

Article

Feedback Support in Open Distance e-Learning Higher Institution: Students' Analysis of Benefits and Challenges

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Received: Apr 24, 2025; Revised: May 30, 2025; Accepted: May 30, 2025; Published: Jun 30, 2026

Abstract: This study was motivated by the increased in the reliance on Open-Distance Learning (ODL) institutions as an alternative to face-to-face learning. Many students are engaging in ODL, so there is a need to assess students' responses about experiences, benefits, and challenges. For the study, a quantitative research approach used among undergraduate students pursuing varying bachelor's degrees in an ODL institution. There were 384 responses to the online survey, and the result was analysed using a descriptive and inferential data analysis. The findings revealed that students perceived feedback to be beneficial to their studies, especially in support of navigating the Learning Management System (LMS), helping with coursework, and navigating academic material online, including books and journals. However, some students were dissatisfied with the feedback received during the administration and preparation of examinations. Most of the challenges have to do with the attitude of staff in providing timely feedback. We discuss implications for ODL institutions.

Keywords: Feedback support, Open distance learning, Higher institution, ODL students, Experiences, Challenges

1. Introduction

Distance learning has emerged as an important form of education for both basic and higher education institutions during the COVID-19 pandemic. Most students were actively engaged and motivated through online learning using computers and internet services. Open Distance eLearning (ODEL) as an internet-based education where students and tutors interact through technology. It provides the opportunity for individuals who missed out of the formal education as second chance to obtain postsecondary qualifications, ranging from certificates to postgraduate degrees. The success and sustainability of this educational institution is highly influenced by schedule flexibility, accessibility, varied courses, availability and accessibility of course material and opportunity to build valuable skills (Parsad et al., 2008; Susilani & Pribadi, 2021). We contend that students in the ODeL system can engaged effectively in teaching and learning with high communication between students and tutors through feedback. Receiving feedback has been fundamental prerequisite tool for reflection, teaching and learning and assessment (Chokwe, 2022).

Feedback is defines as communication between a tutor and students that provides information regarding performance or understanding to be employed in the learning process, which can be verbal or written (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). We employed the broad definition of feedback that impacts and links directly with students' performance and discourages dropouts. Some of the specific feedback includes instruction for student registration, locating academic materials, tutors' comments, and questions that directly impact the student's academic work and shape the student's tone and argument (Hyland, 2003). This means that feedback allows the student to manage their learning to achieve success because it provides them with the possibility and willpower to learn even with less supervision (Zeiser et al., 2018).

Theoretically, feedback provides benefits as the online learning program that can be used to share knowledge and skills (Norman, 2016). However, providing feedback to learners can also be a challenge and hinder student's learning process. A concern about how the teachers and students manage their experience and challenges in giving feedback amidst the huge number of students through various educational and technological platforms became a consideration. This article aims to elaborate on the constructive use of feedback to open distance learning institutions and students who enrolled in these institutions. Since the establishment of the University of South Africa as an ODL institution, it is proper to continue to explore feedback mechanisms that enhance the learning environment for students. This article elaborates on the benefits and challenges faced by undergraduate students in various colleges and programmes of the University of South Africa. The following research questions were answered: How do students perceive the

benefits of feedback in their learning in an ODeL Institution? What challenges do students face when receiving feedback from lecturers and assessing the ODeL Institution?

2. Research Hypotheses

1. There is a significant relationship between students' sex and their perception of the benefits of feedback in open distance learning.
2. There is a significant relationship between students' marital status and their perception of the benefits of feedback in open distance learning.
3. There is a significant relationship between students' age and their perception of the benefits of feedback in open distance learning.
4. There is a significant relationship between students' college affiliation and their perception of the benefits of feedback in open distance learning.
5. There is a significant relationship between students' sex and their perception of the challenges of feedback in open distance learning.
6. There is a significant relationship between students' marital status and their perception of the challenges of feedback in open distance learning.
7. There is a significant relationship between students' age and their perception of the challenges of feedback in open distance learning.
8. There is a significant relationship between students' college affiliation and their perception of challenges of feedback in open distance learning.

3. Literature Review

As important as feedback is in the ODeL system, the response of students to the feedback is a determinant of its effectiveness since it is a two-way process. Students respond in a variety of ways to feedback from their lecturers: while some use the feedback strategically, others are more concerned with the marks awarded and do not read through the comments provided. A study by Kreonidou and Kazamia (2019) revealed that most students respond positively to feedback by paying attention to the content and applying it strategically to benefit from it in future situations. Segoe (2013), however, sees that in some instances, lecturers do not give feedback on students' assignments, or that when they do, it is late and arrives after the students have written their examination. In such cases, students do not get the opportunity to utilise the feedback, which is useless to them.

