entwistle's conclusion that it is a crucial factor in the level of understanding attained. This is supported by research conducted by Marton and Saljo (as cited in Cassidy, 2004). In the subjects summaries of an article concerned with curriculum reform, they found a relationship between the approach and four hierarchical categories of understanding. That is, of those classified as adopting the surface approach five students responded in relation to the lowest level of understanding, eight responded to the next stage of understanding, one student responded in the second highest level but none could be categorized with the highest level of understanding. Whereas, of those who displayed a deep approach, five responses were categorised at the highest level. The research suggests that a deeper approach to learning is linked to a higher level of understanding in learning. Entwistle (1998) proposes that there are two influential factors that determines which approach is adopted by the learner. He cites early quantitative research which demonstrates

evidence of a development in the nature of thinking during higher education, whereby students gradually shifted from a belief in dualism to a recognition of relativism. That is, from a belief in correct answers which are transmitted by the lecturers to be reproduced in assessments, to the recognition that conclusions are based on evidence which a learner must interpret for themselves (Perry as cited in Vandiver, 2011).

According to Marton & Saljo (as cited in Cassidy, 2004) students who adopt “deep” and “strategic” approaches to learning are more successful in examinations. Whereas “surface” and disorganised approaches to learning users tend to pass only when they manage to overcome the tedium which that form of learning often induces.

Deep processions are more versatile; they find it easier to take “surface” questions than surface processors do “deep” questions.

Strong motivation increases the likelihood that deep level processing will occur, with anxiety inducing a hurried fact-grabbling strategy. This will doubtless, be familiar to the experienced tutor, who will have noticed the increasing desperation among students to memorise “facts” and know “what is what” as examinations approach.

2.4.2 Deep and Surface Approaches of Learning

Higher institutions of learning have devoted precious time to redesign active, learner-centered teaching and learning environment. Out comes from the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) (2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005) asserted that progress is being made in the most students engage in different types of active and collaborative learning activities. A major aim of the redesign is to utilize student’s full learning abilities, which is not usually captured in the traditional

teaching methods. Basically, the shift from passive, facilitator dominated teaching strategy to active, learner-centered activities intends to send students to deeper levels of understanding and meaning as they transfer what is being learnt to real life situations.

The concept of deep approach to learning has drawn attention in recent years as institutions attempt to tap their student's full learning capabilities. The deep approach to learning is not a new concept in higher institutions of learning. Most of the materials available on deep approach to learning are based on Marton and Saljo's (1976) seminal research. An important issue in the deep approach to learning indicates that students adopted various types of approaches to learning, with the results of learning closely connected to the approach to learning adopted (Ramsden, 2003). Two well used approaches to learning are "deep and surface" processing.

Similarly, students who use the surface approach to learning base their leaning on the substance of information and place emphasis on note learning and memorization techniques (Biggs, 2003). The aim of studying for a quiz or examination is avoid failure, instead of grasping the main concepts and understanding their relation to other information and how the information applies to other circumstances (Bowden & Marton, as cited in Laird, Shoup & Kuh, 2005).

On the contrary, students who adopt the deep approach to learning focus not only on substance but also the underlying meaning of information (Laird, Shoup & Kuh, 2005). Educationists (Biggs, 2003; Entwistle, 2000; Ramsden, 2003) accept that deep approach to learning is represented by a personal commitment to understand the material which is reflected in the adoption of different ways such as reading widely, combining a variety of resources, sharing of ideas with peers,

reflecting on how different bits of information relate to larger constructs or patterns and applying knowledge to real world situations (Biggs, 2003). Another vital feature of deep approach to learning is integrating and synthesizing information with previous learning in ways that would make it part of one's thinking and approaching a new phenomena and efforts to see things from different dimensions (Ramsden, 2003; Tagg, 2003). According to Tagg, (2003) "deep approach to learning is learning that picks its roots from issues that enhances understanding, in the embedded meanings that explains individual issues which are in turn used to explain the world" (p. 70).

Surface and deep approaches to learning are two approaches to processing material that is to be learnt (Entwistle, 2000, Athenton, 2002). Surface learning is linked with passive processing which lacks reflection, uses low-level meta cognitive skills and is extrinsically motivated. On the contrary, deep approach to learning is a product of active processing that is intrinsically motivated, reflective and used higher-level meta-cognitive strategies. Surface approach to learning may end in good memory for facts and explanations, but limited ability to understand or employ them. The deep approach to learning on the other hand, end up in facility of thought derived from joining newly acquired facts and offering of meaning to existing knowledge.

Students who adopt the surface approach to learning on the other hand may perform well on tests that evaluate learning though knowledge of facts and explanations, they may not understand or be able to apply the memorized and processed information. Further, on the contrary, students who employ the deep approach to learning understand, apply and are able to use information leaned to enhance their day to day activities. Both the deep and surface approaches to

learning are hypothesized to relate to the various types of processing plans that students apply to materials being learnt (Entwistle, 2000, Atherton, 2002).

Also, other than learning styles, deep and surface approaches to learning are not seen to be a stable disposition of students. Therefore, there is the likelihood the same student would employ the deep and surface approaches to learning when processing information within a course or across the curriculum being used. Motivating any student to use either the deep or surface approaches to learning may depend on the student's personal aims, his or her conception of what learning is (Entwistle, 2000), or whether the student has insight into the information he or she is learning (Entwistle, 2000).

Deep and surface approaches to learning are not unalterable behaviours, though they may be influenced by individual characteristics such as ability (Biggs, 2000). The use of one or the other approach is also affected in part by the learning of the activity itself and the conditions under which the activity is performed (Ramsden, 2003). In this situation, students may use both surface and deep approaches at different times of their studies. Even though students may adopt different approaches in different circumstances, the likelihood is to adopt a specific approach and continue to use it (Biggs, 2000; Entwistle, 2000; Ramsden, 2003). The deep approach is preferred by most students the reason being that, those who use it earn higher grades, retain, intergrade and transfer information at higher rates (Ramsden, 2003). In addition, deep approach to learning is linked up with a satisfying learning experience, while the surface approach tends to be less satisfying (Tagg, 2003).

Further, the major priority with the use of the deep approach to learning is to extract meaning to produce active learning processes that involve relating ideas and

looking for patterns and principles on one hand and the use of evidence and examination of the logic of the argument on the other hand (serial list). The deep approach to learning also includes the monitoring the development of an individual's own understanding (Entwistle, 2000). In contrast, the surface approach intends to cope with the activity, which sees the course as bits of information which is not related but lead to more restricted learning process, in particular to routine memorization.

Research work on individual learning processes indicated that students' information processes are influenced by a variety of contextual factors. In a summary of studies related to deep approaches to learning, indicated that early assessments of the static nature of an individual's approach to learning have been taken over by an understanding that students can adopt either the deep or surface approaches to learning based on the context of the work. Murphy and Alexander (2002) asserted that students can adopt both approaches on intervals, and that the choice of deep or surface approaches to learning is influenced by both the individual student and the context in which the learning takes place. One student might use deep approach to work on a material he/she is familiar with, (for example his/her major subject) but would use the surface approach to learning when completing a coursework which is not important and also not interesting. Also students may use a specific approach to learning based on the characteristics of the questions (Biggs, 2000). Students are likely to adopt surface approach when responding to true/false or multiple-choice questions, but would adopt the deep approach to learning when writing essays or analyzing a case study. It was found out that the effects of deep learning activities were consistent with the major subject of students and the extent to which students used deep approaches to learning differs by disciplines. Biggs

further stated that students approaches to learning are influenced by the normative behaviours of those they interact with.

2.4.3 Deep and Surface Approaches to Learning and Academic Performance of Students

Excelling in academic work goes beyond exposure to facts and content knowledge. Studies conducted earlier on, demonstrated that an important predictor of students academic performance is the approaches to learning adopted (Allen, Lerner, Hinrichsen; Goldman & Warren; Biggs; Gadzella & Williamson; Caballos & Esteban; Entwistle, as cited in Yip, 2012; Weinstein, Husman, Dierking, 2000, Yip & Chung, 2002, 2005; Diseth & Martinson, 2003, Yip, 2007, 2009). For instance, Allen, Lerner & Hinrichsen (as cited in Yip, 2012) stated in their research study based on self-reported learning behaviours of students, identified, good time management is an excellent indicator of the academic performance (grade = point average, GPA) of students. In a similar research conducted by Schutz (as cited in Yip 2012) in a high school setting saw that the educational aims of students positively correlated to their academic performance. Also, Entwistle and Brennan (as cited in Yip, 2012) asserted that college students who use the deep approach to learning score better A – level grades, have better motivation and better verbal and mathematical ability, while those who adopt the surface approach to learning score lower grades, lower abilities and motivation. According to Biggs and Loranger (as cited in Yip 2012) students use various approaches to learning when learning and these approaches to learning were importantly linked to their respective academic performance.

They further, indicated that students who use the deep approach to learning and score high grades (higher academic achievement) would learn in a way that

differs from students who use the surface approach to learning and score lower grades (lower academic achievement).

Various research findings stated that, apart from approaches to learning employed by students, there are other factors that affect students academic performance in different situations (Entwistle, Waterston, Albaili, as cited in Yip, 2012, Diseth & Martinsen, 2003). For instance, cognitive and affective characteristics of the students (intelligence, personality traits, personal motivation, socio-economic status, previous learning experiences) (Marton & Saljo as cited in Yip, 2012; Diseth, 2003); context characteristics (Armbruster & Anderson as cited in Yip 2012); teaching style of facilitators (affecting students reception of knowledge and their perceptions of the learning context) and approaches to learning (deep and surface) (Diseth, 2007) will affect and predict the academic performance of a student. Similarly, studies conducted by Subasinghe and Wanniachchi (2003) with medical students indicated that there is a correlation between deep approach to learning and academic preformation. On the other hand the same findings indicated students who employ the surface approach to learning do not perform very creditably academically. Subasinghe and Wanniachchi (2003), further asserted that, there are various types of approaches to learning students employ for their studies and the approaches determine the outcome of any learning.

Further studies showed that, approaches to learning have significant effect on subsequent outcome of specific learning processes. The deep approach to learning is associated with a higher and quality academic performance, whilst surface approach to learning has been associated with unsatisfactory academic performance.

The relationship between approaches to learning and academic performance has been substantiated in various research studies, both qualitative and quantitative.

The relationship between students approaches to learning and the academic performance in terms of assessment grades, grade point average and self-reported show inconsistent results (Zeegers, 2001). Additionally, Watkins (as cited in Yip, 2012) reports that there is a relationship between approaches to learning adopted by students and academic grades awarded. A research group at the University of Gothenbury, who employed the qualitative research methods, have shown that the approaches to learning adopted by students are related to qualitative differences in academic outcomes; with the deep approach being linked to high quality learning outcomes, while the surface approach is linked to lower academic performance (Marton & Saljo; Prosser & Millar as cited in Yip, 2012).

Besides this, the findings of a study conducted by Kember and Gow; Watkins & Regmi cited in Phan, (2010), established the fact that, there are differences in the approaches to learning used by western and non-western students. The evidence stated that:

- (1) There was positive correlation of score of students who employed the deep approach to learning and academic performance
- (2) Also, the finding showed a negative correlation of score of students who used the surface approach to learning and academic performance. In consistent to this findings, a study conducted by Biggs, Marton & Saljo cited in Koomson (2008) indicated that the students who use the deep approach to learning perform better academically than students who employ the surface approach to learning.

Similarly, in a study conducted by Snelgrove and Slater (2003), it was detected that, student who used the deep approach to learning performed better academically than their counter parts who adopted the surface approach to learning.

In connection with students approaches learning and academic performance, Emilia & MulHolland³ and Davis & Sales⁴ (as cited in Naqvi & Ahmed 2000), reported that, medical and Science students mostly score higher on the surface (rote) orientation as compared to the arts students. It was suggested that the selection of science and medical students, was basically based on academic excellence, incorporates competitiveness in their learning characteristics. Basically, these students employ a surface approach to rapidly acquire facts necessary to perform creditably in an examination, whereas the same students may use a deep approach if offered enough time and under different situations. Also, many writers have asserted and advocated significant effect of learning approaches on students' academic performances.

Furthermore, Arnold and Feighny, Wells and Higgs, and Cust (as cited in Naqvi & Ahmed, 2000) have indicated a consistent predictive pattern in the relationship between students approaches to learning and academic performance.

In addition, it has been asserted that students who use deep approach to learning focus on the significance and meaning of the material being learnt and this has shown to result in better academic performance of college students (Ramsden, 2003). Also, identifying ways of encouraging deep approach to learning among college students is now an important aspect of higher educators, who believe that engaging students in some activities is likely to encourage students to use deep approach to learning.

In collaboration, Entwistle, (2000) explained that the use of a deep approach to learning is basically related to high levels of academic performance, but it depended on where the assessment procedures emphasize and personal understanding.

Furthermore, Arnold and Feighny (as cited in Naqvi & Ahmed, 2000) revised a model on how approaches to learning related to performance. This model incorporated students initial scores on approaches to learning as elements that influence students perceptions of the education context. These perceptions in turn have impact on students choice of approaches to learning that are linked to academic performance.

2.4.4 Strategic and Disorganized Approaches to Learning

The influence of approaches to learning on the quality of learning have featured prominently in educational issues since Marton & Saljo (cited in Harputlu, 2011) introduced the term “approach to learning” and came out two types of approaches to learning namely, deep and surface. Based on the findings of Marton and Saljo’s deep and surface approaches to learning, Entwistle (2001) added the strategic approach to learning. Entwistle defined the strategic approach to learning as intention to obtain the best and highest grades, organize time and distribute effort to greatest effect, ensure conditions and materials for studying effectively, use previous examination papers to predict questions and to be alert to cues about marking schemes.

Again, Entwistle, (2001) explained strategic approach to learning, to involve students trying to get a good mark on a unit by organizing their time well, by exploring the right conditions for studying and putting consistent effort into their studies. Similarly, Saxena (as cited in Ahiatrogah, 2012), stated that students who

adopt the strategic approach to learning exhibit better learning skills characterized by systematic and planned approach to preparing adequately for studies, proper management of time, pay attention in class, make meaningful notes on academic material and formation of intelligent answers. Generally students who employ the strategic approach to learning have good plans for learning. Entwistle, (2001) further outlined some few characteristics of students who adopt the strategic approach to learning as those who, monitor effectively the way they learn, being alert and particular to assessment criteria and requirements and working towards the perceived preferences of their lecturers.

In contrast students who adopt the disorganized approach to learning have “a taken for granted” attitude which leaning is seen as a memorising activity where the work of the student is seen as that of “getting all the needed information into the head at a go” (p. 446). Saljo further indicated that students who adopt the disorganized approach to learning also have the feeling that there is a difference between “learning for life” and “learning in school”. Most of these learners visualized learning in school “as an activity which to a large extent has been stereotyped and routine a specific form of learning that is not seen as being related to anything outside the learning environment (Saljo as cited in Entwistle, 2001). Entwistle & Ramsden (1983) indicated that, students who adopt the disorganized approach to learning are in school just to socialize with colleague and not for the purpose of academic work.

Aside this, students who use the strategic approach to learning are motivated by competition and “self-enhancement”. Their priority is to obtain high grades irrespective of how interesting the material is, or how well they understand it. Also these students always want to be appreciated by their teachers and peers. Students

motivated to use the strategic approach to learning employ skills that help with the organization of study time and 'work space'. Further, the strategic approach to learning is a combination of the deep and surface approach of learning depending on the situation the student is faced with. Interviews with students suggest that students who use the strategic approach to learning are of two distinct issues of concern and these are the academic content and the demands of the assessment system or the marking scheme used by facilitators. The interest in the content is typical of a deep approach to learning, but the alertness to assessment requirements is typically strategic (Entwistle, 2000). Whereas, the distinction between deep and surface approaches was derived from analyses which stressed on extracting meaning from text, the strategic approach to learning, together with the disorganized (Tait & Entwistle, as cited in Entwistle, 2000) indicate how students act in every day learning processes. Similarly, regarding students who employ the strategic approach to learning when studying, the major motive is to score high grades and they adopt either the deep or surface approach to learning depending on what they think would produce the most successful learning outcome (Wanniachi, 2003).

2.4.5 Strategic and Disorganised Approaches to Learning and Academic Performance of Students

Research findings for the past twenty-five years has been indicated that, learning and the learner are of great importance in the teaching and learning process, this implies that, what the learner does has become more important for student learning than what the teacher does. (Marton & Saljo; Marton, Hounsell & Entwistle; Prosser & Trigwell; Biggs as cited in Yip, 2010) For instance, Subansinghe & Wanniachchi, (2003), indicated that higher academic performance was considered as passing the specified examination at the first attempt with or without obtaining

houours; low academic achievement was taken as being referred in one or more subjects.

Furthermore, students were categorized into strategic and disorganized academic achievers based on their examination result. This implied that, students who passed the examination at first attempt were considered as have adopted the strategic approach to learning, whilst those referred in at least one subject were seen to have used the disorganized approach to learning (Subasinghe & Wanniachchi, 2003). Also, it was further hypothesized that students who employed the strategic approach to learning perform better in subject oriented recall certifying examination as compared to those who adopted the disorganized approach to learning (Subasinghe & Wanniachchi, 2003).

In collaboration, Biggs (as cited in Richardson, 2005) indicated that, the strategic approach to learning is based on the ego enhancement of aiming at the achievement of high grade. Unlike the surface approach to learning, the focus is not on task-centered but on the recognition gained from to performance. The plan is to organize time, school environment, and syllabus coverage, cost effective, with much use of seeking a systematic use of study skills, planning ahead and allocating time according to tasks is important. On the other hand, disorganized approach to learning users manage their time poorly, do not make time to study and spend much time on social and extra-curricular activities both of which had a negative impact on their academic performance. Affected students noted that, their poor use of time negatively influence their academic performance because they failed to devote sufficient time to school work, getting behind classes, continually having to “catch up” and not learning well to perform well during examination (Amenkhienan, 2000).

Amenkhienan, (2000) further asserted that students who use the disorganized approach to learning encounter difficulty in managing their time and this negatively affect their academic performance. It has been established that if students do not put in enough time and effort into their academic work, their academic performance would be below expectation. These findings were consistent with a follow up study conducted by Watkins & Hattie; Watkins & Ismail (as cited in Ahiatrogah, Deku & Dramanu, 2008) in different cultures. The results showed that students who used the disorganized approach to learning do not perform well academically. Further studies have found association between the approaches to learning used by students, teachers instructional processes, assessment and academic performance (Campbell, Brownlee & Smith; McKay & Kember as cited in Ahiatrogah, Deku & Dramanu, 2008).

In a research conducted by Phan (2010) which was similar to the findings of a study undertaken by Kember & Gow; Watkins & Regmi (as cited in Ahiatrogah et al, 2008) it showed that, the academic performance of students who use the disorganized approach to learning correlated negatively to their scores and it portrayed their negative attitude towards learning. Again, the academic performance of students who access the strategic approach to learning correlated positively to higher linguistic course. A phenomenographic approach was used to look into the conceptions of learning held by students at the University of Southern Pacific. The conception of learning was made up of the following hierarchy:

- (i) an increase in knowledge;
- (ii) memorizing and reproduction;
- (iii) the ability to apply knowledge;
- (iv) understanding;

- (v) seeing something in a different dimension and
- (vi) perceiving learning as changing a person.

The researchers realized that the most common conception amongst the sample was that of perceiving learning as applying knowledge. The general performance of the students showed a lower percentage of higher-order conceptions of learning. The reason being that the highly examination-driven curricula of secondary schools in the South of the Pacific as well as the lecture-based transmission mode of teaching was preferred by students.

In the same vain, there has been few empirical works in the relationships between strategic approach to learning and academic performance and they seem to be inconsistent in their outcomes. Cassidy (2004) having worked on self-assessment of efficiency, approaches to learning and academic performance with 130 health and social policy undergraduates failed to come out with consistent relationships between the achievement of students who used the strategic approach to learning (correlates positively) surface (correlates negatively) learning.

2.5 Theoretical Framework

Three theories were used as a guide to the study. These are the constructivist theory, socio-cognitive theory and cognitivist theory of motivation.

2.5.1 Constructivist Theory

Constructivism founded by Jean Piaget is basically a theory based on observation and scientific study about how people learn. It says that people construct their own understanding and knowledge of the world, through experiencing things and reflecting on those experiences. When people come face to face with a new situation, they have to reconcile it with previous ideas and experiences by modifying or changing their believes, or discard the new information

which may-be-irrelevant-(retrieved from http://www.thirteen.org//_edonline/concept2class/constructivism/index.ht.ml 2013).

A major theme in the theory of constructivism is that learning is an active process in which learners construct new ideas or concepts based upon their current and past knowledge. The learner selects and transform information, constructs hypotheses and makes decisions relying on a cognitive structure to do so. The cognitive structure (i.e. Schema, mental models) provides meaning and organization to experiences and allows the individual to “go beyond the information offered”.

Constructivists ascertain that cognitive skills are most fully potentiated through active engagement. It is believed that knowledge is presented explicitly as being constructed personally and in interaction with other people and with the physical world.

Constructivists, further argue that, students do not acquire knowledge through interacting with the environment. Rather, they hold the view that students acquire knowledge by constructing from the inside in interacting with the environment. They further indicated that students construct theories or hypothesis about learning situations by putting things into relationships. The use of this process of persistently putting previously learned relationships into new relationships, students become aware of their circular reasoning and construct meaningful explanations of phenomena (retrieved on <http://www.sullivan.leon.kiz.fl.us.LTT/Constructivism.html>).

It is further argued that constructivists postulate that students invent their own ideas but do not absorb ideas spoken by their teachers or that they internalize them through endless repeated practice. Students according to constructivists assimilates new information to simple, pre-existing notion and modify their

understanding to suit the new data. During this process, the ideas of students develop into complexity and power so that with the support of teachers and other adults they develop critical insight into how they think and what they know about the world becomes in depth and detailed. The theory again, looks critically at how students create and develop their ideas (Strommen & Lincoln as cited in Ahiatrogah Deku-Dramani, 2008)

The constructivist claims that children do not conceive number, rather they construct it. This concept will not come to a child all at once, but in a process of building intellectual structures that form a relationship of change, interaction and combining. The theorists again, feel that every student brings different ideas and concepts to a learning situation. Hence it could be concluded that everyone goes away with different ideas and concepts from the same learning situation (MU Online Course – Lesson1: Constructivism).

Constructivists further explained that, this restructuring of information must occur through self regulation. Again, constructivists explain that, learning is a constructive process in which the learner builds an internal illustration of knowledge, and a personal interpretation of experience. This representation is continuously open to modification, thus its structure and linkages are formed based on the ground on which other knowledge structures are attached (Bednar, Cunnigham, Duffy & Perry as cited in Ahiatrogah et al, 2008). They further asserted that, the internal knowledge does not necessarily reject the existence of the real world but also agrees that reality places constraints on the concepts that are learnt but contends that all that is known about the world are human interpretations of peoples experience of the world.

Hanckbanth (as cited in Ahiatrogah et al, 2008) explained that, the fundamental challenge of constructivism is in the changing of locus of control over learning from the teacher to the student. He went on further to state that, educational technologists, with their foundations in behavioural psychology, have sought to design programmes in such a way that students would be enticed to achieve specified objectives. Based on this claim by the educational technologists, constructivist indicated that, this violates both what is known now about the nature of learning (situated, interactive) and about the nature of knowledge (perspectival, conventional, tentative, evolutionary). They claimed that objectives should be negotiated with students based on their own felt needs, that programmed activities should emerge from within the contexts of their lived world; that is students should work together with peers in the social construction of personally significant meaning, that evaluating should be a personalized ongoing, shared analysis of progress (p.11).

Agreeing with this view (Bednar, Cunningham, Duffy & Perry as cited in Solrun, 2008) asserted that learning must be placed in a rich context, reflective of real world context, for this constructive process to happen and transfer to environments beyond the school or classroom. Students must be actively involved in the learning process. They further stated, learning through cognitive apprenticeship, mirroring the collaboration of real world problem solving, and using the tools available in problem solving situations, are the key issues. How effective or instrumental the learner's knowledge structure is in facilitating thinking in the content field is the measure of learning (p. 103 - 104).

In collaboration to this, Bruner (2009) explained that, in the classroom situation the role of the instructor is to encourage students to discover principles by

themselves. He further indicated that the instructor and students should engage in active dialog (i.e. Socratic learning) to enhance good academic performance of the student. The major task of the instructor is to translate information to be learned into a format appropriate to the learner's current state of understanding. Bruner, again explained that the curriculum should be organized in a spiral manner so that the student can continuously build upon what the/she had previously learnt. Bruner, again stated that a theory of instruction should address four major aspects:

- (1) predisposition towards learning
- (2) the ways in which a body of knowledge can be structured so that it can be most readily grasped by the learner
- (3) the most effective sequences in which to present material to be learnt, and
- (4) the nature and pacing of rewards and punishment.

He stated again, that good methods for structuring knowledge should bring about a simplifying, generating new dispositions and increase the manipulation of information. Bruner, further came out with yet three other principles on instructions and they are as follows:

- (1) instruction must be concerned with the experience and contexts that make the student willing and able to learn (readiness)
- (2) instruction must be structured so that it can be easily grasped by the student (spiral organization).
- (3) instruction should be designed to facilitate extrapolation and or fill in the gaps (going beyond the information given)

Vygotsky (as cited in Atherton, 2011) also saw the instructor as an important element in the learning process. He asserted that, an instructor or teacher who is a constructivist should create a context for learning in which students can be engaged in interesting activities that encourages and facilitates learning. The instructor should not be passive and watch students explore and discover, but should as much as possible guide students as they approach problems, encourage them to work in groups to think about issues and questions. Also the instructor should support and counsel them as they tackle problems, adventures and challenges that are rooted in real life situations that are interesting to the students and satisfying in terms of the result of their work. Instructors thus facilitate cognitive growth and learning as do peers and other members of the students community. However, in all classrooms in which instructional strategies are compatible with Vygotsky's approach social constructivist approach do not necessarily look alike. The activities and format can vary considerably. In any Vygotskian classroom four principles apply and these are:

1. Learning and development is a social, collaborative activity.
2. The zone of Proximal Development can serve as a guide for circular and lesson planning.
3. School learning should occur in a meaningful context and not be separated from learning.
4. Out-of-school experiences should be related to the student's school experience (Atherton, 2011).

