Full Length Research Paper

Utilitarian evaluation of the National Open University of Nigeria

Peter James Kpolovie*[1] and Isaac Esezi Obilor[2]

[1]Director of Academic Planning, Research and Control Unit, Office of the Vice-Chancellor, University of Port Harcourt

[2]Department of Banking and Finance, Rivers State College of Arts and Science, Port Harcourt

*Corresponding Author's Email:
kpolovie@gmail.com;
peter.kpolovie@uniport.edu.ng
Phone No.: +2348088061666

Abstract

This study employed Utilitarian Evaluation Design and Discrepancy Evaluation Model, which are the most suitable in educational programme evaluation, to evaluate the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) from its commencement of admission in 2003 to 2013. The study covered headquarters and all the 49 Study Centres of NOUN throughout the six geopolitical regions in Nigeria. A sample of 902 was drawn from students of NOUN, and staff of NOUN, National Universities Commission and conventional Federal Universities in Nigeria. A highly valid Utilitarian Evaluation Questionnaire with reliability coefficient of 0.86 was developed for data collection. The research questions were answered using measures of central tendency, and the hypotheses were tested with One-Way Analysis of Variance and independent samples t-test at 0.05 alpha. Results indicated that though NOUN has been partially implemented as defined with aspects of the objectives achieved; great disparity exists between the expected and actual outcomes; and that NOUN is significantly inadequate in addressing the 'higher education for all in need' intervention for which it was established. It was recommended among others that funding of NOUN be increased, more Study Centres established, and a National Open and Distance Education Commission be established to supervise, monitor and regulate the NOUN.

Keywords: Utilitarian evaluation design, Summative evaluation model, National Open University of Nigeria, Higher education, Open and Distance learning, Life-long learning.

INTRODUCTION

In formulating the National Policy on Education, the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) expressed commitment to the fact that education is the most important instrument of change in any society, and that any fundamentally progressive change in the intellectual and social outlook of a society has to be preceded by an educational revolution. To bring about meaningful changes in the Nigerian society through educational revolution, government then adopted, among other things, policies which would ensure equal and adequate educational opportunities at all levels, life-long learning, and that at any stage of the educational process after primary education, an individual will be able to choose between continuing his full-time studies, combining work with studies, or embarking on fulltime employment without excluding the prospect of resuming studies later on. That is, the education system in the nation was structured to develop the practice of self-learning (Federal Government of Nigeria, 2002).

The idea of an Open University system for Nigeria, as

a separate and distinct institution to be organized nation-wide was appropriately reflected in the 2004 National Policy on Education, which stated emphatically and unambiguously that maximum efforts will be made to enable those who can benefit from higher education to be given access to it. Such access may be through universities or correspondence courses, or open universities, or part-time and work study programmes. The Policy stipulated a system which encompasses education for all, education for life, life-long learning, life-wide education, adult education, mass education, media-based education, self-learning, personalised learning, part-time studies, and much more. It is all these variants now known as open and distance education that the Policy anticipated, without any limitation or exclusion, as long as the variant contributes to equal and adequate educational opportunities at all levels (Federal Government of Nigeria, 2004).

One major objective of the 2004 National Policy on Education is the provision of equal educational opportunities to all Nigerians at different levels of education. Another aspect of the policy is the encouragement of distance learning at the tertiary level of education. These provisions are to manage the continued increase in the number of qualified persons demanding university education. In some Nigerian administrative states like Sokoto and Zamfara, the female literacy rate is as low as 12% when compared to 59% for males; and for the entire country, literacy rate is 39.5% for females and 65.5% for males (UNESCO, 2003). As Jegede (2004) opined, only 15% of qualified students gain admission into the conventional universities in Nigeria. What happens to the rest 85% is indeed a great teaser. Further, distance learning was encouraged by the Nigerian National Policy on Education to curb the menace of poor access to education, intimidating demand by employers of labour for higher qualifications before promotion and other assessment factors of their employees, and the need for informed decision-making.

Distance Learning (Distance Education) is the advent of Open Education which crystallized into Open University. According to UNESCO (2002), any educational process in which all or most of the teaching is conducted by someone removed in space and/or time from the learner, with the effect that all or most of the communication between teachers and learners is through an artificial medium, either electronic or print, is classified as distance education. In this light therefore, the presence of distance education has been in Nigeria since the 1880's when few Nigerians, through correspondence, wrote the University of London examination (Omolewa, 1982). This went on for quite some time until the University College, Ibadan took over the extramural studies of the Oxford University in 1949.

It was to deliver the benefits of Distance Education that the Federal Government of Nigeria on 22nd July, 1983 under the leadership of Alhaji Shehu Shagari enacted an act establishing the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN), to be the fountain-head as well as the springboard of modern-day open and distance education in Nigeria, thus introducing a new era in meeting the millennium goal of education for all. But unfortunately, this great idea did not see the light of day as the military government of General Buhari, on 25th of April, 1984, suspended the project indefinitely. However, hope returned in 2002 when the democratic government of General Olusegun Obasanjo, after a thorough consideration of the huge demand for higher education by Nigerians, lifted the suspension order and ensured the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) commenced academic activities (Kpolovie, 2012).

The Federal Government of Nigeria (2002) justified the adoption and deployment of open and distance education delivery system in Nigeria on several grounds, which include:

(a) The nation's commitment to provide education for all within the context of the declaration at the World Forum on Education for All (EFA), in Dakar Senegal.

(b) With a substantial number of school age children out of school, a high adult illiteracy rate and access denied to more than 85% of eligible candidates for higher education, there is ample justification for a potent intervention to enhance access to quality basic and higher education as a major initiative for the attainment of the EFA goals.

(c) Outreach and satellite campuses mushroomed all over the country over the years with little regard for quality or resources to assist students' learning needs, the results of which had been 'for-profit-only' education and less-than-desirable quality both in terms of programmes and products. Government has closed down these campuses. Several thousands of their students would still need to undertake tertiary education studies by their chosen option of Distance Learning. It is good for them and mandatory for the nation to enable them develop their full potentials.

(d) Distance education programmes, when properly planned, organised, manned and executed, are cost effective to both the nation and the student. Considerable savings are made on teachers/lecturers; buildings and textbook costs because in a distance learning programme the course material would be the major teaching/learning resource.

(e) Distance education programmes lend themselves to economies of scale. Once the initial capital outlay is made and the course materials developed and produced, unit costs decrease with expansion. So new students can be enrolled at marginal additional cost, and the more the students the lower the unit cost.

(f) Distance education programmes are attractive because of their flexibility. Learners study what they want, when and where they want. Control over time and space is particularly valuable to those in full time occupations and employment as well as those in remote

areas.

(g) Distance education gives opportunity to maximize the use of high-level academic personnel who would be able to teach larger numbers of students and especially after suitable distance learning materials are developed and distributed.

(h) Girls and women are important target groups in development programmes. One aspect of the education gap in Nigeria is the discrepancy as regards equal opportunities in education for girls and women.

(i) Education delivery at a distance facilitates the reach of substantial numbers of women, including societies where women lack equal opportunities of participation in conventional forms of education and training such as women in purdah, nomadic communities, disabled or handicapped people.

The National Open University of Nigeria, established in 1983, has been part of the educational history of Nigeria for 30 years (20 years of dormancy and 10 years of active participation in the educational equation of Nigeria). It was established to, among other things, ensure equity and equality of opportunities in education, provide a wider access to education, enhance Education for All (EFA) and lifelong learning, provide educational resources via an intensive use of Information and Communication Technology, provide flexible and qualitative education, and reduce the cost, inconvenience and hassles of education delivery. Whether or not the National Open University of Nigeria is achieving these objectives is the focus of this study.

So far unfortunately, 10 years after the actual takeoff of the National Open University of Nigeria, the University has graduated only one set of students. The researchers fear that the objective of "wider access to university education", among others, is threatened and that the evaluation of the National Open University of Nigeria would provide valid and reliable evidences that will direct the activities of NOUN in realising its objectives. In other words, the primary aim of this evaluation research is to provide a valid and reliable information-base that will be useful to the Federal Government of Nigeria, National Universities Commission, National Open University of Nigeria, educators, researchers, and all interested parties in making informed decision about the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN).

Kpolovie (2012) asseverated that programme evaluation is a systematic study conducted to assess the merit and worth of the programme; how well the programme is working, typically focused on the achievement of programme objectives. It is an assessment, through objective measurement and systematic analysis, of the manner and extent to which a programme achieves intended objectives. According to Monette, Sullivan and Dejong (1994), programme evaluation is a means of supplying valid and reliable evidence regarding the operation of social programmes or clinical practices - how well they are planned, how

well they operate, or how effectively they achieve their objectives. This implies that programme evaluation gives direction to the programme, tells whether the programme is working, regulates implementation, controls expenditure, and makes recommendations for better focus.

The evaluation of the National Open University of Nigeria was holistic, involving the assessment of the implementation of NOUN, ascertaining the extent of achievement of the objectives of NOUN, comparing intended outcomes with actual outcomes and assessing the adequacy of the National Open University of Nigeria. In carrying out this evaluation research, the Discrepancy Evaluation Model by Malcolm Provus (also called Summative Evaluation Model) was adopted. This model presents evaluation as a process or an exercise aimed fundamentally at delineation and determination of the worth of an already existing educational or any other programme in order to ascertain:

1. The aspects that deserve continuation as they are;

2. The aspects that demand modification either by radical change or natural change or both;

3. The areas that require instant termination (Kpolovie 2010, 150)

In Kpolovie (2010), the Provus's Summative Evaluation Model identifies, as very pertinent in evaluation, the following:

a. The generally acceptable goals and objectives of the programme.

b. The performance of the programme - the totality of the combinations of resources in actual implementation of the programme.

c. Comparison of the standards set and the performance.

d. Discrepancies between performance and standards as revealed by the comparison.

e. The termination of some aspects of, or the entire programme due to its irrelevance.

f. Modification, alteration and improvement of aspects of, or the entire programme for its continuity.

g. Retention of the entire programme or its parts.

h. Recycling of the programme in parts or entirely with elements of modified inputs.

In consonance with the Discrepancy Evaluation Model, this study assessed the following:

1. The extent to which the National Open University of Nigeria has been implemented as defined:

(a) Enactment of a Policy on Distance Education as a component of National Policy on Education.

