

# Assessing the factors hindering the implementation of adult education in Open and Distance Learning system in Mbeya, Tanzania

## Abstract

*The study assessed the factors hindering the implementation of adult education in Open and Distance Learning system in Mbeya, Tanzania whereby two research objective namely to examined the practice of adult education through online distance learning in Mbeya region and exploring issues that hinder the practice of adult education through online distance learning. Mixed research approach employed and has a sample size of 56 respondents where by 40 respondents were adult education learners. The study found that the practiced programme not well known among rural society, even local government officials did not knew about adult education, some thought AE is teaching adult reading and writing. Moreover, physical facilities were not satisfactory. Most learners and teachers not satisfied with the availability, relevance and adequacy of teaching and learning materials (textbooks, curriculum, other curriculum support materials, storybooks, technological facilities). The study concludes that the practice of adult education in Mbeya region had positive impact basing on its modes of operands and was among the strategies that revealed to motivate and enhances the programme to gain its popularities. It recommended that more training should offered to learning institution and they should cooperate with the Tanzania Commission for Universities and public universities in Tanzania and NACTVET to use the ODL system. Finally, it is essential that the government of Tanzania to support all institutions through giving the financial and non-financial support as well the qualified human resources including leaders who know the significant of ODL system in practicing the adult education in Tanzania.*

**Key words:** Adult, Adult Education, Open Distance Learning, learners, teacher

## 1. INTRODUCTION

“Education for adults is one of the key educational issues to meet the Education for All (EFA) agenda. Recognizing this, all the countries globally continue to emphasize educating adults even during their retirement and beyond to activate their participation in development through Open and Distance Learning (ODL). Adult education plays a key role in creating social capital, fostering social inclusion, and fighting both immediate and less apparent social exclusion expenses. To enhance active citizenship, adult learning is a significant underpinning. Basic skills and key skills recognized as essential unmet requirements for many individuals in both advanced and poorer parts of the world. Adult education through Open and Distance Learning has grown into an important global strategy in resolving problems of access to education” (UNESCO, 2014).

“In 21st the Century, many educational institutions, especially in developed countries have improved from being purely a campus centred model of higher education to Open and Distance Learning (ODL) models using information and communication technologies” (Howell, Wasiams, and Lindsay, 2003). “Moreover, universities are therefore, increasingly offering some type of distance learning courses for adult learners. Education for adult people is central as they play a key role in family welfare and survival” (Stanley, 2018; Triantafyllou, 2024; Triantafyllou and Sapounidis, 2024). “The need to invest in education in Adult Education (AE) in particular, has been a concern of individuals, families, communities and national states, either individually or collectively. A person considered elderly from 60 years

of age in low and middle-income countries, while in high-income countries over 65” (WHO, 2021).

“England has an estimated 9 million working-age adults (more than a quarter of adults aged 16-65 years) with or both low literacy or numeracy abilities. This represents the general achievement of England in the Survey of Adult Skills-about the average for literacy, but well below the average for numeracy compared to other OECD countries in the Survey. These 9 million individuals are struggling with fundamental quantitative reasoning or having trouble with easy written data. For example, they may struggle to assess how much petrol left from a gauge view in the petrol tank, or they may not be able to comprehend directions on an aspirin bottle. They called 'low-skilled' here. Weak fundamental abilities decrease productivity and employability, harm citizenship, and are thus deeply involved in equity and social exclusion problems” (Flood, and Pease, 2016).

According to Kageye(2018), “several issues face providers of adults ranging from intensive care, relevant resources, and unique communication”. In England, during 1950s and 1960s saw the beginnings of the pre-retirement education through university extra-mural and adult education courses (Cosmas, 2018). While, in Italy, early-life education and Computer use at work found to influence effective education to adults

“Meanwhile, the education for adults in Asia cited as exceptionally crucial within the context of educating them for normal lifetime. Education for adults is critically important because most Asian enter old age after a lifetime characterized by social and economic problems emanating from poverty and deprivation, poor access to health care and a diet that is usually inadequate in quantity and quality” (Mbadiwe et al., 2019). “Despite the fact that adults face those problems, most social, economic and educational interventions in Asian countries directed primarily toward children and young adults. Similarly, education for adults within the context of Asia seems to be strictly important due to peculiar social problem and situations in which most adults implicated” (Adedokun, and Adeyemo, 2013).

“In Ethiopia as like in South Africa, lack of a conducive learning environment, lack of participation and integration between different stakeholders and sectors, overlapping of time table with learners own work, insufficient budget allocation for the program and lack of facilitators training are the constrains facing adult education program” (Stanley, 2018).

“When Kenya became independent in 1963, over half of the population was under the age of fifteen and 80% of the population was illiterate” (Mollel, 2019). “Only half of the number of kids eligible for college between the ages of seven and thirteen actually attended college. Only 10 percent of those attending primary school went to secondary schools. There was no financial resource to expand formal child education quickly. The nation was poor and more than 20% of the domestic budget spent on formal schooling alone. This, ratio was high overtraining and leaves little room for development beyond maintaining pace with the annual rise of 3 percent in population” (Mollel, 2019).

In Tanzania, Adult Education (AE) established in 1960 as an extra mural studies section of Makerere University College, under the University of London. In 1963, the Institute upgraded into a department and placed under the Dar es Salaam University College. Later on, it became an autonomous institution established by Parliamentary Act Number 12 of 1975 under then Ministry of National Education, currently, the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology.

“To-date, the Institute has become a centre for Learning, Research and Training in Adult Education arena for Certificate, Diploma and Degree courses, Diploma, certificates and post-Primary education learners. Its services extended to the grassroots level through regional centres established in 26 regions of Mainland Tanzania with the aims of design, develop and deliver accessible quality life-long education programs through blended learning for sustainable social-economic development of Tanzania, Africa and the rest of the world” (Institute of Adult Education, 2018). “In recent years, due to life challenges and complexities, and shifts in demography, the need to cater on education for adults, has rapidly emerged. However, achieving the endeavours remains challenging leading to low provision of education for adults in Tanzania due to the trends, issues and practices in the provision of education for adults” (Masawe, 2019). This situation creates a number of questions among Tanzanians and other well-wishers to Tanzania if adult education has been used to design develop and deliver accessible quality life-long education programs through blended learning for sustainable social-economic development of Tanzania. The study guided by the following research objectives:

1. To examined the practice of adult education through online distance learning in Mbeya region
2. To exploring issues that hinder the practice of adult education through online distance learning.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

This subdivision presents the review of related literature reviews as conducted by different researchers.

