TEACHING AND LEARNING IN A BLENDED DISTANCE EDUCATION

CONTEXT: A CASE STUDY OF ADULT LEARNING IN A NIGERIAN SETTING

by

OLUREMILEKUN RISIKAT OJO

(Under the Direction of Laura L. Bierema)

ABSTRACT

Ongoing changes to the global economy have a tremendous effect on available physical and human resources. Adult distance education teaching and learning environments are increasingly used in higher education and by corporations for individual and career development purposes to meet the lifelong learning trend. Consequently, there is a need to continually ensure that the distance education teaching and learning process meets the needs of those within it. Unfortunately, there is a paucity of empirical evidence about DE practices within Sub-Saharan Africa (Ayadi, Adekoya & Ikem, 2005; Chiumbu, 2006). Critical poignant questions about how instructors and learners in Sub-Saharan African contexts experience and navigate their DE teaching and learning spaces remain unaddressed.

The study was undertaken to understand the teaching and learning experience of facilitators and learners at a distance education program operated from a Nigerian university. This qualitative case study was guided by the following research questions: (1) How does teaching and learning take place within a distance education program? (2) What instructional design is being used and to what extent does it allow faculty to

accomplish its educational objectives for the higher education learners? (3) What is the learner's experience in the Nigerian distance education context?

This inductive study was conducted with fifteen participants, which included five instructors, eight learners, and two administrators using semi-structured interviews, document analysis and naturalistic observation. The teaching and learning experience for DE participants within the Teacher's Education program was complex. Two main categories each with its own subcategories emerged from the data: *Nigerian factors* and *paradoxical context*. Additionally, the findings of each research question drew on aspects from the two main categories as several issues overlap. These findings resulted in three main conclusions for the study: first, the Nigerian context's DE teaching and learning takes place in an ambiguous, often contradictory and not clearly defined manner. Second, the Nigerian context's DE lacks consistent DE teaching and learning instructional design because of its *laissez faire* education system. Third, the DE teaching and learning experience in the context fluctuates (mixed experience) resulting in an unpredictable, unsupported DE process.

INDEX WORDS: Adult Education; International Adult Education; Adult Learning;
                Distance Education; Blended Learning; Instructional Design;
                Qualitative Case Study; Teaching and Learning Experience;
                Nigeria.

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my parents Oloruntele Kehinde and Yoosuf Adebola Idowu, for the unconditional love, sacrifices, support, patience and prayers that I continue to enjoy.

To my husband, Akinloye Adebayo Ojo and children Adetokunbo Oluwamayowa and Ikeoluwa Abimbola, for their love, patience and prayers which sustained us all through this process.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Distance education (DE) is one of the fastest developing aspects of adult

education worldwide (Barbour & Reeves, 2009; Carr-Chellman, 2005; Dodds, 2005;

Merriam, Caffarella & Baumgartner, 2007; Zesty & Massy, 2005). In 2006, almost 35 %

of higher education institutions in the United States (US) offered entire programs online

(Bolliger & Wasilik, 2009). More than one in four of college and university students

within the United States now take at least one course online according to the 2009 Sloan

Consortium survey (Allen & Seaman, 2010). The major advantage of DE is its flexibility

to accommodate more learners who are unable to attend traditional higher education

establishments (Anyanwu, 2003; Badge, Dawson, Can & Scott, 2008; Bolliger &

Wasilik, 2009). However, in the literature there is still limited empirical evidence on the

DE teaching and learning experience of both learners and facilitators worldwide (Oh,

2003). In addition a comprehensive international DE research structure is lacking

(Zawacki-richter, 2009). What is known is that DE continues to evolve with technology

development (Bates, 2008; Conrad, 2006; Halverson, 2009) and the adoption of new and

modified learning paradigms of the 21st century (Anderson, 2009; Bates, 2008). What

exactly is DE?

DE Definition and Scope

Authors differ on the DE definition and how it has developed (Schlosser &

Simonson, 2006). Some authors believe DE may be in its third phase in terms of its

development process (e.g., Beaudoin, 2006; Halverson, 2009; Peters, 2001) and others

contend that it is in its fifth phase of development (e.g., Bates 2008; Koul, 2007). There

is a general consensus that DE evolved from its earliest form of correspondence courses

(Anderson, 2009; Bates, 2008; Jolivette, 2006). Contemporary DE research however

shows many exciting trends beyond correspondence courses (Barreau, 2000; Zawacki-

richter, 2009). Some authors suggest that online education is an evolving part of DE

(e.g., Anderson, 2009; Beaudoin, 2006; Sehoole & Moja, 2004); while other authors

believe that DE and online education are different (e.g., Guri-Rosenblit, 2005; Ruhe &

Zumbo, 2009). In this proposed study, DE is flexibly defined to include blended learning

environments where planned instruction takes place between the instructor and learner

directly or indirectly using one or more forms of technology (print, voice, television,

computers, web) synchronously or asynchronously (adapted from Schlosser & Simonson

2006). In addition, for this study, all forms of the term distance education (Conrad, 2006;

Guri-Rosenblit, 2005; Shelton & Saltsman, 2005) are also considered as part of DE.

Some of these terms include online learning, web-based learning, Internet learning, e-

learning, online education, learning through technology, cyberspace learning, distributed

learning, open learning, open distance learning, virtual learning, technology mediated

learning, and Information Communications Technology (ICT) in learning. The scope of

the DE discussions within this proposed study is specific to adult DE operated from

higher education contexts.

Distance Education's increasing use of Internet technologies has led to a

proliferation of research. Currently DE research is diverse and multi-faceted and it

continues to grow (Menchaca & Bekele 2008; Miller & Cryss Brunner, 2008) with no

clear organization and sometimes conflicting interpretations within its field of practice (Kanuka & Kelland, 2008; Reeves, Herrington & Oliver, 2004; Zawacki-Richter, 2009). In fact, the research about quality of DE environments is still mixed (Jaggars, Bailey & Columbia Univeristy, 2010; Larreamendy-Joerns & Leinhardt, 2006). Furthermore, even with the proliferation of DE research, the literature on DE development practice and research continues to occur predominantly in the west and in developed contexts (Alzouma, 2005; Gyamfi, 2005; Newell, 2008). Undoubtedly for this reason DE theories also are primarily derived from western contexts (Newell, 2008).

DE Theories

There are several popular DE theories, among three of the more renowned is Moore's (1971) transactional theory; Holmberg's (1995) theory of interaction and communication; and Keagan's (1986) DE theory based on general education theory (Amundson, 1993; Simonson, Smaldino, Albright & Zvacek, 2003). Few theories exist which are specific to African DE contexts (Colle and Roman, 2004; Dodds, 2005; Lapointe, 2005; Mackintosh, 2005). In general, existing DE theories emphasize specific aspects of the educational context (Haughey, Evans & Murphy, 2008; Holmberg, 1995; Moore & Kearsley, 1996). Most of these DE theories often explain the process of interaction or relationships between the core participants operating within the DE context (Haughey et al., 2008). One of the ways DE has been critiqued is that it uses concepts and methods from other disciplines (Makoe, Richardson & Price, 2008; Menchaca & Bekele, 2008). In Adult Education, DE is linked to adult learning principles and the discussion below goes into more details.

DE and Adult Learning

Certainly one of the most described learning attributes for adult distance education learners is self-direction. Distance education is often associated with self-directed learning (Burge & Polec, 2008; Merriam, et al., 2007; Miller & King, 2003; Peters, 2001). Some self-directed learning attributes which have been associated with DE include self-motivation, self-direction, self-discipline (e.g., Cunningham, 2010; Markel, 1999; Miller & King, 2003; Peters, 2001), construction of knowledge, and taking responsibility for personal learning (e.g., Makoe et al., 2008; Peters, 2001). Other learning strategies are often associated with DE and self directed learning. One of the often featured learning strategies in DE contexts is cognitive strategies (e.g., Alessi & Trollip, 2001; Cunningham, 2010; Robson 2000). Cognitive learning in DE contexts involves information processing techniques used by learners for problem solving activities (Alessi & Trollip, 2001; Robson, 2000; Tenenbaum, Naidu, Jegede & Austin, 2001). Cognitive learning is also associated with reflection on prior experience (Knowles, 1998; Mackeracher, 2004). Constructivist learning is also associated with DE contexts (Burge & Polec, 2008; Tenenbaum et al., 2001; Martens, Bastiaens & Kirschner, 2007). In fact there is actually more emphasis on the constructivist aspects of learning in DE settings (Burge & Polec, 2008; Tenenbaum et al., 2001). Advocates of constructivist learning principles for DE contexts discuss how learners make meaning collaboratively. Constructivist learning principles in DE are associated with experiential learning, situated cognition and collaborative learning (e.g., Alessi & Trollip, 2001; Tenenbaum et al., 2001). Furthermore, in constructivist learning, consideration is given to the learner's experience, the materials to be learned and the social context of the learner (e.g., Alessi &

Trollip, 2001; Tenenbaum et al., 2001). The theories that guide adult learners are not the only important aspect of a DE experience, teaching and learning are also important.

DE Teaching and Learning

Distance education teaching methods and learning styles are important aspects of the DE context (Barreau, 2000; Gonzalez, 2008). There are various perspectives of teaching adults to learn (Hayes, 2006; Pratt, 1998) as well as different styles of learning (Schunk, 2000). Technological innovations and advancements within the teaching practice affect both DE facilitators and learners alike within the DE educational context (Duncan & Barnett, 2010; Perraton, 2000). Furthermore, how facilitators choose to manipulate the DE context shapes how learners engage with the content being learned (Burge & Polec, 2008; Pallof & Pratt, 2009). This makes facilitators an extremely important part of the DE process (Burniske, 2003; Duncan & Barnett, 2010; Easton, 2003; Song, Hannafin & Hill, 2007). Instructors/facilitators have to constantly adapt instructional practices and pedagogical techniques used in DE settings (Bates, Gpe & De los Santos 1997; Duncan & Barnett, 2010; Fusco & Ketcham, 2002). Similarly, learners are a crucial part of the DE learning context (Gibson, 2000; Easton, 2003). Quite often, DE learners are geographically separated from the educational institution, facilitator and other peers (Shelton & Saltsman, 2005; Simonson et al., 2003). These DE learners need to navigate the socio-cultural context and learn through non-traditional methods or media (Richardson, 2006; Schlosser & Simonson, 2006). The DE learner's ability to learn, the content itself, and the context of learning affect overall educational success (Burge & Polec, 2008; Carr-Chellman, 2005; Gunawardena & Lapointe, 2008). How do instructors and learners experience these DE teaching and learning processes in different contexts?

For example, the DE teaching and learning contexts such as those within Africa face challenges of technological constraints (Burniske, 2003; Carr-Chellmann, 2005) linguistic barriers (Burniske, 2003) and cultural differences (Burniske, 2003; Gunawardena & Lapointe, 2008). Why should we care about DE in Sub-Saharan African contexts?

DE Importance in Sub-Saharan African Adult Education Contexts

Composed of around 48 countries and Islands geographically, Sub-Saharan Africa is approximately three and a half times the size of the United States (Gordon, 2007; Neff, 2007). Of all the world's known languages over a third is spoken in Africa (Gordon, 2007; Neff, 2007). It is home to the second largest population in the world (United Nations Population Division, 2012). Sub-Saharan adult learners make up a large number of the world's population (Afrik, 2000; Omolewa, 2000). Additionally, 40 out of the world's 50 most poverty ridden countries are found within Africa (Gordon, 2007). Furthermore, the continent continues to struggle to meet the higher education needs for the vast majority of its citizens (Colle & Roman, 2004; Dodds, 2005; Saint, 2003). The limited DE literature focused on African learners often highlight the challenges in existence for its practice (e.g., Colle & Roman, 2004; Dodds, 2005; Jibril, 2003; Lapointe, 2005; Mackintosh, 2005; Schachter, Pence, Zuckernick & Roberts, 2006; Teferra & Altbach, 2004). Few highlight the experience of DE teaching and learning interactions in these contexts even though they are the most crucial aspect of any DE system (Arbaugh & Benbunan-Fich, 2007; Caliskan, 2009). Some of the reviewed literature on low income countries and the practice of DE actually view Asia in healthier DE terms (e.g., Assie-Lumumba, 2004; Koul, 2007; Schachter, et al., 2006; Sy, 2004).

Worldwide DE has moved even beyond academic use into training and professional companies (Chen, Jones & Moreland, 2010; Dennen, Darabi & Smith, 2007). This trend coupled with the increased integration of the world's economies as a result of globalization has also added pressure on African contexts to put more efforts on education and training (Bhola, 2000; Saint, 2003). Additionally, with Africa's current projected growth rate at 26.1% (United Nations Population Division, 2010), the drastic need for education solutions and alternatives to the current overwhelmed, traditional educational systems has become evident (Dodds, 2005; Saint, 2003; Lapointe, 2005; Mackintosh, 2005). Unfortunately, there is a paucity of empirical evidence about DE practices within Sub-Saharan Africa (Ayadi, Adekoya & Ikem, 2005; Chiumbu, 2006; Ololube, Ubogu & Egbezor, 2007). The limited DE research has resulted in a dearth of applicable DE theories for African contexts (Ololube, et al., 2007; Sy, 2004). Therefore, critical poignant questions about how instructors and learners in Sub-Saharan African contexts experience and navigate their DE teaching and learning spaces remain unaddressed.

Statement of the Problem

Some major components within DE contexts include learners, facilitators and the technological medium through which interactions occur (Holmberg, 1995; Moore & Kearsley, 1996; Schlosser & Simonson, 2006). Continuous evaluations and refinements to these major components lead to successful DE teaching and learning experience (Boling Hough, Krinsky, Saleem, & Stevens, 2012; Caliskan, 2009; Chelliah & Clarke, 2011; Dennen et al., 2007; Sit, Chung, Chow, & Wong, 2005). Unfortunately, the limited DE literature focused on Sub-Saharan African contexts often only highlights the existing

challenges in DE (e.g., Colle & Roman, 2004; Dodds, 2005; Jibril, 2003; Lapointe, 2005; Mackintosh, 2005; Schachter, et al., 2006; Teferra & Altbach, 2004). Few studies highlight the DE teaching and learning experience of facilitators and learners in these contexts so as to start building empirical evidence to improve practice. Furthermore, there is limited DE research within these resource challenged Sub-Saharan Africa contexts (Ayadi et al., 2005; Chiumbu, 2006; Ololube et al., 2007). The result is a lack of applicable DE theories for use in Sub-Saharan contexts such as those within Nigeria.

Nigeria is a country in West Africa. Africa's most populous country, it has a population of approximately 149,229,090 (Ajadi, Salawu, & Adeoye, 2008; Central Intelligence Agency [CIA] World Fact Book, 2010; Cole & De Blij, 2007). The *CIA World Fact Book* says that Nigeria is slightly more than twice the geographical size of California and is home to approximately 250 different ethnic groups. Teferra and Altbach (2004) highlighted the fact that Nigeria is ranked second in Africa for university enrollment with a 900,000 student population and this number is only 10% of those eligible to be enrolled. This implies that Nigeria has a significantly high number of eligible higher education learners who are not being served by the current higher education system in the country (Jegede, 2002; Jibril, 2003; Saint, Hartnett & Strassner, 2003). The need for valuable in-depth DE information in Nigerian contexts is significant to improve viable adult education practice options (Ali, 2008; Ukpo, 2006).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this interpretive study was to understand the teaching and learning experience of facilitators and learners at a distance education program operated from a Nigerian tertiary institution. The research questions guiding this study include:

1. How does teaching and learning take place within a distance education program?

2. What instructional design is being used and to what extent does it allow faculty to accomplish its educational objectives for the higher education learners?

3. What is the learner's experience in the Nigerian distance education context?

Statement of Significance

This study contributes both theoretically and practically to the understanding of adult DE in non-western contexts such as within Nigeria. There is little empirical evidence which shows how DE takes place in many African higher education contexts such as Nigeria and this negatively affects the development of DE in these areas. The results from this study are helpful to theorists and form part of the body of work on DE teaching and learning practices in international contexts. In addition, it could also lead other researchers to the genesis of much needed foundational DE theories which would be helpful for similar contexts.

This study of how DE operates in non-western contexts, such as Nigeria, is a useful part of the foundation and dialogue that informs both local and international practitioners in the field. In that it helps support practitioner dialogue about how DE is currently experienced by both instructors and learners. Additionally, it is also useful in generating suggestions to improve the DE teaching and learning environment for Nigerian adult learners.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The purpose of this interpretive study was to explore the teaching and learning experience of facilitators and learners at a distance education program operated from a Nigerian tertiary institution. The research questions guiding this study include:

1. How does teaching and learning take place within a distance education program?

2. What instructional design is being used and to what extent does it allow faculty to accomplish its educational objectives for the higher education learners?

3. What is the learner's experience in the Nigerian distance education context?

Introduction

This chapter is divided into three sections: first is a discussion of the literature that describes important aspects of DE teaching and learning experience, and includes theories, adult learners and faculty. Second, the literature focuses on DE literature on the Sub-Saharan African contexts and highlights its uniqueness of the context for DE practice. Third, the literature review focuses on the Nigeria's DE practice with an overview description of its adult learners and facilitators. The sources used for this literature review included a selection of articles from scholarly databases such as Academic Search Complete, Academic Journal Storage (JSTOR), and Education Resources Information Center (ERIC). Other sources include dissertation abstracts and a variety of books related to the topic of the dissertation. Some of the search terms used include distance education, research in distance education, distance learning in

developing countries, developments in African higher education, online education in Africa and distance education in Nigeria.

Important Aspects of the DE Teaching and Learning Experience

Distance education (DE) at university level has been in existence since the nineteenth century (Ascough, 2002; Hochberg, 2006; Moore & Kearsley, 1996; Tait, 2008). These higher education institutions offer DE programs that reach out to students who are unable to attend traditional university classrooms (Guri-Rosenblit, 2005; Sadykova & Dautermann, 2009). Distance education delivery methods vary with higher education contexts (Barreau, 2000; Gibson, 2000; Wilson, 2008) partly because they use various combinations of teaching methods and technologies to interact with the learner (Shelton & Saltsman, 2005; Simonson et al., 2003). When DE technologies use real time interactions between the facilitator and learners or within groups of learners, it is called synchronous DE (Fusco & Ketchum, 2002; Miller & King, 2003; Zhang, 2007). When the interactions between the facilitator and learners or within groups of learners occur at each participant's convenience (Fusco & Ketchum, 2002; Miller & King, 2003; Zhang, 2007) then the term is asynchronous DE. The literature review continues below with a focus on the various aspects of the DE teaching and learning experience. First is a brief review of three prominent DE theories; Second is the review literature on Adult DE learners, learning theories, and barriers to successful DE experiences; Third, the discussion focuses on DE facilitators and their pedagogy in DE contexts.

DE Theories

Even though there are some recognized DE theories in use, there is no comprehensive theory of how DE works in practice (Menchaca & Bekele, 2008;

Schlosser & Simonson, 2006). Part of the challenge to acquiring a comprehensive DE theory is that it is practiced in different countries and across varied learning environments (Simonson et al., 2003; Schlosser & Simonson, 2006). In this discussion, I review three of its more prominent theories, Moore's, (1972); Holmberg's (1986); and Keagan, (1986)

Moore's theory of transactional distance.

One of the more popular DE theorists is Michael Moore, whose first attempt at a DE theory was in 1972 (Moore, 1993; Moore & Kearsley, 1996). Moore's (1972) theory, earlier called the theory of independent study, is now referred to as theory of transactional distance (Moore, 1993; Moore & Kearsley, 1996). Transactional distance theory is concerned about how learning and facilitation affects learners and instructors at a distance and the emphasis on the types of interactions that occur depending on media, content and learning space (Moore, 1993; Moore & Kearsley, 1996). A part of Moore's (1972) rationalization is that distance impacts how facilitation occurs and it also impacts learner engagement; the learner and facilitator therefore, engage in dialog across a learning context space which Moore terms as the transactional space (Moore, 1993; Moore & Kearsley, 1996). There is an acknowledgment in Moore's (1972) theory that certain external factors such as educational philosophy, language and media affect the learner(s), the instructor, institutional organization and course content in distance education (Moore, 1993; Moore & Kearsley, 1996). The measurable factors of Moore's (1972) transactional theory are dialog–two way communications between learner and instructor–and structure–organization of learning materials and course content–and these two factors determine how responsive distance education is to the learner (Moore & Kearsley, 1996; Schlosser & Simonson, 2006). The learner's ability to be self-directed is

also an issue in Moore's (1972) transactional theory. Moore's (1972) theory factors in the learner autonomy and the extent to which learners exercise self-direction while at the same time monitoring how well the pedagogy accommodates self-directed learners (Moore, 1993; Moore & Kearsley, 1996; Schlosser & Simonson, 2006).

Holmberg's guided didactic conversation.

Holmberg's (1986) theory is described as being about interactions and communications (Haughey et al., 2008; Schlosser & Simonson, 2006). The intercommunication between teacher and student is crucial to Holmberg's (1986) theory (Moore & Kearsley, 1996; Simonson et al., 2006). In this theory guided didactic conversation theory highlights the friendly rapport and interactions between students, the supporting organization, tutors and counselors (Haughey, et al., 2008; Holmberg, 1995; Simonson, Smaldino, Albright & Zvacek, 2006). The friendly communication and interchange between those directly involved in DE teaching and learning promotes inner motivations of the learner and improves learning outcomes (Amundsen, 1993; Simonson et al., 2006). The learning in Holmberg's theory takes place individually and prior knowledge and emotional involvement help the process (Amundsen, 1993; Simonson et al., 2006). With the refinement to the theory in 1995, Holmberg adjusted DE to also accommodate behaviorist, cognitive, constructivist and other learning strategies (Simonson et al., 2006).

Keegan (1986) theoretical framework.

Keegan's (1986) theory was developed as a result of an analysis of four other theories: Holmberg, Peters, Moore and Law (Moore & Kearsley, 1996). The key basis of Keegan's (1986) theory was that it is structured within general education theory

(Amundsen, 1993; Simonson et al., 2006). In this theory, an important tenet is that the DE teaching and learning process is about interpersonal communication that has to be deliberately planned (Amundsen, 1993; Simonson et al., 2006). This is unlike the education environment in a conventional face-to-face education which is already geared towards learning (Amundsen, 1993). Keegan proposes reintegration which involves creation of learning materials in ways to promote interpersonal communication through various media such as print and telephone (Simonson et al., 2006). Using Keegan's theory DE satisfaction is based on how reintegration is effectively balanced. When it is less balanced there are higher attrition rates (Amundsen, 1993; Simonson et al., 2006).

Although this discussion illustrates just three DE theories, there are a number available and used in practice (Amundsen, 1993; Simonson et al., 2006). Regrettably, however, most DE theories have originated from the west (Newell, 2008). Often these DE theories from the west explain the process of interaction or relationships between the core participants operating within the DE context (Haughey et al., 2008). Interactions are regarded as one of the critical aspect of DE (Arbaugh & Benbunan-Fich, 2007; Caliskan, 2009; Simonson et al., 2006), even though it should not be at the expense of its content (Simonson et al., 2006). Interactions in DE can be learner-content, learner-instructor, learner-learner (Moore & Kearsley, 1996; Simonson et al., 2006). Successful learning in DE requires high level interactions (Aleksic-maslac, Magzan & Juric, 2009; Boling et al., 2012; Caliskan, 2009). In addition, the most productive interactions can often be those between instructors and learners (Fidalgo & Thormann, 2012). Additionally, DE theorists often provide guidelines on how to create productive DE teaching and learning experiences for its learners and faculty (e.g., Keegan, 1993; Moore, 1993; Moore &

Kearsley, 1996; Holmberg, 1995). The following discussion goes into more details about the typical DE learner, the adult learning theories and barriers to successful DE teaching and learning experience.

Learner, Theories and Teaching and Learning Experience

One of the main focuses of DE inquiry has been its learners (Andersson & Gronlund, 2009; Sadykova & Dautermann, 2009). While it is possible for anyone to learn in DE contexts, some authors offer a description of the typical adult DE learner (e.g., Gibson, 2000; Guri-Rosenblit, 2005). The typical adult DE learner according to Gibson (2000) shares the same characteristics as those adults engaging in other adult education programs. This implies that adult DE learners are usually slightly older than traditional university students (Barreau, 2000; Easton, 2003; Guri-Rosenblit, 2005). Typically the starting age of the average adult DE learner is around 25 years old (Gibson, 2000; Sadykova & Dautermann, 2009). He or she is more likely to be employed in addition to coping with other responsibilities (e.g., being married with children) (Ascough, 2002; Brindley, Walti & Blaschke, 2009; Macdonald & Thompson, 2005). Often DE literature about adult learners is linked to adult learning theories and its learners are regularly described as being highly motivated (Andersson & Gronlund, 2009; Simonson et al., 2003).

Self-directed learning.

Self-Directed Learning (SDL) is one of the most popular learning concepts linked to DE contexts (Burge & Polec, 2008; Cunningham, 2010; Heiman, 2006; Howland & Moore, 2002; Miller & King, 2003; Rovai & Gallien, 2005). Some of the ways SDL attributes are discussed within the DE literature include self-motivation, self-direction,

self-discipline and responsibility for personal learning (e.g., Cunningham, 2010; Furnborough & Truman, 2009; Makoe et al., 2008; Markel, 1999; Miller & King, 2003; Oh, 2003; Peters, 2001; Smith, Murphy & Mahoney, 2003).

Review. Caffarella (1993) described SDL as "a self-initiated process of learning that stresses the ability of individuals to plan and manage their own learning, an attribute or characteristic of learners with personal autonomy as its hallmark" (p. 25). Tough (1967) and Knowles (1971) are credited as being proponents of the SDL theory (Caffarella, 1993; Long, 1992b; Merriam & Brockett, 2007; Merriam et al., 2007). Long (1992b) explained that while Tough's descriptions often focused on the "individual learner," Knowles explained SDL in terms of an individual "engaged in some kind of group learning activity" (p. 38). SDL's roots are grounded in the humanistic perspective (Caffarella, 1993; Long 1992a; Merriam & Brockett, 2007; Merriam et al., 2007). An assessment of the SDL literature led Merriam (2001) to conclude that "depending on the philosophical orientations of writer, the goals of self-directed learning vary" (p. 9). In fact there is no one truly specific SDL description; it depends on whether it is defined as a goal, personal characteristic or learning process (Knowles, 1998; Mackeracher, 2004; Merriam et al., 2007; Merriam & Brockett, 2007). Earlier SDL models were linear, but nowadays there are several complex models and the research and debate on SDL continues to be pertinent in the field of adult education (Caffarella, 1993; Mackeracher, 2004; Merriam et al., 2007; Merriam & Brockett, 2007).

Some of those who critiqued the SDL concept are Brookfield (1985) and Mezirow (1985). Brookfield (1985) challenged the notion of learner autonomy by reviewing research findings and came to the conclusion that while it was undoubtedly possible to

engage in behaviorist tasks, it was not truly self-directed learning. In Brookfield's (1985) analysis, the learner needed to be making a clear choice of alternatives. By so doing, the learner engaged in critical reasoning and made new meaning which resulted in authentic learning and consequently a better definition of SDL. Mezirow (1995) affirmed that Knowles's SDL description of the learner identifying his or her own needs was not feasible. Mezirow (1995) argued that in a genuine SDL, the learner would have to have a genuine and clear understanding of the situation, the needs and all the options available. According to Mezirow (1995), it is only through an in-depth analysis of all available options that the learner perspective is transformed and then authentic learning is possible.

   ***Distance education study*.** Makoe et al.'s (2008) study discussed the conceptions of learners embarking on an open distance learning program in the United Kingdom. They reviewed previous studies from various countries, China, Finland, South Africa, Nepal and other parts of Europe and surmised from the previous studies that learner conceptions varied across cultures. Makoe et al. (2008) also reported that there were no differences in the conceptions of distance learning students and campus based students. Part of their study revealed that learners across board felt learning meant taking accountability for their "own learning" (p. 306). These revelations were important because they clearly articulated that learners felt some element of control of their learning which is one of the aspects of being a self-directed learner. It is possible to infer that since learner perception from various cultures and countries in this study indicated that SDL was an important part of their learning, SDL must be important to DE learning.

Experiential learning.

Oftentimes the authors who drew relationships between DE and learning theories such as SDL discussed a combination of more than one adult learning theory influencing DE contexts (e.g., Burge & Polec, 2008; Driscoll & Carliner, 2005; Duncan & Barnett, 2010; Ke & Charr-Chellman, 2006; Snyder, 2009; Tenenbaum et al., 2001; Zembylas, 2008a). Another adult learning theory often found within the DE literature is experiential learning (e.g. Cloete, 2005; Duncan & Barnett, 2010; Smits, Boon, Sluijsman & Van Gog, 2008). The role of experience in learning for adults is part of the adult learning discourse (e.g., Fenwick, 2003; Knowles, 1998; Mackeracher, 2004; Merriam et al., 2007).

Review. John Dewey's (1938) publication about experiential learning is credited as being one of its early proponents in higher education (Fenwick, 2003; Knowles, 1998; Merriam et al., 2007). There are several concepts of adult learning and the value of experience. Knowles (1998) suggests--when discussing learner experience in adult learning--that much emphasis is on how prior experiences help "to shape or inhibit new learning" (p. 139). Mackeracher (2004) also discusses the use of past experiences and the constant updating of our learning due to shifts resulting from accumulated new material. Kolb, Boyatzis and Mainemelis (2001) discuss experiential learning theory using the four stage experiential learning cycle which was earlier developed by Kolb. The four stages include, two sections that deal with "grasping experience - concrete experience, (CE), abstract conceptualization (AC)," and two sections for "transforming experience - reflective observation (RO) and active experimentation (AE)" (p. 228). Kolb et al. (2001) categorize learning through experience into discrete groups. However, Fenwick

(2003) explains that learning occurs naturally and it would be meaningless to separate moments when experience is not a part of it. According to Fenwick (2003) there are five theoretical concepts of experiential learning and they are situative, psychoanalytic, complexity, critical, and constructivist theories. Situative theory deals with experiential learning in social activity; psychoanalytic theory deals with unconscious learning; complexity theory connects experiential across systems; and critical closely analyzes where and how experiences are formed. Fenwick (2003) acknowledges that the four concepts--earlier highlighted--are not as established as the constructivist concept. Fenwick's (2003) experiential learning through the constructivist orientation considers the learner--physical, emotional and reflective--as well as the socio-cultural context.

Distance education study. Smits et al. (2008) conducted a study at the Open University in the Netherlands which examined the use of experience in an online DE context. In their study, Smits et al. (2008) investigated the effect of providing structured feedback to learners based on the learners' prior knowledge of genetics. These authors believed their study was of particular importance in self-directed cognitive tasks in online learning environments because they argued was that effective feedback served to motivate learners and keep them on task. Smits et al. (2008) found that those who were identified as high prior learners benefitted more from elaborate feedback because it made those learners more appreciative of the course content. They emphasized that prior experience was useful to learners as they reviewed feedback on their work in DE contexts.

Constructivist adult learning.

Often the most emphasized adult learning approach in DE contexts is constructivism (Burge & Polec, 2008; Sadykova & Dautermann, 2009; Tenenbaum et al., 2001). Constructivist learning principles in DE contexts are associated with experiential learning, situated cognition and collaborative learning (e.g., Alessi & Trollip, 2001; Tenenbaum et al., 2001; Martens et al., 2007). Furthermore, in constructivist learning within DE contexts, consideration is given for the learner's experience, the materials to be learned and the social context of the learner (e.g., Alessi & Trollip, 2001; Brindley et al., 2009; Hudson, Hudson & Steel, 2006; Hudson, Owen & Veen 2006; Kehrwald, 2008; McIsaac, 2002; Tenenbaum et al., 2001).

