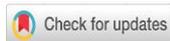# Students' Assessment of Open Distance Learning Programs and Services in Nigeria: A Comparative Description of Three Selected Distance Learning Institutions

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Sections Info	ABSTRACT
	This study reported students' assessment of open and distance learning programs and services vis-à-vis teaching and learning experience, educational resources, technical support service, and infrastructural facilities in ODL institutions in Nigeria**.** The study adopted a descriptive survey research design and the participants for the study comprised of 719 students randomly drawn from three purposively selected ODL institutions in Nigeria. A semi-structured questionnaire was used as an instrument for the study. Quantitative data generated from the survey were analyzed using frequency counts, percentages, and analysis of variance (ANOVA) while the qualitative data was content analyzed. The result of the study showed that students enroll in open and distance learning programs majorly as a result of the flexibility in learning. While students relatively rate their teaching & learning experience, educational resources, and available infrastructural facilities in their universities good, they, however, rate technical support services provided in the ODL institutions as being poor. A comparative analysis of the students' assessment in the three institutions revealed that there exists a statistically significant difference in teaching & learning experiences, available educational resources, technical support services, and infrastructural facilities in the institutions. Based on the findings of the study, some recommendations were made.

INTRODUCTION

The significant role of education in the national development of any nation cannot be overemphasized. Education plays a pivotal role in economic and technological advancement and serves as a tool for elevating people from illiteracy and poverty. It also helps in developing resilient people who are culturally and socially tolerant and exercise ethical and moral considerations in both global and national affairs with a community spirit. The use of education as a catalyst for socio-economic development needs no debate as no meaningful development can be achieved in any country without a reasonable investment in human capital development, and the only means to it is education (Jegede, 2016). However, providing access to quality education to people has remained a severe struggle worldwide most especially in developing countries (Nigeria inclusive) with researchers, policymakers, and governments making frantic efforts at widening access and increasing participation in education acquisition most especially, higher education. The vital role of higher education in a nation's development is inevitable (Jimoh, 2013; Ahmadi, 2017).

Globally, the demand for education has increased for decade just the same way enrolment has continued to grow due to several factors including global growth in population, international efforts encouraging educational participation like the SDGs,

and governments' educational policies. Also, there is the growing belief that education is essential for the knowledge economy which characterized the 21st century. Interestingly, it has been observed that tertiary education has been increasing especially in the past two decades as students' persistence to higher levels of education has witnessed a tremendous increase and this has led to an unprecedented increase in demand for higher education in countries. This global growth in demand for tertiary education has put pressure on educational providers to keep pace with the growing demand as more people want access to university education (Qayyum & Zawacki-Richter, 2019).

In Africa, the major challenge facing higher education provision is access and quality (Mohamedbhai, 2015). While Africa has witnessed significant growth in tertiary education enrolment, the continent still has the lowest participation rate in tertiary education in the world. The increase in tertiary enrolment is yet seen as insufficient to meet the growing demand for higher education due to exponential growth in population, economic growth, improved recruitment in primary and secondary school, and governments' diversification of the economy from primary sector activities towards manufacturing and service sectors. All these factors serve as pressure on countries in the continent to expand further access to higher education (Darvas, Bawany, Darvas, Gao, & Shen, 2017).

Nigeria with a population estimated at over 200 million, providing quality education for this teeming population through conventional education is somewhat unachievable as the traditional schools are perceived to be hard-pressed to meet the demands of today's socio-educational milieu. Also, there is a limitation of spaces in the conventional education system which impose restrictions on access to the teeming population who desire access to education, most especially tertiary education. For instance, statistics from the National Bureau of Statistics and the Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB) shows that between 2010 and 2015, of the 10 million candidates that apply for entry into Nigerian tertiary institutions, it's only 26% that eventually gained admission (Kazeem, 2017). Also, the conventional universities provide no room for those working and desire to upgrade their knowledge and those geographically disadvantaged to attend regular university. Furthermore, the conventional university system has been observed to be too costly to establish and maintain and not elastic and pliant enough. All these factors provide the impetus for agitation for equal access to university education through open distance education which is seen as an easy way to meet the demand for higher education based on its less dependence on physical infrastructure and cost to run (Qayyum & Zawacki-Richter, 2019).

Open and distance learning refers to any learning activities whether formal, informal, or non-formal that is facilitated through the use of information and communication technologies in a way that the physical contacts between learner and instructor are lessened, and there is an increase in interactivity and communication among learners, learning sources and the facilitators. In other words, open and distance learning emphasizes higher dimensions of openness and flexibility in learning in a manner that either all or most of the educational processes are done in a manner that the instructor is away from the learner and learning take place through a multiplicity of both print and online media (Ghosh et al., 2012). UNESCO (2002), defines open and distance learning as educational approaches that focus on opening access to learning and training

provision, freeing learners from the burden placed by time and location, and offering flexible learning opportunities to individuals and groups of learners. The difference between the traditional education system and ODL is basically on the separation of teacher and learner for most, if not all, of the educational processes, and the distance created is mediated by the use of various technologies and pedagogies (Gaskell, 2017).

