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## STUDENT PERSPECTIVES ON OPEN DISTANCE LEARNING IN UNIVERSITIES IN SOUTH-WEST, NIGERIA

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### Abstract

The problem of access to higher education is not new to Nigeria. Over the years, scholars have researched into possibilities of providing education but some African scholars suggested mass education. The arrival of globalization and Information Communication Technology (ICT) has facilitated what is now known as distance education. The Open Distance Learning (ODL) keeps lecturer and student in contact through technology. This study investigated the effectiveness of the system through student perceptions. The study adopted the survey research design with its respondent population drawn from four universities in South-West, Nigeria namely; University of Ibadan (UI) with 100 respondents, Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU) with 100 respondents, University of Lagos (UNILAG) with 100 respondents. The National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) had 150 respondents. All respondents were purposively selected. A researcher-designed instrument entitled 'Perspectives in Open Distance Learning in Universities in South-West, Nigeria Questionnaire' (PODLUSWNO) with four sections was adopted. The instrument was subjected to face and content validity by colleagues in the Faculty of Education, University of Ibadan. Two research questions and two hypotheses guided the study. A trial test of the instrument yielded  $r=0.75$ . The study found a significant difference in ICT availability among universities [ $F(3, 479) = 6.382, p < .05$ ]. The level of ICT availability among students in Obafemi Awolowo University ( $M = 15.8974, sd = 3.41998$ ) was lower than that of students in NOUN ( $M = 17.8416, sd = 4.29356$ ) and University of Lagos ( $M = 18.0187, sd = 3.88024$ ). ICT availability from OAU was not significantly different from those in UI ( $M = 16.9430, sd = 4.50088$ ) while UI is not significantly different from others. It was revealed that the use of radio and television were average hence recommendations centered on the development of radio and television dissemination of information with adequate funding.

**Key Words:** Perceptions of ICT, Open Distance Learning, Perspectives in Open Distance Learning

### Introduction

Education has been variously described as an instrument for effecting national transformation. The National Policy on Education (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2004), describes it as an 'instrument par

excellence'. In like manner, some other scholars as Osokoya (2003), described education as life and as light. In the past, several scholars especially in the area of government investment in education gave reasons why government must continue to invest in education especially higher education. Schultz (1971), explained the role of education in national

development while others like Psacharaopolous (1978) explained the various contributions that nations gain from the investments in different aspects of education. It will be pertinent to include here that Akangbou (1985) explained that government must invest in higher education because it is the training of high level technical manpower that oils and improves the fortunes of any nation's economic growth especially a rise in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and Gross National Product (GNP). Similar postulations could be found in the submissions of scholars on the best possible ways to provide education. For example, Akangbou (1985) and Fabunmi (2004) and others over-viewing extant literature in educational management suggests the use of Social Demand Approach (SDA), Manpower Investment Approach, etc.

While viewing the levels of education, the demand for education in Nigeria, Fafunwa (1974) described the evolution of western education in Nigeria. Fafunwa (1974) specifically zeroed in on the demand for higher education that culminated in the founding of Yaba Higher College in 1947, and thereafter, the University College, Ibadan in 1948. Since then, the demand for higher education has been on the increase. The increase in demand for higher education and the need for national development led to the first post independence educational planning programme for Nigeria commonly referred to as the Ashby commission (FRN, 1960) which eventually recommended additional four universities to the existing University at Ibadan. These were implemented between 1960 and 1970 instead of between 1960 and 1980. The University of Nigeria, Nsukka (UNN) was established in 1960, Ahmadu Bello University (ABU), Zaria in 1962, University of Lagos in (1962) and University of Ife, Ile-Ife now Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU) in 1962. The five universities did not meet the quest for university education in Nigeria hence in 1970/73, the University of Benin in Midwestern Nigeria was established making them 6, and which are known today as the first generation universities in Nigeria.

It is worthy to note that by 1977, Nigeria had 13 universities which in the light of national integration could not be allowed to exist independently hence a central admission, distribution and coordinating agency was established known as the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB).