However, Yuan and Kim (2014) postulate that the progressive interaction between lecturers and students is most important for the success of the student. Such interactions effectively reduce the incidence of students dropping out, improve students' performance, and encourage students to participate actively and gain knowledge (Yuan & Kim, 2014). Online interaction becomes more progressive and successful when the course contents are well structured and instructors are well prepared to produce both informative and motivational outcomes (Sun & Chen, 2016; Tricomi & Depasque, 2016). In online learning, the use of feedback consists of exchanging information for activities within the learned course by the instructor and student (Thurmond & Wambach, 2004).

Timely feedback is crucial for student growth and performance improvement as it ensures that the feedback is provided promptly enough to be useful and impactful (Bailey & Garner, 2010; Costello & Crane, 2010; Evans, 2013; Glover & Brown, 2006; Rodway-Dyer et al., 2010).

In order for feedback in the ODeL system to achieve any benefit, communication in the form of discussion between students and lecturers of the outcomes of assessment is very important. It is, therefore, crucial for students to engage with their lecturers to seek clarification and raise their concerns. Research shows that students tend not to engage with their lecturers about feedback (Kreonidou & Kazamia, 2019). However, those students who engaged in communication did so when they were dissatisfied with their marks, not to discuss their performance and ways to improve it. This study bore out the results of an earlier study suggesting that the majority of students do not seek extra clarification from their lecturers (Black & McCormick, 2010). Segoe (2013) points out that communication is usually a one-way process, and this is because teachers do not give students enough time to go through the course content with them. The lecturers, thus, do not create a conducive environment for a two-way feedback system. Hence, this study aims to ascertain the students' lived experiences and challenges of feedback support in an open-distance e-learning Institution.

Feedback among some university students and academics has been of great advantage to the process of teaching and learning. In fact, some university administrators see feedback as a tool to advance learning processes (Ahea, Ahea & Rahman, 2016). Some researchers report that the advantages of feedback in some higher institutions include; it increases the preliminary guidance of the

learners and academics during the process of teaching and learning; It also serves as supplementary support for the learner and the academics during the process of teaching and learning; It facilitates ongoing clarification among the students; students prior experiences of assessments, feedback on performance/ achievement (Hounsell, McCune, Hounsell, & Litjens, 2008; Cohen & Singh, 2020).

Furthermore, some researchers report that the roles attributed to feedback fall broadly into five, but not entirely delineated discrete, categories: correction, reinforcement, forensic diagnosis, benchmarking, and longitudinal two, Assessment in higher education requires performances that are multi-dimensional, three, Feedback in higher education must be concerned with developing new ways of knowing (Lea & Street, 1998) and, increasingly, the popular view is that feedback must explicitly address future activity, that is, feed-forward rather than feed backward (Price et al., 2010). The purpose of feedback is the purpose of feedback among and between staff and students. Beliefs around purpose ranged from correction to longitudinal development in both staff and student groups, but for staff, other imperatives influenced their approach to feedback. So, they acknowledged that feedback provided a 'yardstick of performance (Price et al., 2010). In addition to this, some forms of feedback are in-class feedback in lectures, tutorials feedback, peer assessment feedback, feedback tasks, and feedback on individual and group assessment activities) University-administered student evaluation forms only incorporated a single question on feedback, which inquires whether a student found the feedback to be effective (Aoun, Vatanasakdakul & Ang, 2018).

3.1. The Challenges that Contribute to The Facilitation of The Process of Feedback

Staff often mentioned university policy as a constraint that restricted the types of feedback and assessment practices that could be implemented in a course. For example, when discussing potential alterations to their course assessment, one teacher: Another challenge frequently cited by staff was a perceived lack of time to implement feedback and assessment processes; the third challenge, also raised by staff, was a perceived lack of student engagement with feedback. Staff were concerned that some students were 'not really engaged' during classes and did not take feedback 'seriously' as they 'just want[ed] to see the grade' (Staff, courses 1 and 3). One teacher, when discussing how their students were not engaging with the feedback; Some groups were able to move beyond a constraints-based approach and engage in more productive conversations about enhancing feedback and assessment in higher education contexts. In these conversations, some groups entered into complex, dialogic exchanges that drew on the diverse perspectives and expertise of students and teaching; Some groups pondered the question of how they could construct feedback that would be meaningful for students. As part of this line of inquiry, some groups established a more expansive view of feedback as something more than. Once the groups discussed what constituted meaningful feedback, they shifted their attention to the impact of feedback. Specifically, a topic raised by students in multiple groups was the idea that feedback can be highly emotional for students, and, therefore, staff should ensure that feedback is provided appropriately and in a safe learning environment. For example, 'gentle' methods of feedback interactions, including peer-to-peer and group feedback, would help to create a positive (Matthews et al., 2024). Furthermore, Nicol, Thomson & Breslin (2014) argued that the students are often reliable and understandable compared to the form of feedback released by the lecturer due to the level and forms of presentation using an accessible language.