Open and distance learning has been well embraced in Nigeria by both the government and individuals for the potentials inherent in it to provide educational opportunities at reduced costs and the fact that it can provide high quality, flexible education to those who are constrained by work, family responsibility, remote location and disability to attend regular educational establishments (Ajadi et al., 2008; Ogili, 2008). Through the ODL platform, many individuals' prospect of employability and their capacity to contribute to the country's human resource capital with the attendant benefit on the economic development of the country has been dramatically enhanced (Aderinoye & Ojokheta, 2004). However, despite the regulatory role being played by the National University Commission at regulating programs and services and accrediting universities for the open and distance learning programs in line with the provisions of the "Guidelines for Open and Distance Learning in Nigerian Universities", it has been observed that the ODL programs are marred by issues ranging from lack of equipment and infrastructure, instructional concerns and poor technical support, inadequate feedback and poor student-instructor contact, alienation and isolation among many other challenges confronting students under the ODL mode (National Universities Commission, n.d.; Yusuf, 2006; Ikegulu & Oranusi, 2014; Musingafi et al., 2015; Soetan et al., 2015; Anaekwe, & Nnaka, 2017; Khumalo, 2018). The issues often prompt many problems for learners and chief among them is the high rate of attrition and late program completion among the students (Adewale & Inegbedion, 2008).

The Distance Learning Centres of the University of Ibadan and the Ladoke Akintola University of Technology, Ogbomoso (dual-mode institutions owned by Federal and State government respectively), and the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN, a single-mode institution) are among the approved distance learning institutions in the country. However, adequacy of resources and institutional capacity to effectively provide qualitative programs to students based on the mission and vision of ODL delivery in Nigeria are yet to be established (Reju & Jita, 2018). While several studies conducted in the area of ODL in Nigeria has focused more on the impact of ODL programs on its beneficiaries (Aderinoye & Ojokheta, 2004; Olakulehin, 2008; Ofoha, 2012; Abimbola et al., 2015) and in some instances, utilization of certain tools to enhance learning among ODL students (Okonkwo, 2012; Reju & Jita, 2018), no study known to the researchers have attempted a holistic assessment of programs and services vis-à-vis teaching and learning experience, educational resources, technical support service and infrastructural facilities most especially from students' perspective who are at the receiving end of the ODL programs and services. This study, therefore, makes an exploratory attempt to assess and make a comparative description of programs and services offered by the three selected ODL institutions in Nigeria from students' perspectives with a view of understanding the learning needs and difficulties students are facing to improve service delivery to them.

Statement of the Problem

Open distance learning has been given much prominence in Nigeria as a result of providing educational opportunities to underserved population and a means to improve both the quantity and quality of education of the country. Despite the impressive impact of ODL programs on its beneficiaries and the resultant effects on the nation's human capital development, ODL programs are still fundamentally marred by issues that may erode people's confidence in the quality of the programs and hinder the success of the open distance learning program. Hence, understanding the critical framework upon which ODL systems work in the country notably, as regard adequacy of resources and institutional capacity to effectively provide qualitative programs to students becomes imperative. While there have been several studies on ODL programs in the country, there exists no assessment of ODL programs and services from students' perspectives and this is the gap that the current study intends to fill.

Research Questions

The study is guided with the following research questions;
1. What is the reason for students' enrolment in ODL programs?
2. What is the students' assessment of the teaching & learning experience, educational resources, technical support service, and infrastructural facilities in ODL institutions?
3. What are the significant challenges facing ODL students?
4. What is the level of Students' General satisfaction with ODL programs and services?
5. What are the possible suggestion for programs and services improvement in ODL institutions?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested in the study

$H0_1$: There is no significant difference in teaching & learning experience among ODL students in UIDLC, NOUN, and LODLC.

$H0_2$: There is no significant difference in educational resources available in UIDLC, NOUN, and LODLC.

$H0_3$: There is no significant difference in technical support services provided in UIDLC, NOUN, and LODLC.

$H0_4$: There is no significant difference in infrastructure available between UIDLC, NOUN, and LODLC.

RESEARCH METHOD

The study employed a descriptive survey research design to have a clear understanding and basis of a description of the subject-matter under investigation. The population of the study consists of all learners enrolled in open and distance learning programs in accredited ODL-providing universities in the Southwestern region of Nigeria. The sample size of the study comprised of 719 students randomly drawn from three purposively selected ODL institutions (University of Ibadan Distance Learning Centre = 271, National Open University of Nigeria, Ibadan Study Centre = 233 and Ladoke

Akintola University of Technology Open and Distance Learning Centre = 215). The three institutions were purposefully selected based on having similar characteristics known to other ODL institutions in the country and because of the proximity to the researchers. The three institutions are located in Oyo, State, Southwest, Nigeria. A self-completion semi-structured questionnaire tagged "Student's Assessment of Open and Distance Learning Programmes and Services Questionnaire" was used as an instrument for the study. The questionnaire was validated by three experts in Open Distance Education, Measurement and Evaluation, and Adult Education. The instrument was pilot-tested among fifty (50) ODL students and 0.71 Cronbach coefficient obtained and considered reliable for the study. The questionnaire was personally administered with the help of two research assistants to the students during their interactive sessions in the institutions. Data generated from the survey were analyzed using a mixed-method approach. Quantitative data collected was analyzed using frequency counts, percentages, and analysis of variance (ANOVA) while the qualitative data was content analyzed. The ANOVA was tested at a 0.05 level of significance.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