Over the years, admission to university has become a big challenge. Several reasons have been adduced for this. Babalola (2010), observed that the demand and supply of education especially higher education were incongruent. Other scholars who came to this conclusion included Adekanbi (2008) who carried out a study on Sub Saharan Africa education. Though several options have been considered, it was observed that a situation where students could be trained in regular universities was almost impossible with the rise in educational demand and shortage in its supply especially in the context of dwindling national resources occasioned by global economic recessions (Babalola, 2003). Adekanbi (2008) showed in his study the rising nature of demand for higher education in Africa while the challenges of higher education access still stares Nigeria in the face as explained by Professor Okojie in [www.ntanewedition.org](http://www.ntanewedition.org) Incidentally, Professor Okojie is the Executive Secretary of the National Universities Commission (NUC). According to him, over thirteen million children register in Nigeria primary schools annually. From this figure, only eleven million eventually complete primary education while about five million complete secondary education. From the five million that complete secondary education, only one and half million opt for tertiary education and the spaces available cannot accommodate more than five hundred thousand candidates (private and public higher education providers). The implication is that a new method of educational provision must be sought. It is this new method that has brought into fore the issue of distance education.

### Overview of Distance Education in Nigeria

Distance education has come a long way in Nigeria. Ajadi (2012) admits that before the advent of the distance learning programmes in universities, other programmes had existed. For example, there have been the era of correspondence colleges when Nigerians obtained lectures for examinations and certificates through postal communications both locally and internationally. Thereafter, arose the era of part time education programmes or sandwich programmes. While the part time programmes were either scheduled as evening courses, weekend courses and programmes, sandwich programmes were enmeshed within convenient times for students especially during holidays. In the same category with these programmes were continuing education centres/institutes, extra mural classes etc. They were all geared at improving and increasing worker certification quest without having to leave employment. In the same study, Ajadi (2012), further explained that increasing global awareness has been altering consistently the modes of lecture delivery in many institutions especially with the arrival of the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and globalization. It is evident that ICT is a compliment of globalization which has been specially deployed to schools and educational institutions. The foregoing notion is aptly supported by Babalola (2010), Asiabaka and Oku (2007). Asiabaka and Oku (2007) identified twenty three equipments that could be classified as ICT equipment and could be used in schools, colleges and universities. Prominent among these equipment are; Projectors, Cinema, Video, Radio, Television, Media van, Intercom/PABX, Fax, e-mail, Radiophone/ceptron, Computer, CD-ROM, Internet, Newsletter, Research bulletin, Posters, etc. Among equipments not listed in the study are mobile/smart phones, iPads, Internet, etc. They were probably not mentioned in the study then because their popularity in Nigeria was purely elitist unlike it is today.

Among teaching modes in universities in Nigeria include; the face to face lecture method which appears to be most popular among regular students in conventional universities, part time and sandwich programmes, use of print media that includes text books, lecture notes and correspondence, etc. Particularly gaining prominence now is the instruction through ICT that is being deployed to education. With the opinion of Adekanbi (2008), mass education can only be qualitatively done using ICT. It has become evident that Nigerian universities are beginning to adopt this model of distance education using ICT to provide tertiary education. In this regards, challenges are many in the use of ICT, hence this study examined perspectives in the Open Distance Learning (ODL) Programmes of universities in South-West, Nigeria.

Adewole (2012), explained that ODL is education from a distance that does not impede its recipient from engaging in any other venture for example working and studying. Okunade (2012), further explained that it is that type of education that is facilitated by modern technology. With such technology, it is possible for teachers and students to be far apart without affecting the quality of education. For these reasons, this study notes that Nigeria has several infrastructural challenges and hence wishes to find out the perceptions and perspectives of stakeholders on these possible lapses. Among the lapses include some identified by Babalola (2010) and include but not limited to absence of electricity, poor internet connectivity, inadequate access to facilities that could aid connectivity and widespread poverty hindering purchase of ICT equipment that are expensive. The significance of the study is quite expansive as it will benefit all those who have always thirsted for tertiary education but failed to get such due to factors such as age, access and occupation. ODL enables individuals to study at their own pace and with their own funds (Adewole, 2012; Okunade, 2012). It is also inspiring that the adoption of ODL

will create much high level technical manpower in any area where it is adopted.