In a further development Swanson (as cited in Scolrun, 2008) opined that students cognitive processes should be a major concern to educators if learning should depend on how information is mentally processed. Again, Swanson asserted that, educators must consider students level of cognitive development when

planning topics and methods of instructions. For instance, explanations which are based on concrete operational logic are unlikely to be effective ways of presenting ideas to preoperational pupils. Concrete operational students would have difficulty in understanding abstract ideas that do not tie in with their own experiences. These students will learn more effectively if the same information is presented through concrete, hands-on examples. Even high school and college students who have not completed the formal operational stage, will need concrete experiences prior to presuming abstract material. This implies that, students should have solid basis for learning before effective academic can take place.

He further indicated that, students should organize the information they learn. Teachers can also help students to learn by presenting organized information and help students see how one idea relates to the other. Swanson (as cited in Solrun 2008) indicated again that new information is most likely to be acquired when students are able to associate it with ideas they have already learnt. Therefore, teachers should help students learn by showing them how new ideas relate to existing ones. When students are unable to relate new information to old experiences, learning is likely to be slow and ineffective.

In collaboration to the earlier submission by Swanson & Skinner (as cited in Solrun 2008) argued from an operant conditioning perspective that, students must actively respond to learning if they are to learn effectively, cognitivists share the same opinion with Skinner, however their emphasis is on mental activity rather than the physical. He went on further to explain that, if students control their own cognitive process, it is ultimately the students themselves who decide on what information will be learnt, and how.

The constructivist classroom as indicated by Educational Broadcasting Corporation (2004) points towards a number of teaching strategies. Generally, it means encouraging students to use active techniques such as experiments, (real-world problems solving) to create more knowledge and then reflect on, and talk about what they are doing and how their understanding is changing. The teacher makes sure she understands the students preexisting conceptions, guides the activity to address, and then build on them. The Educational Broadcasting Corporation (2004) again stated that, constructivists teachers encourage students to constantly assess how the activity is helping them gain understanding. By questioning themselves and their strategies, students in the constructivist classroom ideally become 'expert learners'. This gives them over broadening tools to keep learning. With a well-planned classroom environment, the students learn how to learn.

The Educational Broadcasting Corporation (2004) explained further that, contrary to criticisms by some traditional/conservation educators, constructivism does not dismiss the active role of the teacher or the value of expert knowledge; but rather constructivism modifies that role, so that the teacher helps students to construct knowledge to produce series of facts. It was further asserted by the Educational Broadcasting Corporation (2004) that, the constructivist teacher provides tools such as problem-solving and inquiry-based learning activities which students formulate and test their ideas, draw conclusions and inferences, pool and convey their knowledge in a collaborative learning environment. Constructivism transforms the student from a passive recipient of information to an active participant in the learning process. Guided by the teacher, students construct their knowledge rather than mechanically ingesting knowledge from the teacher or the text book.

In another deliberation, the Educational Broadcasting Corporation (2004) at a workshop explained that, constructivism is often misunderstood as a learning theory that compels students to “reinvent the wheel”. The fact is, constructivism taps into and triggers the student’s innate curiosity about the world and how things work. Students do not reinvent the wheel rather, they attempt to understand how it turns, and how it functions. They are engaged by applying their existing knowledge and real-world experience, learn to hypothesize, test theories and ultimately draw conclusions from their findings.

Basically, constructivism is a theory of learning and an approach to education that lays emphasis on the way people create meaning of the world through series of individual construct. Constructs have the different types of filters and these are place over realities to change reality from chaos to order (Retrieved on Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia, 2013). Von Glasersfeld (2010) described constructivism as “a theory of knowledge with deep roots in philosophy, psychology and cybernetics”. In other words, it is a learning process which allows a student to experience an environment first-hand, thereby giving the student reliable, and trust-worthy knowledge. The student is therefore, required to act upon the environment to both acquire and test new knowledge. Based on this explanation, Glasersfeld (2010) further argued that, the responsibility of learning should reside with the learner. According to Glasersfeld (2010) sustaining motivation to learn is strongly dependent on the learner’s confidence in his or her potential to learn. These feelings of competence and belief in potential to solve new problems, are derived from first-hand experience of mastery of problems in the past and are much more powerful than any external acknowledgment and motivation (Prawat and Floden as retrieved on Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia, 2013). To achieve this, facilitators should fully

engage and challenge the learner, the task and learning environment to reflect the complexity of the environment that the learner should be able to function in at the end of learning.

Learners must not only have ownership of their learning or problem-solving process, but of the problem itself (Derry, retrieved on Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia 2013). According to Duffy and Jonassen (retrieved on Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia, 2013) instructors should first introduce the basic ideas that give life and form to topics or subject areas then revisit and build upon them repeatedly. In support of this Rhodes and Bellamy (retrieved on Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia, 2013) stated that, it is important for instructors to realize that although a curriculum may be set down for them it is their duty to shape them into useful and something personal to reflect their own belief systems, thoughts and feelings about both the content of their instruction and learners. Based on this, the learning experience acquired becomes a shared responsibility. Other ideas have evolved, based on the constructivist theory, for instance, the idea of constructivism have been used to inform adult educators. In this case, where pedagogy applies to educating children, adult educators speak of androgogy or heutagogy methods or strategies used for adult learners must consider the differences in learning, this is because adult learners have a lot of experiences already (Schema psychology) and previously existing neurological structures (Retrieved on Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia, 2013). Furthermore, there have been established approaches that are based on constructivism, and stress they on the importance of mechanisms for mutual planning, diagnosis of learner needs and interests, cooperative learning climate, sequential activities for achieving the objectives, formulation of learning objectives based on the diagnosed needs and interests. Also personal relevance of the content,

involvement of the learner in the learning process, and the deeper understanding of the underlying concepts are some of the intersections between emphases in constructivism and adult learning principles (retrieved on Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia, 2013).

Studies have been conducted extensively in support of the constructivist theory, for example, Hmelo-Silver, Duncan and Chinn (2007) cite several studies in support of the successes of the constructivist problem-based and inquiry learning methods. For instance a project called Gen-Scope, an inquiry-based science software application has helped with the inquiry learning methods. Students using the Gen-Scope software showed significant gains over the control groups, with the largest gains shown in students from basic courses (p.12).

Hmelo-Silver, Duncan and Chinn (2007) again cited a large study conducted by Geier on the effectiveness of inquiry-based science for middle school students, as demonstrated by their performance on high-stakes standardized tests. The improvement was 14% for the first cohort of students and 13% for the second cohort. The study also found out that inquiry-based teaching methods greatly reduced the achievement gap for African-American students (12).

Another study by Guthrie (2004) was based on a comparison of three instructional methods for grade three pupils in reading. The three methods were the traditional approach, a strategies instruction only approach and an approach with strategies instruction and constructivist motivation techniques including student choices, collaboration and hands-on activities. The constructivist approach known as Concept-Oriented Reading Instruction (CORI) came out with a better result in student's reading, comprehension, cognitive strategies and motivation (13).

Furthermore studies by Kim (2005) brought to light that, the use of constructivist teaching methods for grade six students resulted in better student achievement than the traditional teaching methods. The study also found that students preferred constructivist methods over the traditional method of instruction. However, Kim did not find any difference in student self-concept or approaches of learning between those taught with constructivist teaching method and the traditional teaching method (p.14).

In another studies, Dogru and Kalender (2007) compared science classrooms using traditional teacher-centered approaches, to those using student-centered, approach and constructivist method of teaching. In their initial test of student performance immediately after the lesson, they found no significant difference between traditional constructivist teaching methods. However, a follow-up assessment two weeks later, it was realized that students who learned through the constructivist method of teaching showed better retention of knowledge than those who learned through traditional method of teaching.

Based on these findings, Jonassen (Retrieved on Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia, 2013) proposed eight characteristics of constructivist learning environment and these are:

- (1) Constructivist learning environments should provide multiple representations for reality.
- (2) Multiple representations to avoid over simplification and represent the complexity of real world.
- (3) Constructivist learning environments emphasize knowledge construction.
- (4) Constructivist learning emphasize authentic tasks in meaningful context rather than abstract instruction out of context.

- (5) Constructivist learning environments provide learning environments such as real-world settings or case-based learning instead of predetermined sequences of instruction.
- (6) Constructivist learning environments encourage thoughtful reflection on experience.
- (7) Constructivist learning environments “enable context-and content-dependent knowledge construction”.
- (8) Constructivist learning environments support “collaborative construction of knowledge through social negotiation, not competition among learners for recognition”.

Jonassen see the constructivist learning environment as the one which students take control of their learning with facilitators offering support where necessary. The distance learner in the constructivist learning environment is self-directed, creative and innovative and the purpose of education is to help the individual to be creative and innovative through analysis, conceptualizations and synthesis of prior experience to create new knowledge. The role of the facilitator in the distance education learning environment is to mentor the learner during heuristic problem solving of an ill-defined problem by enabling quested learning that may modify existing knowledge and allow for creation of new knowledge. The goal for learning according to the constructivist is the highest order of learning that is heuristic problem solving, metacognitive knowledge, creativity and originality. These are also the goals of the distance learner who meets the facilitator fortnightly for interaction. The deep approach to learning used by some distance learners demands the highest order of thinking and originality to excel.

Constructivist are of the view that students come to the learning environment with different ideas and concepts to help their learning. Distance learners also come to the learning environment with different ideas and concepts to help them to adjust. The support services at their disposal, motivation offered by facilitators, counsellors etc. and the approaches to learning they adopt to learn equip them academically and therefore leave with new ideas and concepts to help them in life.

Constructivists encourage active participation of learners in the learning process. Similarly, facilitators in the distance education learning process use motivation strategies, exercises, assignments etc. to ensure active participation of learners for effective performance to meet the demands of the theorists. Based on this, the researcher finds the theory relevant to the study.

2.5.2 Socio-Cognitive Theory

Social learning theory propounded by Albert Bandura (1986) includes the process of acquisition of knowledge or learning that is directly concerned to the observation of models. These models can be those of an interpersonal imitation or the media. Social learning theory places emphasis on the role played by vicarious, symbolic, self-regulatory processes and psychological functioning.

The theorists also place emphasis on the environmental conditions of the learner and how the interaction of the learner with these environmental factors affects learning. A greater portion of learning according to social learning theorists occurs through observation and imitation of relevant individuals.

According to Bandura (1977) all learning phenomena occurs through a vicarious basis by observing other peoples behaviour and, its consequences. In

addition Bandura stresses the importance of intrinsic reinforcement and punishment. By this he meant that actions of people are not regulated just by environmental consequences observed but by people's own reactions as well. From Bandura's point of view, learning is a change in acquired information that can occur just by virtue of being an observer in the world. The ability to learn through observation enables individuals to acquire large, integrated patterns of behaviour without having to form them gradually through trial and error (Bandura, 1977). Supporting the role played by vicarious learning through observation, Miller (2005) indicates that an individual as a result of observation, can be affected in two different ways. These are the inhibitory and disinhibitory effects. Inhibitory effect is a positive punishment action. This occurs when an observer sees the action of another involved in a social situation being punished for an action. Disinhibitory effect on the other hand, is a positive reinforcement action. This is when an individual is praised for an action and the one observing learns and imitates.

Bandura asserts that through verbal and imagined symbols, individuals process and preserve experiences in representational form that guides behaviour. Bandura has provided the theoretical base for the development of a self-regulated academic learning in which personal, contextual and behavioural factors interact in such a way to allow learners to exercise control over their own learning while at the same time setting limits to self-direction (Bandura, 1977).

Social learning theory emphasizes the importance of observation, modelling behaviour attitudes and emotional reactions of others. Bandura (1977) indicated that:

Learning would be very tedious, not to mention hazardous, if individuals had to rely only on the effects of their own action to inform them on what to do. Most human behaviour is learned observationally through modelling: from observing other people, an individual forms an idea of how new behaviours are

performed, and later the coded information serves as a guide for action.

According to Bandura, apart from elementary reflexes, individuals are equipped with inborn repertoires of behaviour. They are to be learned and in the course of learning, they are either acquired through direct or observational experiences. Instead of seeing people as mechanical products of environmental forces, Bandura sees them as information processors. Efficient and effective observational learning depends on four phases. Attention to behaviour, representation of the behaviour in verbal or images for long term retention, ability to perform the desired behaviour and reinforcement for observable performance.

Reinforcement plays an important role in observational learning, but mostly serves as an antecedent rather than an influence. According to social learning theorists, reinforcement can strengthen the retention of what has been learned through observation to motivate individuals to encode and rehearse modelled behaviour that is of high value. From the social learning theorists point of view, observational learning can be achieved by informing learners beforehand the benefits of adopting modelled behaviour than waiting till they imitate a model and rewarding them.

This indicates that learners who find themselves in social environments in which academic counsellors, course tutors, peers and relevant others discuss the benefits of good academic performance are likely to study hard and for that matter perform well. In effect, the encouragement and support academic counsellors, course tutors and peers give to learners can serve as motivational force that can ginger them in their academic pursuits.

Social learning theorists view of behaviour indicates that people are neither compelled to act by inner forces nor controlled by the environment. Instead, there is

reciprocity between human behaviour and the external conditions that influence it. Through the 'process of reciprocal determinism individuals have the opportunity to influence their own destiny as well as the limits of self-direction. Individuals and their environments are both reciprocal determinants of each other. This implies that behaviour, some personal factors and environmental factors operate as interwoven determinants of each other to help learning.

In support of social learning theorists view, Biggs (as cited in Richardson, 2005) in his research evaluates the study process by focusing on the values, motives and approaches to learning of the learners. His contention is that performance is presumed to be affected by personality and environmental factors. He examines personality in terms of intelligent quotient, home background, subject content, type of approaches to learning used by distance learners and the type of course evaluation which is examined as components of the environment of the study.

From the above, it could be seen that behavioural factors, environmental factors of the distance learner, personality in terms of intelligence quotient, and other factors such as subject content, feedback, support from course tutors and peers, motivational strategies and approaches to learning the distance learner is exposed to enable him/her to exercise control over his/her learning.

Vygotsky (1978) indicated that children begin learning from the immediate family members, their social world which is the source of all facts, ideas, concepts, attitudes and skills. The social world of the learner determines which stimuli occur, and are attended to. The learning environment made up of course tutors and distance learners with varying attitudes toward learning and interaction help learning to take place. If the learner's environment is conducive to learning, the distance learner organises him/herself, sieves through the various support services,

motivational strategies and approaches to learning at his/her disposal and settles on the best for his/her learning.

To conclude, it could be said that social learning theorists place emphasis on the environment one is exposed to. To them, the learner may choose a support service, motivational strategy or approach to learning due to its significance to his/her performance. Again identification, imitation as well as the social milieu of the distance learner have an important role to play in his/her choice of a suitable support service, motivational strategy and approach to learning. It therefore implies that for one to understand the support service, motivational strategy and approach to learning adapted by distance learners, one needs to consider the individual, his/her environment, his/her personality and how prepared the learner is for the learning task.

Since facilitators are mostly the models of distance learners, it is their responsibilities to expose learners to the various support services, motivational strategies and approaches to learning and guide them to choose the one appropriate to their learning. Based on the discussions Socio Cognitive theory is seen to be relevant to the study.

2.5.3 Cognitive Theory of Motivation

The theory stresses on the role of students thinking, expectations and understanding of their world. This theory established two types of cognitions which form the basis of students behavior. These are:

- (a) the expectation that a behavior that will help students reach a target goal
- and

(b) the understanding of the value of the goal to the student (Tolman as cited in Chauhan, 2007).

The cognitive theory of motivation indicate the length to which students put their energies in place and persist on an academic task from varied beliefs, attitudes and perception. Some of such beliefs are; the extent to which the students value the material or skills being learnt (Weiner as cited in Ozkan, 2003).

The cognitive theory of motivation brings out the difference between intrinsic (internal) and extrinsic (external) motivation. Based on Chauhan's (2007) assertion, intrinsic motivation is the urge to engage in an activity for the joy and satisfaction derived from performing the activity.

Three distinct types of intrinsic motivation were identified (Brunner as cited in Mukhege, 2002). These are; curiosity, competence and reciprocity. Brunner further asserted that curiosity satisfies the need in behavior, competence is an individual's ability to control the environment to meet his or her needs for survival, and reciprocity is the need to behave based on the situation. Santrock, (2008) explains that students are intrinsically motivated to learn when they have options to choose from, are engrossed in challenges that match their skills, and are awarded with informational values.

Extrinsic motivation on the other hand involves performing an activity to gain something in the end. This type of motivation is most often influenced by external reinforcement such as rewards and punishment. For example, a student studies always because he or she wants a higher certificate for better salary or good grades in a course. Again, extrinsically motivated students most of the time perform activities not because of personal interest they have in the activity, but because they

see the performance of the activity as being instrumental to different goals. Extrinsic motivation based on rewards can be useful in two ways. These are;

- (i) incentive to perform a given activity, in which the aim is to control the behavior of the student, and
- (ii) to communicate information about mastery of the activity (Bandura as cited in Santrock, 2008)

When incentives given to students communicate information about mastery, their competence level is enhanced. The reward per se does not cause the effect but, rather the expectations of the reward (Schunk as cited in Santrock, 2008).

Learning is said to be lasting when it is sustained by intrinsic motivation than when it is urged by external reinforcers (Brunner cited in Sprinthall, Sprinthall, & Oja, 1994) Brunner, was of the opinion that, extrinsic motivation is necessary to get a student to start the learning process.

Similarly, the theory of motivation is used to explain the initiation, direction, intensity and persistence of behaviour especially behaviour that is goal oriented. In the learning process, motivation is used to explain the extent to which students use attention and effort in different pursuits which may or may not be the ones desired by teachers (Brophy as cited in Koomson, 2008). Aggarwah (2008) asserted that, motivation is the centre of all learning. Further, he indicated that motivation offered by teachers and others does not only set in motion the activity which initiates learning but also sustains and directs it. Von Glaserfeld (as cited in Koomson, Brown, Ahiatrogah & Dawson-Brew, 2012). Sustaining motivation in the learning process, is very much dependent on the confidence level of the student in his or her potential for learning. The feelings of competence and belief in the potential to solve

new problems, are acquired from first hand experience of mastery of problems in the psat and are more powerful than any external acknowledgement and motivation.

Bandura (as cited in Bouffard & Couture, 2013) asserted that, students motivation is neither an innate concept or a trait of personality but rather a construct that is built out of an individual's learning activities and experiences and that it differs from one situation or context to another. Similarly, Sam-Tagoe (2008), asserted that, motivation involves a constellation of beliefs, perception, values, interest and actions are closely linked. As such, various approaches to motivation can focus on cognitive aspects (such as perceptions, beliefs and attitudes) or both.

From childhood onward, humans, in their healthiest moments are active, inquisitive, curious beings, exhibiting readiness to learn and explore and do not require any extra energy to do so. This natural motivation tendency is a critical element in cognitive, social and physical development because it is through an individual's inherent have frequent contactt interest in new issues, to actively assimilate, and to creatively apply skills not limited to childhood, but a significant feature of human nature that affects performance persistence and well being across life (Ryan & LaGuardia as cited in Richer & Vallerand, 2001).

The problem in motivating distance learners is complex due to the fact that it is generally easier to identify and rectify motivational issues in the main stream than in distance education setting. During teaching in the mainstream teachers have frequent contact with learners and this enables teachers to detect and address motivational issues. In distance education settings, however, students who need to be motivated to work to improve their academic work go unnoticed for a long period and this does not augur well for them as students. As such, distance learners may not receive the timely help that would bring about higher levels of motivation when

urgently needed. It is evident that technological advancement has improved distance learning delivery but has not addressed students motivational needs. Bohlin (1987) is of the view that motivation is the backbone of effective learning and instruction and Zvacek (1991) also postulates that the role of motivation in distance education cannot be underestimated. On the basis of this, the researcher finds the theory relevant to the study.

2.6 Overview of Distance Education

According to Perraton (2000) the definition and difference between distance education and other educational approaches has been the subject of debate. The Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) (1999) define distance education as a means of providing higher education which involves the transfer to the students location the facilities that make up the main basis of learning, rather than the student moving the location of the institution. The Commonwealth of Learning (COL) (20004) further, explains distance education, as the delivery of learning for people who are separated in most instances by time and space from facilitators. Hence, the concept distance education, is the separation of students from facilitators by distance and in some instances by time which necessitates the introduction of an artificial communication medium that will deliver information and also provide a channel for interaction between the facilitator and the students (Moore & Kearsley as cited in Akrofi, 2010).

UNESCO (2002) looks at distance education as a process by which a greater part of facilitation is done by someone removed in space time from the learners. In most distance education programmes, the students are not usually in direct physical contact with their facilitators. Course materials are packaged and sent to students

on-line or personally by officials from the institutions offering the services. Also occasional face-to-face tutorial sessions are organized for students (IEDE, 2007).

Holmberg (as cited in Akrofi, 2010) describes distance education as:

The various forms of teaching and learning at all levels which are not under the continuous, immediate supervision of facilitators present with their students in lecture rooms or in the same premises but which nevertheless benefit from planning, guidance and facilitation (that is tutoring, teaching of staff of the tutorial organization). Its major characteristic is that it relies on non-contiguous, that is mediated communication (p.1)

From the point of view of many educational technologists, distance education is linked to technology. According to Garrison and Shale (as cited in Akrofi 2010) distance education involves non-contiguous communication between students and facilitators mediated by print or some form of technology. According to Bates (2005) new technologies offers a wider range of facilitation and a higher quality of learning, lower costs, greater student control, effective interaction and feedback for students.

Holmberg (as cited in Akrofi, 2010) indicates that there has been different views on the term distance education and Open Learning. UNESCO (2001), in an attempt to identify the difference between open learning and distance education, indicated that distance education is an educational process by which a greater part of facilitation is done by an individual who is removed by space and time from the

learner while open learning is an organized educational activity, based on the use of teaching materials, in which limitations on studies are minimized in terms of either access, time or place, method of study or a combination of these. Additionally, the Commonwealth of Learning (CoL, 2004) states that the policies of open learning should not be made a part of distance education programmes but are complimentary to it.

Rowntree (as cited in Akrofi, 2010) uses the term distance learning to include all distance learning, as such learning extends to both industrial and professional learning. Keegan (as cited in Akrofi, 2010) on the other hand uses the term distance education to include both distance teaching and learning. Holmberg (as cited in Akrofi) throwing more light, indicated that the term distance learning could be limited to denote the activity of the students while distance teaching denotes that of the supporting institutions such as course writers, editors and facilitators.

Keegan again (as cited by Akrofi, 2010) offers a vivid description of distance education. He sees distance education based on the following characteristics as:

- (a) Semi-permanent separation of facilitator and learner throughout the length of the learning process. This differentiates it from the conventional face-to-face.
- (b) Impact of an educational organization both in planning and preparation of learning materials and in the provision of student support services. This makes it quite different from private and “self tuition programmes”.
- (c) The use of media-print, audio, video and computer as a means of content delivery.

(d) Provision of two-way communication so that the student may benefit from an initial dialogue. This separates it from other uses of technology in education.

Another vital feature of distance education is the profile of distance learners. Peters (as cited in Akrofi, 2010) indicates that students differ primarily in the following ways: they have varied experiences of life, many of them bring considerable experiences from their work place to the academic arena and this has influence on their studies especially when the academic work and the professional experience cover the same thing; there are some distance learners who strive for higher socio-economic status as a result of their experience at work; being mostly adult learners, studying becomes a different function as compared to younger students of 19 – 25 years of age, because they fit into plans of life-cycles in varied ways. In distance education, students are physically, emotionally and separated from the institution.

Moore (as cited in Makoe, 2006) defines this distance education in terms of the responsiveness of an educational programme to the student rather than in terms of the physical separation of the instructor and the student. He went on further to argue that distance education, is not only a geographic separation between the facilitators and the learners, but a pedagogic concept. One of the major challenges facing distance education is the provision of support for “isolated students who are left to fend for themselves” (Brindley & Paul, 2004, p.40).

Students studying through distance education are not only geographically isolated from their facilitators as sources of information and separated from their peers as sources of support, but also the effects of such possibility for engagement with facilitators, study materials, academic calendar, study guide and peers (

Simpson, 2002). Studies have shown that proper provision of student support services may break learners isolation and meet not only the academic demands of students in distance education but also their social needs (Brindley & Paul 2004; Rumble 2000; Tait 2003; Thorpe 2001).

From the researchers perspective, distance education could be defined as a mode of delivery by which the facilitator is separated from the learners, thereby necessitating the use of unnatural communication system such as telephone, email etc. to facilitate interaction between facilitator and learners and learners and learners. Distance education enables individuals yearning for higher and quality education to stay in the comfort of their homes, work places and everywhere to enjoy tertiary education to obtain diplomas and degrees.

Distance Education in the University of Cape Coast

The University of Cape Coast was established to train graduate teachers for second cycle institutions. As the first teacher University, it was mandated to create unlimited opportunities for the over hundreds of thousands teachers throughout the country to up-date their knowledge and up-grade themselves professionally (Mensah & Owusu-Mensah, 2002). Based on this mandate and the recommendation made by Commonwealth of Learning (CoL) and the United Nations Educational for Scientific and Cultural Organization on a survey conducted on the orders of the Government of Ghana through the Ministry of Education, the University of Cape Coast established the Centre for Continuing Education in 1997 to absorb teachers and other professionals who could not gain admission to the mainstream, due to limited facilities such as lecture halls and halls of residence among others. Though

the Centre for Continuing Education was started in 1997, the programmes took off in October 2001 in nine regional capitals of Ghana with seven hundred and fifty applicants in basic education who had the desire to upgrade themselves but could not have access to the mainstream even though they had the entry requirement (Koomson, 2010; Owusu & Owusu-Mensah, 2002). The mission of distance education in Ghana and the University of Cape Coast is to make quality education at all levels more accessible and relevant to meet the learning needs of all Ghanaians so as to enhance their performance and improve the quality of their lives (Koomson, 2010).

