

# **Workshop on Research Methodology for Distance Education**

June 30—July 04, 2009

A Report  
by

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(August 14, 2009)

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In the first place, I thank Prof. Asha Kanwar, Vice President, COL, for handling the project (Workshop on Research Methodology for Distance Education) from the COL end and for her contributions in the process of building contacts with the Open University of Tanzania (OUT) and also for her PowerPoint presentation, entitled *Need for Quality Research in ODL*, made in the beginning of the Workshop on June 30, 2009.

Secondly, my thanks are due to Prof. Tolly Mbwette, Vice Chancellor, Open University of Tanzania, for his *inaugural address* in addition to the support and advice he provided to set the Workshop on its course on June 30, 2009. Along with the Vice Chancellor, I must thank Prof. Lughano J. M. Kusiluka, DVC (RM), OUT, who delivered the valedictory address to close the Workshop on July 4, 2009.

Thirdly, I must thank the participants from the University of Tanzania and also those from Egerton University, Kenya, for their cooperation during the conduct of the Workshop and also for the interest they took in the goings on and the immensely valuable feedback they provided. I am grateful to them all for their contributions.

At the level of implementation, the Workshop could not have run as smoothly and efficiently as indeed it did without the cooperation and support of Ms. Margreth Jubilate Mushi, the Programme Coordinator. I record my sincere gratitude for all she did to facilitate the conduct of the Workshop.

Also, I express my gratefulness to all those who helped in various other ways, though behind the scenes, in our work and deliberations in the process of shaping (in however a small measure) the future of OUT.

Lastly, I record my gratefulness for the hospitality of the Vice Chancellor, OUT, who kept me occupied purposefully on the 5<sup>th</sup> of July (the day I had to spend waiting to catch my flight back to USA) by facilitating my visits to a few historical sites around Dar-es-Salaam. The days' engagements were instructive as well as relaxing in so far as I learnt a little more about Tanzania and enjoyed the hospitality of my hosts. Here, I must thank Mr. Alphonse Hume, Public Relations Officer, OUT, and the University Driver, who accompanied and guided me during the day long tour.

Badri N. Koul

## 1. BACKGROUND

The Commonwealth of Learning (COL), Vancouver, Canada, has been providing significant support to higher *distance education*<sup>1</sup> institutions in Africa for quite sometime now. In 2009, the Open University of Tanzania (OUT) received funding and expert help to build its and also regional research capabilities. OUT was the main beneficiary of the said funding, while Egerton University, Kenya, too benefited, though only in a small measure.

No *Open Distance Learning (ODL)* institution of higher education can meet the local socio-educational needs adequately and effectively, unless it engages in systemic research in order to make its products and services contextually purposeful. It was, therefore, reasonable for OUT to acquaint its staff with what systemic research in ODL is and how to go about it. To provide the needed support in this regard, the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) engaged Prof. Badri N Koul to act as a Consultant/Facilitator for a Workshop on *Research Methodology for Distance Education* scheduled at one of the Regional Centres of OUT in Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania. The related contract was formally signed on May 15, 2009.

It was agreed that the Consultant would take up the following tasks (see Item 1.1, Contract C09-427) to fulfil the contractual obligations:

1. prepare a Programme, similar to the Research Workshop held at the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) in 2005;
2. design the workshop, including the preparatory workshop materials (workshop materials to be submitted to OUT in advance for reproduction);
3. ensure that the expected outcome of the workshop is achieved;
4. develop an evaluation tool to assess the effectiveness of each session of the workshop and the workshop as a whole;
5. evaluate the workshop to ensure the participants have benefited and the objectives have been achieved; and
6. prepare an *evaluation report* on the workshop.

As for the *evaluation report* (see item 6 above), it was agreed (see Item 5.1, Contract C09-427) that it would present details about:

- i. the impact of the workshop using participant feedback;
- ii. the extent to which the training objectives were achieved;
- iii. what impeded and/or assisted in the achievement of the objectives; and
- iv. the recommendations for future consideration.

The timeframe and the deliverables agreed to (see Item 3.1, Contract C09-427) are as follows:

- v. Workshop materials (prepared by COL) to be delivered to OUT: 30 April 2009
- vi. Programme of the Research Workshop (prepared by the Consultant) to be notified: 15 May 2009
- vii. Five (5) days' training, 6 working hours a day to be conducted by the Consultant at OUT, Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania: 30 June to 4 July, 2009

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<sup>1</sup> Though *Distance Education* is the term used in Contract C09-427 (under which the Workshop was conducted), the more commonly used expression *Open Distance Learning (ODL)* has been used throughout this Report, except in its title on the first page.

viii. Evaluation Report to be prepared and submitted by the Consultant: 15 August 2009.

The stipulated overall outcome of the workshop (see Item 1.2, Contract C09-427) was that each participant be enabled to develop a good research proposal.

## 2. PRE-WORKSHOP TASKS/ACTIVITIES

In line with the agreement, the following tasks were completed as per the schedule outlined in the contract:

1. Materials on Research Methodology for ODL prepared by the Commonwealth of Learning (i.e. PREST materials) were sent to OUT and also to the listed participants (see Appendix-2) much before the deadline—April 30, 2009.
2. A detailed programme in the form of a Workshop Schedule (see Appendix-1) was prepared and transmitted to COL and copied to Ms. Margreth Jubilate Mushi, the Workshop Coordinator at OUT, Dar-es-Salaam, on April 29, 2005, as per the schedule.
3. Workshop materials comprising a handout detailing *some important concepts used in quantitative analysis* and fourteen PowerPoint presentations, covering the major themes, namely

- Preparation of a research proposal
- Nature of research and research in ODL
- Importance of eclecticism in the research in ODL
- Research design and research instruments
- Experimental designs
- Quantitative analysis
- Qualitative analysis
- Research in on-line ODL
- Research project management
- Preparation of a research report and
- Publishing research works

were prepared and transmitted to the Workshop Coordinator at OUT, Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania, weeks before the Workshop began.

In addition to the above materials, one paper entitled *Socio-educational Coordinates of Open Distance Learning (written by the Consultant)* was also passed on to the Coordinator to be duplicated for the participants to improve upon their awareness regarding the evolutionary inevitability of the emergence of ODL and the corresponding significance of the systemic research in ODL to ensure its socio-academic credibility and utility.

4. Both the Workshop Schedule and the Workshop Materials were duplicated by the Workshop Coordinator and kept ready for distribution among the participants on their registration for the workshop on June 30, 2009.
5. The evaluation instrument, comprising two questionnaires, too was prepared in advance and the first of them (meant to assess/outline the entry behaviour of the participants) was handed over by the Consultant to the Workshop Coordinator for duplication before the Workshop activities began on June 30, 2009, and the second one on July 4, 2009, just before the Workshop was closed.

### 3. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WORKSHOP: DETAILS

1. Registration for the workshop began in the morning of June 30, 2009, when, along with other things, the Workshop Materials also were handed over to the participants. The Opening Ceremony attended by the participants, the representatives of the local Press, Prof. Asha Kanwar (the Vice President, COL), Prof. Tolly Mbwette (the Vice Chancellor, OUT), and the Consultant followed immediately after. The workshop was declared open by the Vice Chancellor, who also graced the session with a very informative and extensive key-note address on the theme of *Research in ODL* and its relevance for OUT.
2. Instead of the proposed number (31) of participants, the workshop was attended by 20 participants only. Such relatively poor participation (in relation to the number indicated prior to the actual conduct of the Workshop) may not be justified for more than one reason:
  - i) OUT has not engaged in systemic research in any significant measure so far, though it has been in operation for quite sometime now.
  - ii) The newly recruited staff coming from diverse backgrounds and orientations need orientation in systemic research in order to function effectively in an ODL institution. Accordingly, it is not only necessary, but also crucial that as many of them as possible should get appropriate research orientation.
  - iii) Such workshops are not easy to organize in countries that have to depend on support from outside. It is, therefore, a case of ‘an opportunity lost’.
3. By and large, the Workshop Schedule proposed by the Consultant was adhered to. A few alterations (see also items 5 and 6 below), however, were made i) to accommodate changes in lunch and tea timings and ii) to meet the need for personal/individual attention required by the participants. With the exception of two topics/sessions—P-14: Quantitative Analysis: Some Important Concepts and P-18: SPSS Applications (see Appendix-1), all the scheduled topics (see Unit 2, item 3 above) and all the sessions (see Appendix-1) were covered satisfactorily.
4. All the hands-on sessions and personal/individual meetings were managed by the Consultant himself. Of the 19 substantive sessions, one (1) was taken by Prof. Asha Kanwar, Vice President, COL, while all the remaining 18 were taken by the Consultant. Normally, the Consultant made four presentations every day and the afternoon sessions were devoted to group work. Each session comprised a presentation of about 60 minutes, followed by some space for any questions that would be raised for clarifications. The purpose of presentations was three-fold: a) to acquaint the participants with research methodology with special reference to ODL processes and products, b) to prepare them for *group work* (see item 5 below for details) on a day to day basis, and c) to lead them towards preparing relevant and implementable research proposals.
5. Group work came to be so only partially, as some of the participants could not work in groups—they had to work as individuals. This situation was born of the concern for the effort that had already been made by most of the participants. This needs some explanation here:

The Vice Chancellor, OUT, had initiated informal discussions with Prof. Asha Kanwar of COL and the potential participants of the Workshop much before it actually began on June 30, 2009. The purpose of these discussions was to prompt the participants to give deliberate thought to what research activities they would like to engage themselves in. As a result, most participants had prepared research proposals (see Appendix-3), which the Vice Chancellor had commented on at various levels. Without reflecting on the quality of these proposals, the Consultant thought it reasonable to build on the effort that had already been invested. Accordingly, rather than initiating work on new proposals, he invited the participants to bring forth the work they had already done individually and revisit it to make it technically acceptable. Those of the participants who had worked on the same or similar areas could work in groups (for example, those who had chosen ICT Applications or Student Support Services to work on), while others (i.e. those whose chosen themes could not be grouped together) had to work as individuals (see Appendix-2 for details).