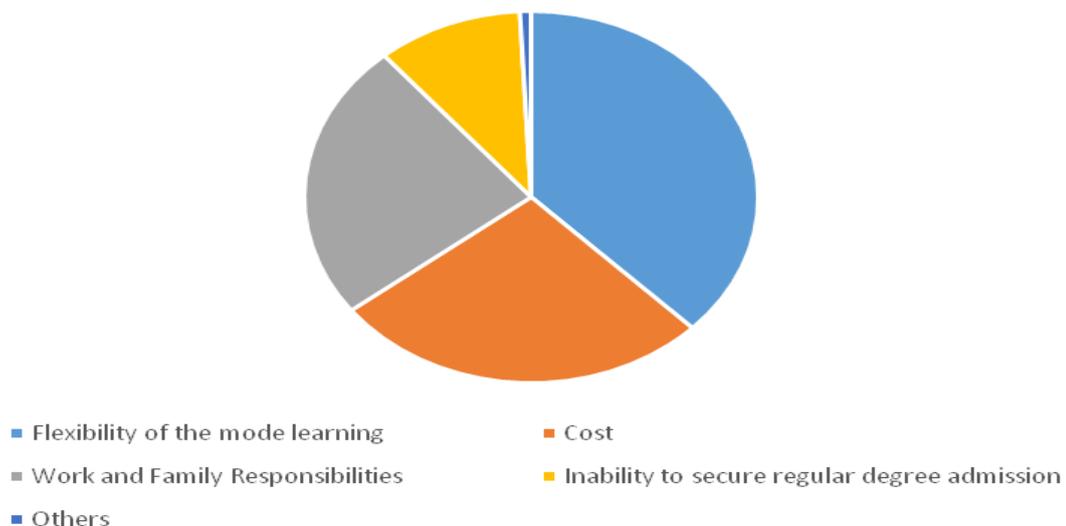*RQ1:* What is the reason for students' enrolment in ODL programs?

Figure 1. Reasons why learners enroll in ODL programs.

Figure 1 indicates that the majority of the respondents enroll in ODL institutions based on the flexibility of learning the ODL programs offer coupled with the associated cost of the programs. Other factors are work and family responsibilities and the inability to secure regular degree admission.

RQ2: What is the students' assessment of the teaching & learning experience, educational resources, technical support service, and infrastructural facilities in ODL institutions?
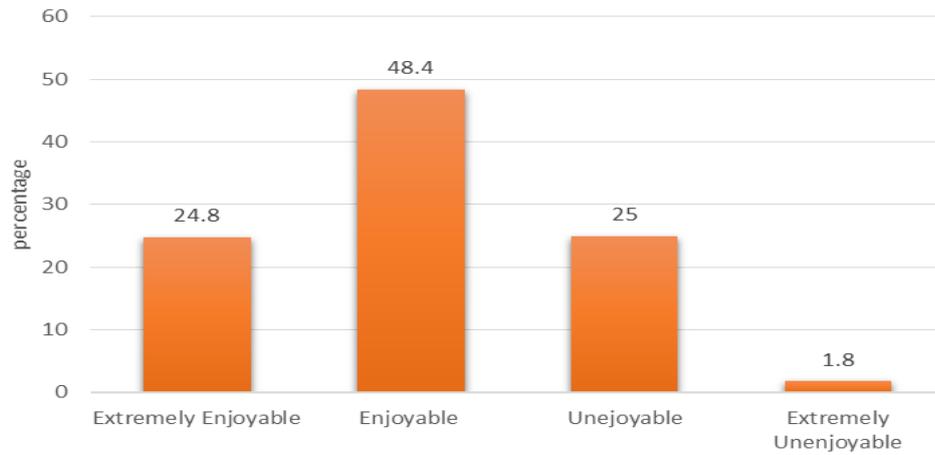
Teaching and Learning Experience

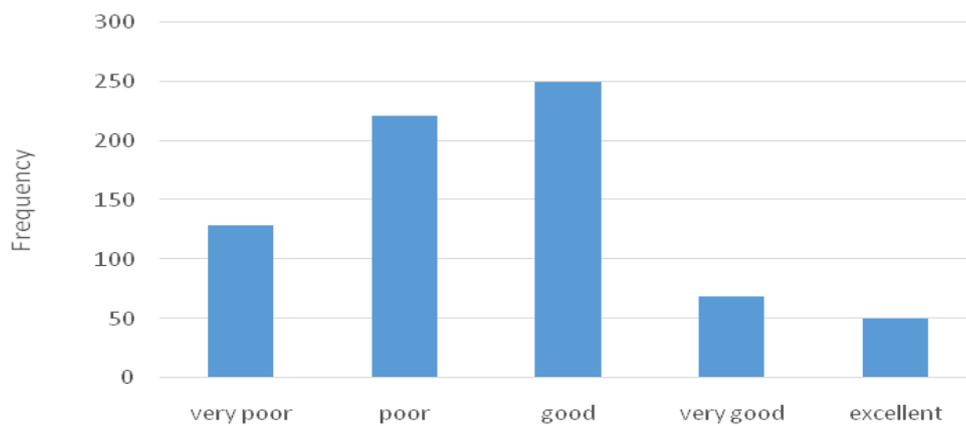**Figure 2a**. Learning experience under ODL.

