



IAE Journal of Research and Development (IJORED)

Vol. 2, Issue 1, March 2026, pp. 237-254,
eISSN: 3088-5515, pISSN: 3088-5523,
Published by IAE under **CC BY-NC** license

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.61408/ijored2026v02i01.10>

Assessing Learners' Support Service in Quality Complementary Secondary Education Provision. A Case of Selected Open Schools in Tanzania

Sebastian Mighay Bekko

Institute of Adult Education

Email: bekkosm.rb@gmail.com

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0004-7758-1509>

Abstract

Received: 30 December 2025

Revised: 20 April 2026

Accepted: 27 April 2026

Published: 15 May 2026

Copyright: © 2026 by the
authors.

Licensee IAE, Dar es Salaam,
TANZANIA.

This article is an open access and
distributed under the Creative
Commons Attribution-
NonCommercial (CC BY-NC)
license.

Learner support services constitute an essential component of any open and distance learning (ODL) system, encompassing a broad range of academic and related activities. However, the provision of quality complementary secondary education in open schools is often constrained by inadequate learner support services. This challenge emphasises the need to strengthen such services to effectively meet learners' needs. Specifically, this paper explored the types and roles of learner support services in open schooling, and to examine how they influence the delivery of quality complementary secondary education. Employing a literature review method, the study draws on existing research, policy documents, and programme evaluations relevant to open and distance learning. The findings reveal that comprehensive support services-including academic guidance, psychosocial support, access to learning resources, and flexible assessment practices-positively affect learner retention, engagement, and academic performance. Furthermore, well-structured support systems enhance inclusivity and institutional efficiency, enabling open schools to fulfil their educational mandate. The study concludes that prioritising learner support services is essential to improving quality in open schooling and

recommends their integration into policy and practice for more equitable and effective secondary education delivery.

Key words: *Support services, Open schooling and Complementary education*

How to cite: Bekko, S. M. (2026). Assessing Learners' Support Service in Quality Complementary Secondary Education Provision. A Case of Selected Open Schools in Tanzania. *LAE Journal of Research and Development*, Vol. 2(1), 237-254. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.61408/ijored2026v02i01.10>

Introduction

Learner support services (LSS) are critical to the success of Open and Distance Learning (ODL), especially within open schooling models that aim to reach learners outside the conventional classroom system (Makarius, Nyangarika & Mwesiga, 2020). These services include academic advising, mentoring, tutoring, psychosocial counselling, administrative support, and access to learning materials (Arhin, Ampofo, Kaedabi-Donkor, Nyagorme & Laryea, 2025). In open schools, where learners often study independently and with limited direct interaction with educators, the availability and quality of support services directly impact learner engagement, persistence, and success (Tshabalala, Ndeya-Ndereya & van Zyl, 2021; Musingafi, Mapuranga, Chiwanza & Zebron, 2016). Without these services, learners are more likely to become demotivated, academically isolated, or drop out entirely.

Globally, the provision of LSS varies significantly between developed and developing countries. In developed contexts such as the United Kingdom, Canada, and Australia, open schooling and distance education systems are supported by strong digital infrastructures, qualified personnel, and well-coordinated learner monitoring mechanisms (Tait, 2015). These systems provide timely academic assistance, psychosocial support, and continuous learner engagement strategies that enhance retention and academic success. In contrast, many developing countries face persistent challenges in establishing comprehensive learner support systems due to limited technological, financial, and human resources (Musingafi et al., 2016; Chawinga & Zinn, 2019). This disparity affects learner outcomes and undermines the overall effectiveness and credibility of open schooling models.

In Africa, open schooling has emerged as a key strategy for expanding access to education, particularly for underserved populations. Despite its potential, the effectiveness of these systems is often constrained by inadequate learner support services, which are essential for guiding learners in self-directed study environments (Mireku, Bervell, Dzamesi & Nimo, 2024). Weak academic advising, limited psychosocial support, and insufficient feedback mechanisms continue to hinder learner engagement and completion rates across many contexts.

In Tanzania, the Education Sector Development Plan (2016/17–2020/21) and related policies emphasize inclusive education through alternative pathways such as open schooling under the Alternative National Framework for Education (ANFE) (URT, 2021). These schools are designed to expand equitable access to secondary education for out-of-school youth, rural learners, girls facing socio-cultural barriers, and individuals unable to access formal schooling. Through flexible learning schedules, distance learning approaches, and decentralized study centres, open schools provide opportunities for continued education (Mbelwa & Maulid, 2020). However, the expansion of access has not been matched with adequate strengthening of learner support systems, raising concerns about the quality of education delivery.