The operational constraints imposed by this situation changed the character of group work as envisaged to begin with. As a result, the plenary sessions (as proposed in the Workshop Schedule) were replaced by one-to-one meetings between the Consultant and groups as well as individual participants. Each of the proposals was modified, improved upon and reshaped progressively over the days of the Workshop in accordance with the inputs made by the Consultant day by day together with the inputs he made during the said respective meetings, which were introduced on the second day of the Workshop and continued till the fifth day, i.e. the culmination of the Workshop. Those of the participants who had not developed any proposals, or had just begun to put their thoughts together, of course, built new proposals to work on.

6. *Group work sessions* (in this particular case it is better to designate them as *hands-on sessions*) were designed to achieve three objectives: a) that *each group/individual is prepared to develop a technically sound and institutionally relevant research proposal*, b) that *each group/individual is enabled to prepare a research instrument corresponding to its/his/her proposal* and c) that *each group/individual prepares details of a research/experimental design as required*. The groups/individuals were advised to discuss/think over the inputs made by the Consultant in his presentations in order to understand and internalize the new concepts etc. and get over the possible doubts with the help of group members and/or the Consultant and thus achieve the objectives set for each days' work sessions.

As none of the proposals required any detailed/complex statistical analysis, nor any kind of experimental research design (except in one case), two of the related themes/topics (i.e. Quantitative Analysis-2: Some Important Concepts and SPSS Applications) were not taken up for any detailed discussion. The topic of Experimental Design, however, was presented like the rest of the topics with the intention that it could serve as a ready reference to commence with as and when any of the participants would come up with and/or feel like working on a research idea/exercise requiring an experimental design.

7. In his meetings with the groups and individual participants, working progressively over the second through to the fifth day of the Workshop, the Consultant focused first on the preparation, content and format of research proposals, and then on the corresponding

- i. Whether the purpose of the proposed research, and with that the research problem, has been stated clearly.
- ii. Whether the proposed research problem/question has been validated with the help of a peer review, relevant literature review, or on the basis of personal field experience.
- iii. Whether the presented literature review displays participant's understanding of the research problem vis-à-vis what has already been done or is being done to address it. Such a review should build sound justification for the research one is proposing.
- iv. Whether the type of research (exploratory, causative, etc.) has been identified clearly.
- v. Having stated the type of research being proposed, whether the approach and with that the corresponding research design has been detailed clearly.
- vi. Whether these details include elaborate statements regarding the kind of data that need to be collected, the research instruments needed to collect that data, the population and the related sample that would be used to collect the data from, the way the data would be analyzed, what (if any) hypothesis may be used, and the level of statistics (descriptive or inferential) needed to come to conclusions.
- vii. Whether focused attention (as per the specific and detailed advice provided in the Workshop) has been given to the content and format of the research instrument.
- viii. Whether the proposal includes a detailed research work-plan including statements with necessary elaborations regarding the sources of research funding, a tentative budget, human resource requirements, research activities together with a work-schedule, beneficiaries of the research exercise/outcomes, ways of disseminating the findings, limitations and delimitations of the research being proposed, and the ownership/copyright and other ethical issues pertaining to the proposed research.
- ix. Whether, in view of the ownership and the beneficiaries of the proposed research, the format of the final report has been outlined.
- x. Whether the stipulation of such a format includes decisions regarding what may be presented in the form of appendices, foot notes and section/chapter-end notes and what standard format may be used to enter the in-text and list the report-end references.

*[Note: It should be mentioned here that the participants were advised a) to remain in touch within the groups and individually to communicate among themselves regularly in order to polish their proposals and research instruments with additional inputs and refinement which additional time and effort should easily lead to, and b) to send the refined proposals to the Vice Chancellor, OUT, (to the authorities concerned, in the case of participants from Egerton University, Kenya) for consideration and further action.].*

8. The closing function was held in the afternoon on July 4, 2009. Because of other compelling preoccupations, the Vice Chancellor could not attend the function himself,

and the valedictory address was given by Prof. Lughano J. M. Kusiluka (DVC, RM) on behalf of the Vice Chancellor. Among various pleasantries exchanged during the session, participants from different groups and some individuals came up to express their views in relation to the week's experience. All of them expressed their complete satisfaction with the week's proceedings and the general feeling was that the Workshop had provided a basis sound enough for all the participants to try their hands on systemic research and thus make positive developmental contributions to their ODL processes, products and the overall outcomes of the system.

#### **4. EVALUATION OF THE WORKSHOP**

As per the Contract (see Item 5.1 of the Contract and Unit-1 above), evaluation of the Workshop comprises four tasks. To accomplish these tasks by way of assessing the impact of the Workshop and the extent to which its objectives were achieved, two questionnaires<sup>2</sup> were used—the first was served soon after the Workshop was inaugurated and the second after all the Workshop activities were completed. The feedback thus collected has been analyzed and presented in the following four sub-units.

##### **4.1 Feedback received through Section-1 of Questionnaire-1**

The first questionnaire (see Appendix-4) has two sections, each comprising 15 questions. The first section (15 questions) focused on the work that participants had already done in their preparation for the Workshop, and the second section (another set of 15 questions) on the theoretical elements covering the content of the workshop. Nineteen (19) participants, who were present on the first day of the Workshop, responded. Responses to the 15 questions in the second section are discussed in Sub-unit 4.3, while those to the 15 questions in the first section are abstracted and presented together with the Consultant's question-wise observations and/or comments below in this very Sub-unit. For ready reference, the questions in the first section of the questionnaire have been reproduced below and the related observations and comments attached to them underneath.

##### Questionnaire-1, Section-I

1. What is the **title** of your research proposal?

Observations/comments: The 19 responses received are shown in Appendix-3. It is clear that most of the participants had put in genuine efforts to put their thoughts together, though many of the topics lack clarity. A preliminary analysis of the topics shows that only one points to an *experimental* design, while the remaining 18 fall in the category of *descriptive* research, of which 4 indicate *evaluative* and 2 *needs* research. All of them pertain to worn out themes in the field of ODL, but they are highly significant for OUT and east-African institutions, as their value lies in their context specificity—these themes have not been explored in Tanzania or Kenya.

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<sup>2</sup> Based on the presentations prepared for and presented during the Workshop, a set of 25 short-answer questions was prepared. Of these 25 questions, a random selection of 15 questions (covering almost all the themes/topics of the Workshop) was made to build the pre-test (i.e. Questionnaire-1). Five questions selected randomly from the remaining 10 questions of the original set together with five questions from Questionnaire-1 (found to be difficult for the participants to answer during the pre-test) made the post-test (i.e. Questionnaire-2).

2. What is/are your **research problem/problems**?

*Observations/comments:* Two participants did not respond, one returned a vague response, three reproduced the titles of their proposals, while 11 responses were relevant to the corresponding titles of their respective proposals. That only 58% of the participants could relate their responses with those of theirs to the first question is *poor showing* at the level of higher education operations. Clearly, some of the participants are new to the domain of research.

3. Why are you proposing this research activity? State the **purpose** of the proposed research.

*Observations/comments:* One participant reproduced the title of his/her proposal, one stated the proposed *research problem* (which should have been listed as a response to Question 2), two responses were somewhat vague, while 15 responses were relevant to the corresponding research proposals.

It may be noted that the first three questions (discussed so far) are interrelated. Only a clear understanding of the difference between a research problem and the corresponding purpose of research and that of the function and the content of the title of the related research proposal would have elicited in-unison responses across the three questions. Such understanding is absent in quite a few cases.

4. Have you engaged in any kind of **literature review** in this regard? List one title.

*Observations/comments:* Three participants did not respond, three said that they had not engaged in any kind of literature review, five said that they had not 'yet' (implying that they would do so subsequently), while eight had done some review work (one of them did not list any *titles* though).

5. What **type** of research are you proposing to address/solve the problem(s)?

*Observations/comments:* Two participants did not respond, two said that they would take up quantitative research, two qualitative research and one both quantitative and qualitative research, four would go in for surveys and two for case studies, while six did not seem to be clear about what they were entering as responses (for example, one wrote 'learner supporting services in the centres', another wrote 'practitioner research', yet another wrote 'link practical sessions with students' performance', etc.). Overall, it is clear that the participants are not aware of *research typology* within the domain of Social Sciences.

