



The Role of Open and Distance Education in National Development of Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

The quest for national development has prompted many developing nations to focus on education since it is recognized globally as the cornerstone of national development. The developed nations of the world are ahead of the developing nations in terms of development particularly in the area of human capital development, entrepreneurship skills development, employment generation and poverty alleviation. These nations are able to achieve this advantage through adequate investment in education. Developed nations annually increase their budget to education with a view to establish more open and distance learning centres to give all their citizens both young and old, privileged and less-privileged the opportunity to acquire education. With this system of education, they are able to achieve national development. Many developing countries including Nigeria have follow suit by introducing open and distance education with a view to achieve national development This paper examines the role of open and distance education in national development of Nigeria. It takes an insight to the contribution of open and distance education to human capital development, entrepreneurship skill development, employment generation and poverty alleviation. It was concluded that open and distance education plays a significant role in national development of Nigeria through the creation of skilled manpower and entrepreneurs, human capacity building, employment generation and poverty alleviation.

Keywords: Open education, distance education, national development, human capital development, entrepreneurial skill development, employment generation, and poverty alleviation.

INTRODUCTION

The issue of national development is a major priority to every responsible government. It occupies a distinct place in their developmental agenda and constitutes a major campaign promise. The quest for national development has prompted many governments in developing countries to focus on education since it is recognized globally as the cornerstone of national development. A country with educated citizens stands a better chance of achieving national development than those with uneducated citizens. This is based on the fact that educated citizens are not just creative and productive citizens, they are culturally and socially tolerant people who exercise ethical and moral considerations in national and local affairs (Jegade, 2016), with an entrepreneurial spirit which helps to create employment opportunities and reduce poverty among the teeming youth. They contribute to technical, economic and political development because of the leadership qualities and ideology.

The Nigerian Government having realized the contribution of education to national development decided to introduce open and distance education to enable its citizens (who missed the chance earlier in life) to secure an education. This form of education is open to all and is not limited by age, sex, marital status, religion or family size. It is a type of education that can be acquired from a distance and has no boundary or limit. Khakhar (2001) stated that distance teaching is spreading to all areas of education and training, as governments become aware of its potentials in dealing effectively with the numerous problems they face. Governments in developing countries have begun to invest huge resources to solve the problem of educational deficiencies using open and distance education techniques in such high-priority areas as primary and secondary and teacher education. They have come to realize that such technique is reliable in meeting the education needs of the society.

The most prominent advances in distance education over the past 30 years have been in the university sector (Evans and Nation, in Khakhar, 2001). A number of open universities have been established across the globe to provide open and distance education. Open universities embrace a fully integrated system of distance teaching with subsystems for designing course materials and providing support and instruction to students. Governments in developing countries have established a single-mode distance teaching universities and considered it as a means of meeting the national education needs. For instance, the Nigerian government established the National Open University of Nigeria as a means of addressing the education needs of the country. Dual-mode universities have also grown in number and have begun to flourish. As the Nigerian government continues to face financial challenges, they began to add distance teaching components to the existing universities. This system of adding distance teaching components to the existing universities has a far longer tradition than open universities.

Today, many universities are providing distance education to students. Open and distance education is considered as a tool for achieving national development. Such education tends to provide increased access to students who could not have the opportunity earlier in life to secure an education. Aderinoye and Ojokheta (2004) posit that open and distance education is an appropriate instrument for filling the gap in the provision of education. With mass education, the country will experienced significant economic growth and development as educated citizens are more likely to be creative and go into entrepreneurship which will help to create more employment opportunities for the teeming youth and reduce the poverty level in the country. Kaufman, Walkins and Guera (2000) added that bridging the educational gap through open and distance education will go a long way in solving the problem of manpower shortage in industries.

A developing country that invests in open and distance education is more likely to achieve national development within a short period of time. Educated citizens are the most important assets of a nation and as such the government must ensure that its citizens secure the education which they have missed at some point in their lives. Umoru and Ott (2001) argue that without education it will be difficult for a nation to achieve national development. It is against this backdrop that this paper examines the role of open and distance education in national development of Nigeria. To achieve this, the concept of open and distance education was discussed. The concept of national development was also discussed. The role of open and distance education in human capital development, entrepreneurship skills development, employment generation and poverty reduction as indices of national development was also examined. The paper applies the Wedemeyer's theory of independent study as its theoretical framework for analysis and examines the challenges of open and distance education in Nigeria. The concluding remarks were given based on the robust discussion and the recommendations were provided as the way forward to remedy the problems of ODE in Nigeria.

