

# Components of Communication and Effective Service Delivery in Open Distance Learning Programmes in Southwest, Nigeria

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## Abstract

Communication is germane to the management and success of every programme. Open and Distance learning institutions' effort to positively reach out and go beyond imparting knowledge to their learners may never be realized without effective communication. Thus, the effective utilization of components of communication is important in the learning process. This study examined the relationship between the communication components in Open Distance Learning (ODL) institutions and effective service delivery of ODL programmes. Five objectives were developed to guide the study. The study adopted a mixed research design involving both qualitative and quantitative data collection techniques. 420 participants selected using a multi-stage sampling procedure involving both stratified random sampling and simple random sampling techniques. Both descriptive statistics and inferential statistics were used for data analysis. The study, among other things, found a significant relationship between the communication components and the efficacy of the service delivery. Based on the findings, it was recommended that for service delivery to be effective, feedback mechanism must be varied, adequate and effective so that learners can use the one that best suit them; facilitators must be continuously trained on the use of different channels of communication to be able to produce and deliver quality content.

**Keywords:** : Communication 1; Components of Communication 2; Distance Learning 3; Effective Service Delivery 4

## 1. Introduction

It is a known fact that conventional education institutions across the world can no longer accommodate the increasing demand of the current generation seeking higher education. This has made distance education and open distance learning an indispensable viable alternative.

Distance Education according Bates (2005), is that mode of learning where learners and facilitators are mostly domicile at different locations and learn at their own pace and time. One of the features of distance education is the detachment of facilitators from learners with the use of communication technologies, making it very convenient for learners to study at their own pace. This implies that any member of the society, who is willing to go to school can access higher education wherever they may be, making him/her a learner in distance education.

Moore and Keersley (2012) see distance education as teaching and planned learning in which teaching takes place in a different location from learning, needing communication through technologies and special institutional support. Also, Moore and Tait (2002) stated that distance education is an educational process in which all or most of the teaching is conducted by someone removed in space and/or time from learners with the effect that all or most communication between facilitators and learners is through medium either electronic or print. Farrell (2003) corroborated this by saying that distance education is the delivery of learning or training to those who are separated mostly by time and space from those who are teaching or training. The teaching Farrell

stated, is done with a number of "mediating processes" used to pass on the content, to prepare tuition, and to manage assessment or estimate the end result using communication technologies. Benson (2004) opined that "Distance education is simply formal instructional- based educational activities in which the facilitator and learner are removed from each other in location, but not normally separated in time, and where two-way interactive telecommunication systems are used.

Analysis of the above definitions for distance education reveals that distance education has its base in a formal educational institution; but facilitators and learners are in different locations nonetheless, with blended classes, separate locations may not always be the case. Also, interactive communication is shown in the definitions to lay emphasis on the movement of communication from instructor- to- learner, or learner- to - instructor, or learner - to - learner. Finally, the use of different technologies is used to deliver and receive the contents. These definitions imply that communication is germane to distance learning.

Communication is very important to the success of any educational programme and more importantly to the success of content delivery in open distance education/learning. It helps to pass across information, notions, and ideas that contribute to learning and establishes opportunities for learning to take place. Thus, Swerling and Thorson (2014) stressed that the effectiveness of Open Distance Learning (ODL) depends on the components of communication employed. If effective communication in education is viewed by Galusha (2001) as the passing of the right message or information to the right person, in the right way, at the right time, and with the effect, impact, and the outcome, then communication between facilitator and learner is a vital element of a successful open distance learning. This made Lister (2014) to affirm that communication is a critical component of a productive distance education programme. Learners and stakeholders must actively converse to ensure that content is understood, and expectations are conveyed. Lister (2014) further stated that learners need an open forum where they can ask questions and facilitators can give important information. Since no constant face-to-face interactivity is present in distance learning courses, communication is highly placed by institutions providing these courses. The effectiveness of the communication process employed through its components (sender, message, medium, receiver, and feedback) is crucial to guide learners, build their confidence as they navigate the learning process and has also made teaching and learning more interactive and dynamic at a distance (Khan, 2005; Swerling & Thorson, 2014). This made Ebrahimzadeh (2006) to conclude that distance education is a dynamic, state-of-the-art, and a participative environment that enables access to content (with the effective use of communication components) in the shortest time possible.