6. List the main components of your proposed **work plan**.

*Observations/comments:* Three participants did not respond. *Data Collection* appeared in 10 responses, *Data Analysis* in 11 responses, *Reporting* and *Literature Review* each in seven responses, *Research Proposal* in six responses, *Development of the Research Instruments* in three responses, *Presentation of Findings & Recommendations* in three, *Evaluation* in two, *Budget and Timeframe* in three, *Activities* in three, *Guiding Questions* in one and *Sampling & Pilot Study* in one. It is clear that all the participants did not have the same (nor even nearly the same) understanding of a research work plan. Some of the oddities are that *Guiding Questions* and *Research Proposal* are seen as components of the work plan. Further, the purport of expressions like *Evaluation* and *Pilot Study* used in two responses does not emerge clearly in the respective responses.

7. Does this plan (i.e. a participant's *research work plan*) include a **timeframe** and a **budget**?

*Observations/comments:* Two participants did not respond. Thirteen recorded a 'yes', two a 'no', while two indicated that they would do so subsequently.

8. State the **limitations** of your proposed research activity and its possible outcome.

Observations/comments: One participant did not respond. *Lack of the required funds* was seen as a limitation by six participants, *lack of the required time* (on account of work related time constraints) by four participants, *poor access to research subjects* (because of their remote locations, selective choice of regional centres, etc.) to collect data from by nine participants, *poor access to and poor quality of secondary data* by two, and *difficulty in quantifying the data, difficulty in utilizing the research outcomes, and low levels of subjects' competence in ICT applications* by one each. The purport of one response (*i.e. 'flexibility of the people who will be interviewed'*) could not be interpreted. Whereas limited availability of funding will certainly be a limitation, *access to subjects* for whatever reasons should not be so (as the related research design should provide for it amply). Similarly, *quantification of the data, utilization of the research outcomes, etc.* should not be seen as limitations; instead they are issues to be addressed by adopting multiple strategies. Clearly, participants' awareness regarding research techniques is wanting and must be improved. Further, some participants interpreted this question wrongly—instead of writing about the *limitations of the possible outcomes*, they wrote what the possible outcomes may be.

9. How are you going to **disseminate** the outcomes of your proposed research?

Observations/comments: Two participants did not respond. Most participants favoured multiple-channels for disseminating their research outcomes. *Workshops* found favour with three participants, seminars with five, *conferences* with four, *publication of papers in journals of various types* with eleven, *Internet* with two, and *preparation of reports to be presented to the Government and/or the OUT Management, the Faculty and the Research Subjects* with six. One participant thought of the use of *posters* and another of *training sessions* as the main. No participant, however, tried to show any links between the purpose of the proposed research and the way/means of disseminating the related research outcomes.

10. Who are the **beneficiaries** of your research outcomes?

Observations/comments: All the participants responded. In general, each participant has listed beneficiaries in line with the research proposals he/she has made. They include OUT as a whole (management, staff (academic, administrative and technical) and the students of OUT), the Government and public of Tanzania, higher education institutions and schools of Tanzania, potential students of OUT, materials producers, e-learners, disabled learners, women learners, primary and secondary school teachers, employers and stakeholders in the ODL enterprise.

11. What **type of research instrument** are you planning to develop to collect the data you need?

Observations/comments: Two participants did not respond. Some of the participants indicated that they would prepare multiple instruments to collect the required data. Fourteen would prepare questionnaires, seven would develop interview schedules/guidelines/questions, one would prepare a check-list, two would develop observation schedules, four would use literature/documents and secondary data review, and two would go for in-depth group discussions. Though *questionnaire* was the most common instrument thought of, the listing of additional instruments displays a reasonably sound choice of tools in view of the research themes proposed by the participants. Here the question to be addressed is whether or not all the participants are fully aware of the concerns pertaining to the preparation of effective and efficient questionnaires.

12. Who/what are the **subjects** of your research—the **population** and the **sample**?

Observations/comments: Three participants did not respond. The remaining 16 listed *populations* relevant to the themes of their proposed research activity, but 12 of them could not differentiate *the population* from *the sample*. Just four participants displayed their understanding of this distinction.

13. What types of **statistical analysis** will you require and can you manage that analysis yourself?

*Observations/comments:* Five participants did not respond. One participant wrote that he did not require any statistical analysis, though his research topic suggests a need for it. Four participants wrote that they would need SPSS—obviously the distinction between *the types of statistical analysis* and *a tool* for it is not seen clearly. The remaining nine participants wrote *the types of statistical analysis* (more or less relevant to their research topics) they would need/use, but only three stated that they could manage such analysis themselves, while two thought that they could do so somewhat/a little.

14. Have you already undergone any **training** in research methodology for ODL?

*Observations/comments:* All the nineteen participants responded. Seventeen have had no training in research methodology so far, while two have had some training in the basics only.

15. Is this your **first attempt** to engage in research in the field of ODL?

*Observations/comments:* All the participants responded. Fifteen of them wrote that the occasion related to the Workshop was their first ever opportunity to engage in research in the field of ODL. Three participants had done such research earlier as well, while interestingly one participant wrote that he/she *was not sure what to write/say*.

Questionnaire-1, Section-II (See Sub-unit 4.3 for feedback received through Section-II of Questionnaire-1)

#### **4.2 Feedback received through Sections- I, II, III and V of Questionnaire-2**

The second questionnaire (see Appendix-5) comprises five sections detailed below:

- I. The first section comprising two questions (1 and 2) was about the logistics of the Workshop.
- II. The second section comprising twelve questions (3 to 14) was about the Workshop objectives, content and structure of presentations, group work and usefulness (or otherwise) of the topics dealt with.
- III. The third section comprising just one question (15) was to evaluate each of the presentations made by the Consultant and also the group work as it actually materialized during the Workshop.
- IV. The fourth section comprising ten questions (16 to 25) was to assess the participants' level of awareness regarding the basics of systemic research in ODL.
- V. The fifth section allowed an open space for the participants to write any additional comments they might wish to.

Twenty participants responded to Questionnaire-2. For purposes of ready reference, questions 1-15 (from Sections I to III and Section V) have been reproduced below and the related observations and comments attached to them underneath.

#### Questionnaire-2, Section-I

1. Did OUT send you the intimation about this workshop in good time for you to prepare yourself for full participation? If 'yes', did you actually participate in the workshop fully, without missing any of the sessions?

*Observations/comments:* All the participants received all the information pertaining to the Workshop in good time for them to ready themselves for participation. By their own admission, however, of the twenty participants who attended the Workshop, two missed two full days each, one missed one and a half day, one missed one full day, one missed two sessions, and five missed one session each. Thus, only ten participants attended the Workshop fully. Given the short duration (5 days) of the Workshop and the density of the content presented and focused purpose of group work, the loss outlined above is considerable. An employee identified and listed for attending a costly workshop should have no engagements whatsoever, nor be assigned any officially, for the entire duration of the workshop.

- To what extent are you satisfied with the ..... *organizational aspects* (see Appendix-5 for the detailed question) of the Workshop? Please rate your level of satisfaction on the four (4) point scale given blow. [Three (3) indicates *fully satisfied* ....and zero (0) indicates *not satisfied at all*.]

*Observations/comments:* All the twenty participants responded. The table below shows the overall average rating of 2.7 points (out of the best possible 3 points). Clearly, overall the participants were satisfied with the organisational aspects of the workshop. It should be noted, however, that 75% of them did not express their *full satisfaction* with *the training facilities* at the training venue. As training (whatever type and for whatever purpose) has to be an integral component of ODL operations, OUT authorities should pay attention to this aspect of their preparedness for the purpose.

*Table-1 Organizational Aspects of the Workshop: Ratings by Participants*

A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	AR
B	2.8	2.7	2.8	2.5	2.8	2.8	2.4	2.8	2.3	3.0	2.5	3.0	3.0	2.7	3.0	2.5	2.0	2.8	1.7	3.0	2.7

[Row A lists the code numbers from 1 to 20 representing the participants.

Row B presents the ratings entered by the participants.

Column AR presents the average rating (i.e. the mean of the 20 entries.)

## Questionnaire-2, Section-II

- Please rate your abilities/achievements corresponding to each of the .... Workshop objectives (see Appendix-5 for the full question). [Three (3) stands for *fully able to....* and zero (0) for *not at all able to*.]

*Observations/comments:* The four objectives focused on pertain to abilities gained in relation to the promotion of institutional research activities and their quality and to the organisation of similar workshops and networks for mutual support. All the participants responded and their overall rating (see the table below) comes to 2.6 points against the best possible score of 3 points. Their confidence and feelings pertaining to their abilities with respect to the four objectives in question are of a reasonably satisfactory level. They should be given opportunities to test their confidence and prove their abilities in order to build institutional capacities.

*Table-2 Abilities Gained (vis-à-vis Workshop-objectives): Participants' Self-assessment*

A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	AR
B	3.0	3.0	2.5	2.5	3.0	3.0	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	3.0	2.8	2.0	2.5	2.3	2.0	3.0	2.6

[Row A lists the code numbers from 1 to 20 representing the participants.

Row B presents the ratings entered by the participants.

Column AR presents the average rating (i.e. the mean of the 20 entries.)

- Have you been able to outline a complete and context specific research proposal at the workshop? If 'yes', can you develop this outline into a complete formal research proposal in a week or so?

