

**“A STUDY OF STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES  
PROVIDED BY AL-QUDS OPEN UNIVERSITY OF  
PALESTINE”**

**Thesis submitted to the  
Maharaja Sayajiro University of Baroda  
for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy  
in Education**



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December, 2011**

# *CERTIFICATE*

*This is certified that the work contained in this thesis entitled, “A STUDY OF STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES PROVIDED BY AL-QUDS OPEN UNIVERSITY OF PALESTINE ” submitted by Mr.Mahmoud Awad Mahmuod Saleem Mousa to The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda, Vadodara, India for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Education is a record of bonafide research work carried out by him under my supervision and guidance. The results embodied in the same have not been submitted elsewhere for the award of any degree or diploma. It is further stated that the doctoral research was carried out fulfilling the requisite attendance criteria as per O.Ph.D. : 3(i) of The M.S. University of Baroda, Vadodara.*

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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

I take this opportunity to express my profound sense of gratitude to my guide, Dr. Milind Sahasrabuddhe, Associate Professor, Department of Education, Faculty of Education and Psychology who has always given me immense support, guidance and has indulged me through the study period. I am grateful to him for his untiring patience and readiness. Without his encouragement and keen interest in my work this study would not have made headway.

I am extremely thankful to all the teaching, non-teaching staff and research students in the M.S University of Baroda, faculty of Education and psychology for their constant help and encouragement. And I would like to mention six names specially: Prof.R.G.Kothari, Prof.D.R.Goel, Prof.Pradhan, Prof.S.C.Panigrahi, Dr. K.Pushbanadham and Ms. Swalleha.

I wish to express my sincere appreciation to those teachers, experts, supervisors and university lecturers who have spared their valuable time for this work.

I bow my head to my parents for their unconditional love and who have constantly inspired me to complete the present investigation.

My heartfelt thanks for my dearest wife for the support rendered by her, constant encouragement, inspiration and sacrifice during my stay in Baroda/ India for the research work, can't be just described in words.

My sincere thanks are to my beloved kids who had been starving for my love and affection. Words fail to express my feelings for them.

I sincerely thank my brothers for their love, moral and emotional support extended to me from them.

I thank foreign students studying in India for their support, Specially, Mr. Jihad Nazzal, Mr. Hathim Nakleh and Mr. Rawhi Alshamalat

I express my gratitude to all those who have helped me and inspired me directly or indirectly to pursue this work with all its true spirit and seriousness. I thank all of them.

December, 2011  
Place: Vadodara

(Mahmoud Awad)

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# **Chapter I**

A decorative graphic consisting of a red horizontal line and a red vertical line intersecting at a right angle. At the left end of the horizontal line and at the top end of the vertical line, there is a small blue dot.

## **BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY**

# **CHAPTER I**

## **BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY**

### **1.0. INTRODUCTION**

The world has witnessed sequence of changes, during the last few decades in different fields. Most noticeable changes are Human Resource Development and Scientific and Technological Knowledge which has expanded and advanced at an increasing pace. Field of Science and Technology has seen qualitative shift in generation of information and knowledge and it's investment which led to significant changes in productive methods. The world has witnessed a rapid development in education and training. Such changes of events and revolutions of knowledge have a direct impact on regular methods of education which may not be able to face challenges of 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Education in general and higher education (universities) and their institutions in particular, witnessed complete changes and development in comparison to what they were. For example, expansion and increase in the number of institutions and their methods of admission, administration and so on (Al-Kilanil, 2001, p. 3).

As higher educational institutions, universities are not only service oriented institutions but also productive where every student would like to join, pursue and achieve his/her goals. The university becomes an actor who performs many roles, focusing on three directions such as:

- Spreading knowledge by teaching and training.
- Developing Knowledge by Scientific Research.

- Application of Knowledge by Community Services.

These roles are similar, according to the American Education System which considers education, research and community services (Lee, 1971, p. 361). Perhaps, the most hypothesized phenomena of university education today, is the open and distance learning system which is different than our regular education. Here, researcher is going to focus attention and studying a very rare case of Al-Quds Open University, Palestine with reference to Student Support Services provided by Al-Quds Open University (Al-Kilani, 1998).

### **1.1. OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING SYSTEM**

Open and Distance Education system at University level has shown a tremendous growth and development during the last few decades, all over the world. Open learning system provides students with chances of freedom to learn at their own pace, place and convenience while being away from formal institutions. The basic objective of this system is to provide wider access to higher education, as conventional system was proving to be unable to cope up with ever-increasing demand. In recent time, this system has emerged as an alternative mode of learning for higher education, all over the world. Globalization of distance- learning provides many opportunities for developing countries for realization of goals of their educational systems.

According to United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) report: Open and Distance Education, as a force contributing to socio-economic development, is fast becoming an accepted and indispensable part of the main stream of educational systems in developed and developing countries. Concept of Open Education reflects a fact that: “all or most of the teaching is conducted by



someone, removed in time, space from the learner and that mission aims to include greater dimensions of openness and flexibility whether in terms of access, Curriculum or other elements of structure". (UNESCO, 2002, p. 8). Open and Distance Education system can usually be described as a made up of a range of components such as the mission or a goal of that system, programmes and curricular and teaching/learning strategies, techniques, learning materials, resources, communication , interactions, support and delivery systems, students, tutors, staff , other experts, management, housing and equipment as well as evaluation.

## **1.2. SCENARIO OF OPEN UNIVERSITY SYSTEM TODAY**

A Common need, in many, if not all, developing countries is to upgrade their educational systems in quality as well as in quantity. Open and Distance Education system shows a two-fold development pattern, i.e., numerous single mode open universities have emerged to absorb large number of new learners and increasing numbers of traditional universities have also began to offer their regular programmes through distance education. It is more than ever that, open and distance education will be an important element of future education systems. Open Learning is approaching acceptance, within mainstream education and training in such a way that it will make up, part of the repertoire of most educational institutes in the future. As a matter of fact, Open and Distance Education has existed for about one hundred years, in developed regions and for one or two generations in the developing countries (UNESCO, 2002, pp. 9-10).

Growth of Open and Distance Education system in developing countries led to establishment of number of new educational institutions and also to restructuring of many existing educational institutions as they

sought to increase their educational offerings through Open and Distance Learning departments and centres. Many famous open universities of developing countries have done a lot such as Indira Gandhi National Open University (India), AllamaIqbal (Pakistan), Sukhothai Thammathirat (Thailand), Terbuka (Indonesia), South Africa Open University, Open University of Tanzania, Open University of Nigeria, Open University of Venezuela and of course Al-Quds Open University in Palestine and other open Universities. (UNESCO, 2002, pp.10-11).

Despite of their considerable contribution, these institutions have operated in conditions of under-funding and sometimes their accomplishments were even ignored. New millennium witnessed vast recognition and acceptance of Open and Distance Learning as a valuable strategy, in context of new globalization agenda. Today's new realities need new objectives, modes, flexibility, methods of organization and delivery of education. But as it is known, many problems are faced by these institutions, like priority of objectives. Targets and fund allocation etc. became tricky and with changes of time and technologies, the contexts within Open and Distance Education system requires responding to the needs to be revisited.

### **1.3. AL-QUDS OPEN UNIVERSITY SYSTEM IN PALESTINE**

Idea of establishing Al-Quds Open University goes back to the year 1975, as part of the Palestinians' demand for higher education, a request was forwarded to the United Nations Organization (UNO) (Qamhawi, 1986, p. 247). A studied proposal was put for discussion by the Palestinian National Council, in the year 1981 which was passed and the university came into existence and named as Al-Quds Open University

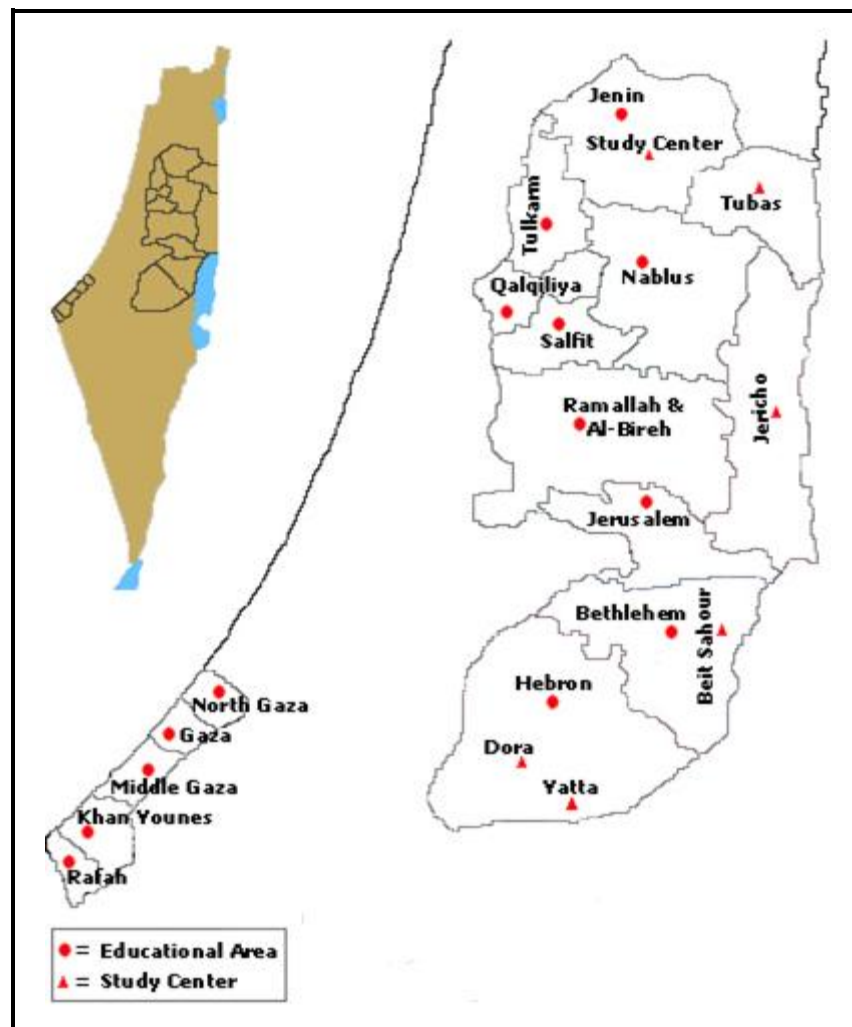
which was established and started in the year 1985 at its temporary location, at Amman City, Jordan. In 1994, the university was relocated to Al-Quds at its present building. Al-Quds Open University is an educational institution for Open and Distance Education. Its main job is to transform education to students wherever they may be located and by this way, they can work and learn while at their jobs. Also, it adopts a flexible policy in admission and education of students. (Al-Quds Open University Index, 2003).

Al-Quds Open University is making all efforts to take higher education to the doorsteps of the hitherto unreachable people. As of now, more than 60% of the total students of regular higher education are enrolled with Al-Quds Open University. The university provides education and knowledge to those who have been debarred from higher education due to many different reasons through various flexible means of studies suited to open mode of learning including information, materials and communication. Also, it encourages, coordinates and assists, open and distance learning system to improve its standards. Al-Quds Open University promotes a strong relationship among the Palestinians and integration and development. The university provides higher education and training to large number and sections of the Palestinians, specifically to disadvantaged segments of the Palestinian society and the Arab world. (Al-Quds, 1998, p. 1).

Al-Quds Open University is considered to be a pioneer institution in the field of Open and Distance Learning in Arab world. Despite of being a new institution of learning, university became a pyramid of education to the academicians and Palestinians who were interested to complete their university education in general and others from Arab world where

number of its enrolled students was more than 36,000 in the academic year 2003. Right now, the university has more than 200 full-time experts and academicians and in addition to that a number of part-time faculty members- some of them are having Ph.D. degrees too. The researcher is going to do a field work so as to investigate students-support-services to those who are enrolled in Al-Quds Open University. A map showing distribution of the following areas and centres of Al-Quds Open University in Palestine is shown below.

**Chart 1: Educational Regions and Study Centres in Palestine**



Source: <http://portal.qou.edu>

#### **1.4. ACADEMIC PROGRAMS AT AL-QUDS OPEN UNIVERSITY**

The University offers five academic programs, all leading to the Bachelor of Arts (B.A) or Bachelor of Science (B. Sc) degree as follows: (i) Technology and Applied Sciences, (ii) Agriculture, (iii) Education (iv) Social and Family Development and (v) Administrative and Economic Sciences. Each program consists of at least one major. Student may choose major, in which he/she is interested with an aim of obtaining a Bachelor of Arts (B.A) or Bachelor of Science (B. Sc) degree.

#### **1.5. MISSION OF AL- QOU 2005-2010**

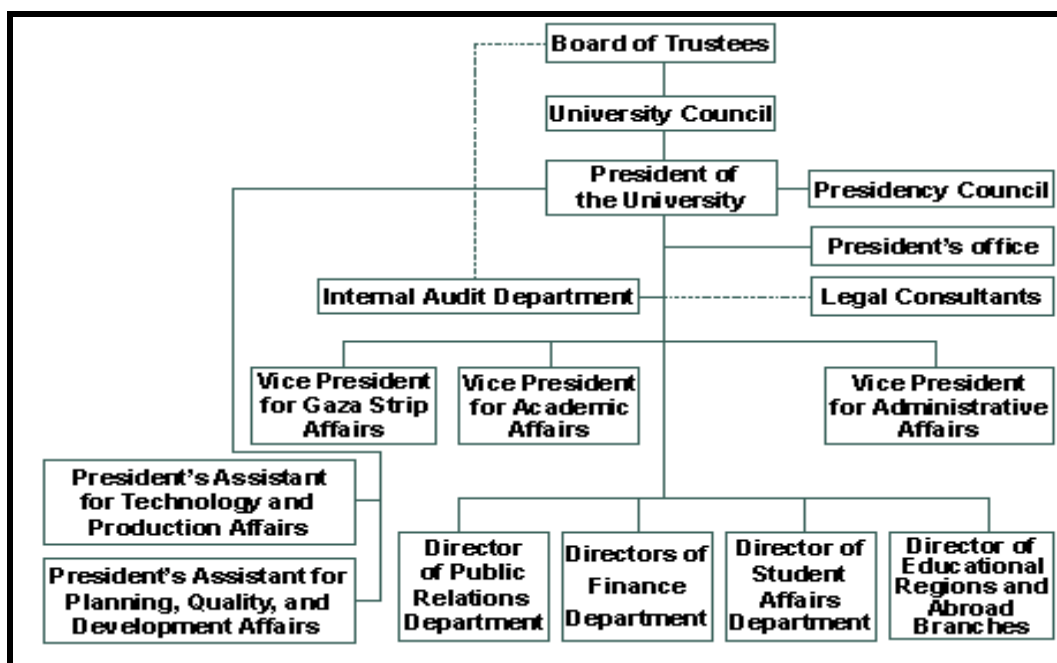
**Mission of Al-Quds Open University over period 2005-2010, can be summarized in following points:**

1. Commitment to carry out philosophy, principles and methods of open education and distance learning according to latest cognitive and technological developments.
2. To maintain University's academic, financial and administrative independence.
3. Keeping freedom of thought and expression while avoiding ideological or political conflicts.
4. Providing university educational services to Palestinian people without discrimination in West Bank and Gaza Strip.
5. Granting an M.A degree in specializations relevant to needs of the Palestinian and Arab communities, besides granting a B.A degree in existing programs.
6. Offering various continuing education programs which lead to granting certificates and diplomas of various levels.

7. Taking care to make level of academic programs and graduates equal and competitive to equivalent levels in local and Arab universities.
8. Employing a mixture of various instructional medias (printed, visual, audio, computerized and electronic) to support distance learners.
9. Seeking to convert Al-Quds Open University into a virtual university.
10. Commitment to carry out a principle of learner-centered education.
11. Seeking to implement a principle of total quality at an University and providing necessary qualified cadres, funds and training.
12. Encouraging research and studies in particular, as well as creative production, in general.
13. Developing professional capabilities of academic supervisors so they can perform their duties at a high quality level.
14. Employing qualified and trained human cadres alongside with applying most up-to-date techniques of information and communication technology.
15. Increasing cooperation and relationship with educational, societal and economic organizations in Palestine as well as in Arab and foreign countries.
16. Continuing to develop contents and methods of the university textbooks to integrate distance learning objectives.
17. To increase interest in scientific applications stated in the academic programs, such as Education, Social Development etc.

## Administrative Structure of Al-Quds Open University

**Chart 2:** Administrative structure of Al-Quds Open University is as follows:



Source: <http://portal.qou.edu>

### 1.6. UNIVERSITY'S PHILOSOPHY, VALUES AND PRINCIPLES

To enhance commitment to philosophy of University which is represented in implementation of system of open education and distance learning in Palestine through keeping up with latest scientific and technological developments.

1. To encourage academic freedom as well as freedom of thought and expression, adhering to good ethics, respect of others and national unity.
2. To enhance interest in a learner through guiding University's all activities, towards serving him\her, supporting his\her learning so that he\she can be a high quality graduate.
3. To enhance interest in performance quality at all levels within a plan of total quality.

## **Learners**

1. To prepare an independent learner who graduates with an adequate knowledge and skills which enable him/her to continue learning, depending on himself/herself and encourage a spirit of innovation, efficiency, organization and ability to face challenges.
2. To contribute to make a learner acquire a local and Arab character which has a strong belonging to a country and nation.
3. To increase interest in community sectors which are socially, financially or geographically unable to get high education and improve their opportunities, to join higher education and succeed in it.

## **Technology**

1. To continue process of computerizing and developing all administrative systems at the University.
2. To intensify using information and communication technology in process of teaching, to improve quality of learning.
3. To set up new studios for photographing and telecasting, broadcasting and electronic transmission.
4. To provide computer net services to all academic supervisors and students.
5. To encourage access to electronic libraries and international data bases in order to provide an opportunity for employees, students and researchers to make use of these rich sources of knowledge.
6. To increase production of educational video, audio and electronic aids which complete development of the University's textbooks and consolidate distance learning.



## **Academic and Training Programs**

1. To offer academic programs which lead to B.A and M.A degrees which take into consideration, latest developments and which meet the needs of Palestinian as well as the Arab societies' future developmental aspirations.
2. To provide academic and professional programs flexible to continuous development in various fields of human knowledge which do not necessarily lead to any university degree. This would open an opportunity for all those interested from various community sectors to develop themselves through implementation of well- prepared training programs and courses.
3. To increase interest in practical aspects of academic and developmental courses.
4. To enhance interest in quality of educational materials, specializations, academic programs and appropriate educational aids, regarding preparation and output.
5. To divert methods of delivering knowledge to learners through employing modern technology in general and electronic learning in particular.
6. To conduct technical internal evaluation to specializations, every four or five years, to maintain best standards.
7. To encourage scientific production in various fields of knowledge through scientific research, translation and writing; in addition to enhancing cultural interaction and exchange among experts inside and outside the country.
8. To build cooperative relations with other universities inside and outside the country, to exchange expertise and services.

9. To build relations with local and external factories as well as companies, to enhance relationship between the university and community's needs, in addition to provide opportunities for training learners.

### **Expansion**

1. To prepare an appropriate infrastructure (buildings, areas of land, equipments, furniture's, communications, etc.) to cope with the biggest possible number of Palestinians seeking university education.
2. To open new study centers in Arab/foreign countries, hosting a big number of Palestinians where feasibility studies show that there is a possibility to get revenues to support University's budget.
3. To divert and increase funding sources of the University so as to be sufficient for implementing it's developmental plans.

### **Employees**

1. To provide university with highly qualified academic, administrative and service staff, capable of achieving the University's general goals.
2. To develop qualifications of University employees, in light of latest developments, relevant to high quality standards of production and services.
3. To continue to deal with employees on the basis of efficiency, capability, avoid favouritism and bias or injustice to anyone.

## **Other Goals**

- To enhance attitude of decreasing the education cost while maintaining high quality of education.

### **1.7. CONVENTIONAL EDUCATION OBSTACLES**

Conventional education sector is still suffering from many obstacles: geographical, political, social, and economical. By geographical part, student's residence may form an obstacle which prevents him/her to reach study place. Hence, in recent conditions, Palestinian territories have witnessed political upsets and instability. It leads to closure of educational establishments because of Israeli occupation. In the current Social Structure, the role of a woman in Society in the home can further be enhanced through the new educational methods which cater to educated and uneducated women. So Distance Learning is a boon to them.

Educationally, as a fact, there is a durable correlation between economy and education. On one hand, it is important to point that education forms an essential part for economic development. On the other hand, economic development is a necessity for educational development. Therefore, it must have been necessary to search for new education system to surpass the above mentioned obstacles and remove them. Hence, an Open Learning is the best solution which fits this problem; Open learning shows itself, as a real alternative for conventional learning, particularly in developing countries, as it reduces expenses. Open learning is considered as one of the fastest training and educational fields all over the world. Additionally, new inventions in information and technique aspects have enhanced possibilities of this learning type over services, offering for various sectors of people-especially women who have been affected negatively by conventional education.

## **1.8. PROBLEMS AND PROPOSED SOLUTIONS**

However, Palestinian educational system in all stages, has suffered along occupation era, from all types of prejudices and persecutions, for instance closure of educational establishments such as Schools, Colleges and Universities.

In addition to effects which were resulted by Israeli occupation and its practices which have increased negative effects, particularly on higher education- especially universities.

To sum up these problems, cost seems to be one of the main problems of higher education- especially universities, that their budget acts as a burden on government's budgets as well as families' budgets which also act as the same problem in financing their students. Moreover, finance problem increased because of increase in population which caused increase in demand for education. It led to many problems as university education crises which (Bader, 1999) can be summarized into;

- Difficulty of assimilation for flowing numbers who aspires to join universities.
- Weakness of appropriateness between universities' output and the changeable market labour requirements, by effect of scientific & technology progress.
- Increase of higher education burden on families and governments (Bader,1999).

Therefore, it was necessary to find solutions for all above mentioned problems which education encounters especially-higher education so as to develop Palestinian society. Besides, to meet the increasing demand in higher education to fail the occupation targets which aim to deprive them of education. In light of these, the Palestinian decision- makers found an unconventional solution that was based on supplying education to students wherever they were.

Hence, this idea is represented by Al-Quds Open University which adopts open learning system to meet needs of Palestinian people, in spite of hard and complex economical, social and political conditions of Palestinian people.

### **1.9. OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING CONCEPT**

Open Learning Concept: it is considered one of the distance learning modes which enables a learner to learn separately of the university where he/she studies. Learner can choose appropriate place and time which suit his/her condition. Moreover, he/she can learn in a fast way which suits his/her abilities and possibilities. (Nasrallah.2000).

Open learning is an educational policy that constitutes its philosophy on individuals right to reach for available educational opportunities. Meanwhile, it is mass open education for all as it has flexibility that enables learners to pick out ways of learning, time, place and learning contents. Consequently for his/her conditions and needs (Keelani.2001). Therefore, it is an educational system which meets natural readiness for an individual through surpassing obstacles which prevent him/her to keep on learning and diluting of attendance conditions which are essential conditions for conventional education system like age, time devotion for studying, former educational qualifications and financial ability.

Lewis has defined open learning, as "The education that enables the learner to control decisions by himself/herself like content study choosing, learning method, learning place and self-learning". (Keelani.2001).

Phil Race determines "Open Learning means that student has a freedom in choosing and controlling. Hence, the freedom means; choosing operation, of what he/she learns, whereas controlling means self-

controlling .Since, student is responsible for his/her learning .By the same ,open learning is considered as a system that can expand opportunities and control grade learners, also use of educational materials which concentrated about learners and allow for learners to take their responsibilities and roles in learning besides helping to keep needed skills for survival." (Nashwan.1999).

### **1.10. DISTANCE LEARNING CONCEPT**

Initially distance learning had started in past century when many educational commercial and private institutes in U.S.A and Britain have used distance learning in order to convey educational materials for learners in such a system which was called correspondence.

Secondly, after the success that accompanied this experiment, some universities have started to use distance learning system in university learning like, Queens Land in Australia and New England University. But, the British University had started in sixties and it had a main role to use distance learning in an university grade. Furthermore, this university had proved, it is possible to use distance learning by less economic cost in comparison with conventional learning.(Nasrallah.2000).

Hence, as to determine distance learning concept, we will show most important definitions from well-known specialists: Abed Al-Jabber says," Distance learning is a democratic system enables equivalent opportunities and skills acquisition aspects. On the whole, this is called learning democracy which includes the following three dimensions:

\*- Social dimension: it is a correlation of education democracy and society's democracy. Meanwhile, discrimination should be removed i.e. On race, colour, social status and gender ground.

\*- Quantitative dimension: distance education system contains those who are candidates and need to be educated.

\*- Qualitative dimension: Distance learning makes structures, contents and creates flexible and improved curricula to meet the needs of environment and population.(Nasrallah.2000).

Accordingly, Al-Quds Open University defined" Distance learning is all organized forms of education and learning, as there is no meeting between learners and tutors in the same place. Hence, distance learning gives an opportunity to individuals to pursue their learning even after break in their studies, as a matter of fact this type is not confined by the restrictions of traditional rules, while it ensures an appropriate flexibility which suits students' circumstances .Otherwise, it needs special preparation in it's programmes and curricula in order to compensate for interaction absence between learner and tutor. (Shahatah.2003)

Holmburg defined" Distance Learning is a dialogue between the learner and tutor who are not in touch and this type is available wherever learner exists. Furthermore, it has advantage that revolves about responsibility of learner in addition of using several educational means."( Keelani.2001).

Peters defined" Distance learning is a way to spread knowledge and acquisition of skills and attitudes by working condensation in administrative and techniques by various technique medias so as to produce educational material of high quality which enables learners in their places to get knowledge."(Baker.2000).

Hamadi defined" Distance learning is suitable for all distance learning establishments because it determines the following essential factors;

- Separation between learners and teachers.

- Use of technical medias to connect learners and teacher in order to apply educational content for students' curriculum.
- Use of two directions that a can make use of.
- Possibility of making meetings between teachers and learners to achieve educational and social aims. (Nashwan.1999)

In light of above definitions, researcher implies that open learning and distance learning are in durable correlation where as it is difficult to distinguish between them. Hence, both of them are flexible and constructed on the same philosophy that is learning separated from teacher and educational establishment, not only both of them revolves about learners themselves instead of educational establishment but also both agree with obtaining educational opportunity, since all obstacles can be surpassed whether those were, political, financial, social, related to place or time.

### **1.11. TARGETS OF OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING**

Targets of open and distance learning involve that following as were referred to them by 'Ibraheem"

- Requirements and development plans meeting from qualified trained manpower.
- To allow an education university opportunities for all learners who aspire to, in correspondence for increasing social demand for this learning type.
- To grant learning opportunity for those who missed higher education for reasons which are related to an individual or society.
- Providing educational opportunities, training and continuous habitation for employers who are in charge.
- To provide all people with cultural programmes, supplying them for enlightenment .Moreover, supplying for knowledge by using



modern means like television and satellites. Through transmitting educational programmes, use is not exclusive on learners only but including all people, who are not uncovered by conventional education.

- To participate encouraging woman to be educated but in developing countries, woman's education represents real problem- for example in agricultural societies, percentage of illiteracy has risen because women are discouraged. (Ibraheem,2004).

### **1.12. JUSTIFICATIONS OF OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING**

Justifications can be summarized such as:-

- To give university education to those who face economical and social obstacles which hinder them to join immediately after secondary grade during that time.
- Open and distance learning enables those who had not joined university.
- Open and distance learning is considered as an important mean of developing society through developing it's individuals.
- Open and distance learning act as buffer between job and learning.
- Woman's learning is an essential matter in developing society. Hence, open learning suits women by giving them enough time to practice their social role.

Ability of this type to contain huge number of students which exceeds traditional education ability in this sphere such as:

- Open and distance learning grants academic programmes.
- Open and distance learning obtains progressive education programmes and society services which are essential for it.

- Flexibility principle that is represented in surpassing all obstacles that may rise by rules and laws.
- Political uproars and conflicts may not allow one to pursue organized study.
- Traditional education fees is more compared with open learning.
- To Save efforts and time so as to give more production which leads to adopt more flexible educational system than the traditional one.
- To solve psychological problems like dropout and slow learning. Studies pointed out that slow learners, are ashamed of their inability to convey to others which creates loathing for schools and universities. Hence ,open learning may solve some of these problems because it reflects fitness for those students.(Teashory.2005)
- Open and distance learning, under consideration of individual differences among learners .