In Ghana, about 15,000 certificate “A” teachers leave the classroom each year for further studies, creating vacancies too difficult for the government to fill, because the number of teachers who gain admission to the Universities is greater than those turned out by these institutions annually (Owusu & Owusu-Mensah, 2002). The exodus of teachers into the universities to upgrade themselves is due to the government of Ghana’s directive that the minimum qualification for teaching in Ghanaian basic school by the year 2015 should be at least a diploma certificate (Owusu & Owusu-Mensah, 2002).

The University of Cape Coast uses the dual mode in the delivery of its distance education programmes. This implied that, the same entry requirements for programmes, courses follow the same mode and the conduct of quizzes and examinations follow the same regulations as the mainstream. The mode of operation is through the print media (modules) and weekly face to face in all the 35 study centres for education group and 12 study centres for the business group study centres scattered nationwide. These centres are monitored on weekly basis by officials from the University of Cape Coast. There are also well equipped offices in

the ten regional capitals and they are managed by Resident Tutors who are senior members, administrative staff (senior staff) and junior staff. The main programmes pursued by the distance learners are education, commerce, management studies and marketing. Distance education, unlike the conventional system is flexible in terms of time, place of study and techniques of imparting knowledge (Hall & Mannett as cited in Dawson-Brew & Ankoma-Sey (2008).

The Centre for Continuing Education has study centres which provide facilitator support, counselling services, and an encouraging learning environment. The study centre offer students places to attend lectures, hold discussion with study group members, register during the beginning of every semester, collect fresh modules, time-table, academic calendar and other study materials (Makoe, 2006).

Models of Distance Education

The organization and operational practices of distance education programmes are based on the philosophy and policies of that institution as well as economic and political restrictions of a country (Verduin & Clark as cited in Akrofi, 2010). Majority of educationists prefer a student-centred model while politics and economics might dictate a more institution-centred approach with much control and a larger number of students (Verduin & Clark, as cited in Akrofi, 2010).

In an unpublished work on Distance Education Awareness Creation presented to the University of Cape Coast by Aggor (as cited in Adentwi, 2002) identified three different organizational model in distance education as follows:

- (a) single mode institutions

- (b) dual mode institution

Single Mode Institutions

Single mode institutions also known as purpose-build institutions are institutions created for the purpose of providing quality education via distance education. These institutions prepare their own detailed instructional packages for use by their students in pursuit of specific academic or professional programmes (Akrofi, 2010). According to Moore & Kearsley as cited in Akrofi, 2010) such institutions have accreditation, prescribe their own syllabus, conduct their own examinations, award certificates, diplomas and degrees. The University of Great Britain is the most widely known institution using the single mode to offer distance education programmes (Moore & Kearsley as cited in Akrofi, 2010).

Numerous factors account for the popularity of the single model and Holmberg (2001) have identified the following factors:

- (a) Facilitators in these institutions are specially trained to meet the peculiar needs of their distance students who are their first priority. Thus distractions that might dilute their services are immediately removed.
- (b) The single mode distance education programmes are flexible to accommodate desirable changes which distance learners may require.
- (c) The single mode distance education programmes also tend to be more suitable for the mature and employed students who prefer adult teaching and learning methods which permit them to learn on their jobs and at their own pace.

According to Perry & Rumble (as cited in Adentwi, 2002), the main challenge associated with the single mode is that it is expensive to operate. It requires setting up an organization having its own plant in the form of buildings, machinery, tools and equipment for planning, designing and producing instructional materials. It also requires highly qualified staff to handle the business of providing quality education at a distance.

Dual Mode

Aggor (as cited in Adentwi, 2002) stated that dual distance education institutions provide both on-campus conventional residential education and off-campus courses by distance via correspondence and other electronic media.

An example of such institutions was the Deakin University in Australia which was established with the aim of serving a dual mode purpose. (Peters, as cited in Akrofi, 2010) other universities such as Simon Fraser University Vancouver, Canada, University of Lagos Nigeria and University of Zambia were all initially established as conventional residential universities but later included the distance education component to meet the pressing demands of university education by the populace (Mark as cited in Akrofi, 2010). In Ghana, the University of Cape Coast and University of Education, Winneba offer the dual mode.

A main feature of the dual mode is that, the courses offered in the conventional system are mounted for learners on the distance education programmes (Rowntree as cited in Akrofi, 2010). The implication is that, the traditional campus-based courses are offered to distance learners concurrently. The dual mode has some advantages and disadvantages. Some of the advantages are as follows:

- (a) Dual mode institutions ensure that comparable standards are met on both programmes. To ensure uniformity of standards, students on both programmes use the same curriculum, the same assessment format, follow the same rules and regulations in writing quizzes and examinations, the same monitoring and evaluation system and graduates on both programmes are awarded the same certificate of degrees, diplomas and so on.
- (b) The dual mode system also helps to give credibility to certificates obtained by distance learning. This is because the certificates obtained are recognized by the job market since the institutions awarding them are known. The reason being that, since the distance education courses were offered by universities already in existence, then the graduates have been subjected to the right kind of learning experiences. (Akrofi, 2010)

Some few challenges have been identified with the dual mode model and they are as follows:

- (a) Rumble (as cited in Akrofi, 2010) indicated that with dual mode model, lecturers who teach regular students also take up additional responsibility as facilitators on the distance education programmes. This may overload them with work. In this situation they may approach their duties on the distance education without commitment.
- (b) Furthermore, staff of the distance education programmes may be seen as inferior by their colleagues who handle students on the conventional programme (Rumble, as cited in Akrofi, 2010)

Characteristics of Distance Learners

The major characteristics of distance learners as proposed by Tait (2000) include, gender, age, geographical, location, employment, income status, educational background, marital status and cultural. Rumble (2000) also argues that the information about student characteristics should not be based solely on aggregated data, but also the context in which learning takes place should be taken care of.

Adult learners bring various experiences and exhibit maturity in their studies, because of their state of maturity, they make wiser judgements and decisions. They make conscious efforts to study to improve their academic performance and manage their time for studies. Most adults turn to distance education because of:

- Financial or environmental factors may have hindered some adults from continuing with their education when young.
- Others may have drop-out from the main stream because of poor academic performance.
- Those who completed school many years back have lost touch with how to study (Kamau, 1999).

Research conducted by Worcester Polytechnic Institute showed that, there are demographic and personality similarities among many of the distance learners that provide the basis for describing a typical distance learning student.

Most studies have shown that majority of distance learners are average in age and older than students on campus-based programmes. In a survey conducted in 2004 with Worcester Polytechnic Institute campus-based students, it was realised that 73% of the students were under age 35. Also in April 2007 a survey was

conducted with distance education students in the same institution and it came to light that 58% of the students population were below 35 years.

Similarly, in many of the institutions offering distance education programmes in North America, the students are mostly females. Various studies conducted showed that between 60% and 70% of students are females (University of Florida, 2003). Again, several investigations have shown that, more than half of distance learning students are on full-time jobs. These students are pursuing programmes that would enable them develop themselves academically and also earn promotion. Furthermore, studies have shown that, majority of distance students are married with children and other dependents. This indicates that these special students have combined family life, job and their education (Hweb@wpi.edu.2007)

Another point is that, distance education programmes have attracted students whose geographical location from institutions with regular programmes are far and as such have hindered their enrolment. Others even though are close to institutions offering regular programmes have opted for distance learning because of its convenience and flexibility.

Similarly, students who are attracted to distance education and have performed creditably in their courses of study have exhibited the following affective characteristics:

- Research conducted have indicated that students on the distance learning programmes have internal locus of control than those on the main stream. That is, they have the belief that, consequences stem from one's own behaviour and efforts.
- Also distance learners are self-directed, are able to manage their own learning and perform well on their various programmes.

- Similarly, distance learners, seem to be highly, intelligent, emotionally stable, trusting, compulsive, passive, conforming, self-sufficient, introverted and expedient than their counter-parts on the regular programmes. (Thompson,) June, 2005)
- Thompson, further stated that, distance learners, learn from a variety of content types and activities.
- Distance learning programmes are attracted to students who live far away from the traditional university campuses in some cases. Of late, the convenience of not having to be in a specific location to enjoy university or higher education is a motivator for distance learners, but the convenience of not being time-bound is an important factor. Distance students lead very tight schedules and they are supposed to fit their coursework in their schedules when it is convenient for them. Also, some distance learners are motivated by the mode of instruction itself.

The process of learning for distance learners is more complex than students on the regular programme. For instance, Schemer (as cited in Ahiatrogah, Deku & Dramanu, 2008) observed that many distance learners are older, have jobs and families which influence their studies. They are also faced with lack of motivational factors of learning such as contact or competition with other students. It also takes them a longer time to establish rapport with their facilitators because they do not interact with them often.

Some fresh students on the University of Cape Coast distance education programmes and many distance learners may have difficulty determining what the demands of university study actually are because they are not familiar with the delivery of distance education materials (Ahiatrogah, Deku & Dramanu, 2008).

Morgan (as cited in Akuamoah-Boateng & Boadu, 2013), noted that those who are not confident about their learning tend to concentrate on memorizing facts in order to complete assignments and write examinations. As a result, they end up with poor understanding of learning material.

Distance Education in Ghana

Over the past years, universities in Ghana have had the unpleasant duty of turning away a great number of qualified applicants due to limited facilities. Based on this and many other factors the government of Ghana charged all public tertiary institution to find ways of offering admission to applicants to avoid wastage of the needed human resources, and talents since this can weaken the manpower base of organizations. This gave birth to distance education to absorb qualified applicants who could not be admitted into the conventional system (Mensah, & Owusu Mensah, 2002).

Almost all the public Universities in Ghana, University of Ghana, University of Cape Coast, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, University of Education, Winneba, University for Development Studies, Tamale and University of Mines and Technology, Tarkwa, have adopted distance education as an alternative to complement the conventional system of education (Mensah & Owusu Mensah, 2002). The introduction of distance education into the Educational Sector in the Western World is more than a century but in Africa it is quite recent. According to (Mensah & Owusu Mensah, 2002), the idea of distance education for the development of manpower for the various sectors of the economy resurfaced in 1982. This led to the introduction of various distance education initiatives including the Modular Teacher Training Programme which saw the light in 1982 in all the Colleges of Education in Ghana. The programme was intended to upgrade all

untrained teachers in the classroom academically and professionally, through the programme, seven thousand, five hundred the thirty seven (7,537) untrained teachers received professional training and obtained Teacher's Certificated 'A' (Mensah & Owusu Mensah, 2002). The programme also did not stay long because of financial and other problems.

A government policy in the 2002/2003 enabled over 3,000 teachers and other professional to pursue higher education each year in the universities and other tertiary institutions in Ghana. The number however reduced drastically due to the difficulty in replacing those who leave (National Coordinators for UNESCO, TISSA, 2006). The reason being that, some of those who leave to pursue further education do not get their positions back, whilst others divert to organizations that pay better salaries. This prompted the government of Ghana to reduce drastically the number of workers granted study leave with pay. Therefore the introduction of the distance education programme for teachers and other professionals to pursue higher education whilst on the job was very timely. To make the distance education viable and a better alternative to the conventional system, the government of Ghana through the Ministry of Education sponsored a number of surveys to assess the needs of distance education in Ghana between 1991 and 1994 (Mensah & Owusu Mensah, 2002). Two international organizations involved in the surveys were the Commonwealth of Learning and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (Mensah & Owusu Mensah, 2002). Based on the results of the survey, the six main universities in Ghana embraced distance education to implement the Ghana government's policy of making quality education accessible to all (Ministry of Education, MOE 2005). The institutions offering distance education in Ghana have their own ambitions, for instance a study conducted by Mensah and

Owusu-Mensah (2002) on the interest in distance education in four out of the six public universities; the University of Ghana, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, University of Cape Coast and University of Education, offered the following reasons for accepting distance education.

1. Distance education will help them to expand access to many applicants who do not gain admission even though they have the requisite grade.
2. Distance education will make quality education available to the large number of the working populace who are unable to study full-time.
3. Distance education programmes would be useful to workers in the private sector and other organizations which by their collective agreement policy, do not grant study leave with pay to their workers.

In Ghana, many people use education to enhance their prospects for promotion and self-actualization. Professionals including teachers are a group of individuals who are always eager to upgrade themselves educationally, but access to university education is a barrier (Akrofi, 2010). He went on further to say that, since access to the conventional system is highly competitive and expensive, distance education is the best option for people who are not prepared to leave their jobs to stay in the comfort of their homes and pursue university education. Since distance education has come to stay as a better option for workers, it should be well managed by institutions offering distance education programmes to enhance the prospects it holds for students.

Challenges of Distance Education

Distance education changes learning from the ordinary centralized school system to a decentralized and flexible system. Also it reverses social dynamics by

bringing learning to the door step of students rather than students to the institution. The programme, however is faced with a lot of challenges. The major challenges faced by the distance education programmes according to Galusha (ascited in Akrofi, 2010) are student-related, faculty related, organizational-related and course-related.

Challenges students face fall into many clear categories, such as cost involved in the programme, motivation, feedback, contact with facilitators, student support services, lack of experience and training (Keegan as cited in Akrofi 2010). According to Koomson (as cited in Akrofi, 2010) majority of the distance learners are faced with the problem of meeting their financial obligation in connection to the programme. This is because they bear the cost of the programme as well as shouldering huge financial commitment towards their families, and this brings stress on the students and subsequently lack of interest in the programme (Galusha, as cited in Akrofi, 2010).

Another challenging factor affecting distance learners is lack of effective feedback strategies from institutions and facilitators. Basically, face to face sessions are not regular and so affects students contact time with facilitators as well as self-evaluation. Keegan (as cited in Akrofi, 2010), believes that the separation of students from facilitators as imposed by distance removes on important link of communication between these two parties. According to Keegan (as cited in Akrofi, 2010) in a study he conducted in Mongolia indicated that learners do not receive enough reintegration strategies such as electronic communication and feedback from facilitators and as such do not experience a complete academic and social integration into institutional life. Hence such students are more likely to drop out of the programme.

Burge and Howard (as cited in Bampoe, 2008) revealed in a study that, the utilization of on-site facilities tend to increase students interaction with facilitators and peers. This may lead to greater satisfaction of students. In a similar research conducted at Athabasca University (AU) by Coldeway, Mac Rury and Spencer (as cited in Akrofi, 2010) found out that distance learners were motivated when they frequently interacted with their facilitators.

Another major area of concern for distance learners is lack of support services such as counselling services, feedback, learning materials and many more. According to Wood (as cited in Akrofi, 2010) support for distance learners should not be over looked when planning distance education programmes. Students need facilitators, and academic counsellors to help them to complete courses on time and act as a support system when stress becomes a problem. Academic counsellors of Washington State University hold the view that success in attracting and retaining students will depend on excellent student support services than on any technology issues (Oaks, as cited in Akrofi, 2010).

According to Akrofi, (2010) alienation and isolation are also challenges distance learners face. Distance education programmes take away social interactions that would be present in the traditional learning environments. Institutions offering distance education programmes should use facilitators to bring about personal involvement of students through communication (Tait as cited in Roberts, n.d).

Another challenge faced by distance learners according to Rowntree (cited in Akrofi, 2010) is the use of computers and the internet. He indicated that most adult learners are not well versed in these new technologies so are faced with the problem of logging in for vital information. Rowntree, went on further to say

that, adult learners must be taught how to manage not only their study time but also the materials presented to them. Wood (as cited in Akrofi, 2010) stressed that, distance learners are to be offered tuition in computer studies so that technology based barriers could be minimized.

Chou, (as cited in Akrofi, 2010) explains that student and facilitator concerns represent the human aspects of distance education programmes. He further stated that organizational problems, especially infrastructure and technology problems, also present challenges and that instructional heads of distance education programmes must be committed. Marrs (as cited in Akrofi, 2010) admits that without the commitment from institutions offering distance education programmes, it runs the risk of becoming a peripheral activity.

Availability of funds for both students on the distance education programmes and the institutions offering distance education programmes. When technology is used, the costs increase substantially for both students and the institution. Telecommunication and connectivity cost so those using them incur additional cost. According to Kinnaman (ascited in Akrofi 2010) distance education institutions should regardless of cost issues instituted to advance education the cost of education and not as a sole effort to save money.

Inadequate telecommunication facilities is another challenge faced by distance education students and the institutions offering distance education programmes. Harry (cited in Akrofi, 2010) observed that, existing telecommunications systems are inefficient and expensive, so educational institutions are reluctant to rely on them for facilitating, support or information searching. This explains why most distance education institutions in developing countries still do not rely on them for facilitating, support or information searching.

This explains why most distance education institutions in developing countries still rely on print media, cassettes and radio delivery methods for the distance education programmes. These situations obstruct facilitators from using advanced media and to provide quality material for students.

Delay in the distribution of learning materials to students is another challenge for distance education. Adentwi (2002) attributed the delay to the fact that most distance education institutions sublet the production of the modules to private companies most of who lack the capacity to produce on a large scale. According to Moore and Thompson (as cited in Akrofi, 2010) such delays affect the performance of students and their completion rate. Though distance education is at the infancy stage in Ghana, learning materials being used by students are of good quality, simple and learner friendly (Adentwi, 2002).

Assessment of students performance is another challenge faced in distance education programmes. Keegan (as cited in Akrofi, 2010) claimed that, distance learners perform poorly in assessment than their counterparts on the regular programme. However, a study of the results of 67 science students at the California State University (CSU) over a six year period showed that there was no difference between distance and regular students in the proportions of students in each grade category (Harden, as cited in Akrofi, 2010). However, objective testing does not reward soon enough for adequate reinforcement. Since one key to a successful learning campaign is positive reinforcement, the method of assessing students performance must be developed to interactively test what it is supposed to test.

Instructional methods and models used by facilitators on the distance education programmes are also part of the challenges (Jackman, as cited in Akrofi, 2010). In a study he conducted with 93 Interactive Video Network (IVN) graduate

students at North Dakota State University in 1993 and 1994 found that the students place high importance on active learning models. He stressed on the importance of pacing techniques which enable students to learn in bits at their own pace and time and it has a positive effect on completion rate. Jackman (as cited in Akrofi, 2010) conducted another study into completion rate in some identified universities which use the pacing techniques. The results showed that the completion rates were more than double those institutions in which the courses were open-ended. Although the coursework and delivery methods were the same, those institutions that used the pacing technique were more successful at retaining their distance learners.

Attitude of some facilitators towards the distance education programmes is also a major challenge of distance education. In all instructional situation, it is the instructor that sets the tone and pace for learning. Based on this, the instructor who transmits information must be trained and well-motivated to be effective and to be retained on the job (Carter, 2001). Weber (as cited in Akrofi, 2010) suggested that a facilitator is to be well equipped technologically and confidently so that he/she would be in a position to use the various electronic devices effectively. Facilitators must also be in a position to use their discretion to modify the way information is delivered for effective learning and academic performance of learners. Carter (2001) found in a study conducted with adult learners that, to bridge the gap between the learning environment and facilitation on the distance education programmes, faculty need to consider teaching from students point of view.

Supervision is also an important factor in distance education. Both facilitators and students are to be supervised and monitored for effective teaching and learning. Unfortunately most institutions offering distance education programmes fall foul in this important area, and this affects productivity and

academic performance (Sheets, as cited in Akrofi, 2010). This result in high attrition rate and poor academic performance of distance learners (Bates, as cited in Akrofi, 2010).

Low income status of teachers on the distance education programme is also a major challenge. Teachers in developing countries earn low salaries and so find it difficult to pay their fees and to meet family responsibilities. The government of Ghana acknowledges the importance of education and as such is committed to offer assistance to distance education and the learners (Government of Ghana, 2004).

Prospects of Distance Education

Distance education prepares students with skills for the self-directed continuing and recurrent education which will be vital for their continuing professional development in a world of rapidly changing information and ideas (Johnston, as cited in Akrofi, 2010). Distance education provides opportunity for a large number of people to acquire formal education which otherwise would have been a problem (Bishop, as cited in Adentwi, 2002). Hellman (2003) identified the following as prospects of distance education:

- a. Increase in access of formal education
- b. Flexibility
- c. Saving of funds

On the access of formal education for example, a great number of potential applicants do not get admission into tertiary education due to limited facilities and other challenges. (Diamini as cited in Akrofi, 2010) explained that about 20% of qualified applicants are not able to access university education in Swaziland for lack of space on the conventional campus. But with advent of distance education this

challenge has been minimized in Swaziland. Tait (as cited in Akrofi, 2010) asserted that a vital role of distance education is to grant access to tertiary education to qualified applicants who otherwise would have been dropped. In support of the issue, (Paul as cited in Akrofi, 2010) explained that distance education has brought relief to applicants who would have been faced with time constraints, financial demands and geographical demands to enjoy quality university education. (Coombs as cited in Akrofi, 2010) indicated life-long education is very important in a rapidly developing, changing and progressing society. Based on this he itemized three main reasons as benefits of distance education and these are:

- a. To offer professionals already in the system a form of in-service training to be abreast with new issues in their various areas of specialization so as to be more effective and efficient.
- b. To help enrich the leisure time of individuals
- c. To motivate professionals on various jobs to enhance productivity

Distance education offers opportunity to a large audience, meeting the needs of students who are unable to attend on campus classes (Moore & Thompson cited in Akrofi, 2010). Rose (as cited in Akrofi, 2010) asserted that distance education in various ways has proved to have the capability to educate people who would not have had the opportunity to enjoy higher education. According to (Moore & Thompson as cited in Akrofi, 2010) some studies conducted in Mongolia indicated that distance education has been able to reach more professionals in the working populace than the conventional system. He went on further to say that, distance education has helped over half of the country's primary school teachers and headteachers to gain access to university whilst still on the job. Bollag and Overland, (2001), indicated that distance education is used in places such as Beijing,

Jarkata, Brazil, Argentina and America as a means to reach learners that would not have been reached by other mode of education. This assertion by Moore & Thompson, Bollag and Overland, has been collaborated by Keegan (cited in Akrofi, 2010) that distance education attracts a lot of applicants due to the fact that it is cheaper, more flexible and easy to access. Also, according to the American Council on Education, the number of distance education students increased to 1.6 million in 1995 and 1998 (Devarics, 2001). Dibiase (2001), in a study found that by 2002, the number of students on the distance education programmes in colleges and universities in America will increase to 2.2 million.

Bollag & Overland (2001) asserted that distance education promotes efficiency of work, because, students on the programmes who are mostly workers transfer the theories, techniques and skills they acquire from their studies to improve their job performance. Also most African countries such as Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Nigeria, Zimbabwe, Ghana and South Africa use distance education programmes to develop more professional teachers and other professionals (Chivore cited in Akrofi, 2010).

For example, the government of Tanzania in its quest to achieve Universal Primary Education within five years used distance education to train a total number of 37,998 teachers for the classrooms. This made an effective impact on Tanzania primary education (Oduro, 2008). In a survey conducted by Musa (2002) in Wa district of the Upper West region in Ghana brought to light that professional teachers show greater interest in distance education because they see it as a means to upgrade themselves and to be competent.

Again, a study conducted by Owusu-Boateng, Essel and Mensah (2001), revealed that distance education programmes, enhance the prospects for promotion.

In the study 88% of teachers agreed to the fact that distance education increase their chances of being promoted to higher ranks. In collaboration to the study, Owusu-Boateng, Essel and Mensah (2001) conducted a study on the same issue and the results showed that most of the students (81.1%) hold the view that distance education enhances the prospects for promotion. According to Oduro (2008), most distance learners have positive perception towards distance education because of its prospects. A study conducted with Pennsylvania University students by Ferguson and Wijekuman (2000) on their satisfaction with the distance education programmes revealed that (75%) of them were satisfied. Furthermore, a study by Mireku-Gyimah (as cited in Akrofi, 2010) on interest of students in distance education revealed that majority of the students (88%) saw the need for distance education at the tertiary level. Reasons being that the programme is accessible, flexible and offers the opportunity for career development these and other factors motivate them to opt for distance education.

Ravhudzuho (2000) explained that distance education programmes enable students study at one's pace, as there is no time limit for studies. The implication is that, in distance education students do not have to physically be with the facilitator in space depending on the method of instruction and they need not also be together in time. This is an advantage for distance education students who cannot attend regular lecturers. According to Savoye, (2002), satellite campuses such as Arkansas State University which now has offered opportunities for adult learners in and around small towns and cities to enjoy university education.

Distance education, according to Przymus (2004) has helped women who could not leave their families to upgrade themselves in the regular universities to enjoy higher education from their homes. In a study he conducted in Canada it was

revealed that women enjoy distance education programmes in the mist of their hectic life style. The programme allows them to learn at any time or any place. In a study conducted by Reuss (cited in Kwapong, 2007) revealed that majority of women in Athabasca University (AU) showed interest in the distance education programmes. The study further revealed that, 67% of Athabasca University (AU) students are women, and most of them have post-secondary education but did not have the chance to complete their university education. In a related investigation by Kyei-Baffour cited in Adentwi (2002) he explained that distance education could be the answer to the gender imbalance at the tertiary education level. He further indicated that out of the 86 students matriculated into the distance education programmes of the University of Education, Winneba (UEW) 46 were women and only 40 were males.

This implies that, distance education provides a very convenient means by which many women could combine their desire for higher education with their matrimonial responsibilities. In Ghana for instance, distance education is being used to train basic school teachers because of its prospects (Adentwi, 2002). An investigation conducted by Adukpo (2007) on the reasons why Ghanaian teachers are more interested in distance education than the conventional system, it came to light that 87% of teachers have interest in distance education because of its flexibility. Again, Musa (2002) found in his studies with the University of Cape Coast distance learners in Wa that, they were motivated to pursue the programmes offered because they would enrich their knowledge to be efficient and competent. In another study conducted by Owusu-Boateng, Essel and Mensah (2001), to establish whether distance learners have the believe that the programme could help them upgrade themselves academically, 95% of the respondents accepted that distance

education offers them the opportunity. In a similar study Sam-Tagoe, (2000) collaborated the finding that distance education would help them achieve their ambition for higher education.