(b) Comprehensive needs Assessment Survey.

(c) Capacity building: Training of 10,000 Distance Education Operators.

(d) Recruitment of staff for take-off of NOUN.

(e) Establishment of Virtual Libraries.

(f) Setting up of Technology Infrastructure and Community Resource and Study Centres in State Capitals.

(g) Publicity/Public Enlightenment Campaign.

2. The extent of achievement of the under-listed objectives of the National Open University of Nigeria:

(a) Ensure equity and equality of opportunities in university education in Nigeria.

(b) Provide a wider access to university education in Nigeria.

(c) Enhance Education for All (EFA) and lifelong learning.

(d) Ensure the entrenchment of a global culture.

(e) Provide educational resources via an intensive use of Information and Communication Technology.

(f) Provide flexible and qualitative education.

(g) Reduce the cost, inconvenience and hassles of education delivery.

3. The level of adequacy of the National Open University of Nigeria in realising its objectives in terms of the following:

(a) Number of Study Centres.

(b) Location of Study Centres.

(c) Availability of instructional materials.

(d) Staffing.

(e) Funding.

(f) Power supply.

(g) Internet connectivity.

4. The level of congruence between the intended outcomes with actual outcomes of the National Open University of Nigeria in terms of the following:

(a) Attainment of a student target population of 60,000 in the first cycle (1 – 12 months).

(b) Attainment of a student target population of 100,000 in the second cycle (13 – 36 months).

(c) Attainment of a student target population of 120,000 in the third cycle (37 – 72 months).

Statement of the problem and research questions

Although open education is not new to Nigerians, the National Open University of Nigeria is quite an innovation and Nigeria appears quite fertile for it to thrive because of the large population of Nigerians seeking higher education for better job with higher wages, employers' requirements for promotion and job security, education for its sake (knowledge, information, and power), and a lot more. Nigeria's commitment to the lifelong learning and the millennium goal of education for all, as well as huge requirement for redress for millions of adult Nigerians structurally prevented from reaching their educational and other potentials, made the National Open University of Nigeria timely with a huge hope of survival.

Given the above educational needs of Nigeria, which are greatly supportive of the establishment and survival of the National Open University of Nigeria, the problem is ascertainment of the merit and worth of the National Open University of Nigeria. Is the National Open University of Nigeria achieving its objectives? In other words, is NOUN ensuring equity and equality of opportunities in education, providing a wider access to education, enhancing Education for All (EFA) and lifelong learning, providing flexible and qualitative education, educational resources via an intensive use of Information and Communication Technology, and reducing the cost, inconvenience and hassles of education delivery in Nigeria? This study was carried out to provide valid and reliable answers to the questions above and make informed recommendations for ameliorative strategies.

The following Research Questions directed the investigation:

1. To what extent has the National Open University of Nigeria been implemented as defined?

2. To what extent has the NOUN achieved its intended objectives?

3. To what extent are the actual outcomes of the NOUN consistent with the intended outcomes?

4. To what extent is the NOUN adequate in addressing the intervention for which it was established?

5. Which objectives of the NOUN should be (a) continued as they are, (b) modified, or (c) terminated?

6. Is the NOUN worthy to continue as a tertiary Open and Distance Learning (ODL) institution?

Hypotheses postulation

1. The staff of the National Universities Commission, staff of the National Open University of Nigeria, and staff of the conventional Federal Universities in Nigeria do not differ significantly in their mean rating of the implementation of the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) as defined.

2(a) The staff of the National Universities Commission, staff of the National Open University of Nigeria, and staff of the conventional Federal Universities in Nigeria do not differ significantly in their mean rating of the achievement of the objectives of NOUN.

2(b) The students of the Study Centres of the National Open University of Nigeria at Abuja, Calabar, Jos, Ilorin, Mina, Lokoja, Umudike, Enugu, Port Harcourt, Uyo, Lagos, and Ondo do not differ significantly in their mean rating of the achievement of the objectives of NOUN.

3. There is no significant difference between the actual and intended outcomes of the National Open University of Nigeria.

4(a) The staff of the National Universities Commission, staff of the National Open University of Nigeria, and staff of the conventional Federal Universities in Nigeria do not differ significantly in their mean rating of the adequacy of NOUN in addressing the issues for which it was established.

4(b) The students of the Study Centres of the National Open University of Nigeria at Abuja, Calabar, Jos, Ilorin, Mina, Lokoja, Umudike, Enugu, Port Harcourt, Uyo,

Lagos, and Ondo do not differ significantly in their mean rating of the adequacy of NOUN in addressing the issues for which it was established.

5(a) The staff of the National Universities Commission, staff of the National Open University of Nigeria, and staff of the conventional Federal Universities in Nigeria do not differ significantly in their mean rating of the objectives of the National Open University of Nigeria that should be (i) continued as they are, (ii) modified and continued, (iii) terminated in their entirety.

5(b) The students of the Study Centres of the National Open University of Nigeria at Abuja, Calabar, Jos, Ilorin, Mina, Lokoja, Umudike, Enugu, Port Harcourt, Uyo, Lagos, and Ondo do not differ significantly in their mean rating of the objectives of the National Open University of Nigeria that should be (i) continued as they are, (ii) modified and continued, (iii) terminated in their entirety.

6(a) The staff of the National Universities Commission, staff of the National Open University of Nigeria, and staff of the conventional Federal Universities in Nigeria do not differ significantly in their mean rating of the worth of NOUN to continue as an Open and Distance Learning (ODL) institution in Nigeria.

6(b) The students of the Study Centres of the National Open University of Nigeria at Abuja, Calabar, Jos, Ilorin, Mina, Lokoja, Umudike, Enugu, Port Harcourt, Uyo, Lagos, and Ondo do not differ significantly in their mean rating of the worthiness of NOUN to continue as an Open and Distance Learning (ODL) institution in Nigeria.

This study is of great significance as it will provide students, researchers, and educationists with a well-planned and properly executed programme evaluation research that will serve as a genuine guide. This evaluation will help keep the National Open University of Nigeria on track. This evaluation of the National Open University of Nigeria will help identify problems with the programme implementation so that necessary changes when put in place will ensure the National Open University of Nigeria is properly streamlined to address the problems it was established to address.

The quality of a programme, the way people perceive a programme and the level of appreciation people have about a programme are important for the survival of a programme. This evaluation research, in assessing how satisfied students and other stakeholders are with the performance of the National Open University of Nigeria in terms of responsiveness, timeliness, and accessibility, will make for good quality control and quality assurance of NOUN.

This evaluation research will tell whether the National Open University of Nigeria is addressing the problems (situations) it was established to address. In fact, a very important goal of any evaluation, is determining whether or not the programme or intervention has solved the problem or improved the situation it was put in place to address.

The findings of this evaluation research will provide valid and reliable information-base that will be useful to the Federal Government of Nigeria, National Universities Commission, National Open University of Nigeria, educators, researchers, and all interested parties in making informed decision about the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN). The Federal Government of Nigeria, policy makers, educationists, information communication technologists, and the general public will cease to make wild guesses about the National Open University of Nigeria.

Review of related literature

The practice of evaluation dates back to Samurai Sword Evaluation (Scriven, 1991). According to Scriven, evaluation was in evidence as early as 2000 B.C. when Chinese officials held civil service examinations to measure the ability of individuals applying for government positions, and verbal evaluation was included as part of the instructional approach. Potential employees were asked questions verbally and their verbal responses were used to appraise them.

In response to dissatisfaction with educational and social programmes, a more formal educational evaluation can be traced back to Great Britain during the 1800s, when royal commissions were sent by the government to hear testimonies from the various institutions (Guerra-Lopez, 2008). In the 1930s, Ralph Tyler issued a call to measure goal attainment with standardized criteria (Fitzpatrick, Sanders and Worthen, 2004). And during the 1960s, Liston (1999) reported that Scriven and Cronbach introduced formative evaluation (used to guide developmental activities) and summative evaluation (used to determine the overall value of a programme or solution), and Stufflebeam stressed outcomes (programme results) over process (programme activities and resources).

In 1963, Cronbach published an important work, "Course Improvement through Evaluation", challenging educators to measure real learning rather than the passive mastery of facts (Guerra-Lopez, 2008). Cronbach further proposed the use of qualitative instruments, such as interviews and observations, to study outcomes. In the latter part of the 1960s, well-known evaluation figures such as Edward Suchman, Michael Scriven, Carol Weiss, Blaine Worthen, and James Sanders wrote the earliest texts on programme evaluation.

The main purpose of evaluation is not to prove (as most people believe it is) but to improve the performance of an organisation (Stufflebeam, 2003). According to Stufflebeam, this should be the foundation for all evaluation efforts, now and in the future. Every component of an evaluation must be aligned with the organization's objectives and expectations and the decisions that will have to be made as a result of the findings of the evaluation. Evaluation can help organiza-

tions identify what is going right and what is going wrong. Osborne and Gaebler (1992) reported that:

- What gets measured gets done.
- If you do not measure results, you cannot tell success from failure.
- If you cannot see success, you cannot reward it.
- If you cannot reward success, you are probably rewarding failure.
- If you cannot see success, you cannot learn from it.
- If you cannot recognize failure, you cannot correct it.
- If you can demonstrate results, you can win public support.

Conducting an evaluation requires resources, but the benefits outweigh the costs in most situations. For instance, some benefits of evaluation include, but not limited to the following:

- Evaluation keeps programmes or interventions on track.
- Evaluation makes for good quality assurance and quality control.
- Evaluation tells whether a programme or intervention is working or has worked.

An Open University is a university that takes care of all prospective candidates, irrespective of their academic background (Anderson, Benjamin and Fuss, 1994). They went further to highlight that in the Open University system, admission is open to all; candidates are admitted at will and are allowed to study according to their speed; candidates who are not admitted due to some entry qualification deficiencies are considered for admission based on their age, work experience, or are given programmes at literacy, remediation, certificate or diploma levels.