### **2.1 Practice of adult education through online distance learning in Mbeya region**

Globally, different empirical and well-researched study has pinpointed out various practices, issues and impact of adult education in the global and local communities. In the study by Mhando (2023) on the educational stakeholders' attitudes on the implementation of teen mothers and return to schools policy in Tanzania, revealed that after starting to implement the education secular act number 2 of 2021, which foretells the return of teen mothers to schools. The study used a sample size of 35 participants; the researchers used a qualitative technique and an explanatory case study design. Data gathered through focus groups and interviews, then they were thematically analysed. The research showed that teen mothers who went back to school had favourable opinions of the teen mother's return to school program. However, they were constrained by the government's vow to establish a day-care program but have not yet done so, a lack of hostels, a poor supply of materials, being far from home, learning for too little time, and not having adequate facilities and equipment. From the findings, the study concludes that the mothers' return and access to education have impressive provisions such as unconditional readmission to different public schools and adult education centres. The study recommended that the government and other educational stakeholders should immediately take measures on the raised challenges in Tanzania. The study in one way or another is in line with the current study since reveals the current practice of adult education in Tanzania.

Mbadiwe (2019) investigated “Contemporary Adult Education (AE) policies and practices in Tanzania and the way they address national challenges. Four questions guided the study: Quantitative strategy was dominant in data collection although qualitative strategy also used. The study involved adult learners, adult educators, and policy makers and academicians who were accessed through questionnaires and interview guides. Documentary review guide also

used to collect data. The findings indicate that AE in Tanzania accorded low status. In addition, the study found that most of the AE policy statements investigated not related to AE practices. Furthermore, the findings reveal that although AE policies address some of the national challenges like income poverty, illiteracy, HIV/AIDS, and income inequality, some of them not translated into practices. The study recommends that challenges facing adults have to be given first priority in both policies and practices. Moreover, adults have to be conscientized to read and understand the educational policy. Also it is recommended to all AE stakeholders in Tanzania to revive the status of AE as it was in 1970s and early 1980s. Lastly, it is recommended that further study of the same nature can be conducted in a wider geographical area and which was involve more sample from other institutions running AE programmes in Tanzania especially civil societies and Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs). The findings as found in this study are indeed similar with what this study is going to investigate however this study was dominate from 1995 to 2024”.

Mushi (2016) conducting “a research on the perspectives on older adult education. The results revealed that adults’ education through open and distance learning have been faced with the negative impact such as the lack of policies to support indigenous knowledge systems. However on the other hands the offering of adult education has reported that communities acquire knowledge, skills and values from indigenous cultural systems through observation and active participation. This knowledge related to the environment in which they live and passed among village members and from one generation to another informally with the aim of sustaining the community. Some of these activities in which older adults take part include fishing, building, smiting, animal husbandry, traditional dancing, soil conservation and decorative arts. Unfortunately, the government as a critical source of knowledge has not recognized these indigenous knowledge systems”.

Mollel (2019) conducted “a study on the effectiveness of adult education programme in promoting development among the Maasai community in Arusha district council –Tanzania. The findings indicate that in the late 1970s and early 1980s, there was an experience of international economic depression”. This depression affected Tanzania as well in the sphere of education as a whole. This situation led to the deterioration of social services, which included adult education and education in general. Due to the economic depressions, adult learners forced to drop out of the classes due to government cutting off the budget (MoEVT 2012).

To counteract this, Tanzanian government tried to introduce some projects such as Adult Education Development Project (AEDP) to reduce the level of adult illiteracy. “In 1970, Tanzania national wide campaign launched to impart functional literacy. This followed by another campaign in 1973 known as Man is Health and in 1974, another campaign was introduced known as Agriculture for Life. All these campaigns based on teaching adult life skills, reading, writing and counting” (Mushi, 2019; Mollel, 2019).

### **3. METHODOLOGY**

This part presents the methodology used in this study. It includes research design, population and sampling, data collection instruments and ethical considerations. This study guided by pragmatic paradigm which was developed by Charles Sanders Pierce, Wasiam James and John Dewey (Margolis, 2019). The paradigm believes on the interaction, intervention and their effect in multiple contexts and they believe that reality is a practical effect, which works to cause changes (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Saunders et al., 2009). The choice of this paradigm helps the researcher to be flexible and dynamic in choosing any approaches, design,

respondents, sampling techniques, theories and methods that suit and reflect practically the need of the study and develop a real findings pertaining to the study under inquiry.

### **3.1 Study Approach**

“A research approach appropriate for a study depends upon its appropriateness to address the objectives of that particular study” (Cresswell, 2012). “Based on the nature of the study objectives and questions, the researcher deems it is appropriate to employ a mixed research approach by integrating both qualitative and quantitative research approaches, with the dominance of qualitative approach. Also, the study used mixed research approach in order to strengthen and reduce weaknesses such as being bias that could be caused if only one approach would be used” (Cresswell, 2012). Therefore, mixed research approach helps in drawing inferences to increase an understanding of the research topic.

### **3.2 Research Design**

Based on the philosophical underpinning of this study, which holds that any way of thinking or doing that lead to practical solution is useful and believes on interaction and intervention (Gerfalk, 2010; Mkansi& Acheampong, 2012). Specifically, this study was informed by the multiple embedded case study design. The design involves the use of many cases and units of analysis. The rationale for selecting the design relies on the fact that first; it enables the researcher to make a detailed investigation of the subject under inquiry within their natural contexts (Creswell & Clark, 2017; (Yin, 2009). Finally, the design is in line with the focus of the research philosophy and the approach of the study.

