



EXPLORING ADULT LEARNERS' MOTIVATION TO PARTICIPATE IN ONLINE TUTORIAL THROUGH I-LEARN PLATFORM IN NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The question of participation in e-learning has been a daunting one with most learners having low morale because of poor motivation resulting in high level of attrition. The National Open University of Nigeria in order to reach out to the learners where ever they are, and to be technological compliant in line with the best practice(s) in ODL system, established the I-learn e-learning portal. The learners' participation in the I-learn online tutorial has been dramatically low. It is against drop that this paper examines adult learners' motivation to participate in Online Tutorial through I-Learn Platform in National Open University of Nigeria. The study was guided by four research questions and three hypotheses among which are what are the instructional factors motivating adult learners to participate in the i-learn platform? What are the social factors motivating adult learners to participate in the i-learn platform? What are inhibiting factors for participation in the i-learn platform. The paper also examined the level of variation in the factors motivating or inhibiting participation across gender. The study was carried out in Port Harcourt study centre. The study adopted descriptive survey research design. The population of the study was 1229 postgraduate students of NOUN out of which 301 students were sampled using the yaroyermen sampling techniques. A 29 items questionnaire, Focus Group Discussion and key Personality Interview were used for gathering data. 301 copies of the questionnaire were distributed to the respondents out of which 297 were retrieved representing 98 percent. The research questions were analyzed using mean while the hypotheses were tested using t-test statistical tools. The study reveals that the adult learners were intrinsically motivated by instructional factors, that the learners are extrinsically motivated by the artistic design of the i-learn e-learning portal, however extrinsic social factor motivating the learners is very low. The study also reveals that there is variation in the intrinsic instructional factors and extrinsic social factors motivating the learners across gender with the male adult learners been more motivated than their female counters. However, no variation was found in the artistic motivating factors. From the findings it was concluded that there is low motivation to use the i-learn

following the several inhibiting factors which are de-motivating. Based on the finding some of the recommendations were the provision of a robust learner support serve and inclusion of an introductory course in ICT and Application of ICT in ODL systems.

Keywords: Distance Learning, Adult learners, Motivation.

1. INTRODUCTION

Open and Distance Learning (ODL) in Nigeria is not new to most adult learners, its development in Nigeria can be traced to the 1940's when correspondence colleges in Great Britain provided opportunity for some Nigerian adults to enroll and study at home through correspondence for London General Certificate Examination Ordinary Level and Advance Level (GCE "O" and "A" level). Later indigenous correspondence colleges were established in Lagos, followed by the University of Ibadan Extra-Mural Studies Department as the first indigenous institution to provide open and distance learning for the award of bachelor's degree. At this time the mode of instructional delivery was the print media which was delivered through the postal system (Patrick and Abaa, 2014). Some of the correspondence institutions also had tutorial sessions in few major Nigerian cities to provide avenue for tutor-learner interaction. The use of postal system as the instructional delivery system was quite successful because of the efficient postal system then; however, the adult learners had some learning difficulties because of the quasi permanent separation of the learners and the teachers and the apparent lack of technology to drive the system. Effective participation of the adult learners was difficult, consequently only very few Nigerians who were well motivated and self-directed could achieve completion. These were some of the major reasons for the collapse of the correspondence system of open and distance learning in Nigeria.

Modern ODL system is driven by technology using synchronous and asynchronous teaching and learning system. When the National Open University of Nigeria was resuscitated in Nigeria in 2002 after the failed attempt to establish Open University in 1983, the delivery system adopted revolves around print and electronic media which includes printed instructional materials, audio and video tapes, CD ROMS, VSAT, and other Wireless communication systems (Jimoh, 2013). These are complimented by face to face tutorial facilitation. The tutorial sessions afforded the learners the opportunity to meet tutorial facilitators face to face at the study centres in major cities of the country. The face to face tutorial session enabled the learners to ask questions and seek more explanation and clarifications on areas they do not understand in the course material. The tutorial sessions last for minimum of 8 hours per semester for a course. This is organized in at least an hour on Saturdays. The tutorial session is not compulsory so any student who understands the course material very well may not have to attend the tutorial session. However, over the years there have been massive attendance and enthusiastic participation of the students in the face to face tutorial sessions as according to Tofa (2015) all participants attend the face to face tutorial facilitation. The use of face to face tutorial session do not suggest to the adult learners any paradigmatic shift in the instructional delivery system as most of the learners were already used to the traditional and conventional system of classroom learning, but when the university introduced the virtual learning system through its i-learn an e-learning portal there was a paradigmatic shift in the delivery system which seem alien to the adult learners. The learners' participation in the i-learn has been very low; this perhaps goes to collaborate the assertion of Johnson (2000) that the use of technology in education has not always been successful as envisioned. The question is what factors motivate and inhibits access of the learners in the use of the i-learn platform in NOUN as well as what significant variation that exist on the motivating and inhibiting factors on the basis of gender. To address these