*Observations/comments:* Nineteen of the twenty participants answered the first of the above two questions, and all the responses are positive. Of these only one stated that he/she would not be able to

complete a formal research proposal in a week or so for want of time, as his/her official engagements would not let him/her work on the proposal immediately. The participant who did not answer the first question did answer the second one, but negatively. Obviously, this participant has some difficulty, which has remained unresolved in spite of his/her meetings with the Consultant. Some additional help is necessary in this case. Overall, the overwhelmingly encouraging response to this question confirms that the main objective of the Workshop was achieved fully and to the satisfaction of all the concerned.

5. Do the objectives of the workshop fit into the objectives of your routine work?

*Observations/comments:* Only 18 participants responded. Of them just one thought that the objectives of the Workshop did not fit into those of his/her routine work, as he/she is not an academic. Obviously, this particular participant has missed/ignored some portions of the presentations made at the Workshop. It was made clear that in ODL systems, systemic research is not an exclusive preserve of academics. As everyone involved (technicians, administrators, academics, and support staff all alike) is treading new/unknown paths, research is a genuine activity for all of them. This point needs to be emphasised again and again, and also affirmed by legislation to develop a new mind-set.

6. What do you think about the structure (organization and the sequence of the various sub-themes) of the workshop in relation to its objectives?
7. What do you think about the content (its relevance and adequacy) presented in relation to the objectives of the workshop?
8. What do you think about the group work in relation to the content and the objectives of the workshop?
9. To what extent have you benefited from the interaction you had with the fellow participants during the workshop?
10. How useful will this workshop be to you in your role as a resource person (trainer)?

*Observations/comments:* The above five questions (see Appendix-5) on the content, its organisation, etc. ask for six responses, as the 7<sup>th</sup> question asks for two responses (about *relevance* and *adequacy* separately). All the twenty participants answered all the questions, except that five did not answer the *adequacy* related part of the 7<sup>th</sup> question. Ratings in relation to each question including the two parts of the 7<sup>th</sup> question as entered by the participants are shown in the following table.

*Table-3 Content, its Organization, etc. of the Workshop: Ratings by Participants*

A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	AR2
Q6	3	3	2	2	2	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	2	3	3	2	2	2	3	2.35
Q7a	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	3	3	3	2	3	3	2	3	2	3	3	3	3	2.80
Q7b	3	3	2	3	-	-	-	2	3	3	3	2	3	2	3	2	3	-	-	3	2.67
Q8	3	3	3	2	3	2	1	2	2	3	3	1	2	2	2	3	2	2	3	2	2.30
Q9	3	3	3	2	3	3	2	3	2	3	2	3	3	3	2	3	2	3	3	3	2.70
Q10	3	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2.90
AR1	3.0	2.8	2.7	2.5	2.8	2.8	2.0	2.5	2.3	2.8	2.5	2.3	2.8	2.3	2.7	2.7	2.5	2.6	2.8	2.8	2.62

[Row A lists the code numbers from 1 to 20 representing the participants.

Rows Q6, Q7a, Q7b, Q8, Q9 and Q10 present the ratings entered for the respective questions by the participants.

Row AR1 presents the averages of the ratings entered by each participant for the questions listed above.

Column AR2 presents the average rating in relation to each of the questions.

The cell where Row AR1 and Column AR2 intersect presents the overall average rating.]

The overall average rating of 2.62 points (within the range of 2 and 3 points, the lowest and the highest respectively, entered by one participant each, participant-wise and the range of 2.30 and 2.90 points, the lowest and the highest respectively, calculated as average ratings question-wise) against the best possible rating of 3 points indicates that the Workshop was highly rated in terms of its content, organisation of its sub-themes, group work, interaction and its outcome and the help it provided in capacity building in general.

11. Has the workshop given you **any ideas** for bringing about improvements in your working situation on your return to your workplace?
12. If 'yes', please outline them (the ideas) briefly.

Observations/comments: The above questions (i.e. 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>) are linked. All the participants responded and all felt that the Workshop prompted *new ideas* for planning improvements in their work-situations. Some of the noteworthy ones are reproduced below:

- That much is not known about the basics of ODL, let alone research in ODL.
- That after all ODL has emerged because of our needs and has come to stay. It must be given its due recognition.
- How to redefine our attitude regarding ODL.
- How to look at institutional problems objectively and find ways for solving them rather than keep complaining.
- How the usual classroom teaching can be improved significantly by introducing powerful ways of presentation.
- Those working at ODL institutions should consider systemic research as an obligatory part of their work/responsibilities.
- ODL operations are vast and complex. Those working for it need to be knowledgeable about them to operate the system effectively.
- That ODL students are a very different type of learners; they need to be managed and addressed differently.
- That collaboration among institutions and individuals is one of the ways for improving the service provision in ODL.
- That systemic research in ODL is really a very interesting area of research. Engaging in such research will benefit the researcher, the system and also the process of education in general.
- How to organise financial and time resources efficiently.
- How to help students develop good research proposals for their doctoral studies and how to help them better in working through the actual research activities/process.

One gets a sense of '*emerging awareness*' from the above expressions that point to a *different* kind of impact the Workshop has created. *Different* in the sense that they are not entirely pinned to systemic research in ODL, instead they go beyond it to the broader concerns of ODL.

13. Which parts of the workshop did you find the most useful?

Observations/comments: All the participants responded. Six participants found all the parts of the Workshop equally quite useful. Four participants found *group-work* and one participant thought *group/individual meetings with the Consultant and the personal attention so received* to be the most useful part of the Workshop. The theme of *Research Design* was rated highest by nine participants; *Research in ODL* and *Publishing Research Works* by four each; *Preparing a Research Proposal*, *Quantitative Analysis-1*, *Qualitative Analysis* and *Research Project Management* by three each; *Nature of Research*, *Eclecticism in ODL Research*, *Experimental design* and *Reporting on Research* by one each. It is noteworthy that almost all the sub-themes and presentations were found *most useful* by one or the other participant. The implication is that the content and the implementation of the Workshop were completely relevant and adequate.

14. Which parts of the workshop did you find the least useful?

Observations/comments: Only fifteen of the participants responded. Of them, eleven recorded that no parts of the Workshop were *least useful*. Presumably, the five who did not respond also had the same view. Of the remaining four participants, three thought *Experimental Design* and one thought *Research in on-line ODL* to be the least useful of the presentations made at the Workshop. This is understandable, as

hardly any of the research proposals looked for an experimental design. And on similar lines, *Research in on-line ODL* should remain a far cry where preliminary systemic research in ODL is still in the offing.

### Questionnaire-2, Section-III

15. Keeping in view the utility of and the benefits you derived from the following sessions (topics), please rate them on a four (4) point scale—[‘3’ stands for *Excellent*, ‘2’ for *Good*, ‘1’ for *Satisfactory* and ‘0’ for *Poor*.]

*Observations/comments:* All the participants responded. The following table shows how each one of them rated the Workshop sessions together with the group/individual work and the meetings with the Consultant (see Appendix-5 for the details of the sessions etc.). The overall rating comes to 2.53 points against the best possible score of 3 points. This indicates that overall the work done during the Workshop and the presentations made have benefitted the participants to their full satisfaction.

*Table-4 Utility and Benefits of the Workshop: Ratings by Participants*

A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	AR
B	3.0	2.7	2.4	2.7	2.6	2.9	2.5	2.3	2.6	2.4	2.4	2.1	2.7	2.4	2.8	2.0	2.3	2.8	2.1	2.9	2.53

[Row A lists the code numbers from 1 to 20 representing the participants.

Row B presents the ratings entered by the participants.

Column AR presents the average rating (i.e. the mean of the 20 entries.)

Questionnaire-2, Section-IV (See Sub-unit 4.3 for feedback received through Section-IV of Questionnaire-2)

### Questionnaire-2, Section-V

Open space: Please write whatever additional **comments** and **suggestions** (pertaining to the Workshop) you would like to make.

*Observations/comments:* Apart from the general comment/remark that the Workshop was timely, relevant, highly instructive and very useful, the participants made some other comments/suggestions, which should be taken note of in furthering the developmental activities not only at OUT, but at all the ODL institutions in east-Africa. Some of the meaningful ones are reproduced below for consideration.

- i. Participants should have been awarded certificates of attendance. This is a general practice at international workshops and is desirable for more than one reason.
- ii. The Workshop made it clear that many of the participants (having come from different walks of life) need orientation regarding the very basics of ODL as a system before they can do justice to research in the field. Induction/orientation workshops need to be arranged for all the new employees regularly.
- iii. The Workshop should have been spread over a longer duration in order to accommodate more discussions and more practical work.
- iv. ODL institutions should have a definite provision for staff development activities. Such developmental inputs should not be limited in favour of academics only, instead they should cover all the concerned—the administrative, the technical and the support staff including those working at regional centres.
- v. Such workshops should be arranged regularly on routine basis for different clientele groups (such as research supervisors, course coordinators, course writers, course tutors and counsellors, etc.) on clientele specific themes (such as development of self-instructional materials, student support services, evaluation of student performance, etc.).
- vi. Such a workshop should provide information regarding the sources of funding for research in ODL and also the possible ways of conducting research collaboratively.
- vii. The training venue should have reliable provision for using projectors, etc.