Review. Schlosser and Simonson (2006) defined constructivism as a "theory of learning that stresses the importance of experiences, experimentation, problem solving, and the construction of knowledge by the learner" (p. 56). Vygotsky (1978) is recognized as one of the pioneers of the numerous constructivist paradigms that are currently in existence (Fenwick, 2003; Hansman, 2001; Merriam et al., 2007; Pate-Moulton, Klages, Erickson, & Conforti, 2004; Schunk, 2000). Constructivism in adult learning is connected to experiential learning (Fenwick, 2003; Knowles, 1998; Merriam et al., 2007), situated cognition (Hansman, 2001; Merriam et al., 2007) and reflexive practice (Knowles, 1998; Merriam et al., 2007). Situated cognition describes ideas about learning that is social, cultural, context based, and tool dependent (Mackeracher, 2004; Wilson, 1993). Reflective practice is the act of making a break to make decisions from prior information and experience (Knowles, 1998; Merriam et al., 2007). Merriam et al. (2007) describe some of the key aspects of all constructivist learning paradigms; they

stated that "learning occurs through dialogue, collaborative learning and cooperative learning" (p. 292). The application of constructivist learning principles into online learning has evolved from designs of distance environments that promoted both self-regulated and cognitive learning (Anderson, 2009; Baggaley, 2008; Ke & Carr-Chellman, 2006). Nowadays constructivist learning perspectives in online educational contexts are complex and its discourse continues to evolve (Halverson, 2009; Haughey, et al., 2008).

Distance education study. Brindley et al. (2009) collected data in a three year longitudinal study from 15 cohorts of an adult DE class offered jointly at both a German and an American University. The researchers wanted to know if grading collaborative projects was positively related to higher student participation in small group work and they also looked at other factors that might help in creating effective collaborative learning groups. Part of their findings showed that grades for collaborative group projects were not necessarily motivation for learner participation in online study groups for their selected graduate course. This latter discovery is important because it suggests that online learners may be naturally collaborative as has been described within DE literature. The ways adults learn independently, experientially cognitively, and collaboratively can be viewed as part of the factors that help create successful DE teaching and learning experiences.

Barriers to successful teaching and learning DE experiences.

Some authors indicated that not all learners were able to thrive in DE teaching and learning contexts (e.g. Miller & King, 2003; Newell, 2008; Rovai & Gallien, 2005; Tallent-Runnels et al., 2006; Whipp & Lorentz, 2009). There are several factors that influence learning in DE contexts (Smith et al., 2003; Pettazoni, 2008). Issues such as

anxiety (Chen, Bennett & Maton, 2008; Conrad, 2002; Furnborough, & Truman, 2009),

lack of feedback (Miller & King, 2003; Zhang, 2007) and frustrations with the

technology (Bolliger & Wasilik, 2009; Miller & King, 2003; Morris, 2010) affect how

learners cope with DE contexts. DE learners may feel a sense of isolation (Miller &

King, 2003; Chen et al., 2008) and the affective or emotions have some impact on DE

(Shen, Wang & Shen, 2009; Zembylas, 2008a, 2008b).

There is also a growing interest on the issue of cultural influences on DE contexts

(e.g., Chen et al., 2008; Shattuck, 2005; Tapanes, Smith & White, 2009). Using Tapanes

et al. (2009) study as an illustration, these researchers used Hoftede's value survey to

measure cultural dimensions in a DE context. The objective was to determine how

international learners who are often classified as collectivist cultures and instructors

classified as individualist cultural fared in DE contexts. The study revealed three

interesting findings: first, cultural differences did influence learner participation in DE

contexts. Second, those who were minority DE learners often felt intimidated within the

DE contexts by those from the dominant culture. Third, the instructors in the study

reported that they were often unaware of the cultural differences within the DE context.

The study offers a significant indication of the value of instructors in DE contexts. The

section below continues the discussion on the importance of DE facilitators' role and

pedagogy to successful DE teaching and learning experiences.

DE facilitator, Pedagogy and Teaching and Learning Experience

There is limited demographic information for the typical DE facilitator or

instructor (Sadykova & Dautermann, 2009) even though there are various expectations

for them such as mentors, coordinators, administrative manager, facilitators of learning

(Boling et al., 2012; Burge & Polec, 2008; Easton, 2003; Li & Akins, 2005; Miller & King, 2003; Sadykova & Dautermann, 2009; Shelton & Saltsman, 2005; Tenenbaum et. al., 2001; Palloff & Pratt, 2009; Whipp & Lorentz, 2009). It would seem that DE facilitators also have high expectations of themselves as shown in a study by Bolliger and Wasilik (2009). These researchers collected data from 102 out of a possible 122 instructors to find out which factors influenced faculty satisfaction in online higher education DE contexts. Bolliger and Wasilik (2009) used an online faculty satisfaction survey which was divided into three subscales: student-related, faculty-related and institution-related. Bolliger and Wasilik's (2009) findings confirmed that all three sub-factors of student, faculty and institution are important to faculty satisfaction in DE contexts. However, the student-related factor was rated as most essential to faculty satisfaction for all participants, implying that Bolliger and Wasilik's (2009) sample of instructors based their own satisfaction on whether or not they met the DE learners' needs. The findings from this study also indicate that faculty satisfaction is an important influence on DE contexts.

Content design.

The development of content for learners is one of the essential roles of a DE context facilitator (Easton, 2003; Shelton & Saltsman, 2005). Some authors urge facilitators to match educational content to both the DE learner and the available DE technology (e.g., Alessi & Trollip, 2001; Macdonald & Thompson, 2005; Oh, 2003; Simonson et al., 2003; Tu, 2004). This often takes experience since the instructors have no access to learners while the class content is being developed (Simonson et al., 2003). Nevertheless, facilitators can use designs which leave the content open to manipulation

once courses are moved into the DE context (Simonson et al., 2003; Tenenbaum et. al., 2001). If facilitators are not physically designing the learning environment, it is expected that they partner with instructional designers (Torrisi & Davis, 2000; Tu, 2004; Shelton & Saltsman, 2005) to have a seamless teaching and learning environment. DE context facilitators and instructional designers use content and the online technology to manipulate its learning context and this indirectly shapes the DE learners' experience (Han & Hill, 2006; Kanuka & Kelland, 2008; Kanuka & Rouke, 2008; Martens et al., 2007; Miller & King, 2003 Song et al., 2006).

Creating DE teaching and learning experience.

Once the learning context is ready for use, DE teaching concepts may need to differ from those used in conventional educational settings (Barreau, 2000; Burge & Polec, 2008; Hamid, 2002; McPherson & Nunes, 2008; Palloff & Pratt, 2009; Simonson et al., 2003; Torrisi & Davis, 2000). Various factors influence teaching in DE contexts (Barreau, 2000; Moore & Kearsley, 1996) one of which is the DE facilitators' teaching philosophy (Barreau, 2000; Easton, 2003; Simonson et al., 2003). A teaching philosophy is the belief the facilitator holds about how learning should be structured and delivered to achieve predetermined objectives (Pratt, 1998; Tu, 2004).

Contemporary constructivist DE teaching and learning models mean that DE facilitators must adapt their teaching to fit the collaborative schema (Browne, 2003; Dixon & Dixon, 2010; Hamilton, Dahlgren, Hult, Roos & Soderstrum, 2004; Tenenbaum et al., 2001; Torrisi & Davis, 2000; Tu, 2004). These teaching and learning models highlight the importance of a more learner centered DE context in which the learner is put in control of engaging with content, peers, and facilitator (Li & Akins, 2005; Snyder,

2009; Tenenbaum et al., 2001; Tu, 2004). Overall learners' meaning making is more important than pre-determined performance measures (Alessi & Trollip, 2001; Haughey et al., 2008; Torrisi & Davis, 2000). Although a variety of strategies have been proposed to achieve the learner-centered learning context (e.g., Driscoll & Carliner, 2005; Li & Akins, 2005; Snyder, 2009; Tu, 2004) in reality, however, there seems to be no universal constructivist solution (Burniske, 2003; Driscoll & Carliner, 2005; Grenfell, 2006; Martens et al., 2007).

Two popular constructivist strategies are problem based teaching approach (Cambell & Gibson, 2008; Minishi-majanja & Ocholla, 2004; Simonson et al., 2003) or project based teaching approach (Simonson et al., 2003; Willams van Rooij, 2010). In problem based approach, learners are presented with one or more problems or scenarios which they must investigate to determine how to respond (Ciges, 2001; Willams van Rooij, 2010). The project based plan is similar to problem based approach however the intent of project based teaching is to come up with a tangible product (Mason, 2008). Both project and problem based teaching strategies are goal oriented, they provide opportunities for creation of authentic situations while encouraging collaboration and knowledge building (Mcloughlin & Luca, 2006; Simonson et al., 2003; Williams van Rooij, 2010)

Constructivists advocate for DE teaching to be realistic (Alessi & Trollip, 2001; Barreau, 2000; Dixon & Dixon, 2010; Macdonald & Thompson, 2005) and use more learner–learner interactions (Alessi & Trollip, 2001; Haughey et al., 2008; Shelton & Saltsman, 2005) to allow the learners to co-construct new meanings from the content. Under the constructivist framework, DE teaching or facilitation should engage the learner

and encourage their critical thinking (Alessi & Trollip, 2001; Hamid, 2002; Macdonald & Thompson, 2005; Snyder, 2009; Zembylas, 2008b). Facilitators should be present within the learning context but not disruptive of learning (Furnborough, & Truman, 2009; Tu, 2004; Whipp & Lorentz, 2009) and should give timely, clear and concise feedback (Dixon & Dixon, 2010). In essence quality is what is essential in DE contexts (Bolliger, & Wasilik, 2009; Hamid, 2002; Oh, 2003).

Evaluation.

Once teaching and learning occurs within the DE context how is that interaction evaluated? This is an area of concern within DE contexts (Barreau, 2000; Palloff & Pratt, 2009; Simonson et al., 2003; Tu, 2004). Assessment of learning is often more complicated for facilitators in constructivist DE environments since the focus is more on collective creation of knowledge (Campbell & Gibson, 2008; Tenenbaum et al., 2001; Tu, 2004). In these cases facilitators are urged to conduct holistic evaluations where the learner, learners and facilitators are all evaluated (Mcloughlin & Luca, 2006; Pallof & Pratt, 2009; Tu, 2004). Constructivist evaluation rubrics should be co-constructed by learners and their facilitator (Cambell & Gibson, 2008; Li & Akins, 2005; Pallof & Pratt, 2009; Snyder, 2009). These evaluations should also allow learners to engage in critical reflection and self-evaluation throughout the learning process (Haughey et al., 2008; Mcloughlin & Luca, 2006). Effective assessments are aligned with the DE teaching and learning from the onset of course development (Mason, 2008; Pallof & Pratt, 2009).

An example of a holistic DE study was conducted by Boling et al. (2012) who reported on a qualitative configurative case study to explore DE experiences of both students and faculty. Researchers worked from a social constructionist perspective in

that reality is socially constructed (Robson, 2011). They sought out and initially used a convenience sample of participants who were recruited via email. From these participants some had completed DE degree programs or had repeatedly participated in DE environments so they came from various disciplines and various institutions. This study was part of a larger one with a specific timeline. Data collection strategies included an initial review of artifacts such as course syllabi, screen shots, as well as a 60 minute interview to describe the DE course experiences. The findings were analyzed using the constant comparison technique (Charmaz, 2010) and the researchers matched this against the cognitive apprenticeship model. Data was coded and findings generated as a group. The findings revealed that DE text was the primary form of media used in DE teaching and learning environments. The text hindered DE teaching and learning experience because it was often just loaded with information. Other barriers in learning included disconnection between the student-instructor if they required real time participation or received no feedback from the instructors. The instructors also reported a disconnection with other colleagues in terms of support to create good DE teaching and learning experiences. There was also an in-depth focus on a higher education DE Master's program to see what could be learned for practice from it. Boling et al.'s (2012) study shows that a qualitative research design can be useful for understanding DE teaching and learning experience. The study also revealed some challenges to DE teaching and learning experience. Other notable barriers for DE facilitators are discussed below.

Notable facilitation barriers to DE teaching and learning.

There are some notable barriers within DE contexts (Hudson et al., 2006, Hudson, Owen et al., 2006). One of the challenges for DE facilitators is the time required to

develop, organize and manage DE contexts (Fusco & Ketcham, 2002; Shelton & Saltsman, 2005). Some authors assume that DE facilitators need a longer time than for traditional face-to-face (e.g., Li & Akins, 2005; Spronk, 2008). Furthermore, facilitators may not be adequately trained in the new technology and this may lead to them not using it to its full potential and to the full benefit of the learner (McPherson & Nunes, 2008; Snyder, 2009; Torrisi & Davis, 2000; Tu, 2004). Successful DE teaching involves flexibility of the learning environment for the varied learners (Li & Akins, 2005; Snyder, 2009) as well as the willingness to hand over the control to the learner (Burge & Polec, 2008; Snyder, 2009).

Section summary

This section reviewed the literature on the main aspects of the DE teaching and learning experience that include its theories, its connection to adult learners and adult learning theories as well as DE facilitation for DE contexts. There is no consensus on theory for DE contexts in part because DE continues to evolve (Haughey et al., 2008). DE contexts have changed from independent learning contexts (Burge & Polec, 2008; Tenenbaum et al., 2001) to collaborative learning communities (e.g., Burniske, 2003; Macdonald & Thompson, 2005; Rovai & Gallien, 2005; Snyder, 2009; Tu, 2004). Some prominent adult learning theories linked to DE contexts and learners include SDL, cognitive, experiential and constructivist learning (e.g., Duncan & Barnett, 2010; Ke & Charr-Chellman, 2006; Snyder, 2009; Zembylas, 2008a). Constructivist teaching principles also often guide facilitation in DE context (Browne, 2003; Dixon & Dixon, 2010; Hamilton et al., 2004). Moreover, the DE facilitator's has multiple roles in its teaching and learning context depending on his/her participation in the development,

design, delivery or assessment. The facilitators often create the course content; they must also organize and effectively manage content, people, and possibly technology. Ever evolving, the DE teaching and learning literature is overwhelmed with ideas and research originating from predominantly western perspectives (Alzouma, 2005; Gyamfi, 2005; Newell, 2008). The same type of depth in research and development is lacking for DE contexts such as Africa (Alzouma, 2005; Ololube et al., 2007).

DE in Sub-Saharan African Contexts and its Challenges

This second section reviews literature that examines why the Sub-Sahran African teaching and learning context is unique and the challenges that come along with practice. The earliest DE programs within Sub-Saharan Africa, with the exception of South Africa, started as external overseas correspondence courses with colonial host countries, such as the one offered to its colonies through the University of London (Enuku & Ojogwu, 2006; Omolewa, 2000; Tait, 2008). Following the developments of their respective internal universities, these earlier African DE correspondence programs later developed as internal units serving adults within their communities (Enuku & Ojogwu, 2006; Koul, 2007; Mackintosh, 2005).

University of South Africa (UNISA) is the oldest and largest distance-teaching university in Africa (Mackintosh, 2005; Peters, 2001). UNISA started teaching in 1946 (Mackintosh, 2005; Peters, 2001; Tait, 2008); originally it only held examinations when it started out in 1873 (Peters, 2001). It is of no surprise, therefore, that South Africa is believed to be the leading DE provider in Africa (Assie-Lumumba, 2004; Dodds, 2005). UNISA is the only recognized mega DE University serving the African continent with

over 100,000 learners (Mackintosh, 2005; McKay & Makhanya, 2008). This achievement has taken place despite the fact that the African continent, home to the world's second largest population (Neff, 2007) is unable to meet over 90% of its higher education needs in some cases (Mackintosh, 2005; Saint, 2003; Teferra & Altbach, 2003, 2004). In fact, no more than 300 institutions in Africa fit the definition of a university (Teferra & Altbach, 2003; 2004). This makes Sub-Saharan Africa the least developed region in terms of higher education institutions and enrollments (Mackintosh, 2005; Sy, 2004; Teferra & Altbach, 2004). What compounds the issue are various socio-economic challenges common to all parts of Africa such as extreme poverty and low life expectancy which adversely impact higher education opportunities (Gyamfi, 2005; Mackintosh, 2005; Ojo, 2009). There may be some hope on the horizon, however, with the advent of constantly evolving DE teaching and learning practice (Braimoh & Osiki, 2008).

All Sub-Saharan African countries now have connection to the Internet at least in their capitals (Saint, 2003; Sehoole & Moja, 2004; Sonaike, 2004). One of the significant results of this development is that DE teaching and learning has generated some interest as to its use within the Sub-Saharan African higher education contexts (e.g., Assie-Lumumba, 2004; Bhola, 2000; Carr-Chellman, 2005; Chiumbu, 2006; Gyamfi, 2005; Mackintosh, 2005; Minishi-Majanja & Ocholla, 2004; Sy, 2004; Teferra & Altbach, 2004). The literature offers conflicting view and analysis of the current DE situation (e.g., Mackintosh, 2005; Ololube et al., 2007; Sy, 2004). On the whole the tendency is to discuss the Sub-Saharan DE situation from a macro level (e.g., Ayadi et al., 2005;

Chiumbu, 2006). Part of the reason is that the Sub-Saharan context is uniquely endowed

with challenges (Mackintosh, 2004).

Common Concerns with DE in Sub-Saharan Africa

Various authors share some common concerns about DE practice within Sub-

Saharan Africa. These include: issues of access; lack of clear guidelines; inadequate

infrastructure; lack of funding; and limitations of available human resources. Each area

of concern (discussed below) is common to the Sub-Saharan African context, but the

extent to which each specific factor affects each of the Sub-Saharan African countries

and contexts differs (Minishi-majanja & Ocholla, 2004; Sonaike, 2004; Teferra &

Altbach, 2004).

Issues of access.

Access for Sub-Saharan Africa means connecting learners to relevant educational

resources regardless of their circumstances (Alzouma, 2005; Gyamfi, 2005). Sub-

Saharan African contexts have an access problem because of the sheer number of its

underserved population (Ayadi et al., 2005; Bhola, 2000; Day, 2005; Dodds, 2005;

Oduaran, 2000; Saint, 2003; Spronk, 2008). The four underserved groups include: the

high number of qualified learners for whom the traditional universities are unable to cater

to (Mackintosh, 2005; Teferra & Altbach, 2004); women who are often more culturally

marginalized (Saint, 2003; Sy, 2004); refugees from warring countries; and those living

in remote areas (Adekanmbi, 2007; Saint, 2003). Educational access can provide the

significant benefit of limiting relocation which may be inconvenient and expensive for

the learner (Minishi-majanja & Ocholla, 2004; Saint, 2003). It also gives the learner an

opportunity to learn while at the same time taking care of other responsibilities such as an

employment (Saint, 2003). The DE options which are used to meet Sub-Saharan Africa's access problem are fraught with various challenges (Colle and Roman, 2004; Dodds, 2005; Lapointe, 2005; Mackintosh, 2005).

No clear guidelines.

A serious challenge to implementing successful DE within Sub-Sahran Africa is lack of consistent policies (Adekanmbi, 2007; Alzouma, 2005; Jegede, 2002; Minishi-majanja & Ocholla, 2003, 2004; Ololube et al., 2007; Sonaike, 2004; Teferra & Altbach, 2004). In general there is no clearly articulated institutional, local or national policy (Ani & Biao, 2005; Minishi-majanja & Ocholla, 2004). The fear currently is that DE is regarded as being of less value than traditional higher education institutions (Adekanmbi, 2007; Saint, 2003). Only strong policies could improve the current DE standards (Adekanmbi, 2007; Ololube et al., 2007). Nonetheless, the lack of policy is however not the only barrier to successful DE implementation

Inadequate infrastructures.

Another challenge is the lack of adequate ICT infrastructure (Alzouma, 2005; Ani, 2005; Mackintosh, 2005; Minishi-majanja & Ocholla, 2004; Ololube et al., 2007; Spronk, 2008). Although there is Internet connectivity in all of Sub-Saharan Africa, the speed of the connection is limited and fraught with problems (Colle & Roman, 2004; Sonaike, 2004). Furthermore, the Internet connections are more concentrated in the urban areas but extremely limited in the rural areas where potential user reside (Alzouma, 2005; Chiumbu, 2006; Minishi-majanja & Ocholla, 2004). The cables and technology are often not well planned and cannot be well maintained (Ani & Biao, 2005). Power supply for the available technology is sporadic and not consistent (Alzouma, 2005; Ani &

Biao, 2005; Carr-Chellman, 2005; Minishi-Majanja & Ocholla, 2003). Successful

implementation of DE within Africa means those computers and other accessories such

as keyboards and wires should be readily available to learners (Minishi-majanja &

Ocholla, 2003; Perraton, 2000; Spronk, 2008). Unfortunately, Sub-Saharan African

contexts do not make its own computers or its own software; everything is imported

(Day, 2005; Sonaike, 2004).

Lack of funding.

Sub-Saharan Africa's poor economy means that little or no funding is available

for higher education ventures such as DE practice (Ayadi et al., 2005; Chiumbu, 2006;

Latchem, Lockwood & Baggaley, 2008; Sonaike, 2004). The lack of funding bleeds into

various aspects of DE sustainability. For instance, intellectual property rights for

securing and using some Internet content tend to be expensive since these rights are held

by commercial companies (Chiumbu, 2006). There are also often high international

tariffs that go with Internet surfing and these tariffs prevent Internet service providers

(ISP) from delivering web pages at competitive speeds (Latchem et al., 2008; Sonaike,

2004). The lack of funding also means that the high costs of DE tend to be passed along

to its learners (Spronk, 2008).

Limitations of available human resources.

Qualified Sub-Saharan African DE instructors are in short supply (Ani, 2005;

Ashcroft & Watts, 2005; Colle & Roman, 2004; Day, 2005; Gyamfi, 2005; Iwe, 2000;

Minishi-Majanja & Ocholla, 2004). Training programs available for DE instructors are

limited (Minishi-Majanja & Ocholla, 2004; Perraton, 2000). In fact most current DE

programs within Africa are geared towards teacher training initiatives to make up for the

shortfall (Adekanmbi, 2007; Mackintosh, 2005). The continuously changing technologies are also a challenge to maintaining a sustainable workforce of DE instructors (Anyanwu, 2003; Minishi-Majanja & Ocholla, 2004). The cost to keep up with the latest teaching techniques and technologies is daunting on already crippled resources (Mackintosh, 2005; Minishi-majanja & Ocholla, 2004). African context's DE has several choices to help it move forward.

Since Sub-Saharan African context is so unique in the types of complexities experienced in its DE practice, it is imperative that Sub-Saharan Africa take the lead in finding its own solutions (Mackintosh, 2005). Currently very few African languages are represented in international DE practice (Gyamfi, 2005). From a development perspective, Africa needs to promote active research through local, regional and international partnerships (Adekanmbi, 2007; Braimoh & Osiki, 2008; Gyamfi, 2005; Minishi-Majanja & Ocholla, 2004; Ololube et al., 2007; Saint, 2003; Sehoole & Moja, 2004; Sonaike, 2004). These partnerships would help bolster fledgling DE ventures and at the same time promote quality program delivery until each DE venture is able to stand alone (Colle & Roman, 2004; Koul, 2007). Additionally, Sonaike (2004) urged partnerships with scientists and engineers to promote local technological innovations. Research, development and evaluation must be an ongoing process in DE (Colle & Roman, 2004; Koul, 2007; Lapointe, 2005; Sonaike, 2004; Teferra & Altbach, 2004). Sustainable DE must engage all stakeholders in its process to be successful (Day, 2005; Moyo, 2004).

It is common to find African students learning through the use of second, third or fourth languages (Mackintosh, 2005). Assie-Lumumba (2004) discusses how the use of

foreign languages results in the loss of identity to a non-native learner because it is difficult for the learner to personalize or relate to content. Furthermore, the language used is often English (Sadykova & Dautermann, 2009), which means it precludes certain groups who cannot speak, think and write in English from participation in DE (Anyanwu, 2003; Alzouma, 2005; Carr-Chellman, 2005). Most of the content of these programs offer views that are predominantly western (Alzouma, 2005; Anyanwu, 2003; Gyamfi, 2005). For the most part, women's perspectives are often ignored in development of DE programs even though they constitute a large part of its users (Colle & Roman, 2004; Sy, 2004). Cultural perspectives of DE learners are also important (Gunawardena & Lapointe, 2008; Meier, 2007; Spronk, 2008) and these are often ignored in DE programs (Carr-Chellman, 2005). One major reason why most of the DE projects have failed is a lack of cultural understanding (Sy, 2004). Spronk (2008) suggests that while western ways of thinking tend to be linear, other traditions have a tendency to use spiral logics. In fact, the DE system currently functions using a capitalist framework (Carr-Chellman, 2005; Sy, 2004). Therefore, DE ventures have more to do with money, power and control (Anyanwu, 2003; Sonaike, 2004; Sy, 2004) than it has to do with philanthropy (Sy, 2004). This type of DE actually promotes hegemony (Alzouma, 2005; Anyanwu, 2003; Gyamfi, 2005) if in the end the mission of the learning is determined by other countries and technologies rather than its local users and managers (Sy, 2004). DE within Sub-Saharan Africa may end up widening the gap between those who have access to its resources and can use them and those that cannot (Alzouma, 2005; Anyanwu, 2003; Carr-Chellman, 2005).

Summary of DE practice in Sub-Saharan African Context

Africa's striking poverty is part of the reason that the region faces a complex situation in terms of higher education development. There are various ongoing challenges which prevent successful implementation of DE strategies. These include issues of access; lack of clear guidelines; inadequate infrastructure; lack of funding; and limitations of available human resources. Unfortunately the literature in these contexts only focuses on the challenges of the terrain (e.g., Ayadi et al., 2005; Chiumbu, 2006; Minishi-majanja & Ocholla, 2004; Ojokheta, 2010b). Very few offer empirical evidence of how participants experience the DE teaching and learning. In fact, there has been minimal empirical research conducted within each specific African country (Ololube et al., 2007; Sy, 2004).

Nigeria's DE Practice

In this third and final section of the literature review, Nigeria's DE practice is discussed. Nigeria is an ideal example of a Sub-Saharan African country with all of the social, economic and political complexities discussed in DE literature. So, how are participants experiencing the DE teaching and learning within Nigeria's varied DE contexts? A multi-ethnic and multi-religious country (Ituma & Simpson, 2009; Jibril, 2003), Nigeria gained its independence from Britain in 1960 (Ng'ethe, Subotzky, & Afeti, 2008). The country is also the largest black nation in the world (Jibril, 2003; Ng'ethe et al., 2008) with one in every five Africans a Nigerian (Ng'ethe et al., 2008). Since its independence, Nigeria has experienced constant changes stemming both from

political instability and economic challenges (Jibril, 2003; Olujuwon, 2003). Although English is acknowledged as Nigeria's official language (Okedara & Okedara, 1992; Jibril, 2003), the country also recognizes three additional regional languages, Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba (Barber 1997; Ituma & Simpson, 2009; Okedara & Okedara, 1992) even though its citizens speak over 400 languages, (Okedara & Okedara, 1992; Jibril, 2003). In terms of economics, Nigeria ranks high as one of the world's crude oil exporting countries (Ebong, 2004; Ituma & Simpson, 2009; Ng'ethe et al., 2008). Yet, over two-thirds of its population lives in poverty on less than one dollar a day (Saint et al., 2003). As with many African countries, Nigeria has a high--50%--rate of illiteracy (Adomi, 2000; Afrik, 2000; Jegede, 2002; Jibril, 2003) and an extremely high percentage of eligible underserved learners within its population (Ajadi, 2009; Ajadi et al., 2008; Teferra & Altbach, 2004).

Higher education.

Nigeria's higher education system, which, refers to its post secondary learning opportunities is regarded as one of the leading systems within Sub-Saharan Africa (Jibril, 2003; Okebukola, 2002; Saint et al., 2003). It is divided into universities, polytechnics, colleges of education and monotechnic institutions, which are governed by federal, state and private sectors (Ambe-Uva, 2007; Jibril, 2003; Ng'ethe, et al., 2008; Saint et al., 2003). The universities are the only institutions that can award undergraduate and graduate degrees; all other higher education institutions award sub-degree diplomas and certificates (Jibril, 2003; Ng'ethe, et al., 2008). The country is home to 50 public universities and 23 private universities (Ng'ethe, et al., 2008). Even at their full capacities, the higher education institutions are serving approximately 20% of those

eligible to learn (Jegede, 2002; Ololube et al., 2007). Accordingly, a major concern is how to educate Nigeria's underserved population (Jegede, 2002; Jibril, 2003; Saint et al., 2003).

State of DE in Nigeria.

DE is being practiced and promoted in institutions as an alternative education to close the enrollment gap (Ajadi et al., 2008; Ambe-Uva, 2007; Ibara, 2008). However DE practice itself is not a new phenomenon within the country (Ambe-Uva, 2007; Ojo & Olakulehin, 2006). Nigeria started its DE participation through correspondence courses with the University of London during the late 1930s (Enuku & Ojogwu, 2006; Osuji, 2005; Tait, 2008). Once Nigeria eventually established its educational mission and its own internal universities in the early 1960s, six regional universities, referred to as first generation universities, were formed and these also provided DE locally (Jibril, 2003; Okebukola, 2002; Osuji, 2005). From that time, DE institutions as well as other academic institutions have been continuously affected by the country's political and socio-economic turmoil (Ambe-Uva, 2007; Ibara, 2008). More recently the increasing use of ICT to support education globally has led to the resurgence of DE programs (Ajadi, 2009; Enuku & Ojogwu, 2006; Jegede, 2002; Ojo & Olakulehin, 2006).

Institution enrollment, learners and instructors.

Officially recognized Nigerian DE programs are provided through two different types of institutions: the federal first generation universities--referred to as dual mode universities; and National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN)--referred to as a dedicated single mode university (Ajadi, 2009). Although these institutions are officially licensed to award university degrees, limited empirical information exists on how these

DE institutions function within the country (Ali, 2008; Ukpo, 2006). In terms of institutional accreditation, which is provided by the Nigerian Universities Commission, only four dual mode universities are officially recognized (Ojokheta, 2010b) but quite a few exist (Ofulue, 2011). The enrollment figures are not detailed or readily available per DE institution and where available appear conflicting (e.g., Ajadi et al., 2008; Olakulehin, 2008; Ofulue, 2011). Olakulehin's (2008) article reports that 32, 600 students were enrolled in NOUN between 2004 and 2006 with a view to projecting an increase of 50,000 to 60,000. Ofulue (2011) reported that at the time of her study three of the accredited DE institutions which included NOUN had a total of 35,000 enrolled in their programs. 75% or 26, 250were NOUN students. Ajadi et al. (2008) also provided data for NOUN reporting that the current enrollment was 43, 254. However a review of Ajadi et al.'s (2008) article revealed that the enrollment data was actually data over time from 2003 – 2008 rather than actual enrollment stood at the time of the article.

Learners.

DE in Nigeria is currently geared towards the poor, the illiterate, women, those marginalized and those living in remote areas through one form of education or the other (Ave-Umba, 2007). Its objective is to meet the needs of people who have families, jobs and other obligations. Its intent is to reach people in communities where they would otherwise be deprived of opportunities to learn (Ave-Umba, 2007). Some details also emerged on Nigerian DE learners (e.g., Ali, 2008; Ambe-Uva, 2006; Ojo & Olakulehin, 2006; Ukpo, 2006), but the information is not necessarily consistent. For instance adults in DE institutions are more likely to be in their 30s than the early 20s (Ambe-Uva, 2006; Ukpo, 2006). However, Ojo and Olakulehin (2006) found that their participants ranged

from 24 – 65 years in age. The majority of the learners studied are either employed in full time job or in part time jobs (Ambe-Uva, 2006; Ukpo, 2006). Ojo and Olakulehin (2006) contradict this finding from NOUN data which was obtained from its academic registry department. The results in the data showed that the majority of the learners (59%) 5892 out of a possible 9,966 were in fact unemployed and that only (41%) 4, 074 were employed. Again, for some of the studies, the learners were mostly male (Ambe-Uva, 2006; Ojo & Olakulehin, 2006) and this fact is contrasted by Ukpo (2006) whose group of participants were 57% female. Ali (2008) indicated that all the documents reviewed in his study indicated that the learners at the two centers met all the entry requirements for their respective programs. The various conflicts with the DE learner demographic data indicate that there is no consensus and the contexts determine the types of learners.

Facilitators.