The British Open University, now known as Open University of United Kingdom (OUUK), was the first Open University to be set up in 1969 to widen access to education in Britain when it was discovered that there is the need to provide lifelong education and take care of those shut out by the conventional universities. To date, the OUUK remains the largest Open University in the world with 248,216 and 253,075 students' enrolment in the 2008/2009 and 2009/2010 academic sessions respectively. It has thus served as a model to many others (Bells and Tight, 1999; Tait, 2003).

The year 1983, the effective year that the Open University Act of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (1980) came into effect, marked a major turning point in the history of Open and Distance Education (ODE) in Nigeria. From this date onwards, the educational history of Nigeria, in her strive to achieve Education For All (EFA) Nigerians, received a surge.

At present, the National Open University of Nigeria has 49 Study Centres in the six geopolitical zones of the country to facilitate the delivery of study materials and interaction with facilitators. Study Centres are resource places where students can pick up course and other study materials, as well as interact with Instructional Facilitators, Tutors, Student Counsellors, Study Centre Directors and with fellow students.

As at the 2012/2013 academic year, NOUN has had a student enrolment of 110276, a total of 985 staff (academic, non-academic, support), five Schools and two Centres. The schools and centres are respectively School of Arts and Social Sciences, School of Business and Human Resources Management, School of Education, School of Law, School of Science and Technology, Centre for Continuing Education and Work Place Training, and Centre for Training and Development in Open and Distance Learning. So far the University has graduated only one set of 7,220 students.

Studies on evaluation of educational programmes have been done all over the world. The Institutional Evaluation Programme (IEP), an independent member-ship service of the European University Association (EUA) that offers support through evaluation of the participating institutions in the continuing development of strategic management and internal quality culture, carried out the evaluation of the University of Bucharest. The Institutional Evaluation Programme (IEP) was launched in 1993 with the aim of preparing universities to meet the emerging needs for external accountability by an increased capacity for both strategic thinking and internal quality culture.

By reviewing institutions in different countries IEP hopes to disseminate examples of good European practice, as well as international practice, to validate common concepts of strategic thinking, and to elaborate shared ideas on quality that will help member universities to reorient their strategic development while strengthening a quality culture in Europe. During the review the university is helped to examine how it defines its medium and long term aims, to look at the external and internal constraints shaping its development, to discuss strategies that will enhance its quality while taking account of these constraints.

The University of Bucharest (UB) is one of the largest and oldest universities in Romania. It was established in 1864 by the Decree of Prince Alexandru Ioan Cuza with the Faculties of Law, Science and Letters. In 2011/2012 the University had 34,459 students studying in a variety of disciplines in 19 faculties, 1,300 academic staff, and 1,100 administrative staff. In terms of research activities, the University of Bucharest has around 50 research institutes, departments and centres and 5 research platforms (Jensen, Noorda, Rousseau, de Carvalho, and Leisyte, 2012).

The evaluation is guided by four key questions, which are based on a 'fitness for (and of) purpose' approach:

a. What is the institution trying to do?
b. How is the institution trying to do it?
c. How does it know it works?
d. How does the institution change in order to improve?

The Team found that UB has a great reputation in the country, among students as well as in the academic com-

munity. Thus the University should be allowed the means and freedom to further improve its performance and continue to serve society and contribute to scientific advance. The team was impressed by the university's performance in education, regularly innovating study programmes and clearly committed to student success. In terms of research, UB has quite a road ahead. Some disciplines have more opportunities than others, but in general the conditions are rosy. It is, therefore, very important to stimulate outstanding young researchers by research grants and international experience and find ways to invest in up-to-date research facilities and "practice".

During the site visits, and while reading the documents, the team got increasingly worried about the bureaucratic impact the legal context has on University of Bucharest. This is an issue that UB cannot alter by itself. It is wished that the Romanian Government should allow institutions in the country more freedom to operate and develop.

The IEP team, considering all the points above, provided the following recommendations to the University of Bucharest to advance its goals:

1. Decentralise academic decision-making in education and research (fitting the university strategy, quality assurance and budgets) should go hand in hand with centralised efficient services in every area (fitting the decentralised needs and purposes).

2. Rethink the balance between quality assurance promotion and ranking ambitions. Broaden the quality assurance of education to learning outcomes and quality culture. Ensure that QA procedures are effectively functioning throughout the whole organisation.

3. Separate more clearly the strategic and the operational functions and responsibilities in the running of the university.
Unify all the centralised support services and build an efficient, simple and transparent administrative apparatus led by a highly professional head of university operations reporting to the Rector and his team.

4. Implement a unified data information system as well as a central university statistical database.

5. Seek strategic cooperation in the Bucharest area and in the country among the leading academic institutions to strengthen the national influence and increase international visibility.

6. Actively promote academic cooperation and communication between different faculties. The Senate should be playing a role in this instead of focusing on legal matters.

7. The University should enhance the role of the Senate in safeguarding academic standards and evaluating new ideas.

8. Encourage qualified scientific staff to work in teams and research centres to enhance productivity and visibility.

RESEARCH METHOD

In this investigation, Utilitarian Evaluation Research Design and Discrepancy Evaluation Model were adopted. Utilitarian evaluation design is a research methodology that satisfies both scientific and ethical requirements for arriving at, and passing value judgments on the way that a programme is planned and executed or implemented for the actualisation of related societal needs (Kpolovie, 2012; Christie and Fliescher, 2011). It is an impartial research design that is fair to all interest groups in its procedures which ensure fair consideration of all groups and sub-groups (Greene, Caracelli and Graham, 2011).

According to Kpolovie (2012) the utilitarian evaluation research design emphasizes that programme evaluation should be used proactively to help improve the programme, as well as used retroactively to judge its merit and worth in meeting the greatest needs of all programme stakeholders. The most important purpose of the utilitarian evaluation design is not to prove the merit and worth of a programme, but to maximally improve the lives of stakeholders through rendering of exceptionally enhanced programme.

Kpolovie and Ololube (2013) specified that the Utilitarian Evaluation Design seeks to provide data-based answers to the following specific questions:

1. What are the needs of society and of sub-groups of the society?
2. What are the needs of the stakeholders in the programme under study?
3. What are the goals of the programme?
4. What should the goals of the programme be?
5. What results were intended by the programme?
6. What results are actually obtained by the programme?
7. What is the discrepancy between the intended and actually achieved results of the programme?
8. Of what usefulness or value are the methods and means adopted by the programme to attain its objectives?
9. What better methods and means should the programme adopt for the accomplishment of its objectives?
10. How well was the programme organized and implemented?
11. What, if anything, about the organization and implementation of the programme should be changed?
12. What, if anything, should be added to the programme to make for greater utility?
13. What aspects of the programme should be allowed to remain without modification?
14. Should the programme be allowed to continue to exist?

The researcher adopted the Discrepancy Evaluation Model (DEM) by Malcom Provus to accomplish the said Utilitarian Evaluation Design. The Provus's Discrepancy
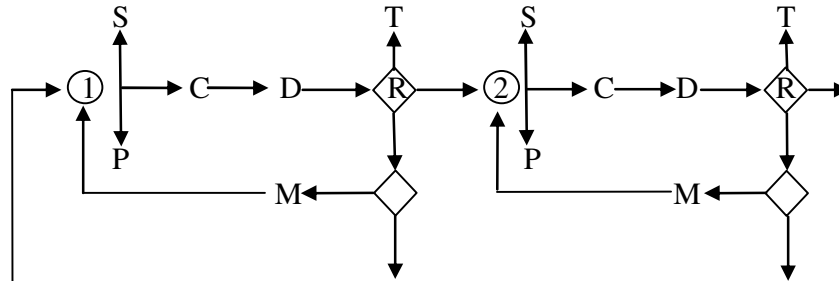
Where:
S = Standards (The general acceptable goals and objectives).
P = Performance (The totality of combinations of resources in actual implementation of the programme).
C = Comparison of the standards and the performance.
D = Discrepancy between performance and standards as accurately as revealed by the comparison.
T = Termination of some aspects of, or the entire programme due to their irrelevance.
M = Modification, alteration and improvement of some aspects of, or the entire programme for its continuity.
R = Retention of the entire programme or part of it as it is.
1,2, etc. = Recycling of the programme in parts or entirely with the elements of modified inputs (Kpolovie, 2010).

Figure 1. Provus's Discrepancy Evaluation Model

Evaluation Model "...fundamentally aims at delineation and determination of the worth of an existing or on-going programme in order to ascertain the aspects that deserve continuation as they are; the aspects that demand modification either by radical change or natural change or both; and the areas that require instant termination". (Kpolovie, 2010: 150)

This study employed Discrepancy Evaluation Model (DEM) that is also known as Summative Evaluation Model which was developed in 1969 by Malcom Provus to provide information for programme assessment and programme improvement. Under the DEM evaluation is defined as the comparison of an Actual Performance to a Desired Standard. Provus (1969) stated that the purpose of evaluation is to determine whether to improve, maintain or terminate a programme. His model is primarily a problem-solving set of procedures that seeks to identify weaknesses (according to selected standards) and to take corrective actions with termination as the option of last resort.

The Discrepancy Evaluation Model can be visualised as an ongoing cycle, as shown in Figure 1.

Population and sample of the study

The population of the study is the entire staff and students of the 49 study centres (including the headquarters) of the National Open University of Nigeria (there are 985 staff and 110,276 students of the National Open University of Nigeria as at the 2012/2013 academic year); 214 senior staff of the National Universities Commission; and 77,315 senior academic staff of the Federal Universities in Nigeria out of which 39,780 are academic staff. The sample of the study consisted of 576 students of the NOUN; 112 senior staff of NOUN; 94 senior staff of National Universities Commission (NUC); and 120 academic staff of 12 randomly drawn Federal Universities in Nigeria, giving a total sample of 902 respondents. The sample was selected by method of random sampling.

The researchers developed a questionnaire titled Utilitarian Evaluation Questionnaire (UEQ) with 10 broad items, each of which had a number of specific statements in strict accordance with the demands of Utilitarian Evaluation Design and Discrepancy Evaluation Model as applicable to the NOUN programme to ensure construct validity. Items 1, 2, and 3 are structured as Very High Extent (VHE), High Extent (HE), Low Extent (LE), Very Low Extent (VLE); item 5 as Allowed, Modified or Discarded; item 9 as Yes/No; and items 4, 6, 7, 8, and 10 are structured as open ended to elicit unrestricted views of the respondents. A measure of the internal consistency of the instrument used for this study was confirmed using the Cronbach's Alpha method and 0.86 was obtained for the entire instrument, while 0.782 was found for the subtest on Implementation of the National Open University of Nigeria; 0.761 for Achievement of the Objectives of NOUN subtest; 0.928 for Adequacy of NOUN subtest; and 0.820 for the subtest on whether the Objectives of the NOUN should be Allowed, Modified or Discarded.