Proper navigation of the learning process by learners to bring out the expected result (completion of learning by learners) can only be done through effective service delivery. The effective delivery of service depends largely on the effective utilization of the components of communication. Service delivery according to the American Marketing Association (1960) as cited in du Plessis et al, 2007) defined service as "activities, benefits or satisfaction which are offered for sale or are provided in connection with the sale of goods." Sigma (2007) defined service delivery as "all contacts with public administration (here referred to as staff of DLI institutions and facilitators) during which customers that is, citizens (in this study known as learners) look for data and control their affairs, contacts and tasks performed by public

administration that affect citizens. Since there are minimum physical interactions, contacts are through the components of communication.

Azam and Kingdon (2014) identified five major components of communication namely: Sender, Message, Medium, Receiver, and Feedback. Each of these components has a role to play in the successful completion of the learner's programme in open distance learning. However, the problem of using communication tools for teaching in ODL that requires different communication practices such as course preparation and presentation peculiar to distance learning programmes is a challenge facing ODL institutions (Moore & Kearsely, 2012). The difficulties in adopting different communication practices of course preparation and presentation peculiar to distance learning programmes lead to instructors' mishandling or poor management of online communication tools and ineffective delivery of course contents (Rienties, Giesbers, Lygo-Baker, Ma, & Rees, 2016) and they concluded that underutilization of communication tools and other distance learning communication platforms by instructors is very alarming in the distance learning programmes. Furthermore, Kaur (2006) believes that such mishandling leads to students' failure, lowers the morale of students to continue with the programme, and occasionally leads to an intention to discontinue the programme.

#### **Components of Communication in Distance Education**

**Sender:** The sender who can be the facilitator (most of the time) or the distance learning institutions, sends messages making use of symbols (words or graphics or visual aids) to transmit the message to bring out the required response. The views, background, approach, skills, competencies, and knowledge of the sender have a great influence on the message. The verbal and non-verbal symbols that are chosen are essential in ascertaining interpretation of the message by the recipient in the same terms as intended by the sender. Weber and Farmer (2012) indicated that learners' satisfaction regarding course delivery is one of the causes of continuing or withdrawing in ODL classes. However, this need for the technical "savviness" of facilitators is not getting attention, because the majority of instructors teaching online courses do not have the technical know-how to the extent required (Ng, 2012). Also, there was the stigma that unqualified facilitators were teaching in ODL programmes, and the teaching was less than adequate (Bernard, Abrami, Lou, Borokhovski, Wozney, Wallet, & Fiset, 2004). The efficacy of the sender (facilitator) as a component of communication in distance education according to Tait (2018), is important as the instructor facilitates learning to provide the optimal learning outcomes for learners and that instructor-learner interaction is the most important ingredient in learner success.

**Message:** The message which is another component is the core of what the sender wants to communicate. It is an idea that should bring out response from the recipient. The message has to be conveyed in a way that the main objective must be clear to make the message easy for the receiver to interpret. Weheba and Kedar (2007) affirmed that the message is crucial because it shows the understanding and how vast the facilitator is in his/her subject matter. This, however, must be conveyed to learners in the easiest way to bring out the expected responses. Conrad and Openo (2018), stated that the message must be delivered in such a way to bring out the effect that is expected from the recipients for it to be effective. This is where Srinivasan (2020) explained that the experience of facilitator is important. The facilitator to him must have the experience of conveying the message on the open distance platform for the message to be delivered adequately and precisely for learners to comprehend.