Figure 2b. Access to and interaction with facilitators.

Figures 2a and 2b show that the general learning experience of ODL students has been relatively good as the majority opined that their learning experience under the ODL is enjoyable and access and interaction with their course facilitators is good.
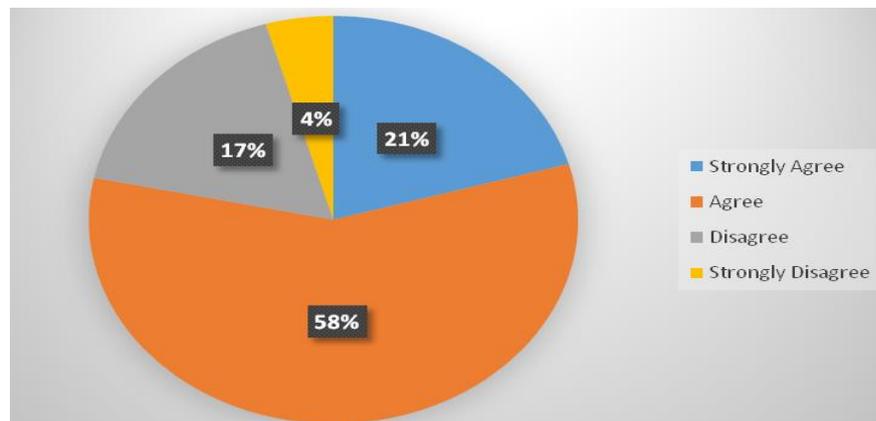
Educational Resources

Figure 3a. Course modules provided for each course meet the objectives of the course.
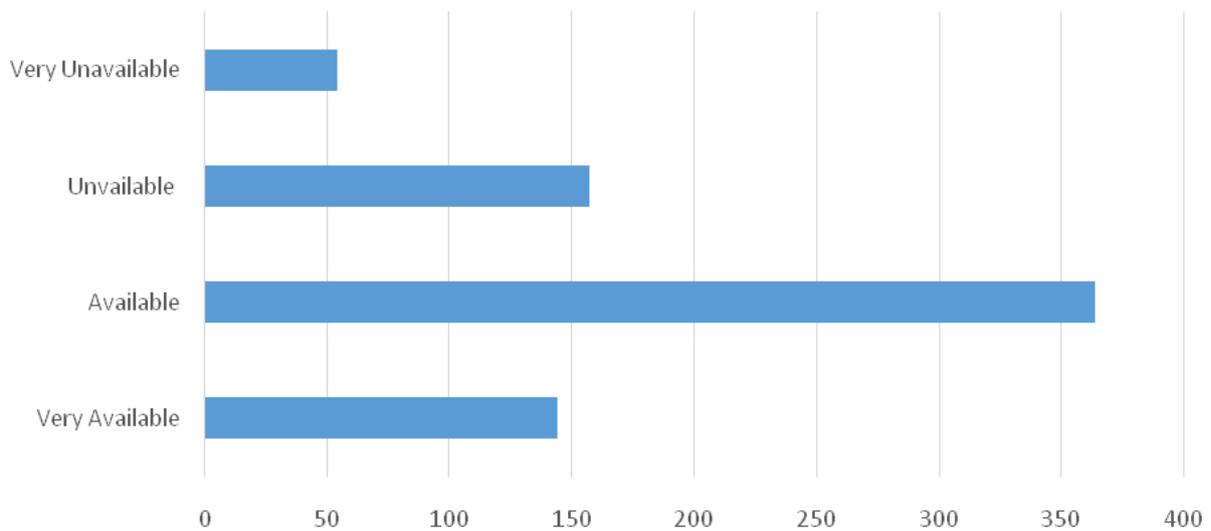

Figure 3b. Availability of supplementary materials to enhance learning in the institutions.