Two different sets of data were collected – primary and secondary data. The primary data consisted of infor-

Table 1. Mean Rating on the Extent of Implementation of the National Open University of Nigeria as Defined

Staff Implementation

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
NOUN	112	21.7946	2.59639	.24534	21.3085	22.2808	17.00	26.00
NUC	94	21.5745	2.64571	.27288	21.0326	22.1164	17.00	26.00
FUN	120	21.9417	2.57426	.23500	21.4763	22.4070	17.00	26.00
Total	326	21.7853	2.59880	.14393	21.5021	22.0684	17.00	26.00

NOUN = National Open University of Nigeria;   NUC = National Universities Commission;
FUN = Federal Universities in Nigeria

mation gathered through questionnaire administered on the staff and students of the National Open University of Nigeria, staff of the National Universities Commission and staff of conventional Federal Universities in Nigeria, interviews, and physical visits to NOUN headquarters and th study centres. The secondary data, on the other hand, were extracted from the records of the National Open University of Nigeria. The research questions were answered using means and standard deviations. To test the null hypotheses formulated for this study, the One-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and t-test statistics were employed, and all the hypotheses tested at the 0.05 significance level.

RESULTS

(a) Answers to Research Questions

Research question one

To what extent has NOUN been implemented as defined?

The result presented in Table 1 shows that the mean rating for the 112 staff of National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) has a mean of 21.7946, standard deviation of 2.59639, and a confidence interval of 21.3085 to 22.2808.   For the National Universities Commission (NUC), the Table 1 indicates an N of 94, mean of 21.5745, standard deviation of 2.64571 and a confidence interval of 21.0326 to 22.1164. The Federal Universities in Nigeria (FUN) has an N of 120, a mean of 21.9417, standard deviation of 2.57426 and a confidence interval of 21.4763 to 21.5021. The entire group of 326 staff has a mean of 21.7853, standard deviation of 2.59880, and confidence interval of 21.5021 to 22.0684. The above results indicate a high extent implementation of the National Open University of Nigeria as defined. In other words, the staffs of NOUN, NUC, and FUN are in consensus about the extent (high extent) to which NOUN has been implemented as defined.

Research question two

To what extent has the National Open University of Nigeria achieved its intended objectives?
    Table 2(a), displays the mean rating of the extent of achievement of the objectives of the NOUN for staff of NOUN, NUC, and FUN. For National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN), N is 112, mean is 22.0536, standard deviation is 2.10036, and the confidence interval of 21.6603 to 22.4468.   The National Universities Commission (NUC), has an N of 94, mean of 21.7660, standard deviation of 2.03953 and a confidence inter of 21.3482 to 22.1837. The N for Federal Universities in Nigeria (FUN) is 120, mean is 22.2250, standard deviation is 2.05170, and a confidence interval is 21.8541 to 22.5959. The entire group of 326 staff has a mean of 22.0337, standard deviation of 2.06705, and confidence interval of 21.8085 to 22.2590.   The above results indicate a high extent achievement of the objectives of the National Open University of Nigeria. In other words, the staff of NOUN, NUC, and FUN are in consensus about the extent (high extent) to which the objectives of the National Open University of Nigeria has been achieved.
    The mean rating of the extent of achievement of the objectives of NOUN for students of the Study Centres of the National Open University of Nigeria at Abuja, Calabar, Jos, Illorin, Mina, Lokoja, Umudike, Enugu, Port Harcourt, Uyo, Lagos, and Ondo, presented in Table 2(b) shows an overall N of 576, mean of 22.1233, standard deviation of 2.09689, and a confidence interval of 21.9517 to 22.2949. From the above, and in tandem with the views of the staff of NOUN, NUC and FUN, the students of the National Open University of Nigeria are of the opinion that the objectives of NOUN have been achieved to a high extent.

Research question three

To what extent are the actual outcomes of the National Open University of Nigeria in terms of student enrolments

Table 2. Mean Rating on the Extent of the Achievement of the Objectives   of National Open University of Nigeria

(a) Staff
Achievement

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
NOUN	112	22.0536	2.10036	.19847	21.6603	22.4468	18.00	26.00
NUC	94	21.7660	2.03953	.21036	21.3482	22.1837	18.00	26.00
FUN	120	22.2250	2.05170	.18729	21.8541	22.5959	18.00	26.00
Total	326	22.0337	2.06705	.11448	21.8085	22.2590	18.00	26.00

(a)Students
Achievement

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
ABJ	50	21.5200	1.94033	.27440	20.9686	22.0714	18.00	25.00
CAL	50	22.8600	1.92735	.27257	22.3123	23.4077	18.00	26.00
JOS	44	22.2500	2.15800	.32533	21.5939	22.9061	18.00	26.00
ILO	46	22.1522	2.05445	.30291	21.5421	22.7623	18.00	26.00
MIN	45	21.9556	2.07754	.30970	21.3314	22.5797	18.00	26.00
LOK	43	22.1163	2.31156	.35251	21.4049	22.8277	18.00	26.00
UMU	50	22.5000	2.10199	.29727	21.9026	23.0974	19.00	26.00
ENU	50	21.7600	2.03600	.28793	21.1814	22.3386	18.00	26.00
PHC	50	21.4000	1.89521	.26802	20.8614	21.9386	18.00	25.00
UYO	50	23.2000	1.79569	.25395	22.6897	23.7103	19.00	26.00
LAG	50	22.0400	2.22197	.31423	21.4085	22.6715	18.00	26.00
OND	48	21.7083	2.10327	.30358	21.0976	22.3191	18.00	26.00
Total	576	22.1233	2.09689	.08737	21.9517	22.2949	18.00	26.00

ABJ = Abuja; **CAL** = Calabar; **JOS** = Jos; **ILO** = Illorin; **MIN** = Mina; **LOK** = Lokoja; **UMU** = Umudike **ENU** = Enugu; **PHC** = Port Harcourt; **UYO** = Uyo; **LAG** = Lagos; **OND** = Ondo

Table 3. Mean and Standard Deviation on the Congruence between Expected and Actual Outcomes of NOUN

Group Statistics (Expected vs Actual Outcomes)

	VAR 00002	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
VAR00001	1	10	111,000.00	58963.26540	18645.82169
	2	10	28,899.80	17763.67463	5617.36714

consistent with the intended outcomes?

Table 3 shows that the mean of 111,000.00 for the expected outcomes is much higher than the mean of 28,899.80 for the actual outcomes. Since N (number of years) is 10 for both the expected and actual outcomes, the result in *Table 3* indicates that the expected enrolments are much larger than the actual enrolments

over the ten year period that the programme evaluation covers.

Research question four

To what extent is the National Open University of Nigeria

Table 4. Mean Rating on the Extent of the Adequacy of the National Open University of Nigeria

(a) Staff
Adequacy

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
NOUN	112	14.2857	2.01985	.19086	13.9075	14.6639	10.00	19.00
NUC	94	14.1596	2.08581	.21513	13.7324	14.5868	10.00	19.00
FUN	120	14.0917	2.03332	.18562	13.7241	14.4592	10.00	19.00
Total	326	14.1779	2.03937	.11295	13.9557	14.4001	10.00	19.00

(b) Students
Adequacy

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
ABJ	50	13.6000	1.86263	.26342	13.0706	14.1294	11.00	17.00
CAL	50	14.4400	2.13006	.30124	13.8346	15.0454	10.00	19.00
JOS	44	14.0000	2.01159	.30326	13.3884	14.6116	11.00	19.00
ILO	46	14.1739	1.99226	.29374	13.5823	14.7655	10.00	18.00
MIN	45	14.0000	1.95402	.29129	13.4129	14.5871	10.00	18.00
LOK	43	14.3953	2.20540	.33632	13.7166	15.0741	10.00	19.00
UMU	50	14.1000	2.06279	.29172	13.5138	14.6862	10.00	18.00
ENU	50	14.5400	2.13054	.30130	13.9345	15.1455	10.00	19.00
PHC	50	14.2400	2.03600	.28793	13.6614	14.8186	10.00	18.00
UYO	50	14.1600	2.10306	.29742	13.5623	14.7577	10.00	18.00
LAG	50	14.4600	2.12094	.29995	13.8572	15.0628	10.00	19.00
OND	48	14.1875	2.02806	.29273	13.5986	14.7764	10.00	18.00
Total	576	14.1927	2.05050	.08544	14.0249	14.3605	10.00	19.00

adequate in addressing the issues for which it was established?

Table 4(a) and Table 4(b) show a low-extent of adequacy of the National Open University of Nigeria in addressing the issues for which it was established. *Table 4(a)*, displays the mean rating for staff of the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) as follows: N is 112, mean is 14.2857, standard deviation is 2.01985, and the confidence interval is 13.9075 to 14.6639. The National Universities Commission (NUC) has an N of 94, mean of 14.1596, standard deviation of 2.08581 and a confidence interval of 13.7324 to 14.5868. For the Federal Universities in Nigeria (FUN) N is 120, mean is 14.0917, standard deviation is 2.03332, and a confidence interval is 13.7241 to 14.4592. The entire group of 326 staff has a mean of 14.1779, standard deviation of 2.03937, and confidence interval of 13.9557 to 14.4001 which point to a low-extent adequacy of the National Open University of Nigeria in addressing the issues for which it was

established.

The mean rating for students of the Study Centres of the National Open University of Nigeria at Abuja, Calabar, Jos, Illorin, Mina, Lokoja, Umudike, Enugu, Port Harcourt, Uyo, Lagos and Ondo, presented in Table 4(b) shows an overall N of 576, mean of 14.1927, standard deviation of 2.05050, and a confidence interval of 14.0249 to 14.3605. These results indicate a low-extent of adequacy of the National Open University of Nigeria in addressing the intervention for which it was established.