Open and Distance Learning (ODL) can provide basic education, skills training and lifelong learning. Appropriate ODL materials are especially important for women who live in countries where they are seen principally as homemakers and caretakers of children and where their social and cultural norms, make attending face-to-face classes are difficult. ODL can provide such women, their partners and their children with a key to the world of learning. Producers of ODL materials must ensure that this key works for both sexes. For example, a 2001 publication of case studies, compiled by the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) found that in India, distance education (DE) is the preferred option for women. DE is cost-effective in India as a learner pays only one third of total fees compared to a conventional institution. As no classroom attendance is required, there is no need for woman learner to dislocate herself; because of the degree of flexibility in course completion, she can

adjust her study time table within her schedule of household responsibilities.(Jenkins,1995).

### **1.13. EXCEPTIONAL SERVICES IN OPEN/DISTANCE LEARNING**

As it was referred in Al-Quds Open University (Manual, 2003), open/distance learning presents the following unusual services:

- Presentations of educational services for those who were not able to join regular universities.
- Presentations of suitable educational conditions which conform to student's needs.
- Give a share in women learning, illiteracy elimination and adult learning.
- Enable learners to conjoin between work and study.
- Enable learners who are in service to develop their vocational growth.
- Creation of educational methods which are different than regular educational matters.

Give a share in solving problems which are related to inability of regular universities for capacity increasing. ([www.portal.qou.edu](http://www.portal.qou.edu)).

### **1.14. HISTORY AND LOCATION OF JENIN EDUCATIONAL REGION**

It was established as a Study Centre in 1991 and was a part of Nablus Educational Region. When, first it was inaugurated, there were only 203 students but in 1998, it reached to 1487 students. That was, one year before it's promotion as an Educational Region. Jenin Educational Region is located in the northern part of Jenin, and Jenin Study Centre is in the southern part of the city. Number of students in an academic year 2006-

2007 was 7,000 in the Educational Regions and a Study Centre; 4,913 students were in the former and 2,087 in the latter. Jenin Educational Region is located now in two rented buildings of 4,500 square meters and Jenin Study Centre is located in a-three buildings of 1,200 square meters. Jenin Centre of Al-Quds Open University is headed by a Director of education along with assistants of (Academic Affairs, Library, Recruitment, Examination, Full Time and Non-full Time Experts, Student Affairs, Social Counsellor, Computers, Personal Affairs, Finance, Admission, Store and Security). Number of Academic Supervisors - Full and Part Timers Are shown in the following table1.1:

**Table 1.1: Number of Academic Supervisors - Full and Part Timers in Educational Regions and a Study Centre in Jenin to Academic year 2009-2010.**

Full Timers		Part Timers		Total Number of Full Timers and Part Timers			
Ph.D	Master	Ph.D	Master	Bachelor	Ph.D	Master	Bachelor
22	18	24	189	1	40	213	1
Total = 40		Total = 213		Total = 255			

**Table 1.2: Number of Jenin Educational Region and a Study Centre  
Distribution of Learners by Academic Program are shown in  
following table 1.2:**

Programmes	Gender	
	Male	Female
Technology & Applied Sciences	112	248
	<b>Total = 360</b>	
Agriculture	46	26
	<b>Total = 72</b>	
Social and Family Development	143	394
	<b>Total = 537</b>	
Education	1034	2816
	<b>Total = 3850</b>	
Economic and Management Sciences	1019	1182
	<b>Total = 2201</b>	
<b>Total</b>	<b>2354</b>	<b>4666</b>
	<b>Total = 7020</b>	

Source: Al –Quds Open University .Primary Statistics from admission department/  
Academic year 2009-2010.

### **1.15. RATIONAL OF THE STUDY**

From discussion made over here and through the nature of researcher's work as a part timer supervisor in Al-Quds Open University in Jenin area, it was clear that student support services were very vital in an Open Distance Learning System. This was because students over there were not formal or regular students, to the institutions but a facility to learn at their own place and time of convenience was there. Therefore, student support services were very important for them to continue with their courses.

Such courses get a good success when student support services were provided of proper quality and at proper time by proper teaching faculty. Since, researcher was interested to study overall success of this Open University; it was decided to make a status survey of present student support services provided to the students and full time academic supervisors.

### **1.16. STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES**

Main aim of Open and Distance Education is to promote self-study among learners, in absence of regular teaching system. To achieve this, every institution of Open and Distance Learning, extends support to its students that comprises of many facilities and activities which were intended to make learning process easier and more interesting for the students (Sharma, 2007, p. 4). There are many key-issues which help and guide preparation and advancement of distance learning initiatives. These activities, beyond production and delivery of course materials, help and assist in progress of learners in term of education (Learning) and effective communication (Simpson, 2000). Therefore, support may range from study centre, counselling and tutorial support to administrative problem solving (Rumble, 1992). Institutions will need to develop policies which clarify academic issues, tuition fee, services considering geographical area, labour management, legal matters and student support services such as counselling, training and others (Gellman-Danley and Fetzner, 1998). Researcher in his opinion mentioned that following are some of student services such as: (i) admission procedures (ii) mode, course and subjects of study (iii) guidance to the students (iv) recruitment (v) job projects (vi) examination and (vii) electronic portal.

Open and Distance Education, utilized regular mail to send written material, videos, audiotapes, and CD-ROMs or other medias storage format such as compact flash to students and to turn in the exercises but today's Open and Distance Education courses make use of internet (E-Mail and Web sites) and video conferencing over broad band and network connections for wired physical locations and wireless mobile learning. In some countries, material is supplemental by television and radio programming. Al-Quds Open University utilized (i) Electronic Libraries (ii) Open Access Resources (iii) EBSCO Database and others. Digital Books Index is fairly new site which offers simple, swift and direct access to online digital books which are fairly utilized at Al-Quds Open University.

Year 2006 marked the first anniversary of establishment of the Blind and Visually Impaired Training Centers of Al-Quds Open University (QOU) at it's Hebron and Jenin locations. These centers were established in conviction that students with disabilities have the same right to access Information Technology as everyone else. Centers were providing services to all university students who were blind or visually impaired in addition to individuals with the same disabilities from the local community. Two centers were well equipped and furnished with latest adaptive or assistive tools, backed by qualified and trained staff to enable students to achieve their highest potential. This would promote students' independence, economic well-being and enhance their quality of life through using latest technology, combined with time-tested adaptive methods. Training centers offer academic and work-related practical training such as computer keyboarding, typing, Windows XP, introduction to computers, word processing, e-mail and Internet.

Supporting Educational Multimedia: Academic Directorate undertakes high importance in supporting educational multimedia for its educational significance in open and distance education. Curricula and Textbooks Department beard through its director and supporting multimedia employee, by way direction and advising from vice -president of Academic Affairs, tasks of facilitating between the Ramallah and Amman offices of Media Productions Centre as well as all educational regions and directors of academic programs to provide each centre with the latest multimedia productions, as well as following the facilitation mechanism for producing and presenting multimedia productions and it's utilization by academic advisors and learners. Department actively supported facilitation process towards creation. Supporting Multimedia Facilities in three new educational regions where this is an ongoing process until every educational region and centre will have it's own Supporting Multimedia.

**Tait** (1995) wrote in his article on Student Support for Open and Distance Learning, examined various factors which need to be taken into account, in planning of student support and stated that there could be no universal blue print for design of student support services. Information communication technologies and marketisation of education are two dimensions which were influencing planning of student support services in open and distance learning. Former brought seamless technological media and later brought consumer culture in open and distance learning system. Both were strongly influencing the methods and philosophies of student support services in open and distance learning.

According to author, student support services means "Range of services both for individuals and for students in groups which complement the



course materials or Learning resources which were uniform for all learners and which were often perceived as Major offering of institutions using ODL "Tait said that student support services covered areas of "inquiry, admission and pre-study advisory services, tutoring, guidance and counselling services, assessment of prior learning and credit transfer, study and examination centres, residential schools, library services, individualized correspondence teaching, record keeping, differentiated services for students with special needs and materials which support development of study skills, programme planning and career development."

Tait in another article on "Student Support in Open and Distance learning".defines student support as "range of activities which complement mass produced materials which make up most well-known element in ODL" and consisting with elements of tutoring, counseling, interactive teaching through television and radio and other activities. Principles which govern support services, were formulated in the form of following questions. Who were your students? What were their needs? How would you meet their needs? How would services be managed? How much would services cost? How would you evaluate?

According to author, under each question, there would be number of parameters to be considered and acknowledged as identity of learner is central to student support system. In operationalizing student support services, study centres play a very crucial role. Study centres are physical locations through which a wide range of services are operationalized and provided to learners. Proper understanding of above questions is essential for any open and distance learning institution for evolving a model for student support services in open and distance learning system.

**David Sewart's (1978)** article on "Continuity of Concern for Students in a System of Learning at a Distance"" was an attempt to identify role of intermediary in the process of student support services to the learners at a distance. As the societies were growing and becoming complex, role of an intermediary assumes significance to bridge the gap between individual and institution. This assumed greater significance wherein education had to be imparted at a distance with the help of course material and other forms of support. Concept of "Continuity of Concern" aimed to provide support and a "Safety Net" to the distance learners wherein a wide variety of support services and counselling was provided. Continuity of concern for students gained importance because of educational background of most of it's students who were adults, returning to study after a number of years. They would need a local and continuing advice on the problem which they encountered would be attended by these intermediaries known in different names like tutors, counsellors, teachers, advisors and academic counselors and coordinators. Counseling function encompassed all those other areas in which University and students 'Interact' and all this interactions need not be "Academic" means counselling covers, general advise on general problems of part-time study. This article was an attempt to put student support services in a perspective with the concept of "Continuity of Concern". It recognized role of "Human Element" in the form of an intermediary.

### **1.17. WHY TO CONDUCT RESEARCH ON STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES?**

Putting definitions of research and student services together, raises obvious question of why research was important or what can it do for

those involved in learners' services? Answer to this question, had two components. The first was to consider many facets of learners' services in which our knowledge was lacking and thus, the ways in which our involvement in it's provision was compromised. Researcher was sure that many of the people could provide a list of issues which were relevant to their practices and which had important consequences to lives of learners and to their institution's capacity to serve, to which their knowledge was at best untested and uninformed and at worst incorrect. These issues probably included traditional distance education questions such as how to reduce attrition, improve learning outcomes and reduce cost of services. But, now we are challenged to provide answers to questions, raised by new forms of distance education provisions, questions such as:

- What mix of personal and machine, delivered services was needed by learners?
- What combinations of collaborative and group based learning were worth cost and inconvenience to both teachers and learners?
- Did face to face tutorials really make a difference or is real time video conferencing just as effective?
- Was travelling to a learning centre worth expense and hassle when we can cost effectively deliver via audio and video to home or workplace?
- How much did expensive multimedia really enhance students' learning; how important are real time interactions?

The list is long and growing. It is even more important to ask ourselves, if our current research practice is capable of answering these questions.

### **1.18. CHARACTERISTICS OF STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES**

In distance education period, examples of student support services would include:

Tutor contact, telephone counselling, correspondence contacts, assignment correction, audio conferences, email, seminars and face-to-face meetings.

In a broader interpretation they would include provision at a distance of all features which conventional universities and colleges provide for their students including:

Induction-type services, General information services, Counselling , Social work services, Special needs services, Career Guidance, Study Guidance and study groups, Intervention service (for those who are likely to drop-out of the system).

The best distance education systems and Open Universities provide a wide range of services for their students which make them national institutions of great prestige and reputation which take their place easily amongst the universities of the nation. (Rekkedal, et.al.2003).

### **1.19. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

A Study of Student Support Services Provided by Al-Quds Open University of Palestine.

### **1.20. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

1. To study provisions of Student Support Services for all courses provided by Al-Quds Open University, Palestine.
2. To study effectiveness of present Student Support Services provided by university in terms of (a) Extent of students satisfaction level. (b) Level of satisfaction of persons providing it. (c) Time cost involved in provision

of student support services. (d) Percentage of students acquiring Student Support Services.

3. To collect suggestions for improvement of Student Support Services provided presently to all Students of Al-Quds Open University.

### **1.21. SIGNIFICANCE OF PRESENT STUDY**

Political situation of middle-eastern countries was not stable. In addition to regional conflicts of West Asia, particularly, Palestine was going on. Thus, to have institutions of regular learning and their continuation was somewhat difficult. When Al-Quds Open University came into existence, many Palestinians who missed train of regular learning were pleased to get their chance of higher education. Since, Al-Quds Open University had specific feature of adhering to mode of open and distance education, it had high degree of importance and significance to Palestinian society. As a matter of fact, this university admitted number of students and provided them, by training and scientific knowledge which qualify them in their profession. Whereas, recommendations of experts helped the university and a directorate of planning and development, to study and put forth the correct plans and policies to distance learning and improving an education by Al-Quds Open University. Research studies have solved concerned problems of the students and that is why we have taken student support services which were provided by the university.

This study is first to be conducted, considering Palestinian level and it is going to investigate student support services which were provided by Arabian/Distance learning institutions and will benefit new researches and further studies in a same area.

## 1.22. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

**Followings questions emerged from discussion:**

1. What were Student Support Services provided by Al-Quds Open University, in different subjects, based on perspectives of students?
2. What were Student Support Services provided by Al-Quds Open University, in different subjects, based on perspectives of full time academic supervisors?
3. Are there significant differences at ( $\alpha=0.05$ ) in the Student Support Services, provided by Al-Quds Open University, in different subjects based on perspectives of students due to these variables: **Gender, Age, Specialization, Place of Residence and Study Level**?

## 1.23. HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

- 1- There is no significant difference at ( $\alpha=0.05$ ) for student support services, provided by Al-Quds Open University, in different subjects, based on perspectives of students due to **Gender** variable.
- 2- There is no significant difference at ( $\alpha=0.05$ ) for student support services, provided by Al-Quds Open University, in different subjects based on perspectives of students due to **Age** variable.
- 3- There is no significant difference at ( $\alpha=0.05$ ) for student support services, provided by Al-Quds Open University, in different subjects, based on perspectives of students due to **Specialization** variable.
- 4- There is no significant difference at ( $\alpha=0.05$ ) for student support services, provided by Al-Quds Open University in different subjects, based on perspectives of students due to **Place of Residence** variable.
- 5- There is no significant difference at ( $\alpha=0.05$ ) for student support services, provided by Al-Quds Open University in different subjects, based on perspectives of students due to **Study Level** variable.

## **1.24. DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

Some of limitations of this study were as follows:

- 1-** This study was based on a sample composed of (351) students which equals to (5%) of Population. The number was 7020 - male and female students from Al-Quds Open University in Palestine –Jenin.
- 2-** This study also involved all **Academic full-time Supervisors** in Al-Quds Open University in Palestine –Jenin. The number was 40 Supervisors.
- 3-** This study was conducted during the second semester of an academic year 2009-2010.
- 4.** This study was conducted at Al-Quds Open University / Jenin branch – Palestine.

## **1.25. EXPLANATION OF TERMS USED IN TITLE OF THE STUDY**

**Open Learning:** Open Learning concept was considered as one of distance learning models which enabled learners to learn separately of university where he/she studied. Learners can choose an appropriate place and time which suited his/her condition. Moreover, he/she can learn in a fast way which suited his/her abilities and possibility (Nasrallah, 2000).

### **Al-Quds Open University (QOU)**

AL- QOU is a national institution for higher education located in Palestine. It enjoys an independent status in academic, financial and administrative affairs. The university attempts to provide educational services for interested students, through adopting Distance Learning system. ([www.portal.qou.edu](http://www.portal.qou.edu))

## **Student Support Services**

Student Support Services comprise of many facilities and activities which were intended to make learning process easier and more interesting for the students (Sharma, 2007, p. 4). In this study, Student Support Services for students comprised of: (1) Services of Receiving New Students. (2) Services Relating to Student Academic Supervisors. (3) Learning Resources Services. (4) Training Services.(5) Services to Resolve Various Student Problems. (6) Services of Community Development for Students.(7) Registration Services. (8) Services of Educational Evaluation. (9) Learning Support Services. (10) Services of University Systems. (11) Services of Public Relations and Media and (12) Services of University Building. **For Full Time Academic Supervisors:** (1) Admission Services. (2) Academic Guidance Services. (3) Academic Supervision Services. (4) Financial Aids Services. (5) Library and knowledge Resources Services.



## **1.26. CONCLUSION**

This research study could find out some student support services, provided by Al – Quds Open University of Palestine. This will help students of different universities, researcher and community at large.

To conclude, researcher would like to say that, we desperately need an increase in quality and quantity of educational research and especially devoted to learners' services. Further, it must involve and be co-directed by practitioners so that results would inspire practical improvements. To achieve this goal, we need to fight much less about the various research paradigms that were available and learn to integrate all research paradigms – extracting value and meaning from each as it provides effective tools to answer our many problems. The emergence of developmental or design-based research seems to offer a promising new methodology which can effectively use all research methodologies, in a process which follows interventions from literature and theory based researches, to multi-mode data collection to implementation and adoption studies. Development of such a methodology gives promise for creation and sustenance of a vibrant research culture in distance education. Cultures are not formed quickly but once established and nourished; they would provide sustaining impetus for collective action which is desperately needed in our mission of providing quality educational opportunity to every inhabitant of our global home.

# **Chapter II**



## **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

## **CHAPTER II**

### **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

#### **2.0. INTRODUCTION**

The Scientific establishment of any research study calls for being acquainted with as many as possible of prior studies relating to student support services extended to distance education learners. Unfortunately, there have been few Arab studies pertaining directly to this field. After reviewing Arab studies in the field of distance higher education, it appears that most of these studies tackled different issues which were related directly to student support services.

It is a fact that, international studies have investigated student support services for distance learners are few. These studies have focused on dual-pattern institutions (traditional universities that provide programs for distance learning). Thus, any study of mono-pattern institutions or open universities in this field has not been found.

Foreign studies contained various student support services needed by distance learners as well as the categorization of these services into identical groups regardless of the institutions they enrolled in. These studies vary in their methods, topics and ideas, but their benefits are limited to their contribution to defining precisely as much as possible distance learners' needs in the domain of student support services. Related studies have been classified in two categories; viz., Studies conducted in India and International studies. Following is a presentation of previous studies in a descending chronology as well as a comparison among these studies and the current study. The implications for the present study have been drawn from the review of related literature and presented in the end of this chapter.

## **2.1. STUDIES CONDUCTED IN INDIA**

**Sesharatnam (1994)** studied "Multi Media instructional System in Distance Education: A Case Study of Dr. BRAOU" was a major study to find out the media instruction in distance education with reference to BRAOU. The objectives among others include, studying the role of audio and video cassettes and integration / non-integration of print and non-print media methods followed for instruction in BRAOU. Major findings of the study were: in spite of the high potential of radio broadcasts majority of the respondents were not able to listen to them and failed to appreciate the supplementary nature of radio counselling. The potential of videocassette was also not fully exploited by the students of the University. The author has suggested the use of electronic media for integrating the same with print material and equipping the study centre with audio and video infrastructure to enhance effectiveness of multi-media instruction. Staff involved should be properly trained.

**Basu (1996)** studied "Regular Telecast by IGNUO Feedback from Students study was aimed to find out media habited, utilization of media infrastructure at study centres, usefulness of telecast of lessons and student reactions on various components of the programmes. Study found that many students were not aware of telecasts and did not watch them, management students watched television more and undergraduate students listened to radio and vice-versa. Because, the former were employed, aged and were in higher income group than the later in all respects. Students were facing some problems in utilizing the media faculties at the study centre. Telecast time was not convenient to many and it would be better if a repeat telecast were arranged. The suggestions given by the students were: broadcasting lessons in a mother tongue, undergraduate students prefer audio programs because they had access to

radio than television, updating of programs with latest material. He also suggested pre-test and post-test of programs and close cooperation of media experts with course teams.

**Rathore (1997)** compared students' perceptions about the quality and cost-effectiveness and satisfaction with feedback they got through: written correspondence; face-to-face sessions; and non-contiguous interaction on electronic media. The survey received responses from 529 of 2,500 active students of the German Fern University (FEU) and 653 of 2,500 active students of the Indian Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU). Comparative analysis revealed a number of significant differences that supported the hypothesis that material development of a society resulted in better support to students in distance education. In general, FEU was found to provide its students better feedback than IGNOU. FEU students found feedback from all forms of non-contiguous communication to be significantly more cost effective than IGNOU students. Feedback through computer-marked assignments was better than tutor-marked assignments at FEU and it was least qualitative and cost effective at IGNOU, reflecting the impact of industrialization in Germany on distance education. Another support for this contention was that, although qualitatively the two universities did not differ significantly in tutor-marked assignments to students, FEU students perceived it to be more cost effective. Distance students in both universities viewed face-to-face sessions very positively.

**Gaba(2000)** studied individual learner's goals to pursue the program, their perception of the value of the distance education degree, their program completion; and perception of employability of their respective distance education program. Study found that, most of respondents joined

distance education system because of its flexible characteristics and with the purpose of mainly getting a job and using ICT in ODL would help to update existing skills of learners and also to generate new skills among them. Further, education could raise the employment opportunities in many ways as it helped to develop necessary skills, attitude and motivation to match opportunity-wage-employment as well as self-employment. In that study, most of students perceived that they would utilise their degree in pursuing higher education and would also eventually get a job.

**Suckumar(2001)** studied "IGNOU" Interactive Radio Counseling: A study was aimed to find out utilization of interactive radio counselling by students and general public. Out of the sample, majority were male, married, came from urban area and were undergraduate students. The study found that though the subject topic was announced well in advance for radio counseling, number of questions or clarifications asked by the students on the subject matter, delivered by experts was very low. Instead the number of questions related to pre-entry qualifications, admission process fee structure etc, was very high. Majority respondents used phone from home to contact the radio studios and others got the information about the programs from newspapers, followed by study centres. Majority were not aware of topic of the programs, prior to the broadcast, even though repeated radio announcements were made on radio about the programs topic. Respondents felt that their interactions with resource persons were very limited but the time slot was appropriate. On the whole, the program was interactive and by breaking a new ground in the field of education in a country. The study had shown among many other components of student support services, interactive radio program seemed to be more attractive to students and general public.

**Passi&Mishra (2004)** studied the process used for selecting research areas and methodological approaches in distance education in India. Experts from field of distance education in India were interviewed at length with an aim of collecting qualitative data, on opinion of process-issues for selecting areas for research, research design and appropriate methodological approaches in distance education. Data collected from these interviews were subjected to content analysis triangulation and peer consultation techniques were used for cross-checking and data verification. While the findings and recommendations of this study had limited application in the sense it could be used in a specific context, outlined in this study. Respondents in this study nonetheless, revealed pressing need for more process-oriented research, in examining media and technology, learners and learning and distance learning evaluation processes. Research yielded interesting empirical findings & also determined that a mixed approach which involved quantitative and qualitative methods was more appropriate for conducting research in distance education in India. Qualitative evidence from the research also indicated that respondents interviewed, felt that the emphasis should be placed on an interdisciplinary and systemic research, over that of traditional disciplinary research. Research methods such as student self-reporting, extensive and highly targeted interviews, conversation and discourse analysis were determined to be useful for data collection.

**Sharma (2007)** conducted a study entitled "Student Support Services in Distance Learning System: A Case of DDE, Maharshi Dayanand University". Purpose of providing quality education at doorstep and meeting needs of students and other facilities provided by university. He concluded "Open and Distance Learning (ODL) System was innovative in nature. It relaxed entry qualifications; used specially designed learning

materials and modern educational technologies, provided Student Support Service (SSS) and applied advanced methods of evaluation. If learners were not fully aware of this system before joining, they might find themselves in an unfamiliar situation.”

## **2.2. STUDIES IN OTHER COUNTRIES**

**Judith (1998)** wrote a paper entitled “Beyond Access: Student Perspectives on Support Service Needs in Distance Learning” she described in her study, support service- needs and assessments of distance learners at three Canadian bi-modal universities (i.e., offering degree- credit courses on-campus and through distance education). A student profile was developed and compared with previous descriptions. From student data, a model of support services for distance learners emerged. Recommendations for further development of support services for distance education students at Canadian bi-modal universities were also included. The survey included 224 Canadian distance education students, 81% were women, 70% enrolled for career reasons and most were of age 24 to 50. Desired support services included information about getting those started in distance education, communication with instructors and students, a learning center, and career assistance.

**Fan ,et al (1999)** in their paper entitled "Effective student support services – An achievement-oriented approach" They pointed out that the provision of support services for students was an important component of distance education. Evidences existed to suggest that there was a positive relationship between students’ academic performance and effective use of student support systems. In light of this, it was a matter of concern that large number of students’ either chose not to make optimum use of some or all of these services or did not know how to use them effectively.



Consequently, it was important to understand more about students' perceptions and use of support systems in order to maximize effectiveness of these to enhance students' performance. In order to gain more understanding about a relationship between achievement and use of student support services. Paper compared a group of high achieving students' knowledge about use of and satisfaction with a range of student support services to those of a group of low achievers. Responses to a questionnaire survey indicated that apart from face-to-face sessions, use of other services was low for both groups. A follow-up interview with a sample of the students explored whether or not, they perceived support offered by these services was in fact useful in helping them to address problems which affected their achievement or whether they turned to other sources to address these problems. The results suggested that for effective student support, related students' characteristics such as educational background should be taken into consideration. For students with higher educational qualifications, time and motivation were identified as major problems which differentiated high from low achievers. For students with lower qualifications, in addition to the above, anxiety about tests and examinations and awareness of support services as well as seeking help for the anxiety was among the major factors. Based on these findings, it was proposed to develop training programs which helped students to improve their study skills and time management. In addition, promoting awareness of available support services and strengthening the student counseling could be an important key for enhancing students' achievement.

**Jackson (2000)** undertook a study entitled "Challenges to Student Support Services in American Higher Education". The purpose of this study was to identify basic student support services for distance learners

in American Higher Education. Furthermore, this study resulted in several recommendations as to how these services could be distributed to distance learning community which was developing and expanding all the time. The study used Delphi technique which was applied to 21 experts selected by universities. Also, specialists in distance education and its programs as well as specialists in students' affairs were chosen. Delphi's four rounds were computer-based designed.

Through a series of electronic surveys, the respondents agreed on 47 student support services which were basic for distance learners. These services were re-classified in following groups:

- 1- Recruitment and enrollment services.
- 2- Academic support services.
- 3- Services of educational materials and search sources.
- 4- Career development services.
- 5- Community development services.
- 6- Evaluation services.
- 7- Financial services.
- 8- Technical support services.

**Concerning findings of the study, they included:**

- 1- Student Support Services were a crucial element in distance learning.
- 2- Students Affairs submitted little to meet distance students' needs.
- 3- Distance Education providers had a developed base for student support services- but they were not well known outside distance learning field.
- 4- Regional Academic Accreditation agencies had to assess distance students' support services.
- 5- Dual-Pattern Institutions (traditional and distance education) became increasingly involved in presenting distance learning programs, without

having until now a suitable pattern to provide distance learners with their necessary support services.

**Vallejo (2001)** undertook a study entitled "Quality in Distance Education: Student Support Services and their Role in Student Satisfaction". This study was accounted by fact that distance education was expanding at a rapid pace in higher education institutions in the United States and in rest of the world. Of special concern among higher education practitioners was question of how to assure quality in distance education programs. This concern had in turn promulgated a vast amount of research and had fostered considerable debate about the advantages and disadvantages of distance education. This dissertation study presented: (1) an exploration of student support services that distance learners receive at a major research university, namely, Bay University in the United States and (2) how these services effected students' satisfaction with a distance education program offered there.

Study was framed under the Engagement Theory of Quality which was developed based on the idea, that high quality programs provide students with enriching and positive learning experiences which led to growth and development.

This study followed a Case Study in the frame of qualitative method. The study was applied to an intended sample of distance learners, seeking MA degree in electronic engineering in Bay University.

Results showed that Student Support Services available for distance learners in a program under study were quite comprehensive and varied. Students were provided with academic, administrative, and technical support that helped them to succeed in their studies. Students tended to express their satisfaction in terms of certain services, they found more useful for their studies. Student support services available in this distance

education program contributed for creating a quality learning environment.

The results in this study showed, three major implications for distance education practice as follows:

1) Students' characteristics and motivation played an important role in students' satisfaction and success. Students at different levels could be expected to have different needs and skills. Practitioners not only needed to be aware of these different needs but also had a responsibility to help and support all students through their distance education experience.

2) In distance education as in traditional education, establishing and maintaining quality programs depended on people's investment of time, in the provision of services to students and other stakeholders.