issues is the problem of this study. On the basis of this background the research questions posed are: what are the instructional, social and artistic motivating factors to access ilearn platform among adult learners in NOUN; and what are the inhibiting factors to access the ilearn platform of NOUN? Is there the variation in the extent of factors motivating and inhibiting access to the ilearn platform across gender? On the basis of these research questions the following null hypotheses were posed and tested:

Hypothesis 1: The female and male adult learners in NOUN do not significantly vary in their instructional motive to access the ilearn platform.

Hypothesis 2: The female and male adult learners in NOUN do not significantly vary in their social motive to access the ilearn platform

Hypothesis 3: The female and male adult learners in NOUN do not significantly vary in their opinion of the factors inhibiting their access to ilearn platform.

The rest of the paper is divided into six parts. Following the introduction is a brief description of the NOUN i-learn e-learning portal; a description of how it works and the various forms as well as how the students can participate in the various platforms. This is followed by the theoretical framework which provides the prism and analytical fulcrum upon which the study is anchored. The third section of the paper elucidates on the methodology adopted to collect and analyze data. This is followed by presentation of results and discussion of findings. In the sixth and final section we reflect and draw conclusions on our findings.

1.1 How the i-learn platform works and how to participate in the NOUN i-learn

How does the i-learn e-learning portal works? The NOUN i-learn platform was specially designed to make learning exciting and well-rounded to the learners as the ODL system is self-directed and the learners may feel isolated. The i-learn platform provides an avenue for the learners to interact with the facilitators, ask question and get answers, meet and discuss with other learners, download course materials and increase their network (NOUN, 2016). To do this the student login to the university website.¹ Every student is expected to create their own profile and they can access the site using their matriculation number which is the student unique identity number or email address and a password. The profile includes the photograph, name, phone number, and email address of the learner and other details of the learner. The profile can be edited from time to time. Any student who has created his or her profile but could not access the site for any reason outside poor internet connectivity, the student has learner support centre that can be contacted through web support link.² For the student to find their facilitator, the student on opening the profile clicks on “My Network” then click on “Facilitator”. Both the facilitator and the student can initiate class discussion with the student and among the students. For the students to participate in such class discussion the student clicks on “My Courses” on the site navigation menu at the left page and select the course. The student on doing that will first access the content tab on the course and then select the class discussion tab and select the discussion from the list of discussion. Students can view past discussions and can make comments on active discussions (active discussion has green button in front of it). There is also what is called Course forum where students share knowledge with other students on topics that relate to a particular course. For a student to participate in the

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Course Forum, the student has to click “My Course” then click “Course Forum” then click on existing topic of discussion, the Course Forum is a platform for the students to share knowledge on topics that relates to a particular course. The site also has a list of course forum on the dashboard created by either the students on the course or the facilitator. The i-learn platform also afford the learners the opportunity to ask their facilitator questions on their course to clarify difficulty areas. In this aspect other student can also provide answer to questions asked by their follow student. To use this feature, the students have to click on “Ask a Question” tab on the site navigation menu and a course list of all previously asked questions on that course will be displayed. To ask a new question, the student clicks “New Question” button at the top of the list of previously asked questions; then a new question page will appear, and the question will be asked with a title. When all the necessary procedure is followed the question will appear in the list of previously asked question and it will be visible to the facilitator of the course and the students of the course. The students can also take a self-assessment test on this platform and submit the assessment on the same site. To do this, you have to click on “view all” on the “My Course” and then click on “Practice Test” followed by clicking “Take self-assessment”. The students’ results are also uploaded in the i-learn platform and they can check the result on-line through the i-learn platform.