Only one study was found that provided some demographic information on DE facilitators and this was conducted by Ali (2008). This study indicated that the facilitators at the two centers reviewed had an average of 4.7 years experience each. 40% of the DE instructors had PhDs, 25% of them had masters and 35% were instructors with first degrees or some form of specialization in their specific field of study. Ali (2008) also indicated that there were high ratios of instructors to learners in the two DE contexts. For those in the arts it was 1:93 instructors to learners; in education 1:86 instructor to learners and in the sciences it was 1:48 instructor to learners. The approved ratio of instructors to learners approved by the government was however 1:20 for the arts; 1:14 for education; and 1:10 for the sciences. This study also revealed that there were various

methods DE instructors used to teach learners and that they included lectures, demonstrations, practical work, projects, modeling and group discussions. However considering the study was about DE instructors, some of the methods raised several questions. Were these instructors, actually conducting part-time or evening classes as Ali's (2008) study report indicated? Clearly only more detailed empirical studies will ultimately provide the best clarification on this and other questions that remain about Nigeria and its DE practice.

Empirical evidence in Nigerian DE practice.

Ali (2008) also stated that an absence of empirical evidence has hindered progress on the issue of whether the new DE systems operated from the first generation universities are actually of benefit to learners and not a strain on currently overloaded systems. The limited Nigerian DE articles are purely descriptive in nature (e.g., Ali, 2008; Ambe-Uva, 2007; Ajadi, 2009; Ajadi et al., 2008; Ibara, 2008; Olakulehin, 2008; Ololube et al., 2007; Osuji, 2005; Yusuf, 2006). There is a lack of studies focused on how participants experience the DE teaching and learning process. Empirical studies found in this review provided mostly quantitative aspects of their mixed methods results (e.g., Ali, 2008; Ambe-Uva, 2006; Ukpo, 2006) and the reporting of some of the studies lacked depth (e.g., Ali, 2008; Ambe-Uva, 2006). For example, Ambe-Uva (2006) conducted a study of students' experience of DE interactivity at NOUN using surveys and focus groups. According to the researcher, 319 out a possible 664 participants completed the survey. As to the survey instrument, the researcher indicated that it had six questions which measured interactivity but thirteen questions that were focused on participant demographics. Although it stated that the survey instrument was pilot tested,

no additional information was provided about its validity or reliability. Some of the concerns stemming from this limited information include a paucity of questions measuring interactivity and the specific survey questions actually used to measure interactivity. Furthermore, apart from indicating that focus groups were used, there was no information as to what types of questions were used for the focus groups, and therefore, the presentation of its results was inadequate. No effort to use the questions posed or the supporting quotes from respondents in the discussion of the results. Overall, the reporting of the study was less detailed than was expected and this fact raised more questions than it should have done. Additionally, Ali (2008) conducted a study to evaluate two Nigerian DE universities. Apart from providing an overview of the types of data requested, the researcher indicated that two instruments were used for data collection. Both instruments were self developed and in fact one of the instruments Distance Learning Evaluation Schedule (DLES) was used previously in two other studies. Not enough details were provided on the validity or reliability of the instruments used. The findings were presented more as a discussion rather than through the use of tables, graphs or other forms of visual representations. Furthermore, only five references were cited at the end. Overall, Ali's (2008) study seemed incomplete. In fact several issues about Nigerian DE practice remain empirical mysteries.

For instance, Ajadi et al. (2008) indicated that the dual mode DE institutions have e-learning capabilities, yet details on these available technologies and several other pertinent questions remained unanswered. Do these e-learning capable institutions use similar e-technologies? How do DE teaching and learning occur with these e-technologies? The limited available empirical studies indicated that study centers

affiliated with DE institutions were used for DE learners and these seemed to vary by context and provider (e.g., Ambe-Uva, 2006; Ali, 2008). Ali (2008) describes two different centers operated through two separate unnamed DE universities. The descriptions provided seemed to resemble resident universities with guesthouses, lecture halls, laboratories and reading rooms. There was also a complaint that both DE centers lacked libraries. In contrast, however, Ambe-Uva (2006) described eight NOUN centers out of a possible twenty four study centers which should be equipped with local area networks (LAN) and wide area networks (WAN). Ambe-Uva (2006) did concede that some learners had problems with specific technologies, but then went on to infer that some of the issues stemmed from the inability of the learners to use available technology.

Summary of Nigeria and DE

This section focused on Nigeria as an example of a unique under-researched Sub-Saharan country with its own varied DE contexts. Not only does Nigeria illustrate all the challenges common to the Sub-Saharan African contexts in terms of DE practices, but it also has its own unique elements. The country is the most populous one in Africa and it is home to a multi-ethnic and multi-religious group of citizens (Ituma & Simpson, 2009; Jibril, 2003). It should be economically buoyant, but the majority of its citizens live in poverty with limited access to educational resources. Despite the confirmation that DE is used in its higher education institutions, there is limited empirical research about how this type of teaching and learning occurs and how it is experienced.

Chapter Summary

This chapter reviewed literature from three DE sections: the first includes important aspects of the DE teaching and learning experience. The second includes the literature focused on DE issues and challenges in the Sub-Saharan Africa that highlight the uniqueness of the context for DE practice. Finally, the third includes literature review focused on the Nigerian DE practice.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this interpretive case study is to explore the teaching and learning experience of facilitators and learners operated from a distance education program within a Nigerian tertiary institution. The research questions guiding this study include:

1. How does teaching and learning take place within a distance education program?

2. What instructional design is being used and to what extent does it allow faculty to accomplish its educational objectives for the higher education learners?

3. What is the learner's experience in the Nigerian distance education context?

Design of the Study

Certainly from my perspective, my worldview influenced my interest in an international adult distance education phenomenon. Initially, I wanted to find out how Nigerians in higher education were experiencing online distance education (DE). My literature review revealed that there is limited research being conducted in Sub-Saharan Africa on DE (Colle & Roman, 2004; Koul, 2007; Lapointe, 2005; Sonaike, 2004; Teferra & Altbach, 2004; Zawacki-Richter, 2009). The gap in the literature presented a good opportunity for an exploratory study to address my specific interest on the teaching and learning experience of both facilitators and learners. These two aforementioned interactive processes are part of the most crucial aspect of any distance education (DE)

system (Arbaugh & Benbunan-Fich, 2007; Caliskan, 2009). In addition, I believed the study of this important phenomenon in an under-researched context such as Nigeria ultimately would bring new insights for researchers and practitioners alike. The Nigerian DE context is unique because of the complex economic challenges and its limited educational resources (Ibara, 2008; Olakulehin, 2008). Such complex contexts are also potentially ripe for innovation (Macintosh, 2005). Consequently, this study hoped to uncover the possible novel DE experiences of the participants.

Research Paradigm

A naturalistic or qualitative case study research design was chosen because the inquiry sought to get an understanding of the phenomenon in a specific context (Maxwell, 2005; Merriam, 1998). This research design fits into the naturalistic paradigm (Lincoln & Guba 1985; Mertens, 1998) and the design is a more appropriate choice for an exploratory study (Creswell, 2009; Maxwell, 2005). Although often classified in different ways, the research paradigm is a way of thinking that guides the approach taken to conduct research (Creswell, 2009; Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009; Neuman, 2006). The theoretical perspective associated with the chosen paradigm is also naturalistic or interpretive because this proposed study intended to understand the meaning of a phenomenon in its natural state (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009; Maxwell, 2005). The following section illustrates the distinct features which the qualitative approach brings to this study.

Qualitative Case Study Design

There is a wide range of research that falls into the interpretive or qualitative perspective (Maxwell, 2005; Neuman, 2006) including this qualitative case study. All

interpretive designs share common features and Merriam (1998) has divided these into

five characteristics. First, qualitative research seeks an understanding from the

participants' perspectives (Creswell, 2009; Maxwell, 2005; Merriam, 1998). This study

sought an understanding of how facilitators and learners experience DE from their

(participant) perspectives.

Second, qualitative research involves field work of some sort to examine the

phenomenon (Creswell, 2009; Merriam, 1998). I travelled to a Nigerian DE center in a

research university to try to understand the DE teaching and learning experiences of the

participants. Third, the qualitative researcher's role is vital in the research because he/she

is part of the data collection process (Creswell, 2009; Merriam, 1998; Neuman, 2006).

Therefore, as data was collected in the field, I started the data analysis process.

Fourth, qualitative researchers derive meaning through inductive data analysis,

often involving comparison of themes and categories (Merriam, 1998; Neuman, 2006).

Not only was my research purpose exploratory but within my theoretical framework,

there was no theory that stood out as being appropriate for the study. No comprehensive

DE theory exists at this time (Menchaca & Bekele, 2008; Schlosser & Simonson, 2006).

One reason may be that DE is practiced in different countries and across varied teaching

and learning environments (Simonson et al., 2003; Schlosser & Simonson, 2006).

Therefore, it is unlikely that an all inclusive theory of DE can exist that addresses its

multiplicity. Additionally, while there were several applicable adult teaching and

learning theories for the DE context, virtually all of them come from within western DE

contexts (Newell, 2008). So I went into the research with an awareness of contemporary

DE theories as well as adult learning theories, but I tried not to fully frame my study

within them because I believed these theories may not be relevant to the Nigerian context.

Fifth, the end product is a deep, rich understanding in form of descriptions using images and words rather than numbers (Merriam, 1998; Neuman, 2006). To this end I used Tables to show the relationship of the categories and I also used the participants' words to bring about an understanding of their teaching and learning experiences.

Qualitative research designs are flexible, adjustable, and sensitive to the context where data are collected (Mason, 2002; Merriam, 1998; Patton, 1990). Consequently, these previously mentioned features make qualitative case study a good approach for my proposed study. Qualitative case studies are "particularistic, descriptive and heuristic" (Merriam, 1998, p. 29). Particularistic means that a specific phenomenon is investigated using in-depth interpretations (descriptive) and the end result enlightens our understanding (heuristic) of the phenomenon being investigated (Merriam, 1998). The discussion below focuses on what a case study approach meant for my study.

Case studies have been used for a long time across disciplines, (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009; Qi, 2009) and consequently what constitutes a case study has been defined in various ways (Lincoln & Guba 1985; Yin, 2003, 2009). One example is a systematic in-depth description of a single or multiple bounded units of study (Merriam, 1998; Patton, 1990). Hammersley and Gomm (2000) believe that case studies should be used to capture cases in their "uniqueness" rather than being used for "generalizations or theoretical inference" (p. 3). Case studies are more about setting the parameters of the case being investigated (Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1994, Qi, 2009). In this proposed study, the case or bounded system (Qi, 2009) was a DE program within a DE center operated

from a university in south western Nigeria. The participants of interest within this bounded case were the facilitators and learners within a program. The phenomenon in question was an understanding of the experience of both facilitators and learners as they navigated their DE teaching and learning context. The methods used for inquiry within cases can be tailored to fit each specific case or cases (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009; Stake, 1994). This ease of customization of the case study means that they can be quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methods (Stake, 1994; Yin, 2009). The case study design also allows the use of multiple sources of evidence (Merriam, 1998; Qi, 2009; Yin, 2009). Therefore, this methodology was a good fit for the proposed study because it allowed for tailoring of the design to fit the phenomenon of interest, teaching and learning experiences, within its natural DE context. Since DE in Nigeria is under-researched with limited methodological precedents, it was important that my research design choice be flexible. Additionally, my design choice made it possible to examine the phenomenon of my study holistically, using more than one source of evidence. This aspect also made the case study approach compatible with the qualitative aspects. The next section highlights the selection process for the study.

Sample Selection

This study used a purposeful sample to answer the research questions. A purposeful sample is the act of seeking "out groups, settings, individuals where and for whom the processes being studied are most likely to occur" (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p. 202; see also Morse, 1994). Creswell (2009) highlights the importance of addressing how researchers will access their site and participants. The case used for this study was a DE Teachers Education bachelor's degree program selected from other DE programs

operated from a dual mode university located within the south western region of Nigeria (see case description). The participants were primarily DE faculty and DE learners of the program. The full description of the case is in the case description section. The criteria for selection for the study are sorted into three distinct groups: site, program faculty and students.

Site

The context of choice was one of Nigeria's federally funded dual mode universities (see case description). Dual mode universities in Nigeria are officially accredited to offer degrees through both conventional and DE programs. The university used for this study has a leading reputation within the country which made it a good context to conduct the exploratory study. Generally, researchers use some form of personal relationships to gain access to the research field (Merkens, 2004; Mears, 2009). In my case, I initiated preliminary discussions regarding the possibility of sample recruitment with the DE center administrator. Then I obtained assurances that it was possible to conduct my study within one of the DE programs operated from the institution. Consequently, I secured an official letter of support from the institution which noted that they were willing for me to conduct my study there. Then using the support letter along with supporting documentation, I applied for an IRB once my committee approved my study. Once the IRB was approved, I travelled to Nigeria to conduct my study in July 2011. The criteria for choosing the DE program used included:

1. Confirmation that it offered a higher education DE program.

2. A DE program that concludes in terminal degrees for learners.

3. Ability to recruit participants for my study within the DE program.

Program Faculty

Upon arrival at the institution in July 2011, I met with my administrator host who introduced me to two female DE faculty colleagues who were part of the institution's DE external grants and research team. The administrator host and the two DE faculty members who consented and were part of the study helped me draw up a viable participant recruitment plan of faculty to approach for my study. This initial planning team introduced me to other DE faculty both by phone and by going with me to their offices to let me make connections and let them know what my study was about. Eventually, three Other DE faculty and another administrator were added to the study based on the initial relationships with the three person planning group at the research site. This study specifically targeted DE faculty currently engaged within the Teacher's Education DE program operated from the Nigerian university. Two main reasons for its selection were that the DE program was one of the two longest running DE programs at the institution, and it had the most number of faculty participants committed to being part of the study. I used data from five DE faculty members for this study and the criteria used for their selection were:

(1) Worked in the DE settings for a minimum

of one year.

(2) Engaged in DE facilitation of learners

within the program used in the study.

(3) Provided access to contact their students for recruitment for the study.

One of the reasons for proposing the selection of faculty who have worked in the DE setting for at least a year was to ensure that participants were already familiar with

and could share their DE teaching and learning experiences. Once I recruited the faculty and got access to contact DE learners. I started recruiting DE students too, and these and additional recruitment strategies are listed below.

Students

I was specifically interested in DE students from the Teacher's Education DE program who were students of my DE faculty participants. Maxwell (2005) points out that "selection decisions require considerable knowledge of the setting for the study" (p. 90). In this case, I sought guidance from those involved in DE on how to secure those who fall into the study criteria. It was a form of snowball sampling where the intention was to recruit participants based on connections from earlier data collection (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). In this case, each participant recruited was as a result of a relationship with another participant who consented to be a part of the study. I got the telephone numbers of various DE learners from the DE faculty participants. I spoke to the participants by phone to set up appointments to meet with them and let them know about the study and if possible to get their consent to participate. I was successfully able to recruit eight DE students (see case description for more details on participants) who met with me on its campus. I selected the participants using the selection criteria below:

1) Needed to be a DE student at the university.

2) Need to be enrolled in the DE program used in the study.

3) Need to be a listed student with one of the DE faculty used in the study.

4) Need to be an adult by Nigeria's standards.

This study did not find any literature about how Nigerian's define adults but Nafukho, Amutabi & Otunga (2005) acknowledged that the term adult in the African sense presently refers to anyone from the age of 18 years. In fact, Nafukho et al. (2005) suggested that the term adult has been refined over the years due to western influences. A more appropriate description of African adult learners is people who are "older than children and they are expected by the society to behave in a specific manner" (Nafukho et al., 2005, p. 5). In this study the expectation was that they should have completed high school equivalent and be considered by society as being able to work in a professional capacity and or get married without needing an approval.

General Recruitment Strategies

For each recruited DE faculty and students, I clarified the intentions of my study in detail in an attempt to seek their individual consent to be a part of the study. The importance of doing no harm to study participants is widely accepted (e.g., Fontana & Frey, 1994; Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009; Merriam & Simpson, 2000). Therefore, the consent letter (see appendices c and d) included pertinent details about what was expected and what participation in the study entailed (interviews using a digital recorder, document analysis, and notes/memos). Additionally the research participants were given a confidentiality assurance that in my reporting of the study only their respective pseudonyms would be used. The recruitment of each participant was completed by having each participant sign two informed consent documents (see appendices c and d) from which they were provided a copy. This process informed and established the rights of the participant to withdraw from the study at any time.

Data Collection

The researcher's role is critical to qualitative research and one of the things the researcher does is to collect data from which to make meaning (Merriam and Simpson, 2000; Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009). Furthermore, qualitative case study research does not privilege any data collection method over another (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Merriam, 1998). In this study design, the data collection methods I used included interviews, document analysis and observation.

Interviews

I used semi-structured interviews (Roulston, 2010) as my primary data collection strategy for this study. Semi-structured interviews use a guide, but they are flexible in that they allow for unanticipated responses and they use probes (Banister, Burman, Parker, Taylor & Tindall, 1994; Roulston, 2010). Interviewing is one of the data collection methods used in qualitative research (Fontana & Frey, 1994; Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009). In fact, Roulston (2010) states, "the term *interviews* are used to encompass many forms of talk" (p. 10). Interviewing may involve the researcher talking with one person or with many people (Fontana & Frey, 1994; Roulston, 2010). Since there are different types of interviews used in multiple ways (Fontana & Frey, 1994; Merriam & Simpson, 2000), classification of interviews often depends on which author is reviewed. One of the ways interviews have been classified is structured, semi-structured and unstructured (e.g., Fontana & Frey, 1994; Roulston, 2010). Structured interviews refer to formal preset questions which the researcher poses to get participant(s) responses (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009; Merriam & Simpson, 2000). Conversely, unstructured

interviews are informal in that they tend to resemble conversations because they are often more in-depth (Angrosino, 2007; Fontana & Frey, 1994).

In this study, semi-structured interviews helped me guide the direction of the discussion towards an understanding of the teaching and learning experiences in the Teacher's Education DE program. I used interview protocols (see appendices a and b) along with probes to let the participants express their understanding of their experience in their words. The interviews were conducted in English since this is Nigeria's official language. In order to effectively manage the study and maintain rigor in the research I interviewed fifteen participants for the study. Qualitative research studies usually involve small numbers, but overall they depend on the complexity of other factors about the research (Marshall & Rossman, 2006; Merriam, 1998). Since my sample included representations of both genders in both groups of participants, it made for a rich interview data because of the additional philosophical differences and educational experiences. A digital recorder was used to tape the interviews for a later transcription and analysis. However, interviews were not the only data collection strategy used.

Document Analysis

I used document analysis (McCulloch, 2004) as a secondary data collection strategy for this study. One of the three main data collection methods used in qualitative inquiry is the analysis of documents (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009; Merriam & Simpson, 2000). The term *document* is defined as "a symbolic representation that can be recorded and retrieved for description and analysis" (Altheide, Coyle, Devriese & Schneider, 2008, p. 127). Documents can include published or unpublished writing, and public or private print (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009). McCulloch (2004) has categorized documents into

three main groups, records and archives; printed media and literature; and diaries, letters and autobiographies. Document analysis according to Altheide et al. (2008) implies that the researcher intends "immersion in the subject matter conceptually" (p. 127). In this study I reviewed documents and records related to the DE teaching and learning in the program being researched. Examples of the documents that I reviewed from instructors included DE records of grades which was completed and certified manually before being input into electronic media. I reviewed the document contents of CDs presented to participants and I reviewed the online documents accessible to DE learners. DE learners and instructors showed me examples of the notes collected from the face-to-face sessions. Document analysis is often used alongside other data collection methods to provide more depth to the findings when biases of each method are evaluated (Hodder, 2000; Merriam & Simpson, 2000). After reviewing each document to determine how it was applicable to the study, I made notes and applied codes which were processed during analysis.

Observation

This study used naturalistic observation (Angrosino, 2007) as part of its secondary data collection strategies. One of the popular data collection methods used in qualitative research is observation (Angrosino, 2007; Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009). Merriam and Simpson (2000) define observation as "viewing events and people" (p. 154). Naturalistic observations are useful for inquiries about day-to-day events and experiences that occur in natural settings.

In this study, I was in the learning environment used for DE teaching and learning. I explored the department, center and facilities related to Teacher's Education DE program within the institution. I observed the way DE faculty and learners interacted

with one another in informal settings such as the offices of faculty members. These firsthand observations of the DE teaching and learning context provided the visual perspective into how participants experience these processes.

Alder and Alder (1994) noted that participant observation is often prevalent in qualitative discussions while ignoring true naturalistic observation as a method in its own right. Naturalistic observation according to Alder and Alder (1994) is synonymous with the term qualitative observation. In naturalistic observation the researcher observes individuals or groups within their natural settings and makes no attempt to change or interfere with the setting (Banister et al., 1994; Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009). In this study, the naturalistic observations were useful in adding depth to my understanding of the DE teaching and learning experience of participants. During the observation, I used note pads to write down the critical aspects of my observations and to record some of my thoughts.

Data Analysis

This study used the constant comparative technique, analytic memo writing and triangulation of data sources as my analytic strategies. Qualitative data analysis is ongoing throughout the life-cycle of a qualitative study. This is because analysis is planned for in the study's design and the process is conducted physically from the data collection phase to the end of the study (Creswell, 2009; Gibbs, 2007; Huberman & Miles, 1994). Once data are collected, the analysis process involves the data's organization into manageable groupings for display, review and interpretation (Butler-Kisber, 2010; Huberman & Miles, 1994).

In this study, once an interview was completed, I transcribed it and it was saved as a unique data file with its own name so that when I started to analyze, each data group was initially independent to others. In a similar vein, once documents were reviewed and had been manually assessed and analyzed using field notes, I created a code for it and saved the data as an electronic file. So once the electronic transcription of each interview was completed and was saved, I printed a copy of each and coded each interview transcript manually. During coding I used a combination of the "holistic coding" and the "values coding" system (Saldana, 2009). Holistic coding tries to understand basic themes from the data by group rather than line by line, and it is used as a preliminary effort to clarify what is in the data (Saldana, 2009). Values coding is appropriate for use in exploring participant experiences in case studies (Saldana, 2009). Using this strategy, the codes were generated from the data itself and based on what was inferred from the values, beliefs or attitudes of the participant. Once I had completed the manual coding of each transcript, I used a word document to list all the various codes that were generated and from there was able to start sorting repeated aspects. At that initial sorting stage I had 76 codes for learners and 96 for instructors and administrators.

Constant Comparative Analytic Technique

I used the constant comparison technique to create some order to my coded data. Although constant comparison analysis is regarded as a major component of the grounded theory (Boeije, 2002; Butler-Kisber, 2010; Charmaz, 2010) the analytical strategy is also used in other qualitative types of inquiry (Boeije, 2002). As its name suggests, constant comparative analysis involves ongoing evaluation and comparison of data in order to form coherent categories and themes for interpretation (Boeije, 2002;

Charmaz, 2010; Gibbs, 2007; Merriam & Simpson, 2000). Analytically the constant

comparative analysis serves to organize and manage the data while at the same time

bringing out important data themes for consideration (Butler-Kisber, 2010; Charmaz,

2010; .Gibbs, 2007). I reviewed each coded interview transcript to compare codes across

participants and groups of participants to see the relationships and developing patterns.

From this stage I moved to "focused coding" (Charmaz, 2010, p. 57). At this stage I

reviewed and matched coded sections within each group and found new and or shorter

labels for them which were more selective. I continued doing this process within and

across groups until I ended up eventually with pared down themes and categories. One of

the strengths of constant comparative analysis is that the comparison strategy can lead to

the discovery of similarities and differences within and across data. Comparative

analysis can also lead to the formation of theories that are grounded in the data itself

(Merriam & Simpson, 2000; Roulston, 2010). In this study, I was able to develop a

tabular representation of the data across participants.

Memo Writing

Memo writing was another analytic strategy used in this study and it is used by

researchers to record the researchers' thoughts which helps guide the data analysis

process from raw data to the reporting stage (Charmaz, 2010; Gibbs, 2007; Roulston,

2010). According to Charmaz (2010) there is no best way to write memos. Researchers

are just encouraged to write memos continuously from the beginning of data collection

stage till the end of the study (Charmaz, 2010; Gibbs, 2007). In this study, analytic

memo writing was used along with the constant comparative analysis to work through

any emerging themes and categories as I moved through the analysis phase. I used the memos to point out critical reflection points I noticed in the data for later review.

Triangulation

As indicated earlier, triangulation was also one my analytic strategies although it is discussed in greater detail in the credibility section of this chapter. When I was reviewing my interview data and paring down the codes, I considered and used as support the additional document analysis data as well as the observation data because there was more than one data collection strategy.

Data Storage

All the data generated from the three data collection methods (interview transcripts, document analysis notes and observation field notes) were kept confidential and secured in a password protected storage drive. In addition, all the paper data generated was also kept in a secured and locked cabinet. The data will be left in the storage until the IRB storage date expires when the storage drive will be erased and all the additional paper data will be destroyed.

<p align="center">Trustworthiness</p>

Qualitative researchers have various terms to describe the validity aspect of qualitative research and they include trustworthiness, authenticity and credibility (Creswell, 2009). Denzin (1994) categorized trustworthiness of the research into "four components: credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability" (p. 508). Trustworthiness is an important part of the design of this study and part of the process involved constant verification of the research process. I constantly reviewed my procedures throughout my research referring to established texts to support the process

(e.g. Charmaz, 2010; Creswell, 2009; Gibbs, 2007; Saldana, 2009). A comprehensive qualitative research design must provide authentic details and accounts to the external audience on the process of the research and how interpretations are drawn (Butler-Kisber, 2010; Marshall & Rossman, 2006). The validity aspects addressed in this study design include credibility, dependability, confirmability and transferability which are interpretive equivalents of internal validity, reliability, objectivity and external validity.

Credibility

Credibility is the interpretive construction of internal validity (Denzin, 1994; Marshall & Rossman, 2006). It seeks to uncover if the researcher has been able to accurately portray the views of the participants (Mertens, 1998; Marshall & Rossman, 2006). In this study, the triangulation of data collection techniques, the use of member checks and a subjectivity statement were the ways to ensure credibility of the study.

Triangulation.

Triangulation is often described as one of the ways to internally validate findings (e.g., Angrosino, 2007; Creswell, 2009; Gibbs, 2007; Mason, 2002; Merriam & Simpson, 2000). Triangulation used in this way reduces researcher bias, increases rigor of the research and is not necessarily used as a way to seek a unified truth (Flick, 2007a; 2007b). An important principle in triangulation is that multiple determinants of a phenomenon (e.g., methodologies, theories, methods and researchers) create a more holistic picture than just one (Gibbs, 2007; Maxwell, 2005). In this study, I used three data collection strategies (interviews, document analysis and observation), to get a more holistic understanding of participants' DE experience. By incorporating the triangulation strategy into the study, I was able to use it as an analytic strategy because I reviewed the

data across multiple sources. Triangulation also worked as a reliability strategy and a credibility strategy in the study.

Member checks.

This study also used member checks (Creswell, 2009; Gibbs, 2007; Maxwell, 2005) with the participants in the DE program being researched. After transcription, I went back to discuss what I discovered with some of the participants to ensure I was capturing what they meant. Apart from that, I collected data from a faculty member from a related DE department and from two DE administrators to ensure that the data obtained from the Teacher's Education DE faculty members was being corroborated, I considered and discussed alternative interpretations of my participants' experiences based on the additional information from the administrators and extra faculty member. I was constantly grounded in my study and this also helped me reflect on my biases during the research process.

Dependability

Dependability is the interpretive construction of reliability (Denzin, 1994). This aspect of the research is concerned with how the researcher accurately portrays and documents the changes in the conditions and possible parameters of the study (Mertens, 1998; Marshall & Rossman, 2006). The assumption behind this is that the qualitative research contexts are not static but constantly evolving, (Mertens, 1998; Marshall & Rossman, 2006). This was addressed in this study by documenting the research process, keeping records and maintaining an audit trail (Merriam, 1998) that could be reviewed and analyzed by external audiences. The use of the triangulation analytic strategy, which

has already been described above, also served to address dependability issues in this study.

Confirmability

Confirmability is the interpretive equivalent of objectivity (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). In qualitative studies according to Denzin (1994) "confirmability builds on audit trails," (p. 513). In this study, confirmability was addressed by the use of field notes and memos.

Transferability

This aspect is concerned with how applicable the findings from this research are transferable to similar contexts (Mertens, 1998; Marshall & Rossman, 2006). Transferability is the interpretive equivalent of external validity (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Since this is an exploratory study, the findings may not be easily transferred to other contexts. It is however possible to relate and anchor these findings to international adult distance education research and to DE research within Nigeria. Marshall & Rossman (2006) suggest that by connecting the research to a known theoretical body of work, external reviewers can determine whether or not the research is transferable to other contexts.

Admitting my bias and subjectivities and reflecting on them as I conducted and documented the study helped to further strengthen both its quality and credibility.

Researcher Bias and Subjectivity

This study is guided by my interpretive/social constructivist perspective view of the world (Creswell, 2009). Interpretive research tries to understand the interactions and experiences of people (Robson, 2011; Rosmann & Rallis, 2003); this tenet is also shared

by social constructivists (Creswell, 2009; Schwandt, 1994). However, social constructivists also believe that knowledge is created through social interactions with other people and these interactions and knowledge are contextually dependent (Butler-Kisber, 2010; Robson, 2011; Strega, 2005). As an early career researcher (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006) in the field of adult education, I am still in the process of trying to understand various aspects of adult teaching, learning and development.

I am a Nigerian by birth who has already been immersed in the online teaching and learning environment both from a learner and facilitator perspective. I have been using different online learning technologies for the past five plus years continuously, both as a graduate assistant and as a student in the adult education doctoral program. Having worked closely with facilitators who teach in online contexts both within and outside my department, I believe that some facilitators are more willing to exploit the available technology than others and this is also the case with the learners who learn in those contexts. The idea to conduct this study came from both my DE practice experience and my curiosity about how adult learners were faring in Africa as a whole. I come in to research slightly biased more towards the positive implications of using online technology to facilitate learning. However, I am also aware of the many limitations that the distance education technology itself presents to various contexts. Educational access means a lot to me personally both as a mother and as a Nigerian.

I approached this study knowing that I was an insider Nigerian woman who was also an outsider. The complexities of the dual roles and the implications of it are clear. This is because I have lived and received an education from America and this experience ultimately influenced my perspectives as I conducted and reported on my study about

participant experiences in the Nigerian DE context. Fournillier (2009) addresses some of the tensions that come along with the dual positions (insider outsider). I made an effort not to come across as being arrogant or to be seen as a colonizer in this inquiry. I focused on getting across an understanding of how participants described their own personal experiences. In the field, I made sure to interact with other researchers and participants in the context to ensure that I was capturing the data accurately. I approached each participant openly with the realization that they were able to discern my genuine interest and willingness to understand and capture other voices and perspectives about their DE teaching and learning experiences.

I was also aware that my insider outsider position in the research could limit and benefit my study. Undoubtedly there is always a risk that I ignored certain issues as a Nigerian because I considered it routine from my insider perspective. On the other hand, being a Nigerian researcher at a higher educational institution also had advantages in that it was easier to build connections and rapport with my participants. Mears (2009) says the subtle advantage from sharing demographic similarities such as race, gender and ethnicity with the participants will sometimes help with understanding and communication.

Race was not a factor in this study because my participants were of African descent which made it easier for me to forge connections with them. There were ethnicity differences between myself and the participants even though, the majority were Yorubas who came from different towns and cities. So, there was an accommodation for a variety of accents even though the study was done entirely in English. There were also colloquial expressions and terms used by participants in describing their experiences that

were familiar to me. An example is "shu" which is a common expression to reinforce what is said. My gender as a female likely influenced my data collection phase. Depending on participants' beliefs or practices, there may have been some reluctance to share more in-depth information with me because of my gender. It could also have been a positive factor in that they shared more with me because of my gender, but in sincerity I think my gender helped me seem more sympathetic. However, it is important to point out that Nigeria has female researchers and educators and women are not uncommon to higher educational settings. For this reason both genders are represented in the data collected and used for the study. I tried to put each participant at ease and worked on building some rapport before any in-depth data collection occurred. As an example, I wore different Nigerian traditional attire throughout my time in the field to make connecting with participants easier. I am aware that I negotiated issues of power while conducting the study, and also as I try to report it, I will need to negotiate with committee about using best practices. Etherington (2004) says that this is an inevitable part of any inquiry. I continue to be reflexive in the journey, querying each assertion to be certain that I am capturing the participants' voices rather than my own. Overall I think that since my dissertation topic was not of a really sensitive nature where the provision of results would provide participant names, so participants found it easier to be forth coming. I had anticipated that observation methods could be intrusive, but there were so many day-to-day distractions for the participants that it ended up being less of a concern in the field. Furthermore, because Nigeria is a convention bound society, I was careful to be polite to all participants, mindful of their generosity of time with me.