3) In order to have a theory of quality for distance education; it was important to take into account unique characteristics of distance education. The study of quality in distance education could not continue to rely on characteristics and experience of traditional education. Since differences between traditional and distance education were evident, it was important to start creating a theory of quality for distance education that embodied its inherent characteristics.

**Bayless (2001)** undertook a study entitled "What are the Non-Academic Needs of Distance Learners?" This study was to prove that distance learning was a fast-growing method of delivery in higher education and literature about distance learning was rich with information about learning and course design. However, there was little information about non-academic support services that universities can and should provide for distance students. This study addressed that gap in the literature, by exploring non-academic needs of distance learners.

Students and faculty members involved with distance learning at four year institutions in the fall of 2000 were asked to identify what, if any, needs distance learners have outside classrooms. Specifically, an original web-based survey was designed to identify 34 possible non-academic needs. Respondents were asked to rate an importance of those needs in the success of distance learners, accessibility of services to meet those needs and when needs presented themselves to distance learners.

Findings indicated that non-academic needs of distance learners were very similar to those of campus-based students. Most important needs were basic: information about institution and program, a way to purchase books, a contact person at an institution and academic advising. More traditional developmental needs such as leadership development, experience with diversity and career services were important to respondents, pursuing Bachelor's degrees. Also, another finding showed that services to meet the needs were currently not easily accessible. Most needs, present themselves, throughout a student's academic career.

Thus, this study recommended that institutions involved with distance learning should consider addressing basic needs first. If an institution targeted a large number of students pursuing Bachelor degrees at a distance, they might also add services to meet more traditional developmental needs.

**Magnussen, JR (2003)** undertook a study entitled "Needed Support Services in Distance Education Environment and the Ability of Net-based Quality of Services to distribute them". Purpose of the study was to define a number of student services designed to be basic via listing according to Delphi technique and then to identify which of these services was distributable by using non-analogous net services. To achieve this, a population of a study composed of 20 experts in distance

education was defined where their perceptions on this matter were targeted. Eight of these experts accepted to participate in this study.

Preliminary round of research was based on a prior study conducted in Texas University. Delphi list was composed of 47 student support services which were submitted to the committee. An agreement of views was detected in the first round on approximately 11 services. This agreement occurred when the experts rated the service with 4 points (agreeing) or 5 points (strongly agreeing) on Lickert's fivefold measure. In the second round, every participant's comments in first round were shared by others and at the same time every participant's degree in first round was compared with total group degree. Afterwards, the list demanded a re-estimation of the prior characteristics, disagreed upon. After the second round, two services reached the level required to be assured statistically. In third and last round the list aimed to discuss the services which can be distributed by using analogous or non-analogous net applications or by mixing both. In addition, list demanded exemplifying how such services can be given out.

In final outcome of this study, forty-five student services were identified (in 8 groups). Eight of these services were considered likelier to be dispensed through analogous service net opposite to non-analogous one. Most of these services were related to counseling and training area.

Main services, study arrived at were:

- 1- Recruitment and enrolment services.
- 2- Academic support services.
- 3- Services of educational materials and search sources.
- 4- Career development services.
- 5- Community development services.
- 6- Quality assurance and evaluation services.
- 7- Financial services.

8- Instructors' development services.

9- Technical support services.

**Cain et. al. (2003)** undertook a study entitled " Support Services That Matter: An Exploration of the Experiences and Needs of Graduate Students in a Distance Learning Environment". Purpose of this case study was to investigate 1) support needs, 2) experiences and 3) expectations of a group of graduate distance learners. The method of inquiry involved qualitative research techniques of interviews and document analysis of a representative sample of distance learning students in United States.

Results revealed three important findings. First, most students were not likely to take advantage of student support services. Second, students perceived their peers as important sources of academic and social support. Lastly, students expected their instructor to be a support resource and to be knowledgeable about on-campus academic and administrative services.

**Hamdan (2004)** investigated an importance of open and distance education in social, political and cultural development. He inspired to apply new technical methods in IT, to bestow new educational services which suited many sectors of people such as households, youth, elders, handicaps and all of them, looked for achieving their educational inspirations. Since, they lost their opportunities in conventional education. The results showed that an open education could differ in many aspects- social and human development such as flexibility in admission and registration, gather between work and study, development of skills, democratization of education through various educational programs.

**Darwazeh (2004)** investigated whether students of Al-Quds Open University felt, distanced and what were factors behind their feelings? Were they due to physical factors, or to psycho-social, academic and administrative factors? Random sample of 318 undergraduates was taken. Restrictive and analytic statistics were used to analyze the data. The analysis revealed following results;

- \* The general mean of Al-Quds Open University students' feeling of distance was ( $x=3.1$ ) out of (5) points.

- \*The students' feeling of distance was due to significantly ( $p\}.000$ ) to the academic factors ( $x=3.4$ ) more than to the physical ( $x=3.03$ ), psycho-social( $x=3.01$ ) or the administrative ( $x=2.96$ ) factors.

**Peach (2005)** wrote a paper entitled "Ensuring student success-the role of support services in improving the quality of the student learning experience" based on premise that universities have an obligation to provide adequate student support services, such as learning assistance (that is, assistance with academic writing and other study skills) and that in order to be effective, such services must be responsive to wider policy and social implications of student attrition and retention. The paper outlined briefly, some of the factors which influenced the development of learning assistance practices in Australia and America. This was followed by an account of experiences, at one Australian metropolitan university where learning assistance service provision shifted from a decentralized faculty-based model to a centralized model of service delivery. As part of his doctoral research (Author, 2003), he asked stakeholders including academicians, librarians, students and learning advisers in semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions to describe role of centralised learning assistance services in improving quality of the student learning experience to identify problems and



tensions in service provisions and to suggest ways of improving work practices, so that the student learning experience is enhanced. Several problem clusters emerged from the data and this paper considered the problem cluster referred to contextualised versus de-contextualised learning assistance. It meant that stakeholders identified problems in centralised service provisions such as the relevance of generic learning assistance services to students struggling with specific course related demands; the apparent tensions between challenging students and assisting students at risk of failure; variations in the level of collaboration between learning advisers and academic staff in supporting students in the learning environment. Theoretical modeling derived from the tools made available through cultural historical activity theory and expansive visibilisation (Engeström&Miettinen, 1999) were used to analyse the problem cluster of contextualised versus decontextualised learning assistance and to identify ways of improving service delivery, in order to reduce obstacles to students' completion and hopefully ensure students' success.

**Zieger (2005)** undertook a study entitled "The Relationship between Student Orientation Programs that Support Community Building and Retention of Distance Learners". It defended that distance education was, undeniably, an enduring and rapidly expanding element in higher education in United States. Growth and popularity of distance education had a potential to significantly increase institutional enrollment and revenue. Retention, however, had been indicated as one of the greatest weaknesses in online instruction. Universities were struggling to understand what causes some students to withdraw in the hope of being able to improve student completion rates.

Traditional higher education institutions developed orientation programs to help students who succeed and persisted in their studies. The orientation was found to be one intervention strategy that was proven to have a substantial impact on student retention.

Purpose of this study was to examine relationship between a student orientation program and university's retention of distance learners. Many mixed methods were followed to conduct the research on Sewano is Private University as a case study through using a number of survey instruments and interviews directed to a sample composed of:

- 1- Two cadres of adult learners of different characteristics and backgrounds enrolled to obtain the doctorate degree in education technology in the university (cadres 8 and 9).
- 2- Personnel who were influential on orientation program, program counselors and college guides.

This study raised three questions:

- 1) Would orientation services for online students met their needs and increase retention?
- 2) What components were essential in an orientation program for online students? The study defined these in three basic elements: academic sides, technology and community development.
- 3) What was influence of this orientation, if it existed, on online graduates regarding student retention?.

**Nada (2005)** undertook a study entitled “The Unique Characteristics of Al-Quds Open University as Seen by It's Students in Northern Palestine” and the study aimed to show the unique characteristics of Al-Quds Open University and to analyze the effects of the following variables (sex, job, place of residence, education level, and area). The researcher selected a random stratified sample of 769 male and female students for this study.

Descriptive method was used in this study and a questionnaire consisted of 64 items was designed to collect data which was analyzed by One Way-ANOVA, Balanced Means, Standard Deviation, Variance Analysis of Multi Repeated Measurement, (t) Test, and LSD Test. Study results showed that highest mean was in area of quality of participating students and the methods of teaching, used followed by an ability to overcome a political crises and flexibility in terms of time.

**Kahrhoff (2005)** undertook a study entitled "Exploring the Relationship between Adult Development and Support Service Needs of Online Graduate Students". This study was justified, on the one hand, by the fact that understanding the support needs of distant students was viewed by scholars and accreditation agencies as an important component of successful distance learning programs. On the other hand, the support needs of traditional college-age students (18-22 age groups) were well studied and human development theories provided a framework for understanding and meeting their needs contrary to distant learners.

This study was conducted to investigate whether one can apply what was known about supporting traditional students to the online graduate student population by addressing three questions: (1) what were the support needs of online graduate students? (2) What was the developmental achievement of these students? And (3) what was the relationship between the support needs, of online graduate students and their developmental achievement?

To answer these questions, support needs and developmental task achievements of students in five online graduate degree programs at Webster University, was examined by using two survey instruments: 1) The Adult Learner Needs Assessment Survey and 2) The Student Developmental Task and Lifestyle Assessment.

Results indicated that, participants were adult learners and had same demographic and affective characteristics as other distant students (Mean age = 33.9 years). They generally required little or no support, with an exception of Career Development (Mean = 2.93). These adult participants had generally reached a higher level of developmental task achievement than college seniors, especially male participants. A canonical correlation analysis indicated that students who had a higher level of developmental task achievement required less support.

**Raphael (2006)** undertook a study entitled "A Needs Assessment: A Study of Perceived Need for Student Services by Distance Learners". The purpose of this study was 1) To examine what online degree seekers expressed as their perceived needs with regard to student support services which existed for students attending on-campus classes and 2) To what extent online degree seekers, at the undergraduate and graduate levels, expressed that their student support services needs were being met.

Study followed descriptive survey method where sample of participants in this study consisted of 272 online degree-seeking students from various colleges and institutions in the United States. All the participants were from four-year institutions. Five participating schools were public, while one was private.

Study used a survey which included demographic questions about the participants as well as a need inventory, consisted of 49 two-part questions. Questions asked students to what extent they felt (a) distance learners need the service and (b) was the service available at their institution?.

As stated above, inventory consisted of 49 questions, split into 10 categories: Distance Learning – General; Pre-Admission Information, Administrative and Academic Program Information; Orientation Services; Academic Advising; Career Services; Services for Students with Disabilities; Personal Counseling; Academic Support Services; Opportunities for Community; and Bookstore Services.

Study resulted in following conclusions:

- 1) The top five reported student services were listed according to descending value of their means as follows:

<i>Item</i>	<i>Section</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Clear, complete, and timely information regarding curriculum requirements	Academic Advising	4.56	.541
An online bookstore which included online textbook lookup and ordering	Bookstore Services	4.56	.587
Online payment and tracking of orders at the online bookstore	Bookstore Services	4.49	.578
Access to individual academic advising	Academic Advising	4.49	.656
An online bookstore clearly describes all delivery methods.	Bookstore Services	4.48	.597

Similarly, five student services perceived by online learners as needed by distance learners were as follows: (presented in increasing order of mean values)

<i>Item</i>	<i>Section</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Orientation as a required, for credit course	Orientation Services	2.34	1.167
A distance learning student government	Opportunities for Community	2.89	1.130
A website that links to other colleges and universities counseling center sites	Personal Counseling	3.21	1.019
Access to information about health and wellness programs and other health care issues	Personal Counseling	3.33	1.026
Access to self-help tools, online links, and information regarding locally based counseling services	Personal Counseling	3.41	.997

2) Paired t-tests indicated that for all but one item, there was a significant difference between perceived need versus perceived availability of services. The only item not found to be significant was, *Orientation as a required, for credit course* . For each significant pair, the mean of need scores was rated higher than the mean of availability of services scores. The following table demonstrates top five differences in means between the estimation of need importance and its availability:

<b>Service</b>	<b>Difference in Means</b>
Information regarding learning assistance, tutorial services, supplemental instruction, and other academic support services.	1.182
Access to career self-assessments with tutorials.	1.115
Access to career services that include self-assessments, goal and decision-making assistance, educational and career planning, and job search information.	1.083
Access to online academic advising guides.	1.065
An online comprehensive job search handbook.	1.058

On the other hand, the bottom five differences in means between the mean of need and availability scores were reported in descending rank order as the following table shows:

<b>Service</b>	<b>Difference in Means</b>
Newsletters and announcements regarding institution related information.	.349
Online access to the catalog, student handbook, and information related to services provided by the institution.	.280
A distance learning student government.	.261
Academic honesty policy and information regarding confidentiality prior to enrollment.	.153
Orientation as a required, for credit course.	.080

**Klukas (2006)** undertook a study entitled "Online Student Support Services at Wisconsin Colleges and Universities". Purpose of this study was to examine and describe need, availability, importance and accessibility of online student services for students enrolled in distance education in Wisconsin's public two and four year colleges and universities, as perceived by student service administrative personnel.

An existing survey was modified and mailed to student services administrators. Twenty-nine surveys were returned. Survey consisted of

demographic and student services questions, asking respondents to rate the importance, availability, and effectiveness of each of twelve student support services. Two open-ended questions, asked about the benefits and challenges to provide online student services. Results were:

1) All institutions, responding, offered distance education courses and some online student services. 2) Offering twelve services, in an online format was viewed as important to very important. 3) basic information and registration was considered as most important. 4) Career services and tutoring considered least important. 5) Basic information on classes, application for admission, financial aid, library services and registration were most commonly available. 6) Bookstore services, academic advising, orientation to online learning, and tutoring were the least commonly provided services. 7) Institutions, not offering an application for admission, financial aid, library services, and registration online planned to offer those services electronically in the future. 8) Tutoring was not likely to be offered online. 9) Effectiveness of 12 student services ranged from moderately effective to effective- 10) Registration, library services and basic information were most effective services offered online and 11) Academic advising and career services were least effective.

**Cunningham (2006)** undertook a study entitled "College and University Faculty and Student Rating of Distance Learning Support Services". This study investigated faculty and student ratings of distance learning support services, to establish a rank order list of essential support services, in a number of private and public universities and colleges in Texas in the United States. a study looked at broad foundational areas of distance education, role of higher education partnerships and consortiums and major policy players guiding the



evolution of distance education. Study also focused on the distance education areas of instructional design, infrastructure costs and innovative technology-enhanced support services which used web-Portals for customer relationship management.

Study found out those students, faculty and technology support services were critical to institution's mission of recruiting and retaining quality students and faculty members- especially in a global, technology-driven marketplace. Just as implementation and expansion of distance education had substantial costs so do initiatives to provide integrated support services for distance learners.

Study participants included 302 distance education faculty and 299 distance education students, representing 37 of 71 Texas private and public colleges and universities identified by Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, Distance education providers. Participants were asked to rate an importance of each of 64 items, within nine categories of support services related to distance education. Nine categories were: (1) Recruitment and Enrollment Services, (2) Academic Support Services, (3) Educational Materials and Research Resources, (4) Career Development Services, (5) Community Development Services, (6) Evaluative Services, (7) Financial Services, (8) Faculty Development Resources, and (9) Technical Support services.

Results of this study provided ranked list of support services considered essential by faculty and student participants. These services included: recruitment and enrollment forms, graduate services, career consultation, minorities and disabled services, financial aid, services linked to governmental, judiciary and legal authorities, health services, university orientation, personal consultation, university fees payment, campus services, information about scholarships, determining student level, student retention services, veterans assistance, academic advising,

measurement and evaluation services, bookstores services, certificates, services of cumulative average reports, programs of international studies, library services, studying and writing skills, publishing services, self-evaluation and tests, computer laboratories management, e-mail and internet services, hardware and software services, assistance demand offices, online educational orientation, collaborative training, foundational support system, development of abilities and talents, curricula development and academic courses distribution.

Analyses also showed a difference between faculty and student responses to a survey. Additionally, two demographic questionnaires- one for faculty and one for students were used to collect data on selected characteristics of respondents.

**Sim,et. al (2006)** investigated distance learners' satisfaction with support system, provided to them by a distance learning institution in Malaysia . Their study was based on the Simpson's model of the support system in distance education. Their paper proposed research framework on students' satisfaction of a quality which considered of two factors- academic and the administrative. Satisfaction, with a quality of various dimensions of academic and administrative learners' support system was measured; these dimensions ranged from an initial process of registration as a student, their orientation, course related support system such as the academic organizer, a course guide book, video conferencing, an annual residential intensive course, library and regional centres for scoring achievement and evaluation process. Factorial analysis was conducted to determine inter-relationships amongst dimensions and to identify a set of latent dimensions which were not readily observed. Results of factorial analysis revealed that satisfaction with the quality of the learners support,

considering of the administrative and the academic dimensions, was consistent with Simpson model of the support system.

**Snoddy (2007)** undertook a study entitled "Impacts of Instant Messaging for Virtual Office Hours on Student Satisfaction, Achievement, and Retention in Online Education". A study proceeded from the fact that, asynchronous distance education has become part of higher education. As this delivery method develops, new tools to provide quality education are adopted. Study examined, if there was a significant difference in distance learners' satisfaction, achievement and retention between students who used instant messenger to communicate with the instructor and students who did not. Students enrolled in an Associate Degree program in Huntington Junior College, were randomly divided into two sections, within the course. One section had an access to instant messenger and the other section did not. Students, then, completed a survey to report student satisfaction levels. Grades and retention rates were reported by instructors. A chi-square analysis was used to get results. The study did not find any significant difference between the groups.

**Collins (2007)** undertook a study entitled "Online Student Support Services: Perceived Problems and Strategies to Affect Change" Objective of this research was to evaluate student support services for online students. This objective was achieved through comparing perceived needs of the students to the availability of services as identified by administrators at the colleges. The services evaluated, fall into six major categories including the following:

1) Recruitment and enrollment services 2) Academic support services 3) Access to materials and instructional resources 4) Career development services 5) Financial aid and 6) Technology support services.

This study followed a descriptive method, through a survey and personal interviews. Population of a survey, comprised students enrolled in business and computer information systems, classes at a community college in the southwest United States of America in addition to the administrators of student services in the college. Survey and personal interview covered a variety of online Student Support Services to be evaluated in terms of their degree of interest and availability as follows:

- 1- General information on distance learning courses.
- 2- Help in recruitment and enrollment.
- 3- Advising related to course selection.
- 4- Help in semester registration.
- 5- Information on course technical requirements.
- 6- Special offers on computer and software purchases.
- 7- Help in answering technical questions.
- 8- Distribution of forms relating to needed courses.
- 9- Measurement of prior life learning experiences.
- 10- Personal counseling.
- 11- Information on college policy and measures.
- 12- Contact point in the college to provide public help.
- 13- Information on academic course requirements.
- 14- Permanent contact with the instructor concerning the semester program.
- 15- Permanent contact with other learners.
- 16- Personal (direct) contact to help in educational needs.
- 17- Help in writing process.
- 18- Help in mathematical preparation.

- 19- Help in the field of self-confidence.
- 20- Provision of clear criteria for academic performance.
- 21- Information on getting the academic textbook.
- 22- General directions on library and other learning sources.
- 23- A specialized official in verifying problems and responding to complaints.
- 24- Information on academic affairs.
- 25- Continual acquaintance on college events.
- 26- Continual acquaintance on students' achievements.
- 27- Financial aid.
- 28- Information on study fees and bills.

This research showed a relationship between availability and accessibility to online student support services through investigation of quality control, accreditation, student satisfaction, availability and reliability of services, organizational structure, faculty and student awareness, technology issues and support from administration.

**Belbeesi (2007)** in her study entitled ' The effectiveness of Al-Quds Open University Students in using techniques and skills of the Open Education'. The study aimed to give an approximate and clear idea about open education in order to inject the concept of open education in the minds of the students through skills, techniques and strategies of open education.

Study consisted of 1890 students. Researcher took a random sample from the size of the study society which was near about 5% and related to the gender, academic programs and the level of the study. Researcher used list of forms- especially for the study which was dealt with Lickert Scale. Following results were issued from study: An appearance of study results

that there was a good understanding which was related to the open education and academic supervisors. Study also indicated that the students had weak ability in using the modern technological methods.

**Axelson (2007)** undertook a study entitled "The Use and Value of Student Support Services: A Survey of Undergraduate Students in Online Classes". Undergraduate students enrolled in online classes at University of Wyoming in the United States of America, completed a 61 item online survey. Survey probed students' use and interest in current University of Wyoming support services including orientation, e-mail, financial aid, library resources, bookstore, writing center, disability support, and technology assistance. Students showed their interest in proposed services like students' newspaper, leadership opportunities, clubs and organizations, community and voluntary service activities, personal counseling, mentoring, career advising, academic advising, tutoring, study skills support, and time management.

Survey included closed and open-ended questions. Students comprised accessible population of online undergraduate students. Nearly 46% of the accessible population responded. Approximately 87% of the respondents were Caucasian, Non-Hispanic, 74% were female and 57% lived outside of Laramie, where the main campus was based. The survey produced three major findings. Due to its importance they included: a) academic advising must be improved and should be offer online b) online technology support for students must be expanded.

Based on findings, online academic advising could be improved by assigning students to an advisor who also serves as a case manager. Survey results also supported a recommendation for an interest in financial aid services, tutoring, university library and writing centre.

**Barakat (2009)** undertook study which aimed at the estimations of Al-Quds Open University's strategies for human development, in viewpoint of its teaching staff members in light of variables such as gender, qualification, types of employments and specialization. To achieve this purpose, a questionnaire for measuring human development strategies applied for a sample consisted of 192 teachers from Al-QOU. Results were as under:

- Teachers' estimates for human strategies development in social, economical and political domains were high and it was very high in the cultural domain.
- There was no significant difference in teaching staff members estimating for the strategies for human development (social, cultural, economical and political) due to gender variable.
- There was significant difference in teaching staff members estimating for the strategies for human development (social and cultural) due to qualification variable in favor of PhD degree teachers.

Whereas there were no significant differences in economical and political strategies due to this variable.

- There were significant differences in teaching staff members estimating for strategies of human development( social, cultural , and economic) due to specialization variable in favor of educational and computer specialization whereas there were no significant differences in political & strategy due to this variable.

**Farajallahi and Moenika (2010)** conducted a study entitled "The Comparative study of Students Support Services of Payame Noor University of Iran, AllamaIqbal Open University of Pakistan and United Kingdom Open University ".The presented research was conducted for purpose of comparing student support services in Payame Noor

University of Iran with those of United Kingdom Open University and AllamaIqbal Open University of Pakistan. Research methods were EX-Post facto. Statistical population of a research consisted of students of Payame Noor University of Tehran province who were at least third semester students in an academic year 2008 – 2009, students of AllamaIqbal Open University of Pakistan and students of United Kingdom Open University .Using appropriate taxonomic method, 1270 students were selected from Payame Noor University. Sample size of United Kingdom Open University and AllamaIqbal Open University of Pakistan were 200 students from each one of item and five –point questionnaire (likert scale) with reliability of  $\alpha = .93$  in Iran,  $\alpha = .87$  in United Kingdom Open University and AllamaIqbal Open University. Data from research was collected electronically as well as in form of printed and filed questionnaire. Using analysis of variance, results showed that, there were significant differences among the three universities regarding Student Support Services.

**Kangai,et al (2011)** in their paper entitled "Student Perceptions on the Quality and Effectiveness of Guidance and Counselling Services at the Zimbabwe Open University" presented in a symposium held in Zimbabwe . They pointed out that academic guidance and counselling was emerging as a crucial aspect of student support services especially for distance education students. Current debate on student support services in general and counseling in particular had now shifted attention of researchers from questions like: “Do distance education students need counseling?” and “Should a distance education institution provide counseling services to its students?” to: “What are counseling needs of distance education students?” and “What counseling services should a distance education institution provide and how?”. Primary



purpose of a present study was to demonstrate how an Open and Distance Learning institution could develop and provide quality and effective guidance and counseling services to students through use of a four-step model. Data for the present study was collected from a random sample of 200 students, registered at the ZOU for an academic year 2010, through a survey which employed questionnaires and interviews. Major findings of the study were: ZOU had institutionalized guidance and counselling as a key support service for ODL students by setting up a student support services unit (SSSU). Majority of students, 80% of whom lived and worked in rural areas, needed quality and effective guidance and counseling and general academic support services in the following areas: distribution of learning materials (modules), management of coursework (assignments), tutorials, processing of examinations, communication and individualized counselling.

**Saifi and Mehmood( 2011)** investigated Student Support Services provided by AllamaIqbal Open University, Pakistan and it's deficiencies. All officers of BPS-17 and above of Directorate of Regional Services and Directorate of Student Advisory and Counseling Services and 50% of 100 tutors for the semesters Spring and Autumn 2008, were included in study. For purpose of collecting data, three questionnaires were developed; each has it's own separate sample. Data were collected through questionnaires. Responses were tabulated, analyzed and calculated using mean scores. Major findings of the study revealed that (1) Tutors received intimation letters from region about tutorship in time; (2) Tutors discourage late submission of assignments; (3) Regional heads occasionally visited tutorials; (4) DRS plans, coordinated and monitored the work of regional centers; (5) Regions were equipped with modern A.V. aids; (6) DRS was provided with sufficient funds; (7) Students

Advisory and Counseling facilitated the learners. It was concluded that tutors discouraged late submission of assignments, regions solved problems of students, Student Advisory Services facilitated distance learners and staff of Students Advisory were trained. Recommendations were; assignments might be returned under postal cover; regional centers should respond to queries of tutors; DRS should be provided with trained staff; providing transport facilities at DRS; and staff of Students Advisory and Counseling might be trained in their work.

## **2.3. RESEARCH TRENDS**

All studies presented previously, targeted directly to student services in some higher distance education institutions in different countries. These previous studies varied in terms of:

### **A) Subject:**

- There were studies which explored status of student services and studies which looked at future of these services while others suggested such services.
- There were studies which classified student services in groups and others which investigated specific ones.

### **B) Method:**

- There were studies which followed survey method, studies which followed qualitative method, studies which used case study technique and others Delphi technique for future studies.
- There were studies which used questionnaires and others used interviews and open speech.
- Previous studies targeted a variety of respondents who ranged from student population, administrators, experts or instructors to more than one population of the afore mentioned.
- Some studies' sample was random while others' was planned.
- Some studies accounted for the participants' characteristics.
- All past studies were conducted in non-Arab countries and environments contrary to the current one in which researcher was interested.
- All previous studies were conducted on higher distance education institutions of the dual pattern, i.e. traditional plus distance education. Whereas the current study was conducted on a higher education institution of the open and mono-mode.

More than half of the previous studies contained a classification of student services. However, these classifications were less detailed than those in the present study.

-Three of the previous studies were restricted to limited student services. As for the current study, it aimed at looking comprehensively at student services.

-Future studies of the previous ones which utilized (Delphi's Technique for Future Studies) were carried out from the beginning of the twenty-first century. This can be explained that higher distance education has crystallized and defined its basic features including student services whose state of affairs need to be investigated as a present study has done.

## **2.4. IMPLICATIONS**

It is clear from related studies that, they had concentrated on different aspects related to Open and Distance Learning system, it's nature, concept etc. On the anther hand, other studies focused on relationship between open learning and human development, gender and empowerment .First part of related studies concentrated on attitudes towards open learning. Other studies concentrated on advantages of open and distance learning. In second part of related studies, concentration was on the relationship between open learning and human development. Some other studies, concentrated on relationship between open learning and empowerment especially of women. There are studies which focused directly on an issue of student support services, provided by open and distance learning for students.

Researcher noticed that, although, there are quite a few studies dealing with open learning and it's relationship with human development and empowerment. But, there is a shortage of studies in Palestine which are dealing with role of an open learning in student support service which gives importance to present research study. It aimed at studying Student Support Services Provided by Al-Quds Open University, Palestine.

# **Chapter III**



## **PLAN AND PROCEDURE OF THE STUDY**

## **CHAPTER III**

### **PLAN AND PROCEDURE OF THE STUDY**

#### **3.0. INTRODUCTION**

This chapter includes a description of the methodology used in this study, method of the study, population and sample as well as tools used and degree of validity and reliability, variables and finally methods of data analysis. The researcher applied well-known statistical techniques for measuring coefficient of determination, t-test and F- Statistics, using a computer software program such as Software Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

A descriptive field approach was used for this study. This approach is to study the phenomenon as it is in real life, analyze it and link it to other similar phenomena, without intervention of the researcher.