Theoretical Framework

The Wedemeyer's theory of independent study was adopted in this study. This theory is centered on the independence of the learners (students). The theory laid emphasis on the learners' independence and the use of technology (such as recorded lectures in Mpeg and Avi formats in CDs and DVDs and Self Learning Materials (SLM) through projectors) in the learning process. The learner's independence refers to his or her responsibility in the learning process. The theory of independent study proposes the separation of teaching from learning as a strategy to break education (learning) "space-time barrier" (Wedemeyer in Claudia, 2011).

Independent study is a type of education offered by many tertiary institutions. This type of education is sometimes referred to as direct study because it is an educational activity undertaken by an individual with little or no supervision (Wikipedia, 2017). Typically, the student and the lecturer (instructor) agree on a topic for the student (learner) to research with guidance from the lecturer or instructor for an agreed or specific amount of credits. Independent study provides a platform for students to work on a topic of interest that does not fit into traditional academic curriculum. Such study provides an opportunity for students to learn specialized materials and explore their interest deeper by making crucial decisions regarding how and where to direct their talents to in the future.

The Wedemeyer's theory of independent study is very useful in explaining the role of open and distance education in national development. The theory emphasizes a system of education that is provided from a distance where the learner can be able to learn with little or no supervision. The theory propose a system of education that is provided from a distance using technology (such as

recorded lectures in Mpeg and Avi formats in CDs and DVDs and Self Learning Materials (SLM) through projectors) in the learning process. Through this system of education, institutions can be able to render educational services to a large number of citizens in a country and achieve national development.

Concept of Open and Distance Education

Open and distance education is an educational pattern, approach and strategy that permit people to learn with no barrier with respect to time and space, age and previous educational qualification – no entry qualification, no age limit, no regard to sex, race tribes, state of origin, etc (Alaezi in Jimoh, 2013). Such education system is said to open because students are not limited by such factors like age, sex, pregnancy, work, race, religion and so on. It is an education that is open to all (Ayo, Odukoya and Azeta, 2014). Jegede in Onwu (2013) states that open and distance learning provides education for all, promotes lifelong learning and improves on the economies of scale in education management. The introduction of distance education in Nigeria can be traced back to the colonial era where colleges and universities from United Kingdom provided intermediate and advanced level training to a number of qualified Nigerians via correspondence courses (Owoeye, in Jimoh, 2013). After the colonial masters left, the practice of open and distance education died until 1983 when the Federal Government introduced open and distance education into the university education system. Although this system of education was introduced to university education in 1983, it only became operational in 2001 following the establishment of National Open University of Nigeria. Two other universities in Nigeria (Obafemi Awolowo University and Nnamdi Azikwe University) were given license to operate open and distance education.

These three universities introduced correspondence study, part-time programme, sandwich programmes and continuing education programmes in the form of adult education programme. Initially, the sandwich programmes were established to be run during the period of school long vacation to create an opportunity for workers and teachers to upgrade their certificate. The programmes were open to all categories of persons with no discrimination with respect to age, sex, marital status, religion or race, but with varied entry qualifications which range from primary school certificate, attempted School Certificate, School Certificate holders, TC II teachers, NCE to first degree holders (Owoeye, in Jimoh, 2013). A lot of people including women took advantage of this opportunity to secure higher education. Today, more universities have introduced distance learning programmes including correspondence study, part-time programme, sandwich programmes and continuing education programmes, weekend programmes, National Teacher Institute (NTI) and e-learning programmes.

The introduction of open and distance education was aimed at increasing people's access to education especially those who could not have the opportunity to secure an education earlier in life due to poverty, oppression and marginalization (Nwaocha and Iyama, 2008). The National Policy of Education outlined the objectives of introducing open and distance education in Nigeria. According to the Policy in Jimoh (2013), the objectives of open and distance education are to:

1. provide access to quality education and equity in educational opportunities for those who otherwise would have been denied;
2. meet special needs of employers by mounting special certificate courses for their employees at their workplace;
3. encourage internationalization especially of tertiary education curricula;
4. ameliorate the effect of internal and external brain drain in tertiary institutions by utilizing Nigerian experts as teachers regardless of their locations or places of work (Jimoh, 2013).

