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Abstract - This study investigated the implementation of Open University Programmes in Nigeria. The researchers generated 4 research questions and 4 null hypotheses guiding the study. A questionnaire was the major instrument used for data collection. 1,424 undergraduate and postgraduate students representing 40% of the total population of study selected using stratified random sampling technique. The study used a descriptive and inferential statistics. Data collected were converted to means and further subjected to z-test. The z-test was used to test the 4 null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The study amongst other things found out that there were significant differences between the undergraduate and postgraduate students of National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) programmes in their perception of the following: adequacy of infrastructures and other learning materials, quality of academic staff, effectiveness of instructional delivery and adequacy of research grants for effective implementation of NOUN programmes in Nigeria.

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Implementation of Open University Programmes in Nigeria

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Abstract - This study investigated the implementation of Open University Programmes in Nigeria. The researchers generated 4 research questions and 4 null hypotheses guiding the study. A questionnaire was the major instrument used for data collection. 1,424 undergraduate and postgraduate students representing 40% of the total population of study selected using stratified random sampling technique. The study used a descriptive and inferential statistics. Data collected were converted to means and further subjected to z-test. The z-test was used to test the 4 null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The study amongst other things found out that there were significant differences between the undergraduate and postgraduate students of National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) programmes in their perception of the following: adequacy of infrastructures and other learning materials, quality of academic staff, effectiveness of instructional delivery and adequacy of research grants for effective implementation of NOUN programmes in Nigeria.

1. INTRODUCTION

The field of education has witnessed some quite innovative and technologically developed techniques for taking up the task of instructional learning to the door steps of the learners in the name of virtual classrooms and e-learning.

This implies that the majority of educational communication between teacher and student(s) occur non-contiguously. It involves two-way communication between teacher and student(s) for the purpose of facilitating and supporting the education process.

From the colonial period, correspondence colleges from the United Kingdom (UK) have provided intermediate and advanced level education to a number suitably qualified Nigerians through correspondence courses. According to Owoeye (2004), a large number of secretarial and middle level administrators were trained using this mode of education. To Adesina (1988), many early nationalist leaders in Nigeria were also trained through this modality before they had the opportunity of travelling to the United Kingdom to further their studies. However, when Nigeria gained her full independence in 1960, delivery from foreign providers stopped. At this period, internal developments have begun in many sectors of the Nigerian economy, including education. Nigeria, a country with cultural, religious, social and political diversities and as a former

British colony, has high awareness for Western education. Incidentally, those without access to formal education are disproportionately higher than those with access.

This is attributable to the sudden collapse of the Nigerian independence coupled with the military coup of 1966 which brought tremendous drawback to the Nigerian economy. According to Bamisaye (2000), successive military regimes which interrupted the weak democratic governments that succeeded them de-emphasized access to education. Therefore, the assistance given to education in form of scholarships, study-leave with-pay, inservice-training and other government supports were either cut down or completely removed. On that note, UNESCO (2002) argues that the challenge for the survival of higher educational institutions in the presence of the ailing economy coupled with rapidly increasing cost surpassing government spending habit. The down crippled economy notwithstanding, the urge for education among Nigerian of all ages remained unabated. The antidote therefore, for the latter became glaring; a type of education that will allow for a study-as-you-work, hence the launching of the Open University of Nigeria on 22nd July, 1983 as a form of Open and Distant Education. After some years of its closure, the compelling reasons that informed the earlier establishment were still confronting the country that in 2002, the Open University Act of 1983 which had been suspended in 1984 was again resuscitated by former President Olusegun Obasanjo through the National Assembly Act No. 6. Koul (2005) posited that Distance and Open Learning (DOL) educational systems are no longer a mere education in which the teacher and the learner are separated by distance. Omolewa (1985) asserts that distance and open learning education were imported as part of Package of Western education and colonial enterprise in Nigeria. This assertion however, corroborates with the fact that some Nigerian educators such as Alvan Ikoku, Simon Adebayo, J.S. Ogunlasi and S.A. Banjo obtained their jobs on the shores of Nigeria. A writer such as Chander (1991) traced the genesis of the Open learning education to the instructional writings of Plato and St. Paul.