Distance education institutions in Ghana have some ambitions for mounting such programmes. In a study conducted by Mensah and Owusu-Mensah (2002) on the interest in distance education in four public universities, these are; the University of Ghana, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, the University of Cape Coast and the University of Education, Winneba, the following were noted by the researchers as the reasons why these institutions favour distance education programmes:

- a. Distance education would help them to expand access to many applicants who do not gain admission every year.
- b. Distance education would make higher education available to the large number of the working population who are not able to study full-time because they fear they would not get their positions back after completion.
- c. Distance education programmes would benefit workers in the private sector and other organizations which by their collective agreement policy, do not grant study leave with pay to their workers.

Most people use education to enhance their prospects for promotion and self-actualization. However, since access to conventional university education is becoming competitive and expensive, distance education presents the best option. Therefore distance education is to be well managed by institutions offering distance education programmes to enhance the prospects they have for students.

2.7 Review of Related Studies

Research in the behavioural learning theories tradition (Bandura, 1969) has established that no matter how powerful a reward is, it may have little impact on behaviour if it is given infrequently; small and immediate feedback is more effective than large infrequent ones. Research on frequency of testing and immediate feedback has been found to be good to assess student progress (Peckham & Roe, 1977; Kjur, et al, 1986). It also points out the importance of questioning in class, so that students can gain information about their own level of understanding and can receive reinforcement to improve their academic performance.

In the case of delayed feedback, results on quizzes and examinations are not delivered on time for students to know their progress of work. A research conducted by Ogilvie, (2003) on the effect of immediate and delayed feedback on learners revealed that learners who receive feedback immediately after a quiz had been written, gain a slightly higher score than their colleagues whose results are delayed. In the case of distance learning, if feedback on quizzes is immediate, students have the chance of going through the marked scripts to correct mistakes and prepare adequately for future quizzes and other academic assignments. On the other hand, if feedback is delayed, students do not have the chance to correct their previous mistakes and this affects their academic work.

Research has consistently shown that there was an explicit relationship between the physical characteristics of learning environment and educational outcomes. Facilities in the school and the classroom environment must be flexible enough to accommodate changing learning patterns. According to Tennessee Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relationship: Staff Information Report (TACR) (2003), that there was growing evidence of a correlation between learning

environment, student behavior and performance. Further research studies found that there was significant relationship between learning environment and students' performance (TACR, 2003). Similar research findings have indicated that good light, clear air, small, quiet, comfortable and safe environment were very vital for academic performance (Buckley, Schneider, & Shang, 2004a; Schneider, 2002).

Furthermore, research studies of Anderson, Berner, Cash, Earthman, Hines (cited in Sam-Tagoe, 2008) have collaborated other research findings which indicated that, conditions of the learning environment of schools, which included in operative heating system, inadequate ventilation and poor lighting affected the health and learning outcomes as well as the morale of students and staff. Lizzio, Wilsons and Simons (2002) studied the relationship between university students perception of their academic environment approaches to learning and academic performance. The result indicated that students perception as influencing both 'hard' (academic achievement) and "soft" (satisfaction, development of key skills) academic performance, both directly and immediate through their approaches to learning, perceptions of heavy workload and inappropriate assessment influenced students towards surface learning.

Similarly, Yee-Yuen and Watkins (as cited in Ahiatrogah & Koomson, 2005) reported that, the result from a research conducted in Hong Kong indicated that students perceived their learning environment to be relatively competitive and teacher controlled. The students further stated that they preferred a friendlier atmosphere where students and teachers collaborated to provide a greater variety of interesting but challenging activities, such a learning environment would promote a deeper and more oriented approach to learning. The relationship was stronger between preferred deep approach to learning and a good learning environment.

Furthermore, studies about students academic performance and learning environment concluded that the quality of the environment affects students performance. There is also sufficient research results that indicated that the learning environment students spend a great deal of their time learning influence how well they learn and their academic performance (Earthman, 2004; 18) Some further studies were conducted to examine the effect of the learning environment which included seating furnishings, noise and acoustics, climate, air quality, windowless classrooms, lights and so on, on students achievement and well-being (Keep 2002, Higgins, Hall, Woolner & McCaughey, 2005; Lackney & Jacobs, 2004; Earthman, 2004). The findings from the studies indicated that, heating, temperature and quality of air are the most important individual elements of students achievement. Also chronic noise exposure impairs cognitive functioning and noise-related reading problems. In relation to students achievement it is argued that day light offers the most positive effect on the human body (Earthman, 2004; Heschong& Mahone Group, 2003).

Moreover, a study conducted by Knez (2001) to unearth the effect of lighting and gender on the academic performance and it was found that females were more perceptive to light than males. Further Knez (2001) found out that males and females performed differently academically in various kinds of lighting systems.

Consistent with other studies, Padhi (as cited in Dramanu, 2012) conducted a study on effects of learning environment and academic performance. The sample used was made up 636 students drawn from fifteen (15) schools randomly. The finding revealed that learning environment has an effect on students academic performance significantly. Also there is a growing research literature to show that, there is a relationship between students academic performance and the conditions of

the learning environment (Buckley, Schneider & Shang, 2004a; Lewis, 2000; Filando, 2008; Hunter, 2006; Schneider, 2003b). Hale (2002) found that students in learning environments with large windows, natural lighting and well-designed daylightings performed 19% - 26% better than their peers in learning environments that lack these facilities. Furthermore, researchers have found that poor academic achievement was attributed to noisy learning environment, polluted air, poor conditions in the classroom and uncomfortable furniture (Clinton-Gore Administration, 2000; Earthman, 2000). In another development, Tanner and Lackney (2006) identified numerous trends in a study conducted that influenced the design of learning environments that includes site and educational space, character of all spaces (e.g. air, light, noise, etc.).

According to a research conducted by Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (2000, as cited in Vandiver, 2011) the results demonstrated that, there was relationship between student performance (achievement and behavior) and the learning environment McGuffey (cited in Dramanu, 2012) asserted that earlier studies correlated student academic performance with better building quality, better thermal comfort, quality of air and better lighting.

Chan (cited in Dramanu, 2012), stated seven research studies conducted some years back found a relationship between learning environment and students academic achievement. This finding is consistent with the research studies conducted by Lewasters (as cited in Dramani, 2012 & Schneider 2002) which indicated that students achievements and behavior are fostered by good lighting in the classroom environment. In another research, the findings showed that good lighting system in the learning environment, significantly increased students test

scores and promoted better health and physical development (Energy Star, 2003; Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) 2000; Fischer, 2008; Schneider, 2002). The research result is supported by Schneider's finding which indicated that poor lighting and poor air quality made students as well as teachers sick. This meant that students and teachers could not perform well academically in an environment with poor air and lighting system. Similarly, it was established in another research study that poor ventilation in the learning environment had been associated with increased student absenteeism which affects performance EPA, 2000; Schneider, 2002; Smedje& Norback as cited in Dramanu, 2012).

In support to these findings, Olson & Kallum (2003) showed that quality air in the learning environment has direct effect on students performance. Research has further shown that good and quality air in the learning environment had lessen students absenteeism and improved students academic achievement (EPA, 2000; Olsoon &Kellum, 2003). These results are consistent with Frazier's (as cited in Dramanu, 2012) findings, which pointed out that the quality of air inside public schools learning environment significantly affected students ability to concentrate during teaching and learning.

Furthermore, a research conducted by Earthman (2002) indicated the role noise play in the learning environment. He stressed that a good learning environment without unwanted noise was very important to students performance.

Consistent with other studies, Goodenow (as cited in Dramanu, 2012) investigated the link between students sense of academic motivation, effort and success. The results indicated that being part of a learning environment and enjoy support from facilitators was a powerful and essential indicator of students educational values and expectancies to excel. Another revelation from the study

linked with students effort and successes was the perception of students about their facilitators in term of interest, support and respect.

Also in a very comprehensive review of eight thousand researches on how students learn best, Walberg (as cited in Ahiatrogah, Deku & Dramanu 2008) asserted that good interaction between teachers and students contribute positively to students academic performance. Walberg, explained again that students who see the learning environment as appealing, satisfying goal oriented and challenging tend to study extensively and perform excellently. On the other hand students who see student learning environment as disorganized apathetic, full of friction and conflicts learn less and so perform poorly academically. Thus assertion was supported by Pressley and McComicks (as cited in Sam-Tagoe, 2008) who stressed that students who find themselves in learning environments that enhances academic progress employ a variety of approaches to learning, tock he academic tasks more aggressively, have a positive mind towards learning and have a strong believe that they would succeed academically when trying put ineffort.

Moreover, a number of studies have also revealed that Rosenfield, Richman & Bowen (2000) realized that, students who had the support of their teachers and colleagues enjoyed good grades in the school work.

In a similar studies, researchers have held discussions on the link between social interaction and social support among peers in institutions of learning and academic performance. It was further explained that an individual's peer group influences social and academic success (Pellegrini as cited in Johnson, 2000).

Furthermore, Epstein (as cited in Dramani, 2012) studied the link between the attitudes of colleagues towards achievement and academic performance over a period of one year, it came out that the achievement of students declined or

improved depending on the attitude of their friends towards academic work. The findings of Epstein was collaborated with the findings of Powers, Bowen & Rose (2005) who saw that being accepted by your peers and good behavior of friends have a positive effect on academic outcomes. In another development, Connell and Wellborn (as cited by Lubbers, Van DerWerf, Snijdera Creemers & Kuyper, 2006) found in a research they conducted the importance of social well-being in motivating academic performance. Similarly, a research conducted by Newton and Mwisukha (2009) showed that, there was a significant relationship between peer attitude, scores and academic performance. Thus brought to light that, students who were positively influenced by their peers performed well academically. On the other hand, peers who were negatively influenced achieved low scores. Newton and Mwisukha's (2009) findings was supported by Hansen and Ginsburgh (as cited in Ahiatrogah et al 2008) stated that the involvement of peers in extra reading of learning involvement of peers in extra reading of learning materials, write assignments and hold academic discussions enhance high scores in their academic work.

In a follow-up study, Fisher, (2000) rejected the findings by Newton and Mwisukha (2009) which found a correlation between peer influence and academic performance. Fisher (2000) established the fact that the correlation between peer support and academic performance was not significant. In another studies on peer influence and academic performance of African-American students, the results showed and incomplete picture of the role of peer group, Fordham and Ogbu (as cited in Clayton, 2008). Moreover there are proofs to support both negative and positive interactions among students and their peers, in most cases, researchers turn their attention on the negative aspect of peers when investigating African-American students. Furthermore, studies on the academic performance of African-American

students, some researchers hold the assumption that peers exert negative influence on each other's academic success (Hill, as cited in Musa 2002). This point of view was strengthened by the ethnographic research of Fordham and Ogbu, (as cited in Clayton, 2008) who saw that African-American students who opted to become academically successful were rejected by their African-American classmates. Fordham and Ogbu further stressed on the point that, peer influence is a major social factor which contribute to the problem of underachievement among African-American students. Though the works of Fordham and Ogbu has attracted a lot of attention from the public, it was not found conclusive support in empirical literature (Perry, 2008, Dormbusch and Brown; Wilson et al (as cited in Clayton, 2008).

Consistent with other studies, Momoh (as cited in Isola, 2010) conducted a research on the effects of learning materials on the academic performance of student who wrote examinations in ten subjects in the West Africa School Certificate Examinations (WASSCE)in Kwara State. It came out that, learning materials have a significant effect on students' academic achievement. Similarly, Popoola (as cited in Okoji, 2013) conducted a research in the Ogun State with five secondary schools in Abeokuta. The studies were based on availability and non-availability of learning materials. The results showed a significant difference in the performance of the two sets of students. The performance was better in the schools that has enough learning materials than those without adequate learning materials.

For some time now, there has been research reports that patronage of on-line learning materials impacted positively on the performance of University students' (William, Birch & Hancock, 2011; Woo, Gosper, McNeil, Woo, Philips, Preston,& Green, 2007; Catley, 2004).Consistent to this report, Mallik, (2011) indicated that the scores of university students increased by approximately 0.15% for every time

students logged into the unit's web-page. In another work, Morris & Walker (2006) also indicated that the introduction of web-based learning material increased the performance rates for a university unit by 20%.

Birch and Williams (2011) investigated the use of web learning materials by university students and its academic successes. It came out that, student used the on-line learning materials judiciously in their studies scored higher marks than those who did not rely on on-line learning materials. This investigation showed that the usage of on-line learning materials is a good indicator of academic excellence.

Furthermore, a study based on controlled and experimental groups was conducted in Ghana by a team from the Ministries of Information and Education and the University of Ghana, with forty rural schools in the Eastern region to establish the relationship between learning materials (books, newspapers) and academic performance. The experimental group read books and newspapers whilst the controlled group read nothing. Results after they were tested showed that the experimental group gained between five and six points and the difference was significant. This showed that learning materials (books, journals) have a significant influence on students' academic achievement.

Consistent with the results from Ghana, an investigation conducted in twenty one countries by International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) showed a relationship between academic performance and learning materials (textbooks) in six subject areas (science, reading comprehension, literature, English as a foreign language, French as a foreign language and civic education). The result showed significant relationship between learning material and academic performance (Tomber & Keeves; Purves as cited in Dramanu, 2012). Most of the researches conducted showed positive association between learning

materials (textbooks) that is clarity of content, language used and comprehensiveness of content and academic performance. For distance learners, prompt delivery of learning materials user friendly content, clear language and others enhances academic performance. In another research by Heyneman, Farrell, & Sepulveda- Stuardo (1978) they found out that textbook or learning material is an educational technology too. Though not new, books have never been widely diffused in less wealthy societies. Books or learning materials have the capacity to deliver massive amounts of new information to the most remote locations. If the content of a book is not clear for students to understand and comprehend it can be studied over and over again, if it is understood, students can continue to read. They also went onto say that learning materials encourages independent learning among students.

In a similar situation, (Nkatha as cited in Essuman, Forde, Asamoah, 2003) a study was conducted in Kenya with 720 secondary school students to establish the relationship between counseling programmes and academic performance. The findings revealed that guidance and counseling programmes enhances positive academic achievement, and the impact was not gender influenced.

Consistent with Nkatha's investigations, another study revealed that group counseling increased achievement scores and improved students relationships (Bermak, Clung & Siroskey-Sabdo, 2005). The implication is that, students spend much of their time with groups in schools, socialize with their peers to hold groups in schools, socialize with their peers to hold discussions, share ideas and solve problems (Bailey & Bradbury Bailey, 2007). Furthermore, a research conducted by Bailey, and Bradbury-Bailey, (2007) with students of the relationship between

African-American origin on the relationship between counseling services and academic performance revealed a positive relationship.

In a follow up studies conducted by Whiston and Sexton (as cited in Essuman, Ford & Asamoah) to examine the impact of school counselor led interventions on students' school achievement and behavior. The result indicated that a combined school counselor intervention of group counselling and classroom guidance were associated with a positive impact on achievement and behaviour.

The issue here is whether motivation has an impact on academic success is very vital in educational psychology. The desire in this issue has deepened among educational researchers and professionals in the academic arena because student motivation can change with approaches to learning they adopt for their studies and interpersonal factors. That is peers, counselors, facilitators and other school professionals can provide a situation for student motivation to thrive (Reeve as cited in Guay, Ratelle, Roy & Litalien, 2010) as have the ability to increase their academic success.

Outcomes of studies over the years have shown that, students with positive attitude and high motivation are more likely to prove achievement oriented behaviours and perform well academically (Green, Nelson, Marton & Marsh as cited in Ning & Downing, 2010). In an investigation conducted by Zimmerman (as cited in Schunk, 2005) it was revealed that a students' academic success could be described with 93% precision on the basic of student's measured self-regulation. Approaches to learning and motivation according Sprinthall, Sprinthall and Oja (as cited in Snowman, McCown & Biehler, 2009) are interdependent process. A student's opinion about academic value according to Zimmerman (as cited in Schunk 2005) is both a cause (motive) of learning as well as an effect (outcome) of

learning. Gottfried as cited in Halawah (2006) saw a positive correlation between motivation and academic performance. Basically, students with higher academic intrinsic motivation had significantly higher scores and intellectual successes. Gottfried, again realized that, early intrinsic motivation, correlates with later motivation and achievement and that later motivation is predictable from early successes. Gottfried's findings have been corroborated by the Self Determination Theory (SDT) by (Deci, Vallerand, Pelletier & Ryan (as cited in Deci & Ryan, 2000). This theory considers the fact that, individuals have an innate desire to stimulate and learn from birth, which is either supported or discouraged within their environment (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Deci and Ryan further explained that, the degree to which intrinsic motivation is seen to be dependent on the fulfillment of a person's psychological needs, the higher the performance.

Furthermore, Boggiano, Schields, Kellamk, Thompson, Simons and Katz (1992) saw that motivational position of students describe students standardized performance scores. Basically, students who are intrinsically motivated gain higher scores in English and Mathematics and higher overall scores in performance scores than those who are extrinsically motivated. The findings of Boggiano, Schields, Kellamk, Thompson, Simons and Katz (1992) showed that being an intrinsically motivated individual or extrinsically motivated individual affected achievement related behaviours and thinking in addition to standardized test scores. Students' who are extrinsically motivated exhibited poor academic performance. Their results suggested that motivation may determine their attribution and perceptions of competence which contribute to their academic performance.

In a submission by Fortler et al (as cited in Halawah (2006) it was realized that academic effectiveness was positively associated with intrinsic motivation.

They further submitted that, students who exhibit competency and self-determination in school, developed an autonomous motivational orientation towards academic work which in turn helps to obtain higher scores. Ajayi, Ajayi and Onabanjo (2011) conducted a study in Ogun State, Nigeria, the results showed that academic motivation had a strong effect of 0.321 of which 0.270 was the direct effect of the variation on students attitude towards mathematics. Blank (as cited in Muola, 2010) collaborates the findings of Ajayi, Ajayi and Onabanjo (2011). Blank further stated that, who are highly motivated academically are more likely to higher levels of academic success and lower dropout rates.

In a research conducted in Nigeria by Tella (2007) it was realized that, students differed significantly in their academic performance based on the extent to which they are motivated. The results showed that, students who were highly motivated performed better than those who were not very much motivated (t -cal= 8.0s, t -crit = 1.96, df =448 at 0.05 level). Though Tella's (2007) investigation is supported by the outcome of Christiana (as cited in Adepaju 2008) which stated that, students who are motivated intrinsically and extrinsically achieve better academic success, it is contradicted by the findings of Niebur as cited in Halawah (2006). Niebur tried to find out the relationship between some variables and students' academic performance. The outcomes showed that student motivation showed no significant effect on academic success of students. Niebur's outcomes are consistent with the results of Deci as cited in Vansteenkiste, Lens & Deci, (2006). Deci, found out in a study that students who were rewarded to perform an intrinsically inclined activity, it was seen that students who were rewarded did not enjoy the activity much, and portrayed less subsequent behavioural persistence than the individuals who were not rewarded. This results shows that individuals are drawn towards who

they value, but the steps to follow has a negative effect on their improved growth-oriented nature. Deci explained this undermining of intrinsic motivation as showing that, the behaviour of students which had been initially been intrinsically motivated was controlled by the reward, so that their sense of autonomy was undermined (Vansteenskiste, Lens& Deci, 2006).

Linked to intrinsic motivation is the concept of mastery-motivation. (Dweck, Mangels & Good as cited in Santrock, 2008) have seen that students exhibit two clear responses to problem situations; a mastery orientation or a helpless orientation. Students with a mastery orientation focus on the work rather than their ability, have positive effect and generate solution oriented skills that improve their achievement (Santrock, 2008).

Mastery oriented students, most often instruct themselves to be attentive, the reason intently and to recall skills that worked for them in the past. On the other hand, students with a helpless orientation focus on their personal insufficiencies, often attribute their challenges to a lack of ability and exhibit negative effect including boredom and anxiety. This orientation undermines their success (Santrock, 2008).

Achievement in a particular field has been seen as product of students efforts and abilities (internal factor) task challenges and facilitator behaviour (external factors). It has been asserted that majority of successful students tend to overestimate the degree to which their personal behaviour produces achievements and failure (Slavin, 2009). This statement is consistent with the opinion that highly successful students are likely to have a positive feelings about their school experiences; attribute their achievement in school to such issues as difficult work,

self-discipline, organization, ability and high motivation; tend to link with students who were also successful in school and keen readers (WAEC, 2005).

The zeal an individual puts in his or her school work has been seen as a vital part of internal cause of academic success. Unlike many causes of academic achievement, it has been explained that it depends on an individual's control and zeal to change. In study conducted by Henderson and Dweck (as cited in Hung, 2014) identified that psychological factors under the mastery and helpless success motivation, using grade seven in course found that students who believed that their intelligence is not static and also tend to have confidence in their abilities earned significantly higher grades than their colleagues who believed their intelligence is fixed and did not have confidence in their abilities. The study showed that students who believed that, their intelligence is static had high levels of anxiety than their counterparts who believed their intelligence is changeable.

In another research by Tella (2007) it was shown that gender difference was significant when the impact of motivation on academic success was compared between male and female students ($t = 9.4$, $t\text{-crit.} = 1.96$, $df = 448$ at 0.05 level). The findings of the study showed that male students had a mean score of 48.3 while their female colleagues had a mean score of 33.4. This implies that, the males performed better than the females. This finding is contrary to the findings of Balarabe and Abdullahi (1996) who found females to be higher in achievement motivation measure of fear of failure than their male counterparts ($t = -1.98$, $df = 302$, $P = 0048$). In the study, the female students had a mean measure of 16.705, while the males had a mean score of 16.042 Balarabe & Abdullahi's (1996) results are consistent with the results of a study conducted by Nuthanap (2007). Nuthanap saw no significant difference in the academic performance of boys and girls. The

findings showed that both males and females performed on the same level on academic achievement. Nuthanap (2007) stated that, the outcome of the study may be because presently males and females are offered the same opportunities in education.

Furthermore, research into learning and teaching in higher education provided a variety of concepts, methods and issues that are both of theoretical interest and practical relevance. It has revealed the relationships between students approaches to learning, their conceptions of learning and their perceptions of their academic. It also revealed the relationship between teachers approaches to teaching, their conceptions of teaching and their perceptions of the teaching environment and influence on students academic achievement (Richardson, 2005).

Similarly, Amenkhienan (2000) in a study found out that, the difficulty of most students to manage time was believed to have negatively influenced their academic performance. The outcome of the study again indicated that, students who adopted the disorganized approach to learning do not perform creditably. Further studies have found a link between the approaches to learning used by students, teachers instructional processes, forms of assessment and academic success (Campbell, Brownlee & Smith; McKay & Kember, as cited in Ahiatrogah, Deku, & Dramanu, 2006). Past researches suggest that Asian students rely on surface approach to learning while western students such as students from Australia employ deep approach to learning to learn (Watkins & Hattie; Watkins & Ismail, 1994; Watkins, Regmi & Astilla, 1991). However, in a later research conducted with Hong Kong Chinese students, approaches to learning the researchers introduced a new concept of learning known as “deep memorization) to enhance understanding

(Chalmers & Volet, 1997; Kember, 1996; Marton, Watkins, Tang, 1997; Sadler, Smith & Tsang, 1998).

In addition to the other findings, Lizzio, Wilson and Simons, (2002) conducted a research to establish the relationship between university students perception of their academic environment, their approaches to learning and academic results. The results showed that students perception as influencing both 'hard' (academic achievement) and 'soft' (Satisfaction, development of key skills) learning and outcomes, both directly and mediated through their approaches to learning, perception of heavy work load and inappropriate assessment influenced students towards surface. The perceptions of good teaching towards deep approaches to learning, students perceptions of their current learning environment were a stronger predictor of learning outcomes at the University than prior achievement at school. Furthermore, studies have found that students who have adopted deep approaches to learning have quality learning outcomes (Prosser & Trigwell, as cited in Richardson, 2005).

Similarly, study was conducted by Van Rossum and Schenk (cited in Richardson, 2005) with sixty-nine psychology students at a university in the Netherlands to establish the approaches to learning adopted in their studies. The results showed that most of them used the 'deep' and the surface approaches to learning depending on the situation, the material to be learnt and the urgency attached to it.

Consistent with other studies (Biggs, 2003; Entwistle, 1981; Ramsden, 2003; Tagg, 2003) that deep approach to learning is represented by a personal commitment to understand the material which is reflected in using various skills such as reading extensively, combining various resources, holding discussion with others, reflecting

on how bits of information linked to larger constructs or patterns and applying knowledge in real world situations and academic performance.

Furthermore, a research conducted by Entwistle (2000) found that, students who adopt the deep and strategic approaches to learning without any elements of surface and disorganized approaches to learning, is generally associated with successful academic performance.

Similarly, in support of Entwistle's (2000) findings Marton and Saljo (as cited in Cassidy, 2004) stated that, deep and strategic approaches to learning is related to high levels of academic achievement, where assessment produces emphasis and reward personal understanding. Marton and Saljo further explained that, students who adopt "deep" and "strategic" approach to learning are more successful in examinations. Whereas "surface" and "disorganized" approaches to learning users tend to pass only when they manage to overcome the situation which they type of learning induces.

In contrary to these findings, Emilia & Mul-Holland; & Davis & Sales (as cited Naqvi & Ahmed, 2000) asserted that, medic at and science students adopt a surface approach to learning to rapidly acquire facts necessary to do well in an examination. Furthermore Leiden et al (as cited in Naqvi & Ahmed, 2000) have reported that low, non-significant positive correlations between approaches to learning and academic performance and have concluded that approaches to learning are not sufficient predictors of academic successes.

2.8 Summary

In the literature reviewed, attempts were made to look into the concepts support services in terms of feedback, learning environment, learning modules, facilitator and peer support and counselling services. The concept motivation in

relation to intrinsic and extrinsic were also discussed. Finally, the concept approaches to learning in terms of deep, surface, strategic and disorganized were also looked at. Theories reviewed in the literature included the constructivists theory, socio-cognitive theory and cognitive theory of motivation. Literature was also reviewed on support services and academic performance in terms of feedback, learning environment, learning materials, facilitator support, peer support and counselling services in relation to academic performance.

Furthermore, literature was reviewed on motivation and academic performance, intrinsic motivation and academic performance and extrinsic motivation and academic performance. Other topic reviewed in the literature included approaches to learning and academic performance, deep and surface approaches to learning and academic performance and strategic and disorganized approaches to learning and academic performance.