Concept of National Development

The concept "national development" is very broad in scope as it covers all aspects of life of an individual and the nation. It is a process of reconstruction and development in various dimensions of a nation and development of individuals (Bawa, 2016). It includes the growth and expansion of the various industries, agriculture, education, social, religious and cultural institutions. National development can best be defined as all-round development (social, political, economic, cultural and human capital development) of a nation (Rajaj and Chiv, 2009). Lawal & Oluwatoyin (2011) define national development as the overall development or a collective socio-economic, political as well as

religious advancement of a country or nation. Broadly, national development implies development through a planned national economy, increase in agricultural production, increase in industrial production, development of human resources, application of science and technology in industrial sector, provision of mass education and various facilities to meet the needs and aspirations of the poor and deprived segments of the population of a nation.

Many developing countries of the world including Nigeria have been strategizing to achieve national development. Some of these countries have been faced with massive underdevelopment characterized by decline economic growth in terms of GDP and standard of living, large scale unemployment, large pool of illiteracy, problem of national an emotional integration, inertia to change process, slow process of modernization, poverty, and poor standard of living, mismatch between moral and scientific values, unwillingness to take responsibility, and low quality products of tertiary institutions. Bwala and Koroma (2005) posit that governments in developing countries have formulated several policies to achieve national development but their efforts have remain futile due to lack of proper implementation.

However, the governments have turned their focus to education since it is believed to be the cornerstone of national development. Rajaj and Chiv (2009) posit that education is considered as an instrument for national development because it tends to facilitate human capital development, increase productivity, skills development, employment generation, poverty reduction and economic growth. The Nigerian government having realized the contribution of education to national development decided to introduce open and distance education with a view to create an opportunity for those who missed the chance to secure education earlier in life to acquire education. This led to the introduction of part-time programmes, sandwich programmes, corresponding study and continuing education programme. Boyi (2013) states that these programmes were designed to bridge the educational gap that exists in the country.

Open-Distance Education and Human Capital Development

Open and distance education plays a crucial role in human capital development in Nigeria. In particular, education and all education-oriented activities and investments are required for the accumulation of human capital (Tekeli and Gunsoy, 2014). Open and distance education is seen as an investment in human capital development. Ayo et al (2014) define human development as the process of nurturing human being to experience optimal cognitive, affective and psychomotor development such that the individual is able to achieve self-actualization within the shortest period of time; while Berber in Tekeli and Gunsoy (2014) describes human capital investment as any investment made for the labour force to be educated, skilled, qualified and productive. Ayo et al (2014) opine that social and economic development of a country ultimately depends on the quality of human capital development. It is universally recognized that investment in human capital development is an essential component of a nation's development (Col-ADB, in Ayo et al, 2014).

Open and distance education is considered as an important instrument for human capital development. According to Nwaocha and Iyama (2008), open and distance education create an opportunity for a nation to develop its human capital especially those who missed the chance to secure education earlier in their lives. It creates an avenue for citizens to be educated, productive and creative and avail them with the opportunity to contribute their own quota to the development of the nation. Jimoh (2013) argues that open and distance education create an avenue for many people to be better workers in any profession they choose or are currently engaged in. For companies, open and distance education offers in-service training for their employees to increase their productivity and creativity. Nakpodia (2010) posits that Nigerian government enrolled prisoners or inmates in distance learning programme in order for them to be useful to themselves and contribute their quota to the development of the nation after their release. Ojokheta (2010) states that open and distance education enable people of different caliber to gain knowledge and skills that would make them productive and creative and become useful to the society at large.

Reflecting on how distance education has contributed to human capital development in Nigeria, Dennis in Jimoh (2013) states that Nigeria can now boost of capable and competent teachers working in its educational sector, improvement in the quantity and quality of teachers. More than 300,000 primary school teachers enrolled in National Teacher's Institute (NTI) have successfully earned their Teacher's Grade II Certificate (Dennis in Jimoh, 2013). NTI has also registered serving teachers in its

NCE and pivotal Teacher Training Programme, which has helped to develop the serving teachers and equipped them with the new teaching methods. The programmes have produced more quality teachers that will drive the nation to greatness (Mukamusoni, 2006).

So far open and distance education has made significant contribution to teacher development. Perraton and UNESCO in Fozdar (2009) explain that distance education has been used extensively to provide pre-service teacher education, upgrading of academic qualification, in-service continuing professional development in subject content areas and instructional methods. Jimoh (2013) opines that open and distance learning together with the appropriate information and communication technologies (ICT's) have impacted positively and significantly on teacher development in Africa.

