

## An Evaluation of National Open University in Ondo State, Nigeria

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**Abstract:** This research examined the evaluation of National Open University in Ondo State, Nigeria. In order to guide the study three research questions were raised. The study explored descriptive research of the survey type. Multi-stage sampling technique was used in the selection of respondents. The population of this study consisted of all students in National Open University (NOUN), Ondo State Campus, Nigeria. However, a total number of one hundred (100) respondents were considered as sample size for this study from five (5) faculties out of eight (8) faculties in the university using simple random sampling technique. A self-structured instrument titled “National Open University Program’s Evaluation Questionnaire (NOUPEQ)” was validated and employed to collect data for the study. The data collected and analyzed using mean ( $\bar{x}$ ) and standard deviation statistical tools. Findings reveal that Flexibility in education delivery system and giving students the opportunity to combine education with work were agreed majorly upon. The extent to which the objective of National Open University in Nigeria has been achieved is very high. It was concluded that the National Open University of Nigeria has contributed to the social-economic and technological advancement of Nigeria as a country. It was therefore recommended that Ministries of Education both at state, federal and local governments should begin to play a role in the development of distance learning education. Poor funding constitutes a big problem to distance learning education in Nigeria. Government should consider voting reasonable allocation of resources to this sector.

**Keywords:** Evaluation, National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN), Ondo State.

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## Introduction

Generally in the whole world, particularly in Nigeria, education has been considered to be corner-stone for development. It forms the basis for literacy, skills acquisition, technological advancement and ability to harness human and material resources toward the achievement of social goal (Fatola, 2021). Adekunle (2023) reviewed education as the totality of all processes by which a child or young adult develops the ability, attitudes and other forms of behavior which are of positive value to the society. Education is very important in any given society. It is a process by which ability and capability of individuals are developed. Individual ability might be physical ability, emotional ability, social ability and intellectual ability. Emoruwa (2023) citing Kenneth (2022) sees education as a process by which any society through schools, colleges, universities and other Institution deliberately transmits knowledge, values and skills from one person to another.

Education has been an important aspect of human life throughout the history of humanity. It is one of the most fundamental instruments that can be used for bringing change in an individual and society at large. Education is a cornerstone of economic and social development. It improves the productive capacity of societies and their political, economic and scientific institutions. It helps to reduce poverty by mitigating its effects on population, health and nutrition. It also increases the value and efficiency of the labour offered by the poor. Education is vital in producing human resource for the economic development of a country. It is any act or experience that has a formative effect on

mind, character or physical ability of an individual (Reda and Mulugeta, 2023).

In the teaching-learning environment, there is a constant need to gauge the outcome or the quality of responsiveness of the teaching and learning process (Masters, 2024). This important symbiotic process generally referred to as assessment, does not only occur after teaching but can also be undertaken before teaching is affected or during the teaching process. More specifically, concepts of test, measurement, and evaluation continue to dominate educational practice around the world. Test may be defined as “any method used to better understand the current knowledge that a student possesses.” This implies that test can be as simple as a teacher’s subjective judgement based on a single observation of student performance or as complex as a five-hour standardized test. Test may affect decisions about grades, advancement, placement, instructional needs, and curriculum. Tests are administered in reading, writing, science and other academic areas. Test is a process by which information is obtained relative to some known objective or goal. Assessment is a broad term that includes testing. A test is a special form of assessment. Tests are assessments made under contrived circumstances especially so that they may be administered. In other words, all tests are assessments, but not all assessments are tests. Teachers test at the end of a lesson or unit. Teachers assess progress at the end of a school year through testing, and assess verbal and quantitative skills through such instruments as the SAT and GRE (Brown, 2018).

On the other hand, the word measurement means the act or the process of ascertaining the context or quantity of something. In another way measurement is an act or process that involves the assignment of a numerical index to whatever is being measured. Measurement tells about the number, the quantity or the score of something (Gronlund, 2016). The process of measurement as it implies involves carrying out actual measurement in order to assign a quantitative meaning to a quality i.e. what is the length of the chalkboard? Determining this must be physically done. Measurement is therefore a process of assigning numerals to objects, quantities or events in order to give quantitative meaning to such qualities (Ogunniyi, 2020). However, Evaluation is an important component of the teaching – learning process. It helps teachers and learners to improve teaching and learning. It is a continuous process not a periodic exercise. It helps in forming of values of judgment, educational status, or achievement of students. Evaluation in one form or the other is inevitable in teaching-learning, as in all fields of activity of education judgments need to be made.