4. Methodology

Methodology is a section in a research study that usually provides response to questions such as why, what, which, where and who. Therefore, the section discussed how the study response to the questions using different subtitled as itemised below.

4.1. Research Approach

This study was aimed at investigating the feedback experience and challenges been received by students in an Open and Distance Learning (ODL) institution. The research adopted a quantitative approach with the use of a descriptive research design. This approach was adopted to reach out to a wide range of participants in the institution.

4.2. Research Instrument

Since the study was situated in an ODL institution, a web based online survey, which was designed titled "Teaching and learning through feedback in an open distance learning" on Microsoft form was used as an instrument for data collection. After obtaining ethical clearance from the ethics committee of the institution, the link to the online survey was posted directly to the participants by the ICT department of the institution. The instrument was designed to ensure total anonymity of the students that participated in the study. The implementation of the web-based data collection method was appropriate because the study participants were distance education students (Keusch, 2015; Akintolu, Mitwally & Letseka, 2024).

4.3. Participants and Sampling

Distance learning-based students in an ODL institution in South Africa served as the participants for this study. According to Kandace (2010), a sample is a portion of the population that is used by a researcher to represent the whole population under study. In the current study, Krejcie and Morgan’s (1970) survey sample size calculation was used to determine the sample size for this study. Three hundred and eighty four (384) students were sampled from the total population of students at an ODeL university.

Validity and Reliability measure was done with expert and ethical considerations were considered by obtaining permission from the ethics committees of the University with ethics reference number 2022/05/11/90474988/27/AM.

4.4. Reliability Scale

Table 1. Reliability Index of the Instrument.

Variables	Number of Items	Cronbach’s Alpha Value
Benefits	6	0.861
Challenges	6	0.843

Table 1 presents the reliability index of the benefits and challenges of feedback scales. The benefits scale has good reliability, with a Cronbach’s alpha value of 0.861, indicating high internal consistency among the items. One item was removed from the initial seven items in the benefits scale and this improved the reliability index from 0.854 to 0.861. The challenges dimension also exhibits good reliability, with a Cronbach’s alpha value of 0.843, indicating high internal consistency among the items. By implication, the research instrument shows good reliability across different dimensions, as indicated by high Cronbach’s alpha values. This suggests that the items within each dimension are measuring the intended constructs consistently and reliably.

4.5. Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics such as percentages and frequency counts were used to analyse the data collected. The data obtained from the online survey were presented in the following section (Table 2).

Table 2. Questionnaire Response Rate.

Questionnaire Response Rate	
Number of questionnaires administered	384
Number returned	384
Percentage number of return	100.0%

5. Data Presentation

The study analyzed the benefits and challenges of lecturers to students’ feedback in an ODeL institution. Three hundred and eighty-four (384) copies of the questionnaire were administered to participants who are distance learning-based students in an ODeL institution. This section presents the analysis of the data collected from the field, the first part presents the demography analyses of the participants while the second part presented the descriptive and inferential analyses of the research questions.

5.1. Demographic Analyses

The demographic characteristics examined in this study entails gender, age, marital status and college of the participants. The demographic characteristics of participants is presented below (Table 3).

Table 3. Respondents by gender n = 384.

Gender	Frequency	Percentage %
Male	106	27.7
Female	276	72.1
Preferred not to say	2	0.3
Total	384	100.0

The analysis of participants' gender in Table 2 and Figure 1 provided insights into the composition of students in an ODeL institution. The study reveals that 72.1% of the participants were females, while 27.7% were males and 0.3% were indifferent. This finding suggests a predominance of female students in an ODeL Institution in South Africa. It is crucial to remember that this finding solely pertains to the current study and might not accurately represent the gender distribution of students in ODeL institution as a whole.

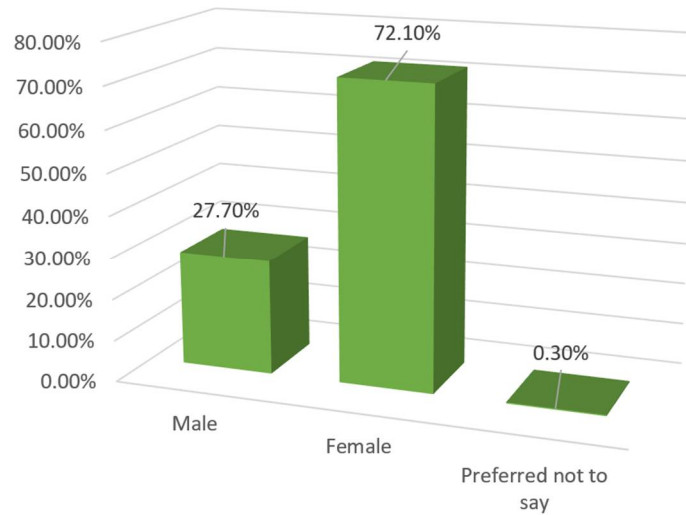


Fig. 1. Respondents by gender, n = 384.