Open-Distance Education and Entrepreneurship Skills Development

Open and distance education plays a significant role in entrepreneurship skills development. According to Raza and Allson (2006), open and distance educational institutions offers entrepreneurship courses which help students to become successful entrepreneurs. For instance, many universities in Nigeria offers part-time and sandwich programmes on entrepreneurship, with a view to produce successful entrepreneurs that will contribute to national development. Umoru and Ott (2001) posit that entrepreneurship is a crucial component of national development, noting that most developed economies of the world reach their milestones through the activities of small and medium scale industries. According to them, the activities of small and medium scale industries create more job opportunities for the youths and reduce poverty and hunger in these countries.

With the entrepreneurship courses offered by distance educational institutions in Nigeria, students in the department are expected to acquire the relevant entrepreneurial skills that will enable them become successful entrepreneurs and contribute meaningfully to national development. Fozdar (2009) notes that when individuals gain the required knowledge and skills to become successful entrepreneurs, they would contribute their own quota to national development by creating more job opportunities for youth, reduce poverty and hunger, and contribute to the Gross Domestic Product of the country. Ayo et al (2014) agree that distance education serves as a medium for creating successful entrepreneurs that will drive national development. They further stated that without education in the form of distance learning which avail students the opportunity to gain professional skills, it will be difficult to achieve national development.

Some authors believe that open and distance learning programmes provide students with vocational and technical skills that will enable them become successful entrepreneurs and be self-reliant (e.g. Fozdar, 2009; Aderinoye and Ojokheta, 2004; Besong, 2014). In this globalized world, it is a well known fact that entrepreneurial skills enhance national development through the establishment of SMEs which create employment opportunities. Fozdar (2009) posits that some distance educational institutions offers programmes which are in the category of skill development, vocational and technical education which enables people to be good entrepreneurs. The benefits of having good and successful entrepreneurs in any nation is that their business activities contribute to the national development by boosting the GDP of the country, create employment opportunities and reduce poverty rate.

Open-Distance Education and Employment Generation

Open and distance education plays an important role in employment generation. Such education makes an individual to be productive and employable. Without education, it will be difficult for an individual to be gainfully employed especially into white collar jobs. Aderinoye and Ojokheta (2004) states that employment generation is an important measure of national development. Many countries of the world assessed their level of development based on the number of jobs created within a given period of time. Dhanaraiian (2001) observes that developed nations created more jobs for their citizen through education. They make adequate efforts for their citizens to be educated. Some of them have been using open and distance learning programmes to prepare their citizens for employment. Standing in Tekeli and Gunsoy (2014) emphasizes the importance of education especially university and vocational education in women's employment and participation in the labour force. He noted that women who missed the chance to secure higher education due to poverty, oppression or marginalization can capitalize on the opportunity provided by distance education to acquire higher education and be gainfully employed into white collar jobs.

Open and distance education create an avenue for all working class citizens who missed the chance to secure higher education to acquire a university degree that would enable them apply for a better and well paid jobs. Jegede (2016) states that most people who partake in distance learning programme have the belief that once they acquire a university degree or certificate they can be able to apply for a better job. In other words, open and distance learning programme gives an individual a better opportunity to get a well paid job once they have completed the programme and secure the certificate. This is applicable for those who are currently working with an establishment that is not paying them well due to lack of university degree or certificate. With the opportunity to further their education and acquire a university degree, people in distance learning programmes are hopeful of getting a better job (Ihejirika, 2003).

It is important to note that most of the working people running a distance learning programme are not satisfying with their present job. They are just doing the job to survive and for them if a better job offer comes they will not waste time to make a switch (Ojokheta, 2010). However, Nakpodia (2010) stated that some of the people running distance learning programmes are satisfied with the nature of their job but they are not just comfortable with their position due to the fact that they are junior staffs who wish to be promoted someday. Nwaocha and Iyama (2008) posit that the desire to get promoted to bigger position is the brain behind their enrollment in distance learning programmes. They believe that with the certificate they stand to acquire after the completion of their programme, they will be able to get promotion and live comfortably.

Open-Distance Education and Poverty Reduction

Economists and other social scientists have attributed poverty to lack of education or illiteracy (Onwe, 2013). Onwe however stated that education is the driving force for eradicating extreme poverty from a nation. Dhanaraian (2001) states that poverty is a symbol of under-development of a nation and it could only be reduced through education and skill acquisition. Open and distance education is a significant tool to develop the human capital of a nation and reduce poverty. Aderinoye and Ojokheta (2004) posits that open and distance education create an opportunity for all citizens (both young and old) to acquire higher education and secure a profession that will enable them earn white collar jobs and defeat poverty.