**Medium/Channel:** Another component is the medium or channel used in passing across the message to the learners. This channel could be print or electronic or both. Weheba and Kedar (2007) stated that channels of communication in the teaching-learning process, help learners to bring to play what they learn to the world around them. The channels are means for the exchange and transmission of messages and therefore an important component in the teaching/learning process in distance education. It should be noted at this juncture, that not all the media can be used to transmit course messages to learners, therefore, an appropriate medium must be chosen to suit the course to be transmitted for efficient utilization. Unfortunately, Ofole (2018) lamented that because of the expensive nature of the various channels, many distance institutions settled for one channel that is not appropriate for the course of study. The inappropriateness of channel according to Gaskell and Mill (2015); Ofole, Fawusi and Oduneye (2013), resulted in dissatisfaction among learners in distance education institutions bringing the effectiveness of service delivery to questioning. Thus, Futani (2020) posited that the quality of distance education programmes is highly influenced by the medium of delivery rather than the presence of instructor.

**Receiver:** The receiver or decoder is a person for whom the message is intended/ aimed or directed. In distance education, the receiver is the learner, and the level to which the decoder appreciates the message depend on the awareness of the subject matter by the recipient, his/her acceptance of the message, and so on. Paul (2016) stated that the learner (receiver) is an important element in the digital revolution and his/her understanding of the message is essential to the success and otherwise of the educational programme. The learners are expected to ask questions flexibly about the course, understand and be able to interpret the messages correctly before they can be successful but many often have difficulty, and therefore unable to create meaningful communication with their instructors/ institutions leading to their inability to complete the programme Siddique (2004) concluded.

**Feedback:** The last of the components which is the feedback depends on how well the other components have been effective. The feedback is crucial in the sense that it allows the sender to examine the efficacy of his/her message to learners. It gives the sender the opportunity to confirm if the perception of the message by the learners is correct. When learners give the expected feedback, this gives an indication that the other components of communication have been used effectively to bring about efficient service delivery. Angelaki (2013) is of the opinion that the absence of prompt feedback on learners' assignments and inert assistance from the tutor or instructors are reasons for learners' dissatisfaction with ODL institutions service delivery. Taylor (2006) noted that the communication process gets to the last stage when the message has been perfectly sent out, received, and the receiver, in turn, reacted to the message from the sender, indicating comprehension. The use of the medium by the receiver to give feedback is important but Means, Toyama, Murphy, and Baki (2013) noted that one of the causes of high dropout rate in ODL programmes, is that learners are unable to utilize the medium of communication properly (due to lack of understanding of the message or/and inability to use the medium).

### **Statement of the Problem**

The provision and delivery of distance education need effective communication. For successful learning and understanding of distance education programmes, all communication process components must work together for service delivery to be effective. However, Weller (2017); Garrett (2016); Paul (2016); Boateng and Boadu

(2013); Adewale and Inegodion (2008); Zacharia (2008) in their various studies showed that many learners are dissatisfied with the way ODL programmes are delivered for various reasons, but their studies do not highlight the use or otherwise of the components of communication as a factor for this dissatisfaction (Stewart, 2012); McQuaid, 2009; Driscoll, 2005) Thus, this study is conceived to ascertain the contribution and utilization of the components of communication for effective service delivery by ODL institutions.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study adopts the System Theory of Bertalanffy (1968). The system theory revealed that a system is a collection of components that are strategically put together for a common purpose. According to the system theory, the components are dependent on one another to the degree that one component cannot function without the help of the other components. A system can therefore be perceived as an entity, which is a coherent whole (Poole, 2014). System theory is hence a theoretical perspective that studies a phenomenon seen as a whole and not as simply the sum of elementary parts. The focal point is on the interactivity and on the association between parts in order to understand an entity's organization, functioning, and outcomes. This implies a relationship between the components of communication to provide effective service delivery.

By definition, a system is goal-seeking and like the components of communication in distance education whose goal is to make service delivery effective in open distance education institutions. The understanding of the principle of this theory is that for a component part to work properly, that component must have relationships with other components in the system and not be isolated from them. This according to Poole (2014), means that the totality of a system is greater than the sum of its part and it is linked to the uniqueness of every system based on the interaction and interdependence among components. When applied to the components of communication in distance learning, each of these components is unique but this uniqueness has to do with the interplay and linkage among these components. The sender is unique, but this is dependent on how the sender can present his/her message, through a medium (Channel), to the receiver (learner) for comprehension and understanding, for proper feedback to occur.

