

WEST AFRICAN JOURNAL OF OPEN AND FLEXIBLE LEARNING

Aims and Scope

The West African Journal of Open and Flexible Learning exists to facilitate and encourage high quality scholarship on important theoretical and empirical work in Open and Distance Learning (ODL), research as well as research in all disciplines that could be taught and learnt through the open and distance learning approach. Researches in the Sciences and Social Sciences, Humanities, Law, etc. are therefore equally encouraged especially those whose findings have identifiable implications for open and distance learning. ODL is a rapidly developing discipline which encourages teachers and learners of all disciplines to think of alternative modes of content delivery; alternative to the conventional face-to-face method, particularly for purposes of expanding access to the discipline. Hence, there is a need for all disciplines to research into the best ways of applying the ODL philosophy.

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CONTENTS	PAGE
From the Editor-in-Chief	iv
About RETRIDAL	vi
From the Managing Editor	viii
Henry Oburu Onyedibia: Advanced Strategies for Improving Reading Comprehension among Open Distance Learners	1
Osang, Francis Bukie: Assessing the Dimensionalities of E-Mail Utilization among Open and Distance Learning Practitioners In Nigeria: A Structural Modelling Equation Approach	11
Osuji, U.S.A: Assessment of Time Management Conditions of Open and Distance Learning Students in Nigeria	37
Kahar Wahab Sarumi & Eric Omazu: Attaining Universal Secondary School Education for the Girl Child in Nigeria through ODL	53
Dr. Adakole Ikpe: Effect of Age on Retention Ability of Chemistry Students Exposed to E-Learning Instruction in Inorganic Chemistry	63
Liadi Hakeem Olaniyi: Lecturers' Knowledge and Skill in the Integration of Information and Communication Technology into Business Education Instruction in Nigerian Colleges of Education	81
Ganiyat Adejoke Adesina-Uthman, Samuel Olumuyiwa Olusanya & Wilson Friday Ohioze: Open and Distance Learning: A Catalyst for Women Empowerment	97
Fidel Onjefu Okopi: Perception of Code of Ethics on use of Online Resources for Counselling in National Open University of Nigeria	115

Awonuga Olukayode Olusola: The Impact and Potentials of Open and Distance Learning (ODL) on Vocational Technical Education in Nigeria 135

Aminu Kazeem Ibrahim: Validation of Goal Setting, Decision-Making Skills and Learning Satisfaction Scale among Distance and Conventional University Learners in Nigeria 153

From the Editor-in-Chief

This edition, which is the seventh edition of the West African Journal of Open and Flexible Learning (WAJOFEL), is published in furtherance of our goal of ensuring that this distance learning journal is here to stay and continues to contribute to the advancement of knowledge in academic communities in Nigeria, the West African sub-region and beyond. In spite of the fact that this edition is coming out later than we had anticipated, the papers therein are no less stimulating and informative. The Editorial Board continues to strive for a more robust and professional production of issues of the journal on a regular basis. The Board is ever ready and poised to take the journal to a higher level and expand its reach. WAJOFEL remains one of the few scholarly, peer-reviewed journals in West Africa that are primarily devoted to open and distance learning research' for the advancement of knowledge in this specialised field.

It is gratifying and heart-warming to note that the West African Journal of Open and Flexible Learning (WAJOFEL) has continued to enjoy greater reckoning and acceptance within academic communities even beyond the shores of Nigeria. When viewed in relation to the short history of the journal, this development can be further appreciated. However, since the appointment of the Editorial Board of the journal, the task of keeping the journal afloat and sustaining its vibrancy and visibility has been made less of a challenge but more of a stimulating experience for all. Our aspiration is that WAJOFEL will continue to be one of the preferred outlets for research-based ODL papers, which will be within the reach of those who are actively engaged in ODL research in higher institutions in the West African sub-region and even elsewhere.

It is instructive to bring to the attention of its readers and other stakeholders the fact that since the launch of WAJOFEL about four years ago, authors of articles published by the journal have so far done so at no cost; in other words, they had not been asked to pay page charges or processing fees for their manuscripts. It goes without saying that the cost of publication must have been borne by certain organisations, which have been taking up the financial burden of sustaining the journal. The two organisations, which have so far borne the full cost of publishing WAJOFEL up till now, are the

Commonwealth of Learning (COL) and the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN). It is unlikely that this can go on indefinitely, largely because the cost of publication is globally ever-increasing. The only option left will be to ask authors to pay certain charges to defray at least a fraction of the cost of production. Consequently, the Editorial Board of WAJOFEL has now introduced payment of nominal page charges by authors of accepted manuscripts. A nominal page charge will apply beginning from the present issue, Volume 4, Number 1 of the journal. Details of this can be found under the “Journal Editorial Policy” on the inside back cover.

Prof. Vincent Ado Tenebe
Editor-in-Chief

About RETRIDAL

The Regional Training and Research Institute for Open and Distance Learning (RETRIDAL) is an international institute established under a collaborative agreement between the Commonwealth of Learning and the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN). It is mainly for capacity building and research in Open and Distance Learning (ODL) for the West African sub-region, and anywhere in Africa when needs arise.