### **3.3 Area of the Study**

The study conducted in Mbeya region in Tanzania and specifically it was conducted in Mbeya City. The decisions to undertake this study in Mbeya city is because of researcher’s early familiarity with the area and culture of people that assisted in consultation with respondents and easy access during data collection process. This decision is supported by Davison, (2021) who comment that, there should be an early familiarity with the culture of participants before the first data collection dialogues takes place. Second, the region is among the region that for five years from 2019 to 2024 is among the top performing in offering adult education services and has all programme being offered by the Institute of Adult Education and schools that falls under SEQUIP (Ali, 2023). Moreover, there is a paucity of research studies regardless of having many adult education centres compared to other district in the region (BEST, 2024)

### **3.4 Target Population**

The population for a particular study is largely influenced by the research objectives, questions and available resources (Kombo, and Trompo, 2006). The target population of this study comprised of adults, adult education learners, facilitators, and Adult Education centres coordinators in Mbeya city who were the research population and unit of the study for the investigated study.

### **3.5 Sample Size and Sampling Techniques**

#### **3.5.1 Sample Size**

A sample represents the actual characteristics of the entire population from which it is drawn (Kothari, 2014)). The sample size for qualitative studies has been a debatable issue in the literature so much that there is no one definitive answer for the appropriate sample size. For instance, Mason (2010) reviewed 560 doctoral qualitative studies in order to determine sample size and data saturation point. He revealed the variations in the range of participants depending on the design of the study, but overall, the size ranged from 1 to 95 participants for case studies. Likewise, Ogula, (2005) examined 83 Information Systems (IS) qualitative studies in leading IS journals with a view to identifying the extent to which the studies employed best practices in justifying the sample size and the optimal ranges of interviews for various qualitative studies. “They found little or no rigour for justifying the sample size was shown in virtually all studies. They also found that the number of interviews was subjective and was correlated with several cultural factors. Finally, they recommended between 20 and 30 interviews as appropriate for grounded theory and 15 to 30 interviews for a single case study qualitative research” (Marshall et al., 2019).

Ogula, (2005) contend that “the sample size appropriate for a particular study depends upon the purpose of the study, the nature of the population under scrutiny and the research approach employed in a particular study, among others. The quantitative research approach usually requires a larger sample selected randomly as its main purpose is to generalize the finding while qualitative approaches require a small sample size since its primary purpose is to maximize information rather than a generalization of the findings”.

In this regard, since the researcher employs a mixed research approach that is weighed with qualitative to the larger extent, a researcher employ a total of 56 respondents from a population of the adults, adult education learners, facilitators and Adult Education centres coordinators in Mbeya city. The proposed sample size was obtained when no new insight or themes was obtained from the data. The samples were adequate and relevant to offer new and sufficient insights into the subject under inquiry. Table 1 clarifies the sample distribution.

**Table 1: Sample Distribution by Category and Sex**

Category of respondents	Respondents' sex	Activity	Total
DEO (adult education in Primary & Secondary)	Males/Female	Interview	2
Students organization	Males/Female	Interview	4
Adults centre coordinators	Males/Female	Interview	4
Facilitators	Males/Female	Interview	10
Adult Education Learners	Male/Female	Questionnaire	40
<b>Total</b>			<b>56</b>

**Source:** Field Data (2024)

### 3.5.2 Sampling Techniques

This study employed purposive snowball and simple randomly sampling techniques in selecting the appropriate sample for the study.

#### 3.5.2.1 Purposive Sampling Techniques for Qualitative Approach

Purposive sampling technique for qualitative sample used to select Adult Education centres coordinators and DEOs in Mbeya City Council and were a research population for the study because of their responsibilities they held. In these aspects, all officials who assigned to enhance, supervise, monitor, assess, coordinate and remark the operationalization of adult education system interviewed.

### **3.5.2.2 Snowball Sampling Techniques for Qualitative Approach**

Snowball sampling technique used in identifying adults who benefited with the offering of adult education programmes. The sampling techniques is suitable in this study because it was hard for a researcher to get adults with such character but coordinators were asked and provided the direction to the researcher of how to get the right respondents in the category of adults who benefited with the offering of adult education.

### **3.5.2.3 Simple Randomly Sampling Technique for Quantitative Approach**

The researcher to get the respondent in the category of facilitators and adult education students who provided with questionnaires in order to unveil the practices of adult education and its impacts in Tanzania and specifically in Mbeya city used the simple randomly sampling technique.

## **3.6 Data Collection Methods and Instruments**

The researcher in this study applied four data collection methods, which are semi structured interviews, observation, documentary review and questionnaires: -

### **3.6.1 Semi-structured Interviews**

This study used semi-structured interview guide to collect data from government officials including DEOs, coordinators and students' organization respondents. The interview session ranged from one hour to two hours depending on the nature of the respondents. In the interview process, the researcher employed both language that are English and Kiswahili. During the interview session, the researcher was taking notes and audio recording the interviewee's responses. The researcher transcribed the notes and audio recordings which later were shared with respondents for clarification and approval. This method is chosen by the researcher because of its credible and functional in collecting the one-to-one information and it gives the flexibility of the asking question to the respondents.

### **3.6.2 Observation Guide**

In the context of this study, the researcher assumed the role of non-participatory observation through transect walk with checklist that was used in collecting different information. Likewise, through this method, the researcher observed and note all practice and support implemented in the offering of adult education services in order to get the reality of the availability and satisfaction level of the implementation in Mbeya city.

### **3.6.3 Documentary Review Checklist**

The researcher reviewed and analysed different documents such as the education policy, government standards of opening and operationalization of adult education for effective utilization and implementation of adult education programme.

### **3.6.4 Survey Method-Questionnaires**

The researcher developed a questionnaire that was relevant to this study. A questionnaire has three parts with closed and open-ended items. The first part of the questionnaire included the demographic information and was measured using short answer questions. Also, a five-point Likert scale was developed where by the respondents rate their level of agreement on the satisfaction level. While in last part of the questionnaire involved the open-ended items that were asked the respondents on the challenges and strategies of improving the situations. The questionnaire was administered to adult students and facilitators.