Chapter Summary

This study used a qualitative case study to explore the teaching and learning experience of facilitators and learners operated from a distance education (DE) program within a Nigerian tertiary institution. The chapter explained the design of the study and addressed why a qualitative case study was used. Furthermore, the chapter described the sample selection strategy used for the site and participants. In addition, the recruitment methods, data collection, and data analytic strategies were also discussed in this chapter. Finally, the issues surrounding the trustworthiness and researcher bias and subjectivities are presented.

CHAPTER 4

CASE DESCRIPTION

The purpose of this interpretive study was to understand the teaching and learning experience of facilitators and learners at a distance education (DE) program operated from a Nigerian tertiary institution. The research questions that guided this study include:

1. How does teaching and learning take place within a distance education program?

2. What instructional design is being used and to what extent does it allow faculty to accomplish its educational objectives for the higher education learners?

3. What is the learner's experience in the Nigerian distance education context?

This study sought to increase understanding of how facilitators and learners experience DE teaching and learning as these two interactive processes are part of the most crucial aspects of any distance education (DE) system (Arbaugh & Benbunan-Fich, 2007; Caliskan, 2009). In this chapter three sections describe the case study context, the case and the participants.

The University and the Distance Learning Center (DLC): Case Study Context

This section describes the university, the main teaching and learning center for all the DE programs and the Distance Learning Center (DLC), the administrative center for all DE programs.

The University

The federal dual mode university used in this study is located in the southwestern part of Nigeria, in a major city of approximately 2.8 million residents. The residents are a multi-ethnic and multi-religious group and as with most Nigerian cities in the southwest, it is a vibrant commercial hub. The university's presence plays a positive role in the city's continued development through its connection to local businesses and people; the university's surrounding community is busy and active. In terms of infrastructure, it is an uneven mesh of both the very old and new buildings. There is much needed maintenance everywhere such as roads with potholes, leaky drainage, limited water supply and a lackluster power supply. In these areas, shanty markets sit beside high rise buildings (business and residential alike) where the businesses and markets pander to the same clients: residents, students and staff. There is a tiered transportation system around the area outside the university which operates through motorcycles, buses, taxis and private taxis. Typically the motorcycles cater to individuals while the buses and the taxis have routes and take more than one passenger, and the private taxis can be rented per hour within the city. Once within the university gates, there is another transportation system around the campus using officially registered taxis and buses. Payment for transportation within the campus is regulated by the university in collaboration with students and the transport workers even though this process is often fraught with intermittent conflicts between the two major groups (students and transport workers). Private cars coming into the university are controlled using a card tagging system, and those cars belonging to residents within also have recognized tags.

There are three gates that lead into the university but the main entrance gate is the busiest. Inside the university gate is another seemingly thriving mini city. As with all universities there are faculty and departmental buildings, academic administrative buildings and university resident halls for undergraduates, graduates and postgraduates. In addition, within the campus there are about three equivalent k-12 schools for staff children, staff residential areas for senior staff and junior staff respectively. To serve the population within the campus, different businesses exist which include various mini grocery marts, official resident dining halls and shanty diners, various document type companies that offer typing, printing, photocopying and binding services amongst others. Notwithstanding the extensive campus, it is impossible for the university to house its entire staff and student population, and so those unable to find accommodation within campus have to live in the surrounding areas outside the campus.

The university's student population for its conventional degree programs stands at approximately 20,000 while the faculty population is at approximately 5000 (based on discussions with Dr. Babatunde the DE Teacher's Education course coordinator). Where applicable, the same faculty teaches in the conventional university programs and in the DE programs. Presently, not all the conventional programs within the university are offered in the DE mode; the DE programs which are run by the university have a different administrative location called the '*DLC*' (Distance Learning Center).

DLC

My first DLC visit was conducted as part of the first phase of action after my arrival in the field in July 2011. As the team of three faculty participants drew up a recruitment plan, they advised me to get an official approval from the recently appointed

DLC director to conduct my study at the University. My primary contact, Professor

Nosa, who had earlier given consent for my study, had just been relieved of his position

as the DLC Director. According to discussions with Professor Nosa and Dr. Eyitayo, the

DLC's Director and its other supporting officials are administrative appointments made

by the Vice Chancellor at his/her discretion. So, in order to ensure that there was respect

for his predecessor and transparency all around, Professor Nosa and his colleagues in my

informal recruitment planning team felt that I needed to visit the DLC officially.

Therefore, contact was initiated with Dr. Eyitayo, the recently appointed Director

Academic for the DLC at that time, and he agreed to chaperone my initial visit to the

DLC to get another official clearance from the newly appointed DLC Director. During

my initial visit I was there for a working day to observe and make connections; a

subsequent visit was shorter in duration to clarify some of what I had written in my notes.

  The DLC for this specific university has its headquarters outside the main

university grounds at a location which is at least a 30 minute drive away. This part of the

city is closer to the highway, and so traffic is heavy in terms of large trailers. There are

limited businesses, sparse roadside shops and the area is generally less busy, so

transportation is limited mostly to motorcycles (called okadas) and taxis. The present

DLC site was commissioned in 2008 and it houses the main administrative staff. Other

satellite DLC administrative centers in other Nigerian cities report to the main center.

There is only one entrance into the gated main DLC compound, manned by security

personnel, so that it is impossible to come into the DLC without proof of official business

to conduct within its buildings.

Inside the compound are three one story buildings and a shanty diner shack attached to the farthest building on its right. The DLC buildings look modern and more like residential homes than offices because the offices were completed from an initial residential design on land and property donated to the University (conversation with Prof. Nosa, the former DLC director). Each of the three buildings is separated by approximately 200 - 500 yards of space. The distance from the gate to the first building which is to the right of the gate is about 200 yards away. This building serves as a lecture hall and a mini residence hall for about 50 students although it was not in use during my time there. Directly in front of the gate is the largest of the three two story buildings which sits about 300 yards from the main gate. This is where the majority of the administrative personnel have their offices such as the DE Director and the deputy directors. The final two story building farthest from the gate served as the accounting and media and material productions units of the DLC. The additional shanty canteen, a tin and wood construction developed at the end of one of the media building, serves as a diner for the staff.

In the main DLC building, the offices are on the left side towards the walls while the entire building opens to a dome like space in the middle. I went round some offices and was introduced to the Director of the DLC so that he was aware of my intent to conduct my study and he graciously gave me his approval. I also took a limited tour around the buildings to see how the administrative section operated. In particular, I saw and spoke with those responsible for managing the registration data, the communications officer who markets the DLC and the media and materials officer who ensures the

production of learners' registration materials. From the registration managers, I learned that the DE registration process uses an online portal maintained within the DLC.

The communications officer makes sure that the university system and potential learners are updated about the current events with the DLC. The media and materials officer works with both the DE departments and learners; this office requires university departments to write text books for the DE courses they offer. The media and materials office prints these course text books and also prepares versions of the text using compact discs and audio recordings. The text-books and sometimes compact discs are given to DE learners once they confirm registration.

There was relatively little traffic within the DLC walls and apart from its staff; the other people within the building were three professionals coming in for a meeting. There were no DE students or non-administrative DE faculty within the DLC. I discovered that in order to find those people who engage in DE at this university, one would actually have to visit its main campus which as I mentioned earlier is closer to the main town.

The DE Teachers Education Program – The Case

Only five of the thirteen units (faculties, colleges and institutes) within this university currently offer DE degree programs (based on discussion with Bayo the communications officer). One such faculty is its College of Education, the university's longest serving DE provider on the campus. The first set of DE programs offered from this university was over 24 years ago in 1988. At that time the DE program operated specifically from the faculty of College of Education and was called an external studies program. Over time, the university has centralized all its degree and diploma DE

programs through its distance learning center (DLC) and this section presents a description of the DE program used as the case for this study.

The DE Teacher's Education (Bachelor's degree) program, offered through the university's College of Education was one of the first DE programs operated from the university. The program serves to educate potential educators for teaching appointments at the middle to high school equivalents (senior secondary schools). Students sought entry into the DE program for many reasons but primarily because they wanted to learn and there were extremely limited spaces in the conventional programs. In addition for the adult learners, DE was a better option because of their additional family and professional responsibilities. There are two levels of entry requirements into the DE program; therefore it can end up being either a five year or a four year program based on the candidates' initial qualifications. Those coming in with post secondary examinations results (equivalent of SATs for high school) get into the five year program. Those with additional qualifications of either the advanced level examination results or the Nigerian Certificate of Education (NCE), a teaching diploma required for all teachers who teach lower level grades get into the four year program. 2006 data from the university shows that a higher percentage of the candidates who graduate from the program came in with the additional NCE diploma. Course offerings within the Teachers' Education program include compulsory as well as elective courses that depend on the learner's area of concentration. During my data collection period, enrollment in the DE program was at approximately 1,500 students (based on discussions with Dr. Babatunde the DE Teacher's Education course coordinator and Bayo the communications officer for the DLC).

The Study Participants

This section provides a description of each of the fifteen major and two minor participants used in the study. The major participants were those who participated fully in the study and the minor participants were two administrative support staff members whom I spoke with at the DLC. Each of the participants featured in this section are grouped according to his/her roles and they include DE instructors, DE administrators, DE learners and DE administrative support staff. Furthermore, for each featured group of participants, demographic details as well as a brief synopsis of their physical appearances and my initial impressions are provided.

DE Instructors

The DE instructors for all the DLC programs are those who also teach in the regular conventional programs. All five DE instructors who participated in this study are from the Faculty of Education, four of them are instructors teaching in its DE Teacher's Education Bachelor's Degree program, while a fifth, Dr. Yemisi (used to corroborate data) teaches in the DE Adult Education Bachelor's degree program. Some of the instructors held DE administrative positions.

It is important to point out that the offices for these participant instructors are located within their respective departments in their faculty building inside the campus walls. None of my participant instructors had a private office space. Each had to share space with other junior colleagues or with peers. So the offices had either two or three occupants. The shared office space overflowed with various files in and around book shelves that caused further crowding in the limited space. It was in these spaces that I and other visitors met with instructors to introduce myself and my study. The Table 4.1

below highlights the demographic information for each DE instructor followed by a

synopsis.

Table 4.1 - Demographic Information for DE instructors

Instructor pseudonyms	Gender	Age Range	Qualifications	DE teaching experience
Dr. Babatunde	Male	50 - 60	PhD in Education specialization in Language Acquisition	10 years teaching in the DE Teacher's Education program
Dr. Funmi	Female	45 - 55	PhD in Education specialization in Education Technology	13 Years Experience in the DE Teachers' Education program.
Dr. Kuye	Male	55-65	PhD in Education	7 Years teaching in the DE Teacher's Education program.
Dr. Ponle	Male	45 - 55	PhD in Education specialization in Geography	Approximately 10 years teaching in the DE Teacher's Education program
Dr. Yemisi	Female	45 – 55	PhD in Education specialization in Adult Education	Approximately 10 years experience in the Adult Education DE program

Dr. Babatunde.

Dr. Babatunde held both a teaching and administrative position as the DE course

coordinator. He stood at about an average height and build and looked well into middle

age with patches of grey all over his head. He was a very affable and thoughtful

participant to work with because during my pre-scheduled time with him, he was delayed

twice and both times he called ahead to let me know of the change in our meeting time.

As he was also the course coordinator for the DE Teacher's Education program, he was

very active and busy, constantly interacting with his colleagues (other DE instructors)

and DE learners. He described a part of his student management duties saying,

"Sometimes the management will send to me to identify some students whether they are

our students or not. Are these students regular students? Are they functional students? Are they students of DLC or have they disappeared or have they gone." Generally Dr. Babatunde seemed to be well liked, judging by the way and number of students who constantly came to interact with him. He pointed out, "You will even see that I've kept receiving visitors since morning, all those are distance learning students; they want one information or another." During our interactions, he came across as vocal and principled in terms of how he expressed himself to me. For instance he was in support of disciplinary action for faculty colleagues who mistreated DE learners. Dr. Babatunde pointed out, "If somebody is made a scapegoat for instance, then others will learn from it but it depends on the DLC center to take the bull by the horn, instead of doing that, they will call meetings and be begging." Overall, Dr. Babatunde was not evasive on any of the questions he was asked and was very attentive to my requests and those of others.

Dr. Funmi.

Dr. Funmi held both a teaching and an administrative position as a member of the DE research team representing the university in external projects. She stood well above average height and looked middle aged in both her matured appearance and dressing. Dr. Funmi wore mostly conservative looking fitted skirt suits during my interactions with her and sported her short grey-tinged hair naturally. She was both jovial and easy to relate to professionally, and I found her often engaged in good natured banter with colleagues and visiting students. She was very much a good resource during my data collection process because she was part of the three person team that helped me draft a participant recruitment plan to secure colleagues when I was in the field. As an education technologist, she was an avid supporter of both DE in practice and the use of support

technology. She shared part of her outlook on DE saying, "It is not enough having the content but the methodology, the delivery format must be represented with the skills of teaching at the distance learning mode." Dr. Fummi also pointed out her primary objective as an educatior, "I want to say that you cannot totally eliminate frustration because we technologists know there will be frustration, but it is the duty of the teacher that frustration within the classroom is reduced to a minimal level so that's our long term goal." Overall, I felt that she was a reliable participant although she sounded more polite and reserved during our main interview, and I sensed this was probably because it was being recorded.

Dr. Kuye.

Dr. Kuye had a teaching position with no administrative duties within the DE program. In physical appearance, he was a lean, elderly man of average height with long hands and fingers wrinkled with age. He was dressed conservatively in a shirt and a pair of pants or in what Nigerians' term a '*safari suit*' when I interacted with him. Dr. Kuye was very sociable and humorous with student and peers. During my time in his company, he was always eager to engage in socio-political discussions about Nigerian current events. He was constantly concerned for the masses and the effect of government policies on them. As an example, during his interview, in response to a question about his expectations for DE learners Dr. Kuye changed the issue to a Nigerian socio-political challenge saying, "In Nigeria you know they've got a problem even at the ministerial and government level, we are always putting round pegs into square holes; recently a woman who read pharmacy was made the minister of information, there performance belied profession." I got the impression that Dr. Kuye enjoyed his ever ready audience with

students who came and spent time in his company as he consistently beguiled everyone with colorful anecdotes often laced with proverbs. An example of one of his proverbs came through in his interview when he discussed his outlook on getting student evaluations from students. He said, "The Yorubas say that you can only see the back of someone else's head, you can't see yours only someone else can tell you what yours looks like." Overall, I felt that Dr. Kuye was an advocate for DE more from a social justice perspective in that students deserved to be educated because they put in financial and emotional efforts.

Dr. Ponle.

Dr. Ponle had a teaching position with no administrative duties in the DE program. He stood slightly shorter than average in height, and judging by his matured facial features he appeared to be a middle aged man who was of average build. Although friendly enough, Dr. Ponle seemed quiet in general and was mostly pensive during any type of engagement with others. Like his colleagues, he played host to various students during his work day. He shared Christian religious tracts with some of the visiting students as well as providing them with dates and times for upcoming faith based events. During our interview, he came across as being principled with strong convictions in terms of how he facilitates learning and interacts with everyone. As an example, Dr. Ponle discussed how he taught his classes saying, "I give them examples like when we talk about AIDS, you will see guilt and condemnation right in their eye because I bring it to them right from the classroom, so they have the right perspective of the whole world." In addition when Dr. Ponle spoke about what students should take from his DE interactive courses he said, "I want to make sure that after they have finished and I am done with

them, they see life in the right perspective." My overall impressions were that although Dr. Ponle came across as being empathetic to some DE challenges, he did not seem to be fully sure about whether he supported DE in practice or not.

Dr. Yemisi.

Dr. Yemisi held both a teaching and an administrative position as a member of the DE research team representing the university in external projects. By her facial features and conservative formal dressing she appeared to be a middle aged lady of average height and build who wore her hair in long braids. During my interactions with her, she seemed reserved and soft spoken although friendly and good natured. In addition, Dr. Yemisi was a part of the three person team that helped me draft a participant recruitment plan and secure colleagues when I was in the field. She was very well composed, seated comfortably behind her desk or on the shared office sofa during my time in her company. She was constantly working with her laptop and sending messages through her phone. She came across as a learner centered educator because when discussing her teaching philosophy, she pointed out that, "To motivate others to enjoy the journey of learning at any particular age, I am not a boss in my class, the days of bossing students are gone especially with the Internet where they can read anything, they see things." Dr. Yemisi continued, "If you let them loose I'm telling you, you will be surprised about what they know, they themselves will be surprised about themselves, so I always encourage them to share from their loot of experience." Overall, she came across as being an avid supporter of DE practice and a supporter of using more technology for DE education because from my perspective she was the most tech-oriented member of the participants.

DE Administrators

Two DE administrators were also added as participants used in the study for credibility purposes of member checking. Below is Table 4. 2 which shows their demographic information followed by a brief synopsis of each administrator.

Table 4.2 - Demographic Information for DE Administrators

Administrator pseudonyms	Gender	Age Range	Qualifications	DE teaching experience	DE Administrative position and
Dr. Eyitayo	Male	40 – 50	PhD in Education specialization in Psychology	10 years teaching in the DE Teacher's Education program	Director Academic for the DLC at the university
Professor Nosa	Male	45 – 55	PhD in Linguistics	10 years teaching in the DE program	Former DLC Director. He headed the DLC for the university for 8+ years. (2002 – Jan 2011)

Dr. Eyitayo.

Dr. Eyitayo held both an administrative and a teaching position in the DE program. In appearance, he seemed to be a middle aged man of average height with a slightly balding patch on his head, his matured facial features and his dressing. He dressed conservatively in a dark colored suit. He mentioned that part of his daily routine was to attend administrative meetings both scheduled and impromptu ones based on the day to day running of the DLC. Dr. Eyitayo was full of energy and friendly in how he interacted with me and those in my presence; he often spoke very quickly and was always on the move. I felt he was very diplomatic in his responses. As an example, when asked about his participation in the DE program he wanted to point out both its strengths in addition to how well it is received. He said, "I am here to tell you how viable the

distance program is in Nigeria, in this university. It is not a second rated program as some people would want to believe." He continued saying, "I'm going to tell you that the DLC students that got their first degree here are happy holders of this university's certificate." As with his quote above, Dr. Eyitayo was enthusiastic about the DE Teacher's Education program and he came across as being genuinely sympathetic to DE colleagues and students with their respective dilemmas in the DE program.

Professor Nosa.

Apart from being a former DLC director, Prof. Nosa was also a part of the DE research team representing the university in external projects. He appeared to be middle aged from his mature physical features; in height he towered over all the other faculty participants and was also lean because his clothes hung on him. He was dressed conservatively all the times I met with him, usually combining a traditional African printed top over an English pair of pants. Personality wise, he seemed to waver between being a quiet reserved character and having a lively entertaining persona. He wove a lot of different stories into the discussion when he spoke using humorous anecdotes to make his point. So, he was pleasant company, yet very serious about the issue of DE within the university. As an example, when he spoke about why DE practice in the context needed to change, he said, "We cannot continue to hold lectures under trees because my father had his classes under trees and came out to become a great man." During the same discussion which highlighted the context's DE education mentality, Professor Nosa said, "For instance, a colleague says 'that exam was tough, 70% of the student failed'; I mean is it not the reverse? There is a problem with the lecturer not a problem with the student, If 70% of the class fail?" As with his views shared above, Professor Nosa was concerned

about various DE issues and he had several ideas to share. Overall I had the impression
that he was open to being challenged and he enjoyed a good debate, so he came across as
being very knowledgeable and experienced about DE at the university.

DE Learners

The DE learners who participated in this study were all from the faculty of
education in the DE Teacher's Education Bachelor's degree program. Four of the DE
instructors and one of the DE administrators in this study had taught each of the
participants listed below. DE learners took an active part of their educational context in
that they were often seen visiting with their instructors to discuss academic issues. It was
normal to have students (both conventional and DE) lined up outside faculty offices
without an official appointment waiting for one issue or other to be addressed directly by
the faculty member. There was also nothing unusual for the faculty to send these
students on errands, both official and personal. For example, students often were sent on
errands to other departmental offices or to get something from faculty car or to buy some
snacks for them. This was an accepted norm and played a regular part of how things
functioned within the context. The Table 4.3 below highlights the demographic
information for each DE learner followed by a brief synopsis of each participant.

Table 4.3 - Demographic Information for DE Learners

DE learner pseudonym	Gender	Age Range	# Years/ Area of Concentration in DE Program	Learning Proximity to University
Ademila	Male	40 - 48	Third year DE student- area of concentration is Yoruba	Lives in state approximately 2 hours drive from University.
Bola	Male	22 - 30	Third year DE student- area of concentration is Geography	Lives in state approximately 20-30 minutes drive from university.

DE learner pseudonym	Gender	Age Range	# Years/ Area of Concentration in DE Program	Learning Proximity to University
Comfort	Female	20 - 28	Third year DE student- area of concentration is early childhood	Lives in state approximately 20-30 minutes drive from university.
Dare	Male	27 - 35	Third year DE student- area of concentration	Lives outside state approximately nine hour's drive from the university.
Sade	Female	38 – 46	Third year DE student- area of concentration is early childhood	Lives outside state approximately three and a half hours drive from the university
Segun	Male	22 - 30	Third year DE student- area of concentration is linguistics	Lives in state approximately two hour's drive from university.
Titilola	Female	22 - 30	Third year DE student- area of concentration is early childhood	Lives in state at approximately 30 minutes drive from the university
Wande	Female	42 - 50	Third year DE student- area of concentration is early childhood	Lives in state approximately a one hour drive from the university

Ademila.

Ademila self-supported his own DE education and he owned a personal laptop for his learning. Judging from his facial features and grey tinged moustache, he was a middle aged man of medium to average height and build. In addition, he noted that he was married with children, and was self-employed running a private business. He looked and dressed more like a professional wearing the traditional conservative Nigerian attire of a pair of pants and buba (an oversized top). Ademila was calm and mature when he spoke using a deep but mellow tone which sounded friendly. He was eager to help me understand every aspect of his learning. For example during the interview, Ademila provided me with a general overview of his courses saying, "For almost every course especially the one that has to do with mathematics or statistics, ah Mama I took my time, so I can pass." He also summarized his DE education journey up till the point of the

interview, saying, "One has to start from somewhere and if you do not stop, you will get there, you know when you get to the river you cross over." Overall, Ademila came across as an easy going, confident individual who enjoyed his DE program.

Bola.

Bola was partially self-supported in his DE education and his parents provided him with additional support. He owned a personal laptop for his learning. In physical appearance, he was tall and lean with a young early to mid twenties look from his casual attire of shirt and a pair of pants. He acted like a mature student because he was relaxed and appeared self-assured. He mentioned that he was employed by an organization but was not married. He was affable yet quiet and from his interview and interactions with me, he seemed genuinely to be enjoying his DE program. When asked about his participation in the DE program, Bola said, "You know this distance learning they have been doing it abroad over some years before they started doing it in Nigeria; but for myself, for me to be part of it, it is interesting and I love it." Bola also came across as being in support of DE faculty interactions with DE learners because he noted it saying, "They shouldn't relent on their efforts at least the way they are teaching us, the way they are advising us, the way they oriented us so on and so forth." As a participant, Bola seemed comfortable and felt appreciative to be a part of his DE program; he was not eager to suggest changes to the status quo of his program.

Comfort.

Comfort's DE education was supported by her parents. She did not own a personal laptop for her learning. She was a petite, young looking lady of average build and because of her pair of jeans and a t-shirt she looked like a typical undergraduate

student. According to her, she was unemployed by choice because her parents wanted her to concentrate on her studies. Although Comfort was composed during our interview section, she often did not go into detail when responding and I had to probe her constantly with more questions to get a detailed explanation of what she meant. As an example, when initially asked to describe her typical DE session activities, Comfort said, "We go to class with our materials, listen to the lecturer from morning till around 7. 00 pm before you can go home, so that is it." Again in another part of the interview when asked about her reaction to some of the DE challenges she had already mentioned within the context, she initially concluded "Me I believe these things are not big deals anyway." As a participant, my impressions were that Comfort seemed to have more of a laid back attitude but she came across as being an interested DE learner.

Dare.

Dare was a self-supported DE learner employed by a private company. He owned a laptop and used it to help with his learning. He stood at slightly above average height and build and although he noted that he was not yet married, his mature facial appearance made him look like an adult learner. He was dressed casually wearing a traditional Buba (Nigerian top) over a pair of pants. In the DE program, he was one of the class representatives, so he was a go-between for the DE instructors and peers. Since class representatives are democratically chosen by their classmates, it would be fair to assume that Dare was popular with his peers. During his interview he spoke in a self-assured and experienced manner. For example, when asked about the importance of face-to-face learning in his DE program, Dare also touched on the value of learner input. He said, "During the lectures, after the lectures and before we resume, let them have a meeting

with us; 'ok what have been you people's experience? What do you think we need?'

because we know what we are passing through, sincerely." Dare also believed it was

important for learners to get value in their DE education and he lamented on this issue

saying, "Even if you are paying millions you won't feel it because there are sometimes

you pay money but you are getting something but sometimes you pay money and you are

not getting what you pay for you will feel bad." In addition to Dare's quotes, my overall

impressions were that he appeared to be confident and vocal and expressive during our

interaction and interview.

Sade.

Sade was a self-supported DE learner who operated her own private business

although she noted that she was earlier employed as an early childhood educator. She

mentioned that she left her job to focus on her studies since the schedules (education and

employment) often clashed. She had her own laptop to help with her learning. In terms

of her physical appearance Sade is an average sized lady who looked middle age judging

from her facial appearance. In height, she stood tall at approximately six feet and she

was neatly dressed in a professional skirt suit with a frilly blouse which made her look

like an executive. Sade noted that she was married with children and that she was also

enjoying her DE program. During her interview she discussed how learning as an adult

was different saying, "So many things contributed to the stoppage of the learning when

we were young, you know the fear, the stress was there then that how are we going to

learn from what or where you are coming from?" Sade continued addressing how DE

inspires adults to achieve previously shelved educational goals saying, "So thank God

there is adult education these days, all things can still continue after the DLC program.

You can still become whatever you want to in life you get what I'm saying." Overall, my impression of Sade was that she was an optimistic individual who was polite, pleasant, well composed and vocal on certain issues.

Segun.

Segun was a self-supported DE learner without a personal laptop who was employed by a private organization. Although he noted that he was unmarried, Segun had a mature student look judging from both his facial appearance and his casual dressing in a regular looking shirt and a pair of pants. He stood at around an average height with a lean physique. During our interaction, he was calm and seemingly self-reflective at times because he paused often before responding during the interview. He spoke about why he wanted to be a part of the DE program saying, "I believe that, the level of my education right then is not up to what I can sit and relax, That is why I have to you know, proceed move forward. " Segun also addressed why he believed that he and his colleagues were committed to their DE program saying, "Some people do ask 'how do we cope with it?' It's because we have it in mind to do it and you know when you have something in mind to do you are determined to do it.**"** Segun's determination in getting through his DE program successfully came through in his interview and overall, I found he was polite and serious about his commitment to the DE program.

Titilola.

Titilola was a self-supported DE learner who did not own a personal laptop, but she had access to one in her office. She was a petite pregnant lady who was dressed in a casual but professional manner. She noted that she was married and worked with an organization. During our interview, she was expressive and showed passion for a lot of

the DE learning issues. For example when we discussed the DE program registration process she was quick to point out the challenges she had encountered to enroll in the program manually. She said "The road is bad, full of trailers, I don't like going there at all; if you go there they will waste your time, at the end of the day you will gain nothing." She continued with how she handled the manual registration situation saying, "And that is why I said that I cannot kill myself, I will let them know their negligence they cannot just be wasting our time and making us risk our lives." Throughout my interactions with her, Titilola was a lively participant full of illustrative stories and overall, I found her friendly, animated and a feisty individual.

Wande.

Wande's was a self-supported DE learner who did not own a personal laptop or computer. She is of an average height and build and she looked like an older lady from her facial appearance as well as her clothes. She wore a conservative looking dress that stopped well below her knees. She referred often to the toll of the DE program on her. For example, she discussed her expectations for DE participation saying, "I am an old woman, the distance learning is supposed to be peaceful there should be no problem as we are doing the program it is not easy for people like me an old woman to be doing this." Wande also discussed the need to get value for financial investments made towards her education saying, "We are the ones paying them so they should serve our needs for the money that we are paying them." The need for accountability in DE teaching and learning was highlighted throughout Wande's interview. The overall impressions I had was that Wande seemed like a "*straight to the point*" polite individual.

DE Administrative support staff

Bayo and Nuru were minor participants. The information they provided helped me understand and clarify the background details as to how the DE process operated from an administrative perspective. They were not used as major participants because they do not participate in the DE teaching and learning process. Their information is presented in Table 4.4 below.

Table 4.4 - Demographic Information for DE Administrative Support Staff

Admin Support pseudonyms	Gender	Age Range	DLC work experience	DE Administrative position and
Bayo	Male	38 – 46	7years	Communications Officer for the DLC
Nuru	Male	32 – 40	5 years	Media and Materials Officer

Bayo.

Bayo was a tall man of average build who was dressed professionally in a formal suit. He was approachable and accommodating with his time. A clear and well spoken individual, he provided me with details about the history and current daily DE process from an administrative perspective. He was eager to market the DE program for the university.

Nuru.

Nuru was a lean man who stood above average height. He was dressed casually yet looked professional in a patterned top and a pair of pants. He was civil with me in

terms of answering any queries I had, but not overly receptive and seemed eager to end our discussion.

Chapter Summary

This chapter provided the description of the case context in terms of the geographical location of the university and its DLC administrative office. Furthermore this chapter includes a description of the case as well as the fifteen major and two minor participants used in the study.

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS

The purpose of this interpretive study was to understand the teaching and learning experience of facilitators and learners at a distance education program operated from a Nigerian tertiary institution. The research questions that guided this study include:

1. How does teaching and learning take place within a distance education program?

2. What instructional design is being used and to what extent does it allow faculty to accomplish its educational objectives for the higher education learners?

3. What is the learner's experience in the Nigerian distance education context?

This study sought to increase understanding of how facilitators and learners experience DE teaching and learning as these two interactive processes are part of the most crucial aspects of any distance education (DE) system (Arbaugh & Benbunan-Fich, 2007; Caliskan, 2009). The study was designed to explore this phenomenon using a specific case in an under-researched context, Nigeria. In this chapter the findings are discussed in four sections: the first section provides a summary of the findings using a Table. The second and third sections describe the two main categories *Nigerian factors* and *paradoxical context*. A chapter and findings summary complete the fourth section.

DE Teaching and Learning Experience in Teacher's Education Program

The teaching and learning experience for DE participants (instructors and their learners) within the Teacher's Education program was a complex, evolving and organic process. In actuality, two main categories each with its own subcategories emerged from the data: *Nigerian factors* and *paradoxical context* (see Table 5.1). In addition, the findings of each research question for this study drew on aspects from each of the two main categories as several issues overlap. To represent the intricacies of the situation, I used a Table (Table 5.1 - shown below) which shows the linear breakdown in terms of categories and subcategories.

