

IMPACT OF OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING IN THE 21ST CENTURY (MOTIVATION FOR A LIFE – LONG LEARNING)

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Abstract

This paper focuses on open and distance learning in the 21st century. Open and distance learning is a method of study specifically designed for students who are separated from teachers by distance, an electronic learning performed via communication technologies like computer and the Internet. The paper looked at the goals of open and distance learning which is to deliver educational services in a manner that would be more learner-friendly and would motivate learners to realize that learning is a life-long affair, enrich the knowledge base of students in regular school program as well as others who cannot afford to attend full-time schoolings. One out of the features of open and distance learning is that it provides a systematic means and platform for self-study carried on by the willing learner separated by the factors of time and space from the source of teaching. The forms of open and distance learning include, online learning, e-learning, and blended learning just to mention a few. The study looked at the advantages of open and distance learning such as flexibility, on the job learning while its disadvantage include lack of social interaction, and its format is not ideal for all learners. Distance learning programs can act as a catalyst for institutional innovation and are at least as effective as face-to-face learning programs, especially if the instructor is knowledgeable and skilled. It recommended that prospective students in distance learning programs should be computer literate before enrolling in the program. Federal Government of Nigeria should establish computer laboratories with the state-of-the art computer systems equipment and connected to the internet at all levels of learning.

Keywords: Open and Distance Education, 21st Century, Motivation, Lifelong Learning

Introduction

In this 21st century, learning (education) can be found at home, work and the office. One of the educational processes that has made this possible is the Open and Distant learning (ODL). Open and distance education refer to the teaching and learning situation in which instructor and learner are engaged in interactive instructional setting though separated geographically by time and space. According to Messo (2015), Open and Distance learning is defined as an education and training in which using multimedia learning resources and lecture notes posted online, rather than attending classroom sessions, are the central features of learning experiences, while (Okebukola, 2009) stated that Open learning or education implies removing barrier such as restrictions to time and place of learning. He explained distance to mean that “the learner and the teacher are physically separated from each other and teaching takes place via print, electronics and telecommunications media.

Surbhi (2018) referenced that ODL allude to an instructive framework wherein instructors and understudies however isolated by separation yet to accomplish the

fundamental coordinated effort among educator understudy, despite everything keep in touch and communication with each other utilizing ICT foundations to accomplish wanted targets, a separation learning framework needs to utilize innovation, to accomplish the longing goals. In ODL method of learning, understudies learning is self – paces and innovation – intervened. Average ICT instruments use for ODL incorporate satellite conveyance, web – over the Internet, CD OR DVD-ORM plate that are hyperlinked to the web, video-cuts, video-conferencing, mixed media, sound conferencing, radio and video tape. In spite of the fact that there are numerous meanings of open and separation discovering that by the Commonwealth of Learning is embraced in light of the fact that it embodies the substance of every single other definition. It expresses that open and separation learning allude to instruction and preparing in which utilizing learning assets, instead of going to study hall meetings, is the focal component of the learning experience (Hong Kong University 2014). Open suggests "expelling hindrance to learning, for example, limitation on schedule or spot of study" while Distance signifies "the student and the guide are genuinely isolated from one another and instructing happens by means of print, gadgets or potentially broadcast communications media.

The most effective tool for ODL is video conferencing which allow instructors to address a large number of students in distance locations at the same time permitting both synchronous and asynchronous learning as it facilitates live interactions supported by a two-way video feed. (Brain, 2017). Offering over the Internet and periods of on-campus learning that is why ODL supports lifelong learning. Lifelong learning is mostly associated with learning that occur in schools, colleges, and universities assuming that learning must only come through formal education. Yes, having good qualifications and certificates through formal education is important and usually the first process of learning and may maximize our opportunity and potentials to find good, more satisfying and better jobs, but we need to enhance our status and improve our skills regularly, to do this we most learn at every opportunity we have.

Schooling is only one type of learning there are several other ways to further our knowledge and develop more skills we need throughout life and to be more successful in our chosen career. According to the (Commission of the European Community 2006), lifelong learning is continuous, deliberate and voluntary pursuit of knowledge carried out either for personal or professional purpose. Skills You Need.com (2019), mentioned that lifelong learning is learning and skills acquired anywhere which is unavoidable and is about creating and the maintenance of positive attitude to learning for both personal and professional development. Every lifelong learner is motivated to learn and to develop him or herself.