### Statement of the Problem

The problem of access and quality higher education in Nigeria has been in existence in pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial Nigeria. Several researches have been conducted by scholars and governments which have not achieved satisfactory results over time. A survey of higher education demand and supply in Nigeria reveals shortages, gaps and some policy inconsistencies mostly in the area of supply of education. A preparation for post-colonial education in Nigeria resulted in the Ashby Commission of 1960 whose results are well understood. In the years after, several macroeconomic indicators showed that education was yet to attain the standard expected in access and quality. Subsequent researches required a mass education that will be equivalent in quality to regular and conventional education but with economies of scale embedded into it. This was made possible with the advent and development of globalization and Information and Communication Technology. The ICT has enabled the use of internet, expanded the scope of computers and computerization, introduced e-learning methodologies to schools, removed the barriers experienced in long distance communication between learner and teacher. Researchers have been able to observe a change in teaching modes in higher education. Among modes that have been explored are the face-to-face communication between teacher and students that ICT in teacher education has rendered unpopular. Several ICT equipments have proved useful and popular in the provision of long distance education popularly known as Open Distance Learning (ODL). Among the very popular ICT equipments often used in the ODL programmes are; computers, internet, mobile phones, e-mail, etc. The ODL varies from all other modes of teacher/student association through the use of technology. This study investigated the

effectiveness of these ICT equipments among students in Nigeria knowing the challenges facing infrastructure provision in Nigeria. The study sought to unveil the perception of students in the ODL programmes on the use of these ICT equipments in Nigerian universities.

### Research Questions

The following research questions have been developed to investigate the subject:

- i. What is the level of awareness of ICT facilities among ODL students in sampled universities in South-West, Nigeria?
- ii. How often do ODL students have contact with ICT facilities in the sampled universities in South-West, Nigeria?

### Hypotheses

The following hypotheses guided the investigation of this research:

- H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significant difference in the level of ICT availability (mobile phones, computers etc) to distance learners involved in the ODL programmes in sampled universities in South-West, Nigeria.
- H<sub>02</sub>:** There is no significant difference in level of ICT accessibility to distance learners in the ODL programmes of sampled universities in South-West, Nigeria.

### Methodology

The study adopted the survey research design '*ex post facto*'. The total population for the study consisted of students in the NUC-accredited institutions that operate the Open Distance Learning (ODL) programme in South-West, Nigeria. These include the University of Ibadan (UI), University of Lagos (Unilag), Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU), Ile-Ife and the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN). The purposive sampling technique was deployed to select 550 students from the four universities across three faculties namely the Faculties of Arts, Education, Social Sciences that

constitute the bulk of faculties operating the ODL. From regular conventional universities as UI, Unilag, OAU, 100 students were selected each while the NOUN had 150 student sample as it is a university solely founded on distance education. The study was investigated by a researcher-designed instrument entitled 'Perspectives in Open Distance Learning in Universities in South-West, Nigeria Questionnaire' [PODLUSWNQ]. The Instrument consists of three sections thus; Section A elicited responses on biodata information, Section B on Information Technology and Open Distance Learning, while Section C elicited responses on ODL and ICT. PODLUSWNQ was validated by colleagues in the Department of Educational Management, Institute of Education, Department of Teacher Education and Department of Guidance and Counseling of the University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria. After validation, a trial test was conducted on similar subjects in other universities that operate the ODL to establish instrument consistency. The split half process was adopted due to the cumbersomeness of the test retest method. The Cronbach Alpha obtained was 'r' - 0.79 indicating a high consistency level. After corrections, all test items found to have fallen below 0.0 were expunged. After correction of the instrument, trained post graduate students of the Department of Educational Management of the University of Ibadan were dispatched to administer the questionnaire. After administration, a total of 438 questionnaires representing 80% were returned; and was considered good. After collation of the instruments, the research questions were answered using descriptive statistics as percentages, standard deviation and bar graphs while the hypotheses were analyzed using inferential statistics. Hypothesis 1 and 2 were analyzed each using one-way ANOVA.