Table 5.1: Complexity of DE Teaching and Learning Experience

APPLICABLE RESEARCH QUESTIONS	CATEGORY	SUBCATEGORIES	DESCRIPTION
Research Questions (1, 2, & 3) 1. How does teaching and learning take place within a distance education program;? 2. What instructional design is being used and to what extent does it allow faculty to accomplish its educational objectives for the higher education learners? 3. What is the learner's experience the Nigerian distance education context?	NIGERIAN FACTORS National challenges	Access	Attribute participation in the DE program to overcoming the effects of a limitation
		Financially weak institutions	The limited finances of Nigerian educational institutions' and their effect on the context's DE
		Poverty	Persistent poverty within the country and its effect on context's DE
		Power supply	Irregular power supply's effect on context's DE
		Bandwidth	Limited Internet connectivity and its effect on context's DE
	PARADOXICAL CONTEXT Divergent nature of context	Entry drive	Factor(s) participants discussed as crucial to the pursuit of their DE program
		Paradox Mentalities	Participant approaches, outlooks or attitudes to DE issues that appeared contradictory
		Freestyle Pedagogy and Learning	The varied teaching and learning strategies participants used
		Power and Politics	How DE progress has been frustrated and promoted

Table 5.1 shows the two main categories (*Nigerian factors and paradoxical context*), their subcategories and descriptions. The Table reveals that all three research questions are relevant to the two main categories of the findings and highlights the complexity of how participants experience the DE teaching and learning in the case study context.

Nigerian Factors

The first main category that emerged from the findings is the *Nigerian factors*. Table 5.2 shows the relationship of the *Nigerian factors* to its subcategories and to the research questions

Table 5.2: Nigerian Factors' Influence on DETL

APPLICABLE RESEARCH QUESTIONS	CATEGORY	SUBCATEGORIES	DESCRIPTION
Research Questions (1, 2, & 3) 1. How does teaching and learning take place within a distance education program? 2. What instructional design is being used and to what extent does it allow faculty to accomplish its educational objectives for the higher education learners? 3. What is the learner's experience in the Nigerian distance education context?	***NIGERIAN FACTORS** National socio-economic challenges*	*Access*	Attribute participation in the DE program to overcoming the effects of a national education limitation
		Financially weak institutions	The limited finances of Nigerian educational institutions' and their effect on the context's DE
		Poverty	Persistent poverty within the country and its effect on context's DE
		Power supply	Irregular power supply's effect on context's DE
		Bandwidth	Limited Internet connectivity and its effect on context's DE

There are several societal dilemmas facing all those who live in Nigeria and the term *Nigerian factors* was coined by the participants themselves as an explanation of

these various limitations within the country. The use of the term *Nigerian factors* is neither original nor unusual to anyone who is Nigerian because it is often used to explain socio-economic challenges and mismanagement issues within the country.

Within the context of the study, some of the ways that participants also referred to the *Nigerian factors* included expressions like *this our country, you know the Nigerian factor, we in Nigeria you know, due to our nature* and other similar phrases. In this section, I discuss the *Nigerian factors* in relation to the DE teaching and learning for the Teacher's Education program. Some socio-economic issues routinely came up during my interactions with the participants and these include *access*; *financially weak institutions*; high level of *poverty*, the irregular *power supply,* and the limited *bandwidth* for Internet connections. The participants used these issues to relate some of their DE teaching and learning experiences in the context.

Access

Access was brought up by some participants as being a pertinent aspect to their involvement in the DE program. Access was noted when participants attributed their participation in the DE program to overcoming the effects of a national education limitation. An example was Comfort, the only DE learner participant who mentioned that her *Personal choice* into DE occurred as a result of her inability to get entry into the traditional university program despite having the qualifications. Comfort's case highlighted the problem of *access* in education within Nigeria: *Nigerian factors*. She said, "I have been sitting for JAMB since 2006 and it is not that I didn't meet the cut off marks but at the end of the day, whenever I went for the UME, I end up not being admitted." Comfort's discussion about *access* highlighted how the well known national

limitation which prevented her entry to a regular academic program was removed with her DE acceptance. I learned that not all those who sought admissions and met entry requirements got into the Teacher's Education program at the university. Professor Nosa noted, "Over 1.4 million Nigerians will take the entrance exam for university placement, less than 200,000 will be placed." Within the context, *access* therefore was a factor that drove both qualified learners unable to secure traditional university placement as well as learners who had other external demands but were eager to learn. Dr. Babatunde explained this fact by saying DE provided *access* for, "Those people that hitherto had been constrained from going further in their education either because of domestic demand, financial or job demand." He also said, "Distance education has been a kind of initiative of the university and federal government of Nigeria to make education accessible." Therefore, according to Dr. Babatunde, the institution itself was committed to easing the *Nigerian factors--access* through the use of its DE programs. Professor Nosa revealed that his own *entry drive* into DE was in part due to *access*. He mentioned that it was "Because the problem of access was really heightened in Nigeria and we wanted to make a difference you know." Prof. Nosa's *access* description was about getting into DE teaching and learning as a way to help those unable to get into traditional university programs. Professor Nosa continued saying, "This whole idea of building facilities based universities, you know brick and mortar universities; how many of these universities are you going to build that will take 1.4 million people?" Similarly, Dr. Kuye spoke about the fact that traditional universities were limited in capacity, "Each university had its own quota and it was not possible to admit more than that in a year." Dr. Kuye went on to say that he saw his DE instructor role as helping to alleviate the

access situation. He said, "Distance learning program provided a way out for these

students." For him distance learning was a positive opportunity for those facing *access*

issues. Dr. Kuye affirmed, "I was interested in teaching them because the luck we did

not have in our own days had now come to people these days." Other DE instructors also

used the *access* issue to explain part of their *entry drive* into DE participation despite

their having *no choice*. (*Entry drive*, *personal choice* and *no choice* overlap with *access*

issues but they are discussed in more detail within the *paradoxical context* category.) Dr.

Yemisi was one of those who mentioned that DE participation for herself and her

colleagues was in part an effort to alleviate *access* issues. She stated, "We are widening

access for a number of people who ordinarily will not be able to partake in the regular

program, so we keep doing it believing it will be better." Dr. Babatunde felt that his

participation as a DE instructor was in part helpful in alleviation of the *access* issue and

stated, "It also gives me pleasure to take part in the thing so that we can lend a kind of

hand." Dr. Eyitayo noted that the Teacher's Education DE program was successful in

combating *access*. He said," So we are making progress, and more and more people are

coming into the program, thereby reducing the number of people who could not gain

admission through our normal program." DE instructors who used *access* as an *entry*

drive for their participation in DE saw their engagement in DE as being part of an

ongoing endeavor to ease a national education dilemma--*access*. Contending with the

issue of access was not the only socio-economic challenge that faced DE participation.

Within the context there was also the financially weak institution which is discussed

further below.

Financially Weak Institutions

Nigerian institutions are often financially limited in running their programs, seldom receiving funding from within the country and often reliant on external funding to run programs and research. This national issue also affected the DE teaching and learning within the context and so it was identified in the findings as *financially weak institutions*. I learned that the university used for this study did not support its DE center financially. This was not surprising because as Dr. Kuye noted, "The institution is incapacitated itself; if we look at happenings in Nigeria, we will see that our government has never concentrated on education." Federal higher education institutions within the county running conventional programs have received very limited financial support from the government. According to Dr. Fummi, "Unfortunately in Nigeria, we have less than three percent of our revenue going into education." Dr. Kuye supported her assessment because he said, "An infinitesimally insignificant aspect goes to education so the university is incapacitated due to the Nigerian factor." The DE program was not immune to the *Nigerian factors* of the *financially weak institution* and in this context, DE not only supported itself, but it also paid earnings back to the university from where it got its staff, and to resources units such as payroll processing and registration. Dr. Eyitayo explained this when he said, "Talking about money, this thing doesn't receive money from the university but rather the DLC helps the university, it is the other way round." Dr. Nosa also made a similar revelation about how DE learners paid for their teaching and learning and then the funds were distributed to various groups in the university. He said, "They pay to university account then there is a formula for disbursement to the various units, we are the primary custodians of the funds but then of course the university will take x

percentage, the departments take x percentage." The fact that DE received no financial

support and seemed to serve as a fund generating program gave cause for concern since

part of its objectives according to some participants was to provide access to those who

had limited opportunities and oftentimes limited funds. Dr. Kuye was vocal on this ironic

situation and about those currently in charge of DE, "The controllers are those who

benefitted from the free education." Dr. Babatunde also highlighted a drawback facing

their weak institution in that it could not afford its DE staff because the center only

generates its funding by increasing DE student fees which defeats its *access* purposes.

He said, "The center pays the lecturers, the center has to source for money to pay the

lecturers: what do we do in this case? We want the fees to decrease we want our

remunerations to increase, so it is a paradox." The financially weak status of the

institution influenced how funding was generated to operate and support DE in the

context. Another socio-economic challenge that influenced the DE teaching and learning

was the visible and inherent poverty which is discussed below.

Poverty

Closely related to financially struggling institutions and perhaps the most

prominent of all Nigeria's social woes is the persistent poverty within the country which

has had an effect on DE education in the context. From an administrative standpoint I

learned that poverty limited the participants in DE in various ways. These ways included

poverty in the daily life of participants, poverty in getting enrolled in DE, and poverty in

getting participants equipped for DE. Although it was impossible to capture the visible

poverty, some of the participants made reference to it. Dare was one of the six DE

learners who described how he empathized with the daily struggles of some of his DE

instructors. He noted, "Even some of them still need to mount behind a bike to get down here, you just look at that and say 'shu' come, that's why many believe in business." Dare believed that their persistent poverty in spite of all their knowledge was less than encouraging to himself and his colleagues as they also try to chart their academic path. He noted, "When you see somebody that has used all his whole life from degree to PhD and you still look at them in fact, some of them don't even have a house of their own." Just as Dare was able to highlight the visible poverty in some of their DE instructor's lifestyles, some of the DE faculty were also vocal about the poverty they saw in their learners. Dr. Kuye tried to explain how the DE learners struggled with poverty but craved education. He stated, "You will need to interact with these people, I have seen where they find it extremely difficult to have three square meals a day let alone have education, at the same time they want to have this education." Systemic poverty was part of the plight of the DE participants.

All the DE learners were quick to point out that one of the major pitfalls they contended with every session was captured in Bola's expression "The sky rocketing of the school fees every year." The payment of the registration fees gave the DE learners access to course materials for their registered courses and they were expected to read these materials before coming in for revision sessions. Seven of the eight DE learners spoke about the effect of the fees for their DE program. Titilola bristled about the rising cost, "Every year, they increase the school fees" and Segun felt resigned in saying, "The issue of school fees, it is a general problem nowadays anyway." According to Dr. Kuye, one of the two instructors who spoke about the issue, "These students are paying, they are paying exorbitantly, and a majority of them are sponsoring themselves, they find it

extremely difficult." The DE learners noted the different effects that the high cost of the fees has on their program. For one thing not all DE learners could pay the fees and consequently, this had negative implications on their teaching and learning experience. Sade expressed her concern for some of her colleagues as she stated, "Look at the economy in Nigeria, it is not so easy there are some that they couldn't meet up with the school fees you know, we have so many drop-outs." Ademila also voiced his concern for colleagues who had to end their DE teaching and learning experience because of their inability to pay the ever rising costs. He noted, "I'm not happy about it because there are so many people that don't have the privilege of paying the huge amount of money and they have this thing, they have brain, they are ready to learn." I learned that the DLC administration previously gave DE students the opportunity to pay twice each semester due to the issue of persistent poverty but students had exploited the system. The payment platform could not be programmed to generate an accurate reading of those who had paid in full and those who made only partial payment. Professor Nosa spoke about that time, "What we then did one year was we allowed them to pay twice, In fact I was willing to allow them to pay monthly but the payment platform complexity, if you don't know they owe you, they will never pay." He continued saying, "Again it has its own drawback because the people you are concerned about then capitalize on the flexibility, shortly before I left all new students were no longer allowed to pay twice." Dr. Babatunde also mentioned that poverty has led some DE learners to resort to fraudulent practices to get into the program. He said, "You know when our students are unable to pay their fees they find fraudulent ways of presenting receipts, some have been caught. They go and photocopy other people's receipts by placing their own names on those other people's

names." Dr. Babatunde continued, "This is because they cannot pay, like I said earlier, a majority of them are sponsoring themselves and how do they get this money to pay?" Those participants not totally limited by the DE fees found themselves limited through poverty in other aspects of their DE teaching and learning experience.

Dr. Eyitayo pointed out that general poverty often resulted in ill-equipped DE learners. He observed, "I know a good number of our students don't even have laptops and you can't be running a DLC program without all these gadgets when you need them." The DE learners themselves corroborated Dr. Eyitayo's point about limited tools. Sade mentioned, "The majority of us don't have access to personal laptops like the one I have." Comfort also noted, "It's not everybody that have access to it, it is only out of hundred let me say like 40% have access to laptops." Dr. Ponle went further in his discussion to show how the effect of poverty, the *Nigerian factor* can seep into the DE teaching and learning environment. He stated, "Because of the economic situation of the country some of them don't pay on time." Based on a premise of late payment by the DE learner, Dr. Ponle highlighted that there would be increased pressure on the DE instructor. He said, "It will tell on the teacher, because once the students don't have access to the text from the beginning that means that the student will not know anything by the time you are meeting them face-to-face." According to Dr. Ponle, "Eventually the burden will now come on the lecturer again, he has to start teaching all over again since they didn't have access to the material right from the beginning."

Poverty was also a factor when considering the types of DE applications that its faculty could use. Getting licenses to use certain applications within DE education meant that the cost would be passed to the learners to pay for. Professor Nosa spoke about this

saying, "You go ahead and you deploy a very expensive LMS, you do that what will happen basically is that the students your fees will go up." Any academic development that would prove expensive to implement would also be detrimental to the DE mission. Professor Nosa highlighted this saying "It defeats the whole purpose of the distance learning because we are talking about equity. So that is why sometimes a lot of the technology issues must be mitigated by reality." According to Dr. Nosa, "70% of Nigerians are below the poverty line," and this had its effect on the DE instructors and its DE learners alike. Poverty made the DE teaching and learning environment an uneven and an unbalanced terrain in terms of who could afford to learn and what DE tools could be used to learn. While poverty may be evident in some of the DE instructor lifestyles, when it came to the DE teaching and learning environment, the *Nigerian factors* that seemed to have the most effect for them was the limited and inconsistent *power supply* discussed below.

Power Supply

The intermittent *power supply* hindered efforts made in the DE teaching and learning process and some of the participants pointed that fact out. Dr. Fummi explained saying, "You know the nature of our country and the electricity is a major problem, even we have been trying to put up a lot of things, they are not working yet." Dr. Babatunde also made similar complaints on the plight of fellow DE instructors, "Some gadgets have been installed in the department but the problem is the power to operate it, right now there is no electricity." In effect, the technology and equipment necessary to assist DE instructors with teaching was controlled by an inconsistent *power supply*. According to Dr. Babatunde, "The problem we have most is power supply because most of the times

when students are around, there may not be electricity." Therefore, instructors were limited in their teaching, learning and student management due to the effect of limited *power supply*. Dr. Ponle spoke about the difficulty of grading using technology because there is no guarantee of the *power supply*. He said, "Grading is very difficult to do because of light, even sometimes, I ask them to submit face-to-face and online knowing that when I want to grade, the light might not be there, just like now, no light." The *power supply* also affected the DE learners as they attended lectures with public address systems. Bola noted, "You may not even hear what the lecturers are saying at times when there is no light, and most of the time no light, you know Nigeria for you." Dare also revealed other lecture hall challenges for both the DE instructors and DE learners. However, he affirmed that there were some teaching aids that DE instructors had at their disposal saying, "All these media resource stuff, they have this projector stuff but they need to do it with computer so everybody will see." The challenge, however was the *irregular power supply* as Dare continued, "The problem we do have then is the light, we always have that, because it is when there is no light, there will be problem, don't let me lie, nobody will listen." Wande noted the instructors' discomfort when they taught in the lecture halls during power outages. She said, "Most of the time, when the lecturers are teaching, you will see them sweating like this when there is no light." Irregular power supply reduced the available teaching tools that DE instructors could draw on for the teaching and learning experience of both groups of participants. This irregular supply of power affected DE instructors and DE learners alike as they tried to work individually or in groups during lectures. One *Nigerian factor* closely associated with the irregular power supply was the *bandwidth* issue discussed below.

Bandwidth

The term *bandwidth* was what some of the participants used as a synonym for Internet connectivity. According to Professor Nosa, "One critical element is bandwidth; it is very expensive we pay more than twenty times what you pay in the US for bandwidth. It is really very expensive and then Internet penetration is very very low." Members from both groups of participants moaned about how this issue affected their DE teaching and learning experience. For example, the limited *bandwidth* within the country means that Internet access is not available in all areas for DE learners. Segun was one of those affected by this development because he said, "Where I'm living, to where I will get access to the Internet is somehow far that is why I may sometimes use it for two hours or four hours in a week." As a result, Segun confessed that Internet use does not play a primary role in his DE education. He continued, "That is why I use Internet as subordinate." During her interview Titilola expressed an opinion in support of not emphasizing the use of Internet connectivity, since it created an unfair educational terrain for all potential DE learners. She said, "Look at people in the remote areas or other diverse villages, they don't have access to Internet or they don't have electricity, what do you think will happen to those people? Such people will be left behind." Other participants spoke about their challenges with trying to use the available limited Internet connectivity. Dr. Ponle spoke about the difficulty of working with both limited power and limited connectivity to the Internet. He said, "Sometimes it is very difficult because even when you have light, Internet might not be going, all the modems are not working properly, when you are sending one thing it goes hours and hours. I mean it is frustrating." Sade also spoke about how hard it was to get any work done through one of

the available national Internet networks. She said, "Since last week now, the STACOM network has not been working, there is something I want to print out; I subscribed to the network monthly, I paid, they said they have network failure. It is not convenient for me." Both Dr. Ponle and Titilola highlighted the challenge they had of trying to use the weak Internet connection for educational pursuits. Dr. Fummi spoke about her aspiration for a better network for the teaching and learning environment when she said, "If I had an unlimited budget, I would make sure there is enough capacity enough bandwidth to provide facilities that will make online instruction attractive to my distance learners." According to Dr. Babatunde, instructors currently had to use their personal expenses to connect to available Internet networks. In his opinion that could be what primarily impeded any intention for online feedback to students as he said, "The situation of feedbacks may be the problem of buying air time, we have to use our own money to load the modem and people are not ready to use their money on these kinds of things." The *Nigerian factor*, *bandwidth,* drew attention to the general weak Internet connectivity within the country and its effect on the DE teaching and learning process. Some learners and instructors were limited in that the b*andwidth* was not readily accessible for use in all areas and where available, it was limited on how long it worked without interruption. Like the other *Nigerian factors* such as the irregular *power supply*, constant *poverty*, *financially weak intuitions* and the *access* dilemma these over-arching socio-economic issues were challenges within the DE context and nationwide. These Nigerian factors influenced both groups of DE participants (instructors and learners) as well as the paradoxical context discussed below.

The findings in the *Nigerian factors* category are relevant to all three research questions in the following ways discussed below and summarized in Table 5.3

Table 5.3: Nigerian Factors' Relationship to the Research Questions

CATEGORY	RESEARCH QUESTIONS	RELEVANCE OF FINDINGS
NIGERIAN FACTORS National socio-economic challenges	1. How does teaching and learning take place within a distance education program?	• Access, financially weak institutions, general poverty, the irregular power supply, and low Internet connectivity influenced participation in the blended DE Teaching and Learning context.
	2. What instructional design is being used and to what extent does it allow faculty to accomplish its educational objectives for the higher education learners?	• Participants reported having access to text materials, some instructional media and laptops. • Participants highlighted that access, financially weak institutions, poverty, power supply and bandwidth affected instructional design techniques used for participants.
	3. What is the learner's experience in the Nigerian distance education context?	• Each of the Nigerian factors had an impact of the teaching and learning environment and influence and on the instructional design used. Consequently, these factors also shaped the learner's experience within the context.

Paradoxical Context

A second major category that emerged from the data was named *paradoxical context* because it referred to the divergent nature of all the other issues in the context not associated with the Nigerian factors. The word paradox was taken from the data because it was used by one of the participants to describe a stalemate situation DE instructors contend with. The constant contradictory pattern of all the teaching and learning issues within the context made it appropriate to categorize the group as a *paradoxical context*. It was a discovery that how participants came to be part of DE, the various mindsets at

play in the context, their teaching and learning activities, and the structures that shaped

the context all have contradictory approaches within the context. Table 5.4 shows the

categories and subcategories of the paradoxical context.

Table 5.4: Paradoxical Context's Influence on DETL

APPLICABLE RESEARCH QUESTIONS	*CATEGORY*	*SUBCATEGORIES*	*DESCRIPTION*
Research Questions (1, 2, & 3) 1. How does teaching and learning take place within a distance education program? 2. What instructional design is being used and to what extent does it allow faculty to accomplish its educational objectives for the higher education learners? 3. What is the learner's experience the Nigerian distance education context?	**PARADOXICAL CONTEXT** ***Divergent nature of context***	*Entry drive*	Factor(s) participants discussed as crucial to the pursuit of their DE program
		Paradox Mentalities'	Participant approaches, outlooks or attitudes to DE issues that appeared contradictory
		Freestyle Pedagogy and Learning	The varied teaching and learning strategies participants used
		Power and Politics	How DE progress has been frustrated and promoted

The *paradoxical context* includes four subcategories of *entry drive*, *paradox*

mentalities, *Freestyle pedagogy and learning* and *power and politics.* The subcategories

intertwine with one another and their details are discussed below.

Entry Drive

Entry drive emerged as one of the subcategories of *paradoxical context* that

helped to shape the understanding of DE teaching and learning experience in this case

study context. *Entry drive* represents both the incentive and push that DE instructors and

DE learners discussed as helping them pursue the DE Teacher's Education program. For

one thing, once I got to the field I was interested in why each participant was in the DE

process in whatever capacity. So, *entry drive* was one of the starting points of our

discussions, stemming from my query, "Why did you start working or enroll in this DE

program?" The line of enquiry served as a good way to get the participants to engage

with me. I eventually learned that *entry drives* were in contrast for the two groups of

participants and this influenced their DE experiences. Furthermore, the contrast in the

way both groups of participants came into DE justifies their inclusion in the *paradoxical*

context category. *No choice* and *personal choice* were the two discussion positions

identified in the case study context; while all DE instructors were *no choice;* all DE

learners were *personal choice*. The influence of the *entry drive* subcategory is discussed

further below.

No choice.

No choice was the first explanation and response that DE instructors provided

when they described how they came into the DE practice for the Teacher's Education

program. As was mentioned in the previous chapter, (case description), DE participation

was a departmental decision made twenty four years earlier. Consequently, I learned that

its current group of faculty had no option in its participation. Their university

employment within a program offering DE meant they were automatically drafted to take

part in it. Dr. Ponle, Dr. Yemisi and Dr. Eyitayo highlighted this fact during their

respective interviews. According to Dr. Yemisi, "It was not my own choice, it is not as if

I regret being part of it but I am just trying to explain to you that it is not as if you have a

choice whether or not you want to participate." Similarly, Dr. Ponle highlighted the same

point, "It is expected that you also teach at distance learning." Dr. Eyitayo also provided

a response similar to his colleagues saying, "By virtue of the fact that I am a teacher that

means automatically I came on board as a teacher teaching programs on the satellite

programs." Having *no choice* meant that not all instructors wanted a DE experience.

Consequently, not all the faculty is automatically invested in it. Dr. Eyitayo mentioned

that some people still saw DE teaching and learning as, "second rated" when compared

with the conventional system. Since the lines blur during the findings Dr. Eyitayo's

important observation veers into other discussions which are discussed later in this

chapter. Within the context, I also noted that DE operated as second tier to the

conventional programs.

Personal choice.

In contrast to the DE instructors, the DE learners' *entry drive* was by *personal

choice.* Each of the learners made a *personal choice* to seek admission into the DE

Teacher's Education program and commit him/her self to its teaching and learning

experience. Two of the DE learner participants, Segun and Comfort, admitted initially

considering the traditional university option. Segun recalled by saying, "Actually, I have

it in mind to come for regular, to be a regular student here." However, according to him,

"When I sat for JAMB (national entry exams) I was unable to meet up with the

requirement." Rather than continue trying to get in to the university via the direct method

Segun concluded, "Along the way I got a job since I have finished my NCE (Teacher's

Preliminary Teaching Certificate). I began to work and that is when I said let me go for

distance learning." Similarly other DE learner participants spoke about how they made

the *personal choice* to opt for the DE program although there were different reasons they

felt that DE was better suited to their respective situations. One was the belief (although

not directly stated by most of the DE learner participants) that certain specifics such as

being older than the average undergraduate and being employed meant that DE was the

better education route. According to Segun, "Distant learning you know is a program

organized for people that are working as well as studying." For people with limited time

Bola also added, "Distance learning is for those that in one way or the other don't have

much time for full-time studies." Indeed, some of the ways that the DE learners

explained their push to be part of the Teacher's Education DE program was often by

using a combination of two or three reasons. Three reasons that emerged for participants

in the context under the *personal choice* section included *individual interest*, *career*, and

society status.

Individual interest.

Individual interest explained the DE learners' deep rooted love of learning and

their feeling or need to acquire more education. Five of the eight DE Learner participants

expressed that their genuine *individual interest* in acquiring more knowledge was part of

the *Entry drive* into the Teacher's Education DE program. The participants in this case

used expressions similar to Sade who said, "The urge was there for me, I have the

feelings that I want to go and learn more." Another participant, Ademila said, "Yes, yes, I

am so much interested and you know it is because of the money that made me to be at

home for donkey years before coming back." Along with the *personal interest*, most of

the participants also expressed their existing career and or future career plans as

influencing why they opted for the Teacher's Education DE program. An example was

Titilola who expressed her personal interest by saying at one point, "I have interest in

education and learning" as well as her ongoing pursuit of career goals. While discussing

her career intentions, Titilola stated that, "I want the degree then secondly if I need to get promoted I need more qualification and without it you cannot get any more promotion."

Career.

Career was another way six participants explained their *personal choice entry drive*. These individuals talked about their use of their current employment and sometimes future employment expectations from participation in the DE program. Wande, for example spoke about how her present employment made her choose the Teacher's education DE program. She said, "I was working, that made it possible for me to both work and school at the same time." In Dr. Babatunde's assessment of why DE learners made the *personal choice* to come into the DE program, he mentioned, "The majority of them being workers, the demand of work may not give them the opportunity of coming for full time studies." Students who spoke about their current employment's use discussed its three roles: to sponsor learning, to meet their living obligations, and as a ladder to meet future professional goals. Furthermore these learners mentioned the importance of keeping their current employment because the salary helped them pay for their education. Wande revealed how important her earnings were to her learning as she stated, "I'm the one sponsoring myself, for me to pay 100,000 naira out of my salary every year is something." Dare's *personal choice entry drive* situation was also an example that used a combination of factors. First there was the personal interest, when Dare stated, "I believe that education is important, it's what we need in this generation so that we will be able to help others." Secondly, Dare mentioned using his current employment to sponsor his DE when he said, "I believe that learning has nothing to do with age and that is the reason why I say ok despite my age, I will still work and I will

sponsor myself." Thirdly, Dare spoke about how he has to manage the use of his current employment to learn and to meet his daily living obligations. He added, "In a situation whereby there is no parents and nobody to help you, you have to pay as huge as that, you eat you buy clothes…so look at it." Current employment for the learner participants also served as a bridge towards their future opportunities. Five participants spoke about using the DE program as a way to get promotions in their current employment. For example, Wande spoke about her personal choice into the DE program for the sake of getting a promotion. She revealed, "There is no other way to get a promotion and that is why I enrolled in the distance program." Three of the five participants who spoke about promotions mentioned the value of the DE degree for future professional endeavors. In Wande's case, apart from her vision of a future promotion, she also foresaw better future opportunities with the successful completion of the Teacher's Education DE degree. She projected her future saying, "Then after my retirement I may use the degree to do other things even more schooling and other personal things like creating a school in my area for others to have the experience of school."

Society status.

Some of the participants looked beyond the boost in career as they reflected on their *personal choice* to come into the DE program. *Society status* was also a factor of *personal choice entry drive* for the DE learners. Four of the DE learners addressed how the DE education would elevate their *society status*. The DE learner participants believed that society has a better perception of educated individuals. For example Segun's stated, "You know in Nigeria nowadays, if you remain the same, you will not be promoted, and for you to be relevant in society as well, if you want to be relevant, you will have to study

more." Sade also reflected about how useful a degree in Teacher's education would be within social circles when she said, "It makes you to stand tall in the society you know because you know what you are saying; you have something to back it up". Dr. Yemisi, one of the DE instructors during her interview described reasons why the typical DE learners made a personal choice to come into the DE program. She said, "They want additional certificates for promotion, for status you know, kind of status symbol for them." Dr. Yemisi also highlighted the fact that DE learners came into the DE program by *personal choice* because of the value placed on learning through the university. She went on to state, "For somebody to say okay you have not only attended a teacher training college, you have also attended a university." I learned that each DE learner's *personal choice entry drive* varied according to his/her perceived developmental need. The perceived developmental need influenced the learner commitment and engagement with the DE Teaching and learning process. As an example, Ademila, who was sponsoring himself because of his individual interest, showed a deep commitment to engage in his DE program. He candidly explained why saying, "You are sponsoring yourself, If you are not serious, nobody will query you but you know how you get that money to sponsor yourself, you have to be serious." Ademila and his colleagues showed that *individual interest*, *career* and *society status* were the three components of their *personal choice entry drive.* The disparity between faculty *entry drive* and learner *entry drive* also led to disparities in the outlooks and mentalities within the DE context. The *paradoxical context* findings continue with the next subcategory called *paradox mentalities.*

Entry drive discussions are relevant to the first and third research questions as shown in Table 5.5.

Table 5.5: Entry Drive's Relationship to the Research Questions

PARADOXICAL CONTEXT'S SUB-CATEGORY	RESEARCH QUESTIONS	RELEVANCE OF FINDINGS
Entry Drive Factor(s) participants discussed as crucial to the pursuit of their DE program	1. How does teaching and learning take place within a distance education program?	• *No-choice entry drive* for DE faculty affected how DE teaching and learning takes place because not all instructors are invested. • P*ersonal choice entry drive* showed the positive investment in DE education and this in turn affected how teaching and learning takes place.
	3. What is the learner's experience in the Nigerian distance education context?	• The faculty with *no choice* in DE participation and those who are not all automatically invested in DE influenced how learners experience DE. • p*ersonal choice entry drive* showed learner dedication to DE and this also acted as an influence on how the participants experienced the program

Paradox Mentalities

Paradox mentalities was another subcategory that emerged from the *paradoxical context* category. The findings showed that as participants engaged in DE within the context, their approaches, outlooks or attitudes to issues appeared contradictory--paradox mentalities. As was mentioned earlier, the word paradox itself was taken from the data and used by one of the participants to describe a stalemate situation DE instructors contend with. Once in the field, I learned from participants that there was a distinctive way that the DE Teacher's Education program was defined and practiced. Dr. Eyitayo helped me understand how this program functioned under ideal circumstances. He said,

"After admissions students come in, they do their registration and they go with their materials, they are expected to read at their own pace, to engage with the materials after which, a time that is called interactive session is arranged." Learners are expected to review the course materials they are given in one of two formats, text books or CD-Rom discs. Dr. Yemisi highlighted the procedure when she said, "They give them print materials, they are also encouraging us to have online content and content on CD so that those who cannot access materials online can access them offline." I learned that once DE learner registration is complete, after the contents review period and during the scheduled holidays for the regular students, the DE learners are invited to campus. At that point the objective is to engage them in a six-week review session (12 weeks per academic session), often referred to by participants as the *Interactive session*. Dr. Eyitayo explained, "They are expected to be on campus for interactive session for six weeks, they will interact with their colleagues and with their course instructor they will socialize together for that six weeks." It is important to note that Dr. Eyitayo was providing an explanation of how the DE process should work in an ideal scenario. In actuality, in the field there were several differences that complicated the process and each of these issues result in the *paradox mentalities*. Three main aspects occur within the *paradox mentalities* subcategory and they include, *defining sandwich or DE*; *regular mentality;* and *managing quality or compromise DE*. Each of them is explored in additional detail further below.

Defining sandwich or DE.

The term *sandwich* was taken from the data and it is a nickname used for a learning environment where courses are undertaken for an intensive short period of time.