Keegan (1990) explained the distance and open learning education as quasi-permanent separation of teacher and learner process with the use of technical media. Bhola (1989) observed that the term distance

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learning education had acquired a universal acceptance since 1982 when the International Council for Correspondence Education (ICCE) a UNESCO affiliated organization changed its name to the international council for National Open University Education. In order therefore, to achieve this objective, it is imperative to ensure that the procedure for the implementation of the Open University Programmes are clearly set out.

Based on this, the researchers embarked on the strategies for the implementation of the Open University Programmes in Nigeria with a view to examining the implementation process, identifying factors such as research grants, library supplies, instructional space and other related facilities for the implementation of Open University Programmes in Nigeria and proffer solutions for improvement.

II. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The objective of the study is to examine the extent of the provision of resources such as human, material and capital and to ascertain the degree of perception of the undergraduate and postgraduate students of the Open University programmes in the adequacy of infrastructural facilities, quality of academic staff, instructional delivery system, etc. for the implementation of the Open University programmes in the South-South zone of the country.

a) Hypothesis

H_{01} : There is no significant difference between the undergraduate and postgraduate students of National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) in their perception of the adequacy of infrastructural facilities provided for the implementation of Open University programmes.

H_{02} : There is no significant difference between the undergraduate and postgraduate students of the Open University in their perception of the quality of academic staff for the implementation of Open University programmes.

H_{03} : There is no significant difference between the undergraduate and postgraduate students of the Open University in their perception of the effectiveness

of structural delivery for the implementation of Open University programmes.

H_{04} : There is no significant difference between the undergraduate and postgraduate students of the Open University of Nigeria in their perception of the adequacy of research grants provided for effective implementation of the programmes.

b) Methodology

The design of the study was descriptive survey, involving an instrument titled "Implementation of Open University Programmes Questionnaire (IOUPQ)" used for data collection. The instrument was addressed to undergraduate and postgraduate students of the programme. It had sections A, B, C, D and E. Section A contained seven items on personal data such as sex, age, marital status, category of correspondents, etc. Section B contained nineteen items on the adequacy of infrastructural facilities. It was structured using likert type scale to provide responses along the continuum of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD).

Section D contained seven items which addressed the level of perception of both categories of students on the adequacy and effectiveness of instructional delivery using same continuum of (SA), (A), (D) and (SD).

Section E contained ten items which measured the perception of both categories of students on the adequacy of research grants and library facilities. It also made use of likert four point scale based on (SA), (A), (D) and (SD).

c) Data Analysis

Based on the returned responses, the data were tested:

H_{01} : There is no significant difference between the undergraduate and postgraduate students of National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) in their perception of the adequacy of infrastructural facilities provided for the implementation of Open University programmes.

Table 1 : Difference between the undergraduate and postgraduate students of (NOUN) in their perceptions of the adequacy of infrastructural facilities

Students' Category	N	\bar{x}	Std. Dev.	df	z-cal.	z-Tab.	Remarks
Underge	721	3.61	4.51	1422	2.31	1.66	Significant
Postgrae	703	4.92	3.21				

$P > 0.05$

From table 1 above, the calculated z-value of 2.31 is greater than table z-value of 1.66 at 0.05 level of significance at degree of freedom (df), hence, the null hypothesis (H_{01}) was rejected. This means that there was a significant difference between the undergraduate and postgraduate students in their perception of the

adequacy of infrastructural facilities provided for implementation of (NOUN).

H_{02} : There is no significant difference between the undergraduate and postgraduate students of the Open University in their perception of the quality of

academic staff for the implementation of Open University programmes.

