

## ANDRAGOGICAL IMPROVEMENTS FOR EFFECTIVE LEARNING OF MODULES EXPERIENCING POOR ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE. A CASE OF THE COLLEGE OF BUSINESS EDUCATION, DAR ES SALAAM

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### ABSTRACT

*Mastering of the subject area and andragogical skills simplifies the teaching and learning process, thus, improves the academic performance of students in their respective examined modules. The current study explored the best andragogical approaches for effective learning of modules experiencing poor academic performance in Tanzania. The study was conducted in the College of Business Education (CBE) whereby a mixed methods approach was employed in the study. Interviews, questionnaires, and document review were used in data collection. A stratified random sampling technique was used to select 105 bachelor and 70 diploma students at CBE, Dar es Salaam Campus. The study employed a content analysis technique for qualitative data collected through interviews and document review, while the data collected through questionnaires were analyzed using SPSS version 25. The findings indicated that most of the methods used by instructors to modules experiencing students' academic failure were those characterized by teacher-directed learning approaches rather than students' self-directed learning. Some of the identified weaknesses in those methods were boredom, less participatory, not providing feedback on time, not sharing learners' experiences and being theoretical oriented rather than being practical. It was also observed that some of the instructors lacked important attributes while interacting with students for effective learning such as being courageous, readiness of volunteering to help students, motivating students, being flexible and fair, and provision of guidance and counseling services to students. Based on the findings, the study recommends that there should be an in-service training on andragogical knowledge and skills to instructors to enable them to effectively perform instructional delivery and assessment activities. In addition to that, all instructors with modules experiencing poor academic performance should be ready to learn from other instructors whose modules or subjects do not experience poor performance.*

**Key words:** Higher Learning Institutions, Poor Academic Performance, Andragogy, Instructors

## INTRODUCTION

### Background Information

Learning process depends on the effectiveness of both teaching and learning methods applied in the class. Learning is more effective when the teacher is competent in both content and methods of teaching (Mocinic, 2010; Movahedzadeh & Cherif, 2014; Wambui, Ngari, & Waititu, 2016). Being competent in teaching methods entails having the deepest knowledge about processes and practices of teaching and learning (Samson & Srinivasan, 2013). With sufficient knowledge and skills in teaching methods, the teacher is capable of selecting appropriate teaching and learning methods that simplify learners to understand a lesson (Bidabadi, 2015; Wambui et al., 2016).

It has been observed that in some higher learning institutions (HLIs), Tanzania in particular, there are students' poor academic performance due to inappropriate andragogical approaches used by instructors (Aysan, 2017; Bura, Mbunda, & Mwakaluka, 2019; Kyule, Mutinda, & Kamau, 2014; Movahedzadeh & Cherif, 2014). Studies suggest that some instructors engage themselves in teaching have inadequate teaching skills, the situation which affects both students' performance and deep learning to students (Ahmed & Ahmad, 2017; Jackson, 2012; Taylor & Francis, 2009; Prosser, 1999). In this study, poor academic performance refers to the situation in which a student fails to meet established standards as per institution. On the other side, instructors/lecturers are referred to all experts in Higher Learning

Institutions (HLIs) who are responsible for delivering instruction and assessment of students' academic performance such as professors, lecturers and tutors.

In tertiary education, the application of andragogical approaches is highly recommended than pedagogical approaches. According to Gibsons & Wentworth (2011), pedagogy is an approach to teaching and learning process which is applicable for pre-adult classes. Pedagogy is viewed as the traditional oriented teaching approach focusing on teacher-directed learning theory while andragogy is the teaching approach based on self-directed learning theory (Kuhne, 2015). In addition, the andragogical approach of teaching is characterized by learners being self-directed, learner's experience become a rich resource for learning, learner's readiness to learn develops from life task and problems and learner's orientation to learning is a task or problem (Gibsons & Wentworth 2011).

Principally, in a teaching profession, the one who is identified as a professional teacher, is required to be competent in both subject areas of specialization and methodological skills obtained after attending and qualifying a specific period of formal training in the college or university (Samson & Srinivasan, 2013). However, as for the recent time, there are some instructors with qualifications in terms of subject content without having andragogical skills, thus, this leads to ineffective teaching and learning process in their respective HLIs (Aysan, 2017; Yuan, 2015). Due to the importance of andragogical knowledge and skills to instructors in HLIs, several countries in the world have seriously committed themselves to offer andragogical training to instructors such as: Belgium, Sweden, New Zealand, Pakistan, and Catholic University of Portugal (Kyule, Kangu, Mutinda, & Kamau, 2014). In Australia, for instance, 75% of universities offer andragogical skills for the aim of fostering and supporting the quality of teaching and learning in their HLIs.