### **3.7 Data Processing and Analysis**

In this study, the collected data was analysed manually using thematic data analysis procedures. The conceptual framework of the thematic data analysis was used in this study in support of the theoretical perspectives of (Braun & Clarke, 2006). They define thematic data analysis as a method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within the data. The procedures that was employed for the analysis of data in this study included six concurrent steps as proposed by (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The steps include data familiarization; generation of initial codes; searching for themes; reviewing themes; defining and naming themes and finally producing the reports to the developed objective one, two and three (Creswell, 2012). Finally, the researcher reorganized the quotations and statements from their original context under the newly-developed themes.

On the other hand, the data from questionnaires was coded using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 24. The collected data from questionnaires was subjected to descriptive statistical analysis with interpretation that was given in terms of frequencies, percentages and mean scores. Finally, both qualitative and quantitative findings were mixed during interpretation of the findings to corroborate results.

### **3.8 Trustworthiness of the Study for Qualitative Approach**

Guba & Lincoln (1982) argue that qualitative researchers need to establish four aspects of trustworthiness to know whether the research findings are valid and reliable. This means that the results obtained from the field must be robust and comprehensive.

#### **3.8.1 Credibility**

The first aspect to consider is credibility as one of the most important aspects used in the establishment of trustworthiness in qualitative research. It was enable the researcher to link the results obtained from the study to what exists in the real world. In establishing credibility in qualitative research, the researcher needs to involve the following methods throughout the research process: The researcher in this study was to familiarize himself with the study area before the process of data collection is done. The researcher was do the following: the researcher was to spend sufficiency time in the research area where the study was conducted to build a friendly relationship with the participants, make a prior visit, observe and study the research area to see if the area can facilitate the process of collecting data smoothly without resistance from the community, read extensively from various research reports, peer-reviewed article and papers to see what findings other researchers obtained on the same topic in various areas.

Moreover, the research instruments were prepared by the researcher and reviewed by fellow masters' candidates and supervisors to see if they captured what was expected to be collected from the field. The reviewers gave comments on the credibility of the research instruments and were improved before collecting data in the study area.

### **3.8.2 Dependability**

Dependability is the establishment of consistency and repeatability of research findings (Creswell, 2012). In this study, the researcher used various techniques of collecting data such as interviews, questionnaires and documentary reviews to establish the dependability of research results.

### **3.8.3 Transferability**

Transferability is the degree by which qualitative research findings may be transferred to other settings (Denscombe, 2007). Thus, transferability is similar to external validity or generalizability as applied in quantitative research. The researcher in this study conducted a thick description to gain an in-depth understanding of people's experiences and perspectives.

### **3.8.4 Confirmability**

Confirmability assumes that qualitative research findings must be confirmed by other researchers in the same contexts (Creswell, 2012). To maintain the Confirmability of this study, the research findings based on the participants' experiences, words, and perspectives than the researchers' bias.

## **3.9 Reliability of the Instrument for Quantitative Approach**

In this study the reliability of the questionnaire was developed and it was undergo a double translation-back-translation process from English to Kiswahili to confirm the meaning of the questions. Kiswahili is the language of instruction to majority of Tanzanian. Ten masters colleagues who is native Kiswahili speaker but have used English as academic language for over 20 years with background in Tanzanian education was involved. In addition to the double translation, back translation method of the items was be discussed by panel of experts in order to redraft them and capture the right meaning of the items as accurately as possible. The questionnaire was pre-tested in a pilot involving 20 respondents to determine whether the questionnaire works well with the population of interest. Furthermore, after collection of main data the questionnaires was factor analysed and reliability coefficient was be calculated where by 0.8 to 1 was given the strong confidence of the instrument.

### **3.9.1 Validity of the Instrument for Quantitative Approach**

The validity of the instruments was enhanced through conduction of pilot study which assisted in determining the accuracy, clarity and suitability of the data collection instrument. It was also help to identify inadequate and ambiguous items such that, those that fail to measure the variables, was to be modified or disregarded completely and new item was added. Likewise, there was a review of the instrument by the supervisors who helped in the improvement of instrument by making sure the face validity, internal and external validity is availed in the tools.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

This part presents findings and discussion in the light of related literature review.

### **5.1 The practice of adult education through online distance learning in Mbeya region**

The first objectives examined the trends towards the practice of adult education in Mbeya Region. Data to respond this objective was collected through interview and questionnaire

methods that were administered to District Education Officers (DEO), facilitators, learners and Regional Resident Tutor. The finding reveals that the trends by its self are controversial. It is found that Adult Education (AE) in local areas was insufficient since officials and people do not consider it as important thing in their lives in terms of practices. Most of respondent unveils that the practiced programme was not well known among rural society, as most of people even local government officials did not knew the whole concept of adult education, some thought AE was all about teaching adult reading and writing others think that attaining evening classes only. It is further; the findings indicate that the community in Mbeya Region prefers primary education, secondary education and tertiary education to be of highly important compare to other forms of education including Adult Education. This finding was noted during the interviews from different respondents. For instance, a researcher of this study noted this in an interview with a District Education Officer who is dealing with adult education in one of a District found in Mbeya region and she said:

...some members of community had a wrong notion about sending children in the system of adult education because they believed that the proper kind of education is the one offered through formal education system that follow the formal structure from pre-primary, primary, secondary and post-secondary education....to them adult education is seen as a kind of education that has no future and they give little support in their area and especially in rural area...Source: Field Data (July, 2024)

The quotation above shows that there is a misconception to some members of the community especially in the rural area found in Mbeya region. On the other hand, in the same objective a researcher of this study administered an interview session with a member of student organization who represents students studying diploma and degree programmes of Adult education and community development at the center of Mbeya region. In that interview a researcher of this study quoted a saying that unveils the situation of practice of adult education in Mbeya region:

...a programme is good we have been meeting in all holidays doing face-to-face, doing test and examinations and receiving learning materials that supports our learning session...I am also a student studying bachelor degree of adult education before being informed by the regional resident tutor in his marketing I was unaware but recently I am enjoying studying this programme so it is indeed a good programme and we are happy being part of the adult education programme....Source: Field Data (June, 2024)

The quotation above implies that student who have got a chance of studying through adult education are well informed with the practice of adult education and it seems they are aware with the advantage and disadvantages of the implemented programmes. This finding indicates that some of the community members have a positive perception towards the practice of adult education in Mbeya region in Tanzania.