Figures 3a and 3b show that both the course modules provided for each course and supplementary materials to enhance learning for the open and distance learning students are available and meet the learning needs of the students.
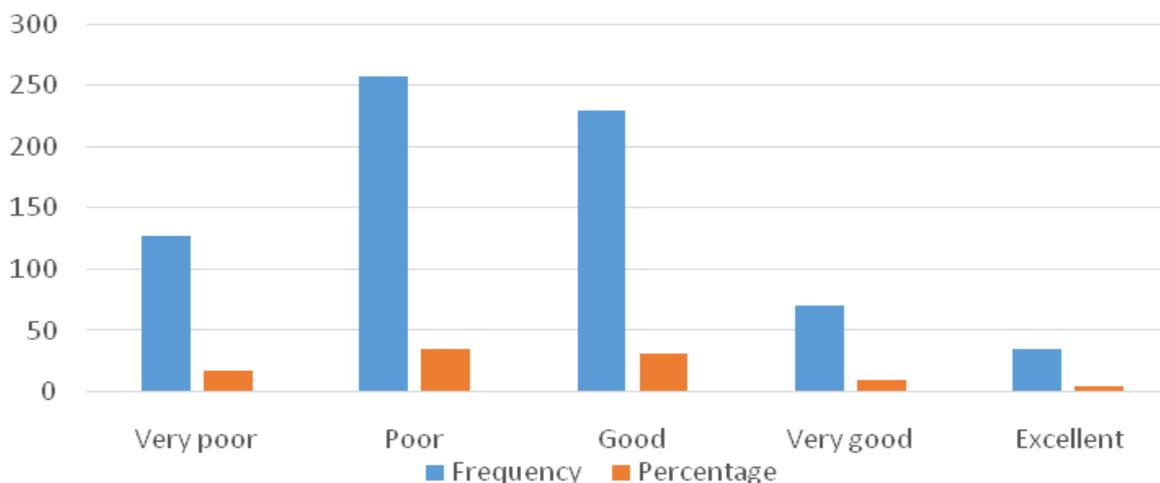
Technical Support

Figure 4. Level of technical support services provided by ODL institutions.

Figure 4 shows that the level of technical support services provided by open and distance learning institutions in the country is poor as the majority of the respondents opined that technical support services offered are poor.

Infrastructural Facilities
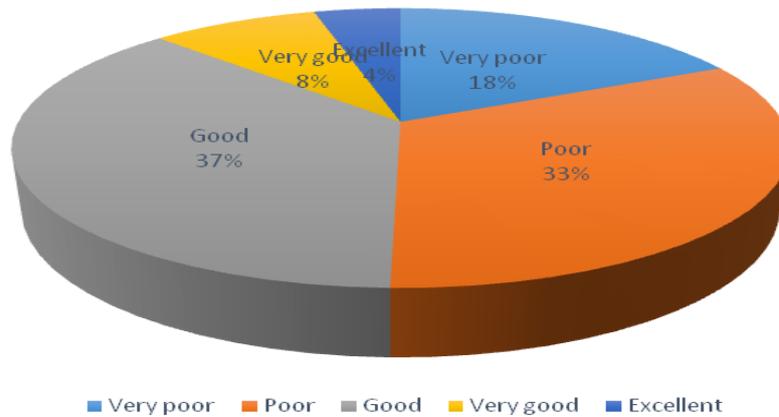
Figure 5a. State of classrooms, labs, etc. meant for interactive sessions and tutorials.
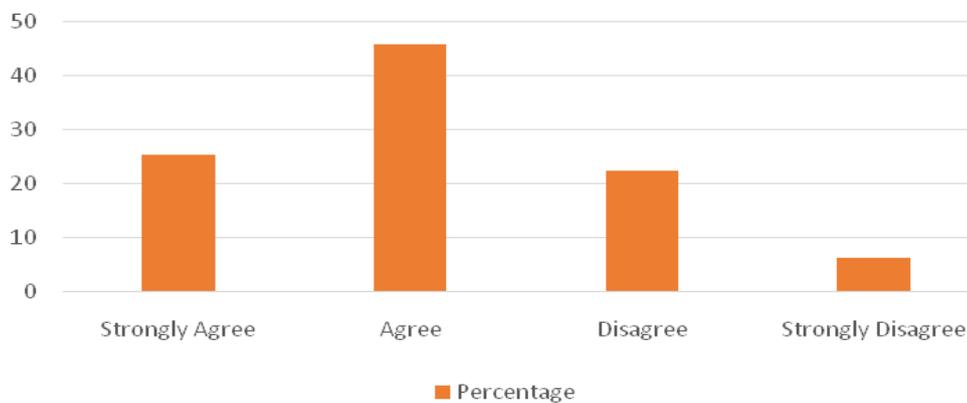
Figure 5b. Adequacy of teaching and learning facilities like computers, laboratories, etc. for ODL students.

Figure 5a and 5b show that there is adequate infrastructure as ODL students' responses to the state of classrooms and other facilities available for interactive and tutorials are relatively good. They agree that there are sufficient teaching and learning facilities for ODL students.

RQ3: What are the significant challenges facing ODL students?

Figure 6. Challenges facing ODL students.