Open and distance education helps to reduce poverty level among workers of different categories as the programmes enable them to upgrade their certificate to a higher level which will in turn earn them promotion and increase their salary structure for better and improved standard of living (Kaufman, Walkins and Guera, 2000). Tekeli and Gunsoy (2014) posit that distance education plays a major role in reducing poverty, social injustice and weakness. Onwu (2013) states that distance education provide a second chance for poor people who do not have the opportunity to secure higher education earlier in life. With the opportunity offered by these programmes, individuals will be able to acquire a profession which will help them to fight poverty and improve their economic status in the society.

Most people who partake in distance learning programmes are working class people whose jobs cannot fletch them any reasonable of money that can enable them take good care of their family and extend hands to their relatives (Besong, 2014). This category of persons embarked on this programme to acquire higher academic qualifications that will earn them promotion in their workplace and uplift them from poverty. Meanwhile, Ojokheta (2010) noted that distance education is the only avenue for people who missed the opportunity to acquire higher education make amend and alleviate themselves from poverty. Dhanaraian (2001) posits that the desire to migrate from poverty to person of social status is the reason why many people who missed out on higher education purchase part-time forms and sandwich programme. Through these programmes, people have the chance to obtain university degree and competent with other intellectuals in the society. Khakhar (2001) opines that open and distance education is the most effective strategy to bridge the wide education gap and alleviate people from poverty and hunger.

Challenges of Open and Distance Education in Nigeria

Open and distance education in Nigeria is faced with numerous challenges. These challenges are discussed below:

Poor Funding

Open and distance learning programmes in Nigeria is poorly funded. The fund allocated to the various distance learning centres is grossly inadequate to match the growing number of students' enrollment in the centres (Rena, 2007). The number of students' enrolment in distance learning programmes has increased significantly in view of the increasing demand for university education. This increase in students' enrollment in distance learning programmes requires an additional increase in the funds allocated to the study centres (Yusuf, 2006). Olojede (2008) posit that fund allocation to the various distance learning centres does not correspond with the increase in students' enrollment in the programmes. Jimoh (2013) noted that investment in ODL is therefore low because the soft and hardwares required are costly. These soft and hardwares needed for the successful implementation of the programmes are not produce locally and as such they are expensive to get. This is a major impediment because success in any educational policy is contingent on the involvement of all stakeholders and the sponsorship of funding agencies (Yusuf in Jimoh, 2013).

Inadequate Teaching and Learning Facilities in the Study Centres

The teaching and learning facilities available at the various distance learning centres in Nigeria are grossly too inadequate to match the growing population of students in the centres. Jegede (2016) noted that most of the distance learning centres do not have enough classrooms, libraries, workshops and laboratories for practical works. Nwaocha and Iyama (2008) observe that most distance learning centres cannot boast of adequate functional workshops and laboratories. In few cases where technical equipments were supplied, there was no workshop to install the equipment. This certainly led to frustration on the part of the facilitators and students. The challenge of inadequate teaching and learning facilities at the various distance learning centres arise as a result of poor funding of the programmes. Jimoh (2013) noted that lack of or low level of provision of the facilities for ODL programmes in the country is one major fall-outs of poor funding.

Irregular and Untimely Distribution of Course Materials

The quality of open and distance education in Nigeria is also hampered by irregular and untimely distribution of course materials. According to Okonkwo (2012), unavailability and poor distribution of course materials underpin instructional delivery at the various distance learning centres. Jegede, in Okonkwo (2012) noted that there is delay and difficulties in developing and distributing materials to study centres and students. According to him, the delay in the distribution of study materials to study centres results in students' untimely preparation for examination and consequently poor academic performance. Musingafi, Mapuranga, Chwanza and Zebron (2015) posit that directors at the various study centres found it difficult to cope with the pressure from students over the delay in the distribution of course materials. They further reveal that a lot of distance learning students attribute their poor performance in examination to irregular and delay in the distribution of course materials.