In Tanzania, the Higher Education Policy of 1999 is in line with Tanzania's Development Vision 2025 that insists on having a well-educated and learned society (Mkude, Levey, & Cooksey, 2016). This being the case, education to Tanzanians is given the first priority for the development of their mind set and competitive spirit. According to the policy of higher education as articulated by the United Republic of Tanzania, all HLIs should offer to students a level of education and training that leads to immediate and/ or full professional qualification and competence (URT, 1999). This implies that higher learning institutions need well qualified instructors who are competent in content and teaching methods to assist students to acquire relevant knowledge.

Although the policy stresses on the quality of education, there are many cases reported concerning poor academic performance in higher learning institutions due to various reasons (Bura et al, 2019; Kyule et al, 2014; Wambui et al, 2016). For the case of Tanzania, few studies have been done to investigate the reasons for students' academic failure in HLIs. For example, Kapinga & Amani (2016) investigated determinants of students' academic performance in higher learning institutions and Bura et al., (2019) investigated factors contributing to students' mass failure at CBE-Dar es salaam campus. Some of the notable causes of students' poor performance are connected to inappropriate andragogical approaches applied by instructors (Bura et al, 2019). Indeed, the existence of students' poor academic performance in the HLIs is contrary to the Higher Education Policy 1999 and Tanzania's Development Vision 2025 which collectively insist on having a well-educated and learned society (Mkude, Levey, & Cooksey, 2016). Therefore, the main objective of the current study was to explore the best andragogical approaches for effective learning of modules experiencing students' Poor Academic Performance. The study was guided by three specific objectives; to examine the andragogical methods used by instructors in teaching modules experiencing students' poor academic performance, to assess the instructors' attributes to modules experiencing students' poor academic performance, and to examine the best strategies for improving students' academic performance.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Theoretical framework

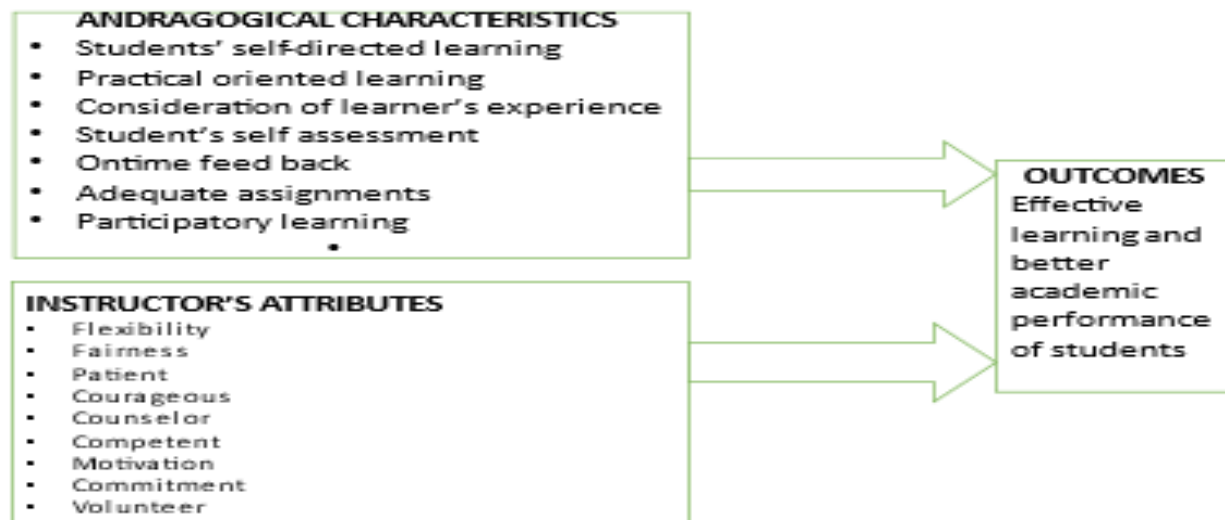
This study is in line with the Experimental Learning Theory (ELT) by an American sociologist and educational theorist David Allen Kolb (1939). The theory is much influenced by Confucious Circa (450BC) based on three key guiding statements for an adult effective learning as quoted by (Zhou, molly, Brown, & David, 2015), that, *'tell me, and I will forget; Show me, and I will remember; Involve me, and I will understand'*. The theory has been widely used in management learning research and practice for over thirty- five years (Zhou et al, 2015). The ELT seems to be more appropriate for adult training because it insists on learning by doing and the importance of individual experiences in the teaching and learning process (Zhou et al, 2015). According to Kolb (2011) as reported in Zhou et al (2015, learning is the process whereby knowledge is created through the transforming experience. It is a cyclical process that gives

