

**Counselling Implications of Effective Self-Directed Learning Among Undergraduate Students in Open and Distance Learning Universities****Les Implications Du Soutien Dans L'apprentissage En Autonomie Efficace Sur Les Etudiants Du Premier Cycle Des Universites Ouvertes De Formation A Distance****Dr Ezeribe, S.N**

Department of Educational Foundations

Faculty of Education

National Open University of Nigeria

Phone : 08039922196

Email: [ezeribeschola@gmail.com](mailto:ezeribeschola@gmail.com)**Abstract**

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*This paper discussed the counselling implications of effective self-directed learning (SDL) among undergraduate students in Open and Distance Learning (ODL) universities with particular reference to National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN). The work considered the meaning of ODL and SDL. ODL is seen as an alternative approach in higher education and leverages on ICT to deliver academic programmes. It viewed ODL as a programme that is mainly for mature students and that has opened the door for people from all walks of life to obtain a university degree. In Nigeria, NOUN is seen the only university established to serve only distance students and also the spring board of the Open and Distance Education (ODE). Self-directed Learning was seen as a central concept in the study and practice of adult education and the goal was found to be the development of the learner's capacity to be self-directed. The benefits of SDL were x-rayed. For instance, it was discovered that self-directed learners are motivated and persistent, independent, self-disciplined, self-confident and goal oriented. The meaning of counselling was not left out. The work also highlighted the counselling implications of effective SDL among undergraduate students in ODL Universities through the roles of counsellors in ODL universities. Examples are- Counsellors raise learners' awareness of their roles in learning, they are central to the process of helping students learn how to learn, plan their future success and cope with the challenges of studying and counsellors guide the students' transition from dependence to independence and interdependence in directing their own learning. Recommendations were made among which is that all Universities that run ODL programmes should employ counsellors to enhance effective SDL among its' undergraduate students. It was concluded that for there to be successful and effective SDL among undergraduate*

*students of ODL universities there must be Guidance and Counselling interventions.*

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**Key Words:** Self-Directed Learning, Open and Distance Learning, Counselling, NOUN

### **Résumé**

*Cet article a discuté les implications du soutien suivi dans l'apprentissage en autonome (AEA) efficace parmi les étudiants du premier cycle des universités ouvertes de formation à distance, en particulier à National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN). Le travail a examiné la signification de la FOAD et de l'AEA. La FOAD est considérée comme une approche alternative dans l'enseignement supérieur et elle tire parti des TICs pour dispenser des programmes académiques. La FOAD est considérée comme un programme qui s'adresse principalement aux étudiants adultes et qui a ouvert la porte aux personnes de tous les horizons qui désirent obtenir un diplôme universitaire. Au Nigeria, NOUN est considérée comme la seule université créée pour ne servir que les étudiants de formation à distance et aussi de tremplin pour la formation ouverte à distance (FOAD). L'apprentissage autodirigé était considéré comme un concept central dans l'étude et la pratique de l'éducation des adultes et l'objectif s'est avéré être le développement de la capacité de l'apprenant à être autodirigé. Les avantages de la FOAD ont été radiographiés. Par exemple, on a découvert que les apprenants autodirigés sont motivés et persévérants, indépendants, auto-disciplinés, confiants et orientés vers l'objectif. La signification du soutien n'a pas été laissé de côté. Les travaux ont également mis en évidence les implications du soutien d'un AEA efficace parmi les étudiants du premier cycle des universités virtuelles à travers le rôle des conseillers dans ces institutions. En voici quelques exemples : les conseillers sensibilisent les apprenants à leur rôle dans la formation, ils sont au cœur du processus pour aider les étudiants à apprendre à apprendre, à planifier leur réussite future et à relever les défis de l'étude et les conseillers guident la transition des étudiants de la dépendance à l'indépendance et à l'interdépendance dans la direction de leur propre apprentissage. Des recommandations ont été faites, parmi lesquelles, toutes les universités qui gèrent des programmes d'ODL devraient employer des conseillers pour améliorer l'efficacité de l'AEA chez leurs étudiants du premier cycle. On a conclu que pour qu'il y ait un AEA efficace et réussi chez les étudiants du premier cycle des universités virtuelles, il doit y avoir des interventions d'orientation et de soutien.*