The i-learn platform of NOUN has a news session for both the students and the facilitators. The news session is for update, announcement and information on how to make maximum use of the NOUN i-learn platform for e-learning. Furthermore, the platform also has an introduction video that the students can download to show them how to use the i-learn platform for e-learning. To download, click the download button beneath each chosen video. You can also view specific videos under each module by scrolling down to each module and clicking “videos”. This same process applies to smart books and audio. Learners can make notes in the smart books and even share the note with friends or to groups that they belong to.

Northedge, (2007) pointed out that group discussion of various kinds is a common feature of degree level course in ODL. The open and distance learners most often learn through group interaction. The NOUN i-learn platform provides an avenue for group discussion. The learners in a particular course can form study group. The i-learn platform has podcast which clearly state how the discussion group can be set up and how people can join existing study group. The learners can as well find their classmates through clicking on “My Network” then click on “classmate”. A learner can find a new user to add as friend by typing in the name of the person in the search bar at the top of the “Classmates or “My Study Centre”. The students can compose and send message to one another through the i-learn platform.

Studying in the open and distance learning system has radically and drastically taken a new and evolving dimension with the aid of Information and Communication Technology (ICT). Open Universities now organize felicitation online, post lectures notes, reading lists and assignments online, students meet in electronic chat rooms and conferences, submit assignments and check examination results. The National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) has been able to achieve this fit in the open and distance learning through the i-learn application. This application is a mobile app and can be downloaded from the app store on Blackberry and Android by the students.

2. THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

There are multiple theoretical perspectives to explain what motivate adult learners to engage or participate in open and distance learning and to use distance education technology in particular. The adult learners according to Knowles, Holton and Swanson (2005) have a deep need to be self-directed in learning. Adult learners are motivated to learn when the learning environment accord them some degree of

independence to determine what to learn, how to learn and when to learn. O'lawrence (2007) asserted that self-directed learning was the key factor in the choice of distance education environment in preference to the traditional learning environment among adult learners. According to him, the flexibility offered to adult learners in the ODL system was the motivator for their choice of this learning system. This is because as adult learners they are mature learners with a lot of responsibility and busy schedule. The ODL system enables them to balance family, career, and social responsibility with their learning and so can complete higher education program. Various technological tools such as discussion groups (chatting online) can provide a forum for self-directed learners to self-assess, to highlight the value of the individual contributions to the learning community, and to provide a means of reflection on their learning experience (Greer and Mott 2010). Similarly, Bonk, Wisner and Lee (2004) had observed that web-based technologies tend to increase learner responsibility, it makes them to be peer instructors, facilitates self-learning and critical reflection. Bonk et al also pointed out that video conferencing facilitates a relationship orientation while chatting online engender task orientation, and that all these will amount to shared learning experience that will drive a higher level of development of self-directed learning.

Derntl and Motschnig-Pitrik (2004) also pointed out that the combination of face to face with web-based instructional delivery system helps to establish patterns for alternating the teaching strategies and technologies and that such combination will not only allow for the much desired flexibility by the adult learners but it will enhance the process of learning and further advance self-directed learning. However, most adult learners do not accept web mediated asynchronous courses as alternative to live instruction. According to Brewer, (2004), asynchronous web based classes tend to have higher attrition rate and lower retention rate compared to traditional classroom system. Adult learners still prefer face to face interactive learning environment. In the ODL system such interactive learning is made possible with the synchronous web- based delivery system. This delivery system reduces alienation and its attendant frustrations rather it provides the participants the sense and feeling of being in the traditional classroom. Video conferencing and the chat room discussion can clearly overcome the limitations of the computer mediated and asynchronous delivery system but if the synchronous delivery systems are not integrated properly and understood it will not guarantee quality instructional outcome.