#### **Theoretical Framework - Human Capital Theory (HCT)**

The theoretical framework on which this study anchors is the human capital theory since it deals

with the development of human capital stock in any community, society or nation. The human capital theory (HCT) is popular among scholars in all disciplines especially in the social sciences and behavioral sciences. In an overview of HCT, Scott (1996) explained that HCT suggests that individuals and society derive economic benefits from investments in people. According to the study, there are differences in the types and means to education especially when relating investment and costs in education to expected benefits. The study acknowledged earlier works by Vaizey (1962), Schultz (1971 & 1981) and Cohn and Geseke (1990). The study notes that the benefits from education are diverse especially its contributions to real growth through human contributions arising from skills acquired in education and training. The study explained that Adam Smith postulated that labour inputs were not only quantitative but qualitative which is a function of education. Again, abilities acquired through education or apprenticeship always costs a real expense which is a capital fixed and realized as it were. The study referring to Garry Becker (1960) explained that differentials in personal income were traceable to education. Becker derived the rate of return to education in which higher education in the USA had a (7-9) % rate of return.

The foregoing reasons and studies account for calls by modern economists especially from the era of Milton Friedman and Schultz that governments must of necessity contribute to the funding of education. With recent studies, the HCT is assuming wider dimensions with the evolution of 'Knowledge Economy'. The knowledge economy explains the contributions of knowledge to countries' Gross Domestic Product and Gross National Product (Babalola, 2011; Erwat, Isah and Fabunmi, 2009). The foregoing show that if government must provide education for all, then Adekanbi's (2008) postulation is right as technology must be deployed. The benefits from education are too many that citizens cannot afford to live in



ignorance in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Another argument of the HCT economists is that education improves nutrition and health. It is a potent instrument for gender balance.

**Results and Findings**

The following results were obtained in the analysis carried out from the observations in this study.

**Research Question 1**

What is the level of awareness of ICT facilities among ODL students in sampled universities in South-West, Nigeria?

This research question was formulated to find out if the same type of ICT was used by all university students and the level of popularity of each ICT equipment among students, hence the items were carefully selected before allowing participants to answer the questions. Simple descriptive statistics as observed in Table 1 was used to answer the questions.

**Table 1: Level of ICT Deployed for ODL in Universities in South-West, Nigeria**

ICTs employed in Universities' ODL									
Type	System Missing		Yes		No		Total	Remarks	Status
	No.	% of Total	No.	% of Total	No.	% of Total			
Internet-enabled mobile phone	8	1.7	383	79.3	92	19.0	483	employed	High
Telephone	10	2.1	301	62.3	172	35.6	483	employed	High
Fax machine	10	2.1	103	21.3	370	76.6	483	not employed	High
Internet enabled computer	6	1.2	422	87.4	55	11.4	483	employed	High
Digital camera	11	2.3	182	37.7	290	60.0	483	employed	Low
Video phone	10	2.1	181	37.5	292	60.5	483	employed	Low
Scanner	8	1.7	199	41.2	276	57.1	483	employed	Low
Radio	9	1.9	267	55.3	207	42.9	483	employed	Medium
Television	11	2.3	207	42.9	265	54.9	483	employed	Low
Interactive multimedia computer programme)	10	2.1	265	54.9	208	43.1	483	employed	Medium
Audiovisual aids	13	2.7	227	47.0	243	50.3	483	employed	Medium
Others, please specify	176	36.4	48	9.9	259	53.6	483	not employed	Medium