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**Mots-clés :** apprentissage en autonomie, FOAD, soutien, NOUN

## Introduction

Education is the bedrock for sustainable development and the essence of education is learning. Learning in educational institutions can be teacher centered or learner centered. When it is teacher centered, the teacher controls the learning while the learner controls the learning in the learner centered learning. When the learning is learner centered, the learners tend to control what they learn, when they learn and how they learn. When this is the case, it is termed self-directed learning. Self-Directed Learning (SDL) considers learners as monitors of their own learning process. In SDL, the individual takes the initiative and the responsibility for what occurs in learning. Learners select, manage, and assess their own learning activities, which can be pursued at any time, in any place, through any means and at any age. According to Shahrouri (2016), Self-Directed Learning focuses on the process by which adults take control of their own learning, how they set their own learning goals, locate appropriate resources, decide on which learning methods to use and evaluate their progress.

The concept of Self-Directed Learning (SDL) has been investigated and discussed for many years globally by educators yet it is minimally practiced in Nigeria. The Nigerian education system is mainly teacher centered but with the advent of the open and distance education system, the self-directed learning came into practice.

In Nigeria, the emergence of distance education dates back to the days of external examinations organized by universities of Oxford, London and Cambridge. These universities provided opportunities for some Nigerians to acquire university education through correspondence. It is this correspondence education that has gradually metamorphosed into what we have today in our universities as open and distance education. Today many Nigerians all over the country who could not make it to the university as young people due to one issue or the other but desire to have university education now achieve their dreams through open and distance learning (ODL) and not through correspondence. While going through the open and distance learning, the learners still do whatever they are doing to earn a living and study at their own pace and time.

ODL students are usually adult learners, who are motivated to study. These learners bring experiences and maturity to their studies though they have poor study habits most of the times.

According to UNESCO (2002), open and distance learning represents approaches that focus on opening access to education and training provision freeing learners from the constraints of time and place and offering flexible learning opportunities to individuals and group of learners.

In Nigeria, the **National Open University of Nigeria** (NOUN) is a [federal Open and Distance Learning](#) (ODL) Institution, and Nigeria's largest [tertiary institution](#) in terms of student numbers.

ODL is basically adult education and largely student oriented. In ODL, there is minimal face to face contact between the teachers and students, the provider enables individual learners to take responsibility for what they learn, how quickly they learn, where they learn, who they turn to for help and, when and where to have their learning assessed.

Therefore, students who undertake distance learning are expected to engage in meaningful self- directed learning in order to excel since they have minimal face to face teaching and learning sessions unlike their counterparts in conventional universities.

Counselling according to Okoro and Odoemelam (2012). is seen as a process that focuses on helping the psychological well- being of the client, such that the client is able to reach his or her full potential through facilitating one's personal growth, development and self- understanding .this facilitation empowers the client to adopt more constructive life practices. It therefore means that through counselling, the learner can be facilitated to achieve prowess in the practice of SDL.

It is worthy to note that firstly SDL is not traditional to the Nigerian students. Our students are used to the teacher controlling the learning; which means that SDL as an unconventional way of study may not be effective among our ODL undergraduate students if they are not particularly motivated to appreciate, focus and continue in it though counselling interventions.

Secondly there is also need for counselling interventions due to the characteristic and peculiar ways in which both SDL&ODL operates and finally, little or no work has actually been done on SDL and Counselling in Nigeria.

Researches on SDL have focused on two main areas: (1) the verification of SDL among University students, and (2) descriptions of models for understanding SDL (Brockett, 2002 in Shahroui 2016).