Table 4. Respondents by age n = 384.

Age	Frequency	Percentage %
16-21 years	8	2.1
22-30 years	224	58.3
31-40 years	96	25.0
41-50 years	42	10.9
51-60 years	13	3.4
61 years and above	1	.3
Total	380	100.0%

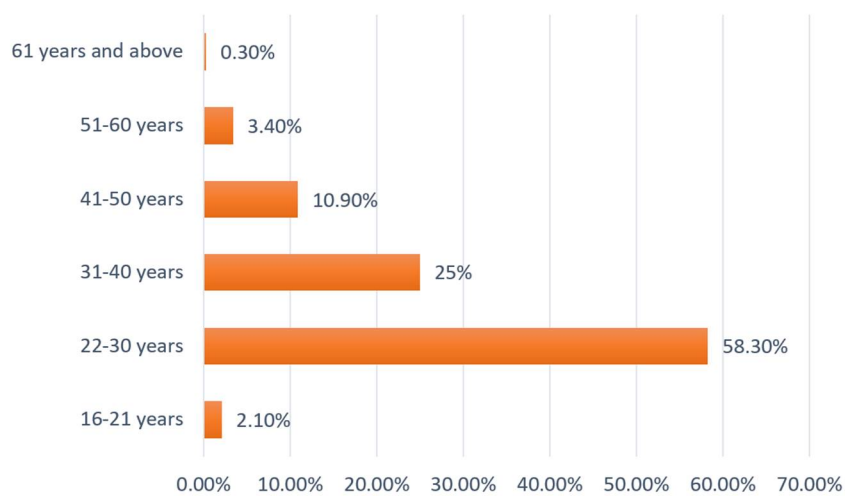


Fig. 2. Respondents by age, n = 384.

The age distribution of the participants in Table 4 and Figure 2 indicates that the majority, constituting 53.3%, were within the age group of 22-30 years and 83.3% were within the age of 22-40 years. This indicates a relatively young student in an ODeL Institution in South Africa. The ODeL programs may be especially appealing to young people pursuing higher education, based on the age distribution of the student body. Furthermore, the ODeL institution may benefit from tailoring marketing and program offerings to resonate with the needs and preferences of younger learners, based on this finding.

Table 5. Respondents by marital status, n = 384.

Marital status	Frequency	Percentage %
Single	314	81.8
Married	63	16.4
Divorce	5	1.3
Separated	1	0.3
Widowed	1	0.3
Total	384	100.0

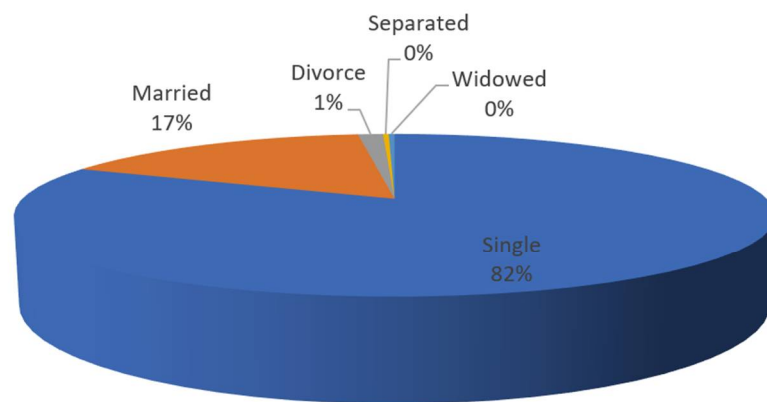


Fig. 3. Respondents by marital status, n = 384.

The study found that 81.8% of respondents were single, with singles (16.4%), divorced (1.3%), separated (0.3%), and widowed (0.3%) having the highest marital status. The prevalence of single implies that most students attending ODeL institutions may have more schedule flexibility and could gain from receiving feedback in a variety of forms, including as interactive, asynchronous, and digital. Married people, however, might need more regimented and timely feedback because of possible family obligations.

Table 6. Respondents by college, n = 384.