Non-utilization of Information and Communication Technologies in the Study Centres

Despite the emergence of technologies and its application in distance learning programmes, many distance learning centres in Nigeria is yet to embrace the use of ICT in teaching distance courses. Yusuf (2006) observes that most distance learning centres in Nigeria do not have adequate ICT and as such they do not adopt the use of ICT in their teaching and learning process. Without technology, a future for distance education does not exist (Tawo, Arikpo, Ojuah and Oshiomu, 2008). A study conducted by Yusuf and Falade as reported in Tawo, et al (2008) indicates that the print media (textbooks, graphic materials, posters, and photographs were very frequently or frequently used by distance learners. For instance, 98.47% of the distance learners involved in their study indicated having very frequently or frequently used textbooks. Briamoh (2015) argues that many African countries including Nigeria are not ready in any form to embrace ICT for educational purpose let alone for economic development. Briamoh cited an example using the 2015 report released recently by the World Economic Forum (WEF) which measured how countries are performing in leveraging ICT for social and economic impact, showed that 143 countries were compared globally.

The inadequate use of ICT in distance learning programmes has captured the attention of the National Universities Commission. The Commission recent issues a directive that henceforth all distance

operating institutions should deliver their course lectures using information and communication technologies such as computers, laptops, recorded lectures in Mpeg and Avi formats in CDs and DVDs and Self Learning Materials (SLM) through projectors, video conferencing and interactive sessions between students and faculties via internet (Panchabakesan, 2011). Although the Commission has issued a directive to all distance operating universities to use ICT in teaching distance courses, many of these institutions are yet to embrace modern technologies in their distance learning programmes. Okonkwo (2012) posits that non-application of ICT in distance learning programmes in Nigeria has negatively affected the quality of distance learning in the country.

Lack of Regular Payment of Facilitators Allowances in the Study Centre

Many centre coordinators find it difficult to motivate their facilitators through regular payment of their allowances. Howell, William and Lindsay (2003) observe that most of the centre coordinators do not pay facilitators allowances as at when due. This has caused a lot of conflict between centre coordinator and facilitators. Bates (2000) posits that most of the conflict that arise between administrators of distance learning centres and facilitators stem from the inability of administrators to pay facilitators allowances regularly and timely. Some coordinators of distance learning centres find it difficult to make regular payment of facilitators' allowances. Ayo, Odukoya and Azeta (2014) stated that when facilitators are not paid their allowances regularly and timely, it will diminish the morale and commitment to work. Oluniyi (2013) posits that the most important factor that motivates workers is regular payment of their salaries and entitlement and when these salaries and entitlements are not paid regularly and timely, it will decrease workers commitment to work and increase the rate of absenteeism. When workers absent themselves from work, it becomes difficult for administrators to achieve their set goals. Rena (2007) argues that the inability of centre coordinators to pay facilitators' allowances is due to inadequate funding of the programme. When open and distance learning programmes are adequately funded, the problem of irregular or untimely payment of facilitators' allowances will be a thing of the past.

CONCLUSION

From our robust discussion, it was evident that open and distance education plays a vital role in national development. It creates an opportunity for all citizens, young and old, privileged and less privileged, to acquire education. Through open and distance education, a nation is able to develop its human capital, create more employment opportunities, create successful and spirited entrepreneurs with diverse skills and reduce poverty for national development. In other words, open and distance education enhances human capital development, entrepreneurship skills development, employment generation and poverty reduction. Developing country like Nigeria can use open and distance education to fill the educational gap in the country and achieve national development. Although the country has introduced open and distance education, the programmes are faced with numerous challenges including poor funding, inadequate teaching and learning facilities at the study centres, inadequate use of information and communication technologies in teaching distance courses, irregular and untimely distribution of course materials to the various study centres and lack of adequate motivation of facilitators through regular payment of their allowances among others. The problems have negatively affected the quality and standard of distance learning programmes in Nigeria.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following measures should be taken in order to improve the quality and standard of open and distance education in Nigeria.

1. Nigerian government should increase the annual budget to education as this would enable tertiary institutions offering distance learning programmes to adequately fund their programmes for quality distance education delivery.
2. Tertiary institutions offering distance learning programmes should ensure that there are adequate teaching and learning facilities (classrooms, libraries, laboratories and workshops) at their various study centres as this would enhance quality distance education delivery that is equivalent to the conventional regular programmes on campus.

3. Nigerian universities offering distance learning programmes should embrace the use of ICT in teaching their distance courses as directed by the National Universities Commission (NUC) as this would improve the quality and standard of distance learning programmes in Nigeria.
4. Nigerian universities offering distance learning programmes should adequately motivate their facilitators through regular payment of their allowances as this would increase workers commitment and productivity for quality education delivery at the various study centres.
5. Finally, it is recommended that universities offering distance learning programmes should regularly and timely distribute course materials to their various study centres as this would enhance quality distance education delivery in Nigeria.

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