### 4.3 Feedback through Section-II (Questionnaire-1) and Section-IV (Questionnaire-2)

Sections II and IV of Questionnaires 1 and 2 respectively were designed to assess the participants' awareness regarding the basics of research operations as they obtain in social sciences and so in ODL.

*Table-5 Aggregate Scores of Responses to Questions in Section-II (Questionnaire-1) and those in Section IV (Questionnaire-2): Participants' Performance*

X	A1	B1	A2	B2	A3	B3	Explanatory Notes
01	21.0	19.0	06.0	10.5	15.0	8.5	1. Column X lists code numbers from 1 to 20 representing the participants.
02	24.5	25.5	05.5	12.5	19.0	13.0	2. In Column A1 are the aggregated scores of the individual participants in the pre-test, which comprised 15 questions worth 40 points.
03	04.5	14.0	01.0	8.5	03.5	5.5	3. In Column A2 are the aggregated scores pertaining to those five questions (worth 13 points) in the pre-test that proved to be difficult for most of the participants. And, therefore, were repeated in the post-test.
04	16.5	21.5	05.0	10.0	11.5	11.5	4. In Column A3 are the aggregated scores pertaining to the remaining 10 questions (worth the remaining 27 points) in the pre-test.
05	07.5	9.5	02.5	5.5	05.0	4.0	5. In Column B1 are the aggregated scores of the individual participants in the post-test, which comprised 10 questions (worth 26 points) including the five (worth 13 points) repeated from the pre-test.
06	11.0	23.0	02.0	11.0	09.0	12.0	6. In Column B2 are the aggregated scores pertaining to those very five questions (worth 13 points) that were repeated in the post-test.
07	05.0	16.0	00.0	8.0	05.0	8.0	7. In Column B3 are the aggregated scores pertaining to the remaining 5 questions (also worth 13 points) in the post-test, which comprised 10 questions, as said above.
08	--	17.5	--	9.5	--	8.0	8. Some of the questions in both the tests were worth 3 points and some worth 2. The participants did not know about the relative worth of any questions, as the questionnaires served to them did not have any indications to this effect. However, the copies of the questionnaires presented in Appendices 4 and 5 indicate these values along with the questions concerned.
09	08.0	12.0	01.0	5.5	07.0	6.5	9. Row T presents totals.
10	06.0	11.5	00.0	7.5	06.0	4.0	10. Row M presents means/averages.
11	--	13.5	--	5.5	--	8.0	11. Row WA1 presents the weighted averages of the scores of all the participants who sat the tests (19 for the pre-test and 20 for the post-test).
12	26.5	17.0	07.0	12.0	19.5	5.0	12. Row WA2 presents the weighted averages of the scores of only those 17 participants who sat both the tests.
13	19.0	12.5	04.0	7.5	15.0	5.0	13. Ratio Row presents the ratios of three pairs of weighted averages (WA2s)—those under A1 and B1, A2 and B2 and the last pair A3 and B3.
14	17.0	16.5	03.5	10.5	13.5	6.0	
15	05.0	10.0	00.0	4.0	05.0	6.0	
16	05.5	15.0	00.0	7.0	05.5	8.0	
17	13.5	14.5	04.0	10.5	09.5	4.0	
18	03.5	11.0	03.5	6.5	00.0	4.5	
19	15.0	18.0	03.5	10.0	11.5	8.0	
20	--	12.0	--	6.5	--	5.5	
21	09.5	--	03.0	--	06.5	--	
22	01.5	--	00.0	--	01.5	--	
T	220.0	309.5	51.5	168.5	168.5	141.0	
M	11.58	15.48	2.71	8.43	8.87	7.05	
WA1	28.95	59.54	20.85	64.85	32.85	54.23	
WA2	30.74	60.29	21.95	66.52	34.97	54.07	
Ratio	1:	2	1:	3	1:	1.6	

As already said, the first questionnaire was served before the Workshop began and the second after it was over. Presented above is a table showing the scores of the participants at the two sittings. To facilitate working through the figures in the table, relevant notes have been provided in the right hand side of the table above. And what follows is a brief discussion to see if the Workshop helped in improving their awareness, even if by a small measure.

### Computation<sup>3</sup>

Means/average (M) scores of a participant:

1. under A1 and B1:---  $220.0 \div 19 = 11.58$  and  $309.5 \div 20 = 15.48$
2. under A2 and B2:---  $51.5 \div 19 = 2.71$  and  $168.5 \div 20 = 8.43$
3. under A3 and B3:---  $168.5 \div 19 = 8.87$  and  $141.0 \div 20 = 7.05$

Weighted averages (WA1s) on percent basis for 19 participants in the pre-test and 20 in the post-test:

1. under A1 and B1:---  $11.58 \times 100/40 = 28.95$  and  $15.48 \times 100/26 = 59.54$
2. under A2 and B2:---  $2.71 \times 100/13 = 20.85$  and  $8.43 \times 100/13 = 64.85$
3. under A3 and B3:---  $8.87 \times 100/27 = 32.85$  and  $7.05 \times 100/13 = 54.23$

Weighted averages (WA2s) on percent bases for 17 participants who attended both the tests were computed the same way in two stages: first the related means/averages were calculated and then the weighted averages on percent bases. The ratios under A1 & B1, A2 & B2 and A3 & B3 are indicative of a much better performance in the post-test.

Further, let us ignore columns A1, B1, A2 and B2 for the noises involved, and focus on the scores presented in columns A3 and B3. In a crude sense, the last pair of columns (i.e. A3 and B3) presents *repeated-measures sans noises*. For a comparative study of the figures in the columns, we multiply each score in column B3 by 2.077 (i.e.  $27/13$ —see the Explanatory Notes in Table-5 above, particularly Notes 4 and 7). Accordingly, with B3 scores modified, the scores in columns A3 and B3 are rearranged in the following table.

*Table-6 Pre- and Post-test Scores (with B3 scores appropriately modified/weighted)*

X	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	9	10	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
A3	15	19	3.5	11.5	5	9	5	7	6	19.5	15	13.5	5	5.5	9.5	0	11.5
B3w	17.7	27	11.4	23.9	8.3	24.9	16.6	13.5	8.3	10.4	10.4	12.5	12.5	16.6	8.3	9.4	16.6
ID	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	□-	□-	□-	+	+	□-	+	+

[Row X lists code numbers from 1 to 19 representing the participants. Nos. 8, 11, 20, 21 and 22 have not been listed, as they did not sit for both the tests. The total number of participants listed is seventeen (17).

Row A3 lists the scores in pre-test (out of the maximum possible 27 points in each case (see Column A3 in Table-5).

Row B3w lists the scores in post-test (out of the maximum possible 27 points in each case (Table-5, Column B3 scores modified).

Row ID lists pluses (+) and minuses (□-) indicating respectively *improvement* and *decline* in participants' performance at the post-test.

The number of times (L) the less frequent sign occurs = 4

The total number of plus and minus signs = 17

The probability (p)<sup>4</sup> of by chance obtaining (L) or fewer of the less frequent sign out of a total (T) signs = 0.05

This probability is equal to the significance level of 0.05. Therefore the difference in the scores is significant at 5% level.

Observations/comments: The ratio of the weighted means under A1 and B1 shows that participants' overall scores in the post-test were two-times better than those in the pre-test. This substantial difference, however, may have been caused partly by the scores for the five questions repeated in the post-test. That such is the case is evidenced by the fact that the weighted average

<sup>3</sup> a) Figures under A1, A2 and A3 pertain to the pre-test, which allowed a maximum score of 40 points in relation to a total of 15 questions. Figures under B1, B2 and B3 pertain to the post-test, which allowed a maximum score of 26 points in relation to a total of 10 questions.

b) Nineteen participants sat for the pre-test, while 20 sat for the post-test. Only 17 sat for both the tests.

c) Five questions (worth 13 points) from the pre-test were repeated in the post-test—call them *repeated questions*.

d) Other than the *repeated questions*, the pre-test had 10 questions worth 27 points and the post-test 5 worth 13.

<sup>4</sup> The value of (p) is obtained from standard statistical tables pertaining to 'sign test' applicable to repeated-measures.

score of a participant in relation to the said five questions in the post-test is three-times that in the pre-test. Awareness in relation to these five questions has certainly increased considerably. As for the unrepeatable questions in the two questionnaires (i.e. the remaining 10 questions of Questionnaire-1 and the remaining 5 of Questionnaire-2), the weighted average score of a participant in the pre-test is poorer than that in the post-test (see under A3 and B3; the ratio 1:1.6 is in favour of the latter). The inference is that the Workshop-inputs (at least in the limited range of the themes/topics introduced and discussed during the Workshop) have improved participants' awareness regarding the basics of research in ODL.

Though a crude application of the *sign-test*, the computation in relation to Table-6 shows that the difference between participants' levels of awareness regarding the basics of systemic research in ODL, as measured before and after the Workshop, was significant at the 5% level. In other words, the Workshop-inputs (independent variable) had an appreciable effect on the awareness of the participants (the dependent variable). It is, of course, true that this inference pertains to the limited themes or inputs presented/made at the Workshop, but the difference made is significant.