College	Frequency	Percentage %
Economics and management	80	20.8
Education	105	27.3
Human science	62	16.1
Law	93	24.2
Science	44	11.5
Total	384	100.0

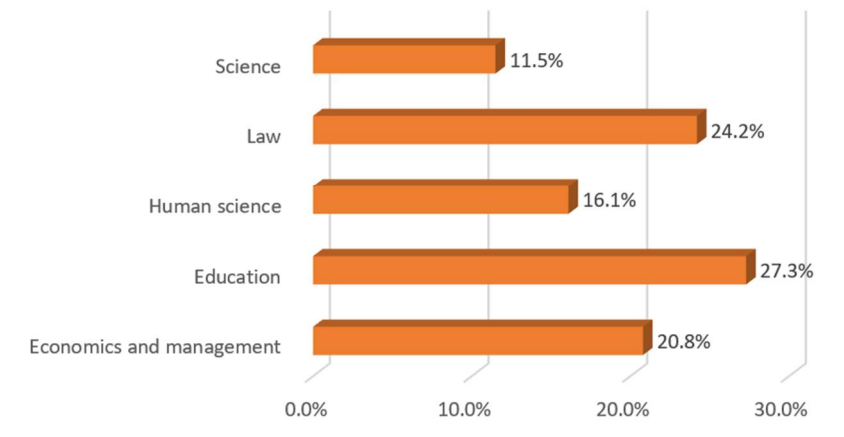


Fig. 4. Respondents by college, n = 384.

Table 6 shows that the highest percentage of respondents are from the College of Education (27.3%) and the College of Law (24.2%) followed by the College of Economics and Management (20.8%) and the College of Human Sciences (16.1%) while the College of Science (11.5%) has the smallest representation. By implication, the high number of students in Education and Law indicates could receive more resources for feedback processes.

5.2. Research Questions

Data collected on the variables were analysed with both descriptive and inferential statistics.

The study examined the benefits and challenges that students face while receiving feedback in an ODeL institution. The questionnaire was distributed in 384 (three hundred and eighty-four) copies to the ODeL students. The outcome was a response rate of 100.0%. The instrument's dependability index was within the range of 0.822 to 0.844. The data in the study were analysed using the frequency, percentage and chi-square test of independence. The null hypothesis that two or more category variables are independent of one another is statistically tested using the chi-square test of independence. The alternate theory is that there are some sort of relationships between the category variables. For computational simplicity, only two-way chi-square tests of independence were employed in this work.

Research Question 1: How do students perceive the benefits of feedback in their learning in an ODeL Institution?

Table 7. Benefits of Feedback in an ODeL Institution.

Benefits	Very High Benefit Freq. (%)	High Benefit Freq. (%)	Overall Positive	Low Benefit Freq. (%)	Very Low Benefit Freq. (%)	Overall Negative	Neutral Freq. (%)
Help to navigate the Learning Management System (Moodle/MyUnisa)	137(35.7)	187(48.7)	84.4%	23(6.0)	7(1.8)	7.8%	30(7.8)
Help with coursework/assignment	142(37.0)	177(46.1)	83.1%	25(6.5)	8(2.1)	8.6%	32(8.3)
Search for academic materials/textbooks	122(31.8)	190(49.5)	81.3%	24(6.3)	14(3.6)	9.9%	34(8.9)
Online videos/e-journals/e-book	108(28.1)	193(50.3)	78.4%	25(6.5)	12(3.1)	9.6%	46(12.0)
Help with administration issues	101(26.3)	176(45.8)	72.1%	34(8.9)	20(8.2)	17.1%	53(13.8)
Help in preparation for and during examinations	148(4.9)	180(46.9)	51.8%	31(8.1)	6(1.6)	9.7%	19(4.9)

The result on the benefits of feedback in an ODeL institution is presented in Table 7. The construct, and benefits of feedback, were measured using six indicators namely preparation for and during examinations, navigate the learning management system, coursework/assignment, search for academic materials/textbooks, online videos/e-journals/e-book and administration help. The result of Table 4 revealed that the students in the ODeL program generally perceive feedback to be very beneficial in various areas

pertaining to their study (Overall Percentage = 75.18%). Specifically, the majority of students in the ODeL program perceive feedback in navigating the LMS to be most beneficial (84.4%). This implies strong satisfaction with the support provided for LMS navigation. This is followed by a whopping proportion of 83.1% who also find feedback related to coursework and assignments as highly helpful. This suggest that continuous and effective feedback facilitates students' academic performance in the ODeL program. Further analysis showed that the 81.3% of the of students in the ODeL program find feedback on searching for academic materials and textbooks to be highly beneficial. This means that guiding the students while searching for academic materials is crucial in helping students in their studies. Nonetheless, 78.4% and 72.1% of the students consider feedback on accessing online videos, e-journals, and e-books, and administrative issues to be beneficial. This suggests that feedback on information resources search and administrative support are important areas where feedback can improve the student experience, even though they may not be as impactful as the earlier top three academic-related feedbacks. Feedback on preparation for and during examinations (51.8%) was considered the least beneficial among the participants While over half of the respondents find this area less beneficial, enhancing this area could further support students' success during exams. The institution may need to address these variations in benefits to ensure consistent and helpful feedback.

