

From the Managing Editor

It is our pleasure to produce Volume 5, Number 1 of the West African Journal of Open and Flexible Learning, WAJOFEL.

We are very grateful to the Commonwealth of Learning (COL), for its support through the consistent funding of the publication of the journal. This has guaranteed the sustenance of the journal. We also acknowledge the readiness of the Management of the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) to give its support. It is also worthy to thank our numerous readers for their feedbacks. They should keep them coming. This attests to the fact that the journal is working in consonance with all other ODL crusaders in the West African sub-region.

We thank our various reviewers for their willingness to cheerfully peer-review the manuscripts upon our request. It is certain that ODL research within the sub-region is strengthening.

This edition of the journal contains ten papers covering diverse research areas. It contains rich research information for practitioners of open and flexible learning based on existing theory and practice-driven solutions to identified contemporary problems.

Professor V. A. Tenebe, Drs. O. D. Ojo, Yemisi I. Ogunlela, Anthonia B. Yakubu & Dorothy Ofoha reported on *Minority Students in Graduate Studies: An Exploration into Women's Accessibility to Higher Education through the Open and Distance Learning Mode in Nigeria*. The study involved women in difficult circumstances constrained by socio-cultural factors and who are pursuing postgraduate programmes through the ODL mode, referred to as minority women. With a sample of 82 purposively selected from study centres of the National Open University of Nigeria, the study employed a qualitative research approach with the thematic data analytical method. The findings identified the major barriers/challenges the women experience living in a patriarchal society as cost of education, Islamic injunctions, traditional culture, lack of family support and time. With their quest for formal education through the ODL mode, they have been provided with a platform to manage their time and finances and make their dream of impacting positively into their society possible. A number of recommendations were also enumerated based on the findings.

Drs. David Adebayo Oluwole and J. B. Oyadeyi's study determined the effect of computer efficacy training in the management of computer anxiety among National Open University of Nigeria freshmen using the Southwestern Nigeria as a case in point. With the Technology Acceptance Model, the pretest-posttest control group quasi-experimental design and 2 x 2 x 2 factorial matrix, 60 computer anxious freshmen from two study centres of NOUN (Akure and Lagos) were given the training which lasted eight weeks. Findings showed that there was significant effect of treatment on the management of computer anxiety of NOUN freshmen. Participants in the experimental group had the least computer anxiety compared to those in the control groups. There was also a significant effect of age on computer anxiety. The older NOUN freshmen significantly benefited more than younger NOUN freshmen. Computer efficacy training was reported to be effective in managing computer anxiety of National Open University freshmen and relevant recommendations were highlighted.

The paper by **Dr A. C. Ukwueze** on E-Counselling for Learner Support Services in ODL institutions adopted a practical approach in dissecting the basic issues involved. Conceptual Clarification of some key concepts such as open education, learner support services, counselling and e-counselling was made. Further, a presentation of e-counselling as an online counselling which provides students with the platform to interact with their counsellors using a variety of social media networks was apt in this modern age of technology. Social networks that could be employed for e-counselling in open education such as Facebook, e-mail (Gmail, Google talk, Skype, WhatsApp), twitter, video conferencing, blog, instant messaging and chat among others were also explored in terms of their relevance to e-counselling needs. Challenges of power failure, poverty, network coverage and outage, issue of confidentiality in e-counselling using social media networks, attitudinal problem and illiteracy were identified with provisions that these problems could be solved through government intervention in several ways. To this end, several suggestions were advanced.

Professor M. O. Adeyeye and O. Oyeleke x-rays management issues in emerging Information and Communication Technology (ICT) driven distance education in Nigeria. The paper investigated the perception of stakeholders in two Nigerian universities –Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife and the National Open University of Nigeria– on the best way open and distance education can be effectively managed with respect to funding, targeted audience, courses being offered, programme structure, technology adaptation,

quality control and general administration. The study assumed that open and distance education was practicable and achievable in Nigeria, if effectively managed. It reported that stakeholders had a relatively positive perception about the administration of ODL in Nigeria in spite of the teething challenges. A Comparative Analysis of Male and Female Students' Academic Performance Using Andragogical Approach: A Case Study of National Open University of Nigeria was carried out by **Dr. Ayodele O. Fagbemi**. Using the academic performance of students in a Measurement and Evaluation course, a 32 – item questionnaire and the convenience sample of 120 students who sat examinations at the NOUN headquarters in Lagos, the study reported that there is no significant difference in the scores of male and female students in the Measurement and Evaluation course. The study further revealed that there is no significant difference in the scores of male and female students in the Measurement and Evaluation course taught through the andragogical approach. Among others, it was recommended that the andragogical approach should be combined with some pedagogical approach as was the original conception in the establishment of the National Open University of Nigeria.

This edition also features **Dr. F. Omemu's** article on effectiveness of motivational techniques in the administration of secondary schools in Yenagoa Local Government Area of Bayelsa State. After an exhumation of motivational techniques in school administration, the study made case for an urgent move towards efforts to ensure that all practising school administrators adhere to relevant and effective motivational theories in dealing with their subordinates in the school organization for the organizational goals to be effectively achieved. The extent to which motivation improves performance as being of very great impact on the administration of schools was also canvassed. The study concluded that motivation improves performance and plays an important role towards the encouragement of effective administration of secondary schools. Among other suggestions, school administrators were admonished to provide incentives in motivating their subordinates to improve performance.

Dr. Erimma Gloria Orié wrote on sustainable distance e-learning for enhanced students' retention and support with special attention on the Faculty of Law, National Open University of Nigeria. The paper commences with brief conceptual clarifications and then gives an overview

of NOUN and its Faculty of Law before expounding the contending issues and challenges which include students' poor perception of e-learning, poor preparedness, poor state of Infrastructure, staffing, funding and a host of others. Prospects and strategies to enhance students' retention, support and success were also enumerated. Specific recommendations for stakeholders were made.

Dr. Folashade Afolabi analysed factors influencing perceived academic achievement in quantitative courses among 100 distance learners. Descriptive statistics and factor analysis were used to explore the contribution of each item to the use of technology and academic achievement in the University of Lagos. The Kaiser-Meyer-Okin statistics was computed and along with the Barlett's Test of Sphericity. The variables were classified or group according to their contributions. The first component which is the use of technology was loaded very high followed by the required skill in the use of the computer component which was also loaded high in the second component. The technology transformation, e-learning, learning through face to face with teachers, computational skills and the problems of using e-learning in teaching quantitative courses were loaded high on components 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 respectively. These factors were considered very important influencing the academic achievement of distance learners in quantitative courses.

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