#### 4.4 Conclusions

To conclude the outcome of the evaluation exercise outlined above in this Unit, recorded below are the conclusions in explicit terms without any explanations and/or discussions. For the corresponding details and explanations, however, the reader is directed to appropriate observations, comments, figures, calculations, discussions and/or remarks within the text of this report with the help of in-text references, in which Q stands for Question, Qs for Questions and SU for a Sub-unit in Unit 4 of this Report.

1. The impact of the Workshop has certainly been positive and considerable (see the details under Qs 11 and 12, Section-V, and Qs 4 and 5 in SU-4.2).
2. All the four objectives of the Workshop have been achieved successfully and to an appreciable degree (see the details under Qs 3 and 10 in SU-4.2).
3. The level of impact and that of the success in achieving the objectives of the Workshop would have been much higher, but for two impediments: i) less than the ideal level of participation in the Workshop (see the details under Q 1 in SU-4.2) and ii) relatively poor preparedness of the participants for the inputs made at the Workshop (see Qs 1 to 6, 8, and 12 to 15 in SU-4.1).
4. The participants were satisfied with the organization (logistics) of the Workshop to quite a high degree (see the details under Q 2 in SU-4.2).
5. As for the content/subject-matter presented at the Workshop (its structure in terms of the sequence of sub-themes, presentation with inbuilt reinforcements, relevance, adequacy, usefulness and benefits), the participants were immensely satisfied/happy with it (see for the details under Qs 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 in SU-4.2).
6. All the presentations collectively, group work and supporting meetings together with their usefulness were highly rated by the participants (see the details under Qs 13, 14 and 15 in SU-4.2).
7. Participants' level of awareness with regard to the basics of systemic research in ODL improved/increased not only appreciably, but also **significantly** (see the details under

Section-II of Questionnaire-1 and Section-IV of Questionnaire-2, both discussed together for purposes of comparative analysis in SU-4.3).

8. As for the overall purpose of the Workshop (see Item 1.2, Contract C09-427), it has been fulfilled completely (see the details under Q 4, SU-4.2).

To sum up, it is reasonable to conclude that the workshop achieved its goals. More precisely, with a focus on the preparation of relevant and workable research proposals, all the participants were made to see clearly what research in ODL entails, why they should take it on and how they may go about it. Secondly, cross-institutional links for possible collaborative research were built as participants from two different countries and institutions got to work and think together on issues that concern them all collectively. Thirdly, ample inputs were made (the Workshop Materials for example) for potential trainers to be able to take up similar training assignments on their own.

## 5. RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations listed below pertain primarily to the institutions concerned (i.e. the Open University of Tanzania and Egerton University, Kenya). The participation and cooperation of the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) and similar other bodies will be supportive in nature. In particular, the support of COL, which is not a funding agency, may be sought primarily for expert and technical support in connection with each one of the following recommendations.

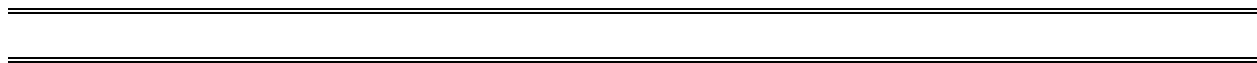
1. Through the responses to questionnaires, discussions on their project proposals with the participants and during informal discussions it became clear that neither of the participating institutions had any specific grants ear-marked for systemic research, nor any institutional time specified for this purpose. Lack of funds and time is, therefore, an issue to be addressed. In this regard it is worth noting that in one of his recent mails to the Vice President, COL, the Vice Chancellor of OUT indicated that some small grants are available at OUT for the staff to take up small research projects. This indeed is commendable, but the issue needs to be tackled in a more substantial way. The ODL system in Tanzania/Kenya has to address local educational issues. It must, therefore, grow and develop in unison with the local needs, clientele and circumstances. Only such growth and development will enable the local environment own the system. ***It is recommended that the institutions concerned (Open University of Tanzania and Egerton University of Kenya) should introduce legislations to regularize funding for systemic research as a routine head within their annual budgets.*** *Ad hocism* in relation to funding for systemic research is not a solution. Once research funding is secured through legislation institutionally, bodies like COL can come in with expertise and technical support to help in making the best possible use of the funds available.
2. Apart from making direct inputs for the growth and development of systemic research, it is not only necessary but also crucial that the necessary human resource is developed for this purpose. Leaving out six participants (the five who have more than five years' experience in ODL systems and the one who did not reveal his/her age), the average experience of the remaining participants (see Appendix-3) within the system is *less than two and a half years*—not enough for them to embark on systemic research, particularly

so, as they have not undergone any ODL induction/orientation programmes so far. It should be noted in no uncertain terms that unless and until the staff supposed to take up research in ODL are clear about its ontological moorings and the related epistemological parameters, their research exercises are bound to lack direction as well as purpose. ***It is recommended that all the new recruits (academic, technical, administrative and support staff) should be oriented/inducted appropriately to take up their new assignments. Again COL may provide the required expert and technical support for such orientation/induction workshops. In fact it is desirable for OUT to arrange such a programme for many of the participants who attended this Workshop.***

3. Since a systemic research culture does not exist in the participating countries/institutions, they will need to go through a learning process, which is done best collaboratively. ***It is recommended that mutually purposeful collaborative research projects be built and funding sought from donor agencies, as many of them give priority to collaborative work that has regional and/or cross-institutional relevance.*** An added advantage of this approach is that the collaborating countries/institutions will see the need for and the advantage in learning from each other and working for each other, which does not seem to be happening at present in the east-African region.
4. For a research culture to strike roots and for the research to be purposeful, there needs to be a critical body of researchers at each of the participating institutions. ***In order to create effective research potential, it is recommended that departmental collaboration within institutions and institutional collaboration within the region should be effected by means of researcher exchange programmes, research attachments and mutual support for publishing research outcomes.***
5. Another recommendation to strengthen the culture of systemic research is that ***legislation should be introduced to make participation in and conduct of systemic research an obligatory parameter for promotions related assessment in all the operative components of the institution—academic, administrative and technical staff.***
6. If the institution concerned finds it difficult, for whatever reasons, to implement the above (i.e. the fifth) recommendation, ***it is recommended that within the institution concerned a specific unit may be created to take complete charge of systemic research within the institution.*** Such a unit could seek funds, involve members of other departments, build collaborations within and outside the institution, monitor the quality of the institutional operations to identify research worthy issues/themes and so on.
7. For systemic ODL research to flourish in Tanzania/Kenya and indeed for the ODL system to get utilized to its fullest socio-economic potential, such research should be the sole backbone of the system. So long as the system in Tanzania/Kenya is based on borrowed assumptions and research, it is not going to have a local habitation, nor the required level of socio-academic credibility. ***It is recommended that ODL research should not only be context specific, but also put to genuine use for developing and improving the various aspects of ODL operations—developing curricula, preparation***

*of study materials, providing learner support, use of ICT applications, service to differently able learners, etc.*

This certainly is a long list, but each bit of it is worth attempting, if we are interested in pursuing development and quality in ODL processes and products on scientific and context specific grounds.



Appendix—1

**Open University of Tanzania (OUT)**  
**Workshop on Research Methodology for ODL: 30 June – 4 July, 2009**

**Workshop Schedule**

	<b>Tuesday June 30</b>	<b>Wednesday July 1</b>	<b>Thursday July 2</b>	<b>Friday July 3</b>	<b>Saturday July 4</b>
<b>09.30 am- 10.30 am</b>	<b>Inauguration</b>  Key-note Address: <b>VC, OUT</b>  Chair: <i>Prof. Asha Kanwar</i>	<b>P-4.</b>  Research in ODL [Status Brief]  <i>BN Koul</i>	<b>P-8.</b>  Research Design  <i>BN Koul</i>	<b>P-12.</b>  Research Project Management  <i>BN Koul</i>	<b>P-16.</b>  Reporting on Research  <i>BN Koul</i>
<b>10.30 am- 11.30 am</b>	<b>P-1.</b>  Need for Quality ODL Research  <i>Prof. Asha Kanwar</i>	<b>P-5.</b>  Nature of Research  <i>BN Koul</i>	<b>P-9.</b>  Quantitative Analysis -1  <i>BN Koul</i>	<b>P-13.</b>  Experimental Design  <i>BN Koul</i>	<b>P-17.</b>  Publishing Research Works  <i>BN Koul</i>
<b>11.30 am--11.45 am: TEA BREAK</b>					
<b>11.45 am- 12.45 pm</b>	<b>P-2.</b>  Entry Status (Pre- assessment)  <i>BN Koul</i>	<b>P-6.</b>  Eclecticism in ODL Research  <i>BN Koul</i>	<b>P-10.</b>  Qualitative Analysis  <i>BN Koul</i>	<b>P-14.</b>  Quantitative Analysis: [Some Imp. Concepts]  <i>BN Koul</i>	<b>P-18.</b>  SPSS Applications  (to be decided)
<b>12.45 pm--01.45 pm: LUNCH BREAK</b>					
<b>01.45 pm- 02.45 pm</b>	<b>P-3.</b>  Preparing a Research Proposal [Macro-design]  <i>BN Koul</i>	<b>P-7.</b>  Research Design: Relevant Concepts  <i>BN Koul</i>	<b>P-11.</b>  Research in On-line ODL  <i>BN Koul</i>	<b>P-15.</b>  Quantitative Analysis-2  <i>BN Koul</i>	<b>P-19.</b>  Post-assessment  <i>BN Koul</i>
<b>02.45 pm- 03.45 pm</b>	<b>Group Work-1</b>  [Preparing Research Proposals]	<b>Group Work-2</b>  [Preparing Research Instruments]	<b>Group Work-3</b>  [Preparing Research Designs]	<b>Group Work-4</b>  [Finalizing Research Proposals]	<b>Plenary-5</b>  Final Group Presentations
<b>03.45 pm--04.00 pm: BREAK</b>					
<b>04.00 pm- 05.00 pm</b>	<b>Plenary-1</b>  Group Presentations	<b>Plenary-2</b>  Group Presentations	<b>Plenary-3</b>  Group Presentations	<b>Plenary-4</b>  Group Presentations	<b>Valedictory Session</b>