Despite their role in expanding access, open schools in Tanzania continue to face significant challenges related to learner support services. Many institutions are under-resourced, with limited trained personnel, inadequate learning materials, and weak mechanisms for academic and psychosocial support (Messo, 2014). Consequently, learners often experience isolation, low motivation, and high dropout rates. Studies indicate that insufficient personalized guidance, delayed feedback, and lack of psychosocial support significantly undermine learners' ability to cope with self-directed learning demands, thereby affecting the quality of open and distance education (Kombo & Nkumbi, 2023; Chawinga & Zinn, 2019)

Given these concerns, this study seeks to assess how learner support services contribute to improving the quality of complementary secondary education delivered through open schools. Specifically, it aims to identify

the types and functions of learner support services and assess how they influence learner retention, equity, and academic success. Addressing these issues is vital if open schooling is to fulfil its intended role in supporting inclusive and lifelong learning. By examining evidence from existing literature and practices, the study contributes to efforts to reform open schooling through integrated, learner-centred support mechanisms that improve both access and quality (Dighe & Reddi, 2017; Mahai & Mselle, 2023).

This study is grounded in Self-Directed Learning (SDL) theory, which provides a relevant lens for understanding how learners in open schools manage their own learning processes. SDL emphasizes the learner's autonomy and responsibility in identifying their learning needs, setting goals, finding resources, choosing learning strategies, and evaluating outcomes (Rui, Nasri & Mahmud, 2024). Knowles (1975), who popularized the concept, noted that SDL is especially important in adult and non-traditional education contexts-such as open schooling-where learners are expected to operate with a high level of independence. In such environments, learners often study outside of formal classrooms, making self-discipline and motivation crucial for success.

In the context of open schools, where face-to-face teacher contact is minimal and learning occurs at a distance, the SDL model is particularly applicable (Dahal (& Bhat, 2024). Learners are expected to study independently, manage their time, and navigate complex learning content with minimal supervision. However, not all learners possess the skills, confidence, or resources to succeed in such autonomous environments (Saad & Al-Mutairi, 2024). This is where learner support services become critical: they act as scaffolds that assist learners in becoming more effective self-directed learners. Services such as academic guidance, mentoring, and counselling help build self-regulation, enhance motivation, and develop competencies necessary for autonomous learning (Godfrey, 2022).

Studies have shown that structured learner support systems significantly enhance the effectiveness of SDL environments by addressing barriers that hinder self-direction, such as lack of confidence, limited access to

materials, and emotional stress (Tshabalala et al., 2021; Mahai & Mselle, 2023). For instance, psychosocial support can help learners overcome anxiety and isolation, while academic tutoring can clarify content and boost self-efficacy. In this way, learner support services do not replace autonomy but rather enable it-creating conditions where learners can thrive in directing their own education journey.

By applying SDL theory, this study views learner support services as essential enablers that bridge the gap between learner independence and successful educational outcomes in open schools. The theory supports the idea that while self-direction is a goal, it must be supported through intentional, structured interventions. Therefore, understanding the types and effectiveness of these support services offers valuable insights into how open schools can strengthen learner autonomy while ensuring equity and quality in education.

Lekule and Shirima (2023) examined the sustainability of open schools in providing quality complementary secondary education in Tanzania using a qualitative approach involving 35 participants. The findings indicate that limited learner support services are a major barrier to sustainability, with challenges such as a shortage of qualified facilitators, inadequate library facilities, limited study centres, and insufficient guidance and counselling services negatively affecting learners' academic performance. Similarly, Okafor, Onwuadi, Imo, Eneh, Okeke and Eseadi (2021) found that counselling as a learner support service significantly enhances the quality of learning among students at the National Open University of Nigeria South-East study centres.

Losioki (2025) and Mahai and Mselle (2023) found that psychological support services, including counselling, emotional support, and encouragement, significantly contribute to building learners' resilience and sustaining motivation to learn. Contrary to this Komba and Mwandanji (2020) highlighted widespread inefficiencies in Tanzanian open schools, including poor communication and disorganized exam logistics. Furthermore, Mahai and Mselle (2023) emphasize that

psychosocial support indirectly enhances learning outcomes by promoting focus, reducing anxiety, and improving learners' self-confidence. Collectively, these factors are essential for enhancing learners' motivation, emotional well-being, and overall academic performance in open and distance learning environments.