more emphasis on students to be engaged effectively in conducting experiments (practical learning) for the acquisition of knowledge. There are series of activities to be conducted to reach the accommodation stage. In the ELT individual concrete experience should start first, then, reflective observation should be processes conducted so as to transform one's experience to abstract conceptualisation which is an assimilation process that brings a person to the accommodation through the active experimentation (Kombo & Trombo, 2006). It is further argued that engaging adult learners in various activities during the teaching and learning process helps them to construct meaning in a way that is unique to themselves, incorporating the cognitive, emotional, and the physical aspects of learning (Zhou et al, 2015). Therefore, with respect to the ELT, all instructors in HLIs are required to employ appropriate andragogical approaches relevant to adult learners in order to eliminate students' mass failure. In the context of the current study, the ELT was employed to examine instructors' attributes and characteristics of the most common teaching and learning methods used for modules experiencing students' poor academic performance in order to identify areas for improvement. Additionally, the theory was applicable in the discussion of findings in relation to the previous relevant empirical studies on this theme. In order to understand the concept of adult education and how it can be delivered for effective learning in modules experiencing students' poor academic performance, the author developed a conceptual framework based on the reviewed literature as shown in figure 2.1.

### The Conceptual framework

A conceptual framework is a structure that the researcher believes can best explain the natural progression of the phenomenon to be studied (Camp, 2001). In the current study, the conceptual framework as indicated in Figure 2.1, shows the organisation of effective adult learning as per various reviewed empirical literature. The framework shows the relationship between the dependent variable which is effective learning of students and better academic performance of students and its independent variables connected to andragogical characteristics and instructors' attributes. Literature asserts that learning activities are characterised by student's self-directed, practical oriented, self-assessment, on-time feedback and adequate assignments. Other influences are recommended andragogical characteristics for adult learners (Goodspeed, 2016; Kuhne, 2015; Kyule, et al., 2014). On the other side, instructors need several attributes to enhance students' learning such as attributes connected to flexibility, fairness, patient, courage, commitment, volunteering, competency, and counseling (Jackson, 2012; Mocinic, 2010). Therefore, the combination of andragogical characteristics and instructors' attributes leads to the effective learning and better academic performance of students to all modules with students' poor academic performance.

**Figure 2.1: Conceptual Framework for Understanding Andragogical Improvements for Effective Adult Learning.**



Source: (Mbunda & Ojwang, 2020).

### Characteristics of adult learners and implications to adult educators

Research in education asserts that there are distinctive features that make adult education different from pre-adult education in terms of teaching approaches (Walter, 2014; Wambui, Ngari, & Waititu, 2016). In an attempt to explain

an adult learner, Kyule, et al. (2014) identify several characteristics of an adult, of which, an adult educator should always pay attention to. The characteristics of adult learning and their respective implication are summarised and presented as follows. First, adults prefer most to take control of their learning as compared to pre-adult students. Adults tend to be self-directed in their lives and when not given this opportunity, most of them will resist learning. Second, adult learning depends much on their experience. This is based on the fact that they have adequate life experience based on what they learn. Thus, allow the adult learners to show their experience about what you want them to learn by linking the new knowledge to the adult experiences. Third, an adult learner requires more motivation to learn because learning to them is a choice to attend schooling. Fourth, adult learners are pragmatic in learning in the sense that they are highly motivated to learn in the formal system practically than theoretically. They always focus on the knowledge that will assist them to solve their immediate challenges. The trainer, therefore, is required to tie the studied content to the needs of the learners. Fifth, in adult learning, an instructor needs to be flexible to cope with the student's interests. Adult students would always like to raise their encountering challenges; therefore, an instructor is supposed to respond in a positive manner to the students rather than forcing them. Sixth, adults experience poor confidence while attending formal schooling due to test anxiety or other such learning barriers. It is the role of the adult educators to deploy strategies that will free adult learners from anxiety, and seventh, adult learners are more reluctant to change than children. Experiences that they have might sometimes act as an obstacle for them to change. Thus, more explanations and relevant examples are needed for them to acquire new concept.

