Chapter VI

SUMMARY
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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 21st 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. It's 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 LEARNING 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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Full Timers</th>
<th>Part Timers</th>
<th>Total Number of Full Timers and Part Timers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ph.D</td>
<td>Master</td>
<td>Bachelor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total = 40</td>
<td>Total = 213</td>
<td>Total = 255</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ph.D</td>
<td>Master</td>
<td>Bachelor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>189</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor</td>
<td>Ph.D</td>
<td>Master</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor</td>
<td>Total = 213</td>
<td>Total = 255</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Number of Jenin Educational Region and a Study Centre Distribution of Learners by Academic Program are shown in following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programmes</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology &amp; Applied Sciences</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>248</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total = 360</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total = 72</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social and Family Development</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>394</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total = 537</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>1034</td>
<td>2816</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total = 3850</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic and Management Sciences</td>
<td>1019</td>
<td>1182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total = 2201</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>2354</td>
<td>4666</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total = 7020</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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).

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:
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 IGNOU 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 it's 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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Section</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clear, complete, and timely information regarding curriculum requirements</td>
<td>Academic Advising</td>
<td>4.56</td>
<td>.541</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An online bookstore which included online textbook lookup and ordering</td>
<td>Bookstore Services</td>
<td>4.56</td>
<td>.587</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online payment and tracking of orders at the online bookstore</td>
<td>Bookstore Services</td>
<td>4.49</td>
<td>.578</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to individual academic advising</td>
<td>Academic Advising</td>
<td>4.49</td>
<td>.656</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An online bookstore clearly describes all delivery methods.</td>
<td>Bookstore Services</td>
<td>4.48</td>
<td>.597</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Similarly, five student services perceived by online learners as needed by distance learners were as follows: (presented in increasing order of mean values).

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

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:
Information regarding learning assistance, tutorial services, supplemental instruction, and other academic support services.  

Access to career self-assessments with tutorials.  

Access to career services that include self-assessments, goal and decision-making assistance, educational and career planning, and job search information.  

Access to online academic advising guides.  

An online comprehensive job search handbook.  

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:

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

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.

**Farajallah 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 Allama Iqbal 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.

RESEARCH 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 ÷ 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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assumed mean value</th>
<th>1-1.79</th>
<th>1.80 – 2.59</th>
<th>2.60 - 3.39</th>
<th>3.40 – 4.19</th>
<th>4.20 - 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Questionnaire scale for supervisors</td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questionnaire scale for student</td>
<td>Very low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Very high</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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.
  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.
  17. Services to Resolve Various Student Problems.
  18. Services of Community Development for Students.
  20. Services of educational Evaluation.

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.