Evaluation is a relatively new term in educational vocabulary. It is a wider concept than testing and measurement and is supposed to judge the worth of all the educational outcomes brought about as a result of teaching learning process. It takes into account the growth of the child as a whole individual and in his total environment. Evaluation is a recent scientific concept and more comprehensive. It takes into consideration both quantitative and qualitative changes in the total being. A comprehensive scheme of educational evaluation serves a number of purposes that ultimately contribute to the improvement of the instructional methods, text books, curriculum and even an advancement of our educational goals. “Education helps us to set tasks and goals which are higher than what we aspired for earlier, thus giving leadership in education”. Evaluation is a continuous appraisal of the achievement of the aims of education as well as the methods of teaching and learning with a view to continuous improvements so that education becomes dynamic and self- developing. It is on this note that this research aim at evaluating National Open University Program in Nigeria.

Distance education has become an important policy option for educational planners in developing countries. In the context of Nigeria, the increasing population, the growing national demand for education, dwindling financial resources, increasing fiscal constraints, and therefore narrowing of access to education led to the emergence of Open Universities in Nigeria to salvage the promise of education only to be choked prematurely to death. Its subsequent re-emergence points to its imperative in salvaging the demand for placement in the universities in Nigeria (Ambe-Uva, 2021). Distance education aims at increasing access to education for those who have difficulty in accessing it within the mainstream such as the poor, illiterate, women, marginalised and those living in remote areas. Distance education is the means by which the teacher is taken literally to the student. It is a teaching and learning process in which students are separated from the teachers by a physical distance which is often bridged by communications technologies (Dhanarajan, 2018).

Open learning on the other hand refers to policies and practices that permit entry to learning with no or minimum barriers with respect to age, gender or time constraints and with recognition of prior learning (Glen, 2022). General Open and Distance Learning education courses are made up of a number of course components or learning materials which can include any of the

following: teaching texts, study guides, course guides, readers or anthologies, assignments (with or without an accompanying tutor guide), television broadcasts or videotapes, radio broadcasts or audiotapes, software or online information and data, CD-ROMS, textbooks and laboratory materials. Tuition materials are sent with questions to be answered, it could be recorded electronic materials and the students do this at their spare time. In addition, some students support may be provided, either through personal communication at local universities or through online student tutors. Both the media used for open and distance learning and the student support arrangements affect the possible level of interaction in ODL. It can be deduced from these definitions that open and distance learning provides educational opportunities needed by anyone, anywhere and at anytime. It provides increased educational opportunities to a larger population in different situations and needs. Both students and employees with distance problems can benefit because it is more flexible in terms of time and can be delivered anywhere.

The National Open University of Nigeria is like the national open university of other countries in the World. The idea of an Open University in Nigeria was first mooted by the National Universities Commission (NUC), the Nigerian government regulatory agency for all universities, in 1976. The Resuscitation of the National Open University of Nigeria came as a compelling need for wider access to higher education for teeming Nigerians would not go away a decade and a half after the suspension of the university, thus the idea of reviving the National Open University forcefully entered into the government political narrative with the coming of the Civilian Government headed by Chief Olusegun Obasanjo in 1999. The vision of the National Open University of Nigeria is to be regarded as the foremost university providing highly accessible and enhanced quality education anchored by social justice, equity, equality and national cohesion through a comprehensive reach that transcends all barriers and the mission is to provide functional, cost-effective, flexible learning which adds life-long value to quality education for all who seek knowledge (NOUN, 2022).

NOUN is an equal opportunity university determined to meet the following objectives that necessitated the establishment of open and distance education in Nigeria: provision of Education for All and promotion of lifelong learning; filling the gap created by the closure of outreaches/satellite campuses; Cost effectiveness; Improved economies of scale; Flexibility of delivery system; Maximum utilization of academic personnel; On-the-job teacher training; Poverty eradication, vocational and lifelong education; Provision of non-formal education; Reaching the unreached and Propagation of national orientation (NOUN, 2022). The evaluation of the National Open University of Nigeria was holistic, involving the assessment of the implementation of NOUN, ascertaining the extent of achievement of the objectives of NOUN, comparing intended outcomes with actual outcomes and assessing the adequacy of the National Open University of Nigeria.

Since the inception of the National Open University of Nigeria and other related open-distance educational institutions, there have been challenges militating against the administrative operation of the various institutions especially the National Open University of Nigeria. It is because of this that this study aimed to evaluating the level of effectiveness of National Open University (NOUN) program in Ondo State, Nigeria.