Within the framework of self-directed learning theory is the community of inquiry. Researchers have used the community of inquiry as a broad explanatory frame to address the importance of collaboration in achieving higher order learning outcome in ODL. This framework can also be used to explain the motivation to learn in the virtual learning environment. According to Ghosh, Rude-Parkins and Kerrick (2012) the community of inquiry emphasizes cognitive interdependence and social interdependence as the fusion of individual and shared learning outcomes. The community of inquiry is applicable to integration of technology in ODL and the motivation to learn by the adult learners in the virtual learning environment because it encourages learners to listen to one another, build on one another's ideas, challenge one another to supply reasons for otherwise unsupported opinions, assist others in drawing inferences from what has been said (Lipman cited in Garrison and Anderson (2003). Garrison et al identified three key elements of learning communities that can help educators to motivate adult learners within the framework of the community of inquiry. These are cognitive presence, social presence and teaching process. Cognitive presence here refers to the extent to which learners are able to construct and confirm meaning through sustained reflection and discourse in a critical community of inquiry. The second key element is Social presence. This refers to "the ability of participants in a community of inquiry to project themselves socially and emotionally, as real people, through the medium of communication being used" (Garrison and Anderson 2003:28). This definition contrasts to some extent with the more commonly

held definition of social presence as asserted by the Social Presence Theory enunciated by Short et al. (1976), which places greater emphasis on the technology or the media characteristics aspect of social presence instead of the participants or users. The third key element according to Garrison and Anderson (2003:29) is teaching presence. This is defined as the “design, facilitation and direction of cognitive and social processes for the purpose of realizing personally meaningful and educationally worthwhile learning outcomes”. While teaching presence is required to integrate all elements of a community of inquiry in a way that is congruent with the needs and capabilities of e-learners, social presence enables the teacher to motivate learners to engage in collaborative e-learning in computer supported environments. The lack of verbal communication in certain virtual environments presents a special challenge for establishing social presence, making it difficult for e-learners to relate with their team members (Garrison and Anderson 2003). Similarly, the use of chat room in the online learning programme creates community of inquiry and this community is a major motivating factor for the adult learners to continue to participate in the virtual learning environment.

Apart from the self-directed learning theoretical perspective to explain adult learners' motivation to learn and enroll in the ODL system, in recent times scholars have used the Use and Gratification (U&G) theoretical perspective. This theoretical perspective evolves from communication theory. The theory has been used to profile audience motivation to use radio, television (including cable television), and video recorders. It is now used to explain how motivated online learners are (Cutler and Danowski, 1980; and Stafford, Stafford and Schkade, 2004). The U&G was also used to explore students' motivation to use IP teleconference in Distance Education by Stafford and Lindsey (2008). Here gratification is seen as an aspect of satisfaction reported by the users. The U&G theory is used to explain what people do with a medium. From this theoretical perspective people are motivated by their self-defined uses and goals. The theory also holds that people are motivated to use a particular media base on the media content and enjoyment of the media usage experience. It has also been pointed out that media users are motivated by two broad elements. These are content gratification and process gratification. Content gratification refers to the message been carried by the medium and process gratification refers to the act of use itself (Stafford & Lindsey 2008). From this theoretical perspective, users of internet may be motivated by enjoyment of the usage process characterized by random browsing and site navigation as well as web site information such as news, weather or travel information. Following the emergence of social media the third element of media user motivation was identified. This is the social interactive benefits that the internet foster and the gratification the users drive form the interactive communicative aspects of the medium (Stafford & Lindsey 2008).

Both the self-directed learning theory and the U&G theoretical perspective provide an effective analytical armory for explicating adult learners' motivation to use any media technology in the ODL system. This is because the adult learners prefer the immediacy of application of knowledge gained in any learning process they embarked on. However, we may apply more of the U&G perspective in this study to examine how content, process and social gratifications serve as motivator to the adult learners in use of the i-learn platform of NOUN.

3. MATERIALS AND METHOD

The methodology adopted for this study is the descriptive survey design. The study was carried out in Port Harcourt study centre of the National Open University of Nigeria. The study population was made up of all the Post-graduate students of the centre. The population is 1,229 registered students for 2014/15 and 1015/16 academic session at the Post-graduate level. This is made up of 141 students for M.Sc programme, 290 students for MBA programme, 160 students for PGD programme in the 2014/2016

academic session; while in the 2015/2016 session there are 331 students for M.Sc programme, 104 students for MBA and 203 students for PGD. To determine the sample size, we use the Yaro Yerman sampling techniques.

