

From the Editor-in-Chief

This edition, which represents the fourth edition of the West African Journal of Open and Flexible Learning (WAJOFEL), attests to the fact that the journal is here to stay and continues to contribute to the advancement of knowledge in academic communities both in Nigeria and globally. Though coming later than anticipated, the papers are no less interesting and informative. With a new Editorial Board in place, one can only expect a more vibrant and professional production of editions of the journal one after another. The Board is poised to take the journal to greater heights and expand its reach. WAJOFEL remains one of the few scholarly, peer-reviewed journals in West Africa dedicated to open and distance learning 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) is now enjoying greater reckoning and awareness within academic communities beyond the shores of Nigeria. When considered within the context of the short history of the journal, this development can be further appreciated and celebrated. However, since the appointment of the Editorial Board of the journal the task of keeping the journal afloat and sustaining its vibrancy and spread has been made a little easier. It is our sincere hope and aspiration 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 within the West African sub-region and beyond.

It is pertinent to now bring to the attention of our readers and other stakeholders that since the launch of WAJOFEL some two years ago, authors of articles published by the journal have so far done so free; in other words that have not been asked to pay page charges for their papers. It goes without saying that the cost of publication must have been passed to certain organisations, which had made ensure that the financial burden of sustaining the journal was borne. The two organisations which have so far borne the full cost of publishing WAJOFEL up to now are the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) and the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN). It is obvious that this cannot go on indefinitely largely because it is not sustainable and the ever-increasing cost of publication, which is a global phenomenon. The only

option left is to ask authors to pay certain charges to defray a fraction of the cost of production. Consequently, the Editorial Board of WAJOFEL will be introducing payment of page charges by authors of accepted manuscripts to be published in subsequent editions. A nominal page charges will apply beginning from Volume 3, Number 1 of the journal. Until a journal becomes self-sustaining, its sustainability and survival will remain at stake.

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 (COL) 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.

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 institutional 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 Managing Editor

We have the pleasure of bringing you volume 2 number 2 of the **West African Journal of Open and Flexible Learning, WAJOFEL**. This is the last number for this volume as we continue to reach out to stakeholders concerning researches in ODL in the West Africa sub-region.

We are indeed very grateful to the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) for funding the publication of the journal. This has really ensured the sustenance of the Journal. We also acknowledge the readiness to offer support at all times by the National Open University of Nigeria. We thank our numerous readers for their feedback. It confirms that the journal is working in tandem with all other ODL crusaders in the West African sub-region. We thank our various reviewers for their prompt response to our review requests. The fact remains that ODL is growing in the sub-region.

This edition of the journal contains eleven papers covering various research areas.

Gloria C. Alaneme and Peter Olayiwola **appraise the organisation and management of distance learners' support services in some Nigerian universities**. She investigated the type of learner support services available for distance learners' in five dual-mode institutions and that of the only single-mode institution in Nigeria using survey method which involved the use of self-completing questionnaire and observation. Her study looks at the learners' perception of the availability and also the adequacy of such services in one of the dual-mode universities. Twelve staff and two hundred and sixteen students formed the usable sample size of the study. Findings of the study showed that support services were available though not adequate and the students suggested areas where improvements in the learning support provision were required.

Olugbenga D. Ojo wrote on **'Enhancing access to learning through blended learning and convergence approaches in open and distance education** examining the role and impact of blended learning and the convergence of approaches on open and distance learning delivery mode of education in ODL institutions within West Africa. The paper discussed

blended learning and convergence approaches in ODL in relation to the viability of e-learning for improving the quality and reach of access to educational opportunities through the Open and Distance Learning approach. The paper concludes with some recommendations of sustainability strategies for implementing blended learning approaches in sub-Saharan Africa.

A.A. Saah discussed 'The application of team-working model for training OER writers of distance and e-learning pathways course materials in Ghanaian public universities.' The study used the outcome of the project on course material writing involving commissioned course writers made up qualified lecturers and others in University of Ghana, University of Cape Coast and Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST), to write course materials for delivery in the distance and e-learning mode to showcase the need for the application of team-working model for course material writing as it enhances the writing of course materials for the use of ODL institutions. The study revealed that although the commissioned people are lecturers, that notwithstanding, they, as well as others, require course-writer training for the production of quality and effective course materials.