Figure 6 indicates that lack of educational resources is ranked highest followed by inadequate infrastructural facilities and lack of adequate technical support as well as lack of access to lecturers in as far as challenges facing ODL students are concerned. Some students went further to state that:
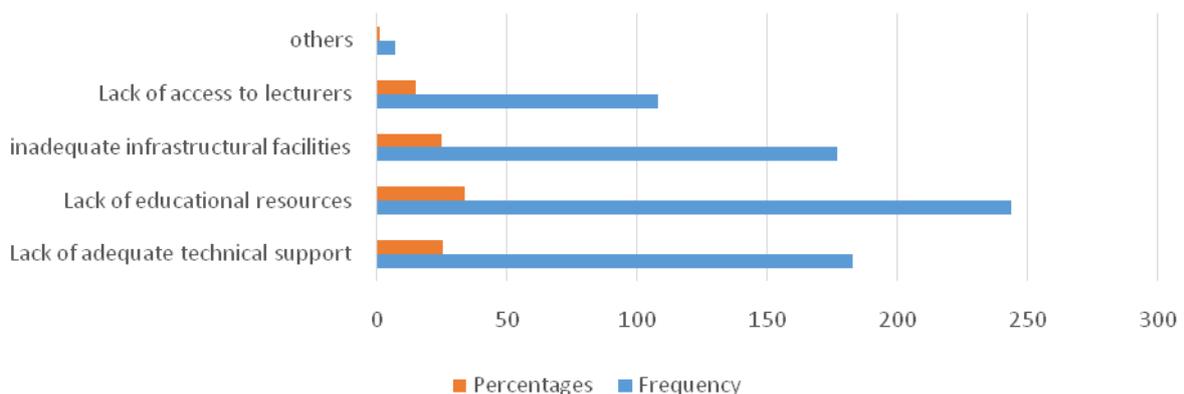
No chairs to sit on or hang around during exams. We hang around standing within the school premises
My major challenge is a continuous increase in school fees
The major problem am facing is that I find it difficult to understand a whole course material just two-time face-to-face interaction scheduled for the course

RQ4: What is the level of Students' General satisfaction with ODL programs and services?
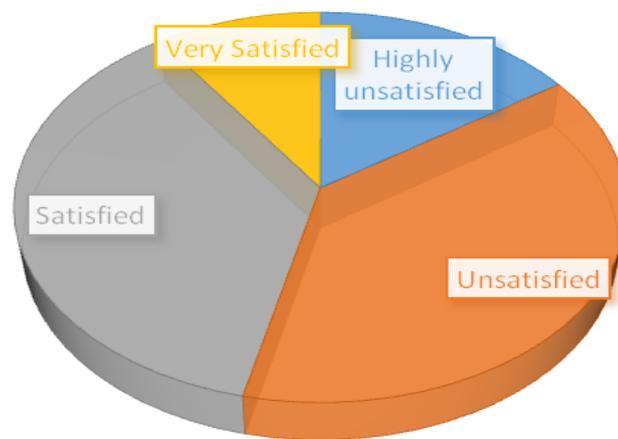
Figure 7. General satisfaction level of ODL students with programs and services provided by ODL institutions.

Figure 7 shows that open distance learning students are generally dissatisfied with the programs and services offered by ODL institutions in the country as 53.6% (summation of those that feel highly unsatisfied and unsatisfied) of the students were not generally satisfied with ODL institutions' programs and services.

RQ5: What are the possible suggestion for programs and services improvement in ODL institutions?

Table 1. Various suggestions on ways to improve students' learning experience, educational resources, technical support, and infrastructural facilities in ODL institutions.

Variables	Suggestion	Freq.	%	Interpretation derived from the responses
Learning experiences	Increase in interaction level between ODL	254	35.3	Based on ODL students' responses, increasing interaction level between the

Variables	Suggestion	Freq.	%	Interpretation derived from the responses
	students and lecturers			students and lecturers and creating an avenue for peer tutoring amongst others are ways to improve the learning experiences of learners under the ODL mode
	Provision of avenue for more student-student interaction	221	30.7	
	Providing an opportunity for collaborative learning through group assignments, homework etc.	111	15.4	
	Provision of direct online facilitation/ lecture	127	17.7	
	Others	6	0.8	
Educational resources	Provision of computer and associated facilities	210	29.2	ODL students suggested that the acquisition of more books in the library and provision of computer and related facilities among other suggestions are the best ways to improve provision and access to educational resources
	Acquisition of more books in the library	270	37.6	
	Giving proper orientation on available educational resources for students' use	149	20.7	
	Online display of library collections available to students	78	10.8	
	Others	12	1.7	
Technical support service	Creating an opportunity for adequate guidance and support system for students to make an informed decision	301	41.9	It was suggested that creating an opportunity for adequate guidance and support services for learners and assisting learners to acquire necessary ICT skills are possible ways to improve technical support service to ODL students
	Helping students to acquire necessary ICT skills needed to succeed under an ODL environment	216	30.0	
	Providing timely referrals when required to students	136	18.9	
	Making provision for timely feedback on ODL operations	60	8.3	
	Others	6	0.8	
Infrastructure	Provision of conducive classrooms for lectures	265	36.9	On ways to improve the state of infrastructure in ODL institutions, it was suggested by the students that conducive classes for lectures and good computer lab and internet services must be provided as well as improving the library system for optimal use
	Provision of a good computer lab and internet services	227	31.6	
	Improving the library system	194	27.0	
	Others	33	4.6	

Other suggestions made by students on ways to improve the teaching & learning experience of learners, educational resources, technical support, and infrastructural facilities in ODL institutions in Nigeria include:

> *Provision of a good learning environment as the learning environment here is not spacious*
> *Provision of relevant learning materials for students and lecturers*
> *Easing of the registration process to accommodate working students*
> *There must be quick feedback on students' inquiries*
> *There should be a dedicated means of contact with lecturers*
> *Regular supervision of ODL staffs' activities to ensure that the right services are provided at the right time*
> *There should be an orientation for lecturers on the need to breakdown subject content in a manner that makes it easier for students to understand*

Test of Hypotheses

H0₁: There is no significant difference in teaching & learning experience among ODL students in UIDLC, NOUN and LODLC

Table 2. Summary of ANOVA showing the difference in teaching & learning experience among ODL students in UIDLC, NOUN, and LODLC.