#### **3.1. METHOD OF THE STUDY**

The researcher used the descriptive survey methodology; this study is a quantitative research.

#### **3.2. POPULATION OF THE STUDY**

Population of the study included 351 students. According to Al- Quds Open University data in Jenin who are still studying in Al- QOU in Jenin Area of Education, Palestine whether full time academic supervisors who are still teaching in QOU in Jenin Area of Education, Palestine whose number was 40 Full Time Academic Supervisors.

### 3.3. SAMPLE OF THE STUDY

The researcher selected random stratified sample students' which is equal to 5% from each area of place of residence; from total of students whose number was 7020 learners of an academic year 2009-2010.

Following tables show distribution of sample according to variables employed in study.

**Table No (3.1): Distribution of study sample according to the gender variable**

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	166	47.3%
Female	185	52.7%
Total	351	100.0%

Table shows that 47.3% of respondents in this study were male and 52.7% was female.

**Table No (3.2): Distribution of study sample according to the age variable**

Age	Frequency	Percent
Less than 30 years	159	45.3%
years 40 30 -	134	38.2%
More than 40 years	58	16.5%
Total	351	100.0%



Table shows that 45.3% of respondents in this study were less than 30 years, 38.2% between 30-40 years and only 16.5% of respondents were over 40.

**Table No (3.3): Distribution of study sample- percentages-according to Specialization variable;**

<b>Programs</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Technology & Applied Sciences	90	25.6%
Agriculture	22	6.3%
Social and Family Development	61	17.4%
Economic and Management Sciences	78	22.2%
Education	100	28.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>351</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Table shows that 25.6% of respondents in the sample study were from Technology & Applied Sciences, 3.6% study were Agriculture, 17.4% were from Social and Family Development, 22.2% were from Economic and Management Sciences and 28.5% were from Education.

**Table No (3.4): Distribution of study sample according to place of residence variable**

<b>Place of Residence</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>City</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>43.0%</b>
<b>village</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>32.2%</b>
<b>Refugee Camps</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>24.8%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>351</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Table shows that 43.0% of respondents in the sample study were living in City, 32.2% were living in village and 24.8% were living in Camps.

**Table No (3.5): Distribution of study sample according to Study Level variable**

Study Level	Frequency	Percent
First year	47	13.4%
Second year	135	38.5%
Third year	86	24.5%
Fourth year	83	23.6%
Total	351	100.0%

Table shows that 13.4% of respondents in the sample were in First year, 38.5% were in Second year, 24.5% were in Third year and 23.6% were in Fourth year.

### **3.4. REASEARCH TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES**

Researcher developed a questionnaire for students to know services by Al-QOU for students. It consisted of 72 items. Moreover, the researcher developed a questionnaire which was composed of 51 items for full time supervisors.

### **3.5. QUESTIONNAIRE'S VALIDITY**

In order to verify ratification of the tool used in the study, they were given to a group of arbitrators from the Department of Education who worked at the Universities of Baroda in India and Al-Quds Open University in Palestine.

Experts were consulted regarding the consistency of the items with domains which were classified the extent and clarity of language. Consequently, the observations were taken into consideration so that they served the purpose of the research and increase it's credibility.

### **3.6. RELIABILITY OF QUESTIONNAIRES**

To examine reliability of **academic supervisors'** study tool, the questionnaires were distributed to 15 full time academic supervisors in Jenin Educational Area. After collecting questionnaires, reliability test was conducted through Cronbach –Alpha for these questionnaires. This questionnaire was composed of 51 items. The items have got overall reliability of 0.8776 degree value and it fulfilled purpose of this study.

To examine reliability of **students'** study tool, questionnaires were distributed to 37 students in Jenin Educational Area. After collecting forms, reliability test was conducted through Cronbach –Alpha for these questionnaires. They were composed of 72 items. Items have got overall reliability of 0.9112 degree value and it fulfilled purpose of the study.

### **3.7. VARIABLES OF STUDY**

Following variables were included in this study.

**Independent variables were:**

**-Gender:** It had two levels: Male - Female.

**- Age: It had three levels:** 1. (less than 30 years). 2. (years from 30-40).  
3. (More than 40 years).

**-Specialization: it had Five levels:** - Technology, Applied Sciences,  
Social development and family, Administrative Sciences, Economics –  
Agriculture, and Education.

**-Place of residence: it had three levels:** - City - Village – Refugee  
Camps.

**- Study Level: it had four levels:-** First Year - Second Year - Third Year  
- Fourth Year .

**Dependent variables were:**

Student Support Services provided by Al-Quds Open University Of  
Palestine.

### **3.8. PROCEDURE OF STUDY**

1) After preparing, finalizing and testing tools of this study, the researcher wrote to the Director of Al Quds Open University in Jenin (see appendix B&C), asking for permission to distribute tools of the study.

- 2) After getting permission, researcher started distributing students' questionnaires in collaboration with the Department of Student's Affairs.
- 3) Researcher started distributing full time academic supervisor's questionnaires.
- 4) Researcher collected back tools from respondents and started the process of data analysis.
- 5) After collecting data, it was analyzed by using Software Package for Social Sciences [SPSS].

### **3.9. DATA COLLECTION**

Data collection is an important part of research. In order to collect requisite data for any theme of research, one has to devise appropriate tools and use suitable measuring techniques. Present study gathered information regarding Student Support Services Provided by Al-Quds Open University of Palestine, in Jenin branch. After reading literature of educational support services provided by Open and Distance Learning, the researcher developed a questionnaire for students to know services by Al-QOU for students consisted of 72 items. Moreover, researcher developed a questionnaire composed of 51 items for full time supervisors.

### **3.10 DATA ANALYSIS**

Following statistical methods were used to describe and analyze data for this study.

1- Specifying percentile estimation for Means as follows:

A- Calculating range of five scales through subtracting minimum the Value from maximum value ( $5-1=4$ ).

B – Calculating (length of limit) through dividing range of scale (4) on a highest value (5) which represent a number of scale mark ( $4 \div 5 = 80.0$ ).

C- Adding length of limit to the lower value in scale specify high limit for it's percentile estimation ( $1+80.0=1.80$ ).

D- Calculating this on all scale values.

So, limits of mean and percentile estimation as shown in table number (3.6) were as follow:

Assumed mean value	1-1.79	1.80 – 2.59	2.60 - 3.39	3.40 – 4.19	4.20 - 5
Questionnaire scale for supervisors	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Questionnaire scale for student	Very low	Low	Medium	High	Very high

Detailed results of findings of the study revealed about the student support services provided by Al-Quds Open University in Palestine based on perspectives of Full Time Academic Supervisors and student support services provided by Al-Quds Open University in Palestine, based on perspectives of students.

This study also tried to find, if effects of the Student Support Services provided by Al-Quds Open University in Palestine, based on perspectives of students which would differ according to following variables: Gender, Age, Specialization, Place of Residence and Study Level.

To simplify results, Student Support Services based on perspectives of student's effect to be **very high** if mean was 4.20 to 5. To be **high** if

Mean was more than 3.4 but less than 4.20 . It was considered **medium**, if mean was more than 2.6 but less than 3.4. To be **Low** if the mean was more than 1.8 but less than 2.6 and to be **very low**, if the mean was more than 1 but less than 1.8.

-To simplify results, the study assumed Student Support Services based on perspectives of full time academic supervisors effect to be **Strongly Agree**, if the mean was 4.20 to 5. **Agree**, if mean was more than 3.4 but less than 4.20. It was considered **Neutral**, if mean was more than 2.6 but less than 3.4. To be **Disagree**, if mean was more than 1.8 but less than 2.6 and to be **Strongly Disagree**, if mean was more than 1 but less than 1.8.

After collecting data, it was analyzed by using Software Package for Social Sciences [SPSS]. After transfer of sample responses of five-degrees to crude degrees. Then, means and S.D. were calculated. In order to answer questions of the study and to examine hypotheses of study, the researcher used T-test, One Way ANOVA test and LSD test for post comparisons.

# **Chapter IV**



## **DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION**



## **CHAPTER IV**

### **DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION**

#### **4.0. INTRODUCTION**

This chapter includes detailed results, findings, the study has revealed about the student support services provided by Al- Quds Open University through answering research questions and examining the hypotheses where the researcher started with results related to research questions first and then result related to the research hypotheses. To simplify the results, a study assumes following scale key:

Assumed mean aluev	1-1.79	1.80 – 2.59	2.60 - 3.39	3.40 – 4.19	4.20 - 5
Questionnaire scale for supervisors	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Questionnaire scale for student	Very low	Low	Medium	High	Very high

#### **4.1. RESULTS RELATED TO ANSWERING THE FIRST QUESTION**

The first question of this research study was "what are the student support services provided by Al-Quds Open University in different subjects based on perspectives of students?".

In order to answer questions of this study, Means and Standard Deviations were calculated to each domain, questions of the domain and total degree.

**A) Result to each domain and it's questions:**

**Results related to the first domain which is Services of Receiving New Students:**

To answer this question, Mean and Standard Deviation were calculated for each item for student's tool, specific field and an ultimate degree for the tool. Following table illustrates the items of the domain.

**Table No. 4.1** shows Means, Standard Deviations and degree of items of the domain (**Services of Receiving New Students**).

<b>Item</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>S.D</b>	<b>Degree</b>
Reception and recognition assembly for new students attended by academic and administrative staff.	<b>4.45</b>	<b>0.840</b>	<b>Very High</b>
The integration of the new student with the university system through granting him a university number.	<b>3.98</b>	<b>0.661</b>	<b>High</b>
Granting the new student a private e-mail to receive all what belongs to him.	<b>3.59</b>	<b>0.800</b>	<b>High</b>
Integrate the new student with university system through granting him a university card.	<b>3.53</b>	<b>0.823</b>	<b>High</b>
Granting the new student a mailbox to receive the journals, textbooks and material stuffs.	<b>3.23</b>	<b>0.845</b>	<b>Medium</b>
Providing students adequate idea on the method of distance education.	<b>3.19</b>	<b>1.017</b>	<b>Medium</b>
<b>Total domain</b>	<b>3.66</b>	<b>0.373</b>	<b>High</b>

The above table shows that mean value and S.D. for total domain related to Services of Receiving New Students were 3.66 and 0.373 which gave **high degree from student's point of view** where it was more than the assumed value 3.40 but less than 4.19 on total domain. Highest

two questions from respondents' point of view were: **firstly**, reception and recognition assembly for new students attended by academic and administrative staff with 4.45 mean value, 0.840 S.D. **Secondly**, the integration of the new student with the university system through granting him a university number with mean value of 3.98 and 0.661 S.D. Researcher attributed this to increased demand on registration in Al-Q.O.U. and an effective role of students committees in coordinating and organizing celebrations attended by academic and administrative staff. In addition to persistent university endeavours, to provide interaction opportunities between students in general and the new registered students in particular.

**Results related to the second domain which was Registration Services:**

To answer this question, Mean and Standard Deviation were calculated for each item for student's tool, specific field, and the ultimate degree for the tool. Following table illustrates the items of the domain.

**Table No. 4.2** shows Means, Standard Deviations and the degree of items of the domain (**Registration services**).

Item	Mean	S.D	Degree
Announcing course calendar that shows all important dates on the procession of studying.	3.52	0.887	High
Facilitating procedures for courses registration.	3.45	0.769	High
Facilitation the procedures of deleting and adding courses.	3.37	0.831	Medium
The opportunity to delay the study for a semester or more.	3.16	0.881	Medium
Give an opportunity to convert from one major to another.	3.03	0.936	Medium
Give an opportunity to accredit the hours of study materials for students coming from other universities or colleges.	2.98	0.928	Medium
<b>Total domain</b>	<b>3.25</b>	<b>0.446</b>	<b>Medium</b>

The above table shows that the mean value and S.D. for total domain related to Registration Services were 3.25 and 0.446 which gave a **medium** degree **from student's point of view** where it was more than the assumed value 2.60 but less than 3.39 on total domain. Highest two

questions from the respondents' point of view were: **firstly**, announcing the course calendar that shows all the important dates on the procession of studying with 3.52 mean value, 0.887 S.D. **Secondly**, facilitating procedures for courses registration with mean value of 3.45 and 0.769 S.D. Researcher attributed this to an effectiveness of electronic website of the university, giving each student a registration number and a password in addition to publishing an academic evaluation and important appointments related to study continuation on the university website. In addition to this, providing opportunities of courses' registration through an electronic portal with flexibility in appointments. Registration for courses is divided into phases and clear timeframe specified by university administration.

### **Results of the third domain which related to Services Relating to Student Academic Supervisors:**

To answer this question, mean and standard deviation were calculated for each item for student's tool, specific field and ultimate degree for the tool. Following table illustrates items of domain.

**Table No. 4.3** shows Means, Standard Deviations and degree of items of the domain (**Services Relating to Student Academic Supervisors**).

<b>Item</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>S.D.</b>	<b>Degree</b>
Providing academic supervisors at a high level of scientific qualification.	<b>4.23</b>	<b>0.853</b>	<b>Very High</b>
Training supervisors on the use of management systems of distance education for educational continuity with students (such as the Moodle system).	<b>3.74</b>	<b>0.788</b>	<b>High</b>
Providing office hours for academic supervisors.	<b>3.66</b>	<b>0.852</b>	<b>High</b>
Providing web pages specified to academic supervisors.	<b>3.47</b>	<b>0.934</b>	<b>High</b>
On-going training for supervisors to develop their academic performance.	<b>3.08</b>	<b>0.825</b>	<b>Medium</b>
The Academic supervisor answers the queries of university students through the university page on the Internet.	<b>2.93</b>	<b>0.914</b>	<b>Medium</b>
<b>Total domain</b>	<b>3.52</b>	<b>0.501</b>	<b>High</b>

The above table shows that the Mean value and S.D. for total domain related to Services Relating to Student Academic Supervisors were 3.52 and 0.501 which gave **high degree from students' point of view** where it was more than the assumed value 3.40 but less than 4.19 on total domain. Highest two questions from the respondents' point of view were: **firstly**, Providing academic supervisors at a high level of scientific qualification with 4.23 mean value, 0.853 S.D. **Secondly**, training supervisors on the use of management systems of distance education for educational continuity with students such as the Moodle system with mean value of 3.74 and 0.788 S.D. Researcher attributed this to care given by university to continue holding training workshops to academic supervisors- particularly electronic teaching courses and distance learning and demand them to activate the electronic page related to them on university website to facilitate communication process with their students.

**Results of the fourth domain which related to Learning support services:**

To answer this question, Mean and Standard Deviation were calculated for each item of student's tool, specific field, and an ultimate degree for the tool. Following table illustrates items of the domain.

**Table No.4.4** shows Means, Standard Deviations and the degree of items of the domain (**Learning support services**).

Item	Mean	S.D	Degree
Providing direct, optional face to face encounter	3.41	0.833	High
Providing students with textbooks, as soon as they register.	3.41	0.867	High
Provide students with immediate feedback for the grades of academic appointments in each course.	3.19	0.807	High
Organizing local groups for cooperative learning in the centers of the university.	3.11	0.895	Medium
The university offers brother students less fees.	2.93	1.014	Medium
Providing supplements to textbooks (summaries,explanations,exercises.).	2.77	0.853	Medium
<b>Total domain</b>	<b>3.14</b>	<b>0.476</b>	<b>Medium</b>

The above table shows that the mean value and S.D. for total domain related to learning support services were 3.14 and 0.476 which gave a **medium** degree from **student's point of view** where it is more than the assumed value 2.60 but less than 3.39 on total domain. Highest two questions from the respondents' point of view were:



**firstly**, providing direct, optional face to face encounter with 3.41 mean value, 0.833 S.D. **Secondly**, providing students with textbooks as soon as they register with mean value of 3.41 and 0.867 S.D. Researcher attributed this to scarcity of providing appendices and summaries for study books, in addition to scarcity of organizing local groups for cooperative learning in university centers.

**Results of the fifth domain which related to learning resources services:**

To answer this question, Mean and Standard Deviation were calculated for each item for student's tool, specific field and an ultimate degree for the tool. Following table illustrates items of the domain.

**Table No. 4.5** shows Means, Standard Deviations and the degree of items of the domain (**Learning Resources Services**).

item	mean	S.D	Degree
Computer-equipped labs connected to an Internet in the university centers.	4.05	1.048	High
Providing a virtual library containing the bases of electronic information.	3.66	0.869	High
Provide paper library in university centers for the most important references of the university scientific specializations.	3.57	0.979	High
Entering in to agreements to benefit from university permanent(traditional) libraries near the centers of learning.	3.33	0.931	High
Provide direct recordings of lectures on multimedia(video, CDs, virtual classes, cassettes.).	3.17	0.837	Medium
The University's website provides sources of knowledge through multiple bonds.	3.09	0.985	Medium
<b>Total domain</b>	<b>3.48</b>	<b>0.510</b>	<b>High</b>

The above table shows that the mean value and S.D .for total domain related to learning resources services were 3.48 and 0.510 which gave **high degree from students' point of view** where it was more than the assumed value 3.40 but less than 4.19 on total domain. Highest two

questions from the respondent point of view were: **firstly**, Computer-equipped labs connected to the Internet in the university centers with 4.05 mean value, 1.048 S.D. **Secondly**, Providing a virtual library containing the bases of electronic information with mean value of 3.66 and 0.869 S.D. Researcher attributed this to university care to provide electronic virtual library and computer laboratory, connected with an internet and provide registration for direct lectures on multimedia (video, CD discs and virtual classes).

**Results of the sixth domain which related to Services of Educational Evaluation:**

To answer this question, Mean and Standard Deviation were calculated for each item for student's tool, specific field and an ultimate degree for the tool. Following table illustrates items of the domain.

**Table No. 4.6** shows Means, Standard Deviations and the degree of items of the domain (**Services of Educational Evaluation**).

Item	Mean	S.D	Degree
The announcement of an educational, fair and clear evaluation system.	3.42	0.788	High
Providing the student with feedback on assignments and periodic exams immediately and directly.	3.36	0.758	Medium
Coordination between professors regarding the dates of assignments and exams to avoid incompatibility and fatigue of the student.	3.14	0.792	Medium
Opening up a comprehensive record to follow the student academically.	3.12	0.780	Medium
Provide the student with a modern academic record at the end of each semester.	3.07	0.897	Medium
Following-up graduates in the labor market in order to provide them with all new in the area of specialization.	2.81	1.024	Medium
<b>Total domain</b>	<b>3.15</b>	<b>0.493</b>	<b>Medium</b>

The above table shows that the mean value and S.D. for total domain related to Services of Educational Evaluation were 3.15 and 0.493 which gave a **medium** degree **from student's point of view** where it was more

than the assumed value 2.6 but less than 3.39 on total domain. Highest two questions from respondents' point of view were: **firstly**, The announcement of an educational, fair and clear evaluation system with 3.42 mean value, 0.788 S.D. **Secondly**, Providing the student with feedback on assignments and periodic exams immediately and directly with mean value of 3.36 and 0.758 S.D. Researcher attributed this to scarcity of coordination between academic supervisors concerning appointments of examiners to evade exhausting students, in addition, scarcity of following up the graduates in labor market to provide them with everything new in the field of specialization.

### Results of the seventh domain which related to Training Services:

To answer this question, Mean and Standard Deviation were calculated for each item for student's tool, specific field and the ultimate degree for the tool. Following table illustrates the items of the domain.

**Table No. 4.7** shows Means, Standard Deviations and the degree of items of the domain (**Training Services**).

Item	Mean	S.D	Degree
Providing cooperative training for graduates in their respective specialization (in work institutions).	4.01	0.976	High
Providing training courses, in the computer field.	3.69	0.775	High
Provide training courses in the field of scientific research skills.	3.55	0.902	High
Providing training courses in the area of time management.	3.34	0.867	Medium
Provide training courses in the area of self-development.	3.29	0.859	Medium
Provide a preparatory program for training in communication skills necessary to study distantly.	3.98	0.947	High
<b>tal domainTo</b>	<b>3.48</b>	<b>0.507</b>	<b>High</b>

The above table shows that the mean value and S.D. for total domain related to training services were 3.48 and 0.507 which gave **high** degree **from student's point of view** where it is more than the assumed value 3.40 but less than 4.19 on total domain. Highest two questions from the respondent point of view were: **firstly**, Providing cooperative training for graduates in their respective specialization (in work institutions) with 4.01 mean value, 0.976 S.D. **Secondly**, Providing training courses in the

computer field with mean value of 3.69 and 0.775 S.D. Researcher attributed this to cooperation of university with local community institutions to hold training courses for students in various fields to raise their professional, personal and social efficiencies.

### **Results of the Eighth Domain which related to Services of University Systems:**

To answer this question, Mean and Standard Deviation were calculated for each item for student's tool, specific field and an ultimate degree for the tool. Following table illustrates items of the domain.

**Table No. 4.8** shows Means, Standard Deviations and the degree of items of the domain (**Services of University Systems**).

<b>Item</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>S.D</b>	<b>Degree</b>
The formation and an announcement of university systems which explained a rationale for university systems of rewards and benefits.	<b>3.34</b>	<b>0.854</b>	<b>Medium</b>
The formation and an announcement of university systems which clarified rights and duties of the student.	<b>3.27</b>	<b>0.836</b>	<b>Medium</b>
Drafting and declaring university systems that clarify the rationale for penalties and discipline.	<b>3.14</b>	<b>0.822</b>	<b>Medium</b>
Drafting and declaring university systems that make clear the ways and channel of grievances and complaints.	<b>3.13</b>	<b>0.919</b>	<b>Medium</b>
Drafting and declaring university systems that explicate the mechanisms of forming student committees and groups.	<b>2.86</b>	<b>0.779</b>	<b>Medium</b>
Drafting and declaring university systems that show employers (public and private) benefits of distance education.	<b>2.80</b>	<b>0.913</b>	<b>Medium</b>
<b>Total domain</b>	<b>3.09</b>	<b>0.437</b>	<b>Medium</b>



The above table shows that the mean value and S.D. for total domain related to services of university systems were 3.09 and 0.437 which gave a **medium** degree **from student's point of view** where it was more than the assumed value 2.60 but less than 3.39 on total domain. Highest two questions from the respondents' point of view were: **firstly**, The formation and an announcement of university systems which explain the rationale for university systems of rewards and benefits with 3.34 mean value, 0.854 S.D. **Secondly**, The formation and announcement of university systems which clarified rights and duties of the student with mean value of 3.27 and 0.836 S.D. Researcher attributed this to scarcity of students' care about them in knowing these systems and identifying them.

**Results of the Ninth Domain which related to Services to Resolve Various Student Problems:**

To answer this question, Mean and Standard Deviation were calculated for each item for student's tool, specific field and an ultimate degree for the tool. Following table illustrates items of the domain.

**Table No. 4.9** shows Means, Standard Deviations and the degree of items of the domain (**Services to Resolve Various Student Problems**).

<b>Item</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>S.D</b>	<b>Degree</b>
Working on solving students' problems.	<b>3.98</b>	<b>1.072</b>	<b>High</b>
Working on solving students' management problems, at the university.	<b>3.76</b>	<b>0.800</b>	<b>High</b>
Working on solving students' problems of social impact on their study.	<b>3.54</b>	<b>0.905</b>	<b>High</b>
Working on solving students' problems in their place of business which have an impact on their study.	<b>3.37</b>	<b>0.887</b>	<b>High</b>
Contacting the family of the student for his interest.	<b>3.24</b>	<b>0.828</b>	<b>Medium</b>
Assistance in solving students' health problems by providing a computer lab for the blind at the university.	<b>2.95</b>	<b>0.950</b>	<b>Medium</b>
<b>Total domain</b>	<b>3.47</b>	<b>0.518</b>	<b>High</b>

The above table shows that the mean value and S.D.for total domain related to Services to Resolve Various Student Problems were 3.47 and

0.518 which gave **high** degree **from students' point of view** where it was more than the assumed value 3.40 but less than 4.19 on total domain. Highest two questions from the respondents' point of view were: **firstly**, Working on solving students' problems with 3.98 mean value, 1.072S.D. **Secondly**, working on solving students' management problems at the university with mean value of 3.76 and 0.800 S.D. Researcher attributed this to an effectiveness of students' affairs section and social counselor at university, as well as coordinating with administrative bodies between the university, student and elected students unions.

### **Results of the Tenth Domain which related to Services of Public Relations and Media:**

To answer this question, Mean and Standard Deviation were calculated for each item for student's tool, specific field and an ultimate degree for the tool. Following table illustrates items of the domain.

**Table No. 4.10** shows Means, Standard Deviations and the degree of items of the domain (**Services of Public Relations and Media**).

<b>Item</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>S.D</b>	<b>Degree</b>
Providing a member of staff to answer queries of students around the clock.	<b>3.26</b>	<b>0.826</b>	<b>Medium</b>
Providing an electronic forum on an Internet for students of different levels of study for an exchange of experiences.	<b>3.26</b>	<b>0.838</b>	<b>Medium</b>
A university newspaper reporting the most important and latest university news.	<b>3.11</b>	<b>0.776</b>	<b>Medium</b>
Acquainting students on what is written or said about their university in public media.	<b>3.03</b>	<b>0.893</b>	<b>Medium</b>
Creating continuous link with graduates.	<b>2.75</b>	<b>0.921</b>	<b>Medium</b>
Seeking to get students discounts and advantages in hospitals, transport companies, sports clubs... etc.	<b>2.70</b>	<b>0.904</b>	<b>Medium</b>
<b>Total domain</b>	<b>3.02</b>	<b>0.505</b>	<b>Medium</b>

The above table shows that mean value and S.D for total domain Services of Public Relations and Media were 3.02 and 0.505 which gave a **medium** degree **from student's point of view** where it was more than the assumed value 2.60 but less than 3.39 on total domain. Highest two questions from the respondents' point of view were: **firstly**, Providing a

member of staff to answer the queries of students around the clock with 3.26 mean value, 0.826 S.D. **Secondly**, Providing an electronic forum on the Internet for students of different levels of study for the exchange of experiences with mean value of 3.26 and 0.838 S.D. Researcher attributed this to high effectiveness for electronic seminars of the university and high participation of students in them. In addition to trial of public relations section to continuously network with official institutions for a favor of students and the university.

## Results of the Eleventh Domain which related to Services of Community Development for Students:

To answer this question, Mean and Standard Deviation were calculated for each item for student's tool, specific field and an ultimate degree for the tool. Following table illustrates items of the domain.

**Table No. 4.11** shows Means, Standard Deviations and the degree of items of the domain (**Services of Community Development for Students**).

Item	Mean	S.D	Degree
Establishing and organizing students' recreation activities in local university centers.	3.75	1.075	High
To give an opportunity of leadership for students by organizing various student groups.	3.59	0.866	High
Setting up a collaborative student fund to support financially needy students.	3.54	0.939	High
Granting students opportunities to participate in university decision-making.	3.29	0.838	Medium
Doing a student trip at least once each academic year for university students.	3.18	0.907	Medium
Offering an opportunity for students to participate in youth programs addressing social issues.	2.84	1.001	Medium
<b>Total domain</b>	<b>3.36</b>	<b>0.554</b>	<b>Medium</b>

The above table shows that mean value and S.D. for total domain related to Services of Community Development for Students were 3.36 and 0.554 which gave a **medium** degree **from students' point of view** where it is more than the assumed value 2.60 but less than 3.39 on total domain.

Highest two questions from the respondent point of view were: **firstly**, Establishing and organizing students' recreation activities in local university centers with 3.75 mean value, 1.075 S.D. **Secondly**, To give an opportunity of leadership for students by organizing various student groups with mean value of 3.59 and 0.866 S.D. Researcher attributed this to social development, represented in desire and motivation at first in addition to scarcity of sufficient coordination between various students clubs for various specializations inside the university.

### **Results of the Twelfth Domain which related to Services of University Buildings:**

To answer this question, Mean and Standard Deviation were calculated for each item for student's tool, specific field and an ultimate degree for the tool. Following table illustrates items of the domain.

**Table No. 4.12** shows Means, Standard Deviations and degree of items of the domain (**Services of University Building**).