The primary purpose of the institute is in three broad but interrelated parts: first, the institute has the mandate to plan and implement programmes to meet the training and capacity development needs of practitioners of open and distance learning - administrative, technical/technological and academic - within the West African sub-region. Second, the institute is mandated to initiate, carry out, and support research in all areas of open and distance learning and its ancillary fields. While the institute facilitates research into open and distance learning as a field of enquiry, it is also involved in promoting discipline-based researches which have implications for open and distance learning. In doing this, the institute is expected to provide necessary training in research and provide support to early career researchers and experienced academics to pursue their research. The institute is also required to provide opportunities for the dissemination of research outcomes through its dedicated website, newsletter and regular journal.

The third strand of RETRIDAL's mandate is to serve as a platform for intra- regional and inter-regional cooperation and linkages between open and distance learning institutions, organisations and professional associations in West Africa and the rest of the world.

RETRIDAL is physically housed within the National Open University of Nigeria, Lagos.

The vision of the institute is to be seen as a centre of excellence in open and distance learning in the West African sub-region through the promotion of workable policies, development of accountable strategies, the promotion of useful research activities and the initiation of network and collaboration for the purposes of attaining excellence in open and distance learning.

To achieve its mandate, the institute has been focusing on meeting the training needs of open and distance learning institutions including single mode, dual mode, consortium and solely electronic mode in the West African sub-region. This way, it intends building a network of open and distance learning trainers and core of professionals in ODL in the sub-region.

More than twenty-four institutions have participated in various RETRIDAL activities from The Gambia, Sierra Leone, Ghana, Cameroon, Nigeria and Tanzania over the last few years to respond to various needs. Many more are expected to participate in the coming years. The feedback from many of the institutions as well as individual participants has been very encouraging.

The institute has its activities supervised by an International Advisory Board with members from the Commonwealth of Learning and the West African sub-region.

From the Editorial

It is our pleasure to produce Volume 4, 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.

K.I. Aminu used a modified Mind Tools scale to measure goals setting, decision-making skills and learning satisfaction among Nigerian distance and conventional university learners. The exploratory factor analysis indicates that the scale measures four distinct dimensions: decision-making skills (DMS), goal setting skills (GSS), formulating learning goals (FLG) and learning satisfaction (LS). The results show that DMS were higher for distance university learners than campus-based students, while GSS were higher among distance university learners than among campus-based students; FLG was higher also among distance university learners than conventional university learners. Similarly, LS was higher among conventional university learners than among distance university learners. The researcher also discovered that many learners become discouraged by perceived learning difficulties, which can be resolved by assisting them to explore their goal setting and decision-making skills. The paper concludes

that the scale, which supports goal setting, decision-making skills and learning satisfaction among learners, is potentially useful for both distance and campus-based students.

C.A. Ikpe examines the effect of age on retention ability of chemistry students exposed to e-Learning instruction in Inorganic Chemistry at the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN). The samples for the study were selected using the purposive sampling technique. The researcher found that there was no significant difference in the retention ability of subjects of different age groups. Consequently, Ikpe concludes that retention ability of students taught using the e-Learning instructional strategy does not depend on age. He therefore recommended that Distance Learning institutions of higher learning incorporate/adapt the instructional strategies for the teaching of chemistry. He further suggested that students and teachers should also be regularly trained and retrained on the usage of e-learning platforms.

G.A. Adesina-Uthman, S.O. Olusanya and W.F. Ohioze assessed the use of open and distance learning as a catalyst for women empowerment. The authors sought to determine whether open and distance learning has any influence on women empowerment in Nigeria and to ascertain if the cost of undergoing ODL in Nigeria is affordable for women that enrolled at the National Open University of Nigeria. Drawing on the feminist theory of women empowerment the authors discussed the role of education in the empowerment of women and girls generally. The paper advanced the notion that women empowerment is an avenue for the development of mental and physical capacity, power or skills for women to operate meaningfully in their social milieu, thereby experiencing a more favourable social recognition and subsequently enhance their economic status. Findings showed that open and distance learning has a significant effect on women empowerment in Nigeria but the cost of undergoing ODL in Nigeria is not affordable for women enrolled at NOUN. The authors recommended that women should be encouraged to undergo relevant ODL programmes. They also recommended that the cost of ODL courses should be reduced to encourage more women to enrol for the programmes.

F.O. Okopi investigates the perception of code of ethics on the use of online

resources for counselling at the National Open University of Nigeria. The author suggests that the introduction of online counselling as part of support services in National Open University of Nigeria has created the need to determine student counsellors' perception of code of ethics of online resources. Using a self-developed distance counselling technology and social media scale for data collection, the author then tested six hypotheses on gender differences using the t-test and the results showed no significant differences between female and male in their responses to all the variables. The study concludes that student counsellors at NOUN have high positive perception of the 2014 American Counselling Association's Code of Ethics guiding the use of online counselling resources.