According to the system theory, components are structured with one another to the extent that one component cannot function without the support of other components. The application of this to the components of communication and service delivery is that for the open distance education institutions/ facilitators (sender) to deliver service effectively to learners (Receivers), they need the support as well as proper utilization of these other components.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between components of communication namely Sender, Message, Medium/Channel, Receiver, Feedback and effective service delivery in Open Distance Education in Southwest institutions in Nigeria. Specifically, the study's objectives are to:

1. Examine the relationships between the components of communication and effective service delivery in Open Distance Learning Institutions.
2. Establish the relative contribution of each of the components of communication to effective service delivery in ODL institutions.

### **Research Hypotheses**

The following hypotheses were formulated and tested:

1. There is no significant joint relationship between all the components of communication and effective service delivery by ODL Institutions.

There is no significant relative contribution of each of the components of communication on effective service delivery in ODL Institutions.

## 2. Method

The study adopted the descriptive research design. The population for the study included all students of ODL institutions in Southwest Nigeria. A multi-stage sampling procedure involving simple random sampling and stratified random sampling techniques were used to select the respondents for the study. First, a random sample technique was used to select six universities in Southwest Nigeria for the study. Thereafter 70 students from each university were selected using stratified random sampling technique. A total of 420 learners were used as sample for the study. A questionnaire titled: Communication and Effective Service Delivery in ODL Questionnaire was the instrument for the collection of data. The instrument has two sections: Section A has the demographic characteristics of the respondents such as gender, age, experience, employment status among others while section B has two parts. Part I has five sub-scale variables -receiver, message, sender, channels, feedback, while Part II has a sub-scale variable of effective service delivery. Part I comprised 35 items covering 5 components (receiver, message, sender, channel, feedback) of communications in distance education with each variable having seven item questions while Part II comprised 10 item statements on effective service delivery. All the items were equally rated in modified four Likert scale as Strongly Agree (4), Agree (3), Disagree (2) and Strongly Disagree (1). The content and face validity of the instrument was carried out by experts in the field of adult education, distance education, and test and measurement. To estimate the reliability of the questionnaire a pilot study was conducted on 60 respondents comprising 10 facilitators, 40 learners, and 10 support staff who are not part of the sample used for the study, but of the same population, using the test-retest method. In measuring the internal consistency of the instruments, Cronbach's alpha coefficient test of reliability was applied using SPSS software. The analysis gave the following alpha co-efficient values for different segments of the instrument: 0.769 for receiver items; 0.774 for message; 0.681 for sender; 0.718 channels; 0.809 for feedback and 0.835 for efficient service delivery. However, an overall alpha co-efficient of 0.773 was obtained for the instrument. In collecting the data, the researcher recruited and trained three research assistants to assist in the data collection process. To avoid high attrition of the questionnaire and ensure quality of data, copies of questionnaire were distributed and collected on the spot after completion by participants. Ethical approval was sorted out and obtained from relevant departments. The researcher sought the permission of authorities of the institutions before the commencement of the study. The analysis of results was presented as mean and standard deviation while inferential statistics, multiple regression, and ANOVA were used for the testing of the hypotheses.

### 3. Results And Discussion

#### 3.1. Results

**Table 1: Descriptive Statistics & Correlation Matrix of Component of Communication and Effective Service Delivery in ODL Programme (N=420)**

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.	1	2	3	4	5
Effective service delivery	1.37	.483	1				
Receiver (Student disposition)	2.94	.956	.349**	1			
Message (Programme Content)	2.84	.992	-.173**	-.523**	1		
Sender (Institution/Faculty members)	3.00	1.10	-.526**	.039	.294**	1	
Channels (Medium)	2.73	.960	-.183**	-.201**	.624**	.564**	1
Feedback (Evaluation mechanism)	2.95	1.022	.329**	.568**	-.746**	-.120**	-.631**

Correlation is significant at  $P < 0.01$  Mean Midpoint= 2.5, (1-2.49 low, 2.5-4.0 High)

Keys= Efficient service delivery (ESD), Receiver (R), Message (M), Sender (S), Channel(C), Feedback (F).