The formula is: $n = \frac{N}{1+N(0.05)^2}$ This is expressed as $\frac{1229}{1+1229(0.05)^2} = \frac{1229}{1+3.07} = 301$.

Thus our sample size for this study is 301 students. We adopted the proportionate sampling techniques to ensure that each of the various strata which are the various programme of study was effectively represented. The 301 students represent 24 percent of the population. Thus for every strata, 24 percent of the students were randomly sampled. Our choice of the Post-graduate students is based on the fact that all the Post-graduate students are mature adult learners and most of them are workers or self-employed and are therefore most probably capable of having ease access to the internet.

The instrument used for the study is a questionnaire designed by the researchers. The instrument is a four-point rating scale made up of 29 items. The questionnaire was administered during the second semester's registration period in 2015/16 academic session. We distributed 301 questionnaires and 297 were retrieved representing 98 percent. Of this number, 165 respondents were female and 132 were male. The distribution of the questionnaire was done with the assistance of the Programme Counselors. The instrument was validated by adult education experts and guidance counselors. To complement the questionnaire in the collection of data, the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) was used. We conducted two sessions of FGDs, one each for the 2014/2015 session and 2015/2016 session. The participants were drawn from each of the programmes. 2 persons were selected from each of the programme; thus making each session of the FGDs to be made up of 6 participants. Conscious effort was made to ensure gender balance and so in all sessions we had 3 males and 3 female students. Why we tried to ensure gender sensitivity in our selection of the FGDs participants, is to enable us to find out if there would be significant variation in the response on the basis of sex. We also went further to conduct key personality interview with the student counselors and the online tutorial facilitators. Specifically, we interviewed 3 online tutorial facilitator each of who takes between 4 to 6 courses online. This is to enable us ascertain the actual level of students' access and participation in the online facilitation and chat room discussion. We used mean statistics in the analysis of the response on the motivating and inhibiting factors to participate on the i-learn platform in NOUN; while we use t-test statistics to determine if there is any significant variation on the basis of gender.

4. RESULTS

4.1 Motivating factors to Access the ilearn platform

We found the instructional factors that motivates the learners to access the ilearn platform. Our finding shows the extent to which female adult learners login to ilearn platform for online facilitations and to chat with course mates on topical issues is low. The mean response of the female respondents in this item is 2.3 and 2.1 respectively. The female adult learners have higher extent of motivation to use the ilearn platform in 7 other instructional areas. On the other hand, the table shows that the male adult learners have higher level of motivation to access the online platform in all the nine motivating factors. These are to sources for material, to chat with course mates on topical issues, to do self-assessment test, to obtain latest news, to participate in course forum, to ask facilitators questions, to check examination results, to receive tutorial online, to access smart books and other research materials.

Our data analysis shows that the social motivating factor to access the ilearn platform among both the female and the male adult learners in National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) is low. The grand mean response on social motives for accessing ilearn platform is low.

The female grand mean is 2.11 while the male grand mean is 2.46. The finding also shows that, to share notes with friends or study group is the least motivating factor for the use of ilearn platform among the female adult learners whereas to send messages through the ilearn platform is the least motivating factor among the male adult learners in NOUN. The mean response of the respondents in this regard is 1.9 for both male and female. However, to share notes with friends or study group is the highest social motivating factor among the male adult learners. The female adult learners have the lowest extent of social motivating factor to access the ilearn platform of NOUN.

We further found that, artistic motivating factor to access the ilearn platform is high with a mean response of 2.5 among female and male respondents. The male respondents have a mean response of 2.6 and 2.5 respectively for style of presentation and features of the NOUN portal as a motivating for to access the ilearn platform; whereas among the female respondent the mean response on the feature of the portal is 2.9 which is an indication of higher extent of motivation to access the ilearn platform. However, the female respondents have very low mean score response to the style of presentation in the portal. The mean response of the female respondents is 2.2.