## Statement of Problem

National Open University of Nigeria is used as a factor to break the three cardinal concept- access, quality and cost that has constrained or stands as an obstacle to education time immemorial. Also, in Nigeria gender inequality and poverty are two serious impediments, many woman have been victims of cultural, socio-political and environmental impacts of development. It is obvious that distance education has a clear impact on gender equality, poverty reduction, economic sustainability, political participation and accessible education. However, despite the contributing impact of National Open University of Nigeria, there are many challenges militating against the operation of the National Open University program in Nigeria. Some of these challenges include; poor funding, inadequate staff, shortage of infrastructure facilities, poor internet services and unstable power supply. It is because of this that this study is aimed to evaluating the level of effectiveness of National Open University (NOUN) program in Ondo State, Nigeria

## Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to evaluate National Open University (NOUN) program in Ondo State, Nigeria.

### *Specifically the study intends to:*

- i. assess the rationale behind the establishment of National Open University in Nigeria;
- ii. evaluate the extent at which objective of National Open University in Nigeria has been achieved;
- iii. examine the contributions of the National Open University program to the educational development of Nigeria

## Research Questions

Sequel to the identified problems above the following questions is generated to guide the researcher.

- i. What are the rationale behind the establishment of National Open University in Nigeria?
- ii. To what extent has the objective of National Open University in Nigeria has been achieved?
- iii. What are the contributions of the National Open University program to the educational development of Nigeria?

## Methodology

### Research Design

The study adopted for this study was descriptive survey. Survey research focuses on the vital facts of people, their beliefs, opinions, perceptions and behaviors. In this study, survey was considered suitable to elicit information on the evaluation of National Open University (NOUN) program in Ondo State, Nigeria

### Population of the Study

The population of this study consisted of all students in National Open University (NOUN), Ondo State Campus, Nigeria.

### Sample and Sampling Technique

A total number of one hundred (100) respondents were considered as sample size for this study. Multi-stage sampling technique was used in the selection of respondents. In the first stage, National Open University (NOUN), Ondo State Campus, Nigeria was purposively selected for the study from all the National Open

University (NOUN) Campus in Nigeria. At the second stage, out of eight (8) faculties in the university, five (5) faculties were selected using simple random sampling technique, which were

- i. Faculty of Social Sciences;
- ii. Faculty of Arts;
- iii. Faculty of Management Sciences;
- iv. Faculty of Education; and
- v. Faculty of Science.

However, Two (2) departments from each of the selected five (5) faculties were selected using simple random sampling technique. From each department, ten (10) undergraduate were selected using the convenience sampling technique, making a total of one hundred (100) undergraduate for the study. Thus, the selected departments include:

### Faculty of Social Sciences

- i. Department of Economics
- ii. Department of Criminology and Security Studies

### Faculty of Arts

- i. Department of English
- ii. Department of Philosophy

### Faculty of Management Sciences

- i. Department of Business Administration
- ii. Department of Public Administration

### Faculty of Education

- i. Department of Art and Social Science Education
- ii. Department of Educational Foundation

### Faculty of Science

- i. Department of Computer Science
- ii. Department of Biology

## Research Instrument

The instrument used in this research survey is a set of questionnaires. The questionnaire was used to collect data for the study namely "National Open University Program's Evaluation Questionnaire (NOUPEQ)" The instrument was divided into six (6) sections.

Section A consisted of the demographic data of the respondent such as gender, level, age, among others. Section B consisted of question items concerning the rationale behind the establishment of National Open University in Nigeria. Section C consisted of question items concerning the extent at which objective of National Open University in Nigeria has been achieved, Section D consisted of question items concerning the contributions of the National Open University program to the educational development of Nigeria, Section E consisted of question items concerning the challenges militating against the administration operation of the National Open University program in Ondo State, Nigeria, while Section F consisted of question items concerning suggest possible ways of improving the administration operation of the National Open University program in Ondo State, Nigeria. This questionnaire was constructed on the basis of research questions on a four point rating scale as follow: Strongly Agree (SA); Agree (A); Disagree (D) Strongly Disagree (SD).

## Validation of Research Instrument

The research instrument for data collection was given to the project Supervisor and two other Lecturers in the Department of

Educational Psychology and Counselling, Faculty of Education to ascertain whether the instrument elicited responses and information required within the framework of the research objectives. The question items were scrutinized for appropriateness and suitability for use in collecting data for the study. Corrections and suggestions were adopted in the final instrument.

### Reliability of Instrument

The questionnaire was subjected to pilot study. To establish its reliability, Twenty (20) copies of the questionnaire were distributed to twenty (20) respondents from the faculty of Law, National Open University, Ondo State, Nigeria which was not part of the selected faculty for the study. Reliability co-efficient was obtained using Cronbach's Alpha. The reliability co-efficient yielded  $r = 0.994$  adjudged good enough for the study.