Though various researches conducted in the western world revealed the importance of support services, motivation and approaches to learning in enriching the academic performance of students in general, little or non has been done in Ghana, The researcher therefore is of the view that the study would add to literature and knowledge in support services, motivation and approaches to learning in Ghana.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the research design, the population, the sample as well as the sampling procedure that was used have been discussed. Also, the research instrument including pilot study, data collection and data analysis procedures have been described.

3.2 Research Design

The correlational research design which is a descriptive research design, was adopted for the study. It is a non-experimental approach to research as no attempt is made to manipulate or control or interfere with its variable. It measures two or more variables as they exist naturally, the goal of which is to establish any existing relationship between or among the variables (Borden & Abbot, 2003, Fraenkel & Wallen, 2000). Dunn (2001) stated that a correlational design is used to discover predictive relationships and the degree of association among variables. In correlational research design, two variables are measured and recorded for each variable. The measurements are then reviewed to identify any patterns of relationship that exist between the two variables and to measure the strength of the relationship. The correlational research design was used in the study to determine the relationships among support services (feedback, learning environment, facilitator support, peer support, learning modules, academic counselling services) motivation and approaches to learning (deep, surface, strategic and disorganized approaches to learning) and their influence on academic performance of undergraduate distance learners of the University of Cape Coast.

The strength of the correlational research design include its non-intrusion on natural behaviour (how naturally occurring variables related to the real world) and a high external validity, the directionality problem (the difficulty in determining the direction of causality between variables when a direct causal relationship exists), and a low internal validity (Bordens & Abbot, 2002; Dunn, 2001; Fraenkel & Wallen, 2000).

3.3 Population

Population according to Ary, Jacobs & Razavieh (2002) is the larger group to which a researcher wishes to generalize; it includes all members of a defined class of people, events or objects. Polit & Hungler (1996) also established that population is the entire aggregation of cases that meet a designated set of criteria. Amedahe & Asamoah-Gyimah (2001) explained accessible population as the aggregate of cases that conform to the designated criteria that are accessible to the researcher as a pool of subjects for a study. They further explained target population as the aggregate of cases about which the researcher intends to generalize. Target population therefore is units for which the information is required and actually studied. The total population of students on the University of Cape Coast distance programme is 44,489. This is made up of 14,105 business and 30,384 education students. Out of the 14,105 business students 7634 are pursuing commerce, 5454 management studies and 1017 marketing. The target population which is the 300 level students in the three selected regions of Ghana on the education and business programmes was 3,250. This consisted of 2,618 and 632 from education and business programmes respectively. The education group is made up of teachers in the Basic and Junior High Schools. Whereas their counterparts in the business group is made up of secretaries, bank staff, clerks, accountants, marketing personnel, other junior

and senior staff in various organizations. Out of the total number Table 3.1 illustrates the breakdown of the population and sample of the various regions.

The 300 level students were targeted for the study because they have been on the programme for a while and have identified the approaches to learning deemed appropriate for their studies and have formed relationships with their peers and facilitators through constant interactions at the study centres. Also their continuous assessment and end of semester examination scores for the previous years would be available. These scores would be used as their academic performance scores. Also it is assumed that, the 300 level students would have a wide range of experiences in the use of their course modules, counselling processes and mode of feedback.

3.4 Sample and Sampling Technique

In order to make the sample have a national representation, the study centres in Ghana were grouped into three geographical zones. These zones were southern, middle and northern zones. The southern zone consisted of Western, Central, Greater Accra and Volta regions, middle zone consisted of Ashanti, Eastern and Brong Ahafo regions, while the northern zone was made up of Northern, Upper East and Upper West regions. Through the simple random sampling technique a region was selected from each zone. The selected regions were Central, Ashanti and Northern. The study centres in the capitals of the 3 regions were purposively selected for the study. These centres were purposively selected because both the education and business courses are offered and have similar characteristics as the centres in the other regional capitals, so that the results of the study could be generalised. In all eight study centres were used for the study

out of a total number of 47 (Education 35 and Business 12) of which are spread across the country.

Using the Table for determining sample size from a given population by Krejcie and Morgan (1970) as a guide, a sample of 854 was randomly selected from the regional study centres. This was made up of 530 education and 324 business students. Table 3.1 illustrates the distribution of the population and sample by regions, programmes and gender.

Table 3.1: Population and Sample Distribution of Business and Education Students showing Male and Females

Region	Course of Study			Population		Sample		Total
	Education	Commerce	Mgt	Male	Female	Male	Famle	
Ashanti	1472	116	129	1084	633	267	156	423
Central	860	156	191	647	382	209	143	352
Northern	286	13	27	226	100	52	27	79
Total	2618	285	347	1957	1115	528	326	854

Source: Assessment Unit, Centre for Continuing Education, University of Cape Coast, 2011/2012

3.5 Instrumentation

The main instruments used to collect data for the study were three sets of questionnaire. These questionnaire were the support services scale, motivation scale and the approaches to learning scale. The Motivation and Approaches to Learning Scales were adapted from Entwistle and Randen (1983) and the support services Scale was designed by the researcher. These scales were administered to all the respondents.

3.5.1 Support Services Scale (S.S.S)

This was a questionnaire that was used to measure feedback, learning modules, facilitators' support, peers' support, academic counselling and learning

environment. It consisted of seven sections (A – G) and had seventy (70) items. Section A had ten (10) items which focused on the biographic data of respondents. Section B focused on feedback. It consisted of ten (10) items. Items in Section C were designed to assess the learning modules that were given to the respondents. There were ten (10) items in this section. Section D had items that measured facilitators' support. This section too, had ten (10) items. Items in Section E focused on peers' support. There were also ten (10) items in this section. Section F had ten (10) items and they were focused on academic counselling as a support service extended to the respondents. The last part of the support services scale, was Section G. this section also had ten (10) items and focused on the learning environment of the respondents. Besides Section A, the rest of the items on the support services scale were structured on the 5 point Likert scale. Respondents were expected to indicate whether they Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Not Sure (NS), Disagree (D) or Strongly Disagree (SD) to the statements on the scale (See Appendix 1).

3.5.2 Motivation Scale (M.S)

This instrument was used to measure the level of motivation of the respondents. It was made up of ten (10) items. All the items were measured on a 5 point Likert Scale and the respondents were expected to indicate whether they Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Not Sure (NS), Disagree (D) or Strongly Disagree (SD) to the statements on this scale. (See Appendix 2)

3.5.3 Approaches to Learning Scale (A.L.S)

This scale had forty (40) items. This scale was used to measure the approaches to learning that the respondents adopted in the pursuit of their programmes. The approaches to learning were deep, surface, strategic and

disorganised. Items 1 – 10 on the ALS focused on the deep approach to learning. The surface approach to learning was measured using items 11 – 20, while the strategic approach to learning was measured by items 21 – 30. Items 31 – 40 on the approaches to learning scale were designed to measure the disorganized approach to learning. All the items on approaches to learning scale were structured on a 5 point Likert scale and the respondents were expected to indicate whether they Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Not Sure (NS), Disagree (D) or Strongly Disagree (SA) to the items (See Appendix 3).

3.5.4 Academic Performance of Students

The end of semester one and two examinations results of the participants were collected from the Assessment Unit of the Centre for Continuing Education, University of Cape Coast. (Commerce: semester 1 and 2, eight (8) courses, Management: semester 1 and 2, eight (8) courses, Education: semester 1 and 2 ten (10) courses). These results were used to measure the academic performance of the participants by calculating the average scores for two semesters.

3.5.5 Scoring of Instruments

All the items in Sections B – G of the Support Services Scale (SSS) Motivation Scale and Approach to Learning Scale (ALS) were measured on a 5 point Likert Scale as follows: Strongly Agree (SA) 5, Agree (A) 4, Not Sure (NS) 3, Disagree (D) 2, Strongly Disagree (SD) 1. All the sections have 10 items each and a respondent can score a maximum of 50 (5 x 10) points which is the highest score indicating that the respondent gave a positive response and minimum of 10 (1 x 10) points which is the lowest score indicating that the response was negative. Grade Letter (GL) of respondents was measured as follows: 80 and above “A”, 79-75

“B+”, 74-70 “B”, 69-65 “C+”, 64-60 “C”, 59-55 “D+”, 54-50 “D”, 49 and below “E”.

3.5.6 Validation of Research Instruments

In order to establish both the face and content validity of the research instruments the Assessment of Student Support Services, Motivation and Approaches to Learning Scales were given to the team of supervisors and other experts in the Department of Educational Psychology and Counselling, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, for their assessment, comments and suggestions. For instance, it was suggested that the items under the approaches to learning scale should be merged to enable students to respond freely and without prejudice. Comments and suggestions offered by the supervisors and other experts helped to fine tune the research instruments.

3.6 Pilot Study

The essence of the pilot study was to test the internal consistency and reliability of the instrument for the study. To achieve this the Students Support Services Scale in terms of feedback, learning modules, facilitator support, peer support, learning environment, academic counselling services, motivation scale, and approaches to learning scale were subjected to a test-retest exercise. The instruments were first administered to sixty (60) 300 level students. This was made up of twenty (20) education, twenty (20) commerce and twenty (20) management studies students of the Sunyani study centre in the Brong-Ahafo region of Ghana on October 27th 2012. On November 10th 2012 the instruments were administered to the same set of students who responded to them on October 27th 2012. The data

was subjected to computer analysis using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) to determine the internal consistency reliability co-efficient of the subscales. The results are illustrated in Table 3.2 below.

Table 3.2: Measures of Internal Consistency of Subscales in the Assessment of Support Services Scale Scales Motivation and Approaches to learning Instrument

Assessment Scale	No of Items	Internal Consistency	
		First Week	Two Weeks Internal
Feedback	10	.643	.651
Learning Modules	10	.627	.643
Peer Support	10	.854	.867
Facilitator Support	10	.436	.763
Learning Environment	10	.806	.850
Counselling	10	.961	.949
Motivation	10	.862	.816
Approaches to Learning	40	.720	.728
	110	.878	.776

3.7 Reliability of Research Instruments

The data in Table 3.2 indicates that, the values obtained from the analysis of the pilot study were above the minimum acceptable reliability alpha value of 0.6 This established the reliability of the research instrument.. Based on this the Students Support Services Scale, Motivation Scale and the Approaches to Learning Scale were used to collect data for the study (see Appendix iv)

3.8 Procedure for Data Collection

The researcher personally administered the instruments with the aid of five (5) trained research assistants from the Research Unit of the Centre for Continuing Education, University of Cape Coast, Ghana and the three 3 Resident Tutors in the three selected regions. In the first week, the researcher and the five (5) research assistants went to the Tamale study centres (Tamale College of Education for the education group and Tamale Polytechnic for the Business group in the northern region). They were joined by the Resident Tutor for the region. The selected students were gathered in two rooms and the purpose of the study was explained to them. All the three instruments were given to the respondents at the same time and were collected after sixty (60)minutes. The research team was in Kumasi in the Ashanti region in the second week to administer the instrument. Kumasi had five study centres, one for business and four (4) for education. Three (3) study centres namely, Serwa Nyarko, Kumasi Anglican Senior High School, and Mofraturom Senior High Schools were used for students on the education programme. The Kumasi Polytechnic study centre was for students on commerce and management programmes. At the various study centres, the selected students were assembled in a classroom and the purpose of the study explained to them. The instruments were then distributed to them and were collected after one hour. In the third week, the team was at the University of Cape Coast, study centre. The University of Cape Coast study centres house both the education and business groups. The same procedure was used to collect the data. At the end of the exercise, 815 instruments were received instead of the 854 that were distributed. This represented 95% return

rate. The main reason being that, 39 questionnaire were 50% filled so were not used for the study.

3.9 Procedure for Data Analysis

The study made use of a number of statistical tools to facilitate the organization, analysis and interpretation of the data collected. Section 'A', which focused on the bio-data of students, the descriptive statistics which in terms of simple percentages and frequency tables were used to analyse the items on the questionnaire.

Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient(r) was used to analyse hypotheses 1, 2, 3, and 4 to determine the relationships between variables. Hypothesis 5 was analysed using the One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) to determine any significant differences between the means of the variables. In order to determine the specific group within which differences existed, the Tukey Post-Hoc Test was used. Hypotheses 6 and 7 were tested using the t-test to find the differences between sample means in the parametric data.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Introduction

The main objective of the study was to investigate the influence of support services, motivation and approaches to learning on the academic performance of undergraduate distance learners of the University of Cape Coast, Ghana. Based on the main objective, three specific objectives were derived. The first specific objective was to investigate the influence of support services, motivation and approaches to learning on the academic performance of level three hundred undergraduate distance learners on the University of Cape Coast distance education programmes in Ghana. The second objective was to determine whether there were differences among education, commerce and management distance learners in their assessment of support services and motivation. The third specific objective was to determine whether there were differences between male and female distance learners in their assessment of support services offered by the University of Cape Coast.

To achieve these objectives the correlational design was used for the study. Three sets of instruments were administered to 854 level 300 students at Serwaa Nyarko, Kumasi Anglican Senior High Schools, Moforaturom Senior High School and Kumasi Polytechnic in the Ashanti Region, the education and business students at the University of Cape Coast study centre in the Central Region and the Tamale College of Education and Tamale Polytechnic study centres in the Northern region. The three instruments namely the student support services scale, academic motivation scale and the approaches to learning scale were administered to both the education and business students sampled for the study (N = 854). The data collected were analysed according to the hypotheses of the study. The results were presented

and discussed in two sections (4.1 and 4.2). In section 4.1, the biodata of the respondents from the eight (8) selected study centres in the Ashanti, Central and Northern Regions were presented. In section 4.2, the analysis of data collected from the selected study centres is presented and discussed. In this section, the relationship between the data collected on support services, in terms of feedback, learning environment, facilitator support, peer support, learning modules, and counselling service; motivation in terms of intrinsic and extrinsic; approaches to learning in terms of deep, surface, strategic and disorganized and academic performance of students is presented. Furthermore, the differences among education, commerce and management studies students on support services, motivation, approaches to learning are presented.

4.2 Analysis of Data

Introduction

This section focuses on the data collected from the selected study centres. The first part of the section deals with descriptive statistics of the sample, while the second part covers the results of the hypotheses testing.

Sample Distribution by Regions

Sample distribution based on the regions used for the study is presented in Table 4.1.1.

Table 4.1.1 Distribution of Respondents by Regions

Region	Frequency	%
Ashanti	401	49.2
Central	341	41.8
Northern	73	9.0
Total	815	100.0

The data in 4.1.1 above shows that four hundred and one respondents, representing 49.2% of the sample were selected from the Ashanti region, while three hundred and forty-one respondents constituting 41.8% were selected from the Central region. Also, seventy-three respondents representing 9.0% of the sample were selected from the Northern Region. The low enrollment in the Northern Region has been the trend since the programmes were introduced. The major reason is that students bear the full cost of the programme because there is no government subsidy on the fees and the fees are slightly higher than that paid by students in the main stream.

Table 4.1.2 Distribution of Respondents by Gender

Region	Frequency	%
Male	500	61.3
Female	315	38.7
Total	815	100.0

A look at the information on Table 4.1.2 shows that 61.3% of the samples were males, while 38.7 were females. It can therefore be deduced that the population of male students is higher than their female counterparts. The reason is that, the

females cannot afford to leave their homes on weekends when they are suppose to give maximum attention to the family.

Table 4.1.3 Distribution of Respodents by Programmes of Study

Programme of Study	Frequency	%
Degree in Basic Education	505	62.0
Degree in Commerce	134	16.4
Degree in Management	176	21.6
Total	815	100.0

The information in Table 4.1.3 above indicates that five hundred and five of the respondents, constituting 62.0% of the sample were pursuing Degree in Basic Education programme. Similarly, one hundred and thirty four respondents, representing 16.4% of the sample were pursuing the Degree in Commerce programme. Also one hundred and seventy-six respondents were pursuing the Degree in Management programme. The picture here explains the fact that teachers are more eager to develop themselves academically to meet the gorvenment’s policy that the least qualification to enable one to teach in the basic school should be a diploma certificate by 2015.

Table 4.1.4 Age Distribution of Respondents

Age Range	Frequency	%
20 - 29	530	65.0
30 - 39	237	29.1
40 – 49	47	5.8
50 - 59	1	0.1
Total	815	100.0

From Table 4.1.4 above, five hundred and thirty respondents representing 65.0% of the sample were less than thirty years of age. Two hundred and thirty-seven respondents constituting 29.1% of the sample were within the age range of 30 – 39 years. Also, forty-seven of the respondents were within the age range of 40 – 49. The information in table 4.1.4 further shows that only one respondent was within the age range of 50 – 59 years. The information in the table therefore shows that majority of the respondents were quite young. The reason being that, the young ones are more eager to develop themselves academically to the highest point in education. Whereas the older ones have the responsibility of sponsoring their children’s education.

When respondents were asked to indicate the level of education they had obtained before enrolling on the programmes they are pursuing, different levels of education were indicated as shown in Table 4.1.5 below.

Table 4.1.5 Distribution of Respondents by Level of Education

Level of Education	Frequency	%
Post-Secondary	275	33.7
Teachers' Certificate 'A'	21	2.6
Senior High/School Certificate	507	62.2
Middle School Leaving Certificate	12	1.5
Total	815	100.0

A look at the information on Table 4.1.5 reveals that quite a substantial number of the respondents, 507 constituting 62.2% of the sample were holders of the Senior High School or School Certificate before enrolling on their current programme of study. Also two hundred and seventy five of the respondents, representing 33.7% of the sample submitted that they were holders of Post-Secondary School Certificates. This means that this category of respondents attended other courses after completing their secondary school education (eg.Higher National Diploma (HND), Diploma in Buiness Studies (DBS) Degree etc.) Twenty-one and twelve respondents respectively reported that they were holders of Teachers' Certificate "A" and Middle School Leaving Certificates. It can therefore be deduced from the table that the young ones from the senior high schools are eager to continue with their education.

4.3 Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis 1: There is no statistically significant relationship between support services in terms of feedback, learning modules, learning environment, academic counseling, facilitator support and peer support and academic performance of University of Cape Coast Distance learners

To test the hypothesis, the independent variables, feedback, learning modules, learning environment academic, counselling, facilitator and peer support

were correlated with the dependent variable which was the end of semester examination results of the respondents. The results are shown in Table 4.2.1.

Table 4.2.1 Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis on Feedback, Learning Modules, Learning Environment, Academic Counselling, Facilitator Support, Peer Support and Academic performance of University Cape Coast Distance Learners (n = 815)

Variable	X	SD	R	Df	p-value
Feedback	31.75	5.64			
Academic Performance	44.99	11.30	.019	813	.584
Learning Modules	34.09	5.74			
Academic performance	44.99	11.30	.071*	813	0.043
Learning Environment	33.74	6.92			
Academic Performance	44.99	11.30	.080*	813	0.022
Academic Counselling	32.47	7.19			
Academic Performance	44.99	11.30	.078*	813	0.026
Facilitator Support	33.15	6.78			
Academic Performance	44.99	11.30	.029	813	.401
Peer Support	24.15	7.80			
Academic Performance	44.99	11.30	-.010	813	.767

*p is significant at 0.05

The analysis presented in Table 4.2.1 reveals that there is a statistically significant relationship between learning modules and academic performance of University of Cape Coast distance learners ($r = .071$, $df = 813$, $p < 0.05$). Also, the analysis shows a statistically significant relationship between learning environment and academic performance of University of Cape Coast distance learners ($r = .080$, $df = 813$, $p < 0.05$). Similarly, the analysis shows a statistically significant relationship between academic counselling and academic performance of University of Cape Coast distance learners ($r = .078$, $df = 823$, $p < 0.05$). However, the analysis did not show any statistically significant relationship between feedback and

academic performance of University of Cape Coast distance learners ($r = .019$, $df = 813$, $p > 0.05$). Also, the analysis did not reveal a statistically significant relationship between facilitator support and academic performance of University of Cape Coast distance learners ($r = .029$, $df = 813$, $p > 0.05$). Furthermore, the analysis did not indicate a statistically significant relationship between peer support and academic performance of University of Cape Coast distance learners ($r = -.010$, $df = 813$, $p > .050$). Since the analysis showed statistically significant relationship between learning modules, learning environment, academic counselling and academic performance of University of Cape Coast distance learners, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Hypothesis 2: There is no statistically significant relationship between intrinsic motivation and academic performance of distance learners of University of Cape Coast.

To test the hypothesis, the independent variable, intrinsic motivation was correlated with the dependent variables, which were the end of semester examination scores of the students. The result is presented in Table 4.2.2.

Table 4.2.2: Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis on Intrinsic Motivation and Academic Performance (N = 815)

Variable	Mean	SD	r	df	p-value
Intrinsic Motivation	34.39	9.74	.037	813	.295
Academic Performance	44.99	11.30			

p is not significant at 0.05 level

The analysis shown in Table 4.2.2 reveals that there is no statistically significant relationship between intrinsic motivation and academic performance of University of Cape Coast distance learners ($r = 0.037$, $df = 813$, $P > 0.05$). The analysis showed that performance was weak and failed to meet the significant level of 0.05. The null

hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between intrinsic motivation and academic performance of University of Cape Coast distance learners is therefore retained.

Hypothesis 3: There is no statistically significant relationship between extrinsic motivation and academic performance of distance learners of University of Cape Coast.

To test the hypothesis, the independent variable, extrinsic motivation was correlated with the dependent variables which were the end of semester examination scores of the students. Table 4.2.3 illustrates the results.

Table 4.2.3: Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis between Extrinsic Motivation and Academic Performance of University of Cape Coast distance learners (N = 815)

Variable	Mean	SD	r	df	p-value
Extrinsic Motivation	34.41	8.74	.078*	813	0.026
Academic Performance	44.99	11.30			

*Correlation is significant at 0.05 level

The information in Table 4.2.3 indicates a statistically significant relationship between extrinsic motivation and academic performance of students ($r = .078$, $df = 813$, $p < 0.05$). The results show a positive relationship between extrinsic motivation and academic performance of students. On account of this finding, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between extrinsic motivation and academic performance of students is rejected.

Hypothesis 4: There is no statistically significant relationship between approaches to learning and academic performance of distance learners of University of Cape Coast in terms of:

- (i) deep approach to learning;

- (ii) surface approach to learning;
- (iii) strategic approach to learning; and
- (iv) disorganized approach to learning

To test the hypothesis the independent variables, deep, surface, strategic and disorganized approached to learning were correlated with the dependent variables which were the end of semester examination scores of the students. The results of the analyse are shown in Table 4.2.4.

Table 4.2.4 Pearson product moment correlation analysis on deep, surface, strategic and disorganized approaches to learning and academic performance of University of Cape Coast distance learners

Variable	X	SD	r	Df	p-value
Deep Approach to learning	41.03	4.27			
Academic Performance	44.99	11.30	-.014	813	.690
Surface Approach to learning	33.69	9.70			
Academic performance	44.99	11.30	-.007	813	.834
Strategic Approach to learning	44.31	10.65			
Academic Performance	44.99	11.30	.021	813	.547
Disorganised Approach to learning	43.31	10.63			
Academic Performance	44.99	11.30	-.01	813	.981

The analysis at illustrated in Table 4.2.4 reveals that statistically there is no relationship between deep approach to learning and the academic performance of students ($r = -.014$, $df = 813$, $p > 0.05$). The analysis also shows that there is no statistically significant relationship between surface approach to learning and academic performance of students ($r = -.007$, $df = 813$, $p > 0.05$). Similarly, the analysis did not reveal a statistically significant relationship between strategic approach to learning and academic performance of students ($r = .021$, $df = 813$, $p > 0.05$). Also, the results in table 4.2.3 did not indicate a statistically significant

relationship between disorganized approach to learning and academic performance of students ($r = -.001$, $df = 813$, $p > 0.05$). On the basis of these findings, the null hypothesis which states that, there is no significant relationship between deep, surface, strategic and disorganized approaches to learning and academic performance of students is retained.

Hypothesis 5: There is no significant difference among education, commerce and management students' assessment of support services and motivation.

See Appendix VI for descriptive statistics on students assessment of support services and motivation on the basis of programmes of study.

To test this hypothesis, the one-way ANOVA was used. The results of the analysis are presented in table 4.2.5.

Table 4.2.5: One-way ANOVA results on students' assessment of support services and motivation

Variable	Source	SS	df	MS	F	Sig
Feedback	Between groups	7.933	2	3.966	9.895	.000
	Within groups	325.495	812	.401		
Learning Module	Between groups	3.821	2	1.910	3.498	.031
	Within groups	443.46	812	.546		
Facilitator Support	Between groups	6.991	2	3.495	5.872	.003
	Within groups	483.341	812	.595		
Peer Support	Between groups	1.152	2	.576	.899	.408
	Within groups	520.585	812	.641		
Academic Counselling	Between groups	4.793	2	2.396	1.688	.185
	Within groups	1152.537	812	1.419		
Learning Environment	Between groups	20.549	2	10.275	12.484	.000
	Within groups	668.305	812	.823		
Motivation	Between groups	10.814	2	5.407	11.425	.000
	Within groups	384.199	812	.473		

A look at table 4.2.5 reveals significant differences among the groups with respect to feedback [$F(2,812) = 9.895$, $p = .000$]; learning modules [$F(2,812) = 3.498$, $p =$

.031], facilitator support [F (2,812) = 5.872, p = .003], learning environment [F (2,812) = 12.484, p = .000] and motivation [F (2,812) = 11.482, p = .00]. However, no significant difference was recorded among the groups in respect of peer support [F (2,812) = 1.688, p = .185]

In order to determine the specific programmes within which the differences occurred, the Tukey post-hoc test was conducted. The results are presented in Table 4.2.6.