Jane-Frances Agbu provided insight into the '**Development and validation of technostress rating scale.**' The rating scale is a 29-item scale that is used to assess the cognitive, emotive, behavioural and physiological manifestations of computer-related stress. Participants for this study comprised 261 male and 262 female students in the age range of 18-70(mean =35 years) who were randomly drawn from the student population of the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN). The test instrument was administered along with a validating questionnaire and the Psychophysiological Symptom Checklist (PSC). Normative scores for the Technostress Rating Scale (TRS) were 79.71 for females, 82.64 for males and 81.15 for males and females collective. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy showed a value of 0.81, and a chi square of 1723.21, @ $p < .05$ respectively. The Technostress Rating Scale (TRS) presented a concurrent validity of 0.53, a 14-day test-retest reliability coefficient of 0.79, split-half reliability coefficient of 0.74, a Cronbach-alpha reliability of 0.76. Eight orthogonal items were further extracted after Factor

Analysis. The result of the study showed that Technostress Rating Scale has a good reliability and validity scores and could therefore be used in the assessment of computer-related stress.

Fidelis N. Okoroegbe while discussing the '**Social media networks as interactive counselling platform: A National Open University of Nigeria survey**', asserted that social media networks have continued to evolve rapidly as a technology firmly rooted in time and space with a caveat that students' counsellors should acquire sufficient expertise to utilise these social media technologies as counselling aids in the face of future developments. He opined that with the advent of information technology, there is an increasing need for counsellors to communicate and interact with students beyond the traditional face-to-face medium. The study concluded that students' engagement with counsellors through social media tools is academically rewarding and economically cost effective. He therefore saw the urgent need for NOUN counsellors to integrate the use of social media networks into counselling and other learner support services.

Charity Akuadi Okonkwo, in the paper entitled '**eAssessment and Students' Perceptions of Computer Self-efficacy and General Self efficacy: A Case Study of the National Open University of Nigeria**' reported the response of NOUN to the challenges of 'Paper and Pen' assessment of students' learning outcomes using the adopted strategy based on its migration to 'eAssessment' -application of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in assessment. The paper investigated NOUN returning students' perception of Computer Self-Efficacy in relation to eExamination. It explored the relationship between returning students' perception of Computer Self-Efficacy and their General Self-Efficacy. Three basic research instruments; the Computer Self-Efficacy Scale (Askar and Umang, 2001), the General Self-Efficacy Scale (Schwarzer and Jerusalem, 1995) were used to collect data along with a survey questionnaire designed to obtain personal information and previous computer experience from participants. The results of the study revealed that ICT has bright prospects in learners' assessment in the 21st century but with a caveat that there are some problems militating against its successful utilisation. Recommendations were made for improvement and for regional development.

Peter Adoga Ikpe and Idama Adamu in a paper entitled '**An Information System for Management of National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) Study Centres**' discussed the issue information system that will help keep track of course materials distribution, counselling history, students and staff records, and financial operations, all in respect of the course materials at the NOUN study centres. The study showed that an integrated system will facilitate the duties of the clerks, administrative officers, accountants, store officers, ICT staff, centre director, library officers, counsellors and students with unique interface created for each user. The study used the nature of demand for course materials by students using the records of monthly demand for five course materials which were selected at random, for a period of six years. The study looked at the reordering pattern of the Yola Study Centre using information on stock supplied between 2005 and 2010. The study based its report on an information system based on developed Periodic Review Inventory Model that was adopted to provide better inventory management in the study centre.

Temilola T. Apena, in his paper entitled '**The Young Old and the Youth as Users: Impact and Challenges of Information and Communication Technology in Open Distance Learning Paradigm**' investigated the accessibility, competence, visits to the internet, purposes, role of ICT in open distance learning and the challenges encumbering the development expected in the relationship between ICT and distance learning. This was with a view to improving the lot of the young old as regards ICT. The study is theoretical and quantitative with a combination of survey and ex-post facto design as methods of investigation. The study was predicated on the assumption that ICT is to serve young old better, help many to achieve their aim of using the internet more and also enable the workers who are learners to acquire the adequate knowledge required for better performance at their various workplaces. The belief is that it will also be beneficial to the employers of labour as the competence of their staff will be guaranteed with regular seminars, conferences and workshops.