The Business Dictionary stated that motivation is that factor that stimulates a desire, and gives energy to people or a person to have a continuous interest, and to be committed to a particular task to attain a goal. In learning situations, motivation has several effects on students learning:

1. It keeps them focused on achieving particular goals,
2. Increases the time, interest and concentration they give to a particular task,
3. And the determination to succeed. (Study.com 2018).

Montel, (2019), agreed that learning is self-initiated which is usually aided by motives leading to the persistence of the learner to learn, therefore, most motives of lifelong learners hinges on what benefits they gain from learning. Some of these benefits of lifelong learning are:

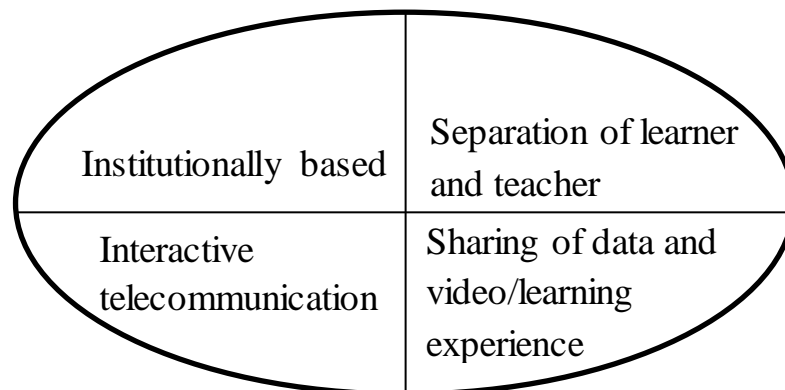
1. To acquire new qualification,

2. To increase employability and promotion prospect,
3. To broaden their knowledge,
4. For better contribution to the community,
5. For person and professional satisfaction. (reed.co 2011)

Concept of Open and Distance Education (ODL)

Open and Distance learning has become a common name for the use of telecommunication to enhance learning. It involves the use of Internet and telecommunication to achieve an extended classroom or learning (Rouse 2018). Simonson (2005) viewed ODL as “institution-based and a formal education where the learner is separated, from the instructor and interactive telecommunications systems are used to connect learner, resources and instructor”.

The Association for Educational Communication and Technology (AECT), published a monograph that explains this definition (Schlosser and Simonson, 1999). Four main components comprise this definition. These are graphically shown in figure 1.



ODL is often times replaced with the term on-line learning depicting a special form of E-learning. It is a way of learning remotely, a method of study specifically designed for students who are separated from teachers by physical distance, an electronic learning performed via communication technologies like computer and the Internet. About the Author[edit]

Tinio (2019), opined that integration of ICT at all levels of education is very important to lifelong learning since most learners are the employed, open and Distance learning gives them the opportunity to learn and for them to learn, they must be computer literate and the knowledge of the use of ICTs. Thus, ODL is a way of acquiring knowledge and skills through the mediation of information and instruction, which encompasses all technologies and choosing forms of learning at a distance. (United States Distance and Learning Association 2018).

Ghosh, (2012) confirmed that ODL focus on open access to education and training and on making learners free from the constraint of time and place and offering the choice of from flexible learning opportunities. It has a great impact on all aspects of educational delivery system, it has grown so fast because of the rapid development of Internet-base information and the World Wide Web in particular and so has peculiar philosophy.

Philosophy

Gava, Gustavo, and Luiz (2014) outlined the principles underlying the philosophy of distance education as:

- The learning procedure should focus on the student's developed understanding and support autonomous and basic reasoning;
- Learning arrangement ought to be adaptable with the goal that students can pick where, when, what and how they realize just as the pace at which they will learn;
- Prior learning, related knowledge and showed skills ought to be perceived with the goal that students are not pointlessly banished from instructive open doors by absence of fitting capabilities.
- Learners ought to have the option to aggregate credits from various learning settings.
- Providers ought to make the conditions for a reasonable possibility of student achievement.