Research question five

Which objectives of the National Open University of Nigeria should be (a) continued as they are, (b) modified, or (c) terminated?

Table 5(a) displays the mean rating for staff of NOUN, NUC, and FUN. For the National Open University of

Table 5. Mean Rating on the Objectives of National Open University of Nigeria that should be Modified

(a) Staff
Modification

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
NOUN	112	19.1875	1.11929	.10576	18.9779	19.3971	16.00	21.00
NUC	94	19.1277	1.12865	.11641	18.8965	19.3588	16.00	21.00
FUN	120	19.1167	1.12409	.10262	18.9135	19.3199	16.00	21.00
Total	326	19.1442	1.12075	.06207	19.0221	19.2663	16.00	21.00

(b) Students
Modification

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
ABJ	50	19.1000	1.09265	.15452	18.7895	19.4105	16.00	21.00
CAL	50	19.1400	1.14304	.16165	18.8152	19.4648	16.00	21.00
JOS	44	19.1136	1.14559	.17270	18.7653	19.4619	16.00	21.00
ILO	46	19.3478	1.11987	.16512	19.0153	19.6804	16.00	21.00
MIN	45	19.1111	1.09175	.16275	18.7831	19.4391	16.00	21.00
LOK	43	18.8605	1.18686	.18099	18.4952	19.2257	16.00	21.00
UMU	50	19.3000	1.05463	.14915	19.0003	19.5997	16.00	21.00
ENU	50	19.0800	1.12195	.15867	18.7611	19.3989	16.00	21.00
PHC	50	19.3400	1.08063	.15282	19.0329	19.6471	16.00	21.00
UYO	50	18.9600	1.17734	.16650	18.6254	19.2946	16.00	21.00
LAG	50	19.3600	1.06445	.15054	19.0575	19.6625	16.00	21.00
OND	48	19.1458	1.14835	.16575	18.8124	19.4793	16.00	21.00
Total	576	19.1580	1.11794	.04658	19.0665	19.2495	16.00	21.00

Nigeria (NOUN), N is 112, mean is 19.1875, standard deviation is 1.11929, and the confidence interval is 18.9779 to 19.3971. The National Universities Commission (NUC) has an N of 94, mean of 19.1277, standard deviation of 1.12865 and a confidence interval of 18.8965 to 19.3588. The N for Federal Universities in Nigeria (FUN) is 120, mean is 19.1167, standard deviation is 1.12409, and a confidence interval is 18.9135 to 19.3199. The entire group of 326 staff has a mean of 19.1442, standard deviation of 1.12075, and confidence interval of 19.0221 to 19.2663. These results indicate that the objective of the National Open University of Nigeria should not be discarded, but some objectives would be retained as they are, while others would be modified and continued.

The mean rating for students of the Study Centres of the National Open University of Nigeria at Abuja, Calabar, Jos, Illorin, Mina, Lokoja, Umudike, Enugu, Port Harcourt, Uyo, Lagos, and Ondo, presented in Table 5(b) shows an overall N of 576, mean of 19.1580, standard deviation of 1.11794, and a confidence interval of 19.0665 to 19.2495. From the above, and in consonance with the views of the staff of NOUN, NUC and FUN, the students of the National Open University of Nigeria are of the opinion that no objective of the National Open University of Nigeria should be discarded. But that while some should be continued as they are, others should be modified and continued.

Research question six

Is the National Open University of Nigeria worthy to continue as an Open and Distance Learning (ODL) institution?

As shown in Table 6(a) and Table 6(b) the staff of NOUN, NUC, FNU, and students of NOUN are in agreement that the National Open University of Nigeria is worthy to continue to exist as an Open and Distance Learning institution in Nigeria.

Table 6. Mean Rating on the National Open University of Nigeria Continuing as an Open and Distance Learning Institution

(a)Staff
Continuation

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
OUN	112	1.7946	.40578	.03834	1.7187	1.8706	1.00	2.00
UC	94	1.7660	.42567	.04390	1.6788	1.8531	1.00	2.00
UN	120	1.7417	.43955	.04013	1.6622	1.8211	1.00	2.00
otal	326	1.7669	.42347	.02345	1.7207	1.8130	1.00	2.00

(b) Students
Continuation

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
ABJ	50	1.7800	.41845	.05918	1.6611	1.8989	1.00	2.00
CAL	50	1.7800	.41845	.05918	1.6611	1.8989	1.00	2.00
JOS	44	1.8182	.39015	.05882	1.6996	1.9368	1.00	2.00
ILO	46	1.8261	.38322	.05650	1.7123	1.9399	1.00	2.00
MIN	45	1.7556	.43461	.06479	1.6250	1.8861	1.00	2.00
LOK	43	1.8372	.37354	.05696	1.7222	1.9522	1.00	2.00
UMU	50	1.7800	.41845	.05918	1.6611	1.8989	1.00	2.00
ENU	50	1.8400	.37033	.05237	1.7348	1.9452	1.00	2.00
PHC	50	1.7400	.44309	.06266	1.6141	1.8659	1.00	2.00
UYO	50	1.7600	.43142	.06101	1.6374	1.8826	1.00	2.00
LAG	50	1.7400	.44309	.06266	1.6141	1.8659	1.00	2.00
OND	48	1.8333	.37662	.05436	1.7240	1.9427	1.00	2.00
Total	576	1.7899	.40771	.01699	1.7566	1.8233	1.00	2.00

Table.6(a), shows the mean rating for staff of NOUN, NUC, and FUN with the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) having N = 112, mean = 1.7946, standard deviation = .40578, and the confidence interval in the range of 1.7187 to 1.8706. The National Universities Commission (NUC), has an N of 94, mean of 1.7660, standard deviation of .42567 and a confidence inter of 1.6788 to 1.8531. The N for Federal Universities in Nigeria (FUN) is 120, mean is 1.7417, standard deviation is .43955, and a confidence interval is 1.6622 to 1.8211. The entire group of 326 staff has a mean of 1.7669, standard deviation of .42347, and confidence interval of 1.7207 to 1.8130. The above results indicate that the National Open University of Nigeria is worthy to continue to exist as an Open and Distance Learning (ODL) institution in Nigeria.

The mean rating for students of the Study Centres of the National Open University of Nigeria at Abuja, Calabar, Jos, Ilorin, Mina, Lokoja, Umudike, Enugu, Port Harcourt, Uyo, Lagos, and Ondo, presented in *Table 6(b)* shows an overall N of 576, mean of 1.7899, standard deviation of .40771, and a confidence interval of 1.7566 to 1.8233. From these results, the students of the National Open University of Nigeria are of the opinion that the National Open University of Nigeria is worthy to continue to exist as an Open and Distance Learning (ODL) institution in Nigeria.

Analysis of items soliciting free responses from respondents

Results of structured interviews and physical visits to NOUN sites

The bedrock of utilitarian evaluation design is the adequ-

Table 7. Analysis of items soliciting free responses from respondents

Item 4. What, if anything, should be added to make for greater utility of the National Open University of Nigeria?

(a) Staff

S/No.	Particulars	No. of Respondents
1	More facilitators	41
2	More study programmes	28
3	Availability of internet facility at all study centres	53
4	More funds should be made available	111
5	More public enlightenment	37
6	Provision of larger examination halls	22
7	Prompt dissemination of information to students	29
8	Without response	5

(b) Students

S/No.	Particulars	No. of Respondents
1	More study centres, in all the LGAs of the country	153
2	More study programmes	13
3	Availability of hard copy instructional materials	88
4	Availability of internet facility at all study centres	102
5	Provision of generating sets at the study centres	95
7	Study centres should be on permanent structures of NOUN	11
8	More public enlightenment	57
9	Prompt dissemination of information to students	56
10	Without response	1

Item 6. What other aspect(s) of the National Open University of Nigeria should be allowed to remain without modification?

(a) Staff

S/No.	Particulars	No. of Respondents
1	Admission procedures	44
2	Open nature of admission for all	23
3	All year round admission	28
4	Without response	231

(b) Students

S/No.	Particulars	No. of Respondents
1	Students allowed to study at their own pace	57
2	Students working and studying at the same time	262
3	Without response	207

Item 7. What other aspect(s) of the National Open University of Nigeria should be modified?

(a) Staff

S/No.	Particulars	No. of Respondents
1	Examinations to be conducted in large halls	41
2	E-learning to be improved	55
3	Internet connectivity should be adequate	106
4	Open educational resources to be enhanced	25
5	More specialist Open and Distance Learning staff to be hired	38
6	Without response	11

(b) Students

S/No.	Particulars	No. of Respondents
1	Mode of payment to made more friendly	67
2	Learner support to be enriched	38
3	Internet connectivity should be adequate	154
4	Instructional materials to be made available on time	85
5	Soft copy materials to be provided	56
6	Number of study centres to be increased	160
7	Without response	16

Item 8. What other aspects of the National Open University of Nigeria should be terminated?

(a) Staff

S/No.	Particulars	No. of Respondents
1	Nil	326

(b) Students

S/No.	Particulars	No. of Respondents
1	Nil	576

Item 10. Please, comment freely on the existence or otherwise of the National Open University of Nigeria.

