PhD VIVA VOCE

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|   | School of Education |

**Qualifications attained:**

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| **Title of Dissertation:** | Instructors’ Experiences of Teaching through Online Mode at the Open University of Tanzania |
| **Date of Viva Voce:** | 07th November 2022 |
| **Venue :** | Board Room-SoED |
| **Time :** | 10:00 a.m |
| **Supervisor :** | Dr. Lulu Mahai & Dr. Philipo Sanga |

Mr Joseph Kabage obtained Certificate of Teachers Grade A at Tukuyu Teachers College in 2005. He obtained Bachelor of Education in Adult Education in 2010 from the University of Dar es Salaam and Masters of education in Open and Distance Learning at the Open University of Tanzania in 2015. From 2017 to date, he is a PhD in education (coursework) candidate. Currently, he is an Assistant Lecturer in the Department of Educational Foundations, Adult and Distance education, Open University of Tanzania. His areas of research interests are distance education, Adult education and community education.

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# ABSTRACT

This study explored instructors’ experiences of teaching through online mode at the Open University of Tanzania. Specifically, the study focused on examining instructors’ conceptions of online teaching as a means of enhancing students learning; assessing the process of online teaching in relation to the principles of online teaching and assessing skills instructors perceive as essential in teaching through online mode. Using an interpretivism paradigm, a qualitative research approach and hermeneutic phenomenology research design underpinned the study to get an in-depth understanding of the instructors’ experiences of teaching through online mode. The study was conducted at the Open University of Tanzania (headquarter, Kinondoni and Rukwa regional centre). The study sample comprised forty-five participants selected through Purposive and quarter sampling techniques. Data were collected through semi structured interviews, documentary review and non-participant observation. Collected data were analysed using interpretive phenomenology analysis. The findings revealed that instructors have mixed feelings regarding online teaching as a means of enhancing students learning. Online teaching was conceptualised as a means of improving teaching and learning, cost effective, as an innovation and learner centred. On the other hand, instructors raised negative emotions that online teaching is not effective as traditional distance education or traditional classroom training. This was attributed by instructors’ negative attitudes about online teaching, background, challenges of ICT facilities, inadequate training, financial challenges and plagiarism. Findings further indicated that teaching was practiced through asynchronous mode using Moodle**,** synchronous mode using zoom and alternative tools (WhatsApp, telegram and e-mail). In the process of online teaching instructors the findings indicated that instructors were not aware of the some principles of online teaching and they didn’t practice them such as lack of instructors’ short video to introduce to students and to give feedback for summative assessment; lack of group online assignments, lack of project presentations in a virtual environment, lack of rubric to show students expectations and lack of example of well-done assignment. Findings further indicated that instructors lacked understanding of online teaching skills set. The results of instructors’ inadequate knowledge of skills required to teach through online mode was a reason for lack of instructors’ confidence to teach through online mode. This study recommended that online teaching is here to stay; therefore student centred pedagogy combined with the adoption of scientific and sensible teaching strategies is required. The study recommended that online teaching should continue to be offered but traditional distance education should not be abandoned in order to help students who cannot study through online mode. Also, other programmes such as evening programmes, weekend programmes and executive programmes need to be offered to accommodate students who can’t study through online mode and tradition distance mode. The study further recommended supporting digital enabling environments through ensuring availability of electricity, reliable internet, standby generator in all regional centres, the government should support OUT financially, and the study also recommended frequent in-service training for instructors who practice online teaching.

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