Methodology

This study adopted a desk review research design, which involves the systematic collection, examination, and synthesis of existing documents to explore how learner support services influence the quality of education in open schools. The desk review approach is suitable for research that seeks to generate insights from existing knowledge, policies, and evaluations rather than primary data collection. It enabled the researcher to examine various scholarly articles, institutional reports, policy documents, and program evaluations related to open and distance learning (ODL), open schooling, and learner support services, particularly in the context of developing countries such as Tanzania.

The literature used in this study was sourced from peer-reviewed journal articles, academic reports, official documents, and reputable online databases accessed through Google Scholar. These sources offered recent and suitable material related to open and distance learning, open schooling, and learner support services, with a focus in developed and developing countries including Tanzania.

The inclusion criteria focused on studies published in English between 2014 and 2025, peer-reviewed journal articles and reports addressing learner support services, open schooling, and educational quality. Relevant studies and concepts that discuss learner support systems and educational outcomes were taken into account. The exclusion criteria included the eliminated sources that were not peer-reviewed, lacked methodological clarity, were unrelated to education, or focused exclusively on higher education without reference to open schooling or secondary education contexts.

Data extraction involved systematically identifying key information such as authorship, year, study context, methodology, and findings related to learner support services and quality outcomes. The analysis involved thematic categorization of findings to identify patterns and Insights related to: the types and roles of learner support services in open schools, and the impact of such services on learner outcomes, particularly in terms of retention, inclusion, and academic performance. The credibility of sources was ensured by selecting peer-reviewed studies and official policy reports. This method allowed the researcher to derive well-informed conclusions and practical recommendations without the limitations and resource demands of field-based data collection.

Ethical considerations were observed by ensuring proper citation and acknowledgment of all sources used in the review. The researcher avoided plagiarism by accurately paraphrasing and referencing all ideas derived from the literature.

Results and Discussion

Exploring the Types and Roles of Learner Support Services in Open Schooling

The analysis of the findings revealed that open schools in Tanzania implement a range of learner support services (LSS) to assist students in managing the flexible and autonomous nature of open and distance learning. These services are categorized into four main types: academic, psychosocial, administrative and technological (Mwachande, 2022). Each plays a distinct role in addressing learner needs and aligns with the principles of Self-Directed Learning (Knowles, 1975), which emphasizes learner autonomy, self-motivation, and self-management. Empirical evidences suggests that effective learner support services enhance learner independence, engagement, and academic success in open learning environments (Rui, Nasri & Mahmud, 2024; Dahal & Bhat, 2024; Godfrey, 2022).

However, Tibane, Mafa-Theledi, Masebe and Mathye (2024) reveal notable disparities in the availability and effectiveness of these services, particularly in under-resourced schools. Similarly, Martin (2017) observes that resource availability is significantly related to school efficiency, although the relationship is weak, indicating that limited resources continue to hinder effective service delivery. In contrast to positive expectation of LSS effectiveness other studies indicate that inadequate implementation of support services often leads to learner isolation, low motivation, and poor academic performance (Musingafi et al., 2016; Chawinga & Zinn, 2019).

Academic Support Services

Findings indicated that academic support is the most prevalent form of LSS in open schools (Ndege, Ndiritu & Gatotoh, 2023). It includes services such as tutoring, distribution of self-instructional materials, guided study sessions, and feedback on assignments. According to Tshabalala et al. (2021), these services help learners grasp complex content, reinforce understanding, and develop independent study skills. In alignment with SDL theory, academic support fosters learners' ability to take responsibility for their own learning by enhancing their capacity for planning, self-monitoring, and reflection. However, the data revealed that in many Tanzanian open schools, academic support is poorly structured. Learners often receive printed modules without complementary tutorial support or interactive feedback. This limitation undermines the SDL process and restricts learners' capacity to master content independently. There is a clear need to strengthen academic interventions through scheduled tutorials, formative assessments, and personalized guidance to promote learner autonomy and success.