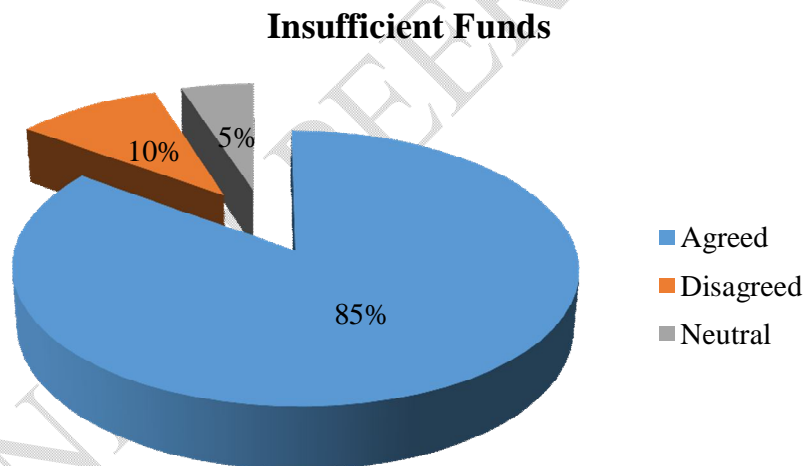
Likewise, a researcher of this study interviewed staffs who are among adult education implementer in the office of regional resident tutor of Mbeya. In that interview, a researcher found that there is a provision of adult education from the secondary level to bachelor degree. The region has a lot of centers offering education services through SEQUIP and Adult Education Pathway (AEP). Also, in that interview a researcher found that there is a programme that are implemented by offering the certificate, diploma and degree programme

have the centres in Mbarali, Kyela, and Mbeya city. These entire programmes are financed, supervised and monitored by the government of Tanzania. The finding was noted during the interview session with one academic staff at the Mbeya region resident tutor and it was quoted saying:

...the adult education is a programme being financed, monitored and evaluated by government through Institute of Adult Education, the institute that is legally established by the government and has opened regional centers in all regions in Tanzania...through this the government has launched different programmes such as SEQUIP, AEP and the return to school of teen mothers to accomplish the education path...so the adult education system is well operated in Mbeya region....Source: Field Data (July, 2014)

The quotation shows that in Mbeya region there is a practice of adult education and different programmes are being offered by using this government programme through the official launched policy and all districts has a good number of students being benefited with the operation of adult education system.

Moreover, the researcher of this study administered a questionnaire to adult education students. The intention was to understand whether they were familiar with the benefits they get when studying through the informal system of adult education. A researcher administered to 40 adult education students and the results are presented in Figure 1 below:

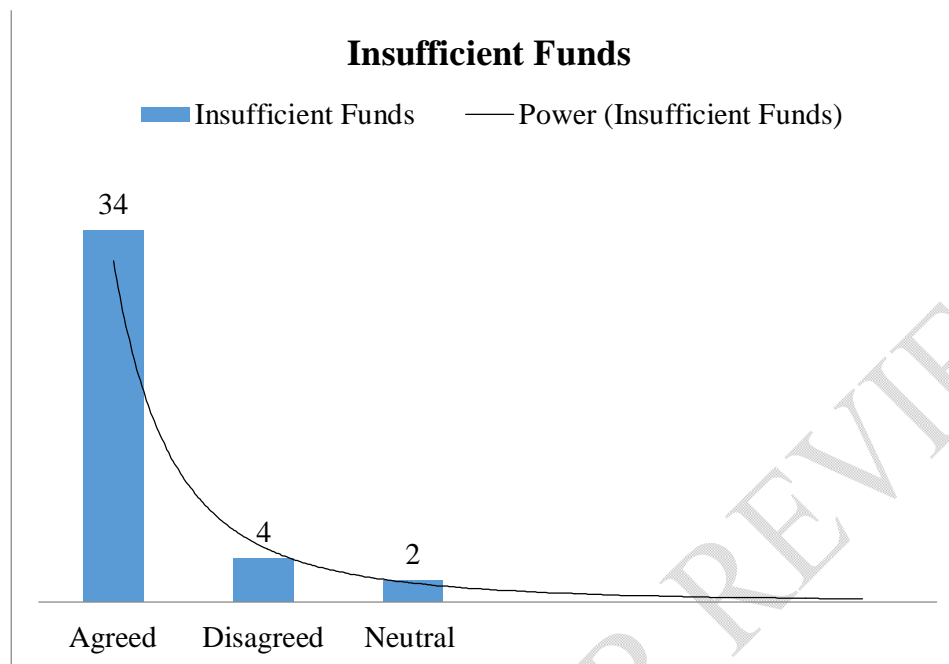


**Figure 1: Adult education learners' responses on the whether they are aware**

**with the benefits of adult education programme in Mbeya region**

Figure 1 as shown in the above indicate that majority of respondents who were adult education students were aware with the benefits being offered by the adult education system in Mbeya region. The data indicates that 82% agreed that the programme was good and few which is 8% disagreed. This implies that the adult education has benefits to students and the community that they get from the practice of such a policy.

On the other side, a researcher administered a questionnaire to adult education learners/students with intention of knowing the benefits that got when the adult education programme is being implemented in Mbeya region in Tanzania. The findings are presented and shown in Figure 2 below:



**Figure 2: Adult Education Learners responses on the benefits of AE programme in Mbeya Region, Tanzania**

As shown in Figure 2 above it indicate that majority of respondents 33 (82.5%) out of 40 who responded in that asked items agreed that the adult education helps many people regardless of their age to acquire practical education in different official opened centres in kyela, Mbarali, mbeya city, mbeya council, Chunya and Rungwe. The practical education are being offered through the SEQUIO programme that the government has officially launched this programme in order to assist students with different social-economic problem to access education services and this has returned a lot of students who were pregnant and others who drops from schools.

