

Editorial

The impact of technological advancements, the fourth industrial revolution (4IR), and more recently, the COVID-19 pandemic, are leading to significant changes in the education sector and the workplace. The articles in this issue of the West African Journal of Open and Flexible Learning (WAJOFEL) address various issues in the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) for teaching and learning in both conventional and distance learning contexts to equip learners with the knowledge and skills required to accommodate the changes.

These issues range from innovative strategies for online delivery to accessing online resources; ICT tools for online assessment; the use of social networking sites for learning; and the effects of collaborative tools on Learning Management System (LMS) platforms on learning. This edition also features a position paper that focuses on the role open and distance learning play in reaching unreached populations.

The first article in this issue by **Abdalla Uba Adamu and Adewale Adesina** - *From Debate to Action: COVID-19 Lockdown and Changing Paradigm in Nigerian Online Higher Education*, examined the challenges that educational systems faced during the lockdown arising from the COVID-19 pandemic. After few months of 'stay safe, stay at home' government advocacy, it became clear that unless new strategies of delivery were embarked upon, education systems could eventually collapse. The National Open University of Nigeria approached the challenges posed by the Covid-19 lockdown in two innovative ways. First, it introduced remote proctoring of examinations in the country for the first time on an on-demand basis, making it optional to students since the hardware requirements may not be possible for all students. The second strategy was the conversion of selected courseware materials from flat PDF files to interactive Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) self-automated lectures. It uses a combination of theoretical insights and empirical data from implementation of 'New Normal' online strategies and advocates a movement away from debate to action in improving the quality of delivery systems in African higher open and distance education.

The next article in this edition submitted by **Angela Ebele Okpala** examined *A Survey of Online Resources on the Development of Lifelong Learning among Students of the National Open University of Nigeria*. A

questionnaire was administered to 150 students randomly selected from the 8 faculties of National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN). Descriptive statistics, using mean and t-test were employed for data analysis. The mean results revealed that NOUN students accessed online information resources at least once a week. The t-test results revealed that online information resources had influence on NOUN students' daily living. The author recommends that students should be encouraged to use online information resources, while libraries should be equipped with online databases and facilities for easy access. The author also recommends that the cost of laptops and data bundle should be subsidized by institutions for their students especially for those in open and distance learning institutions.

The following paper by **Temitayo Omolara Onasanya, Justina Ojoma Attah, Bridget Idowu Otemuyiwa, and Samuel Adenubi Onasanya** reviewed the *Impact of the ClassMarker App on the Performance of Undergraduates in Online Learning of ICT: The University of Ilorin Experience*. Data collected were analysed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research question that guided the study. The hypotheses were tested using independent samples t-test at 0.05 level of significance. Findings revealed that undergraduates in the experimental group performed better than their counterpart in the controlled group. Again the result showed that gender has no significant difference in the performance of undergraduates in online learning of ICT. The authors recommended among others that lecturers in the online learning environment should be encouraged to use the ClassMarker as a tool for assessment because it has a significant impact on the performance of students.

The next paper from **Adetayo Adekunle Adebajo** examined *Assessment of National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) Students' Use of Computer for Electronic Examination in South-West, Nigeria*. Data collection was done by means of a structured questionnaire which was subjected to face and content validating using Cronbach's alpha test. The results yielded reliability coefficient of 0.76 and above. The data collected were analysed using frequency counts, percentage distribution, means, standard deviations and students't-test. The result showed significant difference in online computer use between male and female students, and that there was significant difference in NOUN students on the use of computer for electronic examination based on their faculties. The author recommends that all students of NOUN

should be encouraged to procure mobile technologies such as laptops, iPad, and internet enabled mobile phones compulsorily for easy access and effective preparation for e-exams.

The following article submitted by **Joy Eyisi, Philomena Elom, Joy Eyisi Jr., Frank Onuh, Chinonso Okolo, John O. Oparaduru, and Adaobi Mac-Ozigbo** analysed *Open and Distance Learning (ODL): A Veritable Tool for Reaching the Unreached in Nigeria*. Open and Distance Learning education offers more flexible, free and easy access to students. It has been proven overtime that the conventional mode of education cannot cater for the entire student community, making open and distance education very essential. ODL brings knowledge to those learners who are ordinarily neglected by the conventional learning setting such as traders, entrepreneurs, prison inmates, people living in isolated areas like islands, women whose culture or religion deprives of educational socialization, school dropouts, fulltime workers who want to further their education but are constrained by their jobs, and others. The author examined the roles ODL plays in reaching the unreached in society with a view to encouraging its optimal deployment, in order to serve the educational needs of the masses.

The following paper in this issue from Ghana, and was submitted by **Yaw Odame Gyau** evaluated *Towards Perception and usage of Social Networking Sites among Students in the Ghana Institute of Journalism*. The study adopted Random Stratified sampling technique to respond to three hypothetical issues: 1. That Students' frequency in using social networking sites will not significantly relate to their research and learning; 2. That there is no significant relationship between frequency of using social networking sites and effective advertising of goods and services; 3. That there is a significant relationship between student-perception of social networking sites and frequency of use. The study revealed that students perceived social media as an interesting tool useful for research and learning and concluded that communication students enjoy using social media, but the use of the platforms for learning is limited.

The final paper in this issue by **Muhammad Aliyu, Issah Saadat, Abdusshaqur Abdulrrahman, Bakare Zainab Oluwawemimo, and Abiodun Musa Aibinu** examined *Learning Management System – A Review on the Adoption of Collaborative Tools for Learning*. Learning Management System (LMS) is a software platform that provides learning opportunities to learners over dispersed locations. This paper

highlights the effect of LMS on students' ability to learn and their performance and factors that may influence the adoption of the LMS platforms. The authors recommended a methodology for establishing a student-centred approach, and collaborative learning.

Beginning with this edition, the editorial team is pleased to welcome on board its new Editor-in-Chief, Professor Olufemi Peters, Vice-Chancellor of the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN). The editorial team appreciates the authors for their submissions and its reviewers for ensuring quality. We look forward to disseminating high-quality contributions that showcase research in open and distance learning as well as technology-enabled learning.