Therefore, based on the above-presented characteristics of adult learners, indeed, adult learners need careful treatment from instructors for effective learning. In other words, andragogical skills are very important to those dealing with adult learners.

### **Empirical Literature**

Mwanamoba (2014) determined the effectiveness of teaching methods in higher levels of education for student teachers at the Gonzaga University in Washington. The study used document review, questionnaires and interviews in data collection. The findings indicated that the method of teaching always depends on factors such as type of content handed, available teaching and learning resources and level of assimilation ability of student teachers. Although the study provides us with the importance of considering many variables in teaching, on the other hand, there is a paucity information about how adult learners should be treated by instructors.

Similar findings have been obtained by Bidabadi (2015) who investigated effective teaching in HLIs in Iran at the University of Technology. The findings indicated that mixed methods are the best approach to be used in teaching. It was found that the teacher is required to use both learner and teacher centered approaches while teaching in the class. Furthermore, the study recommended that to minimize most barriers affected with better methods of teaching, faculty members (lecturers) should be supported with periodic andragogical training to improve teaching. However, despite good explanations in the study on effective teaching in HLIs, the question of instructors' attributes to adult learners is not addressed.

Ganyaupfu (2013) investigated the effectiveness of teaching methods on students' academic performance in South Africa, at the College Department of Economic and Business Sciences (CDEBS). The study observed that the teacher-student interactive method was the most effective teaching method, followed by the student-centered method while the teacher-centered approach was the least effective teaching method. Based on those findings, the study recommended that teachers should integrate their knowledge of instructional strategies and create a conducive atmosphere to learning in order to enhance the development of students' learning experiences.

Mocinic (2010) examined attitudes of students on applied teaching methods and procedures at The University of Juraj Dobrila in Croatia. By using the Likert Scale to obtain data from 360 students, the findings indicated that method of lecturing is the dominant one but it is supported by frequent use of guided conversations and discussions which indicates a gradual reorganization of higher learning. The study recommended more variety of teaching methods and procedures enabling students to be more active and to assume greater liability in their own educational process rather than depending much on oral lectures which are common to higher learning institutions.

Unlike all previous studies which collectively concur on the use of mixed approaches in teaching, things are rather different following the study done by Sajjad (2018) in Pakstan. The study investigated effective teaching methods in



HLIs drawing attention to the Department of Special Education at the University of Karachi. Through the findings obtained from 210 respondents, it indicated that the lecture method was seemed to be the best method followed by group discussion. The main reasons given by students demonstrated that through the lecture method, the teacher provides the whole knowledge of the topic and serves the time compared to other methods. Therefore, the study recommended the use of the lecture method in teaching and improvements of other methods of teaching.

Another experience is drawn from The University of Gaza following the study done by Gelisli (2009) to determine the effect of student-centered training approaches on students' success. In the study, an experimental design was applied to study 60 students from the Faculty of Technical Education, the Programme of Furniture Decoration, Teaching and Machining. It was found that the success was significantly higher in the group where students centered methods were applied compared to the teacher centered. Therefore, the study recommended the use of students centered methods rather than teacher-centered methods.

Barraket (2005) had similar findings to others who came up with the learner-centered approach as the best method of teaching than teacher-centered methods. The study aimed at analysing the effectiveness of student-centered teaching methods at a masters-level such as case study teaching, problem-based learning, group work, role-play, and simulation at The University of Melbourne. The result indicated that the re-orientation of the curriculum toward student-centeredness had a positive effect on student performance, learning experience and subject evaluation. However, the analysis also found that students continued to place value on more formal teaching methods, and that the value of student-centered techniques, in this case, rested in the way in which they were integrated with more didactic teaching practice.

Generally, all of the above-cited studies, generate an answered question to be addressed in relation to andragogical approaches appropriate to some modules or subjects that experience students' poor academic performance. There are some studies that found a mixed approach to teaching (student- teacher approach) as the best approach to students learning in HLIs (Bidabadi, 2015; Ganyaupfu, 2013; Mwanamoba, 2014; Mocinic, 2010). On the other hand, other studies found that an independent approach (either a student-centered (Barker, Jensen, & Kolo, 2002; Gelisli, 2009) or a teacher-centered approach (Sajjad, 2018) as the best approach to students learning. This is an indicator that there is no common consensus among the cited studies about how adult learners should be trained, specifically those in higher education. Therefore, it is the purpose of this study to explore the best andragogical approaches for effective learning of modules experiencing students' poor academic performance in HLIs in Tanzania.