### Method of Data Collection

Data were collected through questionnaire administered to students of the selected departments in National Open University, Ondo State, Nigeria. The researcher personally visited the selected department, sought permission from the departmental head so as to administer questionnaire to the respondents, thus, one hundred

(100) copies of the questionnaire were administered and collected immediately after completion to avoid loss in transit.

### Method of Data Analysis

The responses to the questionnaire were collated and analyzed using mean ( $\bar{x}$ ) and standard deviation. The mean and standard deviation of the questionnaire items were used and interpreted based on statistical real limit of the numbers as follows: Strongly Agree(SA) = 4, Agree(A) =3, Disagree(D) =2 and Strongly disagreed(SD) =1. A cut-off point determined the accepted and rejected items.

## Result and Discussion of Findings

This chapter presents various findings drawn from the study. The following results presented are based on the research questions raised, which the study has sought to answer.

### Results

**RQ1:** What are the rationales behind the establishment of National Open University in Nigeria?

**Table 4.1: Mean and rank order table of the rationale behind the establishment of National Open University in Nigeria**

S/N	Item statement: NOUN	N	$\bar{X}$	Rank
1	Gives students the opportunity to combine education with work	100	2.93	2 <sup>th</sup>
2	Allows for a two-way communication between the teacher and the learners	100	2.91	3 <sup>rd</sup>
3	Provide flexible education delivery system	100	2.99	1 <sup>st</sup>
4	Provides education for all and promotes lifelong learning in Nigeria	100	2.74	5 <sup>th</sup>
5	Maximizes then utilization of academic personnel and is therefore in the long run a cost saving measure in Nigeria	100	2.86	4 <sup>th</sup>

Table 4.1 shows rationale behind the establishment of National Open University in Nigeria. Based on the findings, flexibility in education delivery system was agreed majorly upon to provides more precise data on rationale behind the establishment of National Open University in Nigeria which ranked 1<sup>st</sup> with mean of 2.99. Also, giving students the opportunity to combine education wit work is ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> with mean of 2.93. More so, items 2 and 5 are ranked 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> while providing education for all and promotes lifelong learning in Nigeria is ranked the least with mean of 2.74

**RQ2:** To what extent has the objective of National Open University in Nigeria has been achieved?

**Table 4.2: Frequency distribution showing the achievement of objective of National Open University in Nigeria**

S/N	Item statement: NOUN	SA	A	D	SD	$\bar{X}$	St.D
1	been effective seen its establishment	40(40%)	60(60%)	-	-	<b>3.40</b>	.581
2	provided students opportunities to study wherever, whenever, and whatever they want	36(36%)	51(51%)	9(9%)	4(4%)	<b>3.19</b>	.604
3	Provided students the convenience of course materials being delivered at home or office	12(21%)	37(37%)	36(36%)	15(15%)	<b>2.46</b>	.691
4	Aided feedback easily	35(35%)	47(47%)	12(12%)	6(6%)	<b>3.11</b>	1.172
5	Provides equal opportunities to all students, regardless of social status	30(30%)	70(70%)	-	-	<b>3.30</b>	.844

N= 100; SA= (Strongly Agree) A= (Agree), D= (Disagree); SD= (Strongly Disagree)

Table 4.2 shows the extent to which the objective of National Open University in Nigeria has been achieved. Based on the result, been effective seen its establishment is gathered with mean of 3.40 with St.D of 1.172; followed by Provides equal opportunities to all students, regardless of social status with mean of 3.30. Also, provided students opportunities to study wherever, whenever, and whatever they want is ranked 3<sup>rd</sup> while the program

is aided feedback easily is less significant with mean of 3.11. Meanwhile, provided students the convenience of course materials being delivered at home or office is the least achieved NOUN program with mean 2.46

**RQ3:** What are the contributions of the National Open University program to the educational development in Nigeria?

**Table 4.3: Frequency distribution showing the contributions of the National Open University program to the educational development in Nigeria**

S/N	Item statement: NOUN program	SA	A	D	SD	$\bar{X}$	St.D
1	Provide education to reach the “un-reached”	24(24%)	50(50%)	21(21%)	5(5%)	<b>2.93</b>	.840
2	Provides education for all and promotes life-long learning	36(36%)	42(42%)	10(10%)	12(12%)	<b>3.02</b>	1.014
3	Responds effectively to the growing demand of working adults who have difficulties in getting in conventional education	16(16%)	52(52%)	25(25%)	7(7%)	<b>2.77</b>	.749
4	Improves on the economies of scale i.e., more Nigerians receive quality education but at a reduced cost	41(41%)	59(59%)	-	-	<b>3.41</b>	.702
5	Assist individuals to improve their employment prospects in a rapidly changing socio-economic environment	20(20%)	63(63%)	11(11%)	6(6%)	<b>2.97</b>	.822
<b>Grand Mean</b>						<b>3.02</b>	