Given the above, the researcher decided to examine the counselling implications of effective self-directed learning (SDL)among undergraduates in Open and Distance Learning (ODL) universities.

## **OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING**

Distance Open Learning (ODL) is considered nowadays as the most viable means for broadening educational access while improving the quality of

education, advocating peer-to-peer collaboration and giving the learners a greater sense of autonomy and responsibility for learning (Calvert, 2006).

Open and Distance Learning (ODL) is a mode of education where there is a lack of physical proximity between instructors and learners. It is a study away from the institution and the time for teaching and learning is separated.

However, open and distance learning has been defined variously by many scholars. For instance, ODL is defined as 'a general term for the use of telecommunication to provide or enhance learning'(Margaret 2005).

Similarly, Jegede (2016) defined ODL as 'a form of instruction by a mode other than face to face method where there is physical separation between the teacher and the learner and instruction takes place through a variety of media including print and modern ICT'.

Federal Government of Nigeria National Policy on Education sees Open and Distance Education as “the mode of education delivery; where learners and teachers need not be in physical contact; which possesses high range of flexible learning environment; that enhances access to tertiary education; that has the capacity to deliver variety of skills and which uses a variety of media and technologies to provide quality education for large number of learners” (National Policy on Education 2013:63).

It means therefore that as an alternative approach in higher education, ODL leverages on ICT to deliver academic programmes, thus creating an avenue for people to learn independently, anywhere and at any time.

The Open and distance Learning mode of instruction implies that there is no face to face lectures like in the conventional universities. Thus the students are required to do more reading on their own, to be more independent in learning, to be able to learn strategies and utilize higher materials of various levels and be more disciplined ( Odoemelam and Abaa2012).

In Open and Distance Learning(ODL)system, many students are adults most of whom are well over the age of 20. On the average, they are older than students in the conventional university, most of them have jobs and families and now add another dimension by going into part-time studies, a self -instructional mode within hopefully a virtual environment (Ipaye 2005). Most of ODL learners bring their experiences and maturity to their studies. Although ODL in general mainly caters for working adults, it has opened the door for people from all walks of life to obtain a university degree, either for career advancement, upgrading of qualifications or even for personal fulfillment.

It is important to know that a number of distance learners had broken contact with formal school education for a long time and now have a return to

education after a gap of so many years; this condition can be very challenging and requires motivation, dedication and strategizing in order to remain and conclude the programme. Other challenges encountered by ODL students include poor study habits, lack of access to facilities needed for self-directed learning like electricity, internet access, personal laptop etc and the wrong belief that those who went through distance education are not proper graduates hence damaging their self- esteem.

Open and Distance Learning is clouded with a lot of misconceptions which Koul (2005) attempted to correct. He explained that ODL is not a non-formal education, it is not extra mural education and it is not continuing education but it accommodates all of them

It should be noted that university distance education exists in two principal forms: as a single mode or dual mode. That single mode distance education universities are those solely devoted to distance education without any physical or face to face contacts with students. They deal with distance students only.

On the other hand, dual mode universities are those conventional universities that at some point commit to delivering distance education to some students who cannot or chose not to study in the conventional way. They are not generally established to serve only distance students.

Although it is not a university, it is worthy of note that the National Teachers' Institute (NTI) is the first independent institution dedicated solely to distance education. NTI was officially established in 1978 to upgrade unqualified teachers working in the nation's primary schools and to accelerate the preparation of qualified teachers needed for the implementation of the Universal Primary Education programme introduced in 1976 and the Universal Basic Education programme introduced in 1999.

Apart from the fact that there are many conventional universities in Nigeria, distance education still constitutes an integral part of most of these institution's educational offerings.

There are very few Universities in Nigeria that do not offer distance education.

A few of the many universities that offer open and distance education in Nigeria are:

- **Ahmadu Bello University**, which offers a special training programme called: "The Correspondence and Teachers' In-service Programmes (TISEP), established in 1976 to prepare middle level teachers for Nigeria's primary schools. Currently, the university has a center in charge of distance education is known as 'Distance Learning Centre (DLC).'