## **METHODOLOGY**

A mixed method approach employed to investigate the best andragogical approaches for effective learning of modules experiencing students' poor academic performance. The approach is appropriate to the current study due to the fact that it is more useful while investigating a contemporary phenomenon focusing on its real-life context (Teegavarapu & Summers, 2008). The study was conducted at the College of Business Education (CBE) Dar es Salaam Campus, because it has many students and they have been experiencing poor academic performance (Bura et al., 2019). The study population was CBE students including bachelor and diploma students who sat for end of semester exams between the academic year 2018/2019 and 2019/2020. Stratified random sampling was employed because it enabled the researcher to cluster respondents into sub-groups with similar attributes such as programmes and departments. Thereafter, clusters were formulated based on departments whereby students from three departments including Business Administration, Accountancy and Marketing were selected. The use of a stratified sampling technique was purposely employed to obtain respondents with the richest information required from every strata (Gall, 2015). Thereafter, a simple random sampling technique was used to pick respondents for the interview sessions and fill in questionnaires. A sample size of the study was 175 students including Business Administration (65), Accountancy (55), and Marketing (55). Among the selected respondents, there were 105 bachelor students and 70 diploma students. Triangulation as a mixture of tools in data collection was used to complement the weaknesses of each instrument used in data collection (Creswell & Plano, 2001). The researcher used interview guides, documentary review and structured questionnaires in data collection.

According to Miles and Huberman (1994), data analysis involves reducing data, displaying data, and drawing and verifying conclusions. Content analysis techniques were used for all qualitative data collected through interviews and document review whereby, respective themes were created reflecting responses from the respondents. In addition to

that, the researcher used direct quotes from respondents in order to draw some insights to the readers about the feelings of the respondents in the field study. However, the quantitative data collected through questionnaires were analysed using statistical tables to show the frequencies and percentages of respondents.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### Background Information of Respondents

Table 4.1: Sample Characteristics

PROGRAMME	RESPONDENTS & PERCENTAGES			DEPARTMENT	YEAR OF STUDY	TOTAL RESPONDENTS	SEX		AGE				MARITAL STATUS			ENTRY QUALIFICATION					
	RS	%					ME	FE	BELOW 20	20-25	26-30	30+	SINGLE	MARRIED	RELATION	DEVORCED	WIDOW	F6	CERT	DIP	
BCH	RS		35	35	35	1-3	105	60	45	2	87	10	6	82	3	18	2	0	56	0	49
	%		20	20	20		60	34	26	1.14	50	5.7	3.43	46.9	1.7	10	1.1	0	53	0	47
DIP	RS		30	20	20	1-2	70	37	33	11	57	2	0	57	0	13	0	0	15	55	0
	%		17	11	11		40	21	19	6.29	33	1.1	0	32.6	0	7.4	0	0	21	79	0
TOTAL	RS		65	55	55		175	97	78	13	144	12	6	139	3	31	2	0	71	55	49
	%		37	31	31		100	55	45	7.43	82	6.9	3.43	79.4	1.7	18	1.1	0	40.6	31	28

Source: (Field data, 2020)

**Key:** BCH= Bachelor, DIP= Diploma, RS= Respondents, BA= Department of Business Administration AC= Department of Accountancy MARK= Department of Marketing

Table 4.1 indicates the background information of 105 respondents who participated in the study of which, 105 (60%) were bachelor and 70 (40%) were diploma students from three departments including Business Administration 65 (35%), Accountancy 55 (31%) and Marketing 55 (31%). All of them were either in year 1, 2, or 3 of their studies. Amongst the selected respondents, 97 (55%) were male and 78 (45%) were female. This was due to the readiness of respondents to participate in the study. The majority of respondents were 144 (82%) aged 20-25 while other age groups had a small number of respondents such as 13 (7.43%) below 20, 12 (6.9%) between 26-30, and 6 (3.43%) above 30. In terms of marital status, a large portion of the respondents 139 (79.4%) were single, 31 (18%) in relationship, 3 (1.7%) married, 2 (1.1%) divorced and 0 (0%) widows. For entry qualifications, the majority of respondents from the bachelor students 56 (53%) had form six qualifications while 49 (47%) had diploma qualifications. Contrary to diploma students, many of them 55 (79%) had NTA level four certificates while only 15 (21%) had form six certificates. By observing the characteristics of respondents, this implies that a large number of the enrolled students to pursue either bachelor or diploma studies are aged between 20-25 and some of them are already in relationship, marriage and divorced status. Indeed, this brings a message to the instructors that the students with whom they are dealing with are at adult age; thus, need to be treated as adult learners rather than pre-adult students. In addition, many diploma students are the product of NTA level 4 (certificate) than those who join the college with form six qualifications. This again shows that the majority of diploma students lack advanced secondary education compared to those enrolled to join bachelor degrees.