Also, the findings indicate that the practice of adult education benefits those who are employed in various public and private offices and has been denied the permission to join for further studies. In responding to this items, majority of respondents 37 (92.5%) agreed that the adult education programme are too beneficial to them since it helps them to access in getting the education without disturbing the employers. They commented that this kind of education helps them in attending in all session because all session are planned during the holiday where it gives rooms for them to participate.

Likewise, the finding shows that the practice of adult education has helped many teen mothers who got pregnancy while they were still studying. Taking into account before 2021 teen mothers were not allowed to return to schools and some of them used the system of adult education to acquire through passing the qualifying test and do the form four exams using private candidates system. However, recently through SEQUIP programme teen mother have got their own schools that are supervised by adult education and the

government of Tanzania through formal education system. In this case majority of respondents 40 (100%) agreed that the adult education system is beneficial to the community because it helps those teen mothers to have another chance of acquiring education.

In the other side, the researcher of this study after administering the questionnaire methods to adult education learners found that majority of respondents 21 (52.5%) commented that the practice of adult education in Mbeya region help to gain the professional development since it allows them especially those with certificate to study diploma and those with diploma to study through this system various degree programmes. Moreover, the adult education centers have been cooperating with the office of Regional Educational Officer to organize different in-service training that develop and updates their education path.

Furthermore, the researcher of this study administered the questionnaire and majority of respondents 31 (77.5%) argued that through operating adult education in Mbeya region it reduces the illiteracy rates amongst community member in Mbeya. Different people regardless of their age have been using the system of adult education through Complimenting Basic Education in Tanzania (COBET-MEMKWA), Qualifying Test, Private Candidate's system and other vocational education that is implemented by adult education system.

Lastly, the researcher of this study found that majority of respondents 36 (90%) argued that with the practice of adult education system in Mbeya region have been creating the employment opportunities especially the centers for Qualifying Test (QT). Also in the facilitation in the face-to-face in all holidays have been creating employments to Tanzanian.

Generally the practice of adult education in Tanzania has been perceived by different experts and members of community in different. The finding in this study reveals that in Mbeya region it is well implemented and has positively perceived by different stakeholders. Likewise, it is seen that the programme are of the important because it helps to provide practical education, being accessed by employed, teen mother returned to schools, helps in professional development, reduces the illiteracy rates and creates the employment trough public-private partnership. In supporting this findings different literature are in line with what is observed. For instance. In the study by Kupur conducted a study in India in (2019) and commented that Adult Education in India whereby large number of people prefer adult education as making up for basic education that they were not able to acquire. Moreover it shows the situation that signifies that most of adults were not looking to learn since they know how to read and they have basic skills. The hiddenness partly correlates to the dispersed nature of comparative disadvantage within rural population, the hiddenness of rural removal coupled with common social relations, lead to level where individual lack access or are reluctant to look for help or advise. This means that education outreach work and suitable to urban environment and may be less applicable to in rural context, Shucksmith (2000) cited by MacDonald (2009).

Moreover, there is another finding being found in this study whereby there are unequal practices of adult education between rural area and urban area. This finding is supported by the study of Kanukisya (2013) that established the roles of Ward and Village Government on AE Provision in Primary schools by teachers acting as adult facilitators. This has been termed as volunteer however not all primary teachers are AE facilitators, are being assigned

class to teach their outcomes are inefficient due to poor incentive from the government this was argued by Kanukusya (2013). It was further noted that there are few teachers who volunteer particular to primary school leaver as facilitators. Other employers were not ready to permit their employees to facilitate AE classes especially after the introduction of individual institution, which considered the wastage of time to private organization. It is been said that devolving had been a priority to the government plans and operation including AE. MoEVT has argued in the AFE

Sub-sector Medium Term Strategy, it was from village level to ministerial level. However, MoEVT claim to have devolved AE unfortunately ministerial level dictates the AE programs, plans and decision making Kanukusya (2013). In village level VEOs were supposed to be detailed with information on how to run adult education in their localities, for example having knowledge of kind of program to be offered, where to get classroom facilitators and how to get the program funded as well as having statistical data of people activities in order to initiate different programs.

Also in the study by Bwatwa (2010) study found out that the removal of the Regional Adult Education coordinator post has affected the coordination and direction of AE to local government. Shortcoming that faces Local Government towards providing AE in localities were poor communication between MoEVT concerning the initiation of different programs that suit a particular community when issuing circulars to the councils on AE/NFE, remoteness of centers. Need of AE/NFE coordination link at the regional level, inadequate funding as AE budget is being attached to under primary school budget and is too small to accommodate wide range of needs which is being caused by lack of political will, inadequate committed AE/EFE coordinators and facilitators due to irregular payment of gratuity. Bwatwa, (2010) Recommended that, the government must support PMORALG in order to strengthen the AE/EFN at all level for accountability and transparency in order to assist the program routine. It was added that inspect audit on AE/NFE human capital at all levels to come up with needs, competence of staff at place and design training programs the staff from the identified needs MOEVT claim to have devolved AE unfortunately the AE planners are still at ministerial measures.

According to Bwatwa (2010) argued that, the removal of the Regional Adult post at the Regional Secretariat has affected the coordination and supervision of AE. Education policy maker have to make policy that will encourage adult learners to seek skills provided in their localities Buiskool (2010) Competence needed by adult learning professionals are described in job description of individual organization, the learning outcomes of specific educational programmers and if available qualification structures on national level. Developing a constant profile by making use of compiled information on task responsibilities and necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes, may help district official to promote AE in rural areas.