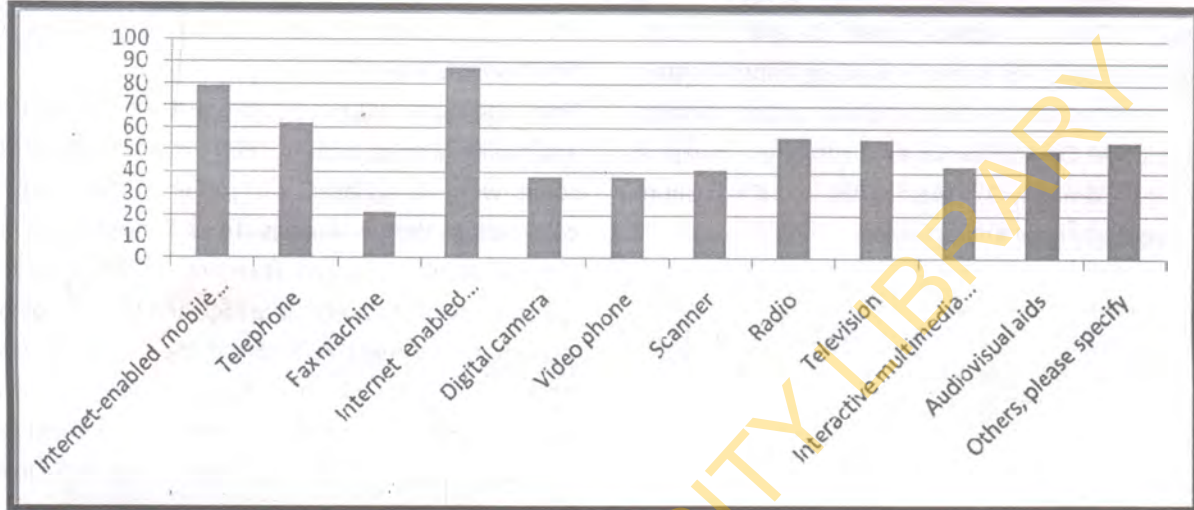
Any ICT with 40% and above yes response was adjudged to be employed in sampled universities and students exposed to such ICT. The data

gathered revealed that students were more exposed to Internet-enabled computers (87.4%), Internet-enabled mobile phones (79.3%), telephones (62.3%), radio (55.3%), and interactive

multimedia computer programmes (54.9%). The results were further rated either as low (below 39%) positive response while (40 -69)% were

ranked medium and 70% and above were ranked high.

Figure 1: Bar Chart showing Percentage Awareness of identified ICT in Universities in South-West, Nigeria Deploying ODL



**Research Question 2**

**How often do ODL students have Access with ICT facilities in the sampled universities in South-West Nigeria?**

This research question was formulated to explore if the availability of ICT facilities could translate into the assumption that such facilities indicated that the

students had contact with them and in effect were utilizing them. Simple test items were also deployed in the instrument to find this out that was also analyzed using simple descriptive statistics as indicated in Table 2.

Table 2: Extent of ICT Access to ODL Students in Universities in South-West, Nigeria

Descriptive Statistics					
ICT Facility	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Internet-enabled mobile phone	483	1	4	2.81	1.465
Telephone	483	1	4	2.20	1.620
Fax machine	483	1	4	1.24	1.287
Internet-enabled computer	483	1	4	2.46	1.439
Digital camera	483	1	4	1.40	1.387
Video phone	483	1	4	1.47	1.471
Scanner	483	1	4	1.51	1.435
Radio	483	1	4	1.95	1.598
Television	483	1	4	1.61	1.547
Interactive multimedia computer programme)	483	1	4	1.76	1.473
Audiovisual aids	483	1	4	1.45	1.425
Others, please specify	483	1	4	.54	1.025

Valid N (list wise)	483			1.7	1.431
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The responses from minimum (1) to maximum (4) were 1 = never, 2 = rarely, 3 = often, and 4 = very often. Out of the 483 respondents, the data revealed that the internet-enabled mobile phone (mean = 2.81 or approximately 3) and internet-enabled computers (mean = 2.46 or approximately 3) often accessed by ODL students in the sampled universities. On the average, a combined mean of 1.7 (approximately 2) revealed that all ICT facilities are averagely used and accessed.