Nda E. Mundi worked on the '**Identification of job-related training needs of village extension agents in the Kogi State Agricultural Development Project.**' The purposeful sample for the study was made up 145 Village Extension Agents (VEAs) located in three agro-development zones (Eastern,

Central and Western) of the state delineation of Kogi State Agricultural Development Project (**KSADP**). A survey was conducted to identify the job-related training needs of VEAs while data were collected from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data were derived from structured questionnaire, similar to the Likert-type scale developed by the researcher. Secondary data were obtained from official documents or records of the Ministry of Agriculture, Lokoja, Kogi State and KSADP. The data analysis of the study based on the weighted mean score and ranking analysis revealed that out of 70 competencies included in the study, 5 of them would require “high emphasis” indicating a serious deficiency gap while the rest 65 competencies would need “average emphasis.” It is evident from the study that all competencies are needed. It is therefore recommended that annual staff training programme as well as fortnightly training (FNT) sessions should be made more productive to ensure efficient and effective training of VEAs among others.

Onyeka Iwuchukwu and Dorothy Ofoha's paper on 'An assessment of practical skill learning activities in study materials developed by the National Open University of Nigeria' use the notion that the Nigerian educational system tends to prepare students only with theoretical knowledge to reflect on what operates in open and distance learning (ODL) using the study materials that are known to be the vital tools used in instructional delivery as basis of its investigation. The study assessed the level of practical skill learning elements embedded in the design and development of course materials used by NOUN students. This was with a view to determining whether or not they were tailored to equip learners with practical skills. **Forty-three** (43) copies of printed course materials were randomly selected from a variety of courses under various programmes from the available five schools to form the study sample. The selected course materials were critically examined by 43 subject experts to obtain data on the following: (i) total number of learning objectives in each course module; (ii) number of objectives that were stated in measurable behavioural terms presumed to test knowledge (iii) number of objectives that were stated in performance/practical terms presumed to test skills and application of knowledge. **Data collected were analysed using frequency counts, percentages, and ratios. The study** concluded that a significant proportion of sampled course materials contained adequate number of learning

objectives that were stated in measurable behavioural terms (knowledge level), but found deficient in performance-based objectives (practical skills). It was recommended that NOUN should adopt practical skill-based education approach in the design and development of course materials while course modules should contain as much practical knowledge as with theoretical knowledge. It was also recommended that all course materials that are deficient in practical skill activities should be reviewed and updated in line with current realities.

Ifeoma Nwosu-Okolis expository study was on '**Contrastive analysis** of the English and the Igbo verbal systems.' The paper reported that language is properly used when a speaker is able to make accessible to his audience meaningful information on a subject of discourse and that to enhance the effectiveness of language, words and symbols employ and deploy in a manner that is capable of rendering our mental and material constructs intelligible to our audience. The paper concluded that English language being the medium of communication commonly used inside (and even outside) the country, it becomes necessary for the serious-minded teacher (who is result-oriented) to devise strategies for discovering and anticipating modes of errors in L2 learning as well as adequate measures for countering such errors.

In the last paper, Joy Chimebere Iyiegboniwe and Gloria Chinyere Alaneme assessed the 'Quality assurance practices in the Distance **Learning** Institute of the University of Lagos, **Nigeria**. **The study** sample consisted of 300 students drawn from 2,233 final year students, using simple random sampling method. The paper reported that the quality of staff and lecture delivery, access to admission; curriculum and instruction were satisfactory. It, however, expressed mixed feelings on students' orientation; students' counselling, coverage of syllabus before examinations, and learning resources. The paper drew attention to the fact that the institution should improve on the areas where there are mixed feelings.

Vincent Babatunde Ogunlela
Managing Editor