<b>Item</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>S.D</b>	<b>Degree</b>
Providing university centers with halls for drama activities.	<b>3.24</b>	<b>0.850</b>	<b>Medium</b>
Distribution of university centers takes account of places of students' gathering.	<b>3.19</b>	<b>0.941</b>	<b>Medium</b>
Providing university centers with stationery store (including Xeroxing and photocopying).	<b>3.11</b>	<b>0.901</b>	<b>Medium</b>
Providing university centers with playgrounds for sports and show activities.	<b>3.00</b>	<b>0.911</b>	<b>Medium</b>
Provide university centers with restaurants and buffets.	<b>2.82</b>	<b>0.851</b>	<b>Medium</b>
Providing university centers with the appropriate study rooms.	<b>2.76</b>	<b>0.983</b>	<b>Medium</b>
<b>Total domain</b>	<b>3.02</b>	<b>0.551</b>	<b>Medium</b>

The above table shows that mean value and S.D. for total domain related to Services of University Building were 3.02 and 0.551 which gave a **medium degree from students' point of view** where it was more than the assumed value 2.60 but less than 3.39 on total domain. Highest two questions from respondents' point of view were: **firstly**, Providing university centers with halls for drama activities with 3.24 mean value, 0.850 S.D. **Secondly**, Distribution of university centers takes account of



places of students' gathering with mean value of 3.19 and 0.941 S.D. Researcher attributed this to large size of students in comparison to size of university buildings, in addition to scarcity of playgrounds and displaying yards as well as scarcity of adequate restaurants and cafeterias in the university campus.

**B) Results on the Study Domain Level and Comparison Between them:**

Mean and Standard Deviation were calculated for domains of the students' tool, specific field and an ultimate degree for the tool for each domain, arranged in a descending order.

**Table No. 4.13** shows Means, Standard Deviations and the domains degree **arranged in a descending order.**

No	Domains	Mean	S.D	Degree
1	Services of Receiving New Students	3.66	0.373	High
2	Services Relating to Student Academic Supervisors	3.52	0.501	High
3	Learning Resources Services	3.48	0.510	High
4	Training Services	3.48	0.507	High
5	Services to Resolve Various Student Problems	3.47	0.518	High
6	Services of Community Development for Students	3.36	0.554	Medium
7	Registration Services	3.25	0.446	Medium
8	Services of Educational Evaluation	3.15	0.493	Medium
9	Learning Support Services	3.14	0.476	Medium
10	Services of University Systems	3.09	0.437	Medium
11	Services of Public Relations and Media	3.02	0.505	Medium
12	Services of University Buildings	3.02	0.551	Medium

The above table shows that the mean value according to the students' point of view for Services of Receiving New Students domain was 3.66 and S.D. reached 0.373 with **high** degree, where the domain obtained the

first position from all services provided by the university for the students. **Services Relating to Student Academic Supervisors** domain came in second position between the other services provided by the university scoring **high** degree with Mean values of 3.52 and 0.501 S.D.

Apparently, the previous table showed that **Learning Resources Services** domain was ranked third in the table with **high** degree, scoring 3.48 mean values and 0.510 S.D. where, **Training Services**, domain took the fourth position with **high** degree scoring 3.38 mean values and 0.507 S.D. also the domain related to **Services to Resolve Various Student Problems** shows a **high** degree where, the domain came in fifth position scoring mean values of 3.47 and 0.518 S.D.

The above table also showed that **Services of Community Development for Students** domain occupied sixth position between studied domains, where it scored 3.36 mean values and 0.554 S.D with **medium** degree. Domain related to **Registration Services** came into seventh position between other domains with mean value of 3.25 and 0.446 S.D attaining also **medium** degree. Eighth position occupied by **Services of Educational Evaluation** domain with **medium** degree obtained by scoring Mean value of 3.15 and 0.493 S.D. Ninth position went to **Learning Support Services** between studied domains with **medium** degree also obtained by scoring 3.14 mean value and S.D of 0.476.

The above table showed that tenth position between studied domains with **medium** secured by **Services of University Systems** domain, where, mean value and S.D were 3.09 and 0.437 respectively. **Services of Public Relations and Media** occupied eleventh position with **medium** degree looking at Mean value and S.D which was 3.02 and 0.505 respectively. In twelfth position and last between the studied domain **Services of University Buildings** domain settled attaining **medium** degree where, mean value and S.D was 3.02 and 0.551 respectively.

### C) Results Related to the Entire Study Tool (All Domains):

To know support services, level in general provided to students by Al-Quds Open University from student point of view in Jenin district, Mean value, S.D and the degree to the entire tool (all domains) were calculated and it has been shown in the table follows.

**Table No. 4.14** shows Mean values, Standard Deviations and degree of all items in the study tool from student's point of view.

Domain	Mean	S.D	Degree
All Services	3.30	0.294	Medium

Apparently, the previous table shows that mean value for all items responded by students in Jenin district on Services Provided to Students by Al-Quds Open University was 3.30 and 0.294 S.D. The tool's degree was medium with reference to the scale of assumed means mentioned in the beginning of this chapter. The researcher can conclude that services provided by the university to students, in general were **medium**.

These results are in line with what Axelson (2007), Bayless (2001), Collins (2007) Cunningham (2006), Jackson (2000) and Magnussen, JR (2003). There was similarity between needs of Al-Quds Open University students and needs of other distant learning institutions in environments away from Arab environments.

## 4.2. RESULTS RELATED TO ANSWERING THE SECOND QUESTION

The second question of this research study was (What are the Student Support Services provided by Al-Quds Open University in different subjects, based on perspectives of full time academic supervisors?).

In order to answer the above stated question, Means, Standard Deviations and total degree were calculated for each domain.

### A) Results to each domain and its questions:

#### Results related to the first domain which was admission services:

To answer this question, Mean and Standard Deviation were calculated for each item for Full Time Academic Supervisor's tool, specific field and an ultimate degree for the tool. Following table illustrated items of the domain.

**Table No. 4.15** showed Means, Standard Deviations and degree of items of the first domain (**admission services**).

Items	Mean	S.D	Degree
Online inquiry about semester's table is available	4.27	0.876	Strongly Agree
The online admission is provided.	4.25	0.898	Strongly Agree
The university academic counseling supplies students with a variety of courses which cover students' academic levels.	4.02	1.165	Agree
The registration department has a policy to provide students with necessary materials.	4.02	1.073	Agree

Continued ... table No. 4.15.			
Items	Mean	S.D	Degree
Students own the required skills for process of registration.	<b>3.97</b>	<b>1.049</b>	<b>Agree</b>
The university academic center offers students a flexible timetable.	<b>3.97</b>	<b>1..073</b>	<b>Agree</b>
Registration is announced after some time.	<b>3.92</b>	<b>1.227</b>	<b>Agree</b>
Registration department gives students adequate time to finish the registration process.	<b>3.92</b>	<b>1.022</b>	<b>Agree</b>
Students register through academic portal by internet.	<b>3.80</b>	<b>1.426</b>	
Supplies students with comprehensive information about course duration and academic supervisor.	<b>3.65</b>	<b>1.098</b>	<b>Agree</b>
<b>Total Domain</b>	<b>3.98</b>	<b>0.733</b>	<b>Agree</b>

The above table shows that mean value and S.D. for total domain of Admission services were 3.98 and 0.733 where, the degree obtained from academic supervisors point of view was **agree** which was more than the assumed value 3.40 but less than 4.19 on total domain and that explained an agreement level of academic supervisors on the services provided by the university.

The above table showed highest three services provided by Al-Quds Open University. Mean value according to the academic supervisors' point of view on Online Inquiry About the Semester's Table is Available, mean was 4.27 and S.D. Reached 0.876 and the degree obtained was **strongly agree**, Therefore, the domain took up the first position from all services provided by the university for students. The Online Admission is provided, this service came up in second position between other services

provided by the university, scoring a **strongly agree** with Mean value of 4.25 and 0.898 S.D. Third position occupied by the third service that is University Academic Counseling supplies students with a variety of courses which covered students' academic levels, obtaining an **agree** with 4.02 and 1.165 as mean value and S.D. respectively. Researcher attributed this to sufficient number of registered employees as well as activating role of electronic registration through the portal and giving sufficient time for this as well as responding to their inquiries related to registration process.

**Results related to the second domain which is academic guidance services:**

To answer this question, mean and standard deviation were calculated for each item for full time academic supervisors' tool, specific field and an ultimate degree for the tool. Following table illustrated items of the domain.

**Table No. 4.16** shows Means, Standard Deviations and degree of items of the second domain (**Academic Guidance Services**).

Items	Mean	S.D	Degree
The university gives studies about local community.	3.02	0.973	Neutral
The university offers online assistances material between supervisor and students.	3.00	1.281	Neutral
The university offers students Online weekly timetable.	2.95	0.904	Neutral
Individual academic counseling is offered to students.	2.92	0.797	Neutral

Continued ... table No. 4.16.			
Items	Mean	S.D	Degree
The university offers manuals and booklets about university rules and regulations.	2.92	0.916	Neutral
The university offers facility of self- assessments for students.	2.92	0.997	Neutral
The university provides students with information about learning assistance resources.	2.90	1.057	Neutral
Guidance material is offered to students to guide them during their study.	2.90	0.810	Neutral
The university offers students during the semester educational aids.	2.87	0.965	Neutral
The university provides students with guidance methods.	2.70	0.882	Neutral
<b>Total Domain</b>	<b>2.91</b>	<b>0.342</b>	<b>Neutral</b>

The above table shows that mean value and S.D.for total domain of academic guidance services were 2.91 and 0.342respectively. The degree obtained from academic supervisors' point of view on the domain was **neutral** which was more than the assumed value 2.60 but less than 3.39 and it explained an agreement level of academic supervisors on academic guidance services provided by a university.

The above table shows highest three services in the domain provided by Al-Quds Open University. Mean value according to the academic supervisors' point of view on The University gives studies about local community was 3.02 and S.D. reached 0.973.Degree obtained was **neutral**; therefore, this domain occupied first position from all services provided by a university for students in this domain. The university offers



online assistance material between supervisor and students, took up the second position between the other services provided in this domain by the university, scoring a **neutral** degree with mean value of 3.00 and 1.281 S.D. Third position was taken by the third service that was the university offered students online weekly timetable, obtaining **neutral** degree with 2.95 and 0.904 as mean values and S.D. respectively. Researcher attributed this to scarcity of students' attendance to a university and shortage of their communication particularly as the educational system was based on distance learning.

#### **Results related to third domain which was Academic Supervision Services:**

To answer this question, Mean and Standard Deviation were calculated for each item for full time academic supervisor's tool, specific field and an ultimate degree for the tool. Following table illustrated items of the domain.

**Table No. 4.17** shows Means, Standard Deviations and the degree of items of the third domain (**academic supervision services**).

<b>Items</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>S.D</b>	<b>Degree</b>
The academic supervisor answers student's questions and inquiries through net.	<b>3.20</b>	<b>1.181</b>	<b>Neutral</b>
The academic supervisor answers students about his/her question and inquiries through phone and mobiles.	<b>3.02</b>	<b>1.025</b>	<b>Neutral</b>
The academic supervisor reviews student's accumulative work during semester.	<b>3.02</b>	<b>1.025</b>	<b>Neutral</b>

Continued ... table No.4.17.			
Items	Mean	S.D	Degree
The supervisor follows up student's performance during semester.	3.00	1.086	Neutral
The supervisor gives advice to students when they need help.	2.92	1.047	Neutral
The direct contract between supervisor and students is through university website portal.	2.77	1.049	Neutral
The university offers academic supervision during academic year.	2.72	1.037	Neutral
The supervisor clarifies all the information related to curriculum.	2.70	0.822	Neutral
The academic supervisor is in his office during office hours.	2.70	0.822	Neutral
The academic supervisor corrects student's assignments.	2.62	0.896	Neutral
<b>Total Domain</b>	<b>2.87</b>	<b>0.333</b>	<b>Neutral</b>

The above table shows that the mean value and S.D.for total domain of academic supervision service were 2.87 and 0.333, the degree obtained from academic supervisors' point of view on the domain was **neutral** which was more than the assumed value 2.60 but less than 3.39 and which explained an agreement level of academic supervisors on the academic supervision services provided by a university.

The above table shows highest three services in a domain provided by Al-Quds Open University. The mean value according to the academic supervisor's point of view on, The academic supervisor answers student's questions and inquiries "Through Net" was 3.20 and S.D.reached 1.181 and degree obtained was **neutral**, therefore, the domain occupied the first

position from all services provided by a university for the students in this domain. The academic supervisor answers students about his/her question and inquiries through phone and mobiles took up the second position between the other services provided in this domain by the university, scoring a **neutral** degree with mean value of 3.02 and 1.025 S.D. Third position was taken by the third service that is: The academic supervisor reviews student's accumulative work during semester, obtaining **neutral** degree with 3.02 and 1.025 as mean values and S.D. respectively. The researcher attributed this to increased academic burdens on academic supervisors, responsible for, in addition to scarcity of full time academic supervisors in a university as majority of academics were not full time but part time.

#### **Results related to the fourth domain which is financial aids services:**

To answer this question, mean and standard deviation were calculated for each item of third domain and an ultimate degree for the domain. Following table illustrated items of the domain.

**Table No. 4.18** shows Means, Standard Deviations and the degree of items of the fourth domain (**financial aids services**).

<b>Items</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>S.D</b>	<b>Degree</b>
The university offers books at reasonable price.	<b>3.37</b>	<b>1.078</b>	<b>Neutral</b>
The cost of credit hour is satisfying.	<b>3.37</b>	<b>0.978</b>	<b>Neutral</b>
The university grants, brothers less fees.	<b>3.17</b>	<b>0.984</b>	<b>Neutral</b>
The university offers financial help from external resources.	<b>3.17</b>	<b>1.083</b>	<b>Neutral</b>

Continued ... table No.4.18.			
Items	Mean	S.D	Degree
The university financial assistance covers large member of students.	3.10	0.981	Neutral
The university gives students financial assistance.	2.90	1.007	Neutral
The university grants students financial assistance from poor students Fund.	2.80	0.939	Neutral
The university grants students loans during years of study.	2.80	0.607	Neutral
The university grants outstanding students scholarships.	2.30	0.648	Disagree
The university gives information about financial assistance granted for students.	2.22	1.250	Disagree
<b>Total Domain</b>	<b>2.92</b>	<b>0.330</b>	<b>Neutral</b>

The above table shows that the mean value and S.D. for total domain of financial aids services were 2.92 and 0.330, The degree obtained from academic supervisor's point of view on the domain was **neutral** which was more than the assumed value 2.60 but less than 3.39 and which explained an agreement level of academic supervisors on the financial aids services provided by the university.

The above table showed highest three services in the domain provided by Al-Quds Open University. Mean value according to the academic supervisor's point of view on, The University offers books at reasonable price, was 3.37 and S.D. reached 1.078, and the degree obtained was **neutral**. Therefore, the domain stood up in the first position. From all services provided by the university for students in this domain, came in the second position between the other services provided in that domain by

the university (The cost of credit hour was satisfying), scoring a **neutral** degree with mean value of 3.37 and 0.978 S.D. Third position was taken by the third service that was the university grants brothers less fees, obtaining **neutral** degree with 3.17, 0.984 as mean values and S.D. respectively. Researcher attributed this to university dependence of university on external donations for needy students fund, in addition to increased expenditures of university and it's financial commitments and obligations.

#### **Results related to the fifth domain which was Library and Knowledge resources services:**

To answer this question, Mean and Standard Deviation were calculated for each item of third domain and an ultimate degree for the domain. Following table illustrated items of the domain.

**Table No. 4.19** shows Means, Standard Deviations and the degree of items of the fifth domain (**Library and Knowledge Resources Services**).

<b>Items</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>S.D</b>	<b>Degree</b>
The library offers students facility of photo copying at reasonable prices.	<b>3.37</b>	<b>1.102</b>	<b>Neutral</b>
The library opens more extra hours than regular working hours.	<b>3.30</b>	<b>0.992</b>	<b>Neutral</b>
The library offers student services including international journal database.	<b>3.22</b>	<b>0.891</b>	<b>Neutral</b>
The library books and material are of different types.	<b>3.12</b>	<b>1.074</b>	<b>Neutral</b>

Continued ... table No. 4.19.			
Items	Mean	S.D	Degree
The library offers E-library services including E-books.	3.05	0.959	Neutral
The library offers assisting teaching material.	2.97	1.143	Neutral
The library services offers internet services, all the time.	2.85	1.075	Neutral
The library material includes CD and Videos.	2.72	0.816	Neutral
Text books are available in the book store.	2.72	0.933	Neutral
University always modernizes books available in the library.	2.60	0.777	Neutral
The university website offers knowledge resources through links.	2.30	1.136	Disagree
<b>Total Domain</b>	<b>2.93</b>	<b>0.268</b>	<b>Neutral</b>

The above table shows that the mean value and S.D. for total domain of **Library and Knowledge resources services** were 2.93 and 0.268, the degree obtained from academic supervisor's point of view on the domain was **neutral** which was more than the assumed value 2.60 but less than 3.39 and which explained an agreement level of academic supervisors on the **Library and Knowledge Resources Services** provided by a university.

The above table showed the highest three services in the domain, provided by Al-Quds Open University. The Mean value according to the academic supervisor's point of view on, the Library offers students, the facility of photo copying in reasonable prices is 3.37 and S.D. reached 1.102 and the degree obtained was **neutral**, Therefore, the domain stood up in the first position from all services provided by the university for students in this domain. Came in the second position between the other

services provided in this domain by the university (The library opens more extra hours than the regular working hours), scoring a **neutral** degree with mean value of 3.300 and 0.992 S.D. Third position was taken by the third service that is the library offers student services including international journal database obtaining **neutral** degree with 3.22, 0.891 as mean values and S.D. respectively. Researcher attributed this to scarcity of research reports or research projects which required them to identify them and its contents in addition to depend on internet more than printed books.

### B) Results of the study domain level and comparison between them:

Mean and Standard Deviation were calculated for domains of the student's tool, specific field and an ultimate degree for the tool for each domain arranged in a descending order.

**Table No. 4.20** shows Means, Standard Deviations and domain's degree for academic supervisors' answers, **arranged in a descending order.**

NO	Domains	Mean	S.D	Degree
1-	Admission Services	3.98	0.733	Agree
2-	Library and Knowledge Resources Services	2.93	0.268	Neutral
3-	Financial Aids Services	2.92	0.330	Neutral
4-	Academic Guidance Services	2.91	0.342	Neutral
5-	Academic Supervision Services	2.87	0.334	Neutral

The above table showed that mean value according to the academic supervisor's point of view for **Admission Services** domain was 3.98 and S.D reached 0.733 with **agree** degree where the domain obtained the first position from all services provided by the university for the students. **Library and Knowledge Resources Services** domain came up in second position between the other services provided by the university, scoring **neutral** degree with mean value of 2.93 and 0.268 S.D. respectively.

The above table also showed that financial aids services domain occupied third position between the studied domains where it scored 2.92 as mean and 0.330 S.D. with **neutral** degree. Domain related to academic guidance services came into fourth position between other domains with mean of 2.91 and 0.342 S.D. attaining also **neutral** degree. Fifth position occupied by academic supervision services domain with again a **neutral** degree obtained by scoring mean of 2.87 and 0.344 S.D.

### C) Results related to the entire study tool (all domains):



To know support services, level in general provided to students by Al-Quds Open University, from academic supervisor's point of view in Jenin district. Mean value, S.D and the degree to the entire tool (all domains) were calculated and it was shown in the table follows.

**Table No. 4.21** shows Mean values, Standard Deviations and the degree of all items in the study tool from academic supervisor's point of view.

Domains	Mean	S.D	Degree
all services	3.12	0.209	Neutral

Apparently, the previous table shows that for mean value , all items responded by academic supervisors in Jenin district on services provided to students by Al-Quds Open University was 3.12 and 0.209 S.D. respectively . Tool's degree was **neutral** with reference to the scale of assumed means mentioned previously in this chapter. The researcher can conclude that services provided by the university to students in general were **neutral**.

The results of the present study do not match with the results of Cain and others (2003) which pointed out that the majority of students did not prefer benefiting from students support services. Students view their mates and teachers as important sources for academic and social support. The researcher has not found previous studies that tackled dealing with students' information learning through Open Learning System and document by the educational institution they learn in. This supports the notion that this study adds this aspect according to review of the researcher.

### 4.3. PRESENTING RESULTS RELATED HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

#### Results related to examining of the first hypothesis which was:-

There is no significant difference for the student support services provided by Al-Quds Open University in different subjects based on perspectives of students, due to **Gender** variable.

To test this hypothesis, researcher used T-test for independent samples to check difference between the two samples, independent samples (Male and Female) to test the level of differences. The results were summarized in the following table.

**Table No. 4.22** t-test results of the independent variables to examine level of differences in services provided by Al-Quds Open University to students according to Gender variable.

Domain	Gender	Number	Mean	S.D	df	T- test	sig
Total degree all services	Male	166	3.32	0.231	349	1.295	0.196
	Female	185	3.28	0.340			

\*sig ( $\alpha = 0.05$ )

This table clearly stated that there was no significant difference at Alfa 0.05 between males and females' mean value at all domains and at an ultimate degree. It was also quite clear that there was no significant difference at (0.05) in the student support services provided by Al-Quds Open University in different subjects based on perspectives of students due to **Gender** variable on the level of an ultimate degree as the value of insignificance was (0.196) which was more than (Alpha = 0.05). It meant

that there was no significant difference on a level of ultimate degree. This led us for **not rejecting** the null hypothesis where support services provided by Al-Quds Open University to students apprehended and expressed by male students was on the same level apprehended and expressed by female students. The researcher attributed this to the services presented to males and females were similar and not separate.

**Results related to examining of the second hypothesis which was:-**

There is no significant difference for the student support services provided by Al-Quds Open University in different subjects based on perspectives of students due to **Age** variable.

To test, if there was significant difference at  $\alpha = 0.05$  in this hypothesis, researcher had to use (One Way ANOVA-test) to check the students' significant average difference according to age variable, all domains of this study and also for an ultimate degree as well. The results were summarized in the following table No. 4.23.

**Table No. 4.23** ANOVA-test to examine level of difference in support services provided by Al-Quds Open University in different subjects due to Age variable.

Domain	Source variance	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
All services	Between Groups	0.531	2	0.266	3.104	* 0.046
	Within Groups	29.780	348	0.086		
	Total	30.312	350			

\*sig ( $\alpha = 0.05$ )

It was clear from the previous data that there was a statistical difference, at Alpha = 0.05 in student support services provided by Al-Quds Open University in different subjects, based on perspectives of students, due to **Age** variable. As it was less than alpha = 0.05 as it reached for overall tool (**0.046**). This meant that there were statistical differences on an ultimate level. This led us to **reject** null hypothesis which assumed by the researcher that the degree of any services offered by the university students also realized and expressed by students vary according to age levels .

To know differences between the levels of variable age of the students and to determine direction of these differences on the overall tool "All Services ". Researcher conducted a LSD test, least significant difference and the results were as shown in the following table NO.4.24.

**Table No. 4.24** LSD-test results to show the differences for the ultimate level for respondents of students, according to the age variable.

Age	Less than 30 Mean (3.2821)	30-40 Mean (3.3025)	More than 40 Mean (3.3932)
Less than 30 Mean (3.2821)	-----	-.0204	- 0.1111*
30-40 Mean (3.3025)	-----	-----	- 0.0906*
More than 40 Mean (3.3932)	-----	-----	-----

it was clear from the above table that differences between average answers of the respondents of the students with regard to support services offered by the University for students on the overall tool according to age variable was among students from the age group “more than 40 years” in the hand and all students of the age group “Less than 30 years old” and “30-40 years”. the difference for the benefit of students in the age group “More than 40 years old” ,i.e. they expressed their appreciation degree of the services offered by a University for students larger than their counterparts of the younger age groups.

While showing no differences in degree of appreciation of services provided by the university among scholars of the age group “Less than 30 years” and scholars of the age group “30- 40 years”. The researcher attributed this to majority of the age group was more than 40 years and the staff who completed their study at same time and so opening an opportunity through distance learning and maintained their jobs at the same time was an excellent and good opportunity to them.

### Results related to examining of the third hypothesis which was:-

There is no significant difference for the Student Support Services provided by Al-Quds Open University in different subjects, based on perspectives of students due to **Specialization** variable.

To test if there was significant difference at  $\alpha = 0.05$  in this hypothesis, researcher had to use (One Way ANOVA-test) to check the students' significant average difference according to **Specialization** variable all domains of this study and also for an ultimate degree as well. The results were summarized in the following table.

**Table No. 4.25** ANOVA-test to examine level of difference in support services provided by Al-Quds Open University in different subjects due to **Specialization** variable.

Domain	Source variance	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Total degree of all services	Between Groups	0.620	4	0.155	1.805	0.127
	Within Groups	29.692	346	0.086		
	Total	30.312	350			

It was clear from the previous table that there was no significant difference at the significance level ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ) between the average answers of the sample of students with regards to support services offered by a university for students. On the overall tool of the study according to specialization variable of the students, as the value of the level of significance of the test (0.127) which was more than (0.05), which meant there was no significant difference .Hence, the Researcher **did not reject** the null hypothesis i.e. the degree of services offered by the university to students expressed by students from different disciplines was same. The researcher attributed this to services presented included all students, regardless of specialization and so all students benefited from them.

**Results related to examining of the fourth hypothesis which was:-**

There is no significant difference for the student support services provided by Al-Quds Open University in different subjects based on perspectives of students due to **Place of Residence** variable.

To test if there was significant difference at  $\alpha=0.05$  in this hypothesis, researcher had to use (One Way ANOVA-test) to check the students significant average difference according to **Place of Residence**, all domains of this study and also for ultimate degree as well. The results were summarized in the following table.

**Table No. 4.26** ANOVA-test to examine level of difference in support services provided by al-Quds Open University in different subjects, due to **Place of Residence** variable.

Domain	Source variance	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Total degree of all services	Between Groups	0.570	2	0.285	3.333	0.037*
	Within Groups	29.742	348	0.085		
	Total	30.312	350			

It was clear from the previous data that there was a statistical difference at  $\alpha = 0.05$  in student support services provided by Al-Quds Open University in different subjects based on perspectives of students due to **Place of Residence** variable. As it was less than  $\alpha = 0.05$  as it reached for overall tool (0,037). It meant that there were statistical differences on ultimate level. This led us to **reject** the null hypothesis which assumed by the researcher, that the degree of any services offered by the university students also realized and expressed by the students vary according to Place of Residence level.

To know the differences between **place of residence level** of the students and to determine the direction of these differences on the overall tool "All Services " Researcher conducted a (LSD) least significant difference test and the results were as shown in the following table No 4.27 .

**Table No.4.27** LSD-test results to show the differences for the ultimate level for respondents of students, according to Place of Residence Variable.

<b>Domain</b>	<b>City Mean (3.3507)</b>	<b>Village Mean (3.2574)</b>	<b>Camp Mean (3.3008)</b>
<b>City Mean (3.3507)</b>	—	0.933*	0.0500
<b>Village Mean (3.2574)</b>		—	0.0434 -
<b>Camp Mean (3.3008)</b>			—

It was clear from the above table that differences between the average answers of the respondents of the students with regards to support services offered by the university for students, on an entire tool, according to the place of residence variable for students' only. They were from city's and village's population where these differences were in favor of students who lived in city, that means ,students of the urban population have expressed the degree of appreciation of the services offered by a university for students in larger and better way than what was expressed by students who lived in villages.

While, showing differences in the degree of appreciation of services provided by a university entirely among students who lived in the city



and the students who lived in the camp as well as showing no differences in the degree of appreciation of services provided by a university, entirely among students who lived villages and among students who lived in the camp. Researcher attributed this to geographical location of houses as students inhabiting to city visit and attended the university more than students who lived in villages due to closeness of university campus from their place of residence.

**Results related to examining of the fifth hypothesis which was:-**

There is no significant difference for the student support services provided by Al-Quds Open University in different subjects based on perspectives of students, due to **Study Level** variable.

To test, if there was significant difference at  $\alpha = 0.05$  in that hypothesis, researcher had to use (One Way ANOVA-test) to check the students significant average difference according to **Study Level** variable, all domains of that study and also for ultimate degree as well. The results were summarized in the following table.

**Table No. 4.28** ANOVA-test to examine level of difference in support services provided by Al-Quds Open University in different subjects due to **Study Level** variable.