Research Question 2: What challenges do students face in receiving feedback from lecturers in an ODeL Institution?

Table 8. Feedback challenges encountered by students in an ODeL Institution.

Challenges	Strongly Agree Freq. (%)	Agree Freq. (%)	Overall Agree	Disagree Freq. (%)	Strongly Disagree Freq. (%)	Overall Disagree	Neutral Freq. (%)
Limited access to the lecturers	90(23.4)	152(39.6)	63.0%	70(18.2)	24(6.3)	24.5%	48(12.5)
Inadequate skill of the lecturer to give feedback	50(30.0)	93(24.2)	54.2%	144(37.5)	31(8.1)	45.6%	66(17.2)
The low response rate from the lecturer	74(19.3)	128(33.3)	53.0%	101(26.3)	24(6.3)	32.6%	57(14.8)
Need to change the mode of communication for effective feedback from the lecturer	75(19.3)	118(30.7)	50.0%	116(30.2)	23(6.0)	36.2%	52(13.5)
Inadequate information from the lecturer	48(12.5)	108(28.1)	40.6%	133(34.6)	35(9.1)	43.7%	60(15.6)
Current platform for feedback is not effective	55(14.3)	91(23.7)	38.0%	123(32.0)	43(11.2)	43.2%	72(18.8)
Overall			75.18%			10.45%	

The result on the challenges of feedback in an ODeL institution is presented in Table 8. The result revealed that most students (75.18%, Overall Agree) in the ODeL program generally perceive that are several challenges in receiving feedback from lecturers to students. Top on the list of challenges is limited access to lecturers (63.0%, Overall Agree), implying that the students face some level of difficulty in reaching out to lecturers for feedback, which is detrimental to their learning experience. This challenge is followed by the inadequate skill of the lecturer to give feedback (54.2%, Overall Agree), implying a need for professional development for lecturers to improve their feedback skills. The third emerged challenge is on that the students are not receiving timely feedback from their lecturers (53.0%, Overall Agree), a situation which could affect their academic progress. Next, the mode of communication for in delivering effective feedback also posed a challenge, although not as significant the earlier challenges. This could imply exploring alternative methods for feedback as the current communication methods might be insufficient to meet the feedback needs of the students. However, few students perceived inadequate information (40.6%, Overall Agree) and current platform effectiveness (38.0% Overall Agree) as challenges to feedback. This shows that current platform effectiveness and inadequate information from lecturers ae not as pressing as the other issues regarding feedback in ODeL institution.

5.3. Research Hypotheses

Data collected on the relationship between students' demography and their perception of the benefits and challenges of feedback in open distance learning were analysed with the Chi-square test of association.

Table 9. Assessing Association between Students Demography and Benefits of feedback in Open Distance Learning with P values from Chi-square Test.

	Benefits
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(n = 384)					
Independent Variables	Category	Low	Moderate	High	Chi-square (P value)
Gender	Male	6 (5.7)	44 (41.5)	56 (52.8%)	0.624
	Female	9 (3.3)	124 (44.9)	143 (51.8%)	
	Prefer not to say	0	1 (100.0)	0	
Age	16-20 years	1 (12.5)	0	7 (87.5)	0.062
	21-30 years	6 (2.7)	99 (44.2)	119 (53.1)	
	31-40 years	4 (4.2%)	43 (44.8%)	49 (51.3%)	
	41 -50 years	4 (9.5%)	23 (54.8%)	15 (35.7%)	
	51-60 years	0	4 (30.8%)	9 (69.2%)	
	61 years and above	0	1 (100.0%)	0	
Marital Status	Single	8 (2.5)	132(42.0)	174(55.4)	0.022
	Married	7(11.1)	33(52.4)	23(36.5)	
	Divorced	0	3(60.0%)	2(40.0%)	
	Separated	0	1(100.0)	0	
	Widow	0	1(100.0)	0	
College	Economics and management	3(3.8)	33(41.3)	44(55.0)	0.239
	Education	5(4.8)	49(46.7)	51(48.6)	
	Human science	1(1.6)	29(46.8)	32(51.6)	
	Law	1(1.1)	41(44.1)	51(54.8)	
	Science	5(11.4)	18(40.9)	21(47.7)	