Table 4.2.6: Results of Tukey Post-Hoc Test

Dependent Variable	Programme Pursued	Programme Pursued	Mean Difference	Standard Error	Significance
Feedback	Degree in Basic Education	Degree in Commerce	.25*	.0615	.000
		Degree in Management	.16*	.0554	.018
Facilitator Support	Degree in Basic Education	Degree in Commerce	.19*	.0749	.041
		Degree in Management	.19*	.0675	.018
Learning Environment	Degree in Basic Education	Degree in Commerce	.44012*	.0881	.000
Motivation	Degree in Basic Education	Degree in Commerce	.27483*	.0668	.000
		Degree in Management	.20046*	.0602	.004

The data in table 4.2.6 reveals a significant difference between the feedback that students pursuing the degree programme in Basic Education and their counterparts pursuing degree programmes in Commerce and Management received from their facilitators (MD = 0.25, p = .000; and MD = 0.16, p = .018 respectively). Also a significant difference was found between the support facilitators offered to students pursuing the degree in Basic Education and their colleagues pursuing degree programmes in Commerce and Management (MD = 0.19, p = .041, and MD = 0.19, p = .018 respectively). Similarly, a significant difference was found between the learning environment of students pursuing the degree programmes in Basic Education and Commerce (MD = 0.44, p = .000). Furthermore, the data in table

4.2.6 shows a significant difference between the motivation received from facilitators by students pursuing degree programme in Basic Education and their colleagues pursuing degree programmes in Commerce and Management (MD = 0.27, $p = .000$, and MD = 0.20, $p = .004$ respectively).

Hypothesis 6: There is no statistically significant difference between male and female students' assessment of support services in terms of; feedback, learning modules, learning environment, academic counselling, facilitator and peer support.

To test this hypothesis, the total scores of male students on the independent variables, feedback, learning modules, learning environment, academic counselling, facilitator and peer support were compared with the total scores of female students on the same independent variables. The results are presented in table 4.2.7.

Table 4.2.7 t-test Analysis on Students' Assessment of Support Services by Gender

Variable	Gender	N	Mean	SD	t-value	df	p-value
Feedback	Male	500	35.78	.63	-1.61	813	0.11
	Female	315	40.7	.96			
Learning Modules	Male	500	43.14	.73	-2.29	813	0.02*
	Female	315	42.02	.75			
Learning Environment	Male	500	36.72	.93	0.85	813	0.393
	Female	315	38.77	.91			
Facilitator Support	Male	500	36.20	.75	-2.45	813	0.014*
	Female	315	36.06	.81			
Peer Support	Male	500	38.15	.77	-0.013	813	0.989
	Female	315	38.15	.85			
Academic Counselling	Male	500	37.48	1.18	-0.323	813	0.747
	Female	315	37.46	1.22			

A look at the analysis presented in Table 4.2.7 shows that there is no statistically significant difference between male and female students' assessment of feedback they received from the marking and return of their quizzes and assignments ($t = 1.61$, $df = 813$, $p > 0.05$). The results also show that male and female students did not differ in their assessment of their learning environment ($t = 0.85$, $df = 813$, $p > 0.05$). Furthermore, the results did not reveal any statistically significant difference between male and female students' assessment of academic counselling offered them at their various study centres ($t = 0.323$, $df = 813$, $p > 0.05$). Also, the analysis did not indicate any statistically significant difference in the assessment of male and female students in the support they received from their peers ($t = 0.013$, $df = 813$, $p > 0.05$). However the analysis shows a statistically significant difference in the assessment of male and female students of the learning modules given to them ($t = 2.290$, $df = 813$, $p < 0.05$). Similarly, the analysis shows a statistically significant difference in the assessment of the support male and female learners received from their facilitators ($t = 2.450$, $df = 813$, $p < 0.05$). The analysis shows the male students had a higher mean score (4.20) than their female counterparts (4.06) indicating that males received more facilitator support than their female colleagues.

Hypothesis 7: There is no statistically significant difference between the approaches of learning adopted by male and female students.

In order to test this hypothesis, the total scores of male students on the independent variables; deep, surface, strategic and disorganized approach to learning were compared with the total scores of female students on the same independent variables. The results are illustrated in table 4.2.8.

Table 4.2.8 t-test Analysis of Approaches to Learning of Students by Gender

Variable	Gender	N	Mean	SD	t-value	Df	p-value
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Deep Approach	Male	500	34.74	5.42			
					-1.31	813	0.18
Surface Approach	Female	315	34.33	.67			
	Male	500	24.73	.71			
Strategic Approach					-2.05	813	0.040*
	Female	315	23.63	.69			
Disorganised Approach	Male	500	24.32	.64			
					-0.036	813	0.971
Academic Performance	Female	315	24.3	.66			
	Male	500	43.04	1.19			
					-0.37		0.711
	Female	315	43.01	1.19			
	Male	500	41.2	1.39			
					-3.75	813	0.00
	Female	315	45.79	1.10			

The results presented in Table 4.2.8 indicate that, there is no significant difference between male and female students on deep approach ($t = -1.31$, $df = 813$, $p > 0.05$); strategic approach ($t = -.036$; $df = 813$, $p > 0.05$) and disorganized approach variables ($t = -.037$, $df = 813$, $p > 0.05$). However, the results revealed a significant difference between male and female students on the surface approach variable ($t = -2.05$, $df = 813$, $p < 0.05$).

4.4 Summary of Major Findings

- The results revealed a relationship between learning materials and academic performance of distance learners of University of Cape Coast. This relationship is significant with $r = .071$, $p = 0.043$ at 0.05 level of significance.
- Similarly, the result showed a relationship between learning environment and academic performance of distance learners of University of Cape

Coast. The relationship is significant with $r = .080$, $p = 0.022$ at 0.05 level of significance.

- There is a relationship between academic counseling and academic performance of distance learners of University of Cape Coast. The relationship is significant with $r = .078$, $p = 0.026$ at 0.05 of significance.
- The result also revealed a significant relationship between extrinsic motivation and academic performance of distance learners of University of Cape Coast. The relationship is significant with $r = .078$, $p = 0.026$ at 0.05 level of significance.
- On the contrary, the results revealed no relationship between feedback and academic performance of distance learners of University of Cape Coast. The relationship is not significant with $r = .019$, $p = .584$ at 0.05 level of significance.
- Further, the results showed no relationship between facilitator support and academic performance of distance learners of University of Cape Coast. The relationship is not significant with $r = .029$, $p = .401$ at 0.05 level of significance.
- There is no relationship between peer support and academic performance of distance learners of University of Cape Coast. The relationship is significant with $r = -.010$, $p = .767$ at 0.05 level of significance.
- The results showed no relationship between intrinsic motivation and academic performance of distance learners of University of Cape Coast. The relationship is not significant with $r = .037$, $p = .295$ at 0.05 level of significance.

- The results revealed no relationship between deep approach to learning and academic performance of distance learners of University of Cape Coast. This relationship is not significant with $r = -.014$, $p = .690$ at 0.05 level of significance.
- The results showed no relationship between surface approach to learning and academic performance of distance learners of University of Cape Coast. This relationship is not significant with $r = -.007$, $p = .834$ at 0.05 level of significance.
- Similarly, the results did not indicate any relationship between strategic approach to learning and academic performance of distance learners of University of Cape Coast. The relationship is therefore not significant with $r = .021$, $p = .547$ at 0.05 level of significance.
- Furthermore, the results did not reveal any relationship between disorganised approach to learning and academic performance of distance learners of University of Cape Coast. The relationship is not significant with $r = -.01$, $p = .981$ at 0.05 level of significance.

4.5 Discussion of Results

The results of the study showed a significant relationship between learning materials and the academic performance of students on the distance education programmes. This finding shows that when students are given a study materials that are clearly defined along the course of study, the students are likely to perform creditably. This finding is consistent with the findings of a study conducted in Kwara State of Nigeria by Momoh cited in Isola (2010). The results of his study indicated that learning materials had a significant effect on students' academic performance. Similarly, this finding of the study, confirms the findings of a study

conducted by Popoola (cited in, Okoji, 2013) in the Ogun state of Nigeria. In his study, Popoola wanted to find out the effects of learning materials on the academic performance of students in five secondary schools in Abeokuta. The results of his study showed that the performance of students in schools with adequate learning materials was better than their counterparts in schools with inadequate learning materials. Also, the result of the study corroborates the research findings of Birch and Williams (2011). These researchers found that university students who used on-line learning materials had higher scores than their counterparts who did not use any learning materials.

The results of the study also showed a positive relationship between the learning environment and academic performance of students on the distance education programme. This finding supports the assertion by Good and Brophy (1986) that the learning environment has an important impact on students' academic performance. Good and Brophy indicated that when the physical, social and academic features of a learning environment are harmoniously perceived by students they are stimulated to work hard to achieve high academic performance. They explained if the teaching-learning encounter and the physical dimensions of the learning environment are perceived negatively by students, the academic performance of students in such a learning environment is bound to be low. This finding corroborates the findings of a study conducted by Osion and Kellum (2003). The results of this study showed that sustainable learning environment with good qualities of learning, site planning, quality of indoor air, acoustic, health, building materials and the use of renewable energy benefited students' academic achievement. Also, this finding supports the research finding of Edwards (1992). In a study to investigate the relationship between conditions in a learning environment

and students' achievement in schools in Washington D. C., Edwards (1992) found that learning environments have an effect on students' academic achievement. Similarly, this finding corroborates the suggestion by Farrer and Skinner (2003) that students who feel that they belong to good learning environments report higher enjoyment, enthusiasm, happiness, interest and more confidence in engaging in learning activities and thus perform creditably. This finding, however contradicts the research findings of the United States Department of Education (2000) which stated that in operative learning system, inadequate ventilation and poor lighting affect the health and learning outcomes as well as morale of students and staff.

The study revealed a significant relationship between academic counselling and the academic performance of students on the distance education programme. This finding suggests that in learning settings where academic counselling services are offered, students are likely to overcome the academic, social and other psychological challenges that they encounter and thus concentrate on their studies. This finding corroborates the research findings of Nkatha (Essuman, Forde & Asamoah, 2003). Nkatha in a study conducted in Kenya investigated the relationship between counselling and academic performance. His sample consisted of 720 secondary schools students in Kenya. The findings of his study revealed a positive correlation between counselling and the academic performance of students. This finding supports the research findings of Whiston & Sexton (1998). In their study, they examined the impact of school counsellor led interventions on students' academic achievement and school success behaviour. The results of their study showed that school counsellor interventions such as group counselling and classroom guidance were associated with positive students' academic achievement.

They explained that this effect was positive because the interventions of the counsellors targeted specific skills that were associated with school success. However, this finding contradicts the finding (Obilade 1987, Ladipo, 2000, Eweniyi, 2002) which indicated that many students perform poorly because they lack the right attitude to study and do not have the right orientation from home and the counsellors. The results of the study did not establish any significant relationship between feedback and the academic performance of students on the distance education programme. The finding is not surprising because the feedback of students on the distance education programme usually receive their marked quizzes and assignment scripts very late. On these marked scripts, comments and suggestions are not offered and the students only have to contend with the scores on the scripts. Sometimes, these marked scripts are not delivered on time. This finding is consistent with the research finding of Harlen and Crick (2003). According to these researchers, frequent high stakes assessment where marks or grades are given, can lower the motivation to learn. Similarly, Elliot (1988) explained that such assessment encourages students to focus on performance goals rather than learning goals. Also, Butler (1988) argued that students pay less attention to comments when given marks and consequently do not try to use the comments to make improvements. This finding also corroborates the argument by Black & William, (1980) that feedback that draws students' attention from the task and towards self-esteem can have a negative effect on attitudes and performance. This finding, however, contradicts the assertion by Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick (2006) that feedback from tutors provides additional information that helps challenge students to reassess their knowledge and beliefs. According to them, teacher feedback also serves as an authoritative external reference point against which students can evaluate, and self-

correct their progress and their own internal goals. Also, this finding is inconsistent with the research findings of Yorke (2003) that external feedback provides an opportunity to close the gap in the learning process between the current learning achievement of the student and the goals set by the teacher.

Also, the study did not reveal a significant relationship between facilitator support and academic performance of student on the distance education programme. This finding corroborates the research findings of Gutman, Sameroff and Eccles (2002); Fisher (2000). While Gutman, et. al. (2002) respectively found a negative relationship between teachers' support and students' achievement score in mathematics, Fisher (2000) did not find teachers' support as an important predictor of grades among African-American high school students. This finding, however, contradicts the finding of Forsbach, Yanowitz & Flala, (2002). These researchers provided evidence that showed a relationship between teachers' support and academic performance of African-American adolescents. Their findings generally support the notion that a warm, friendly, sympathetic and caring student-teacher relationship increases the likelihood of higher student academic performance. Again, the finding contradicts the findings of Agba,Iko and Ashubi (2010); Abang cited in Agba, et al (2010). Agba, et al (2010) in a study in the Calabar Metropolis of Nigeria reported that student-teacher relationship influence to a large extent the academic performance of students in accounting. Similarly, Abang cited in Agba, et al (2010) reported that teachers are the main figures who determine the various forms of relationships that exist within the classroom. These relationships Abang explains influence the attitude of students toward their school work as well as their performance in learning tasks.

Finally, the analysis of hypothesis 1 did not reveal a significant relationship between peer's support and academic performance of students on the distance education programme. This finding suggests that the type of support that peers offered their colleagues did not relate to their academic work. Perhaps as adult learners, they were more engaged in non-academic activities and thus, did not communicate directly their educational goals, values and expectations to their friends. This finding corroborates the assertion by Ryan (2000) that peer groups were not influential regarding changes in students' attitude toward school work. Again, this finding corroborates the research finding of Dramanu (2012), Fuligni (1997) & Wentzel (1994). Dramanu (2012) in a study in Ghana, did not find a significant relationship between peer support and academic performance of Junior High School students. The research findings of Fuligni (1997) and Wentzel (1994) revealed that peer support did not have independent effects on academic achievement of students.

This finding, however, contradicts the research findings of Agba, et al (2010); Newton & Mwisukha (2009); Cooper & Datnow (2000). Agba, et al (2010) in a study in Calabar found a positive significant relationship between academic performance of students in accounting and student-student interaction. Newton & Mwisukha (2009) on the other hand found a statistically significant relationship between selected peer group activities and students' achievement scores. Their finding showed that students whose peers participated in subject-content discussions achieved high academic levels. Also, the findings of Cooper & Datnow (2000) showed that opportunities to develop and maintain peer relationships among African-American students influenced their educational resiliency. Cooper &

Datnow (2000) further found that African-American peer networks at school functioned to boost the students' academic success.

The study did not reveal a significant correlation between intrinsic motivation and academic performance of students on the University of Cape Coast distance education programme. This finding corroborates the research findings of Niebur cited in Halawah (2006); Deci cited in Vansteenkiste, Lens, & Deci (2006). Niebur in a study investigated the effects of individuals motivation on academic achievement of students. The findings indicate that individual student motivation showed no significant effect on academic achievement of students. Similarly, Deci in a study rewarded some participants for engaging in an intrinsically interesting activity and observed that rewarded participants enjoyed that activity less and showed less subsequent behavioural persistence than did non-rewarded participants. This finding of Deci is particularly interesting because it is an instance in which people are approaching outcomes they value, but the process of doing so has negative effect on the prototype of their proactive growth-oriented nature. Deci interpreted this undermining of intrinsic motivation as indicating that participants' behavior which had initially been intrinsically motivated became controlled by the reward, so their sense of autonomy was undermined (Vansteenkiste, Lens, & Deci 2006). This finding, however is inconsistent with the research findings of Schweinhart & Weikart (1980); Gottfried (1990). In a study into the phenomenon of differential academic performance of children, Schweinhart & Weikart (1980) found that a pupil's performance and progress lie to a large extent in the pupil's own motivation and will to work hard and succeed. Gottfried (1990) found a link between motivation and achievement. Specifically, she found that students with higher academic intrinsic motivation had significant higher achievement and

intellectual performance. Again, the finding contradicts the finding that intrinsic motivation is linked to positive academic performance, enjoyment of academic work and satisfaction (Valler et. al cited in Arapattamannu, 2006), and greater conceptual learning (Benware & Deci 1984).

The study revealed a significant relationship between extrinsic motivation and academic performance of students on the distance education programme. This finding suggests that when students are extrinsically motivated, they are likely to exhibit high levels of interest and desire to persist on their academic work. Such students are likely to consciously plan their learning, carryout their learning plan and expend a lot of effort into their academic work. This finding supports the argument by Wentzel & Wigfied (1998) that students who are motivated tend to persist on their school work and display classroom behaviours that facilitate their academic performance. The finding also corroborates the suggestion by Pintrinch (2003) that motivation is not only important in getting students to engage in academic activities, but also in determining how much students learn from the activities they perform or from the information to which they are exposed. Again, this finding buttresses the finding of Ajayi, Ajayi & Onabanjo (2011). Ajayi and his colleagues in a study in Ogun state found motivation to have an influence on the direction of students' attitude towards mathematics. This finding, however, contradicts the finding of Niebur cited in Halawah (2006). Niebur in an investigation of the effects of motivation on academic performance, found that students motivation showed no significant effect on academic performance.

The study did not reveal any significant relationship between approaches to learning and the academic performance of students on the distance education programme. This finding contradicts the research finding of Zeegers (2001). This

researcher in a study found a significant relationship between the approaches to learning adopted by students and their academic performance in terms of assessment grades and grade point averages. Also this finding is inconsistent with the research findings of a group of researchers at the University of Gothenburg. These researchers employed the qualitative research method in their study.

The results of the study showed that the approaches to learning adopted by students were related to qualitative differences in academic outcomes. Their study revealed that deep approach to learning is linked to high quality learning outcomes, while the surface approach to learning is linked to lower academic performance (Marton & Saljo; Prosser & Miller cited in Yip (2012)). Similarly this finding is in contradiction with the findings of a study by Kember & Gau; Watkins & Regmi cited in Phan (2010). These researchers examined the approaches to learning used by Western and Non-western students. Their findings established that there was a positive correlation between the approach to learning that students used and their academic performance. Specifically, the results of their study showed a relationship between deep approach to learning and academic performance of students.

Research findings on specific learning approaches and students' academic performance are in contradiction with the findings of the current study. For instance, Sabasinghe & Wanniarachchi (2003) in a study in which they used medical students as a sample, found a correlation between deep approach to learning and academic performance of students. Sabasinghe and Wanniarachchi explained that approaches to learning determine the outcome of any learning. Also, Entwistle and Brennan cited in Yip (2012) established that students who used the deep approach to learning scored better A – level grades, had better motivation and better verbal and mathematical ability. According to them students who adopted surface approach to

learning scored lower grades, showed lower abilities and motivation. Similarly, Phan (2010) found that the academic performance of students who used the disorganized approach to learning correlated negatively with their scores. Phan explained that this finding portrayed the negative attitude of such students toward learning. Furthermore, Biggs (cited in Richardson 2005) indicated that the strategic approach to learning was based on ego enhancement and thus correlated positively with academic performance of students. Biggs further explained that students who used the disorganized approach to learning manage their time poorly, do not make time to study and spend much time on social and extra-curricular activities. Such activities according to Biggs have a negative impact on the academic performance of the students.

The findings of the study showed a significant difference between the feedback received by students pursuing the degree in Education programme and the students pursuing degree in commerce and management programmes. This finding is an indication that students on the commerce and management programmes had their quiz papers and assignments marked and returned to them on good time than their counterparts on the education programme. This finding also means that facilitators of the commerce and management programmes promptly discussed the marked quizzes and assignments with students than their colleagues on the education programme. The findings of the study also revealed a significant difference between the facilitator support extended to students on the degree in Basic Education programme and their counterparts on the degree in commerce and management programmes. This finding by implication is that University of Cape Coast extended more social and academic help in the form of facilitators sent to students on the commerce and management degree programmes than students on the degree

programme in education. By this finding, it also implies that the facilitators that are posted to assist students on the commerce and management programmes in their academic work constantly interacted with the students. This constant interaction helped the students to enjoy their academic work and also helped them to get well adjusted to their new learning environments.

The results of the study also showed a significant difference between the learning environment of students on the degree in Basic Education programme and their counterparts on the commerce programme. This finding is not surprising because most face to face sessions for the education students are held in Secondary Schools and Colleges of Education while the face-to-face sessions for the commerce students are held in the polytechnics and universities. The learning environments for these two groups are different in many respects. For instance, the lecture rooms in the polytechnics and universities are well organized in terms of furniture, writing boards, ventilation, lighting and they also have places for relaxation as compared to the secondary schools and Colleges of Education.

Similarly, the study revealed significant differences between the motivation of students on the education programme and their counterparts on the commerce and management programmes. This finding is not far-fetched because students pursuing degree in commerce and management programmes differed from their counterparts on the degree in education programme in terms of feedback, facilitator support and learning environment. It is assumed that while students promptly receive feedback, enjoy good and humane support from their facilitators, have a conducive and pleasant learning environment, they are likely to have high levels of motivation to engage in their academic work. In this context, commerce and management students

are likely to be more motivated to attend to their academic work than their counterparts on the education programme.

The study revealed significant differences between male and female students' assessment of the learning modules that are given to them by the Centre for Continuing Education of the University of Cape Coast. The male students rated their learning modules higher than their female counterparts. The male students rated their modules as containing well –planned teaching notes and activities that have been carefully laid out for the students to work independently and at their own pace. This means that the male students unlike their female counterparts viewed their learning modules as interactive, conversational, self-pacing and pedagogically sound.

The study also revealed a significant differences between facilitators support received by male and female students on the University of Cape Coast distance education programme. The finding showed that male students received more facilitator support than their female counterparts. This finding suggests that facilitators interacted more with male students than their female counterparts in discussing problems related to their academic work and helping them to adjust to their new academic environment.

The findings of the study showed that male students used the surface approach to learning than their female counterparts. This finding suggests that male students unlike their female counterparts used the surface approach to learning to acquire facts necessary for them to perform creditably in examinations and quizzes

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the summary and conclusions based on the results of the study are presented. Also, the recommendations and suggestions for further research are presented.

5.2 Summary

The study looked into the influence of support services, motivation, approaches to learning and academic performance of undergraduate distance learners of University of Cape Coast which has been presented into five chapters. Background study was made up of subheadings such as statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research questions and hypotheses. Others were the basic assumptions, significance of the study and scope and delimitation of the study.

Review of related literature was done on the basis of conceptual framework, theoretical framework and related theories and these were Constructivists, Socio-Cognitive theories and Cognitive theory of motivation. Also the overview of distance education was offered in this chapter.

Further, research methodology for the study included subheadings such as research design, population, sample and sampling techniques, instrumentation. Validity of research instrument, pilot testing, reliability of instrument, procedure for data collection and procedure for data analysis also formed part of the methodology. The reliability and validity of instrument brought out the important facts so assumptions made were met. The instrument was therefore reliable and valid and so was used to collect data for the main study. The return rate achieved was 95% (815) and a mortality threat rate of 5% (39) was achieved, this was due to

the fact that the items on the questionnaire were not completely filled by some respondents so were discarded.

Results and discussions from the analysis of the study were presented in chapter four. The correlational design which is a type of descriptive design was adopted for the study. The analysis was made in relation to the background characteristics of the respondents. Descriptive statistics such as simple percentages and frequencies were used to present data in tables for easy interpretation. Inferential statistics such as Pearson's Product Moment Correlational Coefficient, Analysis of Variance and t-test were employed for to draw relationships and differences between the variables. The tukey Post Hoc test was also employed to determine the specific groups within which differences existed.

The study revealed a positive relationship between the learning environment and academic performance of students. The implication is that, a sustainable learning environment with good and comfortable furniture, quality lightening, good ventilation, good buildings etc. benefited students academic performance.

Further, the study revealed a relationship between counseling and academic performance of students. The findings suggests that, a learning setting where counseling services are offered, students are likely to overcome the academic, social and other psychological challenges that they encounter and thus concentrate on their academic work.

Based on the findings some recommendations were made. For instance, it was recommended that, the Centre for Continuing Education, University of Cape Coast should ensure that students on both the education and business programmes

are provided with needed facilities and logistics. The lecture rooms should be well ventilated and well lit.

Finally, it is also recommended that Center for Continuing Education should as a matter of urgency employ and deploy more trained and qualified counselors to all the regional offices. The presence of the counselors will help alleviate some of the counseling needs of the students.

5.3 Conclusions

On the basis of the analysis and findings of the study, the following conclusions are made.

Generally, support services, motivation and approaches to learning play an essential role in the academic performance of students. However, this study has established that learning materials, learning environment, academic counseling and extrinsic motivation positively relates with academic performance of students on the University of Cape Coast distance education programme. On account of these findings, it can be concluded that learning materials, a good and conducive learning environment ,and academic counselling have a positive influence on the academic performance of students on the University of Cape Coast distance education programme. They study did not establish any correlation between students' academic performance and variables such as feedback, facilitator, peer support and intrinsic. It can thus be concluded, feedback, intrinsic motivation, facilitator and peer support do not necessarily correlate with the academic performance of students on the University of Cape Coast distance education programme.

Approaches to learning were found not to have any relationship with the academic performance, of students on the University Cape Coast distance education programme. The study established significant differences in students' assessment of

support services and motivation. The students on the degree programme in education differed from their counterparts on the commerce and management degree programmes in their assessment on support services in terms of feedback, learning environment, motivation and facilitator support. While the study did not reveal any significant difference between male and female students' assessment of feedback, learning environment, academic counseling and peer support as support services, a significant difference between male and female students' assessment of learning modules and facilitator support as support services was established. Also, they did not establish significant difference between male and female students on their use of deep, strategic and disorganized approaches to learning, however a significant difference was observed between male and students on the use of the surface approach to learning.

5.4 Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made:

- (1) Since the study revealed that learning materials relate positively with academic performance of distance education learners, the Centre for Continuing Education of the University of Cape Coast should as a matter of priority ensure that students on their programmes receive their modules on time. The centre should also ensure that the materials given to the students are user friendly. That is, the modules should be written in such a way that the learners can easily understand the contents. The Centre for Continuing Education should occasionally hold durbars with the students to find out their concerns about the materials given to them. Information received from durbars can contribute to the review of modules from time to time.