(a) Staff

S/No.	Particulars	No. of Respondents
1	NOUN is the best thing that has happened to education in Nigeria	37
2	The university is a relief to Nigerian workers and so the employers of labour should buy into it	52
4	Adequate funding should be provided by the Nigerian government to enable the university meet its objectives	54
5	A great innovation in Nigerian education system that helps students work and study	19
6	Government to provide adequate funding and appropriate supervision of the university to ensure quality	44
8	For effective e-learning to take place, power supply must be improved upon	56
11	More enlightenment campaign to be carried out to educate the public about the benefits of NOUN	27
12	The supervision of NOUN should be handled by another body, not NUC	20
13	Without response	17

(b) Students

S/No.	Particulars	No. of Respondents
1	NOUN is the best thing that has happened to education in Nigeria	24
2	NOUN should ensure its law graduates go to the Nigeria Law School	28
3	A great innovation in Nigerian education system that helps students work and study	98
4	More study centres should be provided to meet the educational needs of millions of Nigerians in the rural areas	151
5	For effective e-learning to take place, power supply must be improved upon	105
6	Instructional materials to be made available to students on time	61
7	Radio and television programmes should be included to assist the students in the rural areas	31
8	More enlightenment campaign to be carried out to educate the public about the benefits of NOUN	44
9	Without response	34

adequate meeting of the underlying standards of good programmes. Every good programme must effectively reach and serve the beneficiaries' targeted needs at a reasonable cost, and do so better than other available

Table 8. Interview and Visit Responses to Utilitarian Evaluation Questions

S/No.	Questions	Answers
1	Has an appropriate population been determined?	Over 50 million Nigerians seeking education for employment, promotion, knowledge and a voice in the decision making of the country, who hitherto were excluded owing to the carrying capacity of the conventional universities in Nigeria serve as the target population for the NOUN programme.
2	What beneficiary needs should be addressed?	Higher education for all in need, education for life, life-long learning, life-wide education, adult education, mass education, media-based education, self-learning, personalised learning, part-time studies, and much more.
3	What are the available alternative ways to address these needs?	Conventional face-to-face educational institutions: Federal, State and Private Universities in Nigeria; which for now have highly limited placements for candidates seeking tertiary education.
4	What are their comparative merits and costs?	Most of the conventional universities have been around for a long time and have stabilised, their products and costs are already known and accepted.
5	Are plans of services and participation sound?	Plans of services and participation are sound but several challenges abound: poor power supply, epileptic internet connectivity, dearth of qualified Open and Distance Education professionals, poor funding by the Federal Government of Nigeria, etc.
6	Is there adequate provision of facilities, materials, and equipment?	Provision of facilities, materials and equipment is grossly inadequate. Forty-nine Study Centres (located only in the urban areas) are obviously insufficient to cater for over 50 million Nigerians seeking tertiary education. Instructional materials are in short supply, power supply is ridiculous to say the least, internet connectivity is an apology, etc
7	Are the programme staff sufficiently qualified and credible?	Most staff have good academic qualifications: M.Sc.; MA; PhD; etc. There are many professors in different academic areas. But qualified manpower in the area of Open and Distance Education (ODE) is lacking.
8	Have appropriate roles been assigned to the different participants in the programme?	Not all participants have been assigned appropriate roles. Particularly, owing to the dearth of ODE professionals, their dedicated roles are assigned to mediocre, leading to administrative bottlenecks.
9	Are the participants effectively carrying out their assignments?	Those that are appropriately assigned are doing okay. But those without requisite qualification and experience have serious challenges that are impacting negatively on the growth and well being of the programme.
10	Is the programme working?	The programme is working. There have been challenges, like every other novel idea, but the programme is working. Over 7,000 students have been graduated, and about 3,000 waiting to graduate.
11	Should the programme be revised in any way?	More ODE professionals should be recruited, and other staff in the system that are not ODE compliant should be trained for effective service delivery and optimum capacity utilisation.
12	Is the programme effectively reaching all the targeted beneficiaries?	The programme is not effectively reaching all the targeted beneficiaries. Forty-nine Study Centres in few major cities of the country are a distant cry from adequacy and effectiveness in meeting the educational needs of over 50 million Nigerians.
13	Is the programme meeting participants' needs?	The programme is meeting participants' needs but not sufficiently, and not effectively. The dearth of instructional materials, poor power supply, inadequate internet connectivity, and lack of professionals in the area of ODE are severe drawbacks to meeting the participants' needs.
14	Did beneficiaries satisfactorily play their part?	Participants play their parts. They have hungered tirelessly for the kind of educational opportunities NOUN is offering them today. A good many of them are seizing the chance with both hands. Their response, their participation and commitment are enormous.
15	Is the programme better than competing alternatives?	It is expected to be better than the competing alternatives. But it is not yet. In its present state, it is less than the competing alternatives, not able to effectively meet the intervention for which it was established.
16	Is the programme affordable?	The NOUN is affordable. Students take courses at their own paces, at their own time and in line with the financial resources at their disposal.
17	Is the programme sustainable?	NOUN is supposed to be sustainable. It is a programme that has come at the most opportune time to fill the large gap created by the carrying capacity of the conventional universities in Nigeria.
18	Is the programme transportable or applicable to any other similar population?	The programme is transportable and applicable to similar populations. If the conventional universities in the country house schools of ODE, it will go a long way in complementing the reach to the teaming population which the few study centres (49) are inadequate to handle.
19	Is the programme worth the required initial investment?	The programme is worth the initial investment put into it. And indeed much more funding is required to enable the NOUN meet its objectives and timely too.

Table 8. Continue

| 20 | Is the programme serving the greatest good of all or at least the significantly greater majority of the stakeholders? | The programme is operating at grossly below capacity and so cannot be serving a significantly great majority of the stakeholders for now. |
| 21 | Is the programme actually meeting the needs of these people? | The programme is meeting the needs of the few people it is attending to. But a lot more people need to be attended to. And this is the crux of the matter: NOUN is yet to cope with higher education for all in need. |

Table 9. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) on the difference on mean rating of staff of NOUN, NUC, and FNU on the Implementation of   the National Open University of Nigeria as Defined

ANOVA

VAR00001

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	7.122	2	3.561	.526	.592
Within Groups	2187.847	323	6.774		
Total	2194.969	325			

alternative programmes (Kpolovie, 2012). It is for this purpose that Kpolovie and Ololube (2013) posed the under-listed 21 utilitarian evaluation questions to which the researchers, through interviews and physical visits, provided answers: (Table 8)

Testing of hypotheses

Hypothesis One

The staff of the National Universities Commission, staff of the National Open University of Nigeria, and staff of the conventional Federal Universities in Nigeria do not differ significantly in their mean rating of the implementation of the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) as defined.

Table 9 above presents the sum of squares of 7.122, with 2 degrees of freedom, and a mean square of 3.561 for between groups. Within groups has the sum of squares of 2187.847; 323 degrees of freedom, and a mean square of 6.774, while the total has 2194.969 sum of squares and 325 degrees of freedom. The computed F is .526 which is statistically not significant at .05. Thus the null hypothesis that "the staff of the National Universities Commission, staff of the National Open University of Nigeria, and staff of the conventional Federal Universities in Nigeria do not differ significantly in their mean rating of the implementation of the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) as defined" is

retained, $F(2, 323) = .526$, $p > .05$. In other words, there is indeed no significant difference in the mean rating of staff of NOUN, NUC and FNU on the implementation of the National Open University of Nigeria as defined.

Hypothesis Two

(a) The staff of the National Universities Commission, staff of the National Open University of Nigeria, and staff of the conventional Federal Universities in Nigeria do not differ significantly in their mean rating of the achievement of the objectives of NOUN.

Table 10(a) presents the sum of squares of 11.174, with 2 degrees of freedom, and a mean square of 5.587 for between groups. Within groups has the sum of squares of 1377.455; 323 degrees of freedom, and a mean square of 4.265; while the total has 1388.629 sum of squares and 325 degrees of freedom. The computed F is 1.310 which is not statistically significant at .05. Thus the null hypothesis that "the staff of the National Universities Commission, staff of the National Open University of Nigeria, and staff of the conventional Federal Universities in Nigeria do not differ significantly in their mean rating of the achievement of the objectives of the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) as defined" is retained, $F(2, 323) = 1.310$, $p > .05$. In other words, there is no significant difference in the mean rating of staff of NOUN, NUC and FNU on the achieve-

Table 10(a). Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) on the difference on the   mean rating of staff of NOUN, NUC, and FNU on the Achievement of the Objectives of the National Open University of Nigeria.

ANOVA

VAR00001

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	11.174	2	5.587	1.310	.271
Within Groups	1377.455	323	4.265		
Total	1388.629	325			

Table 10(b). Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) on the difference on the mean rating of students of NOUN on the Achievement of the Objectives of the National Open University of Nigeria.

ANOVA

VAR00001

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	153.777	11	13.980	3.321	.127
Within Groups	2374.471	564	4.210		
Total	2528.248	575			

Table 11. Independent t-test on the Difference between Actual and Expected Outcomes of the National Open University of Nigeria

Independent T-Test on Expected vs Actual Outcomes

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances						
		F	Sig.	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
VAR00001	Equal variances assumed	13.301	.002	4.216	18	.001	82100.20000	19473.60984
	Equal variances not assumed			4.216	10.620	.002	82100.20000	19473.60984

ment of the objectives of the National Open University of Nigeria.

(b)   The students of the Study Centres of the National Open University of Nigeria at Abuja, Calabar, Jos, Illorin, Mina, Lokoja, Umudike, Enugu, Port Harcourt, Uyo, Lagos, and Ondo, do not differ significantly in their mean rating of the achievement of the objectives of NOUN.

Table 4.10(b) above presents the sum of squares of 153.777, with 11 degrees of freedom, and a mean square of 13.980 for between groups. Within groups has the sum of squares of 2374.471, with 564 degrees of freedom, and a mean square of 4.210, while the total has 2528.248 sum of squares and 575 degrees of freedom. The computed F is 3.321 which is statistically significant at .05. Thus the null hypothesis that "the students of the

Study Centres of the National Open University of Nigeria at Abuja, Calabar, Jos, Illorin, Mina, Lokoja, Umudike, Enugu, Port Harcourt, Uyo, Lagos, and Ondo, do not differ significantly in their mean rating of the achievement of the objectives of NOUN" is retained, $F(11, 564) = 3.321$, $p > .05$. In other words, there is in actual fact, no statistically significant difference in the mean rating of students of the Study Centres of NOUN, in the achievement of the objectives of the National Open University of Nigeria.

Hypothesis three

There is no significant difference between the actual and expected outcomes of the National Open University of

Table 12(a). Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) on the difference on the mean rating of staff of NOUN, NUC, and FNU on the Adequacy of the National Open University of Nigeria in addressing the issues for which it was established.

ANOVA

VAR00001

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	2.226	2	1.113	.266	.766
Within Groups	1349.455	323	4.178		
Total	1351.681	325			

Table 12(b). Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) on the difference on the mean rating of students of NOUN on the Adequacy of the National Open University of Nigeria in addressing the issues for which it was established.

ANOVA

VAR00001

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	35.909	11	3.264	.773	.667
Within Groups	2381.700	564	4.223		
Total	2417.609	575			

Nigeria.