***p value < 0.01, **p value < 0.05, *p value < 0.1

The result of Table 9 shows that there is no significant association between gender and perceived benefits of feedback ($p > 0.05$). This means that gender has no significant influence on how students perceive feedback. The association between age and perceived benefits of feedback is not statistically significant at the 0.05 level, but it is close to significance ($p < 0.1$). Although the association is not statistically significant, the trend suggests younger students (16-20 years) and older students (51-60 years) may perceive higher benefits. There is a significant association between marital status and perceived benefits of feedback ($p < 0.05$). Single individuals tend to perceive feedback as more beneficial compared to married students. There is no significant association between college and perceived benefits of feedback ($p > 0.05$). This suggests that gender does not significantly influence how students perceive the benefits of feedback. Since the college affiliation does not significantly impact the perceived benefits, feedback strategies can be applied broadly across different faculties without major adjustments. On students' gender, males (52.8%) reported a high level of feedback benefits more than their female (51.8%) and those who were indifferent (0%). The feedback benefits were highly perceived among older students, 51-60 years (69.2%), and the youngest group, 16-20 years (87.5%). Single students had a higher proportion (27.8%) of 'high benefits' compared to other marital groups. For college, economics and management students had the highest percentage of high benefits (55.0%) compared to law (54.8%), education (48.6%), human science (51.6%) and science (47.7%) students. Based on these results, hypotheses one, three and four were rejected while hypothesis two was not rejected.

Table 10. Assessing Association between Students Demography and challenges of feedback in open distance learning with P values from Chi-square Test.

Challenge (n = 384)					
Independent Variables	Category	Low	Moderate	High	P value
Gender	Male	19(17.9)	60(56.6)	27(25.5)	0.869
	Female	54(19.6)	161(58.3)	61(22.1)	
	Prefer not to say	0	1	0	
Age	16-20 years	4(50.0)	2(25.0)	2(25.0)	0.138
	21-30 years	33(14.7)	137(61.2)	54(24.1)	
	31-40 years	22(22.9)	55(57.3)	19(19.8)	
	41 -50 years	10(23.8)	22(52.4)	10(23.4)	
	51-60 years	4(30.8)	7(53.8)	2(15.4)	

	61 years and above	0	0	1	
Marital Status	Single	57(18.2)	186(59.2)	71(22.6)	0.248
	Married	14(22.2)	33(52.4)	16(25.4)	
	Divorced	1(20.0)	4(80.0)	0	
	Separated	0	0	1	
	Widow	1	0	0	
College	Economics and management	13(16.3)	43(53.8)	24(30.0)	0.215
	Education	14(13.3)	70(66.7)	21(20.0)	
	Human science	16(25.8)	31(50.0)	15(24.2)	
	Law	21(22.6)	56(60.2)	16(17.2)	
	Science	9(20.5)	23(52.3)	12(27.3)	

***p value < 0.01, **p value < 0.05, *p value < 0.1

The link between students' demography and perceived challenges of feedback is presented in Table 10. The result showed that gender does not significantly influence students' perception of challenges in receiving feedback ($p > 0.05$). On students' gender, 25.5% of the male students reported a high level of feedback challenges while their female counterparts indicated 22.1%. This implies the students faced similar challenges regardless of their gender. There is no significant association between age group and perceived feedback challenges ($p > 0.05$). While there is no statistically significant association, the trend indicates that younger students (16-20 years) and older students (51-60 years) report varying levels of challenges. This suggests that age is not a significant predictor of feedback challenges among the students. Marital status has no association with students' perception of challenges in receiving feedback ($p > 0.05$). The lack of significant association implies that feedback challenges are not significantly influenced by marital status. The absence of significant association across different colleges ($p > 0.05$) suggests that feedback challenges are fairly uniform across disciplines. Therefore, a universal approach to improving feedback systems may be effective.

6. Discussion

Feedback provides benefits to some universities students not only to facilitate the process of teaching and learning resulting in better results (Ahea, Ahea & Rahman, 2016). This study shows that a constructive feedback or instructions given by lecturers provides a comprehensive knowledge and guides to facilitate the entire academic process. The result indicates that through feedback most students were guided through preparations, acquisition and use of learning management system, coursework and can search for relevant electronic learning materials. However, students did not benefit much from feedback in preparation for examinations. Contrarily, if students accessed resources, one expects an excellent preparation for examination. It is possible other factors might prevent the students from benefiting from the feedback during examination. This finding contradicts the assertion that feedback serves as supplementary support for the students' preparation during the process of learning and examination (Hounsell, McCune, Hounsell, & Litjens, 2008). The finding shows that feedback did not provide a constructive engagement between lecturers and students on the strength and weakness of their assignment.

The main challenges confronting students have to do with access to lecturers, the skill level of lecturers in providing feedback and timely feedback from lecturers. The finding indicated that there is a gap in the feedback process. Provision of feedback is also inadequate as identified by the students. The primary challenge identified is limited access to lecturers, indicating that many students face obstacles in reaching lecturers for feedback. This lack of accessibility likely affects students' ability to seek clarification, deepen their understanding, and feel supported in their studies, ultimately hampering their engagement and satisfaction with the learning process. Ahea et al. (2016) expresses that teachers are usually more effective in detecting mistakes in students' work rather than themselves. As a result, providing quality information to students is very important to ensuring student learning.

