

International Conference on Educational Research and Practice, 10-11 February 2009,
Putrajaya Malaysia
Enhancing Human Capital through Teacher Education

Title of paper: **Open and Distance Learning Programme and Learner Outcomes: A review of Empirical Evidence**

Sub-theme: Training programme evaluation

Authors: Dr. Rosmah Mohamed, Open University Malaysia
rosmah_mohamed@oum.edu.my

Azlina Abdul Aziz, Open University Malaysia
azlina@oum.edu.my

Majumin Hanum Abdul Samad, Open University Malaysia
majmin@oum.edu.my

Tel/ Fax: +603 - 2773 2341; +603 – 2773 2103 / +603 - 2697 8850

Abstract

There is an increasing interest in examining the issues associated with higher learning institutions, both within Malaysia and in other countries around the globe. Due to the impact of global education market, high competition and a shift towards mass higher education, concerns about the standard of the programmes offered and the demands for public accountability have become crucial. The number of learners enrolled into programmes offered through open and distance learning (ODL) in Malaysia has expanded remarkably. For instance, learners enrolled at Open University Malaysia have increased tremendously from 753 learners in August 2001 to 75,000 learners in January 2009. This increasing number of enrolments indicates that more people are interested in learning and enhancing their competencies by pursuing a higher degree qualification. However, the question on how far the ODL programme affects the learner outcomes is still unanswered. Therefore, this study reviews the empirical research evidences on ODL programmes in higher learning institutions and the learner outcomes. The focus of this study is to answer two key questions: (i) Are learners achieving the outcomes expected? and (ii) If they are, are these outcomes the direct result of the programme, or of other factors? Empirical research articles from various academic sources such as refereed journals, proceedings and theses are explored. The results of this study are hoped to present the status of empirical research evidences on ODL programmes and learner outcomes. It is also hoped that this study will grant significant information for future research and fill the current gaps.

Keywords: Open and distance learning, learner outcomes, curriculum programme evaluation

References:

- Mariasingam, M.A. and Hanna, D.E. (2006). Benchmarking quality in online degree programs: Status and prospects. *Online Journal of Distance Learning Administration*, IX(III).
<http://www.westga.edu/~distance/ojdla/fall93/mariasingam93.htm>. Accessed on 26 December 2008.
- Gabriel, G.E. (2002). Postsecondary distance education: Issues of student outcomes, access, cost, and quality assurance. *Research Report No. 01-02*.
<http://www.nvcc.edu/oir/reports/DistanceEducationReport.pdf>. Accessed on 7 February 2009.
- Shachar, M. (2008). Meta-analysis: The preferred method of choice for the assessment of distance learning quality factors. *International Review of Research in Open and Distance Learning*, 9(3).
- Flowers, L.A., Moore III, J.L. and Flowers, L.O. (2008). African American students' satisfaction with distance education courses. *Ejournal*, 9(3).
http://studentaffairs.com/ejournal/Winter_2008/AfricanAmericanStudents.html. Accessed on 22 January 2009.
- Hall, M. (2008). Predicting student performance in web-based distance education courses based on survey instruments measuring personality traits and technical skills. *Online Journal of Distance Learning Administration*, XI(III).
<http://www.westga.edu/~distance/ojdla/fall1113/hall123.htm>. Accessed on 7 February 2009.
- Urtel, M.G. (2008). Assessing academic performance between traditional and distance education course formats. *Educational Technology & Society*, 11(1):322-330.
- Layng, J.M. (2008). Distance learning: the challenge and opportunity of online technology. *Journal of Literacy and Technology*. 9(3): 56-86.
http://www.literacyandtechnology.org/volume9_3/jlt_v9_3_layng.pdf. Accessed on 2 February 2009.