**Hypothesis 1**

**There is no significant difference in the level of ICT availability (mobile phones, computers etc) to distance learners involved in the Open Distance Learning programmes in sampled Universities in South-West, Nigeria.**

This hypothesis was designed to test the level of ICT availability among distant learning students since some were in villages and other remote areas considering the challenges to ICT availability in Nigeria. While Research Question 1 was a direct question to all students using high and low numbers, Hypothesis 1 sought to find out the various levels. Understanding the number of independent variables involved that introduced parameters, the t-test or chi-square were found unsuitable hence the One-Way ANOVA was deployed as shown in Table 3.

**Table 3: The Mean and ANOVA Test on ICT Availability**

Descriptive Statistics								
ICT Availability								
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
National Open University of Nigeria	101	17.8416	4.29356	0.42723	16.9940	18.6892	4.00	24.00
University of Ibadan	158	16.9430	4.50088	0.35807	16.2358	17.6503	0.00	24.00
University of Lagos	107	18.0187	3.88024	0.37512	17.2750	18.7624	0.00	24.00
Obafemi Awolowo University	117	15.8974	3.41998	0.31618	15.2712	16.5237	0.00	22.00
Total	483	17.1159	4.14857	0.18877	16.7450	17.4868	0.00	24.00
ANOVA								
ICT Availability								
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.			
Between Groups	318.823	3	106.274	6.382	0.000			
Within Groups	7976.685	479	16.653					
Total	8295.507	482						

p<0.05

## Post Hoc Tests

Multiple Comparisons						
Dependent Variable: ICT Availability Tukey HSD						
(I) Name of Institution	(J) Name of Institution	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
National Open University of Nigeria	University of Ibadan	0.89855	0.51988	0.310	-0.4417	2.2388
	University of Lagos	-0.17711	0.56614	0.989	-1.6367	1.2824
	Obafemi Awolowo University	1.94415*	0.55427	0.003	0.5152	3.3731
University of Ibadan	National Open University of Nigeria	-0.89855	0.51988	0.310	-2.2388	0.4417
	University of Lagos	-1.07565	0.51091	0.153	-2.3928	0.2415
	Obafemi Awolowo University	1.04560	0.49772	0.154	-0.2376	2.3288
University of Lagos	National Open University of Nigeria	0.17711	0.56614	0.989	-1.2824	1.6367
	University of Ibadan	1.07565	0.51091	0.153	-0.2415	2.3928
	Obafemi Awolowo University	2.12126*	0.54586	0.001	0.7140	3.5285
Obafemi Awolowo University	National Open University of Nigeria	-1.94415*	0.55427	0.003	-3.3731	-0.5152
	University of Ibadan	-1.04560	0.49772	0.154	-2.3288	0.2376
	University of Lagos	-2.12126*	0.54586	0.001	-3.5285	-0.7140

\*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

A one-way ANOVA was computed to compare the level of ICT availability among ODL students in four universities in south-west Nigeria. A significant difference was found among the universities [ $F(3, 479) = 6.382, p < .05$ ]. The Tukey's HSD post hoc test was used to determine the nature of difference between the universities. The analysis revealed that

the level of ICT availability among students in Obafemi Awolowo University ( $M = 15.8974, sd =$

$3.41998$ ) was lower than that of students in National Open University of Nigeria ( $M = 17.8416, sd = 4.29356$ ) and University of Lagos ( $M = 18.0187, sd = 3.88024$ ). However, the level of ICT availability among students from Obafemi Awolowo University was not significantly different from those in University of Ibadan ( $M = 16.9430, sd = 4.50088$ ) as the University of Ibadan is not significantly different from National Open University of Nigeria and University of Lagos.

### Hypothesis 2

There is no significant difference in level of ICT accessibility to distance learners in the Open Distance Learning programmes of sampled universities in South-West, Nigeria.