The term *Defining Sandwich or DE* explains the difference in how those within the context defined their learning environment and how it was officially marketed to the public. Initially, one of the contradictions that I noted was how some of the participants explained their DE process. And I wondered whether they were they in fact describing something other than DE such as a *sandwich* program as one of the participants indicated. Dr. Yemisi explained that she believed the DE program was currently transitioning in how it operated. She said, "The University is transitioning into distance learning, we have a form of sandwich program, so basically, our print based materials are given to the students. It is only in the recent times that we are beginning to develop online materials." When Comfort tried to describe the program she said, "It is a part-time program that takes place during the holiday season; it is a six-week program, in-house that results in exams." Bola provided a similar explanation, "We spend two months for the whole session, we get just that 2 months for the training and the exams." Wande pointed out what the program did not do or involve, "You know as a distance learner they should interact with us using the computer but it wasn't like that, it is a face-to-face interactive, even though they call it face-to-face interactive it still does not work like that." Some other instructors were also hesitant to label their program DE. During her interview, Dr. Fummi gave her own opinion of how the program was run when she said, "It is more or less like a crash program so I have not really been impressed." Ademila's DE program description also supported its similarity to a crash program when he said, "You know, it is a two or three months program per year but we come in every day and the program is jam packed." Dr. Babatunde noted his assessment, "There are some challenges we are facing in the distance learning, but there can still be more, we can still do more." For his

part Dr. Eyitayo confessed that their DE program was not too different from the conventional programs in its delivery to the DE learners, "The teaching style is still somehow in the neighborhood of what they have with the regular students, somehow, unless we get it right." Dare's response was also similar to Dr. Eyitayo's assessment because he said, "At least, the way I'm seeing distance learning now, I think I'm not sure anymore the difference between the distance learning and the regular. I don't see any difference in it because throughout Monday to Saturday we are having lectures." Not surprisingly, as was seen throughout the findings, there was no uniform agreement on the type of teaching and learning environment in the *paradoxical context*. Although these participants signed up for participation in a DE program they often displayed the *regular mentality* as is described below.

Regular mentality.

Some of the participants used the term "regular" during my interactions with them to describe learning in the conventional program as opposed to enrollment in DE. The use of *regular mentality* in the findings is a way to describe participants who supported the use of the face-to-face interactive sessions, where teaching and learning took place between DE instructors and DE learners using direct contact. So the term *regular mentality* in this study refers to the fact that most of the participants supported the necessity for face-to-face interaction, an example of the paradoxical nature of the context. Dr. Babatunde's stated his position on this issue, "Our people have not come to terms with the issue that distance learning students need not appear for face-to-face class. It is because of the problem of mentality in the university here." Dr. Eyitayo also shared a similar opinion saying, "Many of us instructors still relate with DLC students just like

regular students asking them to come physically." Dr. Yemisi expressed why she felt the interactive session was important to the DE learners, "We have to interact with them because a lot of our students even when you put things in print sometimes it is a little difficult for them so they need to talk to their lecturer one on one." About six of the eight DE learners spoke about the important role that the interactive sessions played for them. For example Wande made a statement which supported Dr. Yemisi's assertions that DE learners want direct contact with their instructors. She said, "Even people from far distance prefer coming within that little period to interact with their lecturer despite the fact that they have been studying from the beginning of the year." In addition, Wande also pointed out why the interactive sessions were important to her when she said, "You know that face-to-face is very very important to me as a student because through that you get a lot of ideas." Similarly Bola stated his preferences for the interactive session when he said, "When you get to the exam hall, you will remember what the lecturer has said, all the examples he made mention when he was teaching. That is why some of us, we so much love to participate in face-to-face interaction." I learned that direct contact between instructors and learners during the interactive session was a way to overcome some of the context's technical limitations. The interactive session also ensured that learners got access to the appropriate course content. In Dare's opinion "Face-to-face works a lot, we see a lot of students expressing their mind, even if we are three hundred, if someone should have a question, everybody will benefit out of it, but on Internet, you may not get the feedback." Dr. Ponle also explained the additional benefits for the DE learners, "Face-to-face is necessary because, students long to see their professor some want to come personally to shake the lecturer, have access to his library and so many other things

that technology may not be able to give to them." Professor Nosa also shared his similar view of the context when he said, "Here people want to feel, they want to touch, they want to see, they want to hear they want to interact physically." Evidently learners preferred more direct interaction.

While the participant DE learners expressed their preferences for direct interaction, the instructors noted that their preference was for a more blended context. Dr. Ponle indicated that there were advantages to both direct and indirect contact with DE learners, so in his opinion the ideal was a combination of both. He said, "The technology would make it more robust, make it real distance learning but face-to-face also adds value so the two will be welcome because they have their advantages." Dr. Fummi also shared that her ideal DE context would be a blended environment when she stated, "My idea of distance education is just a form of blended learning." The blended learning option was what Professor Nosa said the context was striving for as he explained, "You know basically what we want to do is not purely an online system, what we want is a blended form of learning." Regardless of what DE context participants strived for however, the prevailing mentality within the context was that the DE learners often compared themselves with regular students. Dr. Eyitayo was one of those who confessed that this was one of the challenges the context faced. He said, "Even students themselves, many of them still feel that they are regular students, they want to show up physically, they believe that if they show up physically they are students." According to Dr. Eyitayo, the mentality makes their DE process difficult, "Saying they must do it the way that regular students are doing it so is a challenge on their part, and this is also making learning

difficult for them." While in the field, I noted often that DE learners were inclined to compare themselves with their colleagues in the conventional program.

Seven of the DE learners pointed out how similar DE learners were to their colleagues in the conventional program. Segun for example was convinced that DE learners and colleagues in the same program were indistinguishable in the context. In his interview Segun said, "There is no segregation between direct and distance learning, unless you lower yourself. There should not be any differences between us." Ademila wanted to point out that DE learners were equally as knowledgeable as their colleagues in the conventional program because he revealed, "Even the regular students sometimes, there are sometimes when there are some questions, there are some problems we will solve for them." Ultimately what Comfort found compelling was, "Nobody that will know it that you are distance learning, your ID card will not show, your result will not show, only thing is that if you are telling them, if they hear it from your mouth." Professor Nosa explained why getting the same certificate for both the conventional and DE program was significant to the DE learners. He said, "We are perhaps the only university that believes in parity of esteem, they earn the same certificate as the regular students. Other universities will put graduated from the distance learning and that devalues the certificate in the work place." Sade indicated that in her view the sole difference between the direct and regular students was financial. She stated, "I believe now that we and regular are the same, since we are getting the same certificate, so, the only difference there is that we are paying more than they do." Titilola's comparisons of the regular and direct students viewed the issue from a position of needing better returns on her educational investment. She spoke about it saying, "We have access to the library,

the classrooms, but in some aspects we are not the same, games all these things they do, the excursions, coming together to know ourselves, we don't. The only thing we do is we pay." A couple of the DE learners even spoke about the importance of a physical connection to the context. For example when Dare spoke about some of the additions he would make to their current DE program he said, "I will make sure I do the social aspect, we need more interactions within students, then introducing some sports to make us feel we come to school. Time you brainstorm and time you relax yourself and you relax with others." Professor Nosa added that the DLC realized that part of its agenda for the DE learners would be to provide "a sense of belonging" and "create opportunities for them to engage" because that was ultimately what the students craved. Evidently a big part of how the DE learners (participants) saw themselves was by comparing themselves with their colleagues in the regular program. Both the participant's wish for physical contact and the DE center's support for physical contact go against what others accept as DE practice. Apart from the conflicting mentalities in the Teacher's Education program, there were also issues of inconsistent management as is discussed further below.

Managing quality or compromise DE.

Managing quality or compromise DE discussion explores certain contradictory management practices since quality was one of the crucial points that came up with the participants. The term quality was used to describe how the DE education was valued and rated by the institution as well as its participants. However, upon a review of all the findings within the context, the quality claim seemed debatable because some findings conflicted. As an example, Dr. Ponle discussed quality in terms of university expectations for its learners when he said, "It is not just because they are distance learners

so we don't give them the best, no, we don't do that, that is quality assurance, there is a standard the university has set, that standard must be met." Dr. Ponle wanted to stress the importance with which he and his colleagues take their duties as DE instructors and their commitment to providing educational value to the learner. He had support on his *quality assurance* claim from some of the DE learners. Segun was one of those who saw value in his DE program and in his learning because he said, "What I want to bring out is that this school really promotes building us, you know, they make us relevant, you know, it's the quality I'm talking about. We are not buying the certificate we are working for it." Segun explained how he came by his quality definition when he said, "In terms of lectures, they will train you and they will give you a series of work to do in terms of research, you know, building something with a solid foundation than patching something." When Segun spoke about the quality in the DE program, the emphasis was on its value to him and his colleagues as well as the value placed on learning by the institution. Ademila also mentioned the commitment that goes into his DE learning and the value that Nigerians and the university context placed on its education when he explained, "You know something, if you are not committed you cannot make it because this is a very recognized institution within Nigeria and they take their certificate seriously. They so much value their certificate." Despite these attestations to the quality of the DE program, the participants brought up some management and logistics issues which gave cause for concern. These issues include *mismanaged materials*, *inconsistent academic and daily schedules*, and *large classes and overburdened resources.* Each of these aspects is explored in further detail below

Mismanaged materials.

Mismanaged materials discuss part of the findings that revealed the challenges

faced within the context regarding texts produced for its DE courses. When asked about

the DE program, Dr. Kuye provided a summary of how he viewed the context. He said,

"The distance learning program has not been effectively implemented because the

materials for the distance learning are not readily available; we need to communicate

with our students, but how to communicate with them is a problem." Dr. Kuye's

comment captured one of the essential matters that participants discussed as a concern for

them in the DE context: learning materials. Five participants brought up challenges

which stemmed from the mishandling and mismanagement of the learning materials.

One way learning materials were mismanaged was that there was not enough produced

for the registered DE learners. Comfort described her own experience of insufficient

learning materials when she said, "They gave us materials but not everything when we

register and we are coming in, sometimes we only get some, so you have to look for the

rest on your own." Dare also shared his similar experience when he said, "Let me say out

of eight courses we paid for, we may end up seeing three." Dr. Fummi, another DE

instructor who brought up the limited materials for learners said, "The procedure is that

they should have acquired their materials before coming for the face-to-face session, but

you find out that most of the materials may not be ready." Apart from the under-

produced materials, DE context also faced the presence of outdated materials. This is

when the learning materials given to the learners differ to the materials used during the

interactive teaching session. Titilola was able to speak about her experience with both

dilemmas: under produced and outdated materials. She described incidents with limited

materials when she said, "When we registered, we pay then they can say they don't have enough materials even though we may have already paid for it, we have to now sometimes go and buy the materials outside." Then Titilola also recounted her experience of outdated materials when she added, "In terms of the text books we are given, the lecturer that will teach us gives us another text book that we should go and make a photocopy of it, which renders the one we are given by the center useless." According to Dr. Kuye, any mismanagement of learning materials was an administrative problem because he said, "This is a lapse on the part of the center." I learned that under produced learning materials resulted in ill-prepared learners for the interactive session. Dr. Kuye pointed this out when he mentioned, "It is distance learning, they have to read ahead of time and we need to interact with them for a few weeks, those course materials will help them a lot, but they are not given." Discrepancies in the learning materials provided to learners were also deemed as an administrative issue by Dr. Kuye, who acknowledged that the DLC may need to revise the materials. He said, "Another excuse that the center gives is that the course materials have to be updated which is very true." But Dr. Kuye's opinion was clear as he provided an advice to the DLC saying, "if you want to update a thing, you know it, the realization of a problem is the beginning of the solution. You know it's a problem then you solve it, do the updating quickly." The mismanaged materials situation is part of the findings that puts doubt in the DE quality mentality that some of the participants highlighted as being a part of their program.

   Inconsistent academic and daily schedules.

   Another noticeable aspect of the findings was that there was no clear scheduling for the interactive sessions for both its academic and daily calendar: *inconsistent*

academic and daily schedules. Some participants reported that the DE program's

academic calendar for the interactive session was often unpredictable. Bola spoke of the

instability of the academic schedule, "The duration when we resume, is not stable."

Comfort discussed her frustration with the academic scheduling when she mentioned,

"They promise us they will be resuming by June or July or August but at the same time it

may not work out. I've finished my exams since January and since then, nothing: I don't

like it at all." Dare discussed his wish for a consistent academic schedule, "Let's know

the time we are resuming and the time we will be through. Not that we might believe that

we are resuming June and before we know anything, it shifts to September; it affects a lot

of things." In fact Dr. Babatunde mentioned that academic scheduling was one of the

major challenges that DE learners told him they encountered. He said, "It is the major

challenge our students are facing now, they are begging, please make our calendar stable,

so if we tell our employer that we are coming September and by November ending we are

back those ones will approve." Bola spoke about the unfairness of an unpredictable

academic calendar on DE learners when he said, "If it is August, let it be August, so, you

yourself you will know how to program yourself do you get it? It affects students, no full

concentration on the studies, half at the school, half where they are working." Sade

divulged that she had had to resign from work due to the academic scheduling conflict,

"For me it wasn't easy, I have to stop work because all the time, there is a lot of

complaint. Every time you take excuses, August this time, January next and the lecture is

very important." An inconsistent DE academic calendar was also one of the ways that

the University institution demonstrated its subordinate treatment of DE since the calendar

was not fully integrated with those of conventional programs to show the institution's

dual teaching mode. Dr. Fummi spoke of a way some instructors had tried to solve the inconsistent DE calendar challenge. She said, "We have also told and advised the university that since distance learning is part of the university their calendar should be built into the calendar of the school." The irregularly scheduled academic calendar was a challenge to the DE teaching and learning in the context and a valid reason to question the provision of quality DE.

Participants also described having to endure lengthy daily schedules and its toll on them. Titilola spoke about the daily interactive schedule and said, "The time factor is an issue, by the time we are starting lectures, we start in the morning till at times 8: 00pm in the night. It is not encouraging, we don't close on time you know; it is hectic." Segun also mentioned how grueling the daily schedules became when he said, "You will come by 7.00am and leave by 7.00pm in the night, even sometimes, on Saturday, we come. Even I could remember there was a day we came for tutorial on Sunday after we finished in the church." Comfort shared her hectic daily interactive experience saying, "There is not much time, you go from morning, you come home in the evening, at times it used to be stressful we don't have enough time." According to Dare, the tough lecture schedules often gave DE learners little or no intervals. He shared his opinion saying, "You finish one class and may get an hour break or 30 minutes interval or, sometimes it is from one lecture to another no interval. Most times it gives us headache because they don't give us much time to study." Dare continued saying, "Let there be at least some interval or break, most of the time throughout the week even those that are working found that you just have to take off work if not ,you won't be able to meet up. Dr. Fummi conceded that the hectic schedule was grueling to her DE learners when she said, "The nature of our

time table is such that they are in the class most of the time and the little time they have

they have to make sure that they do their assignments so, they get disturbed." According

to Dr. Yemisi, the DE interactive session schedule was tedious to both learners and

faculty. She highlighted her hope that the integration of more technology would result in

a reduced workload for the instructor. Dr. Yemisi said, "Our hope as we planned it is that

a lot of technology will be integrated into the program and that is why it will make it

easier because it is tiring; you have to be here to teach distance learning." Dr. Yemisi

continued about the proposed benefit of better scheduling for instructors saying, "I mean

you will have some time for yourself because a lecturer also needs time to read, to write

and to do research, and that is almost nil in this terrain." Dr. Ponle also discussed the toll

of the schedule on him when he said, "We don't have enough staff driving this program.

I know some of us, I teach about six courses in the regular program. Distance learning, I

have to teach about four again; so what time do I have to rest?" Clearly, the hectic

scheduling for and during the interactive sessions had a serious impact on participant

learners and faculty alike. Furthermore, the type of scheduling participants described

also calls into question the mentality of providing quality.

Large classes and overburdened resources.

Participants complained about the large class sizes and the overburden of

available resources during the interactive sessions. These issues were yet another reason

to question the validity of the quality DE description that some participants referred to.

Essentially when compared with the regular program there was a difference in the

number of distance learners admitted and attending the interactive session. Dr.

Babatunde highlighted the difference with an emphasis on the higher numbers in his DE

classrooms. He said, "Normally the population of distance learning students is greater than that of the regular students so I have close to 500 students in class. We use the large lecture theatres with them." I learned that one of the dilemmas that DE instructors faced in the context was not being aware of how many people were legitimately registered for their courses. Dr. Ponle spoke about this saying, "Some of them will not have registered but they will still come because they know when we resume they will come and join us. I don't know the way they do it over there but here it is an open system." He continued saying, "It is very difficult to check who has not paid up to the point of examination, you don't know until you ask them to put their receipts out, then those who don't have receipts are sent out; it's very difficult." The attendance of courses by both the legally registered and unregistered learners affects the management of space and facilities. Some participants also spoke about how the large class sizes affected learner attention, made the room more uncomfortable and limited their use of class facilities. Wande spoke about class size affecting communication with faculty, "There are so many in our class, it is so big that only the people seated in the front that hear the lecturer." Sade also made a similar observation stating, "Even the time we are receiving lectures come and see crowd, it is not possible for the lecturer to stand in front and for the students to hear the whole thing because of the very big crowd." Titilola bemoaned that their large class sizes automatically precludes some learners from getting to hear the course lecture. She said, "In a class, of about 200 to 600, check the large lecture theatres, the place will not take us all. You will see some people outside, even if the lecturers use a public address system, it will not be sufficient." Dr. Kuye described how the large class sizes negatively affected his voice. He said, "Even when we lecture, when I'm facing close to one thousand

students, I have to strain my voice to ensure that the students get what I'm saying, the public address system is not available." Segun spoke about how the large class sizes affected learners' comfort, "The population is too much, when everybody is in the classroom, there will be heat, it will get to the time you will not enjoy the lecture as well, and when learners don't enjoy the lectures what else?" Ademila discussed how the class size affected learners' seating and comfort. He said, "If you don't get to the lecture rooms earlier, you may not see chairs to sit down. You can imagine somebody that has seats at home but because you want to acquire knowledge, you will stand up for two hours." Dare highlighted how class capacity was often exceeded and consequently learners ended up being uncomfortable. He said, "Just see a class that can't contain 200 people and like 700 people want to have lecture in it, just imagine people standing, some seating, some standing with baby on their backs and all these things, full of stress." Dare continued saying, "There is not enough space, we don't have enough facilities." Bola brought up the issue of the non-conducive to learning atmosphere of their lecture theatres. He said, "I believe our lecture rooms should be a place conducive for learning. It should not be a place where people just come carrying chairs from one place to another at least a good atmosphere will make the lecture more understanding." Comfort spoke about how class overcapacity needed to be addressed to reduce learner discomfort. She said, "I think they should stop too much people in the class; if you want to take 50 students, don't give room for 100, when you know that the facilities will not support them or be sufficient for 100." Participants' discomfort during the interactive class sessions along with less structured organization and management of both participants and facilities are yet another set of reasons to question the mentality of providing quality DE. Perhaps the

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most poignant depiction of the program came from Dare. He said, "Let me be sincere
they have a good program, but the problem is the way they plan it." Dare continued with
a closely followed critique of the program saying, "There is one thing where you have
good food but the way you present it, your package matters a lot. If you have good food
and you don't package it very well, it is a problem." The findings showed that the
paradox mentalities was not the *paradoxical context*'s only dilemma; *freestyle pedagogy
and learning* as described below also contributed to the context.

The findings in the *paradox mentalities* sub-category are relevant to all three research
questions as shown in Table 5.6.

Table 5.6: Paradox Mentalities Relationship to the Research Questions

PARADOXICAL CONTEXT'S SUB-CATEGORY	Research Questions	Relevance of Findings
Paradox Mentalities Participant approaches, outlooks or attitudes to DE issues that appeared contradictory	1. How does teaching and learning take place within a distance education program?	• In *Defining sandwich or DE* discussion participants personally described their DE teaching and learning.. • The *regular mentality* findings confirmed that participants experienced some direct DE teaching and learning in the Teacher's Education program. • The *managing quality or compromise DE* revealed some of the challenges of the day to day DE operations as well as where things were working well
	2. What instructional design is being used and to what extent does it allow faculty to accomplish its educational objectives for the higher education learners?	• *Defining sandwich or DE* discussion described some aspects of the instructional design used such as materials provided to learners. • The *regular mentality* aspect also features instructional design issues because the findings indicate some direct teaching and learning contact between instructors and learners. • *Managing quality or comprise* DE aspect provides information on the educational material used for DE in the context.

PARADOXICAL CONTEXT'S SUB-CATEGORY	Research Questions	Relevance of Findings
Paradox Mentalities Participant approaches, outlooks or attitudes to DE issues that appeared contradictory	3. What is the learner's experience in the Nigerian distance education context?	• *Defining sandwich or DE* discussion illustrated how DE was experienced.. • The *regular mentality* sheds more light on how participants experienced DE in the context because they show a preference for direct DE contact. • *Managing quality or compromise DE* also provided more information on how participants experienced DE in terms of the challenges they face during the interactive sessions.

Freestyle Pedagogy and Learning

A third sub-category for *paradoxical context* is the *freestyle pedagogy and learning* which describes the teaching and learning instructional design strategies and their effect on the participants. The findings revealed that the program had no clear instructional design or structure for its DE and for this reason I chose to refer to it as the *freestyle pedagogy and learning*. Additional discussions covered within this sub category include, *media or media-free DE*; *evaluation free DE; instructor critics and commendations; learner strategies* and *DE learner benefits and growth*.

Since DE learners at the university get the same program certificate as those in the conventional programs, the instructors need to ensure that DE graduates covered the same syllabus content as their colleagues in the regular program. Dr. Ponle highlighted this when he mentioned, "We keep the quality assurance because it is the same certificate, we don't ask them to take separate courses. It is what they do in regular that they do in the distance learning, the same lecturers most of the time." Professor Nosa decried that the DE education format was practically the same as those used for the

conventional programs. He pointed out, "The regulation for the regular mode was moved whole sale to distance learning. You just don't do that kind of thing." I learned that within the context, there are no clear DE standards and this has resulted in a freestyle teaching and learning environment for all those involved. Dr. Eyitayo voiced his concern about the inability to get DE pedagogy done right when he said, "Many of DLC instructors still have that phobia, the kind of challenge the instructors have is how to do it. How do they deploy learning and how do they relate?" Participant faculty members self reported that they used of a variety of conventional strategies rather than those specific to DE to ensure that teaching and learning takes place effectively. The question is how effective are the strategies in terms of delivering quality to the learner and whether the strategies work for a context striving for acceptance as DE? The most popular way that participant DE faculty got their learners engaged involved using group work. Dr. Kuye explained his technique saying, "No matter how large the class is, I have an opportunity of grouping, I split them into smaller groups where they discuss and we interact. That is what I do mostly because this is an interactive session not a lecture." Dr.Ponle described his group work approach by saying, "A number of times, I put them into co-operative groups, depending on the topic I want to teach. Sometimes, I teach them in groups if it is a topic that has to do with a chunk of information." When Dr. Yemisi used group work she mentioned, "It is essential to break them into small groups where they learn from one another and they help one another with problems. Beyond the class, you also have to create a community of learners where they engage in active learning." Dr. Yemisi explained the value of group work as part of her strategy to engage learners as she said, "I have discovered that they do better in these groups because they

are able to go beyond themselves. If they were on their own, they wouldn't go into groups but because they are in small groups you make them work." All the participant faculty members used group work as a combination with other co-operative teaching principles. Altogether they discussed using prior experience, confidence building, active learning, conversations and goal orientation. Dr. Babatunde described his own method saying, "My own teaching is such that I interact with students in the classroom one on one, face-to-face then ask them questions to probe into their prior experience before I bring in a new concept." In Dr. Eyitayo's case he said, "In my class, I always let them know that I will emphasize the area of their strength more than their area of weaknesses, And you will now see that what they feel not capable of doing they can do it." Dr. Kuye described his concept saying, "What I employ most is the active learning strategy where my students are involved, I make them active parts in my lecture." Dr. Ponle also spoke about his own DE approach saying, "In terms of questions we give them, like the course materials, it is conversational, actually it is the same task they perform with the regular students but we couch their questions in such a way that will suit their peculiarity." Dr. Eyitayo in his descriptions mentioned, "When I look at some characteristics of adult learners, that of goal orientation, self-directedness, that they have profound experience background from whatsoever it is they are coming from, these are the principles that inform how I teach them." I found that although all the DE faculty participants discussed their wish for better media applications for the interactive sessions, half of them did not explore available media for teaching in the interactive sessions.

Media or media-free DE.

The reasons provided for the mostly absent media DE teaching techniques included non-availability of technical and financial support and an inconsistent power supply (*Nigerian factors* section). An example of those not using all currently available media was Dr. Kuye who seemed to be a proponent for DE media use during a part of his interview. When considering possible changes if there was an unlimited budget, Dr. Kuye said, "Let students stay in their respective areas for lectures, these lectures should be disseminated to them through whatever media maybe the radio, the television or the Internet and these should be supplied but like I said, we don't have such." However when asked about his current media use for the interactive session Dr. Kuye responded saying, "I teach the way I was taught, so I use charts and pictures to explain but sophisticated media I don't have access to. I can use my laptop to teach but I still feel that it is not as effective." Dr. Ponle also mentioned how impractical teaching with media was for his own classes when he said, "There is virtually nothing we can do about technology, virtually nothing, the economy limits us in that area. It's the problem of the economy and then it is compounded by the electricity; the light is not there to charge things." In spite of various difficulties with using media within the context (see also *Nigerian factors*), three of the participant faculty members reported using one or more forms of available media to engage learners.

Dr. Eyitayo spoke about his tool of choice saying, "It is a challenge in that area, speaking as a teacher now in the program, I've overcome that initial challenge. Now, my lectures are in power point." Dr. Yemisi and Dr. Fummi also highlighted how they managed to incorporate media in their respective interactive session classes. These two

instructors were more innovative with their media use even though they both had different approaches to engaging with DE Learners. Dr. Yemisi explained how she used media to communicate with some of her students who were technology savvy. She said, "I am online at least twice a day, early morning maybe in the afternoon too. Once I see my students, I respond to them through I-messaging, emails, some chat on facebook too. So wherever I can communicate with them." Dr. Yemisi's discussed how her media use was not for all the DE learners as she noted that not all the DE learners were comfortable with using technology. She stated, "We hope our DLC students will adapt to technology because the younger ones have no phobia but the older ones are very scared. So, in a scalable manner, I am introducing them to technology and trying to let them adapt." Dr. Fummi provided another example of media use when she stated, "Because of my background, I've tried to introduce audio instructions and some video instructions. I make sure I give it to them as CDs which they can use offline, I design it in a self-learning format." Dr. Fummi's explanation continued with her saying, "The way I have set it up is to cater for people who are not familiar with technology and for people who have been using technology in one form or the other but not directly for learning." Dr. Fummi discussed how her class media use was designed to accommodate a wide range of learners because not all the DE learners within the context are comfortable with using technology. In fact, Dr. Eyitayo also brought up the limited technology experience of the DE Learners when he mentioned, "A lot of our students are illiterates when it comes to computers, they can't even browse although we encourage them to learn; Email could get a lot of things done. I wish those students will adapt to the global trend." I learned that the high number of DE learners unable to use computers was compounded by the fact

that not all of them could afford their own personal lap tops or had access to use educational media in private (see *Nigerian Factors*). Furthermore, there was no technology support provided to DE instructors by the institution; every instructor incorporating any type of media did so from their own volition. Dr. Yemisi commented on this saying, "Every lecturer does things differently because we are at different literacy levels when it comes to technology use. Gradually, we are beginning to have some individuals who are using these things efficiently and gradually others are being brought into it." As at the study time however, the DE teaching and education strategies used mostly the same techniques as those found in the conventional program, heavily reliant on individual faculty philosophies and often *evaluation free*.

   Evaluation free DE.

   I also learned that within the context there were no formal evaluations conducted to review or analyze how participants experienced the Teacher's Education DE program and this is what was described as *evaluation-free DE*. Dr. Kuye was the only faculty who discussed using an anonymous course evaluation system for DE learners to assist him with making any needed adjustments to his teaching and learning environment. Dr. Kuye said, "I give students the opportunity to assess my lectures, they don't write their names, just give me feedback and don't bring it to me personally so that I know how to adjust and I know how to change the course." Two other DE instructors also spoke about the informal ways they got feedback on the interactive sessions from their DE learners. Dr. Ponle spoke about soliciting immediate feedback about his interactive session classes. He said, "The immediate feedback is always there, I ask them what have we discussed today? And they say they've learned a lot. They let me know what we discussed and

from there I am convinced I passed the lesson to them." Dr. Yemisi described the cumulative observations and informal feedback she has had over time about her interactive session. She said, "Initially they are mad at me saying this is laborious, we have to read this, that, don't you know we don't have time? At the end of the day, they usually tell me we learned a lot from the course." Not conducting official internal evaluations to accurately determine the DE program's progress creates a quality concern about the teaching and learning process. Furthermore participants themselves were unsure about whether they should critique or commend DE faculty; discussed in more details below.

Instructor critiques and commendations.

The data revealed that the DE teaching and learning received mixed reviews from the participants. These individuals provided both criticisms and ardent support about the DE instructors teaching and learning interactive sessions.

Instructor blame.

Instructor blame refers to those participants who blamed the DE instructors; they spoke about the tedium of the course work and the inaccessibility to some of the faculty. For example, Titilola was not happy with the teaching during interactive sessions and she blamed the DE instructors. She said, "We expect better than what we are getting, than what they are teaching us." Wande also voiced her disappointment with the DE instructors saying "What they are teaching us is very tedious, because overall we have a total of six weeks to cover everything. So, not all the topic gets covered, they tell us to go and read others." According to the critiquing participants, not all the DE instructors were invested in teaching DE. Wande stated, "Some of the lecturers will come for their

teaching session and others do not come, they give the class rep the notes that we should copy and read." A similar observation was made by Titilola who said, "Don't even expect us to wait for the lecturers to come because at times some lecturers will not even come for the whole year." Dare also expressed his frustrations with the DE instructors' strategies during the interactive sessions. He said, "There are many things wrong, like if you see most of the topics, these are topics that are supposed to be interesting when they are teaching us, but, at the end of the day you see boring." Titilola also voiced her displeasure because she felt some of the faculty was inaccessible to DE learners. She said, "Some lecturers deal with students as if they are slaves that makes some students panic even to ask questions because even if you ask and have something that is difficult for you, you will not be free." Titilola continued saying, "There is no free interaction between the lecturers and the students; It is not supposed to be so." Dare also brought up the communication difficulty that sometimes existed during the interactive session. He said, "Some of the lecturers are something else sincerely, they do their face tight you can't go to them we don't have access to them, they don't have time for us." Dr. Babatunde talked about his awareness that some colleagues purposely did not encourage any interactions with DE learners because they gave priority to students in the regular program. He said, "Some lecturers their look is enough to scare away students, they will not even be willing to answer questions; these people will not see DLC students because they say they are dealing with regular students." In Dr. Babatunde opinion, being accessible as a DE instructor was an important part of the educational experience for the DE learners. He said, "They find me approachable, I attend to them, I'm ready to entertain requests, solve problems for them at any time of the day. You have to be liberal

with them and accommodating you know they need that kind of thing." Not all

participants thought that the DE faculty was the main challenge to productive interactive

sessions within the *paradoxical context*.

Instructor commendations.