Domain	Source variance	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Total degree of all services	Between Groups	<b>0.478</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0.159</b>	<b>1.854</b>	<b>0.137</b>
	Within Groups	<b>29.833</b>	<b>347</b>	<b>0.086</b>		
	Total	<b>30.312</b>	<b>350</b>			

It was clear from the previous table that there was no significant difference at the significant level ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ) between the average answers of sample of students with regards to support services offered by a University for students, on the overall tool of the study according to study level variable of the student as the value of the level of significance of the test (0.137), which was more than (0.05), that means there was no significant difference. Hence, the researcher **did not reject** the null hypothesis ,i.e. the degree of services offered by the university to students, expressed by students whether from first, second, third or fourth year was same. Researcher attributed this to services presented by the university as presented in one package for all students, regardless an academic level of student.

#### **4.4. DISCUSSION OF STUDY RESULTS IN THE LIGHT OF THEORETICAL FRAME AND PREVIOUS STUDIES**

The general result of the study has clarified that estimations of the academic supervisors and students for the need to students services exposed to them has a range between medium and high according to Lickert five scale which resemble the following studies:

- Study of Cunningham (2006) which measured the importance of students support services contained in the list proposed in the current study with a difference in some names. These services were considered basic and important by students who follow distant learning system in a number of private and public colleges and universities of in USA.
- Study of Raphael (2006) which measured importance of students' services that are listed in the current study with difference in some titles. These services are considered important by students who follow distant learning in a number of institutes and colleges in United States of America who were not requested to mention their educational institutes and institutions. Students considered the major services offered to them were: complete and clear information related to requirements of their courses and curricula, virtual library that contain study courses and the possibility to require, a system to pay the study fees through the internet, following up the application by the electronic library, benefiting from the individual academic guidance and a virtual library that provide all means of communication.
- Study of Jackson (2000) which pointed out that students support services in an important axis in distant teaching programs. However, the last estimation was based on the opinions of 21 experts specialized in distant learning and its programs and other specialists in students' affairs and not based on the point of views of students

- Study of Magnussen S.R. (2003) which investigated point of views a group of experts about the importance of a list about students support services contained in the list in the current study with some difference in some titles. It has concluded the consent of experts on the importance of such services included in this list. However, the results of this study differ from the general result concluded by the study of Kahrhoff (2005) which indicated that students request little from support services except services of professional development. The explanation of this result that the study of Kahrhoff was directed to student community composed of regular students in five programs for higher studies through distant learning in Webster University in contrary to the current study that is directed to the two stages: Bachelor degree and diploma.

Concerning the effect of students' traits on their estimation for their services, there was scarcity in studies that tackled such influence according to the knowledge of the researcher. Accordingly, there was no previous study that was reviewed that is possible to compare its results with the result of the current study. There are few studies that its methodological procedures included some variables determined in the current study. For example, the study of Raphael (2006) which classified a sample of students in terms of the following variables :gender, status before graduation – graduate, age, registered credit hours, completed credit hours, weekly working hours and distant from university campus by mile.

Status before graduation – graduate, age, registered credit hours, completed credit hours, weekly working hours and distant from university campus by mile.

The study of Collins (2007) which classified a sample of students concerning the following variables: age, gender, marital status,

availability or non-availability of children, number of children in case they are available, intention to pursue study, availability or non-availability of previous trials in distant learning, means of distant learning in case there is a previous trial, distant between student place of residence and place of university, job status, current job, the latest qualification and reason for joining distant learning program.

However, the study of Raphael (2006) and Collins (2007) have not clarified the effect of students' variables on students' results but they were suffice to describing the characteristics of the sample according to these variables only.

Moreover, the study of Cunningham (2006) confirmed on demographic characteristics of students, staff teaching members and the administrators and their effect on the future accurate determination for unique needs for institutes students that offer distant learning services. However, study of Cunningham (2006) investigated variation of characteristics among students and non-students for distant learning students and not among students themselves.

# **Chapter V**



## **MAJOR FINDINGS, EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH STUDIES AND CONCLUSION**

## **CHAPTER V**

### **MAJOR FINDINGS, EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH STUDIES AND CONCLUSION**

#### **5.0. MAJOR FINDINGS OF THE STUDY**

- According to full time academic supervisor's responses, all services provided to students by Al – Quds Open University were neutral, on all domains of a questionnaire.

- Degree of estimating services provided by Al – Quds Open University in Jenin, based on full time academic supervisors perspectives were in descending order according to Mean and S.D. were as follows:

- (1) Admission Services.
- (2) Library and Knowledge Resources Services.
- (3) Financial Aids Services.
- (4) Academic Guidance Services.
- (5) Academic Supervision Services.

- According to students' responses, all services provided to students by Al Quds Open University were Medium on all domains of a questionnaire.

- Degree of estimating services provided by Al – Quds Open University in Jenin, based on students' perspectives were in descending order, according to the Mean and S.D. were as follows:

1. Services of Receiving New Students.
2. Services relating to students' academic supervisors.
3. Learning Resources services.

4. Training Services.
5. Services to Resolve Various Student Problems.
6. Services of Community Development for Students.
7. Registration Services.
8. Services of educational Evaluation.
9. Learning Support Services.
10. Services of University Systems.
11. Services of Public Relations and Media.
12. Services of University Building.

## **5.1. RESULTS RELATED TO EXAMINING HYPOTHESIS IN THE STUDY**

1 -There was no significant difference at ( $\alpha=0.05$ ) for student support services provided by Al-Quds Open University, in different subjects based on perspectives of students due to **Gender** variable.

2 - There was a significant difference at ( $\alpha=0.05$ ) for student support services, provided by Al-Quds Open University, in different subjects, based on perspectives of students, due to **age** variable (In favor of more than 40 years category).

3 - There was no significant difference at ( $\alpha=0.05$ ) for Student Support Services, provided by Al-Quds Open University in different subjects, based on perspectives of students, due to **Specialization** variable.

4 - There was a significant difference at( $\alpha=0.05$ ) for the student support services provided by Al-Quds Open University in different



subjects based on perspectives of students, due to **Place of Residence** variable. (In favor of city category).

5 - There was no significant difference at ( $\alpha=0.05$ ) for the student support services provided by Al-Quds Open University in different subjects based on perspectives of students, due to **Study Level** variable.

## **5.2. EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS OF MAJOR FINDINGS OF PRESENT STUDY**

In light of a present study, researcher presented for officials in QOU in Palestine in general and to Jenin Educational Area in particular, several recommendations which might contribute in approaching and removing some obstacles and difficulties that which university students face as well to increase an effectiveness of the university open learning which are as follows:

### **A. Educational Implications for University Administration:**

- Reinforcing and following up a mechanism followed by registration and an academic counseling in the university which tackle manner of holding introductory meetings and sessions for newly registered students at beginning of each semester during which university regulations are explained in addition to responsibility of each section and the services provided by the university.
- University administration evaluates introductory programs as well as academic counseling programs and participating in its development.
- University administration has to implement an open door policy in receiving students' complaints and solve them and to respond to their different inquiries.

- University administration follows up, holding continuous training courses for administration staff, particularly in dealing with inquiries from students, parents and teaching staff.
- Officials in administration should visit university facilities either weekly, monthly or each semester on various occasions to make sure of work continuity and examining students' needs, following them up and guiding them.
- Appointing employees in public relationships section in the university, tasks to coordinate meetings inside the university between students and administration and outside the university between students as well as success cases in community in different specializations.

#### **B- Educational Implications for an Academic section:**

- Following up evaluation of study courses, develop and update them.
- Encouraging to increase number of direct meetings for some specialization courses.
- Holding continuous meetings, between full time academic supervisors and part time academic supervisors in the university to discuss students' needs.
- Continue to follow up academic supervisors' training on technologies of open learning and manner of applying them in study curricula.

#### **C- Educational Implications for Students**

- Holding training courses for newly enrolled students at beginning of each semester, concerning manner of using Model and manner of dealing with the university website and various information resources.
- Making field visit programs for students to connect specialization courses with practice and assign them to write their views, discussing them and consider this within study assignments.

- Providing incentives for distinctive students in their study on a form of scholarships, monetary and moral rewards.
- Involving students in decision making process related to their study.
- Developing students' activities, whether through students unions or electronic activities which enable students to raise their ideas as well as their suggestions- theoretically and practically.

#### **D- Educational Implications for Study Environment**

- Trying to search for another main place for the university –Jenin area-to take into consideration conditions, measurements, standards, requirements of OL and provide it, with all facilities including entertainment and sports facilities.
- Increasing number of staff working in technical support, to be able to cover technical problems of staff, related to equipment and internet.
- Updating and developing model and increasing speed of internet particularly when students upload their study assignments.

### **5.3. SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH STUDIES**

- 1- A study to determine special needs for distance learning of students services in different universities.
- 2- A study on an ability of holding contracts, with private sector institutions to provide better facilities of students' services' for distance learning students.
- 3- A study on abilities of Students in directing and executing Services which requires interaction between them, organizing cooperative learning groups and different students' activities through different methods such as involving them in rewarding activities.

### **5.4. RECOMMENDATIONS**

**In light of objectives and results of a study, researcher recommends following things:**

- 1- Administrative leadership in high levels, should work to increase its support to university in all fields to proceed to achieve it's objectives, circulate it's mission and offer it's services for governorate inhabitants as it is the only educational institution.
- 2-The university as well as staff should be careful to improve quality and control it continuously.
- 3- The University seeks to for mechanisms and means that encourage students to obtain a higher academic qualification.
- 4- The university should urge an academic supervisor to raise degree of cooperation and communication with students to fulfill their needs and satisfactions and stimulate their motivation provided that this does not contradict the applicable systems and regulations.

- 5- The University should work to increase students' trust in their qualification and their professional capacities as well as their information and skills which they obtain from the university.
- 6- The University should raise its level of accepting constructive criticism from students.
- 7- The university should present further specializations which fulfill students and local community needs.
- 8-High levels of leadership should take into consideration academic, administrative, behavioural, practical experiences and communication skills into consideration when appointing leaders, staff and academic supervisors from specialized and experienced people.
- 9-Using informal communications channels by administrative employees and academic supervisors with local community to exchange information and important ideas related to the nature of university, services and roles.
- 10-Discussing issues, needs and visions which are mostly urgent with students, periodically through programmed meetings held by an administrative employees with students on university campus to discuss students' problems and provide them with feedback about their inquiries and listen to their views and issues which they raise and benefit from them.
- 11-Supporting moral support to all administrative , academic and staff employees to motivate them to offer various services to students through their job duties which will be reflected positively on university reputation and reinforce its role and mission.
- 12-Encouraging researches in all areas which may offer feedback for the administrative leadership to inform them in strong and weak points in behavioural and administrative practices to tackle weakness points and reinforce strong points.

## 5.5. CONCLUSION

Student support services make up an element of distance education, most nearly akin to traditional education: it is interface between the institution and its students. Problem of management relates, therefore, to a subsystem which is apparently carrying out a traditional role and consequently might appear to observe traditional management practices of education. The reality is far from this. Student support services have to take cognisance of the course materials which form major part of the traditional role as well as of other subsystems. One approach to this problem, currently taken by many of large scale distance teaching institutions, is to draw up role definitions of those engaged in interface with the students, relating these to one another, to the students and to the subsystem as well as to the institution as a whole. This is a useful way of highlighting role of the intermediaries in distance education and can avoid confusion with the traditional roles. But here again, care must be taken on the interrelationship of these roles. What is being designed is not a machine in which every part performs a separate function, operating in a strict sequence but rather an organism in which the cells are constantly relating to one another in patterns which are duplicated throughout the organism. The loss of a cell does not mean failure of the system and cells can be added without putting a stop to the overall objective of the organism but rather changing its direction marginally, without the need for the design of a completely new machine.

It is possible to transfer between countries elements which make up course production.

The same cannot be said for student support services. These:

Must be constructed in context of almost infinite needs of the clients;

Are dependent on the educational ethos of a region and an institution;

Are dependent on the dispersal of student body, elements of resource and curriculum or product of the course production subsystem;  
are dependent on the generic differences in student body which it has been set up to serve.

# **Chapter VI**

## **SUMMARY**



## **CHAPTER VI**

### **SUMMARY**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

The world has witnessed sequence of changes, during the last few decades in different fields. Most noticeable changes are Human Resource Development and Scientific and Technological Knowledge which has expanded and advanced at an increasing pace. Field of Science and Technology has seen qualitative shift in generation of information and knowledge and it's investment which led to significant changes in productive methods. The world has witnessed a rapid development in education and training. Such changes of events and revolutions of knowledge have a direct impact on regular methods of education which may not be able to face challenges of 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Education in general and higher education (universities) and their institutions in particular, witnessed complete changes and development in comparison to what they were. For example, expansion and increase in the number of institutions and their methods of admission, administration and so on (Al-Kilanil, 2001, p. 3).

#### **OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING SYSTEM**

Open and Distance Education system at University level has shown a tremendous growth and development during the last few decades, all over the world. Open learning system provides students with chances of freedom to learn at their own pace, place and convenience while being away from formal institutions. The basic objective of this system is to provide wider access to higher education, as conventional system was proving to be unable to cope up with ever-increasing demand. In recent time, this system has emerged as an alternative mode of learning for

higher education, all over the world. Globalization of distance- learning provides many opportunities for developing countries for realization of goals of their educational systems.

### **SCENARIO OF OPEN UNIVERSITY SYSTEM TODAY**

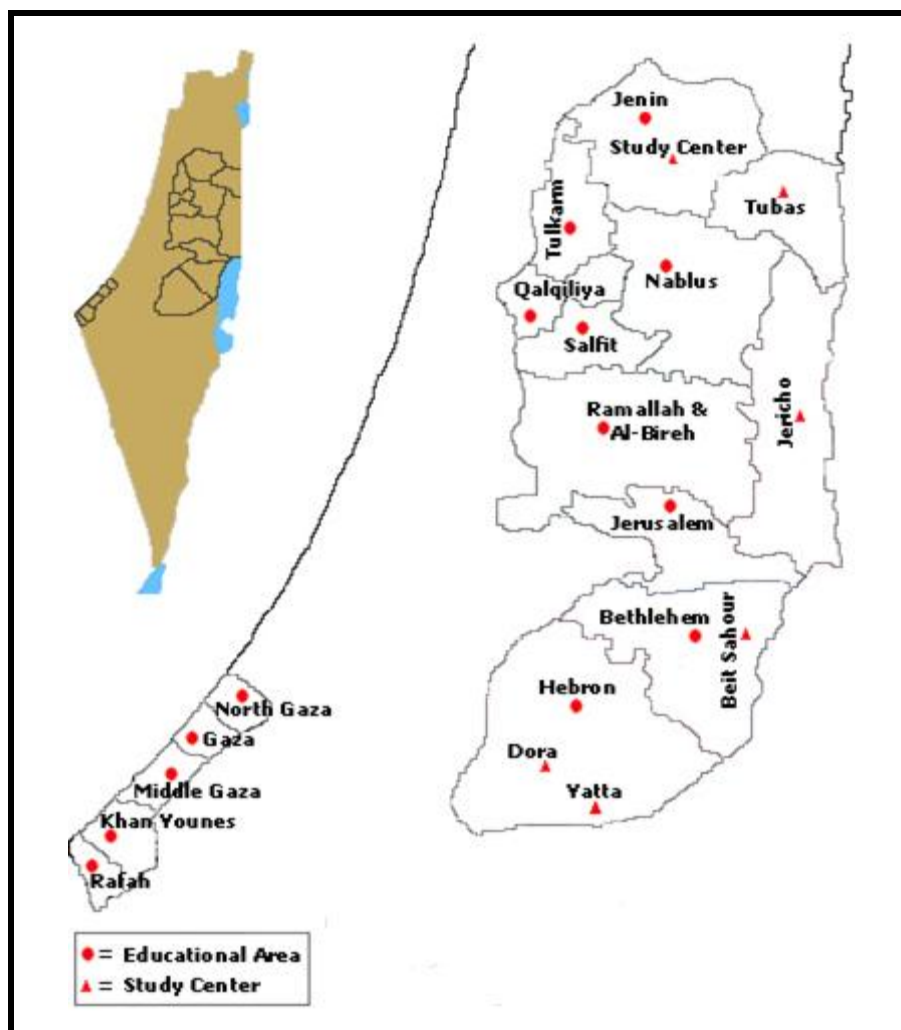
A Common need, in many, if not all, developing countries is to upgrade their educational systems in quality as well as in quantity. Open and Distance Education system shows a two-fold development pattern, i.e., numerous single mode open universities have emerged to absorb large number of new learners and increasing numbers of traditional universities have also began to offer their regular programmes through distance education. It is more than ever that, open and distance education will be an important element of future education systems. Open Learning is approaching acceptance, within mainstream education and training in such a way that it will make up, part of the repertoire of most educational institutes in the future. As a matter of fact, Open and Distance Education has existed for about one hundred years, in developed regions and for one or two generations in the developing countries (UNESCO, 2002, pp. 9-10).

### **AL-QUDS OPEN UNIVERSITY SYSTEM IN PALESTINE**

Idea of establishing Al-Quds Open University goes back to the year 1975, as part of the Palestinians' demand for higher education, a request was forwarded to the United Nations Organization (UNO) (Qamhawi, 1986, p. 247). A studied proposal was put for discussion by the Palestinian National Council, in the year 1981 which was passed and the university came into existence and named as Al-Quds Open University which was established and started in the year 1985 at it's temporary location, at Amman City, Jordan. In 1994, the university was relocated to

Al-Quds at its present building. Al-Quds Open University is an educational institution for Open and Distance Education. Its main job is to transform education to students wherever they may be located and by this way, they can work and learn while at their jobs. Also, it adopts a flexible policy in admission and education of students. (Al-Quds Open University Index, 2003).

### **Educational Regions and Study Centres in Palestine**



Source: <http://portal.qou.edu>

### **ACADEMIC PROGRAMS AT AL-QUDS OPEN UNIVERSITY**

The University offers five academic programs, all leading to the Bachelor of Arts (B.A) or Bachelor of Science (B. Sc) degree as follows:

(i) Technology and Applied Sciences, (ii) Agriculture, (iii) Education (iv) Social and Family Development and (v) Administrative and Economic Sciences. Each program consists of at least one major. Student may choose major, in which he/she is interested with an aim of obtaining a Bachelor of Arts (B.A) or Bachelor of Science (B. Sc) degree.

### **MISSION OF AL- QOU 2005-2010**

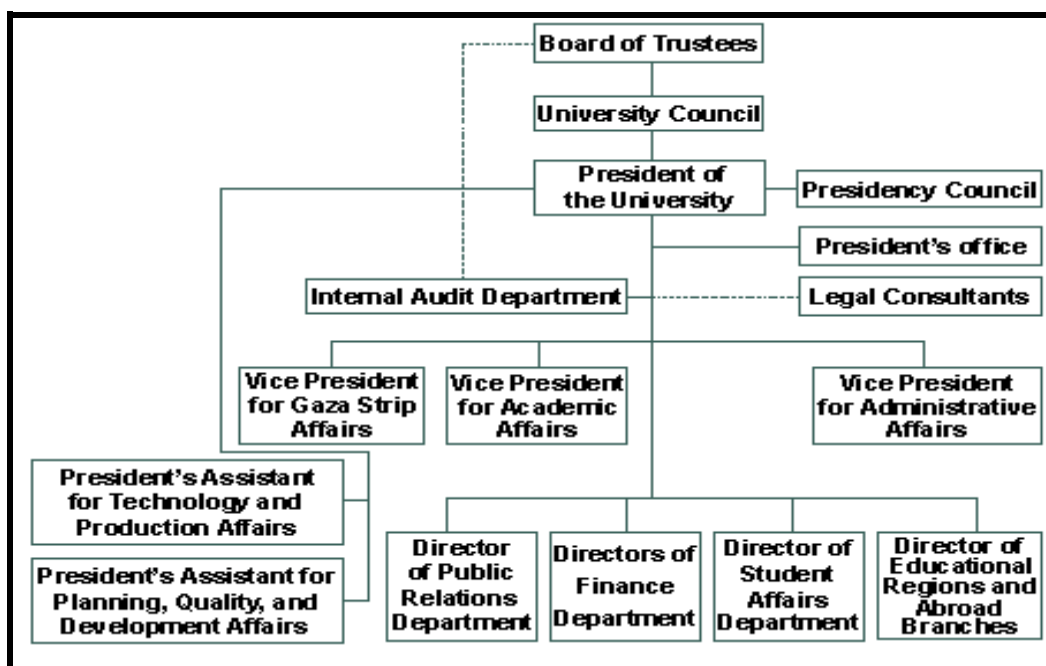
**Mission of Al-Quds Open University over period 2005-2010, can be summarized in following points:**

18. Commitment to carry out philosophy, principles and methods of open education and distance learning according to latest cognitive and technological developments.
19. To maintain University's academic, financial and administrative independence.
20. Keeping freedom of thought and expression while avoiding ideological or political conflicts.
21. Providing university educational services to Palestinian people without discrimination in West Bank and Gaza Strip.
22. Granting an M.A degree in specializations relevant to needs of the Palestinian and Arab communities, besides granting a B.A degree in existing programs.
23. Offering various continuing education programs which lead to granting certificates and diplomas of various levels.
24. Taking care to make level of academic programs and graduates equal and competitive to equivalent levels in local and Arab universities.

25. Employing a mixture of various instructional medias (printed, visual, audio, computerized and electronic) to support distance learners.
26. Seeking to convert Al-Quds Open University into a virtual university.
27. Commitment to carry out a principle of learner-centered education.
28. Seeking to implement a principle of total quality at an University and providing necessary qualified cadres, funds and training.
29. Encouraging research and studies in particular, as well as creative production, in general.
30. Developing professional capabilities of academic supervisors so they can perform their duties at a high quality level.
31. Employing qualified and trained human cadres alongside with applying most up-to-date techniques of information and communication technology.
32. Increasing cooperation and relationship with educational, societal and economic organizations in Palestine as well as in Arab and foreign countries.
33. Continuing to develop contents and methods of the university textbooks to integrate distance learning objectives.
34. To increase interest in scientific applications stated in the academic programs, such as Education, Social Development etc.

## Administrative Structure of Al-Quds Open University

Administrative structure of Al-Quds Open University is as follows:



Source: <http://portal.qou.edu>

## UNIVERSITY'S PHILOSOPHY, VALUES AND PRINCIPLES

4. To enhance commitment to philosophy of University which is represented in implementation of system of open education and distance learning in Palestine through keeping up with latest scientific and technological developments.
5. To encourage academic freedom as well as freedom of thought and expression, adhering to good ethics, respect of others and national unity.
6. To enhance interest in a learner through guiding University's all activities, towards serving him\her, supporting his\her learning so that he\she can be a high quality graduate.
7. To enhance interest in performance quality at all levels within a plan of total quality.

## **CONVENTIONAL EDUCATION OBSTACLES**

Conventional education sector is still suffering from many obstacles: geographical, political, social, and economical. By geographical part, student's residence may form an obstacle which prevents him/her to reach study place. Hence, in recent conditions, Palestinian territories have witnessed political upsets and instability. It leads to closure of educational establishments because of Israeli occupation. In the current Social Structure, the role of a woman in Society in the home can further be enhanced through the new educational methods which cater to educated and uneducated women. So Distance Learning is a boon to them.

## **PROBLEMS AND PROPOSED SOLUTIONS**

However, Palestinian educational system in all stages, has suffered along occupation era, from all types of prejudices and persecutions, for instance closure of educational establishments such as Schools, Colleges and Universities.

In addition to effects which were resulted by Israeli occupation and its practices which have increased negative effects, particularly on higher education- especially universities.

To sum up these problems, cost seems to be one of the main problems of higher education- especially universities, that their budget acts as a burden on government's budgets as well as families' budgets which also act as the same problem in financing their students. Moreover, finance problem increased because of increase in population which caused

increase in demand for education. It led to many problems as university education crises which (Bader, 1999) can be summarized into;

- Difficulty of assimilation for flowing numbers who aspires to join universities.
- Weakness of appropriateness between universities' output and the changeable market labour requirements, by effect of scientific & technology progress.
- Increase of higher education burden on families and governments (Bader,1999).

## **OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNIING CONCEPT**

Open Learning Concept: it is considered one of the distance learning modales which enables a learner to learn separately of the university where he/she studies. Learner can choose appropriate place and time which suit his/her condition. Moreover, he/she can learn in a fast way which suits his/her abilities and possibilities. (Nasrallah.2000).

Open learning is an educational policy that constitutes it's philosophy on individuals right to reach for available educational opportunities. Meanwhile , it is mass open education for all as it has flexibility that enables learners to pick out ways of learning , time, place and learning contents .Consequently for his/her conditions and needs (Keelani.2001). Therefore, it is an educational system which meets natural readiness for an individual through surpassing obstacles which prevent him/her to keep on learning and diluting of attendance conditions which are essential conditions for conventional education system like age, time devotion for studying, former educational qualifications and financial ability.

Lewis has defined open learning, as “The education that enables the learner to control decisions by himself/herself like content study



choosing, learning method, learning place and self-learning". (Keelani.2001).

## **DISTANCE LEARNING CONCEPT**

Initially distance learning had started in past century when many educational commercial and private institutes in U.S.A and Britain have used distance learning in order to convey educational materials for learners in such a system which was called correspondence.

Secondly, after the success that accompanied this experiment, some universities have started to use distance learning system in university learning like, Queens Land in Australia and New England University. But, the British University had started in sixties and it had a main role to use distance learning in an university grade. Furthermore, this university had proved, it is possible to use distance learning by less economic cost in comparison with conventional learning.(Nasrallah.2000).

## **TARGETS OF OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING**

Targets of open and distance learning involve that following as were referred to them by 'Ibraheem"

- Requirements and development plans meeting from qualified trained manpower.
- To allow an education university opportunities for all learners who aspire to, in correspondence for increasing social demand for this learning type.
- To grant learning opportunity for those who missed higher education for reasons which are related to an individual or society.

- Providing educational opportunities, training and continuous habitation for employers who are in charge.
- To provide all people with cultural programmes, supplying them for enlightenment .Moreover, supplying for knowledge by using modern means like television and satellites. Through transmitting educational programmes, use is not exclusive on learners only but including all people, who are not uncovered by conventional education.
- To participate encouraging woman to be educated but in developing countries, woman's education represents real problem- for example in agricultural societies, percentage of illiteracy has risen because women are discouraged. (Ibraheem,2004).

## **JUSTIFICATIONS OF OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING**

Justifications can be summarized such as:-

- To give university education to those who face economical and social obstacles which hinder them to join immediately after secondary grade during that time.
- Open and distance learning enables those who had not joined university.
- Open and distance learning is considered as an important mean of developing society through developing it's individuals.
- Open and distance learning act as buffer between job and learning.
- Woman's learning is an essential matter in developing society. Hence, open learning suits women by giving them enough time to practice their social role.

## **HISTORY AND LOCATION OF JENIN EDUCATIONAL REGION**

It was established as a Study Centre in 1991 and was a part of Nablus Educational Region. When, first it was inaugurated, there were only 203 students but in 1998, it reached to 1487 students. That was, one year before it's promotion as an Educational Region. Jenin Educational Region is located in the northern part of Jenin, and Jenin Study Centre is in the southern part of the city. Number of students in an academic year 2006-2007 was 7,000 in the Educational Regions and a Study Centre; 4,913 students were in the former and 2,087 in the latter. Jenin Educational Region is located now in two rented buildings of 4,500 square meters and Jenin Study Centre is located in a-three buildings of 1,200 square meters. Jenin Centre of Al-Quds Open University is headed by a Director of education along with assistants of (Academic Affairs, Library, Recruitment, Examination, Full Time and Non-full Time Experts, Student Affairs, Social Counsellor, Computers, Personal Affairs, Finance, Admission, Store and Security). Number of Academic Supervisors - Full and Part Timers Are shown in the following:

**Number of Academic Supervisors - Full and Part Timers in Educational Regions and a Study Centre in Jenin- Academic year 2009-2010.**

Full Timers		Part Timers		Total Number of Full Timers and Part Timers			
Ph.D	Master	Ph.D	Master	Bachelor	Ph.D	Master	Bachelor
22	18	24	189	1	40	213	1
Total = 40		Total = 213		Total = 255			

**Number of Jenin Educational Region and a Study Centre Distribution of Learners by Academic Program are shown in following:**

Programmes	Gender	
	Male	Female
Technology & Applied Sciences	112	248
	<b>Total = 360</b>	
Agriculture	46	26
	<b>Total = 72</b>	
Social and Family Development	143	394
	<b>Total = 537</b>	
Education	1034	2816
	<b>Total = 3850</b>	
Economic and Management Sciences	1019	1182
	<b>Total = 2201</b>	
<b>Total</b>	<b>2354</b>	<b>4666</b>
	<b>Total = 7020</b>	

Source: Al –Quds Open University .Primary Statistics from admission department/ Academic year 2009-2010.