Psychosocial Support Services

Psychosocial support services emerged as essential in addressing learners' emotional and psychological well-being (Bretton, 2024). The findings highlighted services such as counselling, peer mentorship,

and motivational talks as particularly valuable for vulnerable learners—including teenage mothers and out-of-school youth. Similarly, Losioki (2025) found that psychological support services, including counselling, emotional support, and encouragement, significantly contribute to building learners' resilience and sustaining motivation to learn. These findings are further reinforced by Mahai and Mselle (2023) who argue that psychosocial support enables learners to cope with stigma, stress, and external pressures, thereby sustaining their motivation to learn. From an SDL perspective, such support is critical in fostering self-motivation and perseverance—key traits for self-directed learners. However, Muganda & Mwinuka (2019) reported that psychosocial support is largely absent or inconsistently offered across open schools. The study further found that, lack of formalized counselling structures contributes to feelings of isolation and leads many learners to drop out. Institutionalizing psychosocial services would therefore strengthen learners' emotional resilience, support SDL processes, and improve academic persistence.

Administrative Support Services

The findings also confirmed that administrative support services are instrumental in facilitating learners' navigation of the schooling process (Mwachande, 2022). These services include assistance with enrolment, timetabling, exam scheduling, and certification. When effective, administrative systems reduce confusion, build learner trust, and enable smoother progression through the education system. Komba and Mwandanji (2020) highlighted widespread inefficiencies in Tanzanian open schools, including poor communication and disorganized exam logistics. These limitations hinder learners' ability to independently plan and regulate their learning. In line with SDL theory, well-organized administrative structures are necessary to support learners' goal setting, time management, and decision-making. Improving administrative responsiveness and simplifying procedures can therefore enhance learners' ability to manage their own learning pathways (He, Nutton, Graham, Hirschausen & Su, 2021).

Technological Support Services

Technological support services were found to be increasingly critical in enabling access to content, promoting interaction, and supporting digital learning (Ashfaq, 2025). Services include online learning platforms, mobile applications, and technical assistance. Mtebe and Raisamo (2018) observed that technology use in open schools encourages learner autonomy and flexibility, core principles in SDL theory. However, the review revealed considerable gaps in digital infrastructure, particularly in rural areas (Chawinga & Zinn, 2019). Many learners lack access to internet, devices, and digital literacy skills-factors that limit their engagement with online content and self-paced learning. Without adequate technological support, learners are unable to fully control the timing, pace, and mode of their learning. Addressing this gap requires investment in ICT infrastructure, training, and accessible digital content to support the development of self-directed learners.

Examining How Learner Support Services Influence the Delivery of Quality Complementary Secondary Education

The analysis of the findings demonstrated that learner support services significantly influence the delivery of quality complementary secondary education in open schools. When effectively implemented, LSS enhance learner engagement, promote retention, improve academic performance, and support educational equity. These outcomes are consistent with the principles of Self-Directed Learning, which posit that learners thrive in environments that encourage autonomy, provide timely feedback, and meet diverse needs. The absence or inadequacy of LSS was found to negatively impact learners' capacity to persist, progress, and succeed within open schooling systems.

Findings revealed that LSS contribute substantially to increasing learner engagement. Academic support, such as structured tutorials and feedback, was reported to enhance learners' interaction with educational materials (Tshabalala et al., 2021). Psychosocial services, including

mentorship and motivational sessions, also helped learners remain emotionally connected to their educational goals (Mahai & Mselle, 2023). Within the framework of SDL theory, engagement is a product of internal motivation and self-regulation. The presence of responsive support services enables learners to actively participate, self-monitor their progress, and take greater responsibility for their learning. These findings affirm the need for consistent and learner-centred support mechanisms to maintain engagement in open schooling.

The analysis further showed that well-structured support services improve learner retention. Support mechanisms such as academic advising, emotional counselling, and clear administrative communication help learners navigate challenges that might otherwise lead to dropout (Komba & Nkumbi, 2023). In the context of SDL, retention is linked to the learner's ability to manage setbacks and remain motivated. The findings suggest that regular follow-ups, flexible learning schedules, and personalized guidance are effective in reinforcing commitment to learning. In contrast, the absence of such services often results in frustration, disconnection, and early withdrawal from school. Institutionalizing supportive systems is therefore key to sustaining participation and reducing attrition in open schools.

The findings also established a direct relationship between learner support services and academic achievement (Wambua, Gakuu, Kidombo & Ndege, 2019). Services such as tutoring, timely feedback, and targeted interventions enable learners to address learning gaps and strengthen understanding (Mtana & Mhando, 2016). Psychosocial support contributes indirectly by fostering focus, reducing anxiety, and improving self-confidence (Mahai & Mselle, 2023). In line with SDL theory, academic success is achieved when learners are empowered to assess their performance, seek help, and adjust their strategies accordingly. Thus, robust LSS not only supplement content delivery but also build learners' capacity for independent problem-solving and achievement.