Table 4: The Mean, ANOVA, and Tukey's HSD Test on ICT Accessibility

Descriptives								
ICT Accessibility								
Institutions	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
National Open University of Nigeria	101	20.4257	10.62577	1.05730	18.3281	22.5234	0.00	48.00
University of Ibadan	158	22.1519	11.31719	0.90035	20.3735	23.9303	0.00	48.00
University of Lagos	107	17.6636	10.34859	1.00044	15.6801	19.6470	0.00	42.00
Obafemi Awolowo University	117	20.5043	11.83990	1.09460	18.3363	22.6723	.00	45.00
Total	483	20.3975	11.18495	.50893	19.3975	21.3975	.00	48.00

p<0.05

ANOVA					
ICT Accessibility					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1287.494	3	429.165	3.484	0.016
Within Groups	59012.183	479	123.199		
Total	60299.677	482			

p<0.05

Post Hoc Tests

Multiple Comparisons								
Dependent Variable: ICT Accessibility Tukey HSD								
(I) Name of Institution	of	(J) Name of Institution	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval		
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound	
National Open University of Nigeria	of	University of Ibadan	-1.72616	1.41405	.614	-5.3717	1.9194	
		University of Lagos	2.76219	1.53986	.278	-1.2077	6.7321	
		Obafemi Awolowo University	-.07853	1.50757	1.000	-3.9652	3.8081	
University of Ibadan	of	National Open University of Nigeria	1.72616	1.41405	.614	-1.9194	5.3717	
		University of Lagos	4.48835*	1.38965	.007	.9057	8.0710	
		Obafemi Awolowo University	1.64763	1.35378	.616	-1.8425	5.1378	
University of Lagos	of	National Open University of Nigeria	-2.76219	1.53986	.278	-6.7321	1.2077	
		University of Ibadan	4.48835*	1.38965	.007	-8.0710	-.9057	
		Obafemi Awolowo University	-2.84072	1.48471	.224	-6.6684	.9870	

Obafemi Awolowo University	National Open University of Nigeria	.07853	1.50757	1.000	-3.8081	3.9652
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	University of Lagos	2.84072	1.48471	.224	-.9870	6.6684
*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.						

A one-way ANOVA was computed to compare the level of ICT accessibility among ODL students in four universities in south-west Nigeria. A significant difference was found among the universities [ $F(3, 479) = 3.484, p < .05$ ]. The Tukey's HSD post hoc test was used to determine the nature of difference between the universities. The analysis revealed that the level of ICT accessibility among students in University of Lagos ( $M = 17.6636, sd = 10.34859$ ) was lower than that of students in University of Ibadan ( $M = 22.1519, sd = 11.31719$ ). However, the level of ICT accessibility among students from National Open University of Nigeria ( $M = 20.4257, sd = 10.62577$ ) was not significantly different from those from Obafemi Awolowo University ( $M = 20.5043, sd = 11.83990$ ) and the University of Ibadan.

### Discussion of Findings

The above findings point to some important issues in the access to higher education, quality and the operations of Open Distance Learning in Universities in South-West, Nigeria. Table 1 showed that among the technological equipment identified in use by students, the internet-enabled computers and the mobile phones were the most used with 80% of students using internet-enabled computers and 90% using smart phones. The least used among students in the ODL programmes in universities in South-West, Nigeria is the fax machine. This could be so because the equipment has been overtaken by new creations in ICT software. Again, though some other equipment as radio and television are expected to score high usage among students, it was found to be in average use as reception of the stations used was limited. For example, most radio stations used by

the universities were either Frequency Modulated [FM] stations operated by the institutions for its community or some in urban towns cutting off those in rural areas. The development of smart phones and the software deployment by institutions on mobile access yielded good results. Further to this, combined access to ICT equipment as shown in Table 2 gave a mean of 1.7 approximately 2 on a total mean of 4 which gives average access. The result indicates that ICT infrastructure needs a lot of improvement even though it has been improving over time (Babalola, 2010). The development of mobile phones appears to be a booster to distance learners who most times are teachers working in rural areas without electricity. In the urban areas, electricity provision is erratic hence most people depend on the use of smart phones whose battery only need to be charged to be ready for the next lecture online.