- **University of Lagos** runs distance education under the Distance Learning Institute, which was established in 1974 by the university to produce graduates in disciplines necessary to meet national labour needs.
- **University of Ibadan** has a Distance Learning Centre (DLC) which was established by its Senate in 1988 to offer distance education
- **The University of Abuja** established its Centre for Distance Learning and Continuing Education in 1992.
- After being closed for 16 years, The National Open University was re-opened in 2001 under a new name, the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN).
- **Obafemi Awolowo University** runs distance education under the Centre For Distance Learning which was established in 2002 by the Governing Council of university 'to facilitate the development and co-ordinate the delivery of degree and sub-degree programmes by the open and distance learning mode through the use of modern information and communication technologies'(www.oaucdl.edu.ng)
- **University of Nigeria Nsukka** also established and runs an ODL centre called 'Centre for Distance & e-learning (CDeL).

Apart from NOUN, all the other universities offering distance education in Nigeria practice dual mode of distance education.

In Nigeria, the federal government established the **National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN)** as a the fountain head as well as the spring board of the Open and Distance Education (ODE). It is the first of its kind in West African sub region. NOUN is Nigeria's largest tertiary institution in terms of students' numbers **(www.nouedu.net)** It is designed to increase access of all Nigerians to formal and non-formal education in a manner convenient to their circumstances.

The unique feature of National Open University of Nigeria is the single mode of operation as an Open and Distance Education institution which delivers instructions at a distance using a variety of media and technologies with the intension of providing and/or improving access to quality education for large number of learners wherever they may be. All the 36 States of the Federation plus the FCT have at least one study centre. Some local government areas already have community study centres in their local governments. NOUN has more than 75 study centres all over the nation.

From personal experience, the researcher discovered that in National Open University of Nigeria, study centres serve as the first contact point between the



students and the University. The study centres functionally co-ordinates the activities of the University within the local government area or state of abode. All support services including counselling services are rendered to the students at the study centres.

### **Self-Directed Learning**

There have been many different approaches of educational theories and models developed throughout the years, trying to find the best way to study self-directed learning. Some theories / models have focused more on studying the characteristics of the individual, while others have focused on developing “instruments,” trying to measure these characteristics.

This paper is based on the humanistic theory of learning which views learning as a personal act to fulfil one's potential. The key proponents of this theory are Carl Rogers, Abraham Maslow and Malcolm Knowles. They view human nature as basically good and accepting responsibility for one's own learning needs, wants and interests. The main assumption is that people act with intentionality and values. Knowles who is a major proponent of this theory believes that in self- directed learning, learners become increasingly self-directed as they mature. He explained that self-directed learning can be achieved through learning contracts. (Knowles 1975). The goal of SDL is the development of the learner's capacity to be self- directed.

Knowles (1975:18), defined Self-directed Learning as *“a process in which individuals take the initiative, with or without the help of others, to diagnose their learning needs, formulate learning goals, identify human and material resources for learning, choose and implement appropriate learning strategies, and evaluate learning outcomes”*.

One of the primary concerns in this definition of SDL is the fact the learner takes (1) the initiative to pursue a learning experience, and (2) the responsibility for completing their learning. Once the initiative is taken, the learner assumes complete responsibility and accountability for defining the learning experience and following it through to its conclusion. This does not preclude input from others, but the final decision is the learners. In other words, self-direction does not mean that the learner learns alone or in isolation. While, that may be the case in any given learning situation, the principal factor here, again is the fact the learner is driving the total learning experience, beginning with recognizing a need to learn. SDL according to him is mainly for adult learners. The now well-known principle of adult learning which Knowles presented is that as individuals mature, four important changes take place:



- o Their self-concepts move from one of being a dependent personality toward being a self-directed human being.
- o They accumulate a growing reservoir of experience that becomes an increasingly rich resource for learning.
- o Their readiness to learn becomes oriented increasingly to the developmental tasks of their social roles.
- o Their time perspective changes from one of postponed application of knowledge to immediacy of application, and accordingly, their orientation toward learning shifts from one of subject-centeredness to one of performance-centeredness.