Timeliness of feedback is also a critical issue, with over half of the students' expressing concerns about delayed responses from lecturers. Timely feedback is essential in ODeL settings, where students often rely on prompt responses to maintain momentum in their studies. Delays in feedback may hinder students' academic progress, causing uncertainty and possibly affecting retention rates. According to Ahea et al. (2016), the teachers have a vital role in increasing their students' own ability for understanding the self-regulation process. They are also an essential source of external feedback. Traditionally, feedback from teachers has been a source where students can evaluate progress.

7. Conclusion and Recommendations

This study is a culmination of the Open Distance e-Learning and provides a good baseline to address the experience of students. Overall, students were positive in participating this study expressed their views. While most students expressed benefits derived

from feedback, some challenges were highlighted such as lack of access to tutors for dialogue, poor exhibition of skills from tutors, and untimely submission of feedback to students. All these challenges point to the need for changes in attitude of tutors towards feedback. It is very important that tutors make themselves available to students using various social media platforms including WhatsApp. Potential feedback to students must be targeted and align with students learning styles to help them succeed in their examinations.

In conclusion, these findings point to several actionable areas for improvement: enhancing lecturer accessibility, developing lecturer feedback skills, ensuring timely responses, and exploring varied communication channels to better serve the feedback needs of students in ODeL institutions. Addressing these challenges is essential for enriching the feedback experience, promoting student satisfaction, and improving educational outcomes in distance learning environments.

7.1. Recommendations for Implementing Feedback Among Students

To effectively implement feedback mechanisms that enhance student learning, the following strategies are recommended:

- **Adopt Appropriate Digital Platforms:** Utilize digital tools that facilitate timely and meaningful feedback. Platforms such as Google Classroom, Seesaw, and Edmodo enable real-time interactions between educators and students, promoting continuous improvement in learning outcomes. Learning Management Systems (LMS) like Canvas and Moodle offer robust functionalities for streamlined feedback processes, including instant grading and detailed performance analytics. Additionally, dedicated feedback platforms like Formative and Flipgrid empower students to engage actively with feedback, fostering a more interactive and reflective learning environment.
- **Provide Comprehensive Teacher Training:** Equip educators with the necessary skills to deliver effective feedback through professional development programs. Training should focus on creating specific feedback models, tailoring communication to individual student needs, and utilizing various digital tools for feedback delivery. Collaborative feedback sessions among educators can promote a culture of open communication, allowing teachers to share experiences and develop uniform strategies for effective feedback practices.
- **Establish Institutional Support Mechanisms:** Develop institutional frameworks that support the implementation of feedback practices. This includes integrating feedback tools into existing systems, providing ongoing technical support, and fostering a culture that values continuous improvement through feedback. Encouraging self-assessment and peer feedback among students can also enhance engagement and ownership of learning.

By incorporating these practical strategies, educational institutions can enhance the effectiveness of feedback mechanisms, thereby improving student learning experiences and outcomes.

8. Suggestions for Future Study

While this study has highlighted the benefits of feedback in administrative contexts and during examinations, several areas warrant further exploration:

- **Psychological Impact of Feedback on Learners:** Investigate how feedback influences learners' psychological states, including motivation, self-efficacy, and emotional responses. Understanding these effects can inform strategies to enhance student engagement and resilience.
- **Development of Self-Regulated Learning Abilities:** Examine how feedback contributes to the cultivation of self-regulated learning skills, such as goal setting, self-monitoring, and strategic planning. This includes exploring the role of feedback in fostering learners' autonomy and metacognitive abilities.
- **Student Strategies for Engaging with Feedback:** Explore the methods and approaches students employ to interpret, internalize, and apply feedback. This includes identifying factors that facilitate or hinder effective engagement with feedback, such as feedback literacy and emotional readiness.

Addressing these areas can provide deeper insights into optimizing feedback mechanisms to support learners' academic growth and self-directed learning capabilities.

Author Contributions: Conceptualization, M.O. Akintolu and G. Fasinu; methodology, M.O. Akintolu; software, P. Ahiaku; validation, M.O. Akintolu, G. Fasinu, and P. Ahiaku; formal analysis, M.O. Akintolu; investigation, M.O. Akintolu; resources, G. Fasinu; data curation, M.O. Akintolu; writing—original draft preparation, M.O. Akintolu; writing—review and editing, G. Fasinu; visualization, P. Ahiaku; supervision, G. Fasinu. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Funding: This research did not receive external funding.

Data Availability Statement: The data of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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