Lastly, findings confirmed that LSS play a pivotal role in advancing equity and inclusion in open schooling. Support services tailored to marginalized groups—such as girls, rural learners, and working youth—

reduce systemic barriers to participation and success (Leung, Kassel-Gomez, Sullivan, Murahara & Flanagan, 2022). For example, flexible delivery models, mobile learning tools, and counselling services have been particularly beneficial to learners managing economic hardship, stigma, or domestic responsibilities (Chawinga & Zinn, 2019; Mahai & Mselle, 2023). According to SDL theory, learners are more likely to thrive when they are provided with a supportive environment that accommodates their specific needs and fosters autonomy. These findings underscore the necessity of embedding inclusive support structures to ensure that all learners-regardless of background-have equitable opportunities to engage in self-directed learning and succeed. Contrary to this, Hassan (2020) reveals significant shortcomings in the quality of LSS provision. The study found that key components such as face-to-face support, internet services, communication systems, and the Moodle platform were inadequately delivered, thereby negatively affecting the overall quality of learner support at the Zanzibar Centre. This suggests that while LSS have the potential to enhance equity and inclusion, their effectiveness is highly dependent on the quality, accessibility, and consistency of their implementation.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the findings of this study affirm that learner support services (LSS)-comprising academic, psychosocial, administrative, and technological components-are vital to the effectiveness of open schooling in delivering quality complementary secondary education. These services enhance learner engagement, retention, academic performance, and inclusivity, especially for marginalized populations, by aligning with the principles of Self-Directed Learning which emphasize learner autonomy, motivation, and support. However, the study also revealed significant gaps in the availability, consistency, and quality of these services, particularly in resource-constrained settings like Tanzania.

Recommendations

It is therefore recommended that policymakers and educational stakeholders strengthen institutional frameworks for LSS through increased funding, structured capacity-building, deployment of trained support personnel, integration of ICT tools, and policy reforms that prioritize learner-centred approaches. Embedding robust support systems in open schooling is essential not only for improving educational outcomes but also for advancing equity and lifelong learning goals.

Conflict of Interest

The researcher affirms that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this desk review study on learner support services in open schooling. The study was conducted objectively and independently using secondary data from journal articles, reports and other scholarly sources without any financial, personal or institutional influence that could affect the interpretation of findings. All sources used were properly acknowledged, and the analysis was based solely on available scholarly evidence.

Funding Declaration

This study was conducted as desktop research and did not receive any specific grant from funding agencies in the public, commercial or not-for-profit sectors. The researcher independently carried out the study using available secondary sources such as books, journal articles, reports and other scholarly publications. No external financial support was received for this research.

References

Arhin, V., Ampofo, S. Y., Kaedabi-Donkor, R., Nyagorme, P., & Laryea, J. E. (2025). Support services, motivational pathways, academic adjustment, and academic outcomes among distance learners. *Open Praxis*, 17(4), 691–709. <https://openpraxis.org/articles/10.55982/openpraxis.17.4.984>

- Ashfaq, M. S. (2025). The role of technology in enhancing the quality of learning in higher education. *SSRN Electronic Journal*, 3(2), 895–907. DOI: [10.2139/ssrn/5297920](https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn/5297920)
- Bretton, O. M. (2024). Mapping the psychosocial: Introducing a standardized system to improve psychosocial understanding within mental health. *Archives of Psychiatry and Mental Health*, 8, 12–19. <https://www.psychiatryhealthjournal.com/apmh/article/view/apmh-aid1051>
- Chawinga, W. D., & Zinn, S. (2019). Use of Web 2.0 tools by students in open and distance learning: A case of Mzuzu University, Malawi, South African. *Journal of Information Management*, 21(1), 1-12. DOI:[10.4102/sajim.v18i1.694](https://doi.org/10.4102/sajim.v18i1.694)
- Dahal, A., & Bhat, N. (2024). Self-directed learning, its implementation, and challenges: A review. *Nepal Journal of Health Sciences*, 3(1), 102–115. <https://nepjol.info/index.php/njhs/article/view/63277>
- Dighe, A., & Reddi, U. V. (2017). Learner Support Services in Open and Distance Education: A Case Study of the Commonwealth Countries. Commonwealth of Learning. <https://ir-library.ku.ac.ke/server/api/core/bitstreams/4616f59b-7027-4b60-8377-670e8b38d3c4/>
- Fussy, D. S., & Hassan, H. I. (2021). Investigating girls' literacy practices in and out of school in rural Tanzania (2019–2020). *Huria Journal*, 27(1), 30-45. <https://code.ngo/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Context-Matters-Research-Report-Final-Fussy-Dec-2021.pdf>
- Godfrey, N. (2022). Students' perceptions of the impact of guidance and counselling programs on academic needs satisfaction in secondary schools within the Rift Valley Region, Kenya. *Educational Research and Reviews*, 17(4), 145–151. <https://academicjournals.org/journal/ERR/article-full-text/1BC7A0368954>
- Hassan, M. S. (2020). *The quality of learner support services in ODL: The case of the Open University of Tanzania–Zanzibar Centre* (Master's dissertation, The Open University of Tanzania). <https://repository.out.ac.tz/2712/>
- He, V. Y., Nutton, G., Graham, A., Hirschhausen, L., & Su, J.-Y. (2021). Pathways to school success: Self-regulation and executive function, preschool