Apart from Knowles, Garrison (1997) came up with his own model of SDL which included motivation as a core aspect of SDL. Garrison (1997) defines Self-directed Learning as 'a central concept in the study and practice of adult education, with three overlapping dimensions: Self-management, Self-monitoring and motivation'. Garrison's model of SDL believes that motivation is an important aspect of SDL unlike the other models that are limited to only self-management and self-monitoring. He recognizes the significant role of motivation in enhancing the learners' efforts. This SDL model attempts to integrate conceptual, cognitive and motivational dimension of the educational experience.

It is worthy to note that

- SDL recognizes the significant role of motivation and volition in initiating and maintaining learners efforts. Motivation drives the decision to participate, and volition sustains the will to see a task through to the end so that goals are achieved (Corno 1992; Garrison 1997).
- Motivation plays an important role at commencement and during implementation of a learning activity. The key to self-direction is motivating students to design and accomplish their own learning tasks. Motivation is very important in SDL in the sense that there is need for the students to be motivated before they take on the task of managing their own activities and continuing in it. Students often begin SDL activities with enthusiasm but when they hit the wall of responsibility, they become discouraged and disheartened. So there is need to teach SDL students to be motivated and stay motivated. (Ezeribe, 2018)
- In SDL, control shifts from teachers to learners. Learners exercise a great deal of independence in setting learning goals and deciding

worthwhile learning as well as how to approach the learning task within a given framework (Morrow, Sharkey & Firestone, 1993).

- SDL is ironically highly collaborative. Learners collaborate with teachers and peers in learning (Guthrie, Aloo & Reinhart, 1997)
- SDL develops domain-specific knowledge as well as the ability to transfer conceptual knowledge to new situations. It seeks to bridge the gap between school knowledge and real-world problems by considering how people learn in real life (Bolhuis, 1996).

The concept of Self-Directed Learning (SDL) is one which educators have investigated and discussed globally for many years though minimally used in Nigeria.

When students assume ownership of learning, they accept responsibility to figure out what they want to learn, what needs to be learned and how to manage their learning process so they result into positive outcomes. SDL recognizes that learners need to be taught how to develop skills in the effective use of learning strategies (Ezeribe, 2018).

SDL is very beneficial to the learner. The benefits of SDL are best described in terms of the type of learners it develops. Literature on SDL asserts that self-directed learners demonstrate a greater awareness of their responsibility in making meaningful and monitoring themselves (Garrison 1997). They are curious and willing to try new things (Hunt 1997), view problems as challenges, desire change and enjoy learning (Taylor, 1995). Taylor also found them to be motivated, and persistent, independent, self-disciplined, self-confident and goal oriented.

SDL allows learners to be more effective learners and social beings. Guthrie, Solomon and Rinehart (1996) noted that the self-directed learners in a Concept-Oriented Reading Instruction (CORI) program demonstrated the ability to search for information in multiple texts, employ different strategies to achieve goals and to represent ideas in different forms.

Morrow (1993) observed that with proper planning and implementation, SDL can encourage students to develop their own rules and leadership patterns.

As a means of better understanding the processes involved in this mode of study, there are four key stages to independent learning – being ready to learn, setting learning goals, engaging in the learning process, and evaluating learning (Hammond, & Collins, 1991).

The researcher believes that although SDL is being advocated for and supposed to be practiced in Nigerian ODL universities especially NOUN, the learners still find it difficult to assume ownership of learning and accept responsibility to figure out what they want to learn. The result of this is that learning becomes very difficult and ineffective. Most times attrition result from this ineffectiveness.