Table 11 shows that Levene's Test for Equality of Variances not assumed (F) is 13.301, p value of .002 (Sig.), t ratio of 4.216, degrees of freedom of 10.620 (df), p value of .002 (Sig. for 2-tailed), Mean Difference of 82100.20000, and Standard Error Difference of 19473.60984. Thus the null hypothesis that "there is no significant difference between the actual and expected outcomes of the National Open University of Nigeria" is rejected as $t(10.620) = 4.216$, $p < .05$, 2-tailed. In other words, there is a statistically significant disparity or discrepancy between the expected and actual outcomes of the NOUN.

Hypothesis four

(a) The staff of the National Universities Commission, staff of the National Open University of Nigeria, and staff of the conventional Federal Universities in Nigeria do not differ significantly in their mean rating of the adequacy of NOUN in addressing the issues for which it was established.

Table 12(a) presents the sum of squares of 2.226, with 2 degrees of freedom, and a mean square of 1.113 for between groups. Within groups has the sum of squares of 1349.455; 323 degrees of freedom, and a mean square of 4.178; while the total has 1351.681 sum of squares and 325 degrees of freedom. The computed F is .266 which is statistically not significant at .05. Thus the null hypothesis that "the staff of the National

Universities Commission, staff of the National Open University of Nigeria, and staff of the conventional Federal Universities in Nigeria do not differ significantly in their mean rating of the adequacy of NOUN in addressing the issues for which it was established" is retained, $F(2, 323) = 0.266$, $p > .05$. In other words, there is no significant difference in the mean rating of staff of NOUN, NUC and FNU on the adequacy of the National Open University of Nigeria in addressing the issues for which it was established.

(b)   The students of the Study Centres of the National Open University of Nigeria at Abuja, Calabar, Jos, Illorin, Mina, Lokoja, Umudike, Enugu, Port Harcourt, Uyo, Lagos, and Ondo, do not differ significantly in their mean rating of the adequacy of NOUN in addressing the issues for which it was established.

Table 12(b) above presents the sum of squares of 35.909, with 11 degrees of freedom, and a mean square of 3.264 for between groups. Within groups has the sum of squares of 2381.700, with 564 degrees of freedom, and a mean square of 4.223, while the total has 2417.609 sum of squares and 575 degrees of freedom. The computed F is 0.773 which is not statistically significant at .05. Thus the null hypothesis that "the students of the Study Centres of the National Open University of Nigeria at Abuja, Calabar, Jos, Illorin, Mina, Lokoja, Umudike, Enugu, Port Harcourt, Uyo, Lagos, and Ondo, do not differ significantly in their mean rating of the adequacy of NOUN in addressing the issues for which it was established" is retained, $F(11, 564) = 0.773$, $p > .05$. In other words, there is no significant difference in the mean

Table 13(a). Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) on the difference on the mean rating of staff of NOUN, NUC, and FNU on the Objectives of the National Open University of Nigeria that should be continued as they are, modified and continued, or discarded entirely.

ANOVA

VAR00001

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.327	2	.163	.129	.879
Within Groups	407.897	323	1.263		
Total	408.224	325			

Table 13(b). Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) on the difference on the mean rating of students of NOUN on the Objectives of the National Open University of Nigeria that should be continued as they are, modified and continued, or discarded entirely.

ANOVA

VAR00001

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	12.810	11	1.165	.931	.510
Within Groups	705.813	564	1.251		
Total	718.623	575			

rating of students of the Study Centres of NOUN, in the adequacy of National Open University of Nigeria in addressing the intervention for which it was established.

Hypothesis five

(a) The staff of the National Universities Commission, staff of the National Open University of Nigeria, and staff of the conventional Federal Universities in Nigeria do not differ significantly in their mean rating of the objectives of the National Open University of Nigeria that should be (i) continued as they are, (ii) modified and continued, (iii) discarded in their entirety.

Table 13(a) presents the sum of squares of .327, with 2 degrees of freedom, and a mean square of .163 for between groups. Within groups has the sum of squares of 407.897; 323 degrees of freedom, and a mean square of 1.263; while the total has 408.224 sum of squares and 325 degrees of freedom. The computed F is 0.129 which is not statistically significant at .05.   Thus the null hypothesis that "the staff of the National Universities Commission, staff of the National Open University of Nigeria, and staff of the conventional Federal Universities in Nigeria do not differ significantly in their mean rating of the objectives of the National Open University of Nigeria that should be   (i) continued as they are,   (ii) modified and continued, (iii) discarded in their entirety" is retained, $F_{(2, 323)} = 0.129$, $p > .05$. In other words, there is no significant difference in the mean rating of staff of NOUN,

NUC and FNU on the objectives of the National Open University of Nigeria that should be (i) continued as they are, (ii) modified and continued, (iii) discarded in their entirety.

(b) The students of the Study Centres of the National Open University of Nigeria at Abuja, Calabar, Jos, Illorin, Mina, Lokoja, Umudike, Enugu, Port Harcourt, Uyo, Lagos, and Ondo, do not differ significantly in their mean rating of the objectives of the National Open University of Nigeria that should be (i) continued as they are, (ii) modified and continued, (iii) discarded in their entirety.

Table 13(b) above presents the sum of squares of 12.810, with 11 degrees of freedom, and a mean square of 1.165 for between groups. Within groups has the sum of squares of 705.813, with 564 degrees of freedom, and a mean square of 1.251, while the total has 718.623 sum of squares and 575 degrees of freedom. The computed F is 0.931 which is statistically not significant at .05. Thus the null hypothesis that "the students of the Study Centres of the National Open University of Nigeria at Abuja, Calabar, Jos, Illorin, Mina, Lokoja, Umudike, Enugu, Port Harcourt, Uyo, Lagos, and Ondo, do not differ significantly in their mean rating of the objectives of the National Open University of Nigeria that should be (i) continued as they are, (ii) modified and continued, (iii) discarded in their entirety" is not rejected, $F_{(2, 564)} = 0.931$, $p > .05$. In other words, there is no significant difference in the mean rating of students of the Study Centres of NOUN on the objectives of the National Open University of Nigeria that should be (i) continued as they

Table 14(a). Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) on the difference on the mean rating of staff of NOUN, NUC, and FNU on the worthiness of the National Open University of Nigeria as an Open and Distance Learning institution.

ANOVA

Continuation

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.163	2	.081	.452	.637
Within Groups	58.120	323	.180		
Total	58.282	325			

Table 14(b). Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) on the difference on the mean rating of students of NOUN on the worthiness of the National Open University of Nigeria as an Open and Distance Learning institution.

ANOVA

Continuation

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.769	11	.070	.416	.949
Within Groups	94.812	564	.168		
Total	95.582	575			

are, (ii) modified and continued, (iii) discarded in their entirety.

Hypothesis six

(a) The staff of the National Universities Commission, staff of the National Open University of Nigeria, and staff of the conventional Federal Universities in Nigeria do not differ significantly in their mean rating of the worthiness of NOUN as an Open and Distance Learning institution.

Table 14(a) presents the sum of squares of .163, with 2 degrees of freedom, and a mean square of .081 for between groups. Within groups has the sum of squares of 58.120; 323 degrees of freedom, and a mean square of .180, while the total has 58.282 sum of squares and 325 degrees of freedom. The computed F is .452 which is not statistically significant at .05. Thus the null hypothesis that "the staff of the National Universities Commission, staff of the National Open University of Nigeria, and staff of the conventional Federal Universities in Nigeria do not differ significantly in their mean rating of the worthiness of NOUN to continue as an Open and Distance Learning institution" is rejected, $F_{(2, 323)}$ = .452, p > .05. In other words, there is no significant difference in the mean rating of staff of NOUN, NUC and FNU on the worthiness of the National Open University of Nigeria to continue as an Open and Distance Learning institution.
(b) The students of the Study Centres of the National Open University of Nigeria at Abuja, Calabar, Jos, Illorin,

Mina, Lokoja, Umudike, Enugu, Port Harcourt, Uyo, Lagos, and Ondo, do not differ significantly in their mean rating of the worthiness of NOUN.

Table 14(b) above presents the sum of squares of .769 with 11 degrees of freedom, and a mean square of .070 for between groups. Within groups has the sum of squares of 94.812, with 564 degrees of freedom, and a mean square of .168, while the total has 95.582 sum of squares and 575 degrees of freedom. The computed F is 0.416 which is not statistically significant at .05. Thus the null hypothesis that "the students of the Study Centres of the National Open University of Nigeria at Abuja, Calabar, Jos, Illorin, Mina, Lokoja, Umudike, Enugu, Port Harcourt, Uyo, Lagos, and Ondo, do not differ significantly in their mean rating of the worthiness of NOUN to continue as an Open and Distance Learning institution" is rejected, $F_{(11, 564)}$ = 0.416, p > .05. In other words, there is no significant difference in the mean rating of students of the Study Centres of NOUN on the worthiness of NOUN to continue as an Open and Distance Learning institution.

DISCUSSION

Implementation of the National Open University of Nigeria as defined

The results indicated a high-extent implementation of NOUN as defined. Prof. Tenebe, the second Vice Chancellor of NOUN, agrees with the high extent imple-

mentation of the National Open University of Nigeria when, during the graduation ceremony of 7,220 students of NOUN, he described the National Open University of Nigeria as the only University in Nigeria, capable of providing unlimited access to tertiary education with no capacity limit (Campus Portal Nigeria, 2013). He announced that NOUN could admit thousands or millions of qualified candidates, adding that the only limitation of the NOUN was funding; and that if NOUN was adequately funded, it would move faster to accomplish its set vision, mission, and objectives.

Oral interviews conducted with some very senior staff of NOUN revealed some challenges that were hiccups to the effective implementation of the National Open University of Nigeria. They include limited number of computer teachers, use of school mangers without ODL training, mean and unworthy treatment of teachers and insufficient facilities for students, poor power supply, low tele-density, inadequate funding, and poor public image.

The use of persons not trained on Open and Distance Learning matters to run as managers of study centres and student support services departments is a major challenge to effective implementation of NOUN. Borisade (2007) revealed outrageous ineffectiveness of managers of study centres in the areas of manager-staff, manager-student, and manager-community relationships. The effective management of ODL programmes must be left with ODL specialist for optimum results. This relates to the National Universities Commission (NUC) supervising the National Open University of Nigeria - the tendency is for NOUN to be treated like the conventional universities in Nigeria. The implication is that of comparing oranges with bananas, and the outcome is grossly absurd.