**Appendix –2**

**Open University of Tanzania (OUT)**  
**Workshop on Research Methodology for ODL: 30 June – 4 July, 2009**

**List of Participation & Participation Profile**

<b>S. No.</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Designation, Institution</b>	<b>Group</b>
01	Emmanuel M. Tonya	Assistant Lecturer, OUT	A
02	Emmanuel Ndilanha	Tutorial Assistant, OUT	“
03	Johnson Changeiywo	Professor, Egerton University, Kenya	“
04	Magreth Jubilate Mushi	Assistant Lecturer, OUT	“
05	Cosmas B. F. Mnyanyi	Assistant Lecturer, OUT	B
06	Daphina Libnet Mabagala	OUT	“
07	Owen Ngumi	Lecturer, Teacher Edn. Department, Egerton University, Kenya	“
08	Sophia Nchimbi	OUT	“
09	Maria Augusti	Instructional Designer, OUT	C
10	Zainab Ruhwanya	Assistant Lecturer, OUT	“
11	Grace Mbwette	Assistant Lecturer, OUT	D
12	Happy Magoha	Assistant Lecturer, OUT	“
13	Hawa Uiso	OUT	E
14	Lughano J. M. Kusiluka	DVC (RM), OUT	“
15	Angaza A. Gimbi	Lecturer, OUT	F
16	Bahati Dionys Mbilinyi	Assistant Lecturer, OUT	“
17	Justine U. J. Kimaro	Chief Editor, OUT	“
18	Leonard Fweja	OUT	“
19	Newton Kyando	Assistant Research Fellow, OUT	“
20	Sydney G. V. Mkuchu	OUT	“
21	Fatma Ubwa	Tutorial Assistant, OUT	G
22	Modest Diamond Varisanga	Ass. Prof., OUT	“
23	Alex Alfred	Tutorial Assistant, OUT	H
24	Athuman Samzugi	Assistant Lecturer/Library, OUT	“
25	Aziz Kagugu	Tutorial Assistant, OUT	“
26	Elifas Bisanda	Professor, OUT	“
27	Kassimu A. Nihuka	OUT	“
28	Michael Patrick	OUT	“
29	Said Ally	Tutorial Assistant, OUT	“
30	Salim Hamad	Assistant lecturer, OUT	“
31	Shedrack Mbogela	Multimedia Technologist, OUT	“

Explanatory notes on Appendix-2

1. The above list of the potential participants, comprising 31 names, was circulated at the Workshop Venue on June 30, 2009, when the Workshop was declared open by the Vice Chancellor, OUT.
2. The order of names as listed in the original list had to be changed to prepare Appendix-2 in order to arrange them group-wise. *It should be noted that, in order not to disclose the identity of individual participants, the code numbers used to represent them in Tables 1 to 5 do not follow the sequence used in Appendix-2*
3. Names in each group have been arranged alphabetically for easy reference.
4. Group A (comprising four participants) worked on the theme of Information & Communication Technologies.
5. Group B (comprising four participants) worked on the theme of Student Support Services.
6. Group C (comprising two participants) worked on the theme of Awareness regarding ODL programmes in Higher Education.
7. Group D (comprising two participants) worked on the theme of Needs (those of students) Assessment.
8. Group E (comprising two participants) worked on the theme of Customer Care in ODL.
9. Members of Group F (comprising six participants) worked individually on different themes/topics.
10. Group G (comprising two participants) did not attend hands-on sessions except on the first day of the workshop, nor did they participate in the feedback session on the last day of the workshop. On the first day of the Workshop, however, they did mention the themes/topics they desired to work on, but it is not clear what they decided subsequently.
11. Group H (comprising the names of nine potential participants) did not attend the Workshop at all.

### Appendix--3

**Open University of Tanzania (OUT)**  
**Workshop on Research Methodology for ODL: 30 June – 4 July, 2009**

**Original titles of the Research Proposals prepared by the Participants**

<i>S. No./ Group</i>	<i>Name/Highest Qualification/ Years of Experience in ODL Operations</i>	<i>Research Topics worked on to prepare Research Proposals &amp; the related Research Instruments</i>
01/A	Emmanuel M. Tonya *** 22 years 4 months	Challenges and prospects of using ICT in ODL: the case of OUT
02/A	Emmanuel Ndilanha B. Sc. 1 year 2 months	Issues and challenges affecting the provision of quality e-learning education
03/A	Johnson Changeiywo Ph. D. 9 months	The importance and challenges of using ICT resources in ODL programmes in Kenya
04/A	Magreth Jubilate Mushi M. Sc. 4 years	Issues and challenges in developing e-learning management system in an ODL institution
05/B	Cosmas B. F. Mnyanyi Ph. D. (to be completed) 2 years 8 months	The use of audio learning materials recorded in audio-cassettes for people with print-disabilities
06/B	Daphina Libent Mabagala M. Applied S. Psychology 5 years 1 month	Support services for students with disabilities in higher DE institutions in Tanzania
07/B	Owen Ngumi Ph. D. (awaiting graduation) 2 years	Challenges of learner support in ODL in Kenya
08/B	Sophia Nchimbi M. A. 3 years 1 month	Impact of counselling and guidance on students performance in ODL: a case study of OUT
09/C	Maria Augusti *** 3 months	Assessment of the awareness of ODL in Dar-es-Salaam: the case study of primary and secondary teachers and secondary school students
10/C	Zainab Ruhwanya M. Sc. 3 years	Issues affecting enrolment of women in science subjects in the ODL system: the case of OUT
11/D	Grace Mbwette *** 2 years 4 months	Student information needs: a case study of OUT

12/D	Happy Magoha M. Applied Science 4 years	Needs assessment for establishing a degree programme in Hotel management at OUT
13/E	Hawa Uiso MBA 4 years	Assessment of the effectiveness of customer care in ODL system
14/E	Lughano J.M. Kusiluka Ph.D. 1 year 7 months	Knowledge, skills and capacity needs for administrative and technical staff for enhancing delivery of open distance learning at OUT
15/F	Angaza A. Gimbi Ph. D. 2 years 8 months	Student satisfaction: learner support services
16/F	Bahati Dionys Mbilinyi *** 2 years 8 months	Role of students as beneficiaries of ODL mode of delivery to marketability of OUT
17/F	Justine U. J. Kimaro PG Dip. In Education 9 years 2 months	Designing effective ODL study materials with effective assessment items: case of OUT
18/F	Leonard Fweja Ph. D. ***	Optimisation of undergraduate practical sessions: a comparative assessment of their impact in ODL and conventional teaching methods in Tanzania
19/F	Newton Kyando M. Phil. 2 years 10 months	Impact of OUT transformation on the globalization process: analysis of ODL learners and their performance in the labour market
20/F	Sydney G. V. Mkuchu Ph. D. 14 years 9 months	An evaluation of quality assurance enhancement through the lens of external examiners: a case study of procedures a practices at the OUT
21/G	Fatma Ubwa *** ***	Assessment of ODL students' readiness and ability to succeed under ODL environment: a case study of OUT
22/G	Modest Diamond Varisanga *** ***	Learner support services at the regional centres and their influence on the quality of education: a case study of OUT

### Explanatory notes on Appendix-3

1. The above list presents details about 22 participants who attended the Workshop for at least one or more days. The two participants listed last attended the Workshop on the first day only.
2. \*\*\* stands for 'no response/information received'.
3. The research proposals listed above (their titles, content, the research design and tools required, the modifications required, etc.) were discussed during the Workshop. It was agreed that the participants would modify and improve upon the proposals (in the light of the inputs made and the hands-on work done during the Workshop) to finalize them for submission.
4. It may be noted that participants' (leaving out the four who have put in more than five years in the ODL system) average experience in the ODL system is less than two and a half years.

## Appendix--4

### Entry-level Feedback—Questionnaire-1: June 30, 2009

We understand that you have prepared a research proposal, which you plan to improve and finalize for implementation. In order to make the workshop more effective, you are requested to provide answers to the following questions. The first fifteen questions pertain to your *research proposal* and the second set of fifteen questions pertains to research (in the field of ODL) in general.

- Instructions:*
- i) Please answer the following questions in the spaces provided.
  - ii) We are not looking for long/detailed responses.
  - iii) It will help us if you are precise and to the point.
  - iv) If you are not sure of an answer, please leave the space provided blank.