- attendance and early academic achievement of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal children in Australia's Northern Territory. *PLOS ONE*, 16(11), e0259857. <https://psycnet.apa.org/record/2022-35241-001>
- Komba, W. L. M., & Nkumbi, E. (2023). Enhancing learner success through integrated support systems in distance education. *Tanzania Journal of Education and Development*, 9(2), 89-103. <http://ijedict.dec.uwi.edu/viewarticle.php?id=859&layout=html>
- Lekule, A. A., & Shirima, G. H. (2023). Conceptions of Sustainability of Open Schools in Offering Quality Secondary Education in Tanzania. *Papers in Education and Development*, 41(1). <https://www.ajol.info/index.php/ped/article/view/249976>
- Leung, E., Kassel-Gomez, G., Sullivan, S., Murahara, F., & Flanagan, T. (2022). Social support in schools and related outcomes for LGBTQ youth: A scoping review. *Discover Education*, 1(1), 18. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/36407890/>
- Losioki, B. E. (2025). Psychosocial support services for youth and adults affected by the landslide disaster in Katesh, Hanang District, Tanzania. *African Journal of Empirical Research*, 6(4), 710–718. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.51867/ajernet.6.4.63>
- Mahai, R., & Mselle, L. (2023). Exploring challenges and strategies for improving learner support in ODL institutions in Tanzania. *East African Journal of Education and Social Sciences*, 4(1), 123-134. <https://journals.udsm.ac.tz/index.php/ped/article/view/4346>
- Makarius, N. N., Nyangarika, A., & Mwesiga, G. N. (2020). Factors leading to absenteeism of teachers in public secondary schools in Tandahimba District. *International Journal of Advance Research and Innovative Ideas in Education*, 6(4), 180–192. https://d1wqtxts1xzle7.cloudfront.net/123112148/Factors_Leading_to_Absenteeism_of_Teachers
- Makunja, G. (2016). Challenges facing teachers in implementing competence-based curriculum in Tanzania: The case of community secondary schools. *International Journal of Education and Social Science*, 3(5), 30-37. <https://www.scirp.org/reference/referencespapers?referenceid=336776>

- Martin, E. N. (2017). Correlation between the availability of resources and efficiency of the school system within the framework of the implementation of competency-based teaching approaches in Cameroon. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 8(2), 82–89. https://dicames.online/jspui/bitstream/20.500.12177/11669/1/FSE_MEM_BC_23_1083.Pdf
- Mbelwa, L., & Maulid, M. (2020). Open schooling as a strategy to improve access to secondary education in Tanzania. *International Journal of Educational Research and Technology*, 11(2), 4553. <https://www.repoa.or.tz/wpcontent/uploads/2020/07/08.1%20Amon%20V.Y.%20Mbelle.pdf>
- Messo, I. N. (2014). Students' perception on the quality of open and distance learning programmes in Tanzania. *Huria Journal*, 14. <https://scholar.google.com/scholar?hl=en&as>
- Mireku, D. O., Bervell, B., Dzamesi, P. D., & Nimo, E. B. (2024). A systematic review of students' support services provision in higher education (SSSPiHE) in sub-Saharan Africa. *Cogent Education*, 11(1). <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/2331186X.2024.2351747>
- Mouton, J., & Subban, M. (2023). The effectiveness of learner support in open distance learning at UNISA, KwaZulu-Natal: Critical considerations. *Journal of Public Administration*, 31(1). https://journals.co.za/doi/abs/10.10520/ejc-adminpub_v31_n1_a9
- Mtana, N., & Mhando, E. (2016). Strengthening teacher support systems in Tanzanian open schools. *Teacher Education Journal of Tanzania*, 5(2), 55–68.
- Mtebe, J. S., & Raisamo, R. (2018). Challenges and instructors' intention to adopt and use open educational resources in higher education in Tanzania. *International Review of Research in Open and Distributed Learning*, 15(1), 249–271. <https://idl-bnc-idrc.dspace.direct.org/server/api/cor>
- Muganda, R., & Mwinuka, D. (2019). An evaluation of learner support in distance education: A case of Institute of Adult Education. *Journal of Continuing and Adult Education*, 6(1), 76–91.
- Musingafi, M. C. C., Mapuranga, B., Chiwanza, K., & Zebron, S. (2016). Challenges for open and distance learning (ODL) students: Experiences from