- (2) The study established a significant relationship between learning environment and academic performance of distance education learners. The finding harmonizes with the suggestion that when the feature of the physical, social and academic features of a classroom or school environment are harmoniously perceived by students, they are stimulated to work hard to achieve high academic performance. In the light of this finding, it is recommended that the Centre for Continuing Education should ensure that the study centres for the students on both the education and business programmes are provided the needed facilities and logistics. The lecture rooms should be provided with comfortable tables and chairs and writing material. The lecture rooms should also be well ventilated and well lit.
- (3) The study established a positive relationship between academic counselling and academic performance of students on the University of Cape Coast distance education programme. In the light of this finding, it is recommended that the Centre for Continuing Education should as a matter of urgency employ and deploy trained counsellors to all the regional offices of the Centre. The presence of these counsellors will help alleviate some the counseling needs of the students.
- (4) The study indicated a positive relationship between extrinsic motivation and academic performance of students on the University of Cape Coast distance education programme. This finding by implication is that when the efforts of distance education learners are acknowledged and praised by their facilitators, they are motivated to direct their efforts and personality towards achieving their academic goals. It is imperative,

therefore, that the praising efforts and strategic behaviours of facilitators of distance learners should be directed at helping them to focus on their learning goals.

- (5) The study revealed significant differences between the feedback received by students on education and business programmes. In the light of this finding, it is recommended that the Centre for Continuing Education should ensure that the marked quizzes and assignment scripts of students on both programmes are sent to the students at the same time since students on both programmes write their quizzes on the same days.
- (6) Similarly, the study revealed a significant difference between the learning environment of students on the education and business programmes. In order to rectify this difference, it is recommended that the study centres of the students on the education programme in particular, should be given adequate attention. The study centres should be furnished with good tables and chairs. The furniture in most of these centres have been constructed for adolescents and are sometimes very uncomfortable for the distance learners who are all adults.
- (7) Gender differences in facilitator support were observed in the study. Male students reported receiving much facilitator support than their female counterparts. To overcome this, it is recommended that facilitators should see both the male and female students as equal competitors on their respective programmes and should therefore offer equal support to both sexes.
- (8) Students are to be motivated intrinsically to enhance academic performance. For instance, facilitators should motivate students to

maximize the use of their ego. In other words, facilitators should engage students in activities which will appeal to their self respect and raise their status among their peers.

(9) Students cannot be interested in a task if they are not aware of the purpose it serves in learning. It is therefore recommended that, clear goals and aims should be set in the learning task to pique students' interest and make them to work in a desirable direction. Students are to be made to understand the value in studying a subject or topic. They must be aware of the purpose of acquiring new skills or experiences so that a clear perception of the goal would motivate them to learn for creditable academic achievement.

(10) It is recommended that, the importance of approaches to learning should be explained by facilitators to students and encourage them to use the ones they deem appropriate in their studies to enrich their academic performance.

5.5 Suggestions for Further Research

The study may be the first of its kind in Ghana which support services, motivation and approaches to learning were investigated using distance learners to unearth their effects on academic performance. The study revealed a significant relationship between learning materials, learning environment, counseling and extrinsic motivation and academic performance. However, the study did not reveal a significant relationship between feedback, facilitator and peer support, intrinsic motivation and the approaches to learning used for the study. Since this study is not exhaustive, it is recommended that further studies involving these same variables should be carried out. In such a study, at least two (2) regions should be selected

from each of the three geographical zones, fifteen (15) study centres or more including district centres should be used with an increase in the sample size to reveal other findings that were not available in the study to solve some of the numerous challenges confronting distance learners and the distance education programmes.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

AHMADU BELLO UNIVERSITY

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY AND COUNSELLING QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Respondent,

This study seeks to find out the Influence of Support Services, Motivation and Approaches to Learning on Academic Performance of Undergraduate Distance Learners of the University of Cape Coast. The study has been instituted as a purely academic study. Please, respond to the items below as objectively as possible. Your responses will be treated with strict confidentiality that is why; your name is not required.

Thank you in advance.

APPENDIX II
SUPPORT SERVICES SCALE

**STUDENT ASSESSMENT SCALE FOR FEEDBACK, MODULES, COURSE
TUTOR SUPPORT, PEER SUPPORT, LEARNING ENVIRONMENT,
TEACHING METHOD, COUNSELING, ENTRY ORIENTATION,
MOTIVATION AND APPROACHES TO LEARNING)**

SECTION 'A'

BIODATA

Tick (✓) the appropriate response in the box provided.

1. Region
2. Study Centre
3. Programme
4. Sex: Female [] Male []
5. Age
6. What is your level of education?
 - a. Post secondary, e.g. HND/Diploma/Post-secondary []
 - b. Teachers certificate 'A' []
 - c. Senior High; School certificate []
 - d. Middle School Leaving Certificate []
7. What is the level of education of your father?
 - a. University degree and above []
 - b. Post secondary, e.g. HND, Diploma, Post-secondary []
 - c. Teachers Cert 'A' []
 - d. Teachers Cert 'B' []
 - e. Senior High School Certificate []
 - f. Middle School Leaving Certificate []

- g. Junior High School []
 - h. No formal education []
8. What is the level of education of your mother?
- a. University degree and above []
 - b. Post secondary, e.g. HND, Diploma, Post-secondary []
 - c. Teachers Cert 'A' []
 - d. Teachers Cert 'B' []
 - e. Senior High School Certificate []
 - f. Middle School Leaving Certificate []
 - g. Junior High School []
 - h. No formal education []
9. Father's occupation (please tick one)
- a. Big Business, High Executive, Professional []
 - b. Small Business, Clerical/Office worker []
 - c. Skilled manual worker []
 - d. Unskilled manual worker []
 - e. Others (specify)
10. Mother's occupation (please tick one)
- a. Big Business, High Executive, Professional []
 - b. Small Business, Clerical/Office worker []
 - c. Skilled manual worker []
 - d. Unskilled manual worker []
 - f. Others (specify)

INSTRUCTIONS

In the next sections that is, Sections B-F respond to the statements using the format below. You are required to tick (✓) only one response.

- 5 SA - Strongly Agree
4 A - Agree
3 NS - Not Sure
2 DA - Disagree
1 SDA - Strongly Disagree

SECTION B: FEEDBACK

S/No.	Statement	SA 5	A 4	NS 3	DA 2	SDA 1
11	Comments by my course tutors on my quizzes and assignments do not help me to understand the modules					
12	Feedback on my quizzes and assignments motivate me to learn harder					
13	Course tutors provide me with positive feedback on my course					
14	Delays in the delivery of my marked quizzes and assignments make me anxious					
15	Discussion are held on the marked quizzes and assignments when they are returned to us					
16	Discussions that follow the delivery of marked quizzes and assignments help me to know how to answer questions					
17	Feedback I receive from my quizzes and assignments place me in a better position to organize myself adequately for future quizzes, assignments and examinations					
18	Feedback I receive from marked quizzes and assignments assist me to know the areas of the modules to pay more attention					
19	Negative feedback on my quizzes and assignments encourage me to be more serious with my studies					
20	I find the comments on my quizzes and assignments not necessary					

SECTION C: LEARNING MODULES

S/No.	Statement	SA 5	A 4	NS 3	DA 2	SDA 1
21	I receive all my modules at the right time					
22	The modules have unit and session/objectives that specify clearly what I am expected to learn					
22	The language used in the module is clear and easy for me to understand					
24	Illustrations in the modules are clear and self-explanatory					
25	Examples in the modules are very practical, realistic and helpful in my studies					
26	The self-assessment questions after each session put me on track when studying					
27	I wish the modules encourage collaborative work between me and my course mates					
28	The modules present information in a coherent manner that encourages me to read them					
29	The contents of the modules are relevant to the course					
30	The style used in writing the modules makes them clear for reading					

SECTION D: FACILITATORS' SUPPORT

S/No.	Statement	SA 5	A 4	NS 3	DA 2	SDA 1
31	I feel comfortable discussing my course work with my course tutors					
32	My course tutors like ideas sharing with me					
33	Tutorials offered by course tutors are learner-centered					
34	My course tutors answer all questions I pose to them satisfactorily					
35	My course tutors always encourage me to work harder					
36	My course tutors respect me as an adult learner					
37	My course tutors praise me when I make good grades in quizzes and assignments					
38	My course tutors encourage me to make contributions during lectures					
39	My course tutors are always prepared to attend to my academic challenges					
40	My course tutors encourage me when I score low grades in quizzes and assignments					

SECTION E: PEERS' SUPPORT

S/No.	Statement	SA 5	A 4	NS 3	DA 2	SDA 1
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41	I feel comfortable when studying with my friends					
42	My friends are always ready to help me with my academic work when I am in difficulty					
43	I enjoy discussing my class work with my friends					
44	I can always count on my friends for support					
45	My friends always encourage me to work harder during and after lectures					
46	My friends always tell me that I am intelligent and can do better					
47	My friends always encourage me to join them for studies					
48	My friends and I always meet and share ideas on what has been taught at lectures					
49	I can trust my friends					
50	My friends are always ready to share new learning materials they find with me					

SECTION F: ACADEMIC COUNSELLING

S/No.	Statement	SA 5	A 4	NS 3	DA 2	SDA 1
51	The counselling unit functions effectively at my study centre					
52	There is a prepared schedule for counselling sessions					
53	The counsellor is always on time for counselling sessions					
54	The counsellor is friendly and serious with his/her work					
55	The counsellor has time for every student					
56	The counsellor is always ready to counsel me on my academic problems					
57	The counsellor always encourages me to consult him/her whenever I have difficulty in studying					
58	I always feel that I am capable of doing well after counselling sessions					
59	The counsellor always consults and discusses my academic problems with my course tutors					
60	The counsellor always suggest to me the strategies I could use in my studies					

SECTION G: LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

S/No.	Statement	SA	A	NS	DA	SDA
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		5	4	3	2	1
61	Physical structures at the study centres are good					
62	The classrooms are adequate					
63	The lighting systems in the classrooms are good					
64	The furniture in the classrooms are comfortable					
65	Noise in the learning environment is limited					
66	Teaching and learning aids are adequate					
67	I feel comfortable to learn because the environment is devoid of distractions					
68	The classrooms are well ventilated					
69	There are adequate toilets and urinals for use by students at the study centre					
70	Sanitation in and outside the classrooms is good					

Source: Self designed through reading of related literature

APPENDIX III

SECTION H: MOTIVATION SCALE

S/No.	Statement	SA 5	A 4	NS 3	DA 2	SDA 1
1	I find the course I am pursuing personally rewarding					
2	I like to learn because the course will contribute to my academic development					
3	I learn because the course is relevant to my profession					
4	The encouragement I receive from my course tutors motivate me to work harder					
5	I learn hard so that I can earn a certificate at the end of the course					
6	I find the learning modules exciting so I am motivated to read					
7	I find the content of the learning modules challenging but I feel satisfied after reading them					
8	I learn because I want to score better grades					
9	I learn hard to maintain academic standards					
10	The learning materials make me eager to learn					

APPENDIX I V

SECTION I: APPROACH TO LEARNING SCALE

S/No.	Statement	SA 5	A 4	NS 3	DA 2	SDA 1
1	I try to see the connection between ideas in one subject and those in another					
2	I am very good at planning my study time					
3	I get so interested in some topics at lectures that I try to read more of them on my own					
4	I often ask myself questions about the things I hear during lectures or read in books					
5	I take my work seriously no matter the situation					
6	When trying to understand new ideas I often try to see how they might apply in real life situations					
7	I am quite good at revising my work even when it is a whole semester's work					
8	I enjoy discussing my work with my course mates					
9	I always test myself on important topics until I understand them well					
10	I always try to relate new ideas to previous knowledge					

SECTION J: SURFACE APPROACH TO LEARNING

S/No.	Statement	SA 5	A 4	NS 3	DA 2	SDA 1
11	I find memorizing to be an important part of my learning					
12	I don't usually need more time to complete written work					
13	I don't usually have time to think about the things I read					
14	I like to be told exactly what to do in any assignment given to me					
15	I make my own notes only when the course tutor tells me to					
16	Generally, I read only what I am told to read					
17	When studying I find it difficult to make sense of new ideas presented					
18	When studying I always identify points that will help me answer examination questions and learn them					
19	I find it unnecessary to learn topics in detail					
20	I study because I want to pass my					

	examinations.					
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SECTION K: STRATEGIC APPROACH TO LEARNING

S/No.	Statement	SA 5	A 4	NS 3	DA 2	SDA 1
21	I work out what I am going to put as an answer before writing it					
22	I don't mind working for long hours to complete my work satisfactorily					
23	I find it easy to find information in a book					
24	I always plan my work very carefully					
25	I plan my study time carefully to make the best use of it.					
26	I work hard in order to learn something in the end					
27	I always try to find the right conditions and materials for study					
28	I always reflect on what I study					
29	I always use previous examination papers to guide me when studying					
30	I manage my time effectively to achieve a higher grade					

SECTION L: DISORGANISED APPROACH TO LEARNING

S/No.	Statement	SA 5	A 4	NS 3	DA 2	SDA 1
31	It is difficult for me to plan my study time					
32	I see no value or meaning from what I learn					
33	I generally leave my assignment until the last minutes					
34	My attention is easily taken away from my studies					
35	I work out my own ways of remembering things					
36	I never seem to have enough time to finish my work					
37	When studying I treat the units as unrelated bits of information					
38	I do not have time to reflect on the facts I read					
39	I learn not to understand the course materials but to pass the examinations					
40	I study when I have examinations to write					

Source: Entwistle, N. & Ramsden, P. 1986

Thank you for your time.

APPENDIX V

STUDENT ASSESSMENT SCALE FOR FEEDBACK, LEARNING MODULES, FACILITATOR SUPPORT, PEER SUPPORT, LEARNING ENVIRONMENT , COUNSELLING , MOTIVATION AND APPROACHES TO LEARNING

Reliability

Scale: SECTION B: FEEDBACK

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	60	100.0
	Excluded ^a	0	.0
	Total	60	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.643	10

Reliability

Scale: SECTION C: LEARNING MODULES

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	60	100.0
	Excluded ^a	0	.0

Total	60	100.0
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a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.627	10

Reliability

Scale: SECTION D: FACILITATOR SUPPORT

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	60	100.0
	Excluded ^a	0	.0
	Total	60	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.436	10

Reliability

Scale: SECTION E: PEER SUPPORT

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	60	100.0
	Excluded ^a	0	.0
	Total	60	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.854	10

Reliability

Scale: SECTION F: ACADEMIC COUNSELLING

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	60	100.0
	Excluded ^a	0	.0
	Total	60	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.961	10

Reliability

Scale: SECTION G: LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	60	100.0
	Excluded ^a	0	.0
	Total	60	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.806	10

Reliability

Scale: SECTION H: MOTIVATION

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	60	100.0
	Excluded ^a	0	.0
	Total	60	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.862	10

Reliability**Scale: SECTION I: PEER SUPPORT****Case Processing Summary**

		N	%
Cases	Valid	60	100.0
	Excluded ^a	0	.0
	Total	60	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.720	10

Reliability**Scale: RETEST - SECTION B: FEEDBACK****Case Processing Summary**

		N	%
Cases	Valid	60	100.0
	Excluded ^a	0	.0
	Total	60	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.492	10

Reliability**Scale: RETEST - SECTION C: LEARNING MODULES****Case Processing Summary**

		N	%
Cases	Valid	60	100.0
	Excluded ^a	0	.0
	Total	60	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.213	10

Reliability**Scale: RETEST - SECTION C: LEARNING MODULES****Case Processing Summary**

		N	%
Cases	Valid	60	100.0

Excluded ^a	0	.0
Total	60	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.213	10

Reliability

Scale: RETEST - SECTION D: LEARNING MODULES

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	60	100.0
	Excluded ^a	0	.0
	Total	60	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.763	10

Reliability

Scale: RETEST - SECTION E:

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	60	100.0
	Excluded ^a	0	.0
	Total	60	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.867	10

Reliability

Scale: RETEST - SECTION F: ACADEMIC COUNSELLING

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	60	100.0
	Excluded ^a	0	.0
	Total	60	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.949	10

Reliability

Scale: RETEST - SECTION G: LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	60	100.0
	Excluded ^a	0	.0
	Total	60	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.850	10

Reliability

Scale: RETEST - SECTION H: MOTIVATION

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	60	100.0
	Excluded ^a	0	.0
	Total	60	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.523	10

Reliability

Scale: RETEST - SECTION I: APPROACHES TO LEARNING

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	60	100.0
	Excluded ^a	0	.0
	Total	60	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.629	40

Reliability

Scale: ALL VARIABLES TEST

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	60	100.0
	Excluded ^a	0	.0
	Total	60	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.878	110

Reliability

Scale: ALL VARIABLES RE-TEST

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	60	100.0

Excluded ^a	0	.0
Total	60	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.776	110

APPENDIX VI

Responses on Facilitator Support

ITEM	SA	A	NS	D	SD	M	STD DEV.	RANK
1. Describe course work with course tutor.	222(27%)	378(46%)	69(9%)	75(9%)	71(9%)	3.74	1.20	5 TH
2. Course Tutors share ideas	221(27%)	410(50%)	71(9%)	68(8%)	45(6%)	3.85	1.08	4 TH
3. Tutorials are learners centered	169(21%)	360(44%)	134(16%)	85(10)	67(8%)	3.59	1.17	7 TH
4. Facilitators respond to questions satisfactory.	191(23%)	361(44%)	100(12%)	103(12%)	60(7%)	3.64	1.81	6 TH
5. Facilitators encourage students.	372(46%)	363(46%)	21(3%)	33(4%)	26(3%)	4.25	0.93	1 ST
6. Facilitators respect me as adult learners.	295(36%)	357(44%)	79(10%)	31(4%)	53(7%)	3.99	1.09	2 ND
7. Facilitators praise me after given grades.	220(27%)	287(35%)	126(16%)	97(12%)	85(10%)	3.56	1.28	8 TH
8. Contribution encouraged me in class.	241(30%)	412(51%)	61(8%)	54(7%)	47(6%)	3.91	1.07	3 RD
9. Academic challenges are attended to.	157(19%)	320(39%)	142(17%)	95(12%)	101(12%)	3.41	1.27	9 TH
10. Facilitators encourage me even after scoring low grades.	186(23%)	299(37%)	110(14%)	108(13%)	112(14%)	3.41	1.34	10 TH
Total Response on facilitator support	277(34%)	412(51%)	101(12%)	19(2%)	6(0.7%)	4.15	0.78	

Source: Survey Data, 2013

Responses on Peer Support

ITEM	SA	A	NS	D	SD	M	StdDev.	RANK
1. Comfortable studying with friends	365(45%)	340(42%)	46(6%)	26(3%)	38(5%)	4.19	1.01	1 st
2. Friends ready to assist.	248(30%)	374(46%)	90(11%)	49(6%)	54(7%)	3.87	1.11	4 th
3. Enjoy discussing course work with friends.	250(31%)	423(52%)	71(8%)	35(4%)	36(4%)	4.00	0.98	3 rd
4. Count on friends for support	204(25%)	345(42%)	123(15%)	74(9%)	69(9%)	3.66	1.19	7 th
5. Encouragement from friends.	230(28%)	394(48%)	93(11%)	52(6%)	46(6%)	3.87	1.07	5 th
6. Friends say I can do better.	193(24%)	344(42%)	147(18%)	81(10%)	50(6%)	3.67	1.12	6 th
7. Encouragement from friends group study	183(23%)	387(48%)	89(11%)	96(12%)	60(7%)	3.65	1.16	8 th
8. Discussion after class.	192(24%)	320(39%)	107(13%)	118(15%)	78(10%)	3.52	1.26	9 th
9. I can trust my friends.	149(18%)	323(41%)	161(20%)	94(12%)	79(10%)	3.46	1.19	10 th
10. Friends ready to share.	156(19%)	358(44%)	118(15%)	92(11%)	91(11%)	4.15	0.80	2 nd
Total Response on peer support	291(36%)	389(48%)	107(13%)	22(3%)	6 (0.7)	4.15	0.80	

Source: Survey Data, 2013

Responses on Academic Counselling

ITEM	SA	A	NS	D	SD	M	StdDev	RANK
1. Counselling Unit function effectively	52 (6%)	104(13%)	152(19%)	128(16%)	379(47%)	2.17	1.31	4 th
2. Prepared schedule for counselling session	32(4%)	84(10%)	174(21%)	141(17%)	384(47%)	2.06	1.20	10 th
3. Counsellors are always on time.	33(4%)	83(10%)	171(21%)	148(18%)	380(47%)	2.07	1.21	9 th
4. The counsellor is friendly.	33(4%)	91(11%)	187(30%)	152(19%)	352(43%)	2.14	1.21	6 th
5. Counsellor has time for every student.	35(4%)	89(11%)	190(23%)	143(18%)	358(44%)	2.14	1.21	7 th
6. Ready to counsel me.	35(4.32%)	89(11%)	188(23%)	161(20%)	342(42%)	2.16	1.20	5 th
7. Counsellor encourages me to consult him/her always.	41(5%)	109(13%)	171(21%)	147(18%)	347(43%)	2.20	1.25	2 nd
8. Feel capable of doing well after counselling service.	59(7.2%)	130(16%)	187(23%)	145(18%)	294(36%)	2.40	1.31	1 st
9. Counsellor discuss my issues with my facilitator	31(4%)	85(10%)	196(24%)	149(18%)	354(43%)	2.12	1.91	8 th
10. Counsellor suggests learning strategies.	40(5%)	96(12%)	182(22%)	143(17.5%)	354(43%)	2.17	1.24	3 rd
Total Response on Academic Counselling	42(5%)	133(16%)	215(26%)	207(25%)	218(27%)	2.47	1.19	

Source: Survey Data, 2013

Responses on Learning Environment

ITEM	SA	A	NS	D	SD	M	StdDev	RANK
1. Good physical structure	189 (23%)	366(45%)	57(7%)	94(12%)	109(13%)	3.35	1.32	4 TH
2. Adequate classroom	179(22%)	391(48%)	57(7%)	99(12%)	89(11%)	3.57	1.26	3 RD
3. Good lighting system	192(23%)	428(53%)	59(7%)	60(7%)	76(9%)	3.73	1.72	1 ST
4. Comfortable furniture	111(14%)	300(37%)	73(9%)	164(20%)	167(21%)	3.03	1.39	9 TH
5. Limited noise in the environment.	117(14%)	322(40%)	86(11%)	130(16%)	160(20%)	3.13	1.38	6 TH
6. Adequate teaching and learning aid	80(9%)	268(33%)	126(16%)	177(22%)	164(20%)	2.90	1.32	10 TH
7. I feel comfortable to learn because the environment is devoid of distraction	125(15%)	307(38%)	98(12%)	135(17%)	150(18%)	3.15	1.37	7 TH
8. Ventilated classroom	207(25%)	363(45%)	57(7%)	87(11%)	101(12%)	3.59	1.31	2 ND
9. Adequate washrooms	168(21%)	274(34%)	61(8%)	118(15%)	194(24%)	3.13	1.50	8 TH
10. Good sanitation	183(23%)	369(45%)	67(9%)	74(9%)	122(15%)	3.51	1.33	5 TH
Total Responses on Learning Environment	158(19%)	382(47%)	193(24%)	69(9%)	13(2%)	3.74	0.92	

Source: Survey Data, 2013

Response on Deep Approach to Learning

Item	SA	A	N/S	D	SD	M	StdDev.	Ranking
1. Connection between ideas	161(19%)	476(58%)	101(12%)	44(5%)	33(4%)	3.84	0.94	9 th
2. Glad at planning study time	199(24%)	437(54%)	108(13%)	53(7%)	18(2%)	3.91	0.91	7 th
3. Self-tuition	288(35%)	425(52%)	60(7%)	20(2%)	22(3%)	4.21	1.64	1 st
4. Self-questioning	229(28%)	481(59%)	57(7%)	32(4%)	16(2%)	4.14	1.96	3 rd
5. Takes learning serious	286(35%)	440(54%)	46(6%)	27(3%)	16(2%)	4.17	0.83	2 nd
6. Relating learning to real life situation	225(23%)	471(55%)	79(10%)	26(3%)	14(2%)	4.06	0.81	4 th
7. Good at revising	190(23%)	456(56%)	89(11%)	49(6%)	31(4%)	3.88	0.96	8 th
8. Discussing with course mates	200(24%)	430(53%)	82(10%)	68(8%)	35(4%)	3.84	1.02	10 th
9. Self-testing	218(27%)	447(55%)	79(10%)	47(6%)	24(3%)	3.97	0.93	6 th
10. Relating ideas with previous knowledge	238(29%)	448(55%)	71(9%)	34(4%)	24(3%)	4.03	0.90	5 th
Total Response on Deep approach	359(44%)	416(51%)	30(4%)	7(0.9%)	3(0.4%)	4.58	4.27	

Source: Survey Data, 2013

Response Rate on Strategic Approach to Learning

ITEM	SA	A	N/S	D	SD	M	Std. Dev	RANK
1. Work out answers before writing	226(28%)	372(46%)	121(15%)	121(51%)	59(7%)	3.86	1.04	8 th
2. Working extra hours	226(28%)	346(43%)	98(12%)	98(12%)	46(6%)	3.74	1.15	9 th
3. Information in book	171(21%)	382(47%)	107(13%)	102(12.5%)	53(7%)	3.63	1.14	10 th
4. Plan of work	223(27%)	467(57%)	62(8%)	36(4%)	27(3%)	4.00	0.91	5 th
5. Plan to make best use of it.	245(30%)	430(52%)	67(8%)	52(6%)	21(3%)	4.01	0.93	4 th
6. Work hard to learn.	290(36%)	440(54%)	43(5%)	27(3%)	15(1.8%)	4.18	0.82	1 st
7. Right condition and material	230(28%)	418(51%)	83(10%)	52(6%)	32(4%)	3.94	0.99	7 th
8. Reflect on studies	308(38%)	380(47%)	66(8%)	28(3%)	33(4%)	4.11	0.97	2 nd
9. Use of past exams papers	261(32%)	400(49%)	77(9%)	48(6%)	29(4%)	4.00	0.98	6 th
10. Time management	265(33%)	409(50%)	81(10%)	30(4%)	30(4%)	4.04	0.94	3 rd
11. Total Response on Strategic Approach	329(40%)	424(52%)	54(7%)	6(0.7%)	2(0.2%)	4.31	0.65	