Some participants raved about the effectiveness of the interactive sessions and

their DE instructors; *instructor commendations*. These participants spoke about the

confidence building nature of the DE interactive instructors as well as their being

compassionate, patient, dedicated, relatable, motivating and hardworking. An example

was Ademila who highlighted the compassion, motivation and commitment of the DE

faculty saying, "You know, these lecturers, they calm us down, they let us understand

that we shouldn't have that fear that we won't pass through in this course or in our

studies of choosing." Ademila continued saying, "Even before the students comes, some

lecturers will be there so, it makes us to be more committed to the program." Similarly

Sade discussed how relatable attentive and patient instructors were when she said, "The

lecturers the way they were taking the lectures with us, they come to our level, by the

time we resume for the session they will come, ask questions, explain better to us so they

come to our own level." Sade explained further saying, "I'm saying the way they treat us

they are so lenient in the classroom, it makes the learning interesting. They don't isolate

us and they see us as the learner and this really motivates our learning." Segun spoke

about good accessibility and the faculty showing good examples, he said, "Most of our

lecturers are friendly and willing to listen to us, yes, you know we have so many good

role models, the humbleness is there, they behave as if they are nothing, they teach us

well too." Furthermore, Segun provided an example of one of his dedicated DE

instructors saying, "If you just say Mr. Taiwo please I don't understand, he will say please can you still get more people so that you can arrange yourselves so I will teach you so everybody will benefit from it." Bola discussed how hardworking the instructors were and from his perspective he noted that not everyone was able to handle the interactive sessions. He said, "I want to give kudos to our lecturers they really try for us the lecturers, are ready to give us their own points while the students also want to cooperate with them." Bola continued saying, "Almost everybody enjoys it although most people that are not ready or don't have the charisma could not cope but, I really enjoy it and I do not have any cause to say why did I come to this program." Ademila described how learners were often reluctant to finish courses because they enjoyed the faculty company so much. He said, "We don't feel like going when it ends, we don't want to leave our teachers, we really enjoy them because they really give us what we need to learn." Those with positive interactive session reviews brought attention to the mixed experience participants share in the paradoxical DE teaching and learning environment. The findings also revealed that DE learners used *learner strategies* and took individual responsibilities for their participation in their DE program as is discussed in more details below.

Learner strategies.

Apart from faculty teaching and learning strategies DE learners also revealed the varied efforts and strategies they used for their DE education; *learner strategies*. These strategies included reading course materials ahead, using instructors as resources and researching for supplemental course materials online. For example Titilola spoke about her efforts to understand her courses saying, "The way I do my own is that I will gather

the materials from the lecturers, read it, the ones that are difficult I will go and meet them; I gain a lot from it." Sade discussed her efforts saying, "I get the course materials ahead of the resumption time, so by the time the lecturer comes to class things will not be so new to you. I go to class I make sure that I go to class regularly." Sade continued with more explanations saying, "Because the course materials by the DLC student at times is not so rich, at times our lecturers normally tells us to go online to search more about the topics on our own so that we will get more information." Bola highlighted his strategy saying, "I do read and do research as well and it even made me familiar with the computers so all my time I spend it based on the research using Google and so on." Segun also discussed his process saying, "Right from the beginning of the year I just begin to write down my questions from the materials and when I come for interaction I will firstly ask my colleagues that these are the areas of my difficulties when reading." Segun continued saying, "When they are unable to solve the question, you throw it to the teacher, even if they solve the question and you are not satisfied with the answer, you throw it to the lecturer to put more light to it." There were mixed reviews for the learner strategies used in this context and they are discussed below in *learner strategies – fail* and *learner strategies – pass*.

Learner strategies - fail.

Critics of the DE learners' cited their lack of adequate preparation for classes, unruly behavior during class, and persistent complaints and excuses as the primary cause of less productive interactive session experiences. For example, Dr. Eyitayo was one of those participants who blamed the DE learners. He pointed out that the tedium in the interactive process within the *paradoxical* DE *context* stemmed from having to teach

content from scratch to a high number of DE learners who did not go through the materials before the interactive session began. He said, "When a lot of them get these materials, instead of studying the materials before they come for interactive, they don't, they just leave it gathering dust. And when they now come they will expect the teacher to spoon feed them." Dr. Fummi also echoed the same claim that DE instructors ended up putting in more effort than necessary for the interactive sessions. She said the process led to tedium for all concerned. Dr. Fummi said, "In most cases, you cannot just do revision for them you have to start teaching and it becomes cumbersome. It is tedious I must say because of the facilities and the nature of our program." Dr. Ponle also mentioned that the DE learners' limited preparation for the interactive sessions made the process challenging. He said, "We give them materials, they want you to spoon feed them; as adults they need to put in some effort. They don't even open the books; they just come in and expect that getting to the class you teach them." Sade reiterated some of the DE instructors' opinion that students were in general not well prepared for the interactive session. She spoke about her colleagues saying, "Most of the students don't have time to read ahead, they will not come back to get the materials to find out what they need to do. When we resume they come in and start moving up and down." Sade continued her discussion about how some of the DE learners with limited preparation were also often ill-mannered during the interactive session. She said, "They know that they did not prepare well, they did not read anything and yet they join people that are not serious in the class. When the lecturer comes, instead of listening they are the ones we will find playing." Comfort was another DE learner who observed that some of the challenges to the interactive sessions came from unruly peers. She said, "Even some DLC students

have their own faults they will not be well prepared when the lecturers enter the class.

Instead of keeping quiet, some will continue playing; when you say stop, you will get,

just leave me, you know." Titilayo also acknowledged that part of her disappointment

with the interactive portion of the DE program was from her peers. She said, "I don't

like the way DL students are doing too, because even though the lecturer is in the class

they would still be making noise." In addition to often not being prepared or unruly

during class, Dr. Yemisi highlighted that DE learners were also often full of excuses

about their inability to complete required work. She said, "A lot of them also come down

telling you different excuses they have because they didn't submit the assignment on

time; they are married, their children and so forth." Dr. Ponle made a similar claim about

DE learners continuous complaints when he stated, "Some of them don't meet deadlines

so they come complaining, that their children had accident. They come complaining,

when you give them test, I was not there; maybe you should find a way of conducting

their own test for them." Dr. Ponle concluded his opinion on DE learners during the

interactive session saying that, "Sometimes they complain too much." To have believed

the critics alone would imply that DE learners were ill-prepared and often had no strategy

except to disrupt the DE process. However, not all the participants felt that learners were

failing in their DE efforts.

Learner strategies - pass.

Some DE faculty also spoke about their positive perception of DE learners'

overall strategies within the *paradoxical context*. These participants spoke about DE

producing better overall results than the regular program and in general being just as

experienced as the faculty. Dr. Kuye spoke about the better academic success of DE

learners saying, "Majority of them are better than those students in regular program; some of them come out with first class, some second class upper and second class lower. We don't record failures as much as we record in the regular program." Dr. Babatunde also spoke about the academic success of DE learners as compared to those in the regular program. He said, "These students in view of their responsibilities, the kind of assignments they do in their various work places, and their age are performing better than regular students because the maturity is there and shows in the quality of their answers." Dr. Babatunde continued saying, "So we have a lot of them mothers, fathers, aged doing the program and yet they are finishing with better grades than the conventional, students in the conventional system. Dr. Eyitayo revealed how impressed he was with the DE learners overall knowledge base, "A lot of them have more experience than the instructor, not quantifiable in official terms, but when they make contributions, you now see that they have a wealth of experience that may be even greater than that of the instructor." Dr. Eyitayo continued with suggestions for peer DE faculty saying, "We should learn from them too because, in terms of work experience you can't measure the experience they have. It is only this academic thing, that we can use as a way of telling them, that we are better than them." DE learners were just as experienced and often provided rich contributions to the DE process according to some participants; however, not everyone agreed with this description of the DE learners in the paradoxical context. One issue that all DE learners were in agreement about was the benefits they derived from their DE program irrespective of its challenges as is discussed below.

DE learner benefits and growth.

When the DE learners considered their ongoing DE experience, all the students in the study reported that overall they liked and benefitted from their DE program. They spoke about their interest in the course work and their perceived personal development since being a part of the program. Examples of these discussions included Wande's comment about the program, "I love distance learning program because I'm one of their students." Sade also lauded the program and its effect on her personal development. She said, "The program as a whole, I find it so interesting, then as a mother, there are so many things you gain from the course which can be of help for your family as well." Segun shared that his educational development was a result of his being a part of the program. He said, "I really improved, I really how do I call it, I really upgraded in terms of study, this school is fine and one of the best. I really thank God because I'm in the right place." Bola also spoke about the positive effect of the program on his development. He said, "In fact, my academic level, everything has changed since I've gotten to this premier university everything has changed about me. My speaking English, the way I interact with someone, so I've observed that everything has changed so I thank God." Ademila too shared that the DE program had changed him for the better. He said, "When I started this course, I am not exposed to so many things. I want to thank God that he gave me the privilege to be one of the DLC students because I believe that I gained a lot." Despite his various DE critiques and like all his colleagues, Dare indicated that he would be willing to recommend his DE program to others. He said, "Yes, I will recommend this program but before I do that I will tell them if you are able to take the stress if you are ready, then come." DE Learners experienced a sense of personal development from their

participation in the eclectic DE environment. Additionally, *power and politics* subtly

influenced the *paradoxical context* as is discussed below.

The findings in the *freestyle teaching and learning* sub-category are relevant to all

three research questions in Table 5.7.

Table 5.7: Freestyle Pedagogy and Learning's Relationship to the Research

Questions

PARADOXICAL CONTEXT'S SUB-CATEGORY	RESEARCH QUESTIONS	RELEVANCE OF FINDINGS
Freestyle Pedagogy and Learning **The varied teaching and learning strategies participants used**	1. How does teaching and learning take place within a distance education program?	• Participants revealed their DE education strategies and also highlighted those strategies that were working well or not.
	2. What instructional design is being used and to what extent does it allow faculty to accomplish its educational objectives for the higher education learners?	• The DE faculty talked about the instructional design techniques they used in their DE context and the extent to which their strategies accomplished their objectives
	3. What is the learner's experience in the Nigerian distance education context?	• The DE learners have a mixed DE experience within their program, but overall they liked it and felt an aspect of self development from their DE program.

Power and Politics

Another important sub-category of the *paradoxical context* was its fourth

subcategory dealing with the effect of *power and politics* on the DE program. The

following discussion highlights both how DE progress was suppressed and frustrated as

well how DE efforts and developments have been promoted, also illustrating the characteristic contradictory nature of the context. Furthermore, the *power and politics* factor provided another way to interpret some of the different issues within the DE programs.

Suppression and frustration.

Suppression and frustration refer to the aspects of the findings that discussed how people controlled DE issues with intent to restrain its development. Professor Nosa described various suppressed and frustrated administrative efforts perpetuated by some colleagues within the institution which had direct impact on DE teaching and learning. For example some participant faculty blamed their work load on having to teach their courses in both the conventional program and in the DE program. However, from Professor Nosa I learned that when an attempt was made to recruit external faculty to run the DE programs, he was met with resistance from some of his colleagues. The resistance was strong enough to prevent progress on the issue; hence, the current overload on regular instructors. Professor Nosa spoke of the situation saying, "In a dual mode system, because it also involves money people were blocking making it difficult for us. They just made it impossible for us to get people from outside." He continued, "They wouldn't let it happen, because it was as if we were trying to take the extra income, you know in our situation, it is a real big issue you know the money issue is a big issue." Part of the opponents' objection against recruitment of specialized DE instructors was the quality assurance. Professor Nosa highlighted this by saying, "And what was the reason, they said quality assurance, now when of course you and I know that quality assurance is not an inoculation. It is not an injection you just give people. It is a continuous process."

Professor Nosa bemoaned the quality assurance argument saying, "If some other person is involved then there is no quality assurance but when they are involved there is quality assurance. It doesn't matter whether there is in fact any learning taking place between them and the students at all." Power and politics (*suppression and frustration)* ensured that DE instructors could only be hired from overstretched faculty from within the university even if they were not clear what DE was or interested in it. According to Professor Nosa and as some of the other participants indicated, not all the present DE faculty was suitable nor did they seem to understand exactly what DE was. Professor Nosa highlighted this saying, "If I had the power, I won't allow just anybody to come into distance learning to teach because people are basically formed already. So, you have to take them through that process of induction as you would do the students."

Another way Power and politics (*suppression and frustration*) showed up was when it was used as an excuse to prevent any official policy even when they were officially passed through the university senate system to facilitate the DE process. Professor Nosa discussed this saying, "It took four years to make some adjustments, but even after making those adjustments, those who were to implement kicked against implementing those things because they felt that if we implement it there would be quality problems." One of the changes that colleagues resisted was using both maturity qualifications and work experience to support adults' entry into DE programs. Dr. Nosa highlighted this saying, "Even though senate of the university had given us the permission to go ahead and use maturity based on a particularly defined template, the guys who should operate it are not operating it because they don't believe in it." According to Professor Nosa, colleagues would refuse to follow any new DE policy that

they did not agree with because they did not fully understand or appreciate the DE

concept. Furthermore these powerful resisting colleagues were also not ready to make

changes to accommodate a new way of learning where they were not in control.

Professor Nosa pointed out this idea, "So at some point, it is a function of ignorance." He

continued about his resisting colleagues saying, "They are unwilling to accept that they

are not the primary or the most important element in any situation. In distance learning,

the content now is more you are just a facilitator mediated by content."

Professor Nosa also addressed how power and politics (*suppression and*

frustration) affected the unstable academic calendar for DE programs. He reported that

the unregulated DE academic calendar was caused by some of his colleagues who did not

have any regard for the DE programs they taught. Professor Nosa pointed out an

example of what students typically faced with these resistant colleagues saying, "A guy

may decide that I'm not going to conduct my tutorials now even though students are

around, I will conduct it six weeks later, students should come back six weeks later for

that one course." According to Professor Nosa, any DE instructor that treated its learners

badly more often got away with it because of the *suppression and frustration* of the

resistant group within the institution who considered DE education as secondary.

Furthermore, there were no repercussions for bad faculty behavior because there was a

high demand for admission into DE programs despite how badly its learners may be

treated because of the *Nigerian factor--access*. Professor Nosa said, "Weak institutions,

supervisory institutions, there is no real serious repercussion for it because distance

learners or distance learning is more like an appendix." He continued saying, "In the

Nigerian situation, no university needs to attract any student, so you can maintain what

you have because there are a hundred times more students than the spaces that you have."

According to Professor Nosa, it was therefore easier to maintain the status quo within the

context than advocate change. He continued, "So universities don't have to improve on

their programs, they don't have to update curriculum, they don't have to give students

support because whether or not you do that, there are a hundred students chasing one

space."

Power and politics (*suppression and frustration)* also inadvertently limited recourse for

DE learners because their power within the context was restricted and consequently so

was their ability to engage as a group to demand changes. These DE learners always had

to contend with the resistant groups that didn't think they were important and didn't get

any actions taken against them for treating DE students unfairly. Professor Nosa spoke

about this fact saying, "I think people take them for granted because they know they will

never get into a situation where they are going on demonstration and so on and all this

stuff; there is no opportunity for that." Power and politics suppressed and frustrated

learner power and was a strong influence in the context. It affected DE policy changes

and their implementation limited how much DE can change within the context. Despite

the subversive role *power and politics* played in the context by impeding certain DE

changes, there was also its positive role which showed up as ongoing DE *efforts and*

development as is discussed below.

Efforts and developments.

Efforts and developments came across as plans, projects and attempts made by

certain individuals or groups within the institution to improve DE in the context. It

included the addition of extra classes to manage large groups of students, plans for

provision and usage of more tutorial assistants, access to audio classes, and cell phones. These DE efforts and developments were either already partially implemented or were being explored for use in the DE context.

As part of the *efforts and developments*, I learned that due to the challenge of large classes, some of the faculty took individual initiative and unofficially re-divided their classes so that they could teach them in manageable sizes. Bola spoke about this practice saying, "Some lecturers will say Monday I'll take you people between the hours two to four pm; then the same thing with another group on that same Monday between the hours of five to six pm. That's how they help us." Bola continued saying, "Some of the lecturers even went to the extent of fixing time with us after the school it takes a lecturer that has interest in the success of the students to do that." Dr. Babatunde was one faculty member who discussed how he needed to teach in groups to assist learners. He said, "Sometimes to make things easier I divide them to groups so that I have to meet group 1 then make the time to meet group 2, 3 4 groups like that." He continued explaining the additional support he provided to his DE learners saying, "I used to employ my graduate students to come and engage them in tutorials so that some of the things we discuss in class if they need further clarification the tutorial assistant will be there to explain it to them." Another participant who also spoke about providing tutorial assistance to DE learners was Dr. Fummi. She said, "In my own courses I use tutors for academic support, for maybe when students are going through their materials and they have a problem." Dr. Fummi continued about the intention of the DE program moving forward when she said, "We are carrying out research to find out the level of readiness for distance learning tutors; we are thinking of post graduate students. Each instructor is

expected to choose the graduate student that will be helping them teach their course." In fact, Dr. Eyitayo also spoke about the DLC's intention to provide more tutorial assistant support for DE programs in general as a way to improve interactivity with DE learners. He said, "For now some departments have one tutorial assistant and we are encouraging more, at least depending on the number of students in the department, to help the instructors throughout the year to relate with the students wherever they are." Tutorial assistants were already in use within the Teacher's Education program and the projected increase in their numbers was expected to improve DE interactivity.

Besides the plan to add more tutorial assistants, Professor Nosa also brought up discussions about exploiting the use of culturally relevant media. According to him media which focused more on using audio would fit with the nature of DE participants. He said, "Look at our nature, the nature of our society, it is orality driven, our reaction to the print and to text is so much different from that of the western world." As a result, Professor Nosa explained one of the DE developments started under his leadership using his orality driven premise. He said, "So this informed why we went into the idea of producing audio books and we recorded materials in audio mp3 format so that the students can in fact listen and use that as a basis for interacting with the content." I learned that the audio books were already being transmitted through the campus radio waves but they were not accessible to the majority of DE students who lived outside its transmission capacity. As a result, Prof Nosa spoke about the ongoing effort and development on the audio books saying, **"**We want to pipe it online so if you don't have access because you are not in some parts of this city or on campus, you can go and play it

and download all those things online." Audio books were part of an ongoing effort and development not yet readily accessible to the majority of DE learners.

Another ongoing *effort and development* process was the plan to use context accessible technology within the DE context. Dr. Yemisi spoke about the move towards exploring the use of phones to help with tutorials in DE programs and as a part of the attempt to improve interactivity for learners. Dr. Yemisi discussed the issue saying, "We are exploring the mobile phone, because there is a lot you can help students with using it; try out their hand on quizzes, assignments and things like that and we have tutorial formats of their content on mobile phones." Professor Nosa also pointed out why the plan to use cell phones for DE was progressive when he said, "Convert these course materials and make them accessible through the mobile phones then you won't have to deal with the issue of bandwidth." (Bandwidth is a term synonymous with Internet connectivity discussed in the *Nigerian fac*tors section). As a result DE effort and development supporters believed the proposed plan to use cell phones would limit the need to use computers for Internet connectivity. Dr. Yemisi lauded the advantage of using cell phones in DE saying, "Students use their phones a lot they are always on it, most of the time they are chatting. Why we are introducing it is that we can also use all these mediums to get instruction across to them." Dr. Fummi also highlighted what made the proposal to use phones attractive to DE saying, "We are trying to get all our courses on the mobile learning platform whereby we have some content, drills and some telephone activities. These will ensure that the learners have the materials and ensure learners interact with the materials." She provided the new educational term used for their ongoing DE development saying, "We don't want to talk about 'digital-divide'

again now we talk about *digital-difference*. Other people have more access to laptops but

we have access to more mobile phones, good ones, so it is just about a digital difference."

The DE *efforts and developments* proposals exploited the digital difference idea in their

plan to use context accessible media--mobile phones and a context relevant media--audio

books. The efforts made by some DE faculty to add more classes during the interactive

sessions also promoted DE using a context relevant idea to alleviate some of the context's

challenges. Power and politics supported and promoted DE through ongoing *efforts and*

*development*s projects. The nature to promote and inhibit DE was evident in *power and*

politics as well as in all the other areas of the findings in the *paradoxical context*.

      The findings in the *power and politics* sub-category are relevant to all three

research questions as shown in Table 5.8.

Table 5.8: Power and Politics' Relationship to the Research Questions

PARADOXICAL CONTEXT'S SUB-CATEGORY	RESEARCH QUESTIONS	RELEVANCE OF FINDINGS
Power and Politics **How DE progress has been frustrated and promoted**	1. How does teaching and learning take place within a distance education program?	• The effect of interest groups that limited DE as well as those that led to development efforts promoting DE was highlighted. • These in turn affect how teaching and learning takes place as well as the challenges and the areas that were working well
	2. What instructional design is being used and to what extent does it allow faculty to accomplish its educational objectives for the higher education learners?	• The politics, power constraints and improvements affected DE instructional design. • Power and politics also as influenced the extent to which the instructional design used could accomplish its objectives.
	3. What is the learner's experience in the Nigerian distance education context?	• Both the positive and limiting effects of the power groups influenced the DE learners' DE experience.

Chapter and Findings Summary

This chapter discussed the findings of a case study to understand the teaching and learning experience of faculty and learners at a distance education program operated from a Nigerian tertiary institution. It is representative of fifteen study participants' DE experiences at the specific DE program. Three research questions that guided this study and they are: (1) How does teaching and learning take place within a distance education program? (2) What instructional design is being used and to what extent does it allow faculty to accomplish its educational objectives for the higher education learners? (3) What is the learner's experience in the Nigerian distance education context?

In answer to the first research question, teaching and learning experience of faculty and learners takes place in a complex way involving two major categories *Nigerian factors* and *paradoxical cont*ext. All the participants were essentially affected and limited to an extent by the *Nigerian factors* of *access*, *financially weak institutions*, *poverty*, *power supply* and *bandwidth*. The major challenges in the day to day operations consisted of several issues. Primarily not all its instructors are invested in the DE program. Furthermore, because the DE program was not too different from its regular program in terms of how it was run, no uniform agreement existed on how participants should teach and learn. Contradictory DE management issues for educational texts, inconsistencies in the academic and daily scheduling of the calendar and large class sizes with overburdened resources added further challenges to daily DE practice in the context. In addition, some DE instructors and DE learners were under prepared during the interactive sessions and added to its day to day challenges. Finally, negative *power and politics'* efforts (*Oppression and frustration)* served to limit the day to day DE practice

within the context. The main areas where things were working well included the positive

investment in DE education by the learners whose *entry drive* was overwhelmingly made

by *personal choice*. The majority of the participants supported the fact that they had

regular interactive classes in their DE program. Also, some participants felt there was

value and benefit in the DE program despite the challenges within the context. Some of

the DE faculty members were effective with their students and some others also had a

positive perception of the DE learners' efforts. The influence of positive *power and

politics'* (*efforts and developments*) within the context promoted DE by proposing the use

of a context accessible media (cell-phones) and a context relevant media (audio books) as

well as provided a new way to reduce faculty workload (tutorial assistants).

In answer to the second research question, DE instructional design is varied

within the *paradoxical context* with the use of some direct teaching and learning contact

between instructors and learners. Some course texts were provided in advance for DE

learners to review before the interactive sessions. These texts were usually relevant

during the interactive sessions for which there is no clear academic calendar. Faculty

mainly discussed using group and cooperative direct teaching techniques during the

interactive sessions. Some faculty members exploited available instructional resources

such as PowerPoint, audio, video and online communications with students by email,

chats and messages through Face book. Faculty reported using learner centered strategies

as part of their instructional design although they also noted it was fraught with various

challenges from the *Nigerian factors* and *paradoxical context*. Furthermore, participants

gave mixed review of their DE instructional experience. As there was no formal

evaluative system in place to review or analyze how participants experienced the

Teacher's Education DE program, there was no way to fully assess how the instructional design allows faculty to accomplish its educational objectives. However, some of the DE faculty declared that overall DE learners had better academic achievements than their colleagues in the conventional program. The findings showed that negative *power and politics* served to frustrate DE within the context. Its *suppression and frustration* affected who was allowed into the teaching and learning environment either as instructor or as learner. The negative *power and politics* also affected the instructional strategies used in the context because some people were not invested in DE. Positive power and politics promoted changes in the context which also affected the instructional strategies introduced to the context.

In answer to the third research question, the learner experienced the Teacher's Education DE program through a combination of the *Nigerian factors* and *paradoxical context*. Although the participant learners came into the DE program with *personal choice*, their experience was influenced by instructors who came in through the *no choice entry drive*. The learners experienced a DE context with a lot of contradictory and conflicting issues such as a preference for attending classes on campus via direct contact with peers and faculty rather than at a distance. Although participants perceived value to the DE program, all the learners experienced various challenges which affected their teaching and learning process. These obstacles included *mismanaged materials*, *inconsistent academic and daily schedules*, and *large classes with overburdened resources*. The learner participants rated their DE instructional design experience as mixed in its affectivity and value. Additionally, the learners' efforts and strategies which included reading course materials ahead, using instructors as resources, and researching for

supplemental course material received mixed reviews from faculty. Not all the participants used media as a teaching and learning strategy in the DE program and no formal evaluations were conducted. However, all the learners spoke about experiencing personal development since their engagement in the DE program. The learners were further influenced in how they experienced the DE program by both the negative and positive power and politics in the context.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this interpretive study was to understand the teaching and learning experience of facilitators and learners at a distance education program operated from a Nigerian tertiary institution. The research questions that guided this study include:

1. How does teaching and learning take place within a distance education program?

2. What instructional design is being used and to what extent does it allow faculty to accomplish its educational objectives for the higher education learners?

3. What is the learner's experience in the Nigerian distance education context?

This study sought to increase understanding of how facilitators and learners experience DE teaching and learning as these two interactive processes are part of the most crucial aspects of any distance education (DE) system (Arbaugh & Benbunan-Fich, 2007; Caliskan, 2009). The study was designed to explore this important phenomenon using a specific case in an under-researched context, Nigeria. In this chapter, the conclusions, implications, limitations, recommendations and final reflections are discussed. The first section discusses the three conclusions of the study, then the second section addresses the implications for theory and practice, the third section addresses the

limitations of the study while the fourth proposes recommendations for future research.

Following the Chapter summary is the final reflections on the study.

Conclusions

These conclusions shed light on our understanding of how the participants (DE instructors and its learners) experienced teaching and learning at the Teacher's Education program, and they are presented below.

Conclusion one: The Nigerian context's DE teaching and learning takes place in an ambiguous, often contradictory and not clearly defined manner.

Conclusion two: Nigerian context's DE lacks consistent DE teaching and learning instructional design because of its *laissez faire* education system.

Conclusion three: DE teaching and learning experience in the context fluctuates (mixed experience) resulting in an unpredictable, unsupported DE process.

Conclusion one: The Nigerian context's DE teaching and learning takes place in an ambiguous, often contradictory and not clearly defined manner.

The findings showed that the participants, both instructors and learners, were in a DE teaching and learning environment that was perpetually unstable because of the heavy influence of context independent and context dependent factors. The context independent factors were identified in the findings as the effects of access, financially weak institutions, poverty, power supply and bandwidth. Additionally, context dependent factors were identified in the findings as entry drive, paradox mentalities, freestyle

pedagogy and learning, and power and politics. Definitely the challenges noted in the findings confirm previous literature that DE practice in Nigeria faces tough problems (Ojokheta; 2010b; Olakulehin, 2008). For example it has been noted that there is an access problem in Nigerian higher education, even at their full capacities, the higher education institutions are serving approximately 20% of those eligible to learn (Aluede, Idogho & Imonikhe, 2011; Jegede, 2002; Ofulue, 2011; Olakulehin, 2008; Ololube et al., 2007). Furthermore, it was noted that inadequate infrastructures within Nigerian educational institutions are an effect of financially weak institutions and this stems from national poverty (Ojokheta; 2010b; Olakulehin, 2008; Ololube et al., 2007; Onyia & Onyia, 2011). Additionally, the erratic power supply and limited bandwidth limits the productivity of the institution, faculty and learners in Nigeria's DE practice (Ajadi, et al., 2008; Oye, Salleh &Iahad, 2011). Therefore, perhaps because of these consistent claims about the challenges of and to effective DE, there is limited empirical evidence which shows how DE is conducted within Nigerian contexts (Ali, 2008; Ololube et al., 2007; Ukpo, 2006). In fact, Ololube et al. (2007) noted that the limited Nigerian DE data meant that they had to rely on both personal observations and general impressions of DE as part of the sources used in their study.

Part of the complexity within the Nigerian DE teaching and learning environment used in this case study was the evident tension in how the context defined and practiced its DE. For example, the tenets and practice of DE as are defined in western context such as the separation of learner and instructor with the use of media did not appear to be in effect within the context (e.g., Ascough, 2002; Hochberg, 2006; Holmberg, 1995; Moore & Kearsley, 1996; Ojokheta, 2010a; Schlosser & Simonson, 2006; Tait, 2008). Instead,

participants in the Nigerian DE context engaged instructors and learners in a two phase

blended teaching and learning process each inundated with its own many flaws. In the

first phase, DE instructors should have prepared up-to-date course materials for DE

learners to use as a self-directed study guide into the course content. In the second phase,

DE learners and relevant faculty needed to meet for the face-to-face interactive session

which should last for six weeks and culminate in examinations. Due to the ambiguous

nature of the context, however, nothing in it was definite or as designed. For one thing,

participants in this study noted that the course materials were under produced and

oftentimes not relevant or used during the interactive sessions. "Drab, esoteric and non-

compliant to global standards" course materials could be the result of a deficiency in the

art and writing for DE and the consequence of that could mean an ineffective DE learning

process (Braimoh & Osiki, 2008, p.59). The findings illustrated that DE instructors were

overwhelmed and unable to produce materials as well as meet their obligations to teach in

conventional and DE programs.

There was also a variety of competing and conflicting ideologies among the

participants. For example, the findings showed that a face-to-face interactive time is

deliberately designed into the Nigerian context's DE teaching and learning process

(Ukpo, 2006; Yusuf, 2006). In addition, it was revealed that not every participant was

sure how to practice DE as has been described in western contexts (e.g., Ascough, 2002;

Hochberg, 2006; Holmberg, 1995; Moore & Kearsley, 1996; Ojokheta, 2010a; Schlosser

& Simonson, 2006; Tait, 2008) because, they demanded a physical presence at the host

institution. Closely related to this issue was the fact that not every faculty wanted to be

truly involved in the context's DE. This may explain claims that qualified African DE

instructors are in short supply (Ani, 2005; Ashcroft & Watts, 2005; Colle & Roman, 2004; Day, 2005; Gyamfi, 2005; Iwe, 2000; Minishi-Majanja & Ocholla, 2004). Additionally, Ojokheta, (2010a) attributes Nigerian faculty's limited acceptance of DE to their conservative educational nature. Within this case study was that its DE faculty had no choice about whether or not they participated in the DE program; DE in the context for faculty was a mandatory departmental obligation. In spite of the context's ambiguity, three of the five faculty members did feel committed to the DE program because they believed they were making a difference by helping reduce Nigeria's educational access situation. However, all five participating DE faculty felt overburdened with the workload associated with conducting DE courses and their conventional courses. I found limited studies about DE faculty experience in Nigeria; however, Ali (2008) conducted a study that evaluated two DE centers in Nigeria which included some DE faculty information. Unlike Ali (2008), who noted that only 20% of faculty in DE had advanced degrees of Masters and PhDs, each of the faculty participating in this study had a PhD. The findings for the context's DE did not support Ali's (2008) claim that the average number of years of DE faculty in practice is approximately five. In fact the DE faculty in this study had an average of ten years plus in DE teaching and learning. Participants also reported that overburdened DE instructors in the context managed large classes, which supports the claim of a high ratio of instructors to learners in Nigerian DE practice (Ali, 2008; Ojokheta 2010b). In fact, in this study, some participants reported that for a number of their courses DE faculty class ratios were at 1: 500 or more, which is much greater than 1: 86 for an education program as reported in Ali (2008).