Table 2 : Test of difference perception of the quality of academic staff

Students' category	N	\bar{x}	Std. Dev.	df	z-cal.	z-tab.	Remarks
Undergraduate	721	31.83	4.21	1422	1.98	1.66	Significat
Postgraduae	703	51.67	2.93				

$P > 0.05$

Table 2 above shows that calculated z-value of 1.98 is greater than table z-value of 1.66 at 0.05 level of significance at degree of freedom (df), hence, the null hypothesis (Ho2) was rejected. This means that there

was a significant difference between the two categories of students in their perception of the adequacy and quality of academic staff.

Table 3 : Test of difference on perception of the effectiveness of instructional delivery

Students' Category	N	\bar{x}	Std. Dev.	df	z-cal.	z-tab.	Remarks
Undergraduate	721	4.71	4.39	1422	2.81	1.66	Significant
Postgraduate	703	2.63	2.73				

$P > 0.05$

In table 3 above, z-calculated value is 2.81 where as z-table value is 1.66 at 0.05 level of significant, with degree of freedom (df) 1422. The null-hypothesis

was rejected suggesting significant difference between the two categories of respondents.

Table 4 : Test of difference of perception of the adequacy of research grants

Students' Category	N	\bar{x}	Std. Dev.	df	z-cal.	z-tab.	Remarks
Undergraduate	721	26.11	3.23	1422	2.43	1.66	Significant
Postgraduate	703	21.02	2.32				

Table 4 shows that z-calculated value is 2.43 while z-table / critical is 1.66 at 0.05 level of significant at the degree of freedom (df) of 1422.

The null hypothesis (Ho4) was rejected meaning that there was significant difference in the perception of both categories of students on the adequacy of research grants for the implementation of (NOUN) programmes.

III. DISCUSSIONS

The results of the study revealed that the availability of infrastructural facilities for the effective implementation of (NOUN) programmes in Nigeria was significant in the area of road network and low in provision of electricity supplies. This finding was consistent with that of Koul (2005) who posited that Distance and Open learning educational system is no mere education in which the teacher and learner and separated by distance. The findings revealed that most Third World Countries especially Nigeria, are yet to grapple with problems inherent in the digital divide, access to instructional technology and the capacity to use such technology is negligible compared to those of the developed countries. Admittedly, the availability of duplicating machines, slides and film strip projectors at

the study centre no doubt pose serious challenges to the implementation of the (NOUN) programmes.

The result revealed that learners used the media selected, for example, accessibility to a personal computer, TV, radio, telephone, which showed a relative high mean score for both undergraduate and postgraduate students. Egbezor (1986:1) argued that teaching-learning methods, assessment, etc; are compulsory in open and distance education (ODE). It could be noticed that students of Open University system both undergraduate and postgraduate normally appreciate the provision of learners support services such as information and communication technology, counselling, etc; throughout the learning periods. Learning materials are designed according to the principles of self instruction. Another challenge of the Open University system was in the area of fund allocations to science equipments. This was felt more by the students who are not science oriented. These findings agree with that of Ajeke (1998:12) that despite increasing budgetary allocations to fund education there are still series of obstacles to educational growth and development as a result of lack of adequacy of funds to provide the necessary facilities and other learning equipments. Therefore, the Open University system

require some physical facilities such as buildings, library and other equipments which without effective implementation of NOUN programmes will be difficult.

IV. CONCLUSION

Open University system has become a potent tool for the realization of educational objectives in Nigeria. A situation therefore, of inadequate materials, ineffective delivery of learning materials, infrastructural facilities, inadequate skilled manpower, teaching staff, could grind the programme to a halt, or turn out the products half-baked, such that they cannot face the challenges of the labour market like their contemporaries from the conventional universities.

V. SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Following the facts, this work is delimited to the South-South geopolitical zone of the country, it is therefore suggested that similar studies on the implementation of Open University programmes be carried out in other remaining geo-political zones of the country to make for a proper generalization of the study. The limitations posed on this study is also hoped to provide meaningful insight for further research on the implementation of Open University programmes in Nigeria.

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