- Zimbabwe Open University. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 6(18), 59-66.
<https://www.sciepub.com/reference/129977>
- Mwachande, S. O. (2022). *Assessment of the community perceptions on open schooling system in Tanzania: Empirical experience from Mbeya* (Master's dissertation, The Open University of Tanzania). The Open University of Tanzania.
<https://repository.out.ac.tz/3664/1/Shukuru%20Mwachande-Dissertation-24-05-2022.pdf>
- Ndege, W., Ndiritu, A., & Gatotoh, M. A. (2023). Learner academic support services and retention of students in open distance learning programmes: The case of selected universities in Kenya. *African Journal of Emerging Issues*, 5(17), 122–139
<https://ajoeijournal.org/sys/index.php/ajoei/article/view/519>
- Okafor, I. C., Onwuadi, C. C., Imo, C. O., Eneh, E. C., Okeke, P. M. D., & Eseadi, C. (2021). Counselling as a learner support service for enhancing quality learning for students of National Open University of Nigeria, South-East study centres of Nigeria. *Library Philosophy and Practice* (e-journal), 487. and Practice (e-journal).
<https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/libphilprac/4873>
- Rui, L., Nasri, N. F. B. M., & Mahmud, N. D. B. (2024). The role of self-directed learning in promoting deep learning processes: A systematic literature review. *International Journal of Academic Research in Progressive Education and Development*, 13(4). <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/387549141>
- Saad, S. S., & Al-Mutairi, M. A. (2024). The impact and future of students' independent learning. *MECCA Journal of Middle European Construction and Design of Cars*, 68.
<https://mecs.com/uplode/images/photo/musaedali007@gmail.com.pdf>
- Tibane, C. C., Mafa-Theledi, O. N., Masebe, T. P., & Mathye, P. (2024). Examining the effect of resource constraints on teaching and learning of Grade 12 Mathematics in Gauteng community learning centres. *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research*, 23(10), 453–474.
<https://www.ijlter.myres.net/index.php/ijlter/article/view/2101>
- Tshabalala, M., Ndeya-Ndereya, C., & van Zyl, J. (2021). Exploring student support in open distance learning environments in Sub-Saharan Africa. *African Journal of Open and Distance Learning*, 8(1), 41-57.

<https://oasis.col.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/0eac83be-a7e1-4db7-a2bd-6915220e89b0/content>

UNESCO. (2021). Reimagining our futures together: A new social contract for education. Paris: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/362352272_Reimagining_our_futures_together_a_new_social_contract_for_education_by_UNESCO_Paris_UNESCO_2021_186_pages_ISBN_978-92-3-100478-0

URT (United Republic of Tanzania). (2021). Education Sector Development Plan (2016/17-2020/21). Ministry of Education, Science and Technology.

[https://search.worldcat.org/title/Education-sector-development-plan-\(201617-202021\)-:-Tanzania-Mainland/oclc/1248735981](https://search.worldcat.org/title/Education-sector-development-plan-(201617-202021)-:-Tanzania-Mainland/oclc/1248735981)

Wambua, R. M., Gakuu, C., Kidombo, H., & Ndege, S. (2019). Learner support system and academic performance of distance learning students in selected Kenyan public universities. *The Electronic Journal of Teaching and Learning for Higher Education*, 1(1).

<https://doi.org/10.35293/tetfle.v1i1.69>