Linked to inexperienced ODL managers is the shabby treatments meted out to the lecturers by centre managers, leading to some of the lecturers pursuing monetary benefits, to the detriment of what the students should achieve. But what does one expect in a nation where counsellors, house of assembly members (national and state), and senators earn much more than the teachers/lecturers that trained them. According to Obilor (2012), Nigerian students can only achieve optimally if teachers are given their rightful places: treated with respect and honour as the geese that lay the golden eggs.

Another challenge was that of public perception of the National Open University of Nigeria. Entrance examinations were not conducted for admission into NOUN. The criteria for admission of students into NOUN were not the same as those of conventional institutions in the country as stipulated by the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB) or National Universities Commission (NUC). This casts doubts on the credibility of the expected products of the National Open University of Nigeria leading to poor public image.

Power supply all over the country is outrageously erratic. Successful ODL cannot be assured without the use of communication technologies (internet services, radio, television, computers, etc.). Incessant power outages and sometimes total absence of power supply create problems for the effective integration of most instructional materials in the delivery of ODL. Access to telecommunication tools such as the internet is at a very low ebb. Internet connectivity in Nigeria and access to other communication services are ridiculous to say the least, and yet service charges are too high. These make the integration of necessary online resources (internet, email, etc.) into open and distance learning in Nigeria very difficult, and sometimes impossible.

Inadequate funding of the National Open University of Nigeria resulting from poor budgetary allocations to the education sector by the Federal Government of Nigeria was another impediment to effective implementation of NOUN. The funding of education in Nigeria has nothing to write home about (Onifade, 2003; Kpolovie and Obilor, 2013). Even with the minimal funding, financial mismanagement in the institution is not left out.

Achievement of the objectives of the National Open University of Nigeria

The result indicated that the objectives of the National Open University of Nigeria have been achieved to a high extent. The National Open University of Nigeria was established to realize the following objectives:
a) ensure equity and equality of opportunities in education but specifically in university education;
b) provide a wider access to education generally but specifically university education in Nigeria;
c) enhance Education for All (EFA) and lifelong learning;
d) ensure the entrenchment of a global culture;
e) provide educational resources via an intensive use of Information and Communication Technology;
f) provide flexible and qualitative education; and
g) reduce the cost, inconvenience and hassles of education delivery (FGN, 2004).

According to Jegede (2004), the National Open University of Nigeria in realizing its set objectives, is providing education that is accessible to people who cannot attend regular classes due to social, structural or personal situations; flexible education that allows study at any time and place; specialized training for professionals; efficient academic assessments and tutor interactions; excellent learner support services; and good quality learning materials that are provided with the interest of the learners as the focus, and giving support to ensure that learners have a good chance of successful completion of their programmes.

The modest achievements recorded by NOUN have won it international recognition. The Commonwealth established a Regional Training and Development Institute for Open and Distance Learning at NOUN's

headquarters in Lagos, which has organised workshops on e-learning for Ghana, Kenya and Tanzania. The university also hosted the African Council for Distance Learning with a view to consolidating the achievements recorded by some African countries in this area of tertiary education.

Actual versus expected outcomes of the National Open University of Nigeria

The results showed that there is a significant discrepancy between what NOUN intended to accomplish and what it actually achieved. The student enrolment of the National Open University of Nigeria over the ten years period of its existence is a far cry from the expected outcome of widening the scope of beneficiaries of university education, thus reaching the hitherto unreachable and ensuring that nobody interested in, and capable of having university education, is left out; and reducing the pressure on university placement in the conventional universities in the country. Although 49 Study Centres is grossly inadequate to support higher education for all in need, visits to the centres showed that they are operating at below capacity. According to Jegede (2004), one of the challenges confronting the institution was the failure of the country's populace, even the elite, to embrace the idea of an open university. Many people in this country still don't understand the concept of open and distance learning, even at the highest level, stressing that people seem to have a wrong notion of NOUN and still hold old and jaded ideas about its concept and quality of its products. This view is not new as according to Walter Perry, the first Vice Chancellor of the Open University of United Kingdom, "scepticism garnished with ridicule and hostility was the bane of distance education universities the world over" (Young 1994). Peat and Helland (2002) have also called to question the quality of higher education through distance education.

However, empirical evidences abound that there is no significant difference between learning outcomes that can be attained at traditional institutions versus distance learning (Verduin and Clark 1991). According to Gagne and Shepherd (2001), students taking distance learning courses perform as well as students taking courses via traditional methods. More often than not, perception of the distance learning system is standing on the way of its acceptability. Increased public enlightenment is therefore, very imperative.

Adequacy of the National Open University of Nigeria in addressing the intervention for which it was established

The results indicated a low-extent adequacy of the National Open University of Nigeria in realising the intervention for which it was established. The indices considered in adequacy of NOUN in this investigation were 'Number of Study Centres; Location of Study Centres; Availability of Instructional Materials; Staffing; Funding; Power Supply; and Internet Connectivity'. The number and location of study centres are dismal, to say the least. How could 49 study centres located in the townships (rather than in the rural areas where the ODL is earnestly needed) be adequate for a population of over 150 million people with a demography that is predominantly school age and working class.

Funding is inadequate, not only in NOUN but in the entire education sector of the country. As indicated by Onifade (2003), and Kpolovie and Obilor (2013), funding of education in Nigeria is nothing to write home about. Yet the greatest causes of woe in the National Open University of Nigeria are poor power supply and grossly epileptic internet connectivity. Open and Distance Learning (ODL) is predominantly an e-learning programme, and adequate power supply with appropriate internet connectivity are the main drivers. But in Nigeria these two facilities are either non-existent or unacceptably poor. Access to unhindered use of ICT tools such as telephone and internet has been very low in Nigeria (Asogwa, 2007). Despite the advent of the Global System of Mobile (GSM) telecommunication, the use of ICT resources for educational purposes in general and Open and Distance Learning in particular is still very low in Nigeria.

Worthiness of the National Open University of Nigeria to continue to exist as an Open and Distance Learning (ODL) Institution

The results also showed that the National Open University of Nigeria is worthy to continue to exist as an Open and Distance Learning (ODL) institution in Nigeria. In efforts to meet the new and changing demands for education and training, open and distance learning may be seen as an approach that is at least complementary and under certain circumstances, an appropriate substitute for the face-to-face methods that still dominate most educational systems (UNESCO, 2002). The worthiness of the National Open University of Nigeria can be seen in terms of access, social enhancement, economic growth, and poverty reduction.

CONCLUSION

The provision of quality education to millions of Nigerians has been one of the major challenges facing the people and government of Nigeria. Experiences, both nationally and internationally, have shown that conventional education is extremely hard pressed to meet the demands of today's colossal demand for education,

especially for developing countries like Nigeria (Jimoh, 2013). The "carrying capacity" of universities in Nigeria imposes limitations to access to university education. In the efforts to meet the new and changing demands for education and training, open and distance learning may be seen as an approach that is at least complementary and under certain circumstances, an appropriate substitute for the face-to-face methods that still dominate most educational systems (UNESCO, 2002). Thus the unsatisfied demand for education versus the actual supply of educational services has contributed to the acceptance, implementation and growth of distance education programmes in Nigeria as a means to bridge the gap between demand and supply (Aderinoye and Ojokheta, 2004). This has further led to the establishment, in 1983, of the National Open University of Nigeria.

This study has shown that the National Open University of Nigeria has been implemented as defined to an extent, though not without serious challenges. The objectives of NOUN have been achieved to a high extent, and the National Open University of Nigeria is worthy of existence as an Open and Distance learning institution in Nigeria. However, the actual and expected outcomes of NOUN are significantly at variance with each other. Also, the National Open University of Nigeria is adequate to a low extent in addressing the intervention for which it was established.

On the whole, the numerous benefits of Open and Distance Learning may elude Nigeria and Nigerians if proper funding and supervision are not provided for the National Open University of Nigeria. One sure way to achieve these is the setting up of a National Open and Distance Education Commission (NODEC) to monitor, supervise and follow-up on the release, and judicious utilization of allocated funds.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made to improve the effectiveness of the National Open University of Nigeria in actualising the purpose of its establishment:
1. Establishment of a National Open and Distance Education Commission (NODEC) saddled with the responsibilities of monitoring, supervising, and following-up on the judicious application of allocated funds.
2. Power supply in the country should be improved and areas not linked to the national power source should be linked. Open and Distance Learning is an illusion in any place with the type of power supply Nigeria has. The National Open University of Nigeria cannot reach its bloom with the present state of power supply that is regularly irregular.

3. Internet connectivity must be improved upon if the National Open University of Nigeria is to realise its objective of access to quality education for all.
4. The number of study centres should be increased and equipped. A minimum of 150 study centres are advocated and such additional centres should be located in the hinterland to meet the objective of education for all in need.
5. Management of ODL facilities and programmes should be by trained ODL personnel. Open and Distance Learning is a special education programme and should be managed by ODL specialists.
6. The National Open University of Nigeria should have increased funding. The minimum recommended by UNESCO to education is 26% of a nation's budget. The highest budgetary allocation to education in Nigeria was 17.59% in 1997. In 2013 it is 8.70%. For ODL to thrive in Nigeria, improved funding is not negotiable.
7. Instructional materials should be timely developed and delivered in right quantities and to the right locations.
8. There should be better and more reaching public awareness of NOUN. The benefits of NOUN should be "put on the table" for all to see and appreciate. The result will be improved acceptance of NOUN as an Open and Distance Education institution, leading to higher student enrolment.
9. Nigeria and other African countries should emulate the Institutional Evaluation Programme (IEP), an independent membership service of the European University Association (EUA) that offers support through evaluation of the participating institutions in the continuing development of strategic management and internal quality culture. This will lead to collaboration among member countries and improved quality of their products.
10. There should be cross-border collaboration between NOUN and other Open Universities across the world. This will lead to exchange of ideas and facilities, and very importantly, quality enhancement and control for the National Open University of Nigeria.

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