## **5.2 Exploring issues that hinder the practice of adult education through online distance learning**

The second objective explored the issues that hindered the effective implementation of adult education through Open and Distance Learning (ODL) in Mbeya region in Tanzania. The data to respond this objective were collected through questionnaire and interview methods that were administered to facilitators, Adult education students, DEO, Regional Resident Tutor. The findings are discussed hereunder;

#### 4.4.1 Insufficient Funds

It was found that the practice of adult education in Mbeya region in Tanzania is hindered with the issue of insufficient of fund to run different programmes of adult education. This finding was found in the interview session when one respondent in the office of regional residents tutor in Mbeya region office in Tanzania who had this to say:

...the adult education is a programme owned by the government who monitor, evaluate and finance all programmes that are being offered to the community of Tanzania and the programmes ranged from primary schools, secondary schools, and post-secondary education that are informally offered...The programme are being hindered because the government tend to provide little funds in supporting the programme and sometime even the fund being offered are delayed in its submission...so this has been affecting the operation of adult education programme... Source: Field Data (July, 2024)

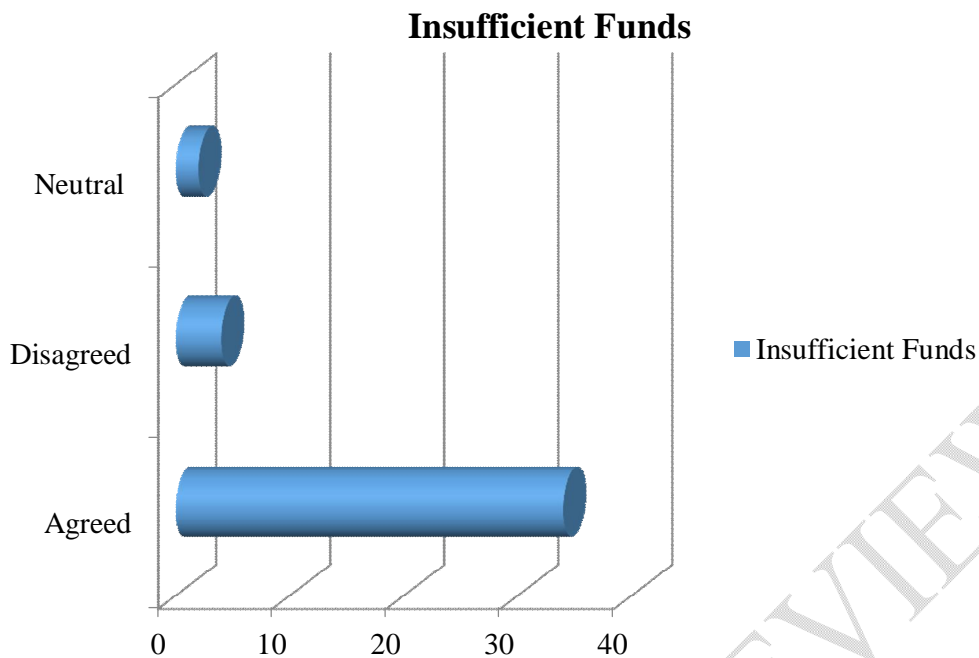
The above quotation implies that there is insufficient of funds to support the practice of adult education in Mbeya Region.

Retrospectively, a researcher of this study interviewed another respondent in a category of facilitator at adult education centres concerning the financial challenge as a great issue in operational of various activities in Mbeya region in Tanzania. In that interview a researcher quoted a saying from one facilitator in Mbeya city adult education centre:

...we have been teaching in the face-to-face session at IyungaCenter in diploma and degree programme but the challenges being found in the practice of these session are ranged basing on the situation. They have been paying little amount per course which is 45000 in two hours so it demotivate the practice of such sessions and some time they delay paying the amount so it is hard though the programme by itself is good...Source: Field Data (June, 2024)

This quote has shown that in the implementation of adult education session the insufficient of funds have been hindering the process of enhancing the learning session in Mbeya region in Tanzania.

Likewise, researcher of this study administered a questionnaire to adult education learners and it was found that there is a problem of insufficient of fund because there was poor office and even the class that are usually used is the one that are used by secondary schools students. This has also shown in the provision of teaching and learning materials it seems there is a financial challenges while we are paying the tuition fees. Figure 3 below indicates that in the practice of adult education programmes financial constrains has been shown as hindrance toward effective enhancement of adult education system in Mbeya region in Tanzania.



**Figure 3: Adult Education Learners Responses on the Financial Constrains**

**Source:** Field Data (June, 2024)

The above table shows that majority of adult education learners 34 (85%) commented on the scarce of funds as among the hindrance toward the practices of adult education in Mbeya region in Tanzania.

#### 4.4.2 Shortage of Time

Shortage of time to study as per annually planned timetable by the implementer is a debatable towards the quality of education being offered. The data that was collected from the field was collected through interview and questionnaire that was administered to adult education facilitators, regional resident tutor and adult education students/learners. The findings reveal that the time of studying especially in diploma and bachelor degree is too limited and sometime it has raised a debatable issue toward the quality programmes being offered. Other, have commented on how they do balance between the works, family commitment and attending schooling. Moreover, the practice of adult education have been offered in two years to accomplish secondary education and one year to accomplish advanced secondary education so this has been reported to be a hindrance in terms of time for studying the programme. In affirming this researcher during the interview with a facilitator in one of the adult education canter found in Mbeya region in Tanzania:

....we have been teaching in this programme as facilitator but the programme is too congested and taking into consideration that the programme is being offered in three years similar to what is being offered to higher learning institutions that is a full time learning institutions.....Source: Field Data (July, 2024)

The quotation above entails that time is too limited especially in offering degree and diploma programmes in the context of adult education in Mbeya region in Tanzania.