The high ratio of students to instructors was not the only dilemma DE learners within the context had to contend with. For example, all eight DE learners reported being overwhelmed with the intensity of the course schedules during the interactive sessions. What seemed to happen in the case study's context was that overburdened instructors in turn tended to overwhelm DE learners with limited intervals in between face-to-face lectures. The congested class schedules for DE learners support claims by previous authors (e.g., Ali, 2008). Additionally, overloaded course schedules affected the professional and family time of the Adult DE learners. Indeed, although this study found limited Nigerian DE literature about its learners, available literature showed that those who participate in DE tend to be adults (Ofulue, 2011; Ukpo, 2006). Ofulue (2011) noted that 93.3% of the 215 Nigerian DE learners who responded to the study's questionnaire ranged in age from 20 – 50 and above; this closely corresponds with this study's findings which found that all eight DE learners ranged from around 22 – 50 in age. These adults are motivated to a large extent by economic factors; specifically their need for better employment (Ukpo, 2006). In Ukpo's (2006) study the findings revealed that 88% of the DE learners had enrolled in the educational programs as a strategy to get better employment and this supports this study's findings that career motivations played a significant role in DE enrollment. This study's findings also support the literature about adult learners being older, employed, needing skill updates and or career change (Kungu, Machtmes, Prieto & Jabor, 2011; Zirkle, 2004). Because of family responsibilities, work commitments or geographic limitations these adults seek educational opportunities that offer convenience (Zirkle, 2004). In this study, the findings also indicated that their careers helped support some DE learners in terms of giving them the necessary funding

for enrollment. Borode (2010) stated that DE learners were often billed for every aspect of their education from enrollment to exams. This private expenditure took a heavy toll on the DE learners in this study's findings and was a major part of the struggle DE learners faced. This is also consistent with adult education literature which has established that one of the most significant barriers for most adults' participation in formal learning is its high cost (Selwyn, Gorard & Williams, 2001; Merriam et al., 2007). Other findings from this ambiguous DE context can also be related to literature about the situational, institutional and dispositional barriers adult learners experience in participating in adult education (Kungu et al., 2011; Merriam & Brockett, 2007). Time constraints seriously affect adult learners' education (Mackeracher, 2004; Merriam, et al., 2007). While time and cost are counted as situational aspects for the learners, institutional barriers are concerned with administrative factors such as course scheduling; dispositional factors are concerned with learner confidence in their abilities to participate (Kungu et al., 2011; Merriam & Brockett, 2007). Definitely the institutional support affected the DE teaching and learning process in this study's context and also contributed to its ambiguity. For example, part of the findings revealed that in the Nigerian DE context, human and material resources are not well regulated (Ojokheta, 2010b). Some of the participants described the DE program's treatment within the context as being second tier to the conventional programs (Ambe-Uva, 2007). Consequently the DE academic calendar not only fluctuated, but also priority was always given to conventional programs when there was conflict of schedules. As a result, I learned the DE academic calendar was not integrated with those of the entire university. In fact, part of this study's findings showed that the Nigerian DE program is run more as an internal revenue

generating system (Ojokheta, 2010b) than an education system which provides access to an underserved adult population. Ambe-Uva (2007) cautioned that making the DE system unaffordable to the majority could confuse its noble access objectives. Unfortunately, the ambiguity found in the DE teaching and learning context and its poorly defined practices lend support to previous literature that in general there is no clearly articulated institutional DE policy (Ani & Biao, 2005; Minishi-majanja & Ocholla, 2004). As a result within the case study context, a contradictory, underlying force of power and politics was also revealed. As some forces pushed against DE teaching and learning, others also showed a growing support that pushed back, resulting in a DE context that is ambiguous, often contradictory and not clearly defined.

Unfortunately, the issue is that there is limited adult education literature fully informed by African contexts (Beckloff, 2009; Diouf Sheckley & Kehrhahn 2000) with which to assess this Nigerian DE case study context. The limited DE literature which focused on Nigeria and was reviewed for use in this study largely drew comparisons with international DE in the west (e.g., Aderinoye, nd; Olakulehin, 2008; Ofulue, 2011; Oye et al., 2011; Tawo, Arikpo & Ojuah, 2008). This situation supports the argument that Adult Education within under-researched contexts such as Africa tends to be judged using western models (Beckloff 2009; Diouf et al., 2000).

Conclusion two: Nigerian context's DE lacks consistent DE teaching and learning instructional design because of its "laissez faire" education system.

There was no outlined DE instructional design style within the context. Consequently, in terms of getting learners to interact with the content within the DE case

study, there was a form of mixed mode DE delivery (Ajadi et al., 2008; Ali, 2008). Interactivity is an important aspect of engaging in DE, and it involves communication between learner and instructor and engagement between learners (Ambe-Uva, 2006; Moore & Kearsley, 1996; Simonson, et al., 2006; Yusuf, 2006). Interactivity also includes learner and context as well as active classroom learning (Ambe-Uva, 2006). DE learners participating in this study reported that their initial contact with the content often left them with questions. They usually needed to wait until the interactive session to get needed feedback on their questions. For adult learners, questions can play a crucial role in the learning process and student generated questions can motivate meaningful learning (Pedrosa de Jesus, Almeida, Teixeira-Dias & Watts, 2006). As certain questions indicate, learners have reflected on the ideas presented and are trying to extend and link these with other things they already know (Pedrosa de Jesus et al., 2006). In this study, DE learners noted that the learner-to-class interaction was important to their learning experience. Also as is noted in previous literature, the most accessible form of media used was print (Ashcroft & Rayner, 2011; Ofulue, 2011; Tawo et al., 2008) and in the context, this was fraught with its own challenges of being under produced and sometimes irrelevant for the DE course.

According to Donkor, 2011, the use of print based materials has its own short comings. One reason for this is that teaching and learning environments in adult settings need to accommodate various learning abilities (Amstutz, 1999; Mackeracher, 2004). In the findings, some participants mentioned the institution's use of radio to transmit DE course content and some also mentioned a CD-ROM being given to DE learners. A few DLC officials also mentioned that some DE course content was in the process of being

made available through the online servers. For the radio transmissions of content, bandwidth was an issue because of its limited range; it could only be transmitted to those within the main campus or just outside to the immediately local environs. CDs were often given to DE learners during registration and there were reports that courses loaded on the CDs were incomplete as with the print media. In addition, the courses on the CDs were often direct replicas of those in print so that DE learners just printed copies off of them. The online content was also affected by the network problems. Another major conflict for DE participants within the context was that access to ICTs is largely determined by those who can afford them (Ofulue, 2011).

Again because of the inconsistent DE pedagogy in the context, what resulted was that each lecturer made individual arrangements for teaching their learners (Ali, 2008). Compounding the issue for the participants was the limited DE infrastructure with which to work (Olakulehin, 2008; Onyia & Onyia, 2011). Limited technology was available for use from the institution, however and where available it was not maintained and often was not used because the instructor could not guarantee the power to run it. This again showed that no guidance or support was provided for DE faculty (Ali, 2008; Jegede, 2009). Jegede (2009) reported that when there was training it was general to familiarize instructors on the basic use of the digital equipment and not training to teach them to integrate it into their teaching and learning environments.

The findings revealed that a wide variety of instructional methods were in use (Ajadi et al., 2008; Ali, 2008). However, practically all these methods were designed for use in a face-to-face teaching and learning environment. Learners were just as handicapped and confused in the DE teaching and learning terrain as the faculty. Ojo and

Olakulehin, (2008) pointed out that because students are new to DE and its innovations, the opportunity for confusion exists. Most adult educators teach the way they were taught and have a preferred learning style; however, this natural tendency can be unproductive with adult learners who learn in a different fashion (Amstutz, 1999). Three of the five DE faculty members within this study's context seemed to only use conventional teaching styles (Olakulehin, 2008; Oye et al., 2011) such as face-to-face lectures. The participants that mentioned using online technology used it for registration, communication and for gathering student data in the various courses. These findings are consistent with Ofulue, (2011) who reported that Internet and email, and text messaging were being increasingly used more for accessing information than for learning. One of the DE faculty admitted that DE instructors had different levels of technology literacy. Technology adoption is a complex, inherently social, developmental process which needs to address cognitive, emotional, and contextual concerns to be successful (Straub, 2009). Clearly, within this case study the DE Teacher's Education program was shaped by how faculty and learners defined their teaching and learning environment because no style was ruled out or ruled in. From the findings, three adult learning concepts stood out and these include expected self-directed traits of the learners and the use of collaborative and experiential learning strategies. According to some of the instructors, adult learners were supposed to be self-directed learners and as such they designed their course content to train them in that way. Within the adult learning literature, self-directed learning emphasizes autonomy, and a disposition of the learner to taking responsibility in learning (Amstutz, 1999; Merriam & Brockett, 2007) A majority of adult learning occurs using self-directed strategies (Kungu, et al., 2011). "Both self-directedness and relatedness to

others contribute to how adults prefer to learn" (Mackeracher, 2004 p.25). The instructors also described grouping learners together to ensure that they worked in collaborative teams during interactive sessions. Collaborative learning strategies are part of the adult teaching and learning strategies (Mackeracher, 2004; Merriam & Brockett, 2007). Collaborative strategies can be used for any type of learning and calls for groups of co-learners and facilitators to create shared meanings (Mackeracher, 2004). Closely tied to collaborative strategy is experiential learning (Merriam & Brockett, 2007; Merriam et al., 2007). The DE instructors in the context also described linking new concepts to participants' previous experiences during the interactive teaching and learning sessions. Experience is one of the core concepts used in adult education (Amstutz, 1999; Merriam & Brockett, 2007; Yorks & Kasl, 2002). "Learning from experience is an interaction between two processes—experience is first taken in or grasped, then transformed into meaning" (Yorks & Kasl, 2002, p.180).

The DE learners also used a wide range of learning strategies based on their access to resources and the extent of their interest in their learning. One of the instructional issues noted in the context was that students described a dependence on facilitators to assist them in completing the course (Ambe-Uva, 2006). In fact, some participants claimed a DE learner preference for being spoon fed at all times (Ajadi et al., 2008). Oftentimes students come to adult education classes with the belief that knowledge emanates from experts and that their responsibility is to passively absorb the subject-matter content and knowledge generated by teachers (Amstutz, 1999). Therefore, according to some participants, DE learner dependency contributed to the challenging experiences within the DE teaching and learning context. As dependency reflects the

belief that they—DE students—cannot produce knowledge themselves (Amstutz, 1999).

This also in some way explained their preference for the interactive face-to-face sessions.

Regardless of the ambiguity of the teaching and learning process, participants for the

most part experienced value in the DE program even though there was no comprehensive

and credible quality assurance system put in place by the DE institution in Nigeria

(Ojokheta, 2010b). This would explain why the DE faculty seemed to be just starting out

although they had been engaged in DE teaching and learning for approximately ten years.

**Conclusion three: Learners' DE teaching and learning experience in the context
fluctuates (mixed experience) resulting in an unpredictable, unsupported DE
process.**

DE teaching and learning experienced by its learners was not clearly positive or

negative, resulting in constant free fall state of unpredictability for DE learners since their

DE process is unsupported. For one thing, DE learners in this study are similar to those

reported in previous literature as people who cannot attend conventional institutions

because of other external factors (Ascough, 2002; Brindley et al., 2009; Macdonald &

Thompson, 2005; Zirkle, 2004). Job and career; home and personal responsibilities; and

leisure or interest are the three reasons adults give for participating or as triggering their

venture into adult education (Kungu et al., 2011) and these areas are also consistent with

the findings of this study. DE faculty freedom contributed to the mixed and fluctuating

DE learner experiences even though participants personally sought entrance into DE,

within the context however. For one thing, faculty could choose to teach or not teach

DE. Participants reported that some faculty members in the context were diligent with

the time-table and respected the interactive session while other faculty did not show up at all or just sent notes through the class representatives for DE learners to photocopy. These findings seem consistent with Ali (2008). The researcher in the evaluation of two DE centers explained that some classes on the timetable were not held and those that did sometimes ended much earlier than was assigned. In fact, the general barriers for adult learners include costs, feedback and teacher contact, alienation and isolation, student support and services, and a lack of experience and/or training (Zirkle, 2004), all of which were relevant to this study's findings. Costs affected experience because it influenced how much they could participate in the teaching and learning context. In other words, did they pay school fees on time and get access to the required texts or CDs? Did they have access to personal laptops or other forms of learning technology? Therefore, the level of resources they had available to them limited the learners' DE teaching and learning experience (Ajadi et al., 2008). Other external responsibilities and goals also seemed to impact how DE learners experienced teaching and learning. Although some DE learners did not have access to technology, the findings from this study indicated that the limited access did not diminish interest in the DE program. Interest is one of the primary reasons that adult learners attend and participate in education programs (Hori & Cusack, 2006). Some learners also showed more motivation than others and a higher maturity when they paid for their own learning. Adult Learners are characterized as being internally motivated (Amstutz, 1999). Feedback and teacher contact experience were mixed as was the feeling of alienation and isolation which took place when teacher contact was limited. The psychological reactions of adult learners and their learning characteristics need attention in teaching and learning contexts (Aliana man wai, 2012).

The ambiguous and not clearly defined DE teaching and learning environment also meant that no institutional evaluation of DE learners took place to produce necessary changes. DE participants spoke about experiencing limited learner support. Although it was noted in the field and some participants also mentioned that informal mentoring that took place between DE learners and sympathetic instructors, there was no official structure set up. This finding supports the literature that there is inadequate learner support as well as problems with counseling and mentoring DE learners (Braimoh & Osiki, 2008).

However, regardless of the learner frustrations with the various DE contexts' challenges, all eight of them felt that the terminal degree would have a positive impact on their status. They discussed experiencing value in their DE teaching and learning and spoke about their personal development since they became a part of the Teacher's Education program. The value experience that participants discussed can be likened to humanism in adult education (Amstutz, 1999; Merriam et al., 2007). Humanism goes beyond behavioral changes to the learners' personal changes in values, attitudes, and beliefs (Amstutz, 1999). In this context DE learners received exactly the same certificate as those given in the conventional programs. According to the participants themselves, no other DE facility provided that type of assurance to its learners. A sense of empowerment to DE learners occurred because there was no disparity in the final credentials received from the institution.

Implications for Practice and Research

Clearly this study adds new perspectives to the adult DE teaching and learning

literature about the under-researched Nigerian DE context. The findings and conclusions

from the study generate implications for practice and research which are discussed below.

Implications for practice

The adult education DE practitioners engaged in Nigeria or similar contexts face

demanding hurdles as they try to be effective educators in the field. The teaching and

learning process is a crucial DE component which is supported by various educational

structures. Its operation under conditions fraught with challenges makes things tougher

and is not for faint hearted practitioners. International best practices can only be of

assistance up to a point (Ololube et al., 2007). To this end, I have six implications for

practice and they are below.

1. **Practitioners in resource deprived contexts should make regular, relevant**
    and focused instructional design changes to enable them to function
    effectively in their teaching and learning environments.

It is important for practitioners to strive for regular, relevant, focused instructional

design changes rather than to continue aiming for radical overnight changes that are more

applicable as long term goals. The Nigerian context's resource-poor situation is riddled

with various overlapping constraints that would be impossible to eliminate in the short

term. Therefore, because of the challenges and their mitigating circumstances, efforts

should be made to assist practitioners in resource deprived contexts to function as

effectively as possible in their present teaching and learning environment and

predicaments. An example of how this can be done in this context is by introducing regular informal DE faculty gatherings within and across departments where faculty can share effective DE strategies. Early adopters of a technology, strategy or related facilitation point can share information with less experienced colleagues. Individuals who observe others adopting a particular innovation may be more inclined to consider its adoption, and the experience of someone successfully or unsuccessfully using a technology may also influence others (Straub, 2009). Sharing strategies would help to ease some faculty frustration from those who are less technology savvy, and it could also resolve issues that are common to the program's DE practitioners more quickly. Communication channels are one of the ways which information about a particular innovation can be passed from individual to individual (Straub, 2009).

Apart from informal training opportunities, formal training should also be built into the departmental structure to allow for growth of its DE program not just in terms of the enrollment numbers but in terms of DE pedagogy support for the faculty. By so doing they can have more productive teaching and learning environments which benefit both instructors and learners. To be fully effective, practitioners need an attitude adjustment (Ashcroft & Rayner, 2011).

2. **Practitioners in resource deprived contexts should not make unnecessary changes.**

Just as it is important for practitioners to be prepared to make periodic changes to their DE teaching and learning environment, there is also a need to ensure that effected changes are merited. For example, making a sudden change to a process that is comfortable for its participants may lead to frustration and negative reactions. Over-

emotional stimulation of learners can cause distress and can inhibit adult learning (Mackeracher, 2004). Within this context, it would be like putting an end to face-to-face interactive sessions when participants clearly like the opportunities associated with them. A better approach might be to ensure that daily schedules are restructured to give better intervals for DE learners and instructors. The maintenance of the face-to-face communication where appropriate is important (Yusuf, 2006).

3. **Practitioners should make ongoing efforts to evaluate with the intent to implement context specific solutions to increase the buy-in of the stakeholders (faculty and learners).**

The challenge in not addressing issues by context is that practitioners risk targeting the wrong audience and, therefore just as when we plan programs for adults, there may be no buy-in by the stakeholders and the programs fail. Thus this DE context should only use DE faculty who are comfortable and open to DE teaching and learning process.

Available media already purchased for use in the context should be readily accessible to participants in the context. An immediate reduction in faculty to learner ratios can be made because both groups find that the excessive numbers hinder the teaching and learning process. To optimize productivity within the DE teaching and learning environment, it is important to provide more interactive opportunities for learners (Yusuf, 2006).

4. **Another issue which forms part of the context specific solutions would be for practitioners to foster and strengthen micro and macro communication and networking opportunities.**

Communication at the micro level would be with colleagues, departments and its DE administrative center. For example, if practitioners extended the communication and networking opportunities with and between the DE learners, other DE faculty and the administrative center concerns and issues could get addressed more quickly. This can lead to a more productive DE teaching and learning environment. DE Practitioners at the departmental level could make efforts to ensure that registered DE learners admitted into any DE program within the department have relevant course materials. Departmental ownership of circulating the course materials rather than the administration would ensure that more materials are pertinent. Ultimately it will lead to a higher percentage of DE learners being prepared for the interactive sessions. The stronger cohesive networks will start to act as support for the teaching and learning process: needed support which at the moment is weak. At the macro level practitioners should continue fostering network and communication opportunities with national and international groups to ensure that needed professional practitioner support is reinforced.

5. **The institution needs to implement and support the DE teaching and learning environment with progressive policies.**

Policies need to be put in place to guide, support and nurture the DE teaching and learning environment (Adekanmbi, 2007; Ololube et al., 2007). For example, there could be a policy to have the DE calendar aligned with the academic calendar of the conventional programs. Policies could be used to ensure that there are internal

monitoring systems in place to regularly review the DE teaching and learning
environment with intent to provide support. Policies should be enacted to provide learner
support to reduce context frustration and feelings of isolation. One of the challenges
experienced by participants in the context was that even the existing limited policies were
often not implemented. In light of this type of condition, efforts should be made to
ensure that tasks associated with any policy changes made by the institution are
effectively delegated and carried out (Ashcroft & Rayner, 2011).

6. **The institution needs to support a DE teaching and learning environment**
   conducive to its core participants (instructors and learners).

Support to learners and instructors is crucial to maintain a productive teaching and
learning environment (Caliskan, 2009). Support includes provision of all necessary
factors and facilities that helps the DE teaching and learning to function. The physical
environment for adults is also important to teaching and learning (Amstutz, 1999;
Mackeracher, 2004), so lighting, furniture, sound and air quality are important aspects of
what needs to be addressed for teaching and learning to be conducive to all
(Mackeracher, 2004). In resource challenged contexts like that of the study, efforts
should be made to get external funding for renovations and other physical resources such
as chairs.

Implications for research

This study has identified two complex interconnected categories, Nigerian factors
and paradoxical context, within the Nigerian DE teaching and learning experience. This
extends previous literature on the Nigerian DE environment (e.g., Aluede et al., 2011;
Jegede, 2002; Ofulue, 2011; Olakulehin, 2008; Ololube et al., 2007). Previous literature

has already identified the various challenges noted in the study such as access, financially weak institution, poverty, power supply and bandwidth (e.g., Aluede et al., 2011; Jegede, 2002; Ofulue, 2011; Olakulehin, 2008; Ololube et al., 2007). However, these previous works did not come from the perspective of the DE learner and instructor experiences. These previous works also neglected to highlight the positive and negative underlying effects of power and politics as part of the dynamic from which participants experience DE. Additionally, this study used Tables to summarize the DE teaching and learning experience and the relationship between Nigerian factors and paradoxical context.

Another major implication of this study is that it highlights the need and importance of researchers to be closely aligned with practitioners in these and similar educational contexts. These collaborations with practitioners would enable researchers to conduct holistic research to practice projects in order to make headway in reducing some of the adult DE teaching and learning complexities. Essentially, progress can only be effectively achieved when addressing issues and challenges from the point or context where they originate (Merriam & Brockett, 2007).

Another implication is that researchers in this or similar contexts may need to address adult coping strategies and their adaptability to complex teaching and learning environments. These would be helpful to practitioners and help in developing effective adult teaching and learning strategies for their contexts.

Limitations of the study

The study was limited in resources of time and budget because I could not afford to spend more than a month in the field. Also, I did not physically observe how each participant engaged in his/her specific teaching and learning space so this somewhat

limited the data. However, had I been able to personally observe each participant engage in teaching and learning, I still might not have captured the experiences they accumulated over time.

The findings have a researcher bias and it is possible that others could interpret the data differently. Since the study used data collected in Nigeria using snow ball sampling recruitment, it is possible that the findings might have been different if I had used a different type of recruitment strategy or targeted a different population. In addition, although the sample size of this study was within the normal range for a qualitative study, it is limited in the extent to which generalizations can be made about other Nigerian DE teaching and learning experience.

Recommendations for future research

This exploratory study has tried to understand the DE teaching and learning experience of instructors and learners. My first recommendation for other studies is to use a similar study design to determine if the findings of this study are applicable to other Nigerian DE programs and contexts.

This study could also be applied and expanded to other Sub-Saharan DE contexts to build more empirical evidence to continue to improve the adult DE teaching and learning terrain for practitioners and all participants alike.

Another recommendation would be to use an action research approach to bring about productive changes with DE practitioners on the ground. In this type of research there will be an emphasis and collaboration with the adult participants (instructors and learners) whose experiences are directly influenced by the teaching and learning process (Berg, 2009; Merriam & Brockett, 2007).

Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the conclusions, implications, limitations and recommendations of this study. The findings resulted in three conclusions: the Nigerian context's DE teaching and learning takes place in an ambiguous, often contradictory and not clearly defined manner. In addition, the Nigerian context's DE lacks a consistent DE teaching and learning pedagogy because of its "laissez faire" education system. Finally, learners' DE teaching and learning experience in the context fluctuates (mixed experience) resulting in an unpredictable, unsupported DE process.

Six implications for practice and an implication for research were presented as well as the limitations of the study. Finally, my recommendations consist of conducting more studies to see if the results are applicable to other Nigerian DE and possibly other Sub-Saharan DE contexts. In addition, an action research follow up study is suggested to create interventions which could improve the current challenges in the DE teaching and learning experience for learners and instructors.

Final Reflections on Study

The intention of this study was to uncover the experience of DE instructors and its learners in a Nigerian Teacher's Education program. The experience of DE instructors and its learners are important to the teaching and learning context and these need to be constantly reviewed in order to make changes (Caliskan, 2009; Chelliah & Clarke, 2011; Dennen et al., 2007). Initially I proposed an exploratory study of this nature based on the argument that DE teaching and learning in an under-researched context is expected to be different from that of the resource rich contexts in the west (Ashcroft & Rayner, 2011). Therefore, I wanted to uncover novel teaching and learning experiences that might have

been overlooked in mainstream DE research. Leaving underrepresented contexts undefined and unexamined may result in missing out on valuable knowledge which cannot be viewed from a global central position (Winkle-Wagner, Hunter & Ortloff, 2009).

In order to effectively represent participants within the DE context, I focused on the experiences of those people who agreed to take part in the study. Experience is a foundational aspect of learning and important to education (Lawrence, 2009). This study recognizes that "participants' experiences, voices and contexts are in flux which makes learning and teaching seem like moving targets that can never be understood with precision" (Lawrence, 2009, p.83).

I was fortunate to get participants who graciously shared and helped me understand their rich DE teaching and learning experiences. Thus, by conducting this study I have been a part of giving voice to an underrepresented context in terms of DE research. I have added to previous conversations in research that seemed to focus primarily on describing the challenges within the Sub-Saharan DE contexts (e.g., Alzouma, 2005; Anyanwu, 2003; Colle & Roman, 2004; Day, 2005; Gyamfi, 2005; Sy, 2004). It is my hope that with the findings, conclusions and implications from this study, our DE teaching and learning conversations have been expanded. So, I continue onward exploring other avenues that will add to other spaces and voices within adult learning.

Afterword

I can say with certainty that I don't know exactly what the future holds for this Nigerian context in terms of how the participants' DE teaching and learning experience

will evolve. However, I do believe that it would be next to impossible to make any

meaningful progress in the context without taking into consideration the majority of those

directly involved in the process. The present set-up of the context seems to be such a

struggle because of the difficulties and various contradictions within the context. So in

my opinion, the transition to any type of meaningful DE teaching and learning must first

accurately determine what is feasible given the constraints of money and other issues.

Then the context must re-educate, train and inform everyone to have a clear

understanding of what the primary objectives should be: educating adults that desperately

want to learn.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

THE INTERVIEW PROTOCOL FOR FACILITATORS

1. **How does teaching and learning take place within a distance education program at a Nigerian tertiary institution?**

    - Walk me through a typical DE session as a facilitator?
    - What types of advice would you give someone just starting to teach in this DE program?
    - What are the most important things you've learned teaching in this program?
    - Why did you start working with this DE program?
    - What types of institutional support do you get?
    - What does it feel like working in this online DE program as a facilitator?
    - Can you give me examples of some of the activities you do within this DE program?
    - If you had an unlimited budget what would you add to this program?
      - Can you share with me what would happen if you couldn't work online on a day?
      - What constraints if any exist in running this type of DE program?
      - What are some of the issues you solve on a day to day basis in this online program?
      - Give me a time when you were at
      - Are there any applications you can't do without?
      - Please share some of the interesting aspects of this program's online DE with me?

2. **What instructional design is being used and to what extent does it allow faculty to accomplish its educational objectives for the higher education learners?**

    - How would you characterize your teaching style in this DE program?

- What are the things your students must leave with when they leave this DE program
- What are some of the expectations you have for this online course or program?

3. **What is the learner's experience the Nigerian distance education context?**

- What good feedback do you often get from students?
- What are the most common complaints you get from students

APPENDIX B

THE INTERVIEW PROTOCOL FOR LEARNERS

1. How does teaching and learning take place within a distance education program at

   a Nigerian tertiary institution?

   - **Why did you enroll with this online program?**
   - **Can you give me examples of some of the activities you do within this online DE program?**
   - **Walk me through what a typical day is like when you are working on your DE course in this program?**
   - **What stand out in your mind or what do you think is important to your learning?**
   - **If you were a faculty member what would you change in the DE program or course?**
     - ➢ **Can you share with me what would happen if you couldn't work online on a day?**
     - ➢ **What are some of the issues you solve on a day to day basis in this online program?**
     - ➢ **Tell me about your bad experiences in your DE program?**
     - ➢ **Are there any applications you can't do without?**
     - ➢ **Tell me about the best experiences you've had in your DE program?**
     - ➢ **What are your favorite DE activities?**

2. What instructional design is being used and to what extent does it allow faculty to

   accomplish its educational objectives for the higher education learners?

   - **How well matched do you feel your course information is with what you need as a learner?**

3. What is the learner's experience the Nigerian distance education context?

   - **What does it feel like working in this online DE program as a learner?**
   - **What should the program start doing?**
   - **What should the program stop doing?**
   - **What should the program continue doing?**
   - **Would you recommend this program to others?**

APPENDIX C

CONSENT FORM FOR INSTRUCTORS

I, _____, agree to participate in a research study titled "*Experiences of Teaching and Learning at a Distance in a Nigerian Context*" conducted by Oluremilekun Ojo from the Department of Lifelong Education Administration and Policy at the University of Georgia (542-3343) under the direction of Professor Laura Bierema Department of Lifelong Education, Administration and Policy University of Georgia (542-6174). I understand that my participation is voluntary. I can refuse to participate or stop taking part at anytime without giving any reason, and without penalty or loss of benefits to which I am otherwise entitled. I can ask to have all of the information about me returned to me, removed from the research records, or destroyed. The interest of this study is on the teaching and learning experience of both facilitators and learners because these two interconnected processes are part of the most crucial aspects of any distance education (DE) system. If I volunteer to take part in this study, I will be asked to do the following things:

1)   Allow the researcher (Oluremilekun Ojo) to observe me teaching my DE course or program, this may take 1 work day (6 hours)
2)   Provide Oluremilekun Ojo access to my DE teaching documents for her review anywhere from 30 mins to 5 hours
3)   Allow Oluremilekun Ojo to interview me face to face for at least 60 minutes. These interviews will be audio-taped and transcribed for analysis.

The benefits for me as an instructor is that the information will be useful for me and help me understand how to make improvements in my teaching experiences. The researcher also hopes to learn more about how instructors and learners experience and navigate the Nigerian distance education context. No risk is expected but I may experience some discomfort when I am observed. The discomfort will be reduced in the following ways: if at any time, I do not want the observation to continue, I can simply say so and the researcher will leave.

No individually-identifiable information about me, or provided by me during the research, will be shared with others without my written permission. I will be assigned an identifying number and a pseudonym and this number and name will be used in all the interview transcripts that I am part of or on any document copies I provide. The investigator will answer any further questions about the research, now or during the course of the project.

I understand that I am agreeing by my signature on this form to take part in this research project and understand that I will receive a signed copy of this consent form for my records.

_____   _____
_____

  Name of Researcher   Signature   Date
Telephone: 17062546491
Email: ROJO@UGA.EDU

_____   _____
_____

Name of Participant   Signature   Date

Please sign both copies, keep one and return one to the researcher.
Additional questions or problems regarding your rights as a research participant should be addressed to The Chairperson, Institutional Review Board, University of Georgia, 629 Boyd Graduate Studies Research Center, Athens, Georgia 30602-7411; Telephone (706) 542-3199; E-Mail Address IRB@uga.edu

APPENDIX D

CONSENT FORM FOR STUDENTS

I, _____, agree to participate in a research study titled "*Experiences of Teaching and Learning at a Distance in a Nigerian Context*" conducted by Oluremilekun Ojo from the Department of Lifelong Education Administration and Policy at the University of Georgia (542-3343) under the direction of Professor Laura Bierema Department of Lifelong Education, Administration and Policy University of Georgia (542-6174). I understand that my participation is voluntary. I can refuse to participate or stop taking part at anytime without giving any reason, and without penalty or loss of benefits to which I am otherwise entitled. I can ask to have all of the information about me returned to me, removed from the research records, or destroyed. The interest of this study is on the teaching and learning experience of both distance education instructors and learners because these two interconnected processes are part of the most crucial aspects of any distance education (DE) system. If I volunteer to take part in this study, I will be asked to do the following things:

1) Allow the researcher (Oluremilekun Ojo) to observe learning my DE course and or program this may take 1 working day (6 hours)
2) Provide Oluremilekun Ojo access to my DE student documents for her review anywhere from 30 mins to 5 hours
3) Allow Oluremilekun Ojo to interview me face to face for at least 60 minutes. These interviews will be audio-taped and transcribed for analysis.

The benefits for me as a DE learner/student is that the information will be useful to me and may help me understand how to make improvements in my learning experiences. The researcher also hopes to learn more about how instructors and learners experience and navigate the Nigerian distance education context. No risk is expected but I may experience some discomfort when I am observed. The discomfort will be reduced in the following ways: if at any time, I do not want the observation to continue, I can simply say so and the researcher will leave.

No individually-identifiable information about me, or provided by me during the research, will be shared with others without my written permission. I will be assigned an identifying number and a pseudonym and this number and name will be used in all the interview transcripts that I am part of or on any document copies I provide. The investigator will answer any further questions about the research, now or during the course of the project.

I understand that I am agreeing by my signature on this form to take part in this research project and understand that I will receive a signed copy of this consent form for my records.

_____   _____
_____

  Name of Researcher   Signature   Date
Telephone: 17062546491
Email: ROJO@UGA.EDU

_____   _____
_____

Name of Participant   Signature   Date

           Please sign both copies, keep one and return one to the researcher.
Additional questions or problems regarding your rights as a research participant should be addressed to The Chairperson, Institutional Review Board, University of Georgia, 629 Boyd Graduate Studies Research Center, Athens, Georgia 30602-7411; Telephone (706) 542-3199; E-Mail Address IRB@uga.edu