### Andragogical Characteristics of Modules Experiencing Students' Poor Academic Performance

One of the research questions aimed at examining characteristics of the most common teaching and learning methods used by instructors to some modules experiencing students' poor academic performance. All questions were formulated based on characteristics of effective adult training as per reviewed literature. Also, the study investigated the nature of those modules experiencing students' poor academic performance. The study used closed ended questionnaires with three answering options (yes, *no* and *not sure*) to collect primary data from 175 respondents as were summarised in table 4.2.

**Table 4.2: Andragogical Characteristics of Modules Experiencing Students' Poor Academic Performance**

Students' Responses on Andragogical Characteristics of Modules Experiencing students' poor academic performance (N=175)							
Andragogical Characteristics		Yes		No		Not sure	
		N	%	N	%	N	%
<b>i.</b>	Can methods used by instructor (s) be a key source to your module (s) toughness?	97	55.4	26	14.9	52	29.7
<b>ii.</b>	Do those methods in the tough module (s) participate you fully in the process of learning?	75	42.9	69	39.4	31	17.7
<b>iii.</b>	Do those methods in the tough module (s) create boredom to you in the process of learning?	84	48	58	33.1	33	18.9
<b>iv.</b>	Does the instructor of your tough module (s) provide enough assignment to you?	88	50.3	63	36	24	13.7
<b>v.</b>	Does the instructor of your tough module (s) give a feedback on time after the provision of assignment?	35	20	91	52	49	28
<b>vi.</b>	Does the instructor of the tough module (s) give you an opportunity to share your experience during the learning process?	62	35.4	91	52	22	12.6
<b>vii.</b>	Does the instructor of the tough module (s) give you an opportunity to practice what you learn theoretically?	79	45.1	92	52.6	4	2.29
<b>viii.</b>	Does the instructor of the tough module (s) promote your confidence? (encouragement)	60	34.3	102	58.3	13	7.43
<b>ix.</b>	Does the instructor of the tough module (s) give you an opportunity to evaluate yourself?	26	14.9	109	62.3	40	<b>22.9</b>
<b>x.</b>	Is the instructor of your tough module (s) able to assist you while encountering academic challenges	55	31.4	47	26.9	73	41.7

Source: (Field Data, 2020)

The findings in Table 4.2 indicate that the majority of respondents 97 (55.4%) agreed that methods used by instructors are key sources to their module toughness. Others who identified andragogical weaknesses were those associated with the failure of giving the feedback on time 35 (20%), not sharing experience with students 62 (35.4%), absence of practical learning 79 (45.1%), not promoting learners confidence 60 (34.3%) and creating boredom during the learning process 75 (42.9%). However, to some extent, the study observed some improvements in providing assignment 88 (50.3%) and being able to assist students while encountering academic challenges 55 (55%).

**Table 4.3: Nature of Modules Experiencing students' poor academic performance**

Students' Responses on Nature of Modules Experiencing students' poor academic performance (N=175)							
Nature of Modules		Yes		No		Not sure	
		N	%	N	%	N	%
<b>i.</b>	Have you experienced any supplementary exam (s) between 2019/ 2020 and 2020/2021?	78	44.6	65	37.1	32	18.3

ii.	Have you experienced any tough module (s) in your study?	123	70.3	22	12.6	30	17.1
iii.	Are those tough modules originating from your department?	26	14.9	99	56.6	50	28.6
iv.	Are those tough modules characterized by mathematics related content only?	123	70.3	29	16.6	23	13.1
v.	Are these tough modules characterized by non-mathematics related content only?	40	22.9	107	61.1	28	16
vi.	Are those tough modules characterized by both mathematics and non-mathematics related content?	78	44.6	72	41.1	25	14.3

Source: (Field Data, 2020)

As evident from Table 4.3, it has been observed that a large portion of the respondents 123 (70.3%) have experienced tough modules in their studies. Also, 78 (44.6%) experienced supplementary exams between the academic year 2019/2020 and 2020/2021. It has been further noted that most of the tough modules 99 (56.6%) originate from different departments. Whilst those modules with purely mathematics-related content 123 (70.3%) seem to be tougher than those with non-mathematics related content 40 (22.9%) or both 78 (44.6%).