## **STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES**

Main aim of Open and Distance Education is to promote self-study among learners, in absence of regular teaching system. To achieve this, every institution of Open and Distance Learning, extends support to its students that comprises of many facilities and activities which were intended to make learning process easier and more interesting for the students (Sharma, 2007, p. 4). There are many key-issues which help and guide preparation and advancement of distance learning initiatives. These activities, beyond production and delivery of course materials, help and

assist in progress of learners in term of education (Learning) and effective communication (Simpson, 2000). Therefore, support may range from study centre, counselling and tutorial support to administrative problem solving (Rumble, 1992). Institutions will need to develop policies which clarify academic issues, tuition fee, services considering geographical area, labour management, legal matters and student support services such as counselling, training and others (Gellman-Danley and Fetzner, 1998). Researcher in his opinion mentioned that following are some of student services such as: (i) admission procedures (ii) mode, course and subjects of study (iii) guidance to the students (iv) recruitment (v) job projects (vi) examination and (vii) electronic portal.

## **WHY TO CONDUCT RESEARCH ON STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES?**

Putting definitions of research and student services together, raises obvious question of why research was important or what can it do for those involved in learners' services? Answer to this question, had two components. The first was to consider many facets of learners' services in which our knowledge was lacking and thus, the ways in which our involvement in it's provision was compromised. Researcher was sure that many of the people could provide a list of issues which were relevant to their practices and which had important consequences to lives of learners and to their institution's capacity to serve, to which their knowledge was at best untested and uninformed and at worst incorrect. These issues probably included traditional distance education questions such as how to reduce attrition, improve learning outcomes and reduce cost of services. But, now we are challenged to provide answers to

questions, raised by new forms of distance education provisions, questions such as:

- What mix of personal and machine, delivered services was needed by learners?
- What combinations of collaborative and group based learning were worth cost and inconvenience to both teachers and learners?
- Did face to face tutorials really make a difference or is real time video conferencing just as effective?
- Was travelling to a learning centre worth expense and hassle when we can cost effectively deliver via audio and video to home or workplace?
- How much did expensive multimedia really enhance students' learning; how important are real time interactions?

The list is long and growing. It is even more important to ask ourselves, if our current research practice is capable of answering these questions.

## **SIGNIFICANCE OF PRESENT STUDY**

Political situation of middle-eastern countries was not stable. In addition to regional conflicts of West Asia, particularly, Palestine was going on. Thus, to have institutions of regular learning and their continuation was somewhat difficult. When Al-Quds Open University came into existence, many Palestinians who missed train of regular learning were pleased to get their chance of higher education. Since, Al-Quds Open University had specific feature of adhering to mode of open and distance education, it had high degree of importance and significance to Palestinian society. As a matter of fact, this university admitted number of students and provided them, by training and scientific

knowledge which qualify them in their profession. Whereas, recommendations of experts helped the university and a directorate of planning and development, to study and put forth the correct plans and policies to distance learning and improving an education by Al-Quds Open University. Research studies have solved concerned problems of the students and that is why we have taken student support services which were provided by the university.

This study is first to be conducted, considering Palestinian level and it is going to investigate student support services which were provided by Arabian/Distance learning institutions and will benefit new researches and further studies in a same area.

## **RATIONAL OF THE STUDY**

From discussion made over here and through the nature of researcher's work as a part timer supervisor in Al-Quds Open University in Jenin area, it was clear that student support services were very vital in an Open Distance Learning System. This was because students over there were not formal or regular students, to the institutions but a facility to learn at their own place and time of convenience was there. Therefore, student support services were very important for them to continue with their courses. Such courses get a good success when student support services were provided of proper quality and at proper time by proper teaching faculty. Since, researcher was interested to study overall success of this Open University; it was decided to make a status survey of present student support services provided to the students and full time academic supervisors.

## **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

A Study of Student Support Services Provided by Al-Quds Open University of Palestine.

## **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

1. To study provisions of Student Support Services for all courses provided by Al-Quds Open University, Palestine.
2. To study effectiveness of present Student Support Services provided by university in terms of (a) Extent of students satisfaction level. (b) Level of satisfaction of persons providing it. (c) Time cost involved in provision of student support services. (d) Percentage of students acquiring Student Support Services.
3. To collect suggestions for improvement of Student Support Services provided presently to all Students of Al-Quds Open University.

## **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

**Followings questions emerged from discussion:**

1. What were Student Support Services provided by Al-Quds Open University, in different subjects, based on perspectives of students?
2. What were Student Support Services provided by Al-Quds Open University, in different subjects, based on perspectives of full time academic supervisors?
3. Are there significant differences at ( $\alpha=0.05$ ) in the Student Support Services, provided by Al-Quds Open University, in different subjects based on perspectives of students due to these variables: **Gender, Age, Specialization, Place of Residence and Study Level?**.



## **HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY**

- 1- There is no significant difference at ( $\alpha=0.05$ ) for student support services, provided by Al-Quds Open University, in different subjects, based on perspectives of students due to **Gender** variable.
- 2- There is no significant difference at ( $\alpha=0.05$ ) for student support services, provided by Al-Quds Open University, in different subjects based on perspectives of students due to **Age** variable.
- 3- There is no significant difference at ( $\alpha=0.05$ ) for student support services, provided by Al-Quds Open University, in different subjects, based on perspectives of students due to **Specialization** variable.
- 4- There is no significant difference at ( $\alpha=0.05$ ) for student support services, provided by Al-Quds Open University in different subjects, based on perspectives of students due to **Place of Residence** variable.
- 5- There is no significant difference at ( $\alpha=0.05$ ) for student support services, provided by Al-Quds Open University in different subjects, based on perspectives of students due to **Study Level** variable.

## **DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

Some of limitations of this study were as follows:

- 1- This study was based on a sample composed of (351) students which equals to (5%) of Population. The number was 7020 - male and female students from Al-Quds Open University in Palestine –Jenin.
- 2- This study also involved all **Academic full-time Supervisors** in Al-Quds Open University in Palestine –Jenin. The number was 40 Supervisors.
- 3- This study was conducted during the second semester of an academic year 2009-2010.

4. This study was conducted at Al-Quds Open University / Jenin branch – Palestine.

## **EXPLANATION OF TERMS USED IN TITLE OF THE STUDY**

**Open Learning:** Open Learning concept was considered as one of distance learning models which enabled learners to learn separately of university where he/she studied. Learners can choose an appropriate place and time which suited his/her condition. Moreover, he/she can learn in a fast way which suited his/her abilities and possibility (Nasrallah, 2000).

### **Al-Quds Open University (QOU)**

AL- QOU is a national institution for higher education located in Palestine. It enjoys an independent status in academic, financial and administrative affairs. The university attempts to provide educational services for interested students, through adopting Distance Learning system. ([www.portal.qou.edu](http://www.portal.qou.edu)).

### **Student Support Services**

Student Support Services comprise of many facilities and activities which were intended to make learning process easier and more interesting for the students (Sharma, 2007, p. 4). In this study, Student Support Services for students comprised of: (1) Services of Receiving New Students. (2) Services Relating to Student Academic Supervisors. (3) Learning Resources Services. (4) Training Services. (5) Services to Resolve Various Student Problems. (6) Services of Community Development for Students. (7) Registration Services. (8) Services of Educational Evaluation. (9) Learning Support Services. (10) Services of University Systems. (11) Services of Public Relations and Media and (12) Services of University Building. **For Full Time Academic Supervisors:**

(1) Admission Services. (2) Academic Guidance Services. (3) Academic Supervision Services. (4) Financial Aids Services. (5) Library and knowledge Resources Services.

Scientific establishment of any research study calls for being acquainted with as many as possible of prior studies relating to student support services extended to distance education learners. Unfortunately, there have been few Arab studies pertaining directly to this field. After reviewing Arab studies in the field of distance higher education, it appears that most of these studies tackled different issues which were related directly to student support services.

## **STUDIES CONDUCTED IN INDIA**

**Sesharatnam (1994)** studied "Multi Media instructional System in Distance Education: A Case Study of Dr. BRAOU" was a major study to find out the media instruction in distance education with reference to BRAOU. The objectives among others include, studying the role of audio and video cassettes and integration / non-integration of print and non-print media methods followed for instruction in BRAOU. Major findings of the study were: in spite of the high potential of radio broadcasts majority of the respondents were not able to listen to them and failed to appreciate the supplementary nature of radio counselling. The potential of videocassette was also not fully exploited by the students of the University.

**Basu (1996)** studied "Regular Telecast by IGNUO Feedback from Students study was aimed to find out media habited, utilization of media infrastructure at study centres, usefulness of telecast of lessons and student reactions on various components of the programmes. Study found

that many students were not aware of telecasts and did not watch them, management students watched television more and undergraduate students listened to radio and vice-versa. Because, the former were employed, aged and were in higher income group than the later in all respects. Students were facing some problems in utilizing the media faculties at the study centre. Telecast time was not convenient to many and it would be better if a repeat telecast were arranged.

**Rathore (1997)** compared students' perceptions about the quality and cost-effectiveness and satisfaction with feedback they got through: written correspondence; face-to-face sessions; and non-contiguous interaction on electronic media. The survey received responses from 529 of 2,500 active students of the German Fern University (FEU) and 653 of 2,500 active students of the Indian Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU). Comparative analysis revealed a number of significant differences that supported the hypothesis that material development of a society resulted in better support to students in distance education. In general, FEU was found to provide its students better feedback than IGNOU.

**Gaba (2000)** studied individual learner's goals to pursue the program, their perception of the value of the distance education degree, their program completion; and perception of employability of their respective distance education program. Study found that, most of respondents joined distance education system because of its flexible characteristics and with the purpose of mainly getting a job and using ICT in ODL would help to update existing skills of learners and also to generate new skills among them.

**Suckumar (2001)** studied "IGNOU" Interactive Radio Counseling: A study was aimed to find out utilization of interactive radio counselling by students and general public. Out of the sample, majority were male, married, came from urban area and were undergraduate students. The study found that though the subject topic was announced well in advance for radio counseling.

**Passi & Mishra (2004)** studied the process used for selecting research areas and methodological approaches in distance education in India. Research yielded interesting empirical findings & also determined that a mixed approach which involved quantitative and qualitative methods was more appropriate for conducting research in distance education in India.

**Sharma (2007)** conducted a study entitled "Student Support Services in Distance Learning System: A Case of DDE, Maharshi Dayanand University". Purpose of providing quality education at doorstep and meeting needs of students and other facilities provided by university. He concluded "Open and Distance Learning (ODL) System was innovative in nature. It relaxed entry qualifications; used specially designed learning materials and modern educational technologies, provided Student Support Service (SSS) and applied advanced methods of evaluation. If learners were not fully aware of this system before joining, they might find themselves in an unfamiliar situation."

## **STUDIES IN OTHER COUNTRIES**

**Judith (1998)** wrote a paper entitled “Beyond Access: Student Perspectives on Support Service Needs in Distance Learning” The survey included 224 Canadian distance education students, 81% were women, 70% enrolled for career reasons and most were of age 24 to 50. Desired support services included information about getting those started in distance education, communication with instructors and students, a learning center, and career assistance.

**Fan ,et al (1999)** in their paper entitled " Effective student support services – An achievement-oriented approach" They pointed out that the provision of support services for students was an important component of distance education. Evidences existed to suggest that there was a positive relationship between students’ academic performance and effective use of student support systems.

**Jackson (2000)** undertook a study entitled “Challenges to Student Support Services in American Higher Education". Through a series of electronic surveys, the respondents agreed on 47 student support services which were basic for distance learners. These services were re-classified in following groups:

- 1- Recruitment and enrollment services.
- 2- Academic support services.
- 3- Services of educational materials and search sources.
- 4- Career development services.
- 5- Community development services.
- 6- Evaluation services.
- 7- Financial services.
- 8- Technical support services.

Concerning findings of the study, they included:

- 1- Student Support Services were a crucial element in distance learning.
- 2- Students Affairs submitted little to meet distance students' needs.
- 3- Distance Education providers had a developed base for student support services- but they were not well known outside distance learning field.
- 4- Regional Academic Accreditation agencies had to assess distance students' support services.
- 4- Dual-Pattern Institutions (traditional and distance education) became increasingly involved in presenting distance learning programs, without having until now a suitable pattern to provide distance learners with their necessary support services.

**Vallejo (2001)** undertook a study entitled "Quality in Distance Education: Student Support Services and their Role in Student Satisfaction". The results in this study showed, three major implications for distance education practice as follows:

- 1) Students' characteristics and motivation played an important role in students' satisfaction and success. Students at different levels could be expected to have different needs and skills. Practitioners not only needed to be aware of these different needs but also had a responsibility to help and support all students through their distance education experience.
- 2) In distance education as in traditional education, establishing and maintaining quality programs depended on people's investment of time, in the provision of services to students and other stakeholders.
- 3) In order to have a theory of quality for distance education; it was important to take into account unique characteristics of distance education. The study of quality in distance education could not continue to rely on characteristics and experience of traditional education. Since

differences between traditional and distance education were evident, it was important to start creating a theory of quality for distance education that embodied its inherent characteristics.

**Bayless (2001)** undertook a study entitled "What are the Non-Academic Needs of Distance Learners?" Findings indicated that non-academic needs of distance learners were very similar to those of campus-based students. Most important needs were basic: information about institution and program, a way to purchase books, a contact person at an institution and academic advising.

**Magnussen, JR (2003)** undertook a study entitled "Needed Support Services in Distance Education Environment and the Ability of Net-based Quality of Services to distribute them". In final outcome of this study, forty-five student services were identified (in 8 groups). Eight of these services were considered likelier to be dispensed through analogous service net opposite to non-analogous one. Most of these services were related to counseling and training area.

Main services, study arrived at were:

- 1- Recruitment and enrollment services.
- 2- Academic support services.
- 3- Services of educational materials and search sources.
- 4- Career development services.
- 5- Community development services.
- 6- Quality assurance and evaluation services.
- 7- Financial services.
- 8- Instructors' development services.
- 9- Technical support services.



**Cain et. al. (2003)** undertook a study entitled " Support Services That Matter: An Exploration of the Experiences and Needs of Graduate Students in a Distance Learning Environment". Results revealed three important findings. First, most students were not likely to take advantage of student support services. Second, students perceived their peers as important sources of academic and social support. Lastly, students expected their instructor to be a support resource and to be knowledgeable about on-campus academic and administrative services.

**Hamdan (2004)** investigated an importance of open and distance education in social, political and cultural development. The results showed that an open education could differ in many aspects- social and human development such as flexibility in admission and registration, gather between work and study, development of skills, democratization of education through various educational programs.

**Darwazeh (2004)** investigated whether students of Al-Quds Open University felt, distanced and what were factors behind their feelings? Were they due to physical factors, or to psycho-social, academic and administrative factors? The general mean of Al-Quds Open University students' feeling of distance was ( $x=3.1$ ) out of (5) points.

The students' feeling of distance was due to significantly ( $p\}.000$ ) to the academic factors ( $x=3.4$ ) more than to the physical ( $x=3.03$ ), psycho-social( $x=3.01$ ) or the administrative ( $x=2.96$ ) factors.

**Peach (2005)** wrote a paper entitled "Ensuring student success - the role of support services in improving the quality of the student learning experience" Several problem clusters emerged from the data and this

paper considered the problem cluster referred to contextualised versus de-contextualised learning assistance.

**Zieger (2005)** undertook a study entitled "The Relationship between Student Orientation Programs that Support Community Building and Retention of Distance Learners". This study raised three questions:

- 1) Would orientation services for online students met their needs and increase retention?
- 2) What components were essential in an orientation program for online students? The study defined these in three basic elements: academic sides, technology and community development.
- 3) What was influence of this orientation, if it existed, on online graduates regarding student retention?.

**Nada (2005)** undertook a study entitled “The Unique Characteristics of Al-Quds Open University as Seen by It's Students in Northern Palestine” and the study aimed to show the unique characteristics of Al-Quds Open University and to analyze the effects of the following variables (sex, job, place of residence, education level, and area). Study results showed that highest mean was in area of quality of participating students and the methods of teaching, used followed by an ability to overcome a political crises and flexibility in terms of time.

**Kahrhoff (2005)** undertook a study entitled "Exploring the Relationship between Adult Development and Support Service Needs of Online Graduate Students". Results indicated that, participants were adult learners and had same demographic and affective characteristics as other distant students

(Mean age = 33.9 years) . They generally required little or no support, with an exception of Career Development (Mean = 2.93). These adult participants had generally reached a higher level of developmental task achievement than college seniors, especially male participants. A canonical correlation analysis indicated that students who had a higher level of developmental task achievement required less support.

**Raphael (2006)** undertook a study entitled "A Needs Assessment: A Study of Perceived Need for Student Services by Distance Learners". Study resulted in following conclusions:

- 2) The top five reported student services were listed according to descending value of their means as follows:

<i>Item</i>	<i>Section</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Clear, complete, and timely information regarding curriculum requirements	Academic Advising	4.56	.541
An online bookstore which included online textbook lookup and ordering	Bookstore Services	4.56	.587
Online payment and tracking of orders at the online bookstore	Bookstore Services	4.49	.578
Access to individual academic advising	Academic Advising	4.49	.656
An online bookstore clearly describes all delivery methods.	Bookstore Services	4.48	.597

Similarly, five student services perceived by online learners as needed by distance learners were as follows: (presented in increasing order of mean values).

<i>Item</i>	<i>Section</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Orientation as a required, for credit course	Orientation Services	2.34	1.167
A distance learning student government	Opportunities for Community	2.89	1.130
A website that links to other colleges and universities counseling center sites	Personal Counseling	3.21	1.019
Access to information about health and wellness programs and other health care issues	Personal Counseling	3.33	1.026
Access to self-help tools, online links, and information regarding locally based counseling services	Personal Counseling	3.41	.997

2) Paired t-tests indicated that for all but one item, there was a significant difference between perceived need versus perceived availability of services. The only item not found to be significant was, *Orientation as a required, for credit course* . For each significant pair, the mean of need scores was rated higher than the mean of availability of services scores.

The following table demonstrates top five differences in means between the estimation of need importance and its availability:

<b>Service</b>	<b>Difference in Means</b>
Information regarding learning assistance, tutorial services, supplemental instruction, and other academic support services.	1.182
Access to career self-assessments with tutorials.	1.115
Access to career services that include self-assessments, goal and decision-making assistance, educational and career planning, and job search information.	1.083
Access to online academic advising guides.	1.065
An online comprehensive job search handbook.	1.058

On the other hand, the bottom five differences in means between the mean of need and availability scores were reported in descending rank order as the following table shows:

<b>Service</b>	<b>Difference in Means</b>
Newsletters and announcements regarding institution related information.	.349
Online access to the catalog, student handbook, and information related to services provided by the institution.	.280
A distance learning student government.	.261
Academic honesty policy and information regarding confidentiality prior to enrollment.	.153
Orientation as a required, for credit course.	.080

**Klukas (2006)** undertook a study entitled "Online Student Support Services at Wisconsin Colleges and Universities". Results were:

1) All institutions, responding, offered distance education courses and some online student services. 2) Offering twelve services, in an online format was viewed as important to very important. 3) Basic information and registration was considered as most important. 4) Career services and tutoring considered least important. 5) Basic information on classes, application for admission, financial aid, library services and registration were most commonly available. 6) Bookstore services, academic advising, orientation to online learning, and tutoring were the least commonly provided services. 7) Institutions, not offering an application for admission, financial aid, library services, and registration online planned to offer those services electronically in the future. 8) Tutoring was not likely to be offered online. 9) Effectiveness of 12 student services ranged from moderately effective to effective- 10) Registration, library services and basic information were most effective services offered online and 11) Academic advising and career services were least effective.

**Cunningham (2006)** undertook a study entitled "College and University Faculty and Student Rating of Distance Learning Support Services". Results of this study provided ranked list of support services considered essential by faculty and student participants. These services included: recruitment and enrollment forms, graduate services, career consultation, minorities and disabled services, financial aid, services linked to governmental, judiciary and legal authorities, health services, university orientation, personal consultation, university fees payment, campus services, information about scholarships, determining student level, student retention services, veterans assistance, academic advising, measurement and evaluation services, bookstores services, certificates, services of cumulative average reports, programs of international studies,

library services, studying and writing skills, publishing services, self-evaluation and tests, computer laboratories management, e-mail and internet services, hardware and software services, assistance demand offices, online educational orientation, collaborative training, foundational support system, development of abilities and talents, curricula development and academic courses distribution.

**Sim,et. al (2006)** investigated distance learners' satisfaction with support system, provided to them by a distance learning institution in Malaysia . Results of factorial analysis revealed that satisfaction with the quality of the learners support, considering of the administrative and the academic dimensions, was consistent with Simpson model of the support system.

**Snoddy (2007)** undertook a study entitled "Impacts of Instant Messaging for Virtual Office Hours on Student Satisfaction, Achievement, and Retention in Online Education". Students enrolled in an Associate Degree program in Huntington Junior College, were randomly divided into two sections, within the course. One section had an access to instant messenger and the other section did not. Students, then, completed a survey to report student satisfaction levels. Grades and retention rates were reported by instructors. A chi-square analysis was used to get results. The study did not find any significant difference between the groups.

**Collins (2007)** undertook a study entitled "Online Student Support Services: Perceived Problems and Strategies to Affect Change". This research showed a relationship between availability and accessibility to online student support services through investigation of quality control, accreditation, student satisfaction, availability and reliability of services,

organizational structure, faculty and student awareness, technology issues and support from administration.

**Belbeesi (2007)** in her study entitled ' The effectiveness of Al-Quds Open University Students in using techniques and skills of the Open Education'. An appearance of study results that there was a good understanding which was related to the open education and academic supervisors. Study also indicated that the students had weak ability in using the modern technological methods.

**Axelson (2007)** undertook a study entitled "The Use and Value of Student Support Services: A Survey of Undergraduate Students in Online Classes". The Survey of Undergraduate Students in Online Classes". Undergraduate students enrolled in online classes at University of Wyoming in the United States of America, completed a 61 item online survey. Survey probed students' use and interest in current University of Wyoming support services including orientation, e-mail, financial aid, library resources, bookstore, writing center.

**Barakat (2009)** undertook a study which aimed at the estimations of Al-Quds Open University's strategies for human development, in viewpoint of its teaching staff members in light of variables such as gender, qualification, types of employments and specialization. To achieve this purpose, a questionnaire for measuring human development strategies applied for a sample consisted of 192 teachers from Al-QOU. Results were as under:

- Teachers' estimates for human strategies development in social, economical and political domains were high and it was very high in the cultural domain.



- There was no significant difference in teaching staff members estimating for the strategies for human development (social, cultural, economical and political) due to gender variable.

- There was significant difference in teaching staff members estimating for the strategies for human development (social and cultural) due to qualification variable in favor of PhD degree teachers.

Whereas there were no significant differences in economical and political strategies due to this variable.

- There were significant differences in teaching staff members estimating for strategies of human development( social, cultural , and economic) due to specialization variable in favor of educational and computer specialization whereas there were no significant differences in political & strategy due to this variable.

**Farajallahi and Moenika (2010)** conducted a study entitled "The Comparative study of Students Support Services of Payame Noor University of Iran, AllamaIqbal Open University of Pakistan and United Kingdom Open University ". Using analysis of variance, results showed that, there were significant differences among the three universities regarding Student Support Services.

**Kangai,et al(2011)** in their paper entitled "Student Perceptions on the Quality and Effectiveness of Guidance and Counselling Services at the Zimbabwe Open University" presented in a symposium held in Zimbabwe . Major findings of the study were: ZOU had institutionalized guidance and counselling as a key support service for ODL students by setting up a student support services unit (SSSU). Majority of students, 80% of whom lived and worked in rural areas, needed quality and effective guidance and counseling and general academic support

services in the following areas: distribution of learning materials (modules), management of coursework (assignments), tutorials, processing of examinations, communication and individualized counselling.

**Saifi and Mehmood( 2011)** investigated Student Support Services provided by AllamaIqbal Open University, Pakistan and it's deficiencies. Major findings of the study revealed that (1) Tutors received intimation letters from region about tutorship in time; (2) Tutors discourage late submission of assignments; (3) Regional heads occasionally visited tutorials; (4) DRS plans, coordinated and monitored the work of regional centers; (5) Regions were equipped with modern A.V. aids; (6) DRS was provided with sufficient funds; (7) Students Advisory and Counseling facilitated the learners. It was concluded that tutors discouraged late submission of assignments, regions solved problems of students, Student Advisory Services facilitated distance learners and staff of Students Advisory were trained.

## **METHOD OF THE STUDY**

The researcher used the descriptive survey methodology; this study is a quantitative research.

## **POPULATION OF THE STUDY**

Population of the study included 351 students. According to Al- Quds Open University data in Jenin who are still studying in Al- QOU in Jenin Area of Education, Palestine whether full time academic supervisors who are still teaching in QOU in Jenin Area of Education, Palestine whose number was 40 Full Time Academic Supervisors.

## **SAMPLE OF THE STUDY**

The researcher selected random stratified sample students' which is equal to 5% from each area of place of residence; from total of students whose number was 7020 learners of an academic year 2009-2010.

## **REASEARCH TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES**

Researcher developed a questionnaire for students to know services by Al-QOU for students. It consisted of 72 items. Moreover, the researcher developed a questionnaire which was composed of 51 items for full time supervisors.

## **QUESTIONNAIRE'S VALIDITY**

In order to verify ratification of the tool used in the study, they were given to a group of arbitrators from the Department of Education who worked at the Universities of Baroda in India and Al-Quds Open University in Palestine.

Experts were consulted regarding the consistency of the items with domains which were classified the extent and clarity of language. Consequently, the observations were taken into consideration so that they served the purpose of the research and increase it's credibility.

## RELIABILITY OF QUESTIONNAIRES

To examine reliability of **academic supervisors'** study tool, the questionnaires were distributed to 15 full time academic supervisors in Jenin Educational Area. After collecting questionnaires, reliability test was conducted through Cronbach –Alpha for these questionnaires. This questionnaire was composed of 51 items. The items have got overall reliability of 0.8776 degree value and it fulfilled purpose of this study.

To examine reliability of **students'** study tool, questionnaires were distributed to 37 students in Jenin Educational Area. After collecting forms, reliability test was conducted through Cronbach –Alpha for these questionnaires. They were composed of 72 items. Items have got overall reliability of 0.9112 degree value and it fulfilled purpose of the study.

## VARIABLES OF STUDY

Following variables were included in this study.

### **Independent variables were:**

**-Gender:** It had two levels: Male - Female.

**- Age: It had three levels:** 1. (less than 30 years). 2. (years from 30-40).  
3. (More than 40 years).

**-Specialization: it had Five levels:** - Technology, Applied Sciences,  
Social development and family, Administrative Sciences, Economics –  
Agriculture, and Education.

**-Place of residence: it had three levels:** - City - Village – Refugee  
Camps.

- **Study Level: it had four levels:-** First Year - Second Year - Third Year
- Fourth Year .

**Dependent variables were:**

Student Support Services provided by Al-Quds Open University Of Palestine.

**PROCEDURE OF STUDY**

- 1) After preparing, finalizing and testing tools of this study, the researcher wrote to the Director of Al Quds Open University in Jenin (see appendix B&C), asking for permission to distribute tools of the study.
- 2) After getting permission, researcher started distributing students' questionnaires in collaboration with the Department of Student's Affairs.
- 3) Researcher started distributing full time academic supervisor's questionnaires.
- 4) Researcher collected back tools from respondents and started the process of data analysis.
- 5) After collecting data, it was analyzed by using Software Package for Social Sciences [SPSS].

**DATA COLLECTION**

Data collection is an important part of research. In order to collect requisite data for any theme of research, one has to devise appropriate tools and use suitable measuring techniques. Present study gathered information regarding Student Support Services Provided by Al-Quds Open University of Palestine, in Jenin branch. After reading literature of educational support services provided by Open and Distance Learning, the researcher developed a questionnaire for students to know services by

Al-QOU for students consisted of 72 items. Moreover, researcher developed a questionnaire composed of 51 items for full time supervisors.

## DATA ANALYSIS

Following statistical methods were used to describe and analyze data for this study.

1- Specifying percentile estimation for Means as follows:

A- Calculating range of five scales through subtracting minimum the Value from maximum value ( $5-1=4$ ).

B – Calculating (length of limit) through dividing range of scale (4) on a highest value (5) which represent a number of scale mark ( $4 \div 5 = 80.0$ ).