Institution	N	Mean	Std Dev	Sum of Square	df.	Mean square	F	p.(Sig)
UI DLC	271	4.14	1.371	173.627	2	86.813	54.250	0.000
NOUN	233	4.47	1.228	1145.770	716	1.600		
LODLC	215	5.33	1.159	1319.396	718			
Total	719							

Table 2 shows that there is a significant difference among ODL students in the three institutions in terms of their teaching & learning experiences. The result revealed three different means of ODL students' level of teaching & learning experiences. The mean scores of LODLC have the highest mean of 5.33, follow by NOUN with a mean score of 4.47, and UIDLC with a 4.14 mean score. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is a significant difference in teaching & learning experiences among ODL students in the three institutions (F value (2/716) = 54.250, Pro=0.000 < 0.05). The null hypothesis is therefore rejected.

H0₂: There is no significant difference in Educational resources available in UIDLC, NOUN and LODLC

Table 3. Summary of ANOVA showing the difference in Educational resources available in UIDLC, NOUN, and LODLC.

Institution	N	Mean	Std Dev	Sum of square	df.	Mean square	F	P. (Sig)
UI DLC	271	4.38	1.419	40.518	2	20.259	12.372	0.000
NOUN	233	4.37	1.327	1172.430	716	1.637		
LODLC	215	5.36	1.013	1212.949	718			
Total	719							

Table 3 shows that there is a statistically significant difference in educational resources in the three ODL providing institutions, namely UIDLC, NOUN, and LODLC. The result revealed three different mean values with LODLC having a mean value of 5.36, followed by UIDLC with a mean of 4.38, and NOUN with a mean score of 4.37, (F value (2/716)= 12.372, Pro=0.000 < 0.05). Therefore, it can be concluded that there was a significant difference between the three Institutions U.I., NOUN, and LODC in terms of Educational resources. The null hypothesis is therefore rejected.

H03: There is no significant difference in technical support service provided in UIDLC, NOUN and LODLC

Table 4. Summary of ANOVA showing the difference in technical support service provided in UIDLC, NOUN and LODLC.

Institution	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Sum of Square	df.	Mean Square	F	P. (Sig)
UI DLC	271	2.147	.927	106.446	2	53.223	56.111	0.000
NOUN	233	2.347	.980	679.151	716	.949		
LODLC	215	3.060	1.023	785.597	718			
Total	719							

Table 4 revealed that there is a significant difference in technical support services provided in the three ODL institutions. The result revealed three different mean values for the three Institutions. The mean scores of LODLC have a mean of 3.060, followed by NOUN means of 2.347, and U.I. DLC has to mean of 2.147. Therefore, it can be concluded that there was a significant difference between the three Institutions in terms of technical service provided to ODL students (F value (2/716) = 56.111, Pro=0.000 < 0.05). The null hypothesis is therefore rejected.

NOUN and LODLC **H04:** There is no significant difference in infrastructure available between UIDLC,

Table 5. Summary of ANOVA showing the difference in infrastructural facilities available in UIDLC, NOUN, and LODLC.

Institution	N	Mean	Std Dev	Sum of Square	df.	Mean Square	F	P. (Sig)
UI DLC	271	4.206	1.355	81.056	2	40.528	24.551	0.000
NOUN	233	4.605	1.272	1181.934	716	1.651		
LODLC	215	5.027	1.203	1262.990	718			
Total	719							

Table 5 showed there is a significant difference in infrastructural facilities as perceived by ODL students of the three institutions. The result revealed three different means values of ODL students. LODLC has a mean value of 5.027, followed by NOUN means of 4.605, and U.I. DLC has a mean of 4.206. Therefore, it can be concluded that there was a significant difference in the infrastructural facilities available in the institution (F value (2/716) = 24.551, Pro=0.000 < 0.05). The null hypothesis is therefore rejected.

DISCUSSION

The results of the study revealed that students enroll in open and distance learning programs majorly as a result of the flexibility in learning that ODL programs offer unlike the regular programs that are rigid in nature and class attendance is made compulsory coupled with a fixed time of study for the students. ODL programs are specifically advantageous to those who are working and require educational advancement for a career upgrade or to move to an entirely different work environment as ODL avail them the opportunity to combine work with education in such a way that their academic aspiration is achieved without losing their present employment. This result aligns with the findings of Messo (2014), and Rashid et al, (2015). For instance, Rashid et al. (2015) found out in their study that the flexible nature of the ODL system, amongst other factors, is what attracts students to enroll in open and distance learning programs.