Table 1 shows correlation matrix of the components of communication in relation to efficient service delivery in the Open distance learning programmes. The result from the table suggests a statistically significant correlation between learner disposition (M= 2.94, Std Dev= .96) and effective service delivery (M=1.37, Std= .483),  $r(418) = .349^* P < 0.01$ . Programme content (M=2.84, Std. Dev. = .99) and effective service delivery (M=1.37, Std= .483) were found to be slightly positively correlated,  $r(418) = .173$ ,  $p = 0.01$ . Sender (M=3.00, Std. Dev.=1.0) and effective service delivery (M=1.37, Std= .483) were strongly positively related  $r(418) = .526^*$ ,  $p < 0.1$ ; channel-Medium/technologies (M=2.7, Std. Dev.=.96) and effective service delivery (M=1.37, Std= .483) were slightly related  $r(418) = .183^*$ ,  $p < 0.1$ ; Feedback mechanism (M=2.95, Std. Dev.=.96) and effective service delivery (M=1.37, Std= .483) were found to be strongly correlated,  $r(418) = .33$ ,  $p < 0.01$ . The study result indicates a significant relationship between all the component of communication in distance learning programmes and effective service delivery.

**Table 2: Regression Summary Showing Relationship between Components Of Communication And Effective Service Delivery**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.797(a)	.636	.631	.29388

a. Predictors: (Constant) Predictors: (Constant)-Receiver (R), Message (M), Sender (S), Channel(C), feedback

b. Dependent Variable: efficient service delivery

Multiple regression analysis was used to test if social capital components of communication predicted participants' rating of effective service delivery. The results of the regression indicated the predictor variables explained 64% of the variance in effective service delivery in ODL programmes since  $R = .797$ ,  $R^2 = .636$ . To confirm if relationship was significant, Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was carried out and the result is presented in Table 3.

**Table 3: Showing relationship between components of communication and participants' rating of effective service delivery**

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Remark
1 Regression	61.891	5	12.376	143.326	.000(a)	Significant
Residual	35.495	411	.086			
Total	97.386	416				

a. Predictors: (Constant) Predictors: (Constant)-Receiver (R), Message (M), Sender (S), Channel(C), feedback

b. Dependent Variable: efficient service delivery

The results from the ANOVA showed that components of communication significantly predicted participants' ratings of effective service delivery since  $F_{(5, 411)} = 143.326$ ,  $p = .000 < .05$ ). The null hypothesis, which states that components of communication will not significantly predict participants' rating of effective service delivery, was rejected. For the relative contribution of each component of communication on effective service delivery in the ODL programme, the relative  $\beta$ -values and corresponding p-values of all the sub-variables were established and results are presented in Table 4.

**Table 4: Relative Contribution of components of communication on effective service delivery**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		Sig.	Remarks
	B	Std. Error	$\beta$	T		
1 (Constant)	-.361	.137		2.633	.009	Significant
Receiver (Learner disposition)	-.378	.016	-.902	22.939	.000	Significant
Message (Programme Content)	.285	.026	.565	10.916	.000	Significant
Sender (Faculty member)	.164	.020	.324	8.355	.000	Significant
Channels (Medium)	.215	.024	.441	8.931	.000	Significant
Feedback (Evaluation mechanism)	.337	.026	.712	12.925	.000	Significant

a. Predictors: (Constant) Predictors: (Constant)-Receiver (R), Message (M), Sender (S), Channel(C), feedback,

b. Dependent Variable: effective service delivery

The result from Table 3 indicates that all the predictor variables were statistically significant with effective service delivery in ODL. Learner disposition ( $\beta = .902$ ,  $P < 0.01$ ) made the most significant contribution while sender-institutional/faculty status ( $\beta = .324$ ,  $P < 0.01$ ) made the least significant contributions to effective service delivery in ODL programme. Other variables that made significant contributions in their order contribution include – feedback mechanism ( $\beta = .712$ ,  $P > 0.01$ ), Message i.e programme content ( $\beta = .565$ ,  $P < 0.01$ ), and Channel i.e. media/ technology instruction ( $\beta = .441$ ,  $P < 0.01$ ). The result implies that all the components of communication play a significant role in the effective delivery of the ODL programme.