C- Adding length of limit to the lower value in scale specify high limit for it's percentile estimation ( $1+80.0=1.80$ ).

D- Calculating this on all scale values.

So, limits of mean and percentile estimation as shown in table were as follow:

Assumed mean value	1-1.79	1.80 – 2.59	2.60 - 3.39	3.40 – 4.19	4.20 - 5
Questionnaire scale for supervisors	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Questionnaire scale for student	Very low	Low	Medium	High	Very high

Detailed results of findings of the study revealed about the student support services provided by Al-Quds Open University in Palestine based on perspectives of Full Time Academic Supervisors and student support services provided by Al-Quds Open University in Palestine, based on perspectives of students.

This study also tried to find, if effects of the Student Support Services provided by Al-Quds Open University in Palestine, based on perspectives of students which would differ according to following variables: Gender, Age, Specialization, Place of Residence and Study Level.

To simplify results, Student Support Services based on perspectives of student's effect to be **very high** if mean was 4.20 to 5. To be **high** if Mean was more than 3.4 but less than 4.20 . It was considered **medium**, if mean was more than 2.6 but less than 3.4. To be **Low** if the mean was more than 1.8 but less than 2.6 and to be **very low**, if the mean was more than 1 but less than 1.8.

-To simplify results, the study assumed Student Support Services based on perspectives of full time academic supervisors effect to be **Strongly Agree**, if the mean was 4.20 to 5. **Agree**, if mean was more than 3.4 but less than 4.20. It was considered **Neutral**, if mean was more than 2.6 but less than 3.4. To be **Disagree**, if mean was more than 1.8 but less than 2.6 and to be **Strongly Disagree**, if mean was more than 1 but less than 1.8.

After collecting data, it was analyzed by using Software Package for Social Sciences [SPSS]. After transfer of sample responses of five-degrees to crude degrees. Then, means and S.D. were calculated. In order to answer questions of the study and to examine hypotheses of study, the researcher used T-test, One Way ANOVA test and LSD test for post comparisons.

## **MAJOR FINDINGS OF THE STUDY**

- According to full time academic supervisor's responses, all services provided to students by Al – Quds Open University were neutral, on all domains of a questionnaire.

- Degree of estimating services provided by Al – Quds Open University in Jenin, based on full time academic supervisors perspectives were in descending order according to Mean and S.D. were as follows:

(1) Admission Services.

(2) Library and Knowledge Resources Services.

(3) Financial Aids Services.

(4) Academic Guidance Services.

(5) Academic Supervision Services.

- According to students' responses, all services provided to students by Al Quds Open University were Medium on all domains of a questionnaire.

- Degree of estimating services provided by Al – Quds Open University in Jenin, based on students' perspectives were in descending order, according to the Mean and S.D. were as follows:

13. Services of Receiving New Students.

14. Services relating to students' academic supervisors.

15. Learning Resources services.

16. Training Services.

17. Services to Resolve Various Student Problems.

18. Services of Community Development for Students.

19. Registration Services.

20. Services of educational Evaluation.



21. Learning Support Services.
22. Services of University Systems.
23. Services of Public Relations and Media.
24. Services of University Building.

## **RESULTS RELATED TO EXAMINING HYPOTHESIS IN THE STUDY**

- 1 -There was no significant difference at ( $\alpha=0.05$ ) for student support services provided by Al-Quds Open University, in different subjects based on perspectives of students due to **Gender** variable.
- 2 - There was a significant difference at ( $\alpha=0.05$ ) for student support services, provided by Al-Quds Open University, in different subjects, based on perspectives of students, due to **age** variable (In favor of more than 40 years category).
- 3 - There was no significant difference at ( $\alpha=0.05$ ) for Student Support Services, provided by Al-Quds Open University in different subjects, based on perspectives of students, due to **Specialization** variable.
- 4 - There was a significant difference at( $\alpha=0.05$ ) for the student support services provided by Al-Quds Open University in different subjects based on perspectives of students, due to **Place of Residence** variable. (In favor of city category).
- 5 - There was no significant difference at ( $\alpha=0.05$ ) for the student support services provided by Al-Quds Open University in different subjects based on perspectives of students, due to **Study Level** variable.

## **DISCUSSION OF STUDY RESULTS IN THE LIGHT OF THEORETICAL FRAME AND PREVIOUS STUDIES**

The general result of the study has clarified that estimations of the academic supervisors and students for the need to students services exposed to them has a range between medium and high according to Lickert five scale which resemble the following studies:

- Study of Cunningham (2006) which measured the importance of students support services contained in the list proposed in the current study with a difference in some names .These services were considered basic and important by students who follow distant learning system in a number of private and public colleges and universities of in USA.
- Study of Raphael (2006) which measured importance of students' services that are listed in the current study with difference in some titles. These services are considered important by students who follow distant learning in a number of institutes and colleges in United States of America who were not requested to mention their educational institutes and institutions. Students considered the major services offered to them were: complete and clear information related to requirements of their courses and curricula, virtual library that contain study courses and the possibility to require, a system to pay the study fees through the internet, following up the application by the electronic library, benefiting from the individual academic guidance and a virtual library that provide all means of communication.
- Study of Jackson (2000) which pointed out that students support services in an important axis in distant teaching programs. However, the last estimation was based on the opinions of 21 experts specialized in distant learning and its programs and other specialists in students' affairs and not based on the point of views of students

- Study of Magnussen S.R. (2003) which investigated point of views a group of experts about the importance of a list about students support services contained in the list in the current study with some difference in some titles. It has concluded the consent of experts on the importance of such services included in this list. However, the results of this study differ from the general result concluded by the study of Kahrhoff (2005) which indicated that students request little from support services except services of professional development. The explanation of this result that the study of Kahrhoff was directed to student community composed of regular students in five programs for higher studies through distant learning in Webster University in contrary to the current study that is directed to the two stages: Bachelor degree and diploma.

Concerning the effect of students' traits on their estimation for their services, there was scarcity in studies that tackled such influence according to the knowledge of the researcher. Accordingly, there was no previous study that was reviewed that is possible to compare its results with the result of the current study. There are few studies that its methodological procedures included some variables determined in the current study. For example, the study of Raphael(2006) which classified a sample of students in terms of the following variables :gender, status before graduation – graduate, age, registered credit hours, completed credit hours, weekly working hours and distant from university campus by mile.

Status before graduation – graduate, age, registered credit hours, completed credit hours, weekly working hours and distant from university campus by mile.

The study of Collins (2007) which classified a sample of students concerning the following variables: age, gender, marital status,

availability or non-availability of children, number of children in case they are available, intention to pursue study, availability or non-availability of previous trials in distant learning, means of distant learning in case there is a previous trial, distant between student place of residence and place of university, job status, current job, the latest qualification and reason for joining distant learning program.

However, the study of Raphael (2006) and Collins (2007) have not clarified the effect of students' variables on students' results but they were suffice to describing the characteristics of the sample according to these variables only.

Moreover, the study of Cunningham (2006) confirmed on demographic characteristics of students, staff teaching members and the administrators and their effect on the future accurate determination for unique needs for institutes students that offer distant learning services. However, study of Cunningham (2006) investigated variation of characteristics among students and non-students for distant learning students and not among students themselves.

## **EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS OF MAJOR FINDINGS OF PRESENT STUDY**

In light of a present study, researcher presented for officials in QOU in Palestine in general and to Jenin Educational Area in particular, several recommendations which might contribute in approaching and removing some obstacles and difficulties that which university students face as well to increase an effectiveness of the university open learning which are as follows:

### **A. Educational Implications for University Administration:**

- Reinforcing and following up a mechanism followed by registration and an academic counseling in the university which tackle manner of holding introductory meetings and sessions for newly registered students at beginning of each semester during which university regulations are explained in addition to responsibility of each section and the services provided by the university.
- University administration evaluates introductory programs as well as academic counseling programs and participating in its development.
- University administration has to implement an open door policy in receiving students' complaints and solve them and to respond to their different inquiries.
- University administration follows up, holding continuous training courses for administration staff, particularly in dealing with inquiries from students, parents and teaching staff.
- Officials in administration should visit university facilities either weekly, monthly or each semester on various occasions to make sure of work continuity and examining students' needs, following them up and guiding them.

-Appointing employees in public relationships section in the university, tasks to coordinate meetings inside the university between students and administration and outside the university between students as well as success cases in community in different specializations.

### **B- Educational Implications for an Academic section:**

- Following up evaluation of study courses, develop and update them.
- Encouraging increasing number of direct meetings for some specialization courses.
- Holding continuous meetings, between full time academic supervisors and part time academic supervisors in the university to discuss students' needs.
- Continue to follow up academic supervisors' training on technologies of open learning and manner of applying them in study curricula.

### **C- Educational Implications for Students**

- Holding training courses for newly enrolled students at beginning of each semester, concerning manner of using Model and manner of dealing with the university website and various information resources.
- Making field visit programs for students to connect specialization courses with practice and assign them to write their views, discussing them and consider this within study assignments.
- Providing incentives for distinctive students in their study on a form of scholarships, monetary and moral rewards.
- Involving students in decision making process related to their study.
- Developing students' activities, whether through students unions or electronic activities which enable students to raise their ideas as well as their suggestions- theoretically and practically.

## **D- Educational Implications for Study Environment**

- Trying to search for another main place for the university –Jenin area-to take into consideration conditions, measurements, standards, requirements of OL and provide it, with all facilities including entertainment and sports facilities.
- Increasing number of staff working in technical support, to be able to cover technical problems of staff, related to equipment and internet.
- Updating and developing model and increasing speed of internet particularly when students upload their study assignments.

## **SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH STUDIES**

- A study to determine special needs for distance learning of students services in different universities.
- A study on an ability of holding contracts, with private sector institutions to provide better facilities of students' services' for distance learning students.
- A study on abilities of Students in directing and executing Services which requires interaction between them, organizing cooperative learning groups and different students' activities through different methods such as involving them in rewarding activities.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

**In light of objectives and results of a study, researcher recommends following things:**

- 1- Administrative leadership in high levels, should work to increase its support to university in all fields to proceed to achieve it's objectives, circulate it's mission and offer it's services for governorate inhabitants as it is the only educational institution.
- 2-The university as well as staff should be careful to improve quality and control it continuously.
- 3- The University seeks to for mechanisms and means that encourage students to obtain a higher academic qualification.
- 4- The university should urge an academic supervisor to raise degree of cooperation and communication with students to fulfill their needs and satisfactions and stimulate their motivation provided that this does not contradict the applicable systems and regulations.
- 5- The University should work to increase students' trust in their qualification and their professional capacities as well as their information and skills which they obtain from the university.
- 6- The University should raise it's level of accepting constructive criticism from students.
- 7- The university should present further specializations which fulfill students and local community needs.
- 8-High levels of leadership should take into consideration academic, administrative, behavioral, practical experiences and communication skills into consideration when appointing leaders, staff and academic supervisors from specialized and experienced people.



9-Using informal communications channels by administrative employees and academic supervisors with local community to exchange information and important ideas related to the nature of university, services and roles.

10-Discussing issues, needs and visions which are mostly urgent with students, periodically through programmed meetings held by an administrative employees with students on university campus to discuss students' problems and provide them with feedback about their inquiries and listen to their views and issues which they raise and benefit from them.

11-Supporting moral support to all administrative , academic and staff employees to motivate them to offer various services to students through their job duties which will be reflected positively on university reputation and reinforce its role and mission.

12-Encouraging researches in all areas which may offer feedback for the administrative leadership to inform them in strong and weak points in behavioral and administrative practices to tackle weakness points and reinforce strong points.

## CONCLUSION

Student support services make up an element of distance education, most nearly akin to traditional education: it is interface between the institution and its students. Problem of management relates, therefore, to a subsystem which is apparently carrying out a traditional role and consequently might appear to observe traditional management practices of education. The reality is far from this. Student support services have to take cognisance of the course materials which form major part of the traditional role as well as of other subsystems. One approach to this problem, currently taken by many of large scale distance teaching institutions, is to draw up role definitions of those engaged in interface with the students, relating these to one another, to the students and to the subsystem as well as to the institution as a whole. This is a useful way of highlighting role of the intermediaries in distance education and can avoid confusion with the traditional roles. But here again, care must be taken on the interrelationship of these roles. What is being designed is not a machine in which every part performs a separate function, operating in a strict sequence but rather an organism in which the cells are constantly relating to one another in patterns which are duplicated throughout the organism. The loss of a cell does not mean failure of the system and cells can be added without putting a stop to the overall objective of the organism but rather changing its direction marginally, without the need for the design of a completely new machine.

It is possible to transfer between countries elements which make up course production.

The same cannot be said for student support services. These:

- must be constructed in context of almost infinite needs of the clients;
- are dependent on the educational ethos of a region and an institution;

- are dependent on the dispersal of student body, elements of resource and curriculum or product of the course production subsystem;
- are dependent on the generic differences in student body which it has been set up to serve.

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**Appendix A:**

**M.S University permission latter.**

**Appendix B:**

**Al-Quds Open University Task  
Facilitation (Arabic Copy).**

**Appendix C:**

**Al-Quds Open University Task  
Facilitation (English Copy).**

**Appendix D:**

**Full time academic supervisors'  
questionnaire.**

**Appendix E:**

**Students' questionnaire.**



No.FEP/

**Faculty of Education and Psychology**

The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda

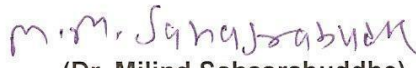
Lokmanya Tilak Road, Vadodara – 390 002, INDIA


Phone : (+91-0265) 2792631

Date : 09.07.2008

**TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN**

It is certified, hereby that Mr. Mahmoud Awad mahmoud Saleem is a registered student for Ph.D. (Education) in the faculty for a study entitled, "A Study of Student Support Services Provided by AL-QUDS Open University of Palestine" under the guidance of Dr. Milind Sahasrabuddhe, Lecturer, Department of Educational Administration in this faculty. In this regard, he wants to collect relevant data from your office which will be utilized only for his research work and kept strictly confidential. I hope you will cooperate with him.

  
(Dr. Milind Sahasrabuddhe)  
Guide

  
(Prof. S. Kumar)  
Dean,  
Faculty of Education & Psychology



Appendix B: Al-Quds Open University Task Facilitation (Arabic Copy).

30. MAR. 2009 12:59  
TO: JENEN  
Office: 2

AL-QUDS OPEN UNIVERSITY  
PROJECT NO. 612  
P. 19

NO. 612  
P. 19

د. حاي / الامام  
بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم  
2.7.20

مضرة الأستاذ الدكتور : بونس محمد .... رئيس جامعة القدس المفتوحة... حفظه الله ..

بوساطة الدكتور : حاي أبو الرب ... مدير منطقة جنين التعليمية .. المختبر  
2.7.18

الموضوع : تسهيل

أنا المشرف غير المتفرغ في جامعة القدس المفتوحة محمود عوض محمود أبو زيد  
التابع بدراستي العليا لنيل درجة الدكتوراه في كلية التربية وعلم النفس في جامعة يارودا -  
البلد . وحيث أن عنوان دراستي :  
" دراسة في الخدمات الداعمة التي تقدمها جامعة القدس المفتوحة لطلبة في فلسطين "

"A STUDY OF STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES  
PROVIDED BY AL-QUDS OPEN UNIVERSITY OF PALESTINE"

أرجو من حضرتكم التكرم بتسهيل مهمتي في توزيع استيفاء الدراسة على طلبة  
جامعة القدس المفتوحة في منطقة جنين لجميع بيئات تنطبق بموضوع دراستي .

واقبلوا فائق الاحترام

الطالب : محمود عوض محمود أبو زيد  
2009/3/18

المرفقات :  
1. كتاب من جامعة يارودا - الهند .  
2. مرفق لاداة الدراسة .

جامعة القدس المفتوحة - القدس  
29-03-2009  
رقم الدخول : 09/3246/1700

جامعة القدس المفتوحة - القدس  
29-03-2009  
رقم الدخول : 09/3246/1700

**Appendix C: Al-Quds Open University Task Facilitation (English  
Copy-translated).**

**In the Name of God, Most Merciful, Most Passionate**

Mr. Honorable Professor Doctor :Yunis Amr .....Chancellor of Al-Quds  
Open University...the respectful

Care of Mr. Doctor Hani Abo-Alrub.....President of Jenin  
Educational Area...the respectful

Greetings,,,,

**Subject: Task Facilitation**

I am the part time academic supervisor at Al-Quds Open University  
“Mahmood Awad Mahmoud Abu Zaid . I pursue my postgraduate study  
to obtain Ph.D. degree in Faculty of Education and Psychology in M.S  
University – Baroda, Vadodara in India. As the title of my study:

**“A Study of Student support services provided by Al-Quds Open  
University of Palestine”**

You are kindly requested to facilitate my task in distributing research  
study questionnaire on students of Al-Quds Open University in Jenin  
Area to collect data related to my study.

**With best regards,,,**

Student: Mahmoud Awad Mahmoud Abu Zaid

8-3-2009 (Signed)

Dr. Younis Amr: no objection to distribute the questionnaire-29-3-  
2009(signed)

Dr. Hani : no objection to distribute the questionnaire 30-3-2009(signed)

**Enclosures:**

1-A permission letter from Baroda university-India

2-Study tools

**Al-Quds Open University –Jerusalem**

**29-3-2009(signed and sealed)**

**Coming number: 09-3286-1710**



**Appendix D: Full time academic supervisors' questionnaire.**

**Department of Education,**

**Faculty of Education and Psychology,**

**The M.S. University, Baroda,**

**Vadodara – 390002,**

**Dear Academic Supervisors ,**

I am the undersigned Mahmoud Awad Mahmoud Saleem, working for my Ph.D Study entitled “A STUDY OF STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES PROVIDED BY AL-QUDS OPEN UNIVERSITY OF PALESTINE” under guidance of Dr. Millind Sahasrabuddhe. In this regard, I want to collect some relevant and important information for my study from you. Therefore, I kindly request you to help me in my work. Your responses will be kept confidential. a questionnaire, given to you has 51 items and for each item you have to respond on five point scale.

Meaning of each scale is mentioned here under.

SA : Strongly Agree  
A : Agree  
N : Neutral  
DA : Disagree  
SDA : Strongly Disagree

**Thanking you,**

Researcher  
Mahmoud Awad

### Admission Services:

No.	Item	SA	A	N	DA	SDA
1	Supplies students with comprehensive information about course duration and academic supervisor.					
2	Students register through academic portal by internet.					
3	The university academic center offers students a flexible timetable.					
4	The university academic counseling supplies students with a variety of courses that cover students' academic levels.					
5	The registration department has a policy to provide students with necessary materials.					
6	Students own the required skills for process of registration.					
7	Registration department gives students adequate time to finish the registration process.					
8	Registration is announced after some time.					
9	Online inquiry about the semester's table is available.					
10	The online admission is provided.					

### Academic Guidance Services:

No.	Item	SA	A	N	DA	SDA
11	Individual academic counseling is offered to students.					
12	Guidance material is offered to students to guide them during their study.					
13	The university provides students with guidance methods.					
14	The university offers students during the semester educational aids.					
15	The university provides students with information about learning assistance resources.					
16	The university offers facility of self-assessments for students.					
17	The university offers students Online weekly timetable.					
18	The university offers online assistances material between supervisor and students.					
19	The university offers manuals and booklets about university rules and regulations.					
20	The university gives studies about local community.					

### Academic supervision services:

No.	Item	SA	A	N	DA	SDA
21	The university offers academic supervision during academic year.					
22	The academic supervisor is in his office during office hours.					
23	The supervisor clarifies all the information related to curriculum.					
24	The supervisor follows up student's performance during semester.					
25	The academic supervisor corrects student's assignments.					
26	The supervisor gives advice to students when they need help.					
27	The direct contract between supervisor and students is through university website portal.					
28	The academic supervisor reviews student's accumulative work during semester.					
29	The academic supervisor answers students questions and inquiries through net.					
30	The academic supervisor answers students about his question and inquiries through phone and mobiles.					

### Financial aids services:

No.	Item	SA	A	N	DA	SDA
31	The university gives information about financial assistance granted for students.					
32	The university grants outstanding students scholarships.					
33	The university grants students loans during years of study.					
34	The university grants students financial assistance from poor students Fund.					
35	The university grants brothers less fees.					
36	The university gives students financial assistance.					
37	The university financial assistance covers large member of students.					
38	The cost of credit hour is satisfying.					
39	The university offers financial help from external resources.					
40	The university offers books in reasonable price.					

**Library and knowledge resources services:**

<b>No.</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>DA</b>	<b>SDA</b>
41	The university website offers knowledge resources through links.					
42	University always modernizes books available in the library.					
43	Text books are available in the book store.					
44	The library material includes CD and Videos.					
45	The library offers assisting teaching material.					
46	The library offers E-library services including E-books.					
47	The library services offers internet services, all the time.					
48	The library offers student services including international journal database.					
49	The library offers students the facility of photo copying in reasonable prices.					
50	The library books and material are of different types.					
51	The library opens more extra hours than the regular working hours.					

**Thank you**

### **Appendix E : Students' questionnaire.**

**Department of Education,  
Faculty of Education and Psychology,  
The M.S. University, Baroda,  
Vadodara – 390002,  
Dear Students,**

I am the undersigned Mahmoud Awad Mahmoud Saleem, working for my Ph.D. Study entitled “A STUDY OF STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES PROVIDED BY AL-QUDS OPEN UNIVERSITY OF PALESTINE” under guidance of Dr. Millind Sahasrabuddhe. In this regard, I want to collect some relevant and important information for my study from you. Therefore, I kindly request you to help me in my work. Your responses will be kept confidential. I hope that you estimate answer to student services contained in this questionnaire by placing the signal (x) for every statement, according to appropriate estimation.

Before that, I hope you identify your primary data, put (✓) in the relevant box.

1. **Gender:** Male ☐ Female ☐.

2. **Age:** less than 30 years ☐ 30-40 years ☐ More than 40 years ☐.

3. **Specialization:** Technology and Applied Sciences ☐ Agriculture ☐  
Social and family development ☐  
Education ☐ Economic and Management Sciences ☐

4. **Place of Residence:** City ☐ Village ☐ Camp ☐.

5. **Study Level:** First Year ☐ Second Year ☐  
Third Year ☐ Fourth Year ☐.

**Researcher:**

**Mahmoud Awad**

**(A) Services of Receiving New Students:**

No.	Student Service	Service Availability				
		Very High	High	Medium	Low	Very Low
1.	Reception, recognition and assembly for new students attended by academic and administrative staff.					
2.	Integrate the new student with the university system through granting him a university number.					
3.	Integrate the new student with university system through granting him a university card.					
4.	Granting the new student a private e-mail to receive all what belongs to him.					
5.	Granting the new student a mailbox to receive the journals, textbooks and material stuffs.					
6.	Providing students adequate idea on the method of distance education.					



**(B) Registration Services:**

No.	Student Service	Service Availability				
		Very High	High	Medium	Low	Very Low
7.	Announcing the course calendar that shows all the important dates on the procession of studying.					
8.	Facilitate procedures for courses registration.					
9.	Facilitation the procedures of deleting and adding courses.					
10.	The opportunity to delay the study for a semester or more.					
11.	Give an opportunity to convert from one major to another.					
12.	Give an opportunity to accredit the hours of study materials for students coming from other universities or colleges.					

**(C) Services Relating to Student Academic Supervisors:**

No.	Student Service	Service Availability				
		Very High	High	Medium	Low	Very Low
13.	Providing academic supervisors at a high level of scientific qualification.					
14.	Train supervisors on the use of management systems of distance education for educational continuity with students (such as the MOODLE system).					
15.	Providing office hours for academic supervisors.					
16.	Providing web pages specified to academic supervisors.					
17.	Ongoing training for supervisors to develop their academic performance.					
18.	The Academic supervisor answers the queries of university students through the university page on the Internet.					

**(D) Learning Support Services:**

No.	Student Service	Service Availability				
		Very High	High	Medium	Low	Very Low
19.	Providing students with textbooks as soon as they register					
20.	Providing direct, optional face to face encounters .					
21.	Provide students with immediate feedback for the grades of academic appointments in each course.					
22.	Organizing local groups for cooperative learning in the centers of the university.					
23.	Providing supplements to textbooks (summaries, explanations, exercises ...).					
24.	The university offers brother students less fees.					

**(E) Learning Resources Services:**

No.	Student Service	Service Availability				
		Very High	High	Medium	Low	Very Low
25.	Computer-equipped labs connected to the Internet in the university centers.					
26.	Providing a virtual library containing the bases of electronic information.					
27.	Provide paper library in university centers for the most important references of the university scientific specializations.					
28.	Entering into agreements to benefit from university permanent (traditional) libraries near the centers of learning.					
29.	Provide direct recordings of lectures on multimedia (video, CDs, virtual classes, cassettes.).					
30	The University's website provides sources of knowledge through multiple bonds.					

**(F) Services of Educational Evaluation:**

No.	Student Service	Service Availability				
		Very High	High	Medium	Low	Very Low
31.	The announcement of an educational, fair and clear evaluation system.					
32.	Provide the student with feedback on assignments and periodic exams immediately and directly.					
33.	Opening up a comprehensive record to follow the student academically.					
34.	Coordination between professors regarding the dates of assignments and exams to avoid incompatibility and fatigue of the student.					
35.	Provide the student with a modern academic record at the end of each semester.					
36.	Following-up graduates in the labor market in order to provide them with all new in the area of specialization.					

**(G) Training Services:**

No.	Student Service	Service Availability				
		Very High	High	Medium	Low	Very Low
37.	Providing cooperative training for graduates in their respective specialization (in work institutions).					
38.	Provide training courses in the computer field.					
39.	Provide training courses in the field of scientific research skills.					
40.	Providing training courses in the area of time management					
41.	Provide training courses in the area of self-development.					
42.	Provide a preparatory program for training in communication skills necessary to study distantly.					

**(H) Services of University Systems:**

No.	Student Service	Service Availability				
		Very High	High	Medium	Low	Very Low
43.	Drafting and declaring university systems that clarify the rights and duties of the student.					
44.	Drafting and declaring university systems that explain the rationale for university systems of rewards and benefits.					
45.	Drafting and declaring university systems that clarify the rationale for penalties and discipline.					
46.	Drafting and declaring university systems that make clear the ways and channel of grievances and complaints.					
47.	Drafting and declaring university systems that explicate the mechanisms of forming student committees and groups.					
48.	Drafting and declaring university systems that show employers (public and private) benefits of distance education.					

**(I) Services to Resolve Various Student Problems:**

No.	Student Service	Service Availability				
		Very High	High	Medium	Low	Very Low
49.	Working on solving students' problems.					
50.	Working on solving students' management problems at the university.					
51.	Working on solving students' problems of social impact on their study.					
52.	Working on solving students' problems in their place of business which have an impact on their study.					
53.	Contacting the family of the student for his interest.					
54.	Assistance in solving students' health problems by providing a computer lab for the blind at the university.					



**(J) Services of Public Relations and Media:**

No.	Student Service	Service Availability				
		Very High	High	Medium	Low	Very Low
55.	Providing a member of staff to answer the queries of students around the clock.					
56.	Providing an electronic forum on the Internet for students of different levels of study for the exchange of experiences.					
57.	A university newspaper reporting the most important and latest university news.					
58.	Acquainting students on what is written or said about their university in public media.					
59.	Seeking to get students discounts and advantages in hospitals, transport companies, sports clubs... etc.					
60.	Creating a continuous link with graduates.					

**(K) Services of Community Development for Students:**

No.	Student Service	Service Availability				
		Very High	High	Medium	Low	Very Low
61.	Establishing and organizing student recreation activities in local university centers.					
62.	Giving an opportunity of leadership for students by organizing various student groups.					
63.	Setting up a collaborative student fund to support financially needy students.					
64.	Granting students opportunities to participate in university decision-making.					
65.	Doing a student trip at least once each academic year for university students.					
66.	Offering an opportunity for students to participate in youth programs addressing social issues.					

**(L) Services of University Buildings:**

No.	Student Service	Service Availability				
		Very High	High	Medium	Low	Very Low
67.	Distribution of university centers takes account of places of students' gathering.					
68.	Providing university centers with halls for drama activities.					
69.	Providing university centers with playgrounds for sports and show activities.					
70.	Providing university centers with stationery store (including Xeroxing and photocopying)					
71.	Provide university centers with restaurants and buffets.					
72.	Providing university centers with the appropriate study rooms.					

**Thank you for your Cooperation**

