

EDITORIAL

In this edition of WAJOFEL, the multidisciplinary nature of research in Open and Distance Learning is on display. The disciplines include adult learning, Library science, English studies, and computer studies. There are five articles in the research article section of this volume, and they address topics such as student enrollment forecast, low-cost digital libraries, interactive pedagogical tools, and Language use in asynchronous facilitation. The authors discuss issues of access, technological and pedagogical support for learners in distance learning and online learning contexts. The commentary section presents a keynote address and the volume closes with the book review section.

Adoga et al investigate Choosing a Forecast Model for Prediction of Students' Enrolment in Multiple Programmes of the National Open University of Nigeria: Towards Course Materials Production Planning. Forecasting student enrollment is crucial for effective income and expenditure planning in educational institutions like the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN). In choosing the best forecast model from various statistical methods, the authors selected the Holt Winters additive seasonal model because it showed a relatively constant seasonality in NOUN's enrollment data. Comparing numeric goodness-of-fit values for multiple time series proved to be a simple and reliable approach. Accurate enrollment forecasts aid in course material production, faculty hiring, and budgeting. The recommended Holt Winters additive technique should be employed by NOUN and similar institutions for accurate enrollment predictions.

Okonkwo in a study of e-Granary Electronic Library: A Panacea for Effective Low-Cost Means of Knowledge and Lecture Delivery for Distance Learning in the National Open University of Nigeria, examines the potential use and benefits of the e-Granary digital library, also known as the "Internet in a Box," as an essential tool to provide information and knowledge for human resources in low-income communities, and specifically in distance learning contexts. It serves as an offline information store, offering access to over 35 million digital resources for those with limited Internet connections. In the author's view, the digital library overcomes challenges faced by academic institutions, such as lack of funds and stable electricity supply, making it a cost-effective solution for distance learning in rural areas.

Akinyemi and Ologunada investigate Perceptions of Teachers and Students on the use of Interactive Learning Instructional Package (ILIP) in Nigeria Senior Secondary Schools in Ondo State, Nigeria for teaching BASIC programming. Both students and teachers perceive ILIP as effective and beneficial for learning. However, challenges such as insufficient time allocation for computer studies, lack of resources, and inadequate technical support hinder its full implementation. They recommend incorporating ILIP in the curriculum, providing necessary resources, and offering training for teachers to optimise its use and enhance students' learning outcomes in BASIC programming.

Patrick and Abaa in their study titled, Assessment of Power and Load Factors in Older Adult Learners' Margin to Learn in National Open University of Nigeria focused on open and distance learning (ODL) for older adults (aged 60 and above). They found that older adult learners face challenges in learning due to factors such as low stamina for learning, lack of institutional support, and financial constraints. Using McClusky's theory of margin, which emphasises the interplay of power (resources) and load (demands) in learning they found the margin to learn to be low due to higher load factors compared to available power factors. Participants expressed the need for support and assistance to overcome these challenges and continue their studies. The study also revealed that older learners have low ICT skills but high peer support. The load factors in learning for older adults include family pressure, career demands, and religious commitment. To motivate older learners, the authors recommend interventions informed by the findings of the study such as older adult learners reducing load factors and increase power through support services and ICT skill development. They also recommend that further research with a larger sample size to generalise the findings.

Bibian Ugoala examines Achieving error-free posts in Asynchronous facilitation: Findings from the Discussion Forum Posts of 100 Level Students of National Open University of Nigeria. The errors are in the use of the simple past tense (SPT) in asynchronous online discussion posts of 100 level students at the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN). Errors in regular and irregular verbs were identified, including omission, addition, and mis-selection of morphemes. The irregular verbs posed more challenges for students, likely due to the lack of specific rules for their past tense formation in English. Interference from learners' first language (L1) did not seem to be the main cause of errors. To mitigate these errors,

Ugoala recommends the use of prompts on discussion platforms to help motivate learners to use the correct past tense forms and improve their communication skills. This would also provide technological and pedagogical support for learners' self-mastery of the English tenses and writing in general.

In the commentary section of this volume, **Olufemi Peters**, Vice-Chancellor National Open University of Nigeria's keynote at the Open University of Tanzania's graduation ceremony, on 24th November 2022, explores the Contributions of Open and Distance Education to Africa's Social-Political and Economic Development. Peters emphasises the challenges faced by Africa and the need for open and distance learning to address issues like political instability, poverty, and inadequate education systems. He highlights the potential benefits of distance education in providing access, quality, and cost-effective education to a rapidly growing population. He notes that ODL has already made significant contributions, such as empowering marginalised groups, meeting special social needs, and reducing brain drain. The National Open University of Nigeria is cited as an example, providing arrangements for special needs candidates, promoting leadership development, vocational training, self-discipline, lifelong learning, internationalisation, and ICT penetration. Peters concludes that although challenges persist, ODL's positive impact on socio-economic development in Africa is acknowledged, and its potential to contribute to development goals of the continent, the African Union's *Agenda 2063, The Africa We Want*, remains crucial.

In the book review section, **Felix Olakulehin** reviews a book collection of papers edited by Online and Distance Education for a Connected World edited by Linda Amrane-Cooper, David Baume, Stephen Brown, Stylianos Hatzipanagos, Philip Powell, Sarah Sherman and Alan Tait.

I thank our contributors for choosing WAJOFEL as the platform to share their research, our reviewers for their valuable contributions and the editorial team for putting together this issue. We hope readers will find this issue valuable and look forward to receiving more manuscripts from across the globe.

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