### **3.2. Discussion**

Findings from the study revealed a significant relationship between each of the components of communications in ODL programmes and effective service delivery in ODL. The implication of this finding is that effective use of each of the component of communication has a role to play in (how effectively the ODL institutions deliver their services)

The finding shows that the receiver which in this implies learner has the highest contribution. This implies that for learners to be satisfied, they needed to be ready, self-motivated, and have a favourable disposition towards the programme of study. This result is consistent with the work of Kelidbari, Dizgah, & Yusefi, (2011) in which they advocated for learner positive disposition in the ODL programme for a quality service delivery in ODL programmes. The finding is also consistent with Anitha (2013) who blamed poor service delivery in many ODL programmes in Nigeria to the negative and poor disposition of learners in the programme and calls for an improved attitude among the key stakeholders for effective ODL programmes. Kate (2009), however, disagreed by stating that if facilitators put a message in a proper perspective for the learner to comprehend, learners' feedback will be positive. Kate further stated that the facilitator has a lot to do for service delivery to be effective.

Similarly, findings from the study also revealed that when ODL materials are written clearly without ambiguity, and when learners can on their own comprehend the relevance of the material sent, they perceive the service rendered to be effective. This implies that the quality of the programme in terms of courses and materials play a critical role in effective service delivery in any ODL programmes. Ojokheta, (2010) corroborated this when he said that how learners perceive course materials is important to their success in open distance programmes. This finding supports the work of Kosseck, Valcour & Lino (2014) in which they found an association between course content, materials, and effective service delivery in ODL programmes. This finding suggests that for service to be effective in any ODL programme, the message (as a component) in terms of content preparation and presentation, must be good enough to attract the right feedback from learners. Davis & Roblyer (2005), opined that preparing the message to elicit the actual feedback is an important part of distance education which will invariably show the effectiveness or otherwise of the service delivery. Also, Moore & Kearsely (2012), concluded that training the facilitators to switch from the conventional teaching styles, to teaching that requires different communication practices such as course preparation and presentation peculiar to distance learning programmes, is one of the challenges of distance education and it's no doubt affecting service delivery. The difficulties in adopting this new role led to instructors' mishandling or poor management of online communication tools and ineffective delivery of course contents (Rienties, Giesbers, Lygo-Baker, Ma, & Rees, 2016).

Furthermore, findings revealed that the teaching role of the facilitator in ODL thinks about their reputation in treating the primary educational mission among ODL institutions. As facilitators disseminate and impart basic or applied knowledge to learners and assist learners in the learning process, they are also expected to follow developments in the field, so their expertise and knowledge base remains current. The result is in tune with the work of Srinivasan (2020) which showed that instructor style of teaching, skill and knowledge were

determinants of student satisfaction and the effectiveness of online programme. However, where this is lacking, the chances of effective service delivery in the ODL programme may be limited. This finding is consistent with the position of Ajao (2010) who reported a significant correlation between the quality of faculty members and effective service delivery in Nigerian Universities. Adewale & Inegodion (2008), warned about the quality of facilitators in distance education. They lamented that although facilitators are qualified to teach in conventional institutions, they lacked the qualification to facilitate open distance education programmes as many of them are not inclined to teach in such a situation. The finding of this study negates that of Gaskell & Mills (2015), who found no relationship between learners' drop-out rate and the quality of faculty members. This implies that there are other factors affecting learners' inability to graduate.