U.S.A. Osuji assessed the time management conditions of open and distance learning students in Nigeria. This study used a descriptive survey design to investigate the extent to which open and distance learning students in Nigeria manage their time effectively. The purposive sampling technique was used to select students from six centres across the geo-political zones of the country. The six centres were randomly selected from the zones. The researcher used a 25-item Time Management Questionnaire (TMQ), in the form of a four-point Likert-type scale, adopted from the standardised Wayne University time management questionnaire, for data collection. Findings from the analysis show that Nigerian ODL students have effective time management skills ranging from good to excellent. Thus the researcher concluded that there is no significant difference in effective time management level of the male and female students, as well as, postgraduate and undergraduate ODL students in Nigeria.

K.W. Sarumi and E. Omazu explored the possibility of achieving universal secondary school education for the girl child in Nigeria using ODL. Drawing insights from the United Nation's declaration on human and people's rights, they emphasised the notion of education as a human right. They also drew attention to the significantly huge number of people that are not in education, especially the case of females from less-privileged background. Focusing attention on the Nigerian situation, the analysts revealed the differential rates of enrolment between boys and girls in Nigerian higher education. The authors then argue that ODL system can serve as a veritable tool for expanding educational opportunities available to the girl child in Nigeria.

Consequently, they recommended that the ODL system should be incorporated into the secondary school education. They also discussed the modalities for effective functioning of the ODL system in secondary education, as well as, the benefits and opportunities that ODL holds for secondary education of the girl child in Nigeria.

L.H. Olaniyi examines lecturers' knowledge and skill in the integration of information and communication technology into business education instruction in Nigeria's Colleges of Education. Based on the premise that lecturers' roles are to facilitate learning and help students to develop into autonomous learners who can continue to learn by themselves, especially with the assistance of new ICT. The author argues that there is a deficit in the knowledge and skill needed for the use ICT as an effective teaching-learning tool amongst lecturers. The paper surveys lecturers' knowledge and skill in the integration of ICT pedagogy into Business Education instruction in Nigeria's Colleges of Education. The study also determined the level of ICT knowledge of Business Education lecturers' in their ICT integration pedagogy in Colleges of Education. It also ascertained whether the Lecturers' skill of ICT tools influence ICT integrated pedagogy in the Colleges of Education. Finally, the paper recommended that Business Education lecturers should be encouraged to improve their pedagogical practices; modelling the use of ICT they teach in their pedagogical practices; and shift away from lecture to activity-oriented teaching-learning approach.

F.B. Osang assessed the dimensionalities of email utilisation among open and distance learning practitioners in Nigeria using a structural modelling equation approach. In the open and distance learning environment, the utilisation of the electronic mail system by institutions of higher learning remains one viable and dependable option for an efficient communication system. But the poor usage attitude within some organisations despite its availability and convenience calls for concern. Through a structural equation modelling approach using smart partial least square, the sampled data were collected and analysed using the technology utilisation, satisfaction and performance model (TUSPEM) as the theoretical framework for the study. The author found a significant relationship between email technology fit and staff attitude towards using the technology. The association between staff attitude towards using email system, perceived usefulness and ease of use of

the technology and staff individual habit as they affect email utilisation was also supported. The researcher strongly recommends testing for the fit, usefulness, ease of use of technologies, users' attitude towards using information technologies and other critical factors using the TUSPEM model in both mandatory and non-mandatory usage environments. He further recommends periodic training of new and old staff on modern technologies adopted by institutions for improved productivity in workplaces.

O.O. Awonuga discusses the impact and potentials of open and distance learning (ODL) on vocational technical education in Nigeria. He suggests that open and distance learning system was introduced to train people in essentially theoretical fields, but was extended to the vocational and technical fields to meet demands of the workplace. Technical and vocational education and training is an important aspect of Nigeria's educational and developmental objectives as enunciated in the National Policy on Education. It is in the bid to actualise these objectives that the National Open University' of Nigeria (NOUN), the first single mode ODL University in the West African sub-region, established a Centre for Lifelong Learning to offer diploma, certificate and proficiency certificate courses in technical and vocational areas of manpower needs. The author provides an overview of the historical evolution of open and distance learning, using a personal lens. He further describes the definitions and interpretations of ODL, including its mode of dissemination, challenges and roles in supporting technical vocational education and training.

H.O. Onyedibia proposed some advanced strategies for improving reading comprehension among open distance learners. The author argues that reading as an important part of educational acquisition has been ignored and that scant attention is paid to essential strategies for boosting reading comprehension. He further suggests that the lack of reading enthusiasm among students is partly due to a lack of awareness of effective reading strategies. Some of the reasons advanced for this fault bordered on the non-inclusion of reading comprehension strategies in the school curriculum; such that the teacher resigns his teaching topic only to reading and answering passage reflected questions. Focusing on reading challenges among distance learners, the author recommends analogy, reading and reasoning, note taking and notation as some of the strategic measures that could improve

undergraduate students' independent reading of selected course materials, especially those at the undergraduate level. The paper concludes that distance learners could improve their reading comprehension capabilities and success by adopting these advanced strategies.

Prof. Vincent Babatunde Ogunlela
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