Other findings revealed in the study show that while students relatively rate their teaching & learning experience, educational resources, and available infrastructural facilities in their universities good, they, however, rate technical support services in the ODL institutions as being poor. This poor technical support service is observed to be inimical to the progress of students as regards learning, interacting, effective communication. This is generally critical to the overall survival of the ODL system as a lack of technical support service tends to isolate and frustrate learners and their learning (Tait, 2000). According to Sarkhel (2014), the success of open and distance learning programs is solely dependent on the support services provided to students as learners face many challenges that influence them in the manner in which they approach their studies. It, therefore, becomes imperative for ODL institutions to formulate a policy that will govern the provision of technical support services to meet the needs of learners in such a way that the learning process is made easier and more interesting. This result is consistent with the findings of Mutambo, Aguti, and Winterbottom (2018), who in their study found out that open distance learning centers do not provide satisfactory support service to the students.

It was further revealed that the major challenges students are facing under the ODL programs in the country is lack of educational resources and inadequate infrastructural facilities as well as lack of adequate technical support amongst others. Some students further remarked that there is no relaxation chair. On some occasions, interactive sessions only hold twice for a course, and this stands as a challenge because it is difficult for them to understand a full course material within that short period. Another issue raised by the students is the continuous increase in tuition fees which often hangs their faith in the program imbalance. Strong evidence exists on the role educational resources and high-quality infrastructure facilities play at improving instruction and students' learning outcomes with its attendant effects on attrition reduction among other benefits to both the learners and the institution (Teixeira et al., 2017). This finding corroborates the findings of Mutanna (2019), who found out that ODL students in Zimbabwe face particular challenges which include inadequate access to tutors and physical resources, inflexible practices and ICT, poor or no electricity among other issues. This finding is also consistent with previous research findings (Ndayambaje et al., 2013; Messo, 2014; Mutambo et al., 2018; Reju & Jita, 2018; Isuku, 2018; Ouma & Nkuyubwatsi, 2019).

On the general satisfaction of students with programs and services offered by ODL institutions, the students vehemently feel dissatisfied with the programs and services provided by the ODL institutions. The author attributes the finding to the fact that most of the learners think frustrated based on the way they are treated as they often get their learning expectation dashed by the institution in terms of having inadequate educational resources to aid their self-learning coupled with lack of immediate feedback about their educational progress which often makes them isolated from the system. It was also observed that some learners feel dissatisfied with the lack of proper interaction with their lecturers as they want good clarification on issues that emanated from a personal study which only their tutor could clarify. Still, with the absence of good interaction with their lecturers, their active learning is hampered. Furthermore, the available infrastructural facilities such as the library, comfortable classrooms, internet facilities that could enhance their learning are inadequate or non-existence. All these issues observed above adversely affect their sense of satisfaction with ODL institutions' programs and services. This finding contrasts the findings of Irungu (2016), who found out that the University of Nairobi students are satisfied with distance learning programs.

The result of the study revealed that there was a statistically significant difference among ODL students in the three institutions in terms of their teaching & learning experiences, available educational resources, technical support services, and infrastructural facilities. It was evident from the results that Ladoke Akintola University of Technology Distance Learning Centre students have higher mean in all the variables which implied that they have better teaching and learning experience, educational resources, technical support service, and infrastructural facilities compared to the National Open University of Nigeria and University of Ibadan Distance Learning Centre. It was revealed that NOUN ranked second in teaching & learning experience, technical support, and infrastructural facility after LODLC based on the mean score while UIDLC only ranked second in educational resources after LODLC. This finding could be attributed to the fact that LAUTECH is a technology-oriented institution, and this shows from their deployment of course materials and mode of interaction with students. Also, a careful look at the website of the three universities, the LODLC website looks more interactive than the others and very detailed in information dissemination to both current and prospective students as well as other stakeholders who might be interested in what they offer. The low ranking of UIDLC programs and services by students compared to others lend credence to the submission of Ajayi and Dzever (2018) that UIDLC students rarely enjoy the services provided by the institution and this has negative implication on students' satisfaction with ODL programs.

CONCLUSION
Thus far, the study has attempted exploring students' assessment of open and distance learning programs and services offered by distance learning institutions in Nigeria and the results generated from the study amongst others indicate that learners enroll in ODL programs because of the flexibility in learning. Also, students' assessment of teaching & learning experience, educational resources, and infrastructural facilities available in the universities revealed that only the technical support service provided in the institutions was rated poor among others. Conclusively, the findings of the study

provided an insight into students' valuation of the programs and services provided by ODL institutions with a view at provoking concerted efforts by stakeholders to improve ODL programs and services offering in the country. Based on the results of the study, ODL institutions should routinely carry out learners' assessment of the programs and services provided to keep abreast of the learning needs and difficulties students are facing to improve service delivery to the students. Also, the provision of adequate technical support services must be taken as a cardinal area to make ODL programs worthwhile for the students, and the acquisition of necessary ICT skills by the students should be an integral part of the ODL curriculum. Equally, ODL institutions must endeavor to improve library collections, internet facilities and student-lecturer interaction as these are critical to learning enhancement among the students. Furthermore, collaborative learning should be encouraged among the learners through group assignments and other activities that could promote peer learning and tutoring. Lastly, further research on this or related topics should involve a larger sample size across the six geopolitical zones of the country for better generalization.

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