Another finding from the study also revealed that the mode of instructional delivery is germane to effective service delivery in ODL. How effective ODL institutions service delivery is, in bridging the gap caused by the separation of learners and facilitators depend on the channels of communication. However, the result showed that ODL institutions make use of channels that are either not suitable for the course or facilitators are not fully utilizing the potentials of the channels. The findings buttress the earlier position of Laleye (2014) who attributed the slow adoption of ODL programmes in Nigeria to the issues of the medium of engagement. While some favour the adoption of information and communication technology, others are still of the opinion that there is need to integrate face to face approach to open and distance learning programmes because of the recurring issues of infrastructure in all ODL programmes. Bakare, (2018) and Rawat, (2016) in their studies lamented the poor power supply; accessibility and connectivity to the internet; inadequate software packages for learning; varied climatic and environmental factors; lack of technological know-how of facilitators/learners and; shortage of facilities and equipment for conducting research and the low governmental budget has limited the effective integration of ICT as the mode of instructional delivery in ODL institutions. These challenges have posed a major limitation to ODL institutions in adopting full use of technology, thus, underutilizing the full potential of the electronic media (Hossein, Mohammad, Behzad, & Mohammad (2014). The underutilization of the potentials of the medium used for instructional delivery according to Tyler-Smith (2006), is a major setback in making service delivery effective and contributing to the non-completion of programmes by learners.

Finally, findings from the study revealed a lack of effective feedback mechanism which is affecting service delivery in ODL programmes. This implies that the extent of a stakeholder's engagement is germane to the effectiveness of service delivery in ODL programmes. This engagement may come in different forms, including learner-teacher evaluations, teacher-learner evaluations among others. ODL institutions need to ensure regular monitoring and evaluation of learning activities which must be a continuous process. This study is consistent with Ebisine & Ajuar (2015) in which they stated that for a proper evaluation to take place, the medium chosen must be the one that can effectively convey instruction to the receiver and in turn allows the receiver to put across his/her thought. There must also be a functional and systematic collection of data on specified indicators as well as periodic objective assessment. This is to provide the stakeholders with an indication of the extent of progress and achievement of output and outcome of learners (Tyler-Smith, 2006). This finding is also consistent with Brennan & Williams (2004) research in which they attributed poor service delivery to a lack of effective feedback mechanisms in many ODL

institutions. Omorogben & Aghagboren (2009) stated that feedback is difficult in most ODL institutions because learners are not familiar with/utilize the channels of communication effectively, making interaction impossible. ODL institutions should not just be a place where facilitators and learners present themselves to mark the attendance register, but a place for the recognition of performance for effective delivery of educational activities and quality of what is learned. Quality assurance and Quality Control (QAQC) are achievable when the framework for effective feedback is on ground. Hence (authorities of ODL institutions have to take-charge and always double check and evaluate their institutions input variables, the process variables, as well as the output variables

#### **4. Conclusion**

Communication is the life wire of any organization. Thus, for open distance education institutions to attain its main goal of delivering quality education to learners, there must be judicious employment of the principles of effective communication by both institutions and learners. This is because communication goes a long way in shaping the organizational culture which the open distance institutions are trying to build. The effective use of the components of communication as a system brings about effective service delivery, but if they are not effectively used, it may lead to unfavourable disposition of learners to open distance learning/education. Fortunately, the skills to use the components effectively could be learned, though not overnight, that can lead to the effective delivery of service in open distance learning/education programmes.

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

- 1) Participants who are in this case (Receivers of ODL programmes) should be prepared to learn skills, aptitude, and knowledge needed for Open Distance Education programmes. They should acquire basic ICT skills, computer skills as well a study- skills required for ODL programmes.
- 2) In line with quality content, Distance Learning Institutions should focus more on the training of facilitators on the effective use of various media or channels to be able to produce and deliver pedagogical content and instruction to learners of ODL programmes for effective service delivery.
- 3) Adequate, flexible, and varied feedback mechanisms should be put in place so learners can use any that best suits them. This may invariably change their attitude towards the programme for a better result.

Management of Open and distance education should adopt more pragmatic options and choices in terms of time, venue, and technology while designing distance education programmes. Multiple modes of delivery -- the workplace, block modes, modules, interactive formats, and other nonstandard modes of delivery - including on-campus, in-class, independent lectures, seminars, tutorials, and practical sessions should be incorporated as means of content delivery.

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