Based on the observed factors related to andragogical characteristics of modules experiencing students' poor academic performance and their nature of toughness, it is evident that the use of less participatory approaches of teaching in adult-student classes is very common to some instructors. These findings are in line with the study done in Malawi by Noel, Daniels, & Martins (2015) to investigate preferred methods of teachings among tutors and students in nurse colleges. The study observed that some tutors prefer the use of less participatory methods including a lecture method even though the majority of students do not prefer it. Furthermore, mathematics-related modules are still a big problem for many students in HLIs as compared to other modules especially for those with poor backgrounds. Again, the current study concurs with the findings by (Grehan, O'Shea, & Mac and Bhaird, 2010) who investigated why year one students face challenges in mathematics at the National University of Ireland Maynooth. With the guide of interviews with year one students, the study found that those with backgrounds in mathematics showed more improvements than those with no backgrounds.

#### Instructors' Attributes to Modules Experiencing Students' Poor Academic Performance

The second objective of the study was to investigate the instructors' attributes to all modules experiencing students' poor academic performance. As it was for the first objective, all questions were formulated focusing on recommended attributes of adult trainers as per reviewed literature. A five-point Likert scale that established the degree of agreement (1= Strongly Agree, 2= Agree, 3= Neutral, 4= Disagree, 5=Strong Disagree), was employed to capture information from 175 respondents so as to seek their perceptions about instructors' attributes.

**Table 4.4: Instructors' Attributes to Modules Experiencing Students' Poor Academic Performance**

Students' Responses on Instructors' Attributes to Modules Experiencing students' poor academic performance (N=175)											
Instructor's Attributes		1		2		3		4		5	
		RS	%	RS	%	RS	%	RS	%	RS	%
i.	Readiness to assist student academically	45	26	75	43	27	15.4	20	11	8	4.6
ii.	Polite language to students	52	30	63	36	27	15.4	17	10	16	9.1
iii.	Commitments in teaching as per timetable	80	46	46	26	20	11.4	23	13	6	3.4
iv.	Fairness in students' treatments	52	30	58	33	39	22.3	17	10	9	5.1
v.	Consistency in directives	55	31	53	30	41	23.4	18	10	8	4.6



<b>vi.</b>	Flexibility	30	<b>17</b>	62	<b>35</b>	45	<b>25.7</b>	25	<b>14</b>	13	<b>7.4</b>
<b>vii.</b>	Courage to students' learning	31	<b>18</b>	57	<b>33</b>	44	<b>25.1</b>	26	<b>15</b>	17	<b>9.7</b>
<b>viii.</b>	Provision of guidance and counselling services to students	43	<b>25</b>	43	<b>25</b>	47	<b>26.9</b>	33	<b>19</b>	9	<b>5.1</b>
<b>ix.</b>	Motivation to students	37	<b>21</b>	61	<b>35</b>	44	<b>25.1</b>	20	<b>11</b>	13	<b>7.4</b>
<b>x.</b>	Volunteering to help students	33	19	46	26	44	25.1	29	17	21	12.0

**Source: (Field Data, 2020)**

The findings on instructors' attributes to modules experiencing students' poor academic performance indicates that to some extent, the instructors have appropriate attributes such as commitments in teaching as per timetable which has only 6 (3.4%) of strongly disagree. However, in many observed areas need some more improvements including polite language 16 (9.1%), flexibility 13 (7.4%), courage to students' learning 17 (9.7%), volunteering to assist students 21 (12%), motivation 13 (7.4%), fairness 9 (5.1%) and provision of guidance and counseling services to students 9 (5.1%). With respect to the above instructors' attributes, some further improvements are needed. Instructors should always behave in a way that motivates students to learn. Although some researchers such as Khan, Ahmad, & Kousar (2011) indicate that students' factors have greater influence on their academic performance than instructors' related factors, still, instructors' attributes are very important in students' academic performance. Likewise, the study was done by (Alami, 2016) to investigate sources of poor academic failure in higher learning among students in Oman, the study found that besides other factors, instructors attributes include instructors' behavior manners, and have contributions to students' academic performance.

### **Strategies of Improving Students' Academic Performance**

In order to answer the question aimed at exploring the perceptions of the respondents about what the best strategies are for improving students' academic performance of modules experiencing students' poor academic performance, interviews were conducted with 10 respondents. Four main themes were identified after a critical analysis of the field data.