Table 4.3 reveals the contributions of the National Open University program to the educational development in Nigeria. Based on item 4 which states “Improves on the economies of scale i.e., more Nigerians receive quality education but at a reduced cost” is found to be significant contribution” 41% agreed while 59% strongly agreed with mean and St.D of 3.41 and .702. Also, 36% strongly agreed and 42% agreed that the program contributed by providing education for all and promotes life-long learning while 22% disagreed to this. On the basis of providing education to reach the “un-reached”, 20% strongly agreed and 63% agreed while 11% disagreed and 6% strongly disagreed with mean of 2.97. More so, based on assisting individuals to improve their employment prospects in a rapidly changing socio-economic environment 74% agreed while 26% disagreed with mean of 2.93 and St.D of .840. Lastly, 68% agreed that responding effectively to the growing demand of working adults who have difficulties in getting in conventional education while 32% disagree with mean and St.D of 2.77 and .749, respectively.

### Discussion of Findings

Analysis showing the rationale behind the establishment of National Open University in Nigeria revealed that flexibility in education delivery system was agreed majorly upon to provides more precise data on rationale behind the establishment of National Open University in Nigeria which ranked 1<sup>st</sup> with mean of 2.99. Also, giving students the opportunity to combine education wit work is ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> with mean of 2.93. More so, items 2 and 5 are ranked 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> while providing education for all and promotes lifelong learning in Nigeria is ranked the least with mean of 2.74. This finding align with the work of Jegede, (2014) who opined that the programmes available under the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) are essentially designed to widen the access to education and to ensure equity and equality of opportunities for all and sundry.

Analysis showing the extent to which the objective of National Open University in Nigeria has been achieved revealed that NOUN has been effective since its establishment is gathered with mean of 3.40 with St.D of 1.172; followed by Provides equal opportunities to all students, regardless of social status with mean of 3.30. Also, provided students opportunities to study wherever, whenever, and whatever they want is ranked 3<sup>rd</sup> while the program is aided feedback easily is less significant with mean of 3.11. Meanwhile, provided students the convenience of course materials being delivered at home or office is the least achieved NOUN program with mean 2.46. Thus, the extent to which the objective of National Open University in Nigeria has been achieved is very high. This finding agreed with the work of Haque, (2020) who opined that National Open University of Nigeria help to increase penetration, wider reach, affordable and cost effective educational opportunities for all so that nobody is left out behind; he further revealed that it facilitate workplace training and professional development and enhance community ownership and participation in the management and provision of education at all levels nation-wide, especially through Community Resource/Study Centers.

Analysis showing the contributions of the National Open University program to the educational development in Nigeria revealed that item 4 which states “Improves on the economies of scale i.e., more Nigerians receive quality education but at a reduced cost” is found to be significant contribution” 41% agreed while 59% strongly agreed with mean and St.D of 3.41 and .702. Also, 36% strongly agreed and 42% agreed that the program contributed by providing education for all and promotes life-long learning while 22% disagreed to this. On the basis of providing education to reach the “un-reached”, 20% strongly agreed and 63% agreed while 11% disagreed and 6% strongly disagreed with mean of 2.97. More so, based on assisting individuals to improve their employment prospects in a rapidly changing socio-economic environment 74% agreed while 26% disagreed with mean of 2.93



and St.D of .840. Lastly, 68% agreed that responding effectively to the growing demand of working adults who have difficulties in getting in conventional education while 32% disagree with mean and St.D of 2.77 and .749, respectively. This result is in consonance with the findings of Lynch (2018), who stated that NOUN enables the individual to plan and direct his/her own learning process.

## Conclusion

The study concluded that the National Open University of Nigeria has contributed to the social-economic and technological advancement of Nigeria as a country. It also contribute to the development of manpower, increment in enrolment of university education, enrolment of post- graduate education, etc.

## Recommendations

The following recommendations were made based on the findings of the study

1. Ministries of Education both at state, federal and local governments should begin to play a role in the development of distance learning education. This is a veritable tool for poverty reduction and boost in literacy level among Nigerians.
2. Poor funding constitutes a big problem to distance learning education in Nigeria. Government should consider voting reasonable allocation of resources to this sector.

E-learning requires ICT to function; government and relevant stakeholders may consider investing their monies in this sector. This will be a money-spinning venture for the investors and facilitate work for users especially students

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