However, Self-directed learning can be challenging, even for the brightest and most motivated students especially in ODL institutions (Ezeribe 2018)

From the on- going according to Ezeribe 2018,when students assume ownership of learning, they accept responsibility to figure out what they want to learn, what needs to be learned and how to manage their learning process, they result into positive outcomes. This is where SDL in implicated in Guidance and counselling.

## **Counselling**

The term counselling has attracted a variety of definitions in the professional literature. For instance Counselling is defined as 'a relationship in which the counsellor and the client work co-operatively and collaboratively to find solution to problems. Counselling therefore means a help given to an individual or group of individuals who are in temporary distress by a professionally trained personnel in order to overcome distress. It is a special relationship aimed at assisting people to become more fully aware of themselves and to adjust to changes in their environment.'(Ekwe and Nwamuo 2008).

According to Okoro and Odoemelum (2012), Counselling as 'a process that focuses on enhancing the psychological well-being of the client, such that the client is able to reach his on her full potential. This is achieved by the counsellor facilitating one's personal growth, development and self-understanding which in turn empowers one to adopt more constructive life practices.

Counselling is also seen as ' the application of mental health, psychological or human development principles, through cognitive, affective behavioural or systematic interventions, strategies that address wellness, personal growth or career development as well as pathology'(<http://counseling.org>)

From the above definitions, it is observed that a common dominator in all of them is the following parts—The counsellor, the client/clients and the problem under attention.

Counselling deals with wellness, personal growth, career, and pathological concerns. It is a process that may be developmental or intervening. The

counselling relationship can be entered individually or in group. During the counselling relationship, the counsellor creates a conducive atmosphere characterized by mutual trust and understanding. He not only goes into the counselling relationship with his accumulated resources of experience and training but also with the professional skills of listening, congruence, observation, empathy and understanding.

Acquiring essential self-knowledge and learning to be self-directed are important and desirable goals for all students and should be a focus for the work of all school counselors. Through interactions with the counseling program, all students are encouraged to identify their own life directions, make academic choices consistent with these directions

The Counsellor offers guidance services in groups. Guidance is an umbrella term that covers all the means whereby an institution identifies and responds to the individual needs of students no matter the nature of the need and no matter its' source thereby helping the client to develop to his maximum potential (Ipaye 1993). Guidance and Counselling therefore 'is a service that helps an individual to have adequate understanding of himself, his environment and adequate clarification of goals and values which in turn assists him to make realistic decisions, choices and plans for future behaviours (Ezeribe 2012).

Counselling is for all ages including the adult learners. There are three broad areas of counselling namely- academic, vocational and personal social counselling. In this paper, what we are concerned with is the academic and personal social counselling.

Generally speaking, Counselling is helpful in enabling students to develop a clearer understanding of their concerns and helps them acquire new skills to better manage personal, career and educational issues. The counsellor can also offer a different perspective and help one think of creative solutions to problems which hitherto seemed insurmountable.

### **Counselling Implications in effective SDL among ODL students**

Guidance in Open and Distance Learning involves a range of processes aimed at helping individuals become more self-reliant and more able to manage their own personal, educational, and vocational development (Okopi 2010). The task of a counsellor in the National Open University of Nigeria is to provide guidance services to distance learners.

Findings have indicated that failure to address unmet needs is likely to lead to unsatisfactory learning experiences, reduced achievements and perhaps attrition (Okopi 2010)

The main aim of guidance and counselling in the ODL Universities especially

NOUN is to track a potential student from the point of first inquiry through graduation and often for life time, plan intervention strategies and assist him/her to happily go through both academic and psychosocial obstacles that will militate against his or her successful completion of his/ her studies. Counselling in the University is based on individual or group counselling. Counselling is also helpful in a number of ways in ensuring effective self-directed learning among ODL students because self-directed learning can be challenging and tasking.