Name: .....

Designation: .....

Institution/Address: .....

E-mail address: .....

#### Section-I

1. What is the **title** of your research proposal?  
.....
2. What is/are your **research problem/problems**?  
.....
3. Why are you proposing this research activity? State the **purpose** of the proposed research.  
.....
4. Have you engaged in any kind of **literature review** in this regard? List one title.  
.....
5. What **type** of research are you proposing to address/solve the problem(s)?  
.....
6. List the main components of your proposed **work plan**.  
.....
7. Does this plan include a **timeframe** and a **budget**?  
.....
8. State the **limitations** of your proposed research activity and its outcome.  
.....
9. How are you going to **disseminate** the outcomes of your proposed research?  
.....
10. Who are the **beneficiaries** of your research outcomes?  
.....
11. What **type of research instrument** are you planning to develop to collect the data you need?  
.....
12. Who/what are the **subjects** of your research—the **population** and the **sample**?  
.....
13. What types of **statistical analysis** will you require and can you manage that analysis yourself?  
.....
14. Have you already undergone any **training** in research methodology for ODL?  
.....
15. Is this your **first attempt** to engage in research in the field of ODL?  
.....

#### Section-II

16. \* Name the **three** major types of research that ODL researchers engage in generally.  
..... (3)
17. What are the major issues facing research in ODL? List any three of them.

- ..... (3)
18. List any two distinguishing characteristics each of deduction and induction as research processes. (3)
- ..... (2)
19. Is a generalization an absolute truth? If ‘not’, then why do researchers go looking for it? (2)
- ..... (3)
20. List any three arguments that favour eclecticism in ODL research. (3)
- ..... (3)
21. List three of the major steps in the process of developing a good questionnaire. (3)
- ..... (3)
22. What are the differing features of the results obtained from qualitative and quantitative research? (3)
- ..... (3)
23. In what type of research (in the field of ODL) may you use hypotheses and why? (3)
- ..... (3)
24. \* What do we mean by control as understood in the context of experimental research? (3)
- ..... (2)
25. \* List three pressing reasons (from your viewpoint) for us to take up research in on-line learning/education? (2)
- ..... (3)
26. \* List any three criteria that you will use in the appraisal of a research proposal in the field of ODL. (3)
- ..... (3)
27. List any three strategies that may be followed in disseminating the contents of a research report. (3)
- ..... (3)
28. It is not unusual for research papers to face rejection by international journals. List any two reasons for this phenomenon. (3)
- ..... (2)
29. \* How is discipline-based research different from systemic research in ODL? (2)
- ..... (2)
30. Format the following information as a reference item in your research proposal:  
*Author:* Peter Jackson; *Year of publishing:* 1998;  
*Title of the article:* Instructional Design for On-line Delivery; *Published in:* Education Today—VI, 6;  
*Place of publication:* London; *Quotation from:* Page 15.  
 ..... (2)

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\* These are the questions that are repeated in the post-test (i.e. Questionnaire-2)

## Appendix –5

### Exit-level Feedback—Questionnaire-2: July 04, 2009

We have been working together for the last five days. It is time we assessed the environment we worked in together with what we achieved in terms of the objectives of the Workshop. The purpose of this evaluation is to assess the level of success it has achieved and also to see what improvements are required in it to make it more successful and useful for the trainees who may undergo a similar workshop subsequently. *Please be assured that your names will not be associated, in any way whatsoever, with the information that you supply here.*

- Instructions:
- i) Please answer the following questions in the spaces provided.
  - ii) We are not looking for long/detailed responses; be precise and to the point.
  - iii) If you are not sure of an answer, please leave the space provided blank.

Name:-----

Qualifications: -----

Experience (how long have you been associated with ODL operations): -----years and -----months.

#### Section-I

1. Did OUT send you the intimation about this workshop in good time for you to prepare yourself for full participation?

Yes                              No       

If 'yes', did you actually participate in the workshop fully, without missing any of the sessions?

-----  
-----

2. To what extent are you satisfied with the following *organizational aspects* of the Workshop?  
Please rate your level of satisfaction on the four (4) point scale given blow.  
[Three (3) indicates *fully satisfied* ....and zero (0) indicates *not satisfied at all*.]

SN	Query	3	2	1	0
1	Quality of the reception/dealings on the first day and subsequently				
2	Quality of transportation during the entire workshop				
3	Quality of the residential accommodation				
4	Quality of the related services at the residential accommodation				
5	Quality of the food provided during the training program				
6	Quality of the training facilities at the training venue				
7	Quality of interaction with the faculty/resource persons				
8	Total points				
9	Overall rating				

#### Section-II

3. Please rate your abilities/achievements corresponding to each of the following workshop objectives.  
[Three (3) indicates *fully able to*..... and zero (0) indicates *not at all able to*.]

SN	Expected Outcomes (objectives) as outlined by COL	3	2	1	0
1	Your ability to identify a research agenda to further your research activities				
2	Your ability to carry out similar training workshops in your institutions				
3	Your ability to support each other through an informal network				
4	Your ability to enhance the quality of your own and institutional research				
5	Total points				
6	Overall rating				

4. Have you been able to outline a complete and context specific research proposal at the workshop?

Yes  No

If 'yes', can you develop this outline into a complete formal research proposal in a week or so?

Yes  No

5. Do the objectives of the workshop fit into the objectives of your routine work?

Yes  No

6. What do you think about the structure (organization and the sequence of the various sub-themes) of the workshop in relation to its objectives?

Very well structured  Well structured   
Somewhat well structured  Poorly structured

7. What do you think about the content presented in relation to the objectives of the workshop?

a) Quite relevant  Relevant   
Somewhat relevant  Not relevant at all

b) Quite adequate  Adequate   
Somewhat adequate  Not adequate at all

8. What do you think about the group work in relation to the content and the objectives of the workshop?

Quite useful  Useful   
Somewhat useful  Not useful at all

9. To what extent have you benefited from the interaction you had with the fellow participants during the workshop?

Significant extent  Fair extent   
Some extent  Not at all

10. How useful will this workshop be to you in your role as a resource person (trainer)?

Very useful  Useful   
Of limited use  Not useful at all

11. Has the workshop given you **any ideas** for bringing about improvements in your working situation on your return to your workplace?

Yes  No

12. If 'yes', please outline them (the ideas) briefly.

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-----  
-----  
-----

13. Which parts of the workshop did you find the most useful?

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-----

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 -----  
 14. Which parts of the workshop did you find the least useful?  
 -----  
 -----  
 -----  
 -----

**Section-III**

15. Keeping in view the utility of and the benefits you derived from the following sessions (topics), please rate them on a four (4) point scale—  
 [‘3’ stands for *Excellent*, ‘2’ for *Good*, ‘1’ for *Satisfactory* and ‘0’ for *Poor*.]

Session	2009 June-July	TOPIC/THEME PRESENTED	Your Rating			
			3	2	1	0
P-03	June 30	Preparing a Research Proposal (Macro-design)				
P-04	July 01	Research in ODL (Status Brief)				
P-05	July 01	Nature of Research				
P-06	July 01	Eclecticism in ODL Research				
P-07	July 01	Research Design: Relevant Concepts				
P-08	July 02	Research Design				
P-09	July 02	Quantitative Analysis-1				
P-10	July 02	Qualitative Analysis-2				
P-11	July 02	Research in On-line ODL				
P-12	July 03	Research Project Management				
P-16	July 03	Reporting on Research				
P-17	July 03	Publishing Research Works				
P-13	July 04	Experimental Design				
P-14	July 04	Quantitative Analysis (Some Imp. Concepts)				
P-15	July 04	Quantitative Analysis-2				
P-18	July 04	SPSS Applications				
Extra	July 04	Socio-educational Coordinates of ODL				
4 Days		Group Work				
Total points						
Overall rating						

**Section-IV**

16. List **any three arguments** to make a case for focused systemic research in ODL.

.....  
 .....  
 ..... (3)

17. \* What are the **three major types** of research that ODL researchers engage in generally?

.....  
 .....  
 ..... (3)

18. What do you mean by the *need for Complementarity* in ODL research?  
 .....  
 .....  
 ..... (3)
19. List **any three crucial decisions** that need to be taken in the process of preparing a good questionnaire.  
 .....  
 ..... (3)
20. Why should ODL research be **context specific**?  
 .....  
 ..... (2)
21. \* What do you mean by **control** as understood in the context of experimental research?  
 .....  
 ..... (2)
22. \* List **three pressing reasons** for us to take up research in on-line learning/education?  
 .....  
 ..... (3)
23. \* List **any three criteria** that you will use in the appraisal of a research proposal in the field of ODL.  
 .....  
 ..... (3)
24. Name the **two variable types** commonly used in experimental research.  
 ..... (3)
25. \* How is **discipline-based** research different from **systemic research** in ODL?  
 .....  
 ..... (2)

**Section-V**

Please write whatever additional **comments** and **suggestions** (pertaining to the workshop) you would like to make.

-----  
 -----  
 -----  
 -----  
 -----

\* These are the five repeated questions taken from the pre-test (i.e. Questionnaire-1)

-----[The End]-----