#### **Instructional Delivery Improvements**

It was vividly evident that instructors' instructional delivery approaches need some improvements to those modules with students' poor academic performance. It was argued that some instructors while teaching focus much on completing the assigned curricula rather than students' understanding. For example, one of the respondents said: *The lecturer always finishes the module earlier than other lecturers but in a real sense, I don't understand him. He treats all students as if we have the same level of understanding.* (Interview on 14/1/2020).

In addition to the instructional delivery improvements, it was observed that some instructors are still harsh to their students. The use of abusive language has been one of the obstacles that hinders students from seeking academic support from instructors when they face challenges. As for evidence, one of the respondents commented: *...in the last semester, I went to seek clarification for my course work because it was different from what I expected. Of course, I failed completely to settle the issue because I was not allowed to express my concern. Thus, I failed due to a technical supplement...* (Interview on 14/1/2020).

In connection to other instructional delivery challenges, most of the instructors are teacher-centered oriented rather than being learner-centered. Students are required to listen only to their instructors without sharing the learned knowledge. Badly enough, some instructors used to read notes and force students to take notes with either partial or no clarifications. As a result, some students fail to understand the lesson as one respondent clarified: *...you can see the lecturer teaching himself by reading the notes without clarifying issues in the content. Also, there is a tendency of using a whiteboard for writing without turning to the students so as to ask them whether they understand the lesson or not...* (Interview on 28/1/2020).

Furthermore, it was reported that the medium of instruction (English language) is not familiar to many students. This being the case, following the instruction especially when complex concepts are presented, it is more difficult for them.

Therefore, the use of commonly known language (Kiswahili) as a supportive language to English during the instruction for easier understanding of complex concepts was highly emphasized by respondents as one said:  
*...look at this... we have different educational backgrounds and our instructors have to know it. It is not bad using Kiswahili for some few complex concepts in order to make us familiar with those concepts.* (Interview on 15/1/2020).

### **Assessment Improvements**

Both effective instruction delivery and assessment are of great importance in students' academic performance. The current study observed that there is a need for assessment improvements for modules experiencing students' poor academic performance. It was argued that some instructors used to provide assignments but do not give the feedback on time after marking has been done. This prohibits students from making a review of their mistakes and making corrections accordingly. One of the respondents reported:

*Sometimes we don't get results from our assignments until the time of signing course work comes. When the class representatives ask the instructor, he says the assignments are not yet marked so keep into waiting...* (Interview on 14/1/2020).

Additionally, some instructors despite the provision of several assignments to their students, they are not consistent in instructions. The situation creates dilemma to students as one said:

*I think our instructors should be smart in giving us instructions while proving assignments because they are not consistency.... Sometimes you may find that an assignment was previously instructed to have 10 marks, thereafter, it can be changed to 15 or any marks that the instructor decides.* (Interview on 14/1/2020).

Giving students makeup assignments to complement the required marks for the course work pass marks was also recommended by students to avoid technical supplementary exams. Some instructors are completely reluctant to give makeup assignments to their students regardless of the amount of the marks required for the course work accomplishment. The respondent said:

*A makeup assignment could help a student to avoid a technical supplementary exam especially to the student whose marks are very close to the course work requirements.*

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Conclusion**

The current study has found that most of the methods used by instructors to modules experiencing students' poor academic performance are those characterized by teacher-directed learning approaches rather than students' self-directed learning. Some of the identified weaknesses in those methods were boredom, less participatory, not providing feedback on time, not sharing learners' experiences and being theoretical oriented rather than practical. It was also observed that some of the instructors lacked important attributes while interacting with students for effective learning such as being courageous, readiness of volunteering to help students, motivating students, being flexible and fair, and provision of guidance and counseling services to students.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the observed findings, the current study has the following recommendations to the government of Tanzania and CBE; It is the high time for the government of Tanzania through its respective Ministry of Education, Science and Technology to promote in-service andragogical training to instructors especially those with no teaching education backgrounds. This is very important so as to equip them with the modern andragogical knowledge and skills related to adult learning. CBE as an autonomous higher learning institution, should be organising regularly on job andragogical training to the instructors especially when new instructors are employed. This can be done in collaboration with NACTE's experts who are responsible for all National Technical Education colleges. All instructors should develop the habit of sharing teaching and learning experience in order to learn more about effective classroom instruction delivery and assessment techniques. This strategy is very important especially to those whose module experience students' poor academic performance.

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