Table 3 showed that all institutions in the ODL programme deployed the same ICT equipment as it recorded that there was no significant difference among institutions on the type of ICT deployment, but the ANOVA Table 3 (Post hoc) treatment showed that levels of access among students varied between the various institutions. While there was no difference between the ICT deployment in regular universities as UI, Unilag and OAU, there was a significant difference between these institutions and NOUN. Why is this so? A most likely reason is that the NOUN is a model ODL operated by the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN), hence its programme may have been well funded by the FGN, thereby giving it an advantage in the deployment of rather sophisticated ICT for ODL purposes than others. The findings of this study did not vary too much from what obtains in

other parts of the word. According to Adekanbi (2008), mass education has been a function of technology and in this circumstance, the ODL has proved to be a tool for mass education. Adewole (2012) and Okunade (2012) observed that the registration of students at the University of Ibadan Distance Learning Centre was outstripping the total student population of regular students at the university. This finding led to the call early in 2013 that a new name be found for the University of Ibadan Distance Learning Centre (UIDLC). It was argued that an academic centre was rather a small place for research, but this is yet to be done. In the case of the University of Lagos, the place started in the late 1970s as Correspondence and Open Studies Unit (COSU) but is now known as the University of Lagos Distant Learning Institute (UNILAG DLI).

Drawing from the responses of students, technology is playing a key role in the provision of higher education in Nigeria. However, the study by Asiabaka and Oku (2007) that explained the roles of the radio and television in the dissemination of information for mass education appear to be a little unpopular with distant learning students but ought to have been more economical because of its mass outreach. Again, programmes recorded once on radio can be replayed over and over again without new recordings. Students could record such information on their tape recorders for use after sometime, but this study found such equipment scoring average points. The challenge could be that most institutions use FM radio stations whose reception is usually within their immediate vicinity. For example, the University of Ibadan Distance Learning Centre uses the Diamond FM Radio which is an arm of the University services. Its reception may not get as far as Lagos or Enugu where we have a large concentration of UIDLC students. The same applies to similar institutions that run ODL programmes

### **Summary**

This study investigated the perspective of ODL students on the effectiveness of the mode of studies of the programme in universities in South-West, Nigeria. The study identified some technological equipment and found out their levels of availability and accessibility to students registered in the ODL programmes of universities in South-West Nigeria. The study found out that while all institutions had these ICT equipments, the level of access of students to the equipments varied. Also students' preferences for these equipments varied. The study found that the cause of variation was associated with the obsolescence of some equipments such as fax machine that is hardly used now and where used, the computer software has replaced it and with a lot of students preferring the computer and internet. It was also observed that the radio and television that are out to play key roles in the provision of services were yet to be maximally developed. The study utilized the survey research method.

### **Implication of Study to Theory and Practice in Educational Administration and Planning**

It is clear that whatever findings a research obtains, if not applied to the discipline, such finding becomes irrelevant indicating a waste of colossal resources hence this study recommends to educational administrators and planners the following:

1. More universities should be encouraged to begin the ODL programme especially as it has been seen to be instrumental to mass education without reduction in quality.
2. Radio and television programmes should be given a higher priority than they presently occupy in ODL programmes. This is because it is possible for them to reach to places where conventional internet cannot reach. Again, the radio can use batteries instead of electricity, thereby making programmes

more accessible to ODL students in rural areas.

- Universities operating the ODL programme should continue to improve on the use of mobile platforms. The development and falling prices of mobile phones make it highly useful to students who can log in and log out of the internet at any time. Also it facilitates the submission and downloading of assignments. It also assists in communication. This paper places high premium on the continuous development and deployment of mobile platforms.

### Conclusion

After investigating the perspectives of students on the effectiveness of ODL in Universities in South-West, Nigeria, this paper opines that more studies could be conducted to aid planners and administrators in this area. For example, some areas as services provision and effectiveness in the ODL programmes and entrepreneurship potentials in the ODL programmes are yet to be explored. These could serve as new research areas for scholars.

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