Source: Survey Data, 2013

Response on Surface Approach to Learning

Item	SA	A	N/S	D	SD	M	StdDev.	RANK
1. Memorizing is part of learning	246(30%)	411(50%)	83(10%)	44(5%)	31(4%)	3.98	0.98	1 st
2. Time not needed to complete work.	1119(14%)	235(29%)	150(18%)	181(22%)	138(17%)	3.00	1.32	5 th
3. Don't have time to think about things/.....	112(14%)	221(27%)	135(17%)	205(25%)	142(17%)	2.95	1.32	8 th
4. Information on assignment should be exact	194(24%)	321(39%)	97(12%)	123(15%)	80(10%)	3.52	1.27	4 th
5. Makes notes when told to do so.	111(14%)	215(26%)	88(11%)	229(28%)	172(2%)	2.83	1.38	9 th
6. Read when asked to do so	101(12%)	145(24%)	105(13%)	220(27%)	194(24%)	2.74	1.36	10 th
7. Difficulty in making sense of new ideas presented	107(13%)	251(31%)	113(14%)	214(26%)	130(16%)	2.99	1.32	7 th
8. Always try to identify points that will help in answering exams questions	276(34%)	375(46%)	73(9%)	44(5%)	47(6%)	3.97	1.08	2 nd
9. Unnecessary to learn topics in details.	132(16%)	234(29%)	93(11%)	199(24%)	157(19%)	2.98	1.39	6 th
10. Study to pass exams.	278(34%)	316(39%)	77(9%)	88(11%)	56(7%)	3.82	1.21	3 rd
Total Responses on Surface Approach to learning	84(10%)	425(52%)	279(34%)	25(3%)	2(0.2%)	3.69	0.70	

Source: Survey Data, 2013

Response on Disorganised Approach to Learning

Item	SA	A	N/S	D	SD	M	Std Dev	RANK
1. Difficult to plan my study time.	105(13%)	233(29%)	121(15%)	194(24%)	162(20%)	2.91	1.35	3 rd
2. No value/meaning of what I learn.	64(8%)	129(16%)	81(10%)	236(29%)	305(37%)	2.28	1.32	10 th
3. Assignment done last minutes.	79(9.7%)	164(20%)	103(13%)	228(28%)	241(30%)	2.52	1.35	8 th
4. Attention easily taken away from my studies.	85(10%)	239(29%)	111(14%)	200(28%)	180(22%)	2.81	1.34	5 th
5. Look out on ways of remembering things.	167(21%)	404(50%)	92(11%)	84(10%)	68(8%)	3.64	1.16	1 st
6. Never seen to have enough time to finish my work.	119(15%)	286(35%)	120(15%)	156(19%)	134(16%)	3.12	1.33	2 nd
7. Treat Unit as unrelated bit of information.	81(10%)	211(30%)	172(21%)	204(25%)	147(18%)	2.85	1.27	4 th
8. No time to reflect on the fact I read.	72(9%)	193(24%)	112(14%)	242(30%)	196(24%)	2.69	2.17	6 th
9. Learn not to understand the course material.	82(10%)	149(18%)	95(12%)	223(27%)	266(33%)	2.45	1.37	9 th
10. Study when there is exams.	123(15%)	144(18%)	203(25%)	283(25%)	283(35%)	2.54	1.48	7 th
Total Response on Disorganised Approach to learning.	96(12%)	638(78%)	78(10%)	3(0.4%)	1(0.1%)	4.31	8.63	

Source: Survey Data, 2013

Responses on Intrinsic Motivation

ITEM	SA	A	NS	SA	D	M	StdDev	RANK
1. My programme personally rewarding.	331(41%)	341(32%)	50(6%)	49(6%)	44(5%)	4.01	1.09	3 rd
2. Learn because it will contribute to be academic development.	425(52%)	325(40%)	21(3%)	24(3%)	20(3%)	4.36	0.86	1 st
3. Learn because it is relevant to my profession	399(49%)	340(42%)	35(4%)	22(3%)	19(2%)	4.32	0.86	2 nd
4. Satisfied despite challenging content of learning modules.	162(10%)	412(51%)	105(13%)	87(11%)	49(6%)	3.67	1.09	4 th
Total Response Intrinsic Motivation	415(51%)	325(40%)	56(7%)	13(2%)	6(0.7%)	4.39	0.74	

Source: Survey Data, 2013

Responses on Extrinsic Motivation

ITEM	SA	A	NS	A	SA	M	StdDev.	RANK
1. Learn aiming to get certificate.	446(54%)	306(38%)	25(3%)	20(3%)	18(2%)	4.40	0.85	1 st
2. Learning modules exciting.	218(27%)	378(46%)	96(12%)	77(9%)	46(6%)	3.79	1.10	5 th
3. I want to score better grades	408(50%)	324(40%)	43(5%)	19(2%)	21(3%)	4.32	0.88	2 nd
4. Learn to maintain academic standards.	385(47%)	350(43%)	34(4%)	27(3%)	19(2%)	4.29	0.87	3 rd
5. Learning materials interesting to read.	176(22%)	363(45%)	129(16%)	76(9%)	71(9%)	3.61	1.17	6 th
6. Encouragement motivates me to work harder.	299(36%)	386(47%)	64(8%)	39(5%)	28(3%)	4.09	0.97	4 th
Total Response on Extrinsic Motivation	427(52%)	318(39%)	52(6%)	11(1%)	7(0.9%)	4.41	0.74	

Source: Survey Data, 2013

APPENDIX VII

Descriptive Statistics

		N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Feedback	Degree in Basic Education	505	33.83	.617	.03	3.77	3.88
	Degree in Commerce	134	33.58	.73	.06	3.46	3.71
	Degree in Management Studies	176	33.67	.60	.05	3.58	3.76
Learning modules	Degree in Basic Education	505	34.14	.73	.03	4.07	4.20
	Degree in Commerce	134	33.96	.80	.07	3.82	4.09
	Degree in Management Studies	176	34.06	.70	.05	3.95	4.16
Facilitator support	Degree in Basic Education	505	33.22	.72	.03	4.18	4.28
	Degree in Commerce	134	33.03	.90	.08	3.88	4.18
	Degree in Management Studies	176	34.03	.82	.062	3.90	4.15
Peer support	Degree in Basic Education	505	34.16	.78	.03	4.09	4.23
	Degree in Commerce	134	34.07	.88	.08	3.92	4.22
	Degree in Management Studies	176	34.18	.79	.06	4.06	4.30
Academic counselling	Degree in Basic Education	505	32.54	1.15	.05	2.44	2.64
	Degree in Commerce	134	32.36	1.18	.10	2.16	2.56
	Degree in Management Studies	176	32.40	1.30	.09	2.20	2.59
Learning environment	Degree in Basic Education	505	33.83	.87	.04	3.76	3.91
	Degree in Commerce	134	33.40	1.01	.09	3.22	3.57
	Degree in Management Studies	176	33.73	.92	.07	3.59	3.86
Motivation	Degree in Basic Education	505	34.56	.61	.03	4.50	4.61
	Degree in Commerce	134	34.28	.84	.07	4.14	4.43

	Degree in Management Studies	176	34.36	.76	.06	4.24	4.47
Deep approach	Degree in Basic Education	505	34.78	5.39	.24	4.30	5.25
	Degree in Commerce	134	34.27	.73	.06	4.14	4.39
	Degree in Management Studies	176	34.27	.66	.05	4.17	4.36
Surface approach to learning	Degree in Basic Education	505	33.70	.66	.029	3.65	3.76
	Degree in Commerce	134	33.67	.75	.06	3.54	3.80
	Degree in Management Studies	176	33.67	.80	.06	3.55	3.79
Strategic approach to learning	Degree in Basic Education	505	34.35	.59	.03	4.31	4.41
	Degree in Commerce	134	34.18	.72	.06	4.05	4.30
	Degree in Management Studies	176	34.29	.72	.05	4.19	4.40
Disorganised approach to learning	Degree in Basic Education	504	32.95	1.18	.05	2.84	3.05
	Degree in Commerce	134	33.04	1.19	.10	2.83	3.24
	Degree in Management Studies	176	33.24	1.19	.09	3.07	3.42

Source: Survey Data, 2013

Multiple Comparisons

Dependent Variable	(I) Programme being pursued	(J) Programme being pursued	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Feedback	Degree in Basic Education	Degree in Commerce	31.25*	.06152	.000	.0948	.3965
	Degree in Basic Education	Degree in Management Studies	30.16*	.05542	.018	.0214	.2932
	Degree in Commerce	Degree in Basic Education	-.25*	.06152	.000	-.3965	-.0948
	Degree in Commerce	Degree in Management Studies	-.09	.07259	.477	-.2664	.0896
	Degree in Management Studies	Degree in Basic Education	-.16*	.05542	.018	-.2932	-.0214
	Degree in Management Studies	Degree in Commerce	.09	.07259	.477	-.0896	.2664
	Degree in Basic Education	Degree in Commerce	.18*	.07181	.039	.0073	.3595
	Degree in Basic Education	Degree in Management Studies	.08	.06469	.450	-.0768	.2404
Learning modules	Degree in Commerce	Degree in Basic Education	-.18*	.07181	.039	-.3595	-.0073
	Degree in Commerce	Degree in Management Studies	-.10	.08473	.488	-.3094	.1062
	Degree in Management Studies	Degree in Basic Education	-.08	.06469	.450	-.2404	.0768
	Degree in Management Studies	Degree in Commerce	.10	.08473	.488	-.1062	.3094
Facilitator support	Degree in Basic	Degree in Commerce	.19*	.07497	.041	.0061	.3738

	Education	Degree in Management Studies	.19*	.06753	.018	.0258	.3570
	Degree in Commerce	Degree in Basic Education	-.18995*	.07497	.041	-.3738	-.0061
		Degree in Management Studies	.00144	.08845	1.000	-.2155	.2184
	Degree in Management Studies	Degree in Basic Education	-.19*	.06753	.018	-.3570	-.0258
		Degree in Commerce	-.001	.08845	1.000	-.2184	.2155
Peer support	Degree in Basic Education	Degree in Commerce	.09	.07781	.488	-.0976	.2840
		Degree in Management Studies	-.02	.07009	.954	-.1933	.1505
	Degree in Commerce	Degree in Basic Education	-.09323	.07781	.488	-.2840	.0976
		Degree in Management Studies	-.11465	.09180	.459	-.3398	.1105
	Degree in Management Studies	Degree in Basic Education	.02142	.07009	.954	-.1505	.1933
		Degree in Commerce	.11465	.09180	.459	-.1105	.3398
Academic counselling	Degree in Basic Education	Degree in Commerce	.17842	.11577	.305	-.1055	.4623
		Degree in Management Studies	.13891	.10428	.412	-.1168	.3946
	Degree in Commerce	Degree in Basic Education	-.17842	.11577	.305	-.4623	.1055
		Degree in Management Studies	-.03952	.13659	.959	-.3745	.2954

	Degree in Management Studies	Degree in Basic Education	-.13891	.10428	.412	-.3946	.1168
		Degree in Commerce	.03952	.13659	.959	-.2954	.3745
Learning environment	Degree in Basic Education	Degree in Commerce	.44012*	.08816	.000	.2239	.6563
		Degree in Management Studies	.10837	.07941	.395	-.0864	.3031
	Degree in Commerce	Degree in Basic Education	-.44012*	.08816	.000	-.6563	-.2239
		Degree in Management Studies	-.33175*	.10401	.006	-.5868	-.0767
	Degree in Management Studies	Degree in Basic Education	-.10837	.07941	.395	-.3031	.0864
		Degree in Commerce	.33175*	.10401	.006	.0767	.5868
Motivation	Degree in Basic Education	Degree in Commerce	.27483*	.06684	.000	.1109	.4387
		Degree in Management Studies	.20046*	.06021	.004	.0528	.3481
	Degree in Commerce	Degree in Basic Education	-.27483*	.06684	.000	-.4387	-.1109
		Degree in Management Studies	-.07437	.07886	.641	-.2678	.1190
	Degree in Management Studies	Degree in Basic Education	-.20046*	.06021	.004	-.3481	-.0528
		Degree in Commerce	.07437	.07886	.641	-.1190	.2678
Deep approach	Degree in Basic Education	Degree in Commerce	.50758	.41498	.474	-.5101	1.5252
		Degree in Management Studies	.50919	.37381	.396	-.4075	1.4259

	Degree in Commerce	Degree in Basic Education	-.50758	.41498	.474	-	.5101
		Degree in Management Studies	.00161	.48961	1.000	-	1.2023
	Degree in Management Studies	Degree in Basic Education	-.50919	.37381	.396	-	.4075
		Degree in Commerce	-.00161	.48961	1.000	-	1.1990
Surface approach to learning	Degree in Basic Education	Degree in Commerce	.03331	.06850	.889	-.1347	.2013
		Degree in Management Studies	.03450	.06170	.855	-.1168	.1858
	Degree in Commerce	Degree in Basic Education	-.03331	.06850	.889	-.2013	.1347
		Degree in Management Studies	.00119	.08082	1.000	-.1970	.1994
	Degree in Management Studies	Degree in Basic Education	-.03450	.06170	.855	-.1858	.1168
		Degree in Commerce	-.00119	.08082	1.000	-.1994	.1970
Strategic approach to learning	Degree in Basic Education	Degree in Commerce	.17931 *	.06292	.018	.0250	.3336
		Degree in Management Studies	.06296	.05668	.540	-.0760	.2020
	Degree in Commerce	Degree in Basic Education	-.17931 *	.06292	.018	-.3336	-.0250
		Degree in Management Studies	-.11635	.07424	.293	-.2984	.0657
	Degree in Management Studies	Degree in Basic Education	-.06296	.05668	.540	-.2020	.0760
		Degree in Commerce	.11635	.07424	.293	-.0657	.2984

Disorganised approach to learning	Degree in Basic Education	Degree in Commerce	-.09088	.11508	.732	-.3731	.1913
	Degree in Education	Degree in Management Studies	-.29789*	.10366	.016	-.5521	-.0437
	Degree in Commerce	Degree in Basic Education	.09088	.11508	.732	-.1913	.3731
	Degree in Commerce	Degree in Management Studies	-.20700	.13574	.313	-.5399	.1259
	Degree in Management Studies	Degree in Basic Education	.29789*	.10366	.016	.0437	.5521
	Degree in Management Studies	Degree in Commerce	.20700	.13574	.313	-.1259	.5399

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Source: Survey Data, 2013

APPENDIX VIII

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

CENTRAL FOR CONTINUING EDUCATION

GENDER STATISTICS FOR 2012/2013 ACADEMIC YEAR

In selecting samples for students on the education programmes, recourse was made to Gorard (2003) sample distribution formula. Based on their formula, a sample size of 530 was selected from the population of 2,618 students. Table 1 gives information on the statistics of male and female students in the selected regions.

Table 1: Statistics of male and female students in the selected regions

S/N	Region/Study Centre	EDUCATION					
		Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
ASHANTI REGION		1472					
1	Serwaa Nyarko	160	13	1	1	0	0
2	Mmofraturu	0	0	0	0	230	61
3	KASS	284	195	0	0	0	0
4	Obuasi	106	67	1	0	34	10
5	Ash. Mampong CoE	61	56	0	0	20	0
6	Konongo SHS	31	12	0	0	0	0
	Sub-total	642	463	2	1	284	80
CENTRAL REGION		860					
1	UCC	250	208	4	1	123	29
2	Swedru SHS	0	0	0	0	45	18
3	Swedru Sch. Of Business	63	51	1	0	0	0
4	Obiri Yeboah SHS	41	26	0	0	0	0
	Sub-total	354	285	5	1	168	47
NORTHERN REGION		286					

1	Tamale College of Education	60	23	4	0	14	5
2	Gambaga Snr. High School	138	52	0	0	0	0
	Sub-total	188	75	4	0	14	5
	Grand-total	1184	823	11	2	466	132

Table 2: Statistics (Gender) for the education students in the selected regions

SEX	ASHANTI REGION		CENTRAL REGION		NORTHERN REGION	
Male	928	63.04	527	61.28	206	72.03
Female	544	36.96	333	38.72	80	27.97
Total	1472	100	860	100	286	100

Table 3 shows the distribution of population and samples for the education students in the selected regions.

Table 3: Distribution of population and samples for the education students in the selected regions

REGION	POPULATION	SAMPLE
Ashanti	1472	298
Central	860	174
Northern	286	58
Total	2618	530

In Table 3, there is information on the gender sample distribution for the education students in the selected regions.

Table 4: Gender sample distribution for the education students in the selected regions

REGION	POPULATION			SAMPLE		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Ashanti	928	544	1472	188	110	298
Central	527	333	860	107	67	184
Northern	206	80	286	42	16	58
Total	1661	957	2618	337	193	530

Using the sample distribution formula recommended by Gorard (2003), a sample size of 324 was selected from the 632 students who were on the business programme (Commerce and Management) in the selected regions. Table 5 provides a summary of the gender distribution of the students.

Table 5 Statistics for the Business students in the selection regions based on study centres

S/No.	Region/Student Centre	Commerce			Management		
		Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
1	Kumasi Polytechnic	85	31	116	71	58	129
2	Univ. of Cape coast	110	46	156	90	101	191
3	Tamale Polytechnic	10	3	13	10	17	27
	Total	205	80	285	171	176	347

Table 6 gives information on statistics for the Business students in the selected regions based on programmes, while on Table 6, there is information on the distribution of population and samples for the business students in the selected regions based on programme.

Table 6 Statistics for the Business Students in the selected regions based on programmes

Programme	Kumasi Polytechnic			Univ. of Cape Coast			Tamale Polytechnic		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Commerce	85	31	116	110	46	156	10	3	13
Management	71	58	129	90	101	191	10	17	27
Total	156	89	245	200	147	347	20	20	40

Table 7: Distribution of population and samples for the business students in the selected regions based on programme

Region	Population			Sample
	Male	Female	Total	
Commerce	205	80	285	146
Management	171	176	347	178
Total	376	256	632	324

In Table 8 information is provided on the distribution of population and samples for the Commerce students in the selected regions based on study centre. In Table 8, how the samples were distributed to respondents on the Management programme is shown.

Table 8: Distribution of population and samples for the commerce students in the selected regions based on gender.

S/N	Region/Study Centre	Commerce			Sample		
		Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total

1	Kumasi Polytechnic	85	31	116	43	16	59
2	Univ. of Cape Coast	110	46	156	56	24	80
3	Tamale Polytechnic	10	3	13	5	2	7
	Total	205	80	285	104	42	146

Table 9: Distribution of population and samples for the Management students in the selected regions based on gender

S/N	Region/Study Centre	Commerce			Sample		
		Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
1	Kumasi Polytechnic	71	58	129	36	30	66
2	Univ. of Cape Coast	90	101	191	46	52	98
3	Tamale Polytechnic	10	17	27	5	9	14
	Total	171	176	347	87	91	178

APPENDIX IX

Summarised findings of hypotheses tested in the study

Statement of Hypothesis	Results	Decision	Conclusion
there is no statistical significant relationship between feedback and academic performance of distance learners of University of Cape Coast	$r(815) = 0.019, p > 0.05$	Failed to reject	Significant relationship was not found. $P > 0.05$
there is no statistical significant relationship between Factuality of content of Learning modules and academic performance of distance learners of University of Cape Coast	$r(815) = 0.079, p > 0.05$	Rejected	Significant relationship was found. $P < 0.05$
there is no statistical significant relationship between facilitator support and academic performance of distance learners of University of Cape Coast	$r(815) = 0.029, p > 0.05$	Failed to reject	Significant relationship was not found, $p < 0.05$
there is no statistical significant relationship between academic counselling and academic performance of distance learners of University of Cape Coast	$r(815) = 0.079, p < 0.05$	Rejected	Significant relationship was found, $p < 0.05$
there is no statistical significant relationship between learning environment and academic performance of distance learners of University of Cape Coast	$r(815) = 0.08, p < 0.05$	Rejected	Significant relationship was found, $p < 0.05$
there is no statistical significant relationship between peer support and academic performance of distance learners of University of Cape Coast	$r(815) = -0.767, p > 0.05$	Failed to reject	Significant relationship was not found, $p > 0.05$
there is no significant relationship between strategic approach to learning and academic performance of distance learners of University of Cape Coast	$r(815) = 0.021, p > 0.05$	Failed to reject	Significant relationship was not found, $p > 0.05$
There is no significant relationship between Disorganised approach to learning and academic performance of distance learners of University of Cape Coast.	$r(815) = -0.16, p > 0.05$	Failed to reject	Significant relationship was not found, $p > 0.05$
There is no significant relationship between intrinsic motivation and academic performance of distance learners of University of Cape Coast.	$r(815) = 0.037, p > 0.05$	Failed to reject	Significant relationship was not found, $p > 0.05$
There is no significant relationship between extrinsic motivation and academic performance of distance learners of University of Cape Coast	$r(815) = 0.065, p > 0.05$	Failed to reject	Significant relationship was not found, $p > 0.05$
there is no significant relationship between		Failed to	Significant

Deep approach to learning and academic performance of distance learners of University of Cape Coast.	$r(815) = -0.04,$ $p > 0.05$	reject	relationship was not found, $p > 0.05$
there is no significant relationship between Surface approach to learning and academic performance of distance learners of University of Cape Coast.	$r(815) = -0.01,$ $p > 0.05$	Failed to reject	Significant relationship was not found, $p > 0.05$
there is no significant relationship between strategic approach to learning and academic performance of distance learners of University of Cape Coast	$r(815) = 0.021,$ $p > 0.05$	Failed to reject	Significant relationship was not found, $p > 0.05$
there is no significant relationship between Disorganised approach to learning and academic performance of distance learners of University of Cape Coast.	$r(815) = -0.16,$ $p > 0.05$	Failed to reject	Significant relationship was not found, $p > 0.05$
There is no statistically significant difference among commerce, management and education students' assessment of influence of support services, motivation and approaches to learning.	Sig. difference were found with respect to feedback, learning modules, learning environment, facilitator support, motivation, strategic approach, disorganised approach to learning.	Mean were Rejected	$P < 0.05$
there is no statistical significant difference between female and male students' assessment of influence of support services, motivation approaches to learning and academic performance.	Gender differences were found with respect to motivation, Surface approach and academic performance.	Rejected	$p < 0.05$

Source: Survey Data, 2013

APPENDIX X

STUDY CENTRE FOR THE STUDY

Education

1. Serwaa Nyarko Senior High School
2. Mmofraturu Senior High School
3. Kumasi Anglican Senior High School
4. Kumasi Polytechnic
5. University of Cape Coast
6. Tamale College of Education

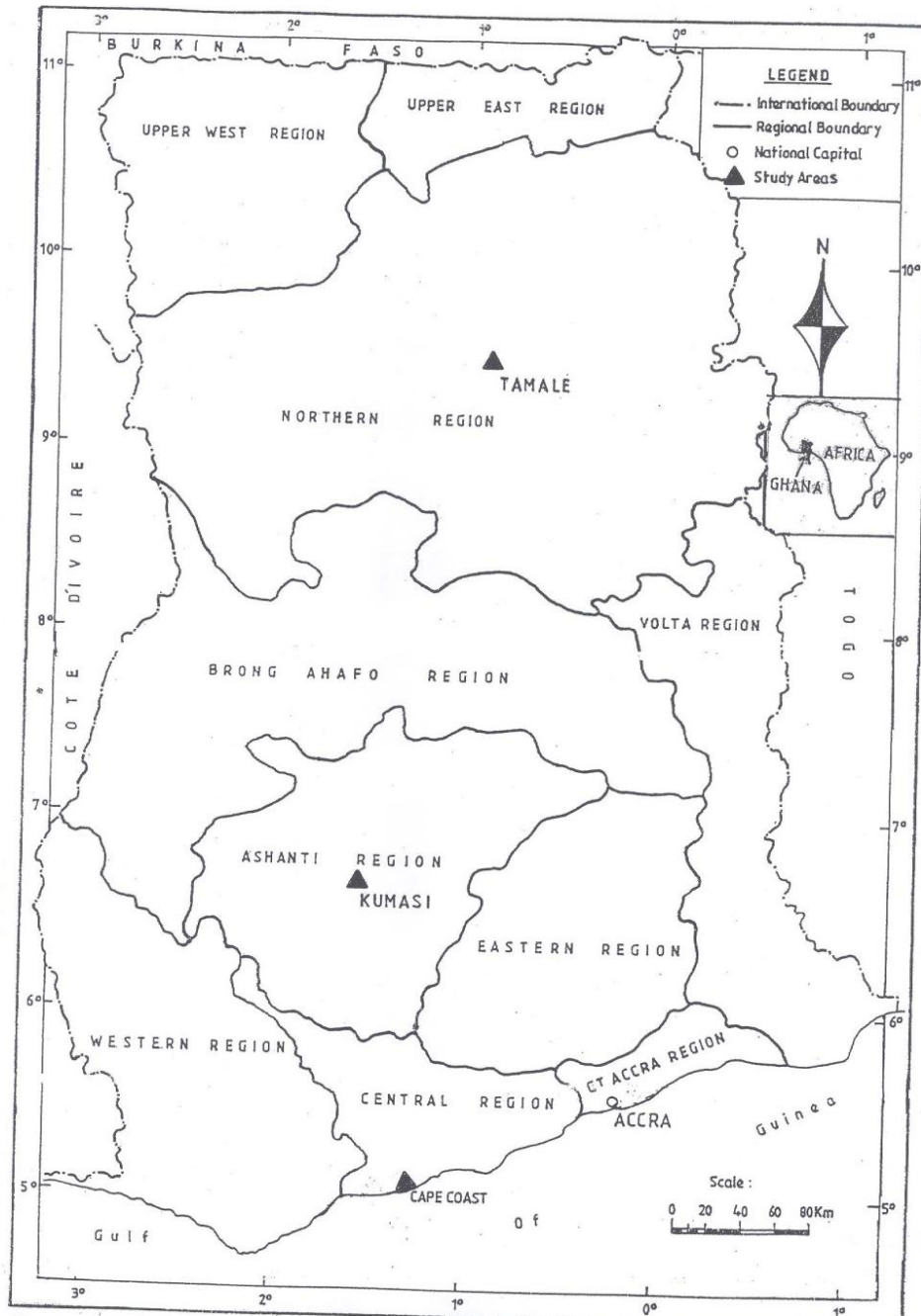
Business

1. Kumasi Polytechnic
2. University of Cape Coast
3. Tamale College of Education

APPENDIX XI

MAP OF GHANA SHOWING REGIONS OF THE STUDY

Source:



Department of Geography & Regional Planning, UCC - 2013