Counselling is also implicated in SDL among the ODL students through the roles they play. .For instance

- They inform students or learners what it means to be self-directed and why it is important to their learning and success in school and life.
- acquiring essential self - knowledge and learning to be self-directed are important and desirable goal for all students and should be the focus of the counselling in ODL universities
- They raise learners awareness of their roles in learning.
- Counsellors are central to the process of helping students learn how to learn, plan their future success and cope with the challenges of studying.
- The ability of adults to learn how to learn - to become skilled at learning in a range of different situations and through a range of different styles - has often been proposed as an overarching purpose for those counsellors who work with adults.
- Owing to the fact that motivation is a key component in of SDL, Counsellors motivate self-directed learners through various means at the commencement of their studies and during implementation of their learning activities. Motivation is needed in SDL among ODL students so they don't get frustrated and drop out of school.
- The counsellors guide the students transition from dependence to independence and interdependence in directing their own learning.
- Counsellors help students develop strategies and skills that enable them become lifelong learners.
- Encourages collaborative learning-- Here the counsellor helps to guide students to form and use peer study groups.
- Through interactions with the counsellors, students are encouraged to identify their own life directions and make academic choices consistent with these directions.

- Helps them implement and monitor their learning plans
- Monitors their academic progress through checking their cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) from time to time and counsel them accordingly.
- It is also the duty of the counsellor to ascertain the ability of their students for SDL and adjust their approaches to assisting them.
- The counsellors remain available to guide student in making meaningful and realistic choices upon request from students or when counsellors perceive that a student is struggling with finding direction that needs their(counsellors) attention or help.

(Ezeribe,2018)

In addition to the above, from the researcher point of view and experience as a counsellor working in NOUN, counselling is also implicated in that

- o Counselling intervention is necessary for the student to learn the ability to self- direct and become proficient self -directed learners because this ability develops in a social context and no one is born into this world with the ability to self- direct. It is a learned trait.
- o Counsellors encourage and nurture the process leading to mastery of SDL process in ODL universities.
- o In Self-Directed Learning, Counsellors organize guidance talks on self –monitoring, self -evaluation, time management, and effective study skills for the students/learners.
- o Counsellors raise the self-esteem of ODL students and make them believe in themselves since people usually look down on their mode of study through cognitive restructuring.
- o Counselling offers referral service when there is need to do so among the learners.

The above roles should make it imperative for ODL universities to employ Counsellors to help its undergraduate students achieve effective self-directed learning and pass through the institution with success. In NOUN, counsellors are employed to fulfil the above-mentioned obligations.

## Summary

This work examined the counselling implications effective self-directed learning (SDL) among undergraduate students in Open and Distance Learning universities with particular reference to National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN).

The meanings of ODL and SDL were highlighted and seen in line and operate with each other. Two models of SDL were highlighted.. In Nigeria, NOUN is the fountain head as well as the spring board of the Open and Distance Education (ODE). It was noted the peculiarities of both ODL and SDL makes it imperative for the students to receive counselling interventions. The meaning of counselling was explained and counselling for effective SDL among ODL students was seen to be implicated in the roles counsellors perform.

### **Conclusion**

It is evident that the meanings of ODL and SDL are in line and operate with each other and that the peculiarities of the two concepts makes it imperative for students to receive counselling interventions. Given the importance of counselling for effective SDL among ODL students which are implicated in the counsellors' roles, it is therefore concluded that in order to achieve successful and effective SDL among undergraduate students of ODL universities there must be Guidance and Counselling interventions.

### **Recommendations**

In view of the implications of counselling in self-directed learning among Open and Distance Education students, the following recommendations are hereby made.

- All Universities that run ODL programmes should employ counsellors to enhance effective SDL among its undergraduate students.
- All our ODL Universities who have counsellors especially National Open University of Nigeria should re-orientate their Counsellors to see the need to ensure effective SDL among their undergraduate students.
- The counsellors should also be trained properly in the principle and practice of SDL in order to make their existence in ODL universities more worthwhile and more useful to the students.
- The number of counsellors in NOUN should be increased in order to contain the large population of students in the university.



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