Note that the way of thinking of separation training and the standards basic it are not selective with regards to the student populace focused on. This is concerning the misinterpretation that open and separation learning is just focusing on the individuals who can't bear the cost of the assets to get to ordinary (eye to eye) training or the individuals who are scholastically second rate. Despite what might be expected, open and separation learning is a comprehensive instructional stage that caters for any individual who wants great training however obliged by components, for example, separation, age, time, occupation and different conditions to go to grounds based training.

Goals of Distance and Open Education

The goals of distance learning irrespective of the model is to make educational opportunities available to a large number of learners especially those who would have been denied education due to their work schedule, geographical locations and other indispositions. The objectives of distance and open education according to the Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004,), Anuonye (2013) and Anuonye and Ukegbu (2012) are as follows:

- Give access to quality instruction and value in training open doors for the individuals who in any case would have been denied get to.
- Address uncommon issues of bosses by mounting exceptional authentication courses for their workers at their workplace.
- Provide a chance for those who did not avail themselves the opportunities to go to school but who are still within the age range for Universal Basic Education to make up for their short-comings or to become literate and continue with life.
- Enrich the knowledge base of students in regular school programs as well as others who cannot afford to attend full-time schoolings.
- Convey instructive administrations in a way that would be more student well-disposed and would propel students to understand that learning is a long lasting issue.
- Enhance the impact of inner and outer cerebrum channel in tertiary establishments by using Nigerian specialists as instructors paying little mind to their areas or work environments. Types of ODL.

According to ACS Distance Education (2018) ODL programmes can be carried out in different forms including the following delivery mechanism;

- Traditional ODL (print based education)
- Projects (mentor guided research)
- Video or Audio courses
- Real Time conferencing
- Online
- E- Learning
- Blended learning

Traditional ODL: This is a paper-based form of education done via correspondence i.e. the posting of course materials in form of study guides, lecture notes and text books. But with the rapid change in the world today, such materials can easily become outdated but if materials are printed from a data base that can easily be updated at will and are allocated adequate relevance for maintaining content, then the traditional ODL will maintain its relevance in the 21st century.

Projects (mentor guided research): This involves students being assigned to supervisors (mentors). Its relevance is commonly used for post graduate courses. Guidelines and instruction are provided for students to follow and the academic expert or supervisor provides support for the students as they work through the project. This mentor will also be given defined responsibilities which will include 'to provide guidance and direction', 'to monitor student progress, and 'to record the student's strict adherence to guidelines given'. All these can be done both online and face-to-face modes of instruction.

Video or Audio courses: These forms of learning have been used extensively over the years both to give a complete course and in blended learning situations. Recorded audio and video are used to deliver learning, they can be sent online to students with guidelines to listen and study.

Real time conferencing: This mode of learning is done via telephone hook-ups Internet and Video-conferencing.

On-line: This involves the use of instruction and information resources transmitted via the Internets. Lecture notes and course materials are viewed and read on Web sites which maybe text, photographs, diagrams, graphics etc. The students are given information on the course and the instruction they will follow to help guide them through the study.

E-learning: This is a form of online learning; it does not depend on Internet links but the courses and lecture notes are viewed on a computer screen. Course materials can be in video formats, automated assessment, access to online library and other support facilities.

Blended learning: This is the use of two or more delivery modes. It may involve on-campus, e.g. (laboratory classes), seminars project defenses, online and E-learning.

In ODL system learning occurs mainly through learners' interaction with learning resources and not with live teachers as is the case in the conventional system. By providing learning resources to the learners the system allows them to study whenever and however the desire.

Beneficiaries of Open and Distance Education

- A. The individuals who are in customary work or focused on other family care duty,
- B. The individuals who are genuinely found excessively far away from the instructive association or wellspring of the administration,
- C. The individuals who are too poor to even think about affording the different expenses of grounds based instruction
- D. Those who lack the formal qualifications necessary to gain entry to conventional university education,
- E. those who are qualified to gain entry to campus-based education but could not as a result of limited infrastructural facilities such as lecture halls, hostels, recreational centres and dearth of social amenities such as pipe borne water, electricity and healthcare delivery centre

Advantages

GODistanceLearning.Com (2020) have outlined the advantages and disadvantages of open and distance learning. These are:

- i. Lots of adaptability: With separation learning courses, understudies can finish their course work from pretty much anyplace gave there is a PC and web association. This permits understudies to work when and where it is increasingly helpful for them without pressing in planned classes to an effectively bustling life.
- ii. No driving: Taking a course online can be one approach to eliminate exorbitant gas or open transportation. Since understudies can frequently tele-commute to finish their class tasks, both time and cash are spared in removing the excursions to and from class. There is hazard decrease.
- iii. Various decisions for schools: Even in the event that you live in a network with not many or no universities, separation taking in permits you to browse a wide assortment of schools to finish your instruction. You may discover online schools that have some expertise in your specific field or one that can give an incredible general training. In any case, your choices for training will be extraordinarily extended.
- iv. Lowered costs: Prices for online courses are commonly less expensive than their nearby partners and you won't need to stress over driving, moving or getting feast plans nearby, some extra advantages to gaining from home.
- v. Learn while working: As separation learning can for the most part be finished on your own timetable, it is a lot simpler to finish separation learning courses while working than progressively conventional instructive projects. Keeping your activity gives you more pay, understanding and steadiness while finishing your degree giving you less to stress over and more opportunity to concentrate on your examinations.

Disadvantages

- i. Absence of social cooperation: If the homeroom condition is the thing that you love most about learning, you might need to make a stride back and reevaluate separation learning. You will probably get some collaboration on talk rooms, conversation sheets and through email, however the experience will be very extraordinary, from the customary courses. There is nonattendance of direction and advising administrations that understudies regularly need.

- ii. Format isn't perfect for all students: Not every person is a perfect possibility for web based learning. On the off chance that you realize you have issues with inspiration, delaying and needs, bunches of individual consideration from an educator, you might need to take some time to consider before joining up with an internet learning program.
- iii. Some managers don't acknowledge online degrees: While a dominant part of bosses will, there are some who despite everything see a shame connected to remove learning. Understand that your online degree may not be the perfect apparatus for some activity fields.
- iv. Requires flexibility to new innovations: If you have never been one to adore working with innovation, you will most likely get much less out of an online course than your more educated partners. Ensure you feel good working with PCs and with online projects before you pursue a class.
- v. Not all degree courses might be offered on the web: The nonattendance of different sorts of learning supports and administrations, for example, research center, instructional exercise and little gathering work make the program insufficient in content. All the more so some major reasonable courses like nursing may not be offered completely on the web, all things considered, some portion of the degree is figuring out how to function straightforwardly with patients.

Conclusion

Open and separation learning (ODL) can grow access to instruction and preparing for both general masses and organizations since its adaptable planning structure reduces the impacts of the many time-requirements forced by close to home obligations and duties. Degenerating a few exercises off-site eases institutional limit imperatives emerging from the customary interest on institutional structures and foundation.

Besides, there is the potential for expanded access to more specialists in the field and to different understudies from assorted topographical, social, social, financial and trial foundations. As the populace everywhere turns out to be increasingly associated with long lasting learning past the ordinary tutoring age, organizations can profit monetarily, and grown-up learning business courses might be especially worthwhile.

Separation learning projects can go about as an impetus for institutional development and are in any event as successful as eye to eye learning programs, particularly if the teacher is proficient and gifted. Separation learning can likewise give a more extensive technique for correspondence inside the domain of instruction. With the numerous devices and projects that innovative progressions bring to the table, correspondence seems to increment in separation learning among understudies and their educators, just as understudies and their colleagues. By having the chance to be associated with worldwide organizations by means of separation learning, a various cluster of thought is introduced to understudies through correspondence with their cohorts. This is useful in light of the fact that understudies have the chance to "consolidate new conclusions with their own, and build up a strong establishment for learning".

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made:

- i. Prospective students in the distance learning should be computer literate before enrolling in the program.

- ii. Federal Government of Nigeria should establish computer laboratories with the state-of-the-art computer systems equipment and connected to the internet at all levels of learning.
- iii. The FGN should ensure that the National Open University of Nigeria maintain standards through its quality assurance of the study materials given to the distance learners. This is achievable if educational technologists are engaged in the instructional design of the course wares.

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