#### **4.4.3 Political Will**

The political will is another issue that has been hindering the practice of adult education in Mbeya region. A researcher of this study in the interview that was conducted through interview methods to regional resident tutors reported that there is challenges of political will to accept the adult education and push to the member community. From the lower level in village level to district and regional little push has been given to support the practice of adult education in Mbeya region in Tanzania. This finding was noted during the interview with one of the supervisor in the adult education centers and he was quoted saying:

#### **4.4.4 Technological Barrier**

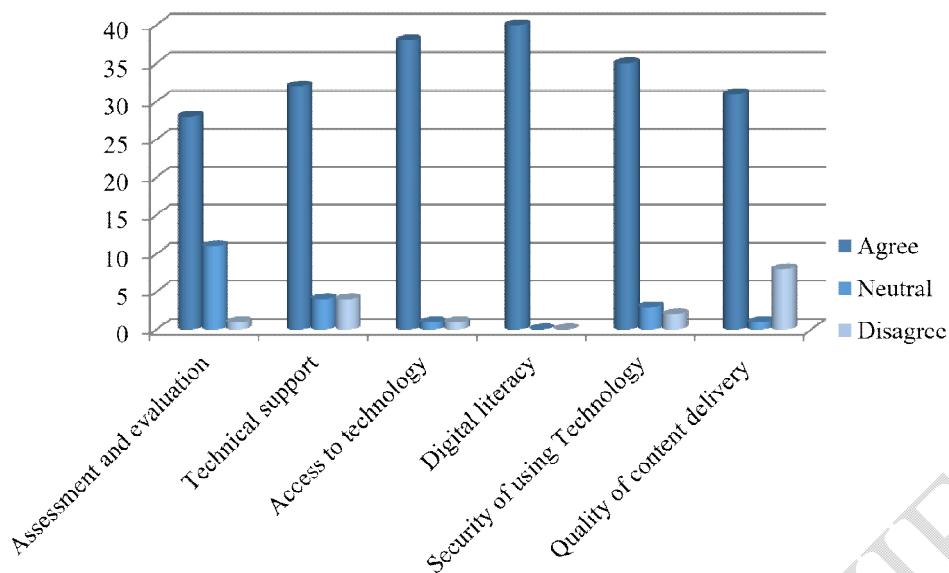
In this objective, it was found out that adult education in an Open and Distance Learning (ODL) system can be greatly beneficial, but it also faces several challenges. One of the challenges as an issue that hinder its effective practice was a technological issue. This was seen to the hindrance since the respondent argued on the problem to the access to Technology where many adult learners may lack access to reliable internet or modern devices. Likewise, it was seen that the operation of ODL system are faced with the digital Literacy where some learners may struggle with using technology effectively, which can limit their engagement.

This was found during the interview with one of the respondent.

...We always get hard to copy the learning through using of distance learning because of the technological challenges Open and Distance Learning (ODL) systems offer many advantages, but they also face significant technological challenges that can impede their effectiveness taking into consideration students in this categories are primary schools teachers and few from offices where using technology is very layer...  
Source: Field Data (August, 2024)

The quotation implies that the operationalization of ODL system is hindered by the limited access to technological issues which is the key issue in the practice of ODL system in Mbeya region.

On the same, the researcher of this study administered a questionnaire to adult education learners. In this aspect the respondents were asked to respond on whether technological issues among the issue hindering the operation of ODL system. The findings are presented hereunder;



**Figure 4: Technological Barrier**

**Source:** Researcher (2024)

The figure above indicate that technological issues has been hindering the operational of ODL system whereby because of the challenges it is hard to be well assessed and getting the support technologically and sometimes even coordinators are limited with use of technology.

#### 4.4.5 Motivation and Engagement

Another issue that was found in this study was the motivation and engagement. Learners in this system have been getting difficulty in having the Self-Direction where by adult learners often require intrinsic motivation; lack of it has been hindering participation. Likewise, Isolation is seen as hindering issue whereby an ODL can be isolating, leading to decreased motivation and a sense of disconnect from peers and instructors. This was found in the data that was collected through questionnaire and interview. Hereunder, is a table showing the respondents view:

**Table 2: Adult education learners' responses on the motivation and engagement**

	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
Flexible to learning	32	7	2
Technical support	32	4	4
Access to technology	38	1	1
Digital literacy	40	0	0
Time constraints	35	3	2
Feedback	31	1	8

Table 2. above indicates that many adult learners juggle work, family, and education, making it challenging to dedicate sufficient time to study but ODL offers flexibility, the lack of structured guidance can lead to procrastination.

#### **4.4.6 Cultural and Social Factors**

Another issue that has found in this study to an issue that hinders the practice of ODL system in Mbeya was a cultural and social factors. It was noted that adult learners come from varied educational and cultural backgrounds, which can affect learning dynamics. In the same it was found that cultural attitudes toward lifelong learning and education can impact participation rates because of the cultural and social dynamism.

This was noted by the researcher during the interview with one respondent:

...most of students in adult education and who are beneficiaries of ODL system have different perception with regard to cultural and social cultural aspects and some have been taking seriously the use of ODL system and some are less motivated...

The quotation implies that the culture and social factors is an issue that has been limiting the practice of ODL system in Mbeya region.

In the light of this study and by addressing these issues, the practice of adult education in ODL systems can be significantly improved, ultimately leading to better learning outcomes for adult learners.

#### **5 Conclusions and Recommendations**

The study concludes that the practice of adult education in Mbeya region had positive impact basing on its modes of operands and was among the strategies that revealed to motivate and enhances the programme to gain its popularities. It recommended that more training should offered to learning institution and they should cooperate with the Tanzania Commission for Universities and public universities in Tanzania and NACTVET to use the ODL system. Finally, it is essential that the government of Tanzania to support all institutions through giving the financial and non-financial support as well the qualified human resources including leaders who know the significant of ODL system in practicing the adult education in Tanzania.

#### **Ethical Approval and Consent**

Ethical issues are very important for the researcher to observe in the whole process of any research, especially those involving human beings (Creswell, 2014). The researcher has to ensure that research is going to be conducted ethically. The research participants were treated following standards and norms, which confirm their humanity (Oliver, 2003). Leedy and Ormrod (2001) categorized ethical issues in research into; informed consent, the right to privacy of professional colleagues, and protection from harm. In this study, the researcher adhered to all ethical issues relating to human rights as well as the national rules and regulations.

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- 3.

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