When we analysed the possible inhibiting factors to adult learners, our result shows several factors inhibits adult learners in NOUN from accessing the NOUN ilearn platform. Among female adult learner, the inhibiting factors are poor Information and technology (IT) skill with a mean response of 3.0 timing for the group discussion online not convenient with a mean response of 2.8, and timing for tutorial facilitation not convenient with a mean response of 2.5. Whereas among the male adult learners the inhibiting factors to access the NOUN ilearn platform are facilitators' style of facilitation and course delivery as well as news on the i-learn platform not regularly updated. The inhibiting factors that are common to both gender are: frequent network failure, lack of access to internet facilities, Non-presence of facilitators at the scheduled time, and untimely response to questions sent through e-mails. On the other hand, the table shows that the respondents are not intimidated or shy in using the platform to chat online and does not have the dislike to join online study group. The mean responses for these items are very low indicating that these items are not inhibiting factors for accessing the ilearn platform.

Table 1: Summary of t-test Analysis on the instructional motivating factors to access the NOUN ilearn platform among female and male Adult Learners.

Variable	N	Mean	SD	DF	t-cal	t-crit.	Decision
Female	165	2.76	0.75	295	4.85	1.96	Reject Ho1
Male	132	3.0	0.78				

The summary of t-test statistics in Table 1 above shows the t-critical value of 1.96at 0.05 level of significance and the calculated or observed t-value of 4.85. Since the observed or computed t-value is greater than the t-critical value we reject the null hypothesis that female and male adult learners do not varies significantly in the instructional factors that motive them to access the ilearn platform of NOUN, therefore the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted indicating that there is variation across gender in the instructional factors motivating adult learners to access the ilearn platform in NOUN.

Table 2: Summary of t-test Analysis on the social motivating factors to access the NOUN ilearn platform among female and male Adult Learners

Variable	N	Mean	SD	DF	t-cal	t-crit.	Decision
Female	165	2.11	0.66	295	5.0	1.96	Reject Ho1
Male	132	2.46	0.82				

Table 2 above shows that there is significant variance in the social factors motivating female and male adult learners in NOUN to access ilearn platform. The mean response among the female adult learners is 2.11 with standard deviation of 0.66, while the mean response of male adult learners is 2.46 with standard deviation of 0.82 t-calculated is 5.0 and the t-critical is 1.96; thus

since the observed or computed t-value is greater than the t-critical table value we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis; this therefor indicates that male and female adult learners do significantly varies in the social factors motivating them to access the ilearn platform.

Table 3: Summary of t-test Analysis on the factors inhibiting female and male Adult Learners from access the NOUN ilearn platform

Variable	N	Mean	SD	DF	t-cal	t-crit.	Decision
Female	165	2.27	0.69	295	0.12	1.96	Accept Ho1
Male	132	2.26	0.71				

Table 3 above shows that there is no significant variation in the factors inhibiting female and male adult learners in NOUN to access ilearn platform. The mean response among the female adult learners is 2.27 with standard deviation of 0.69, while the mean response of male adult learners is 2.26 with standard deviation of 0.71 t-calculated is 0.12 and the t-critical is 1.96; thus since the observed or computed t-value is less than the t-critical table value we accept the null hypothesis and reject the alternative hypothesis; this therefor indicates that male and female adult learners do not significantly varies in the factors inhibiting access to the ilearn platform.

5. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The study reveals that there are several motivating factors that prompt adult learners in NOUN to participate in ilearn platform. These could be instructional, social and artistic. However, these motivating factors vary across gender. The result reveals that instructional motives are the highest motivating factor with a grand mean of 2.76 for the female respondents and 3.1 for the male respondent compared to other motivating factors like social and artistic motives for participating in the ilearn platform. The finding that the learners are motivated by instructional gratification they can obtain from the platform tends to further collaborate the assertion that the adult learners do not just want to engage in any learning activities for the sake of learning, but they are intrinsically motivated to pursue lifelong learning (Brookfield cited in Collins and Martin, 2010). The result of the study reveals that male adult learners have higher mean scores in several instructional motives for accessing the ilearn platform than their female counterparts. The male seems to be more motivate to participate and access the ilearn platform for online instructional delivery, to access smart books and other research materials online, to obtain latest news from the university, to do self-assessment test, to ask course facilitators questions on course of study, and to chat with course mates on topical issues. However, the female adult learners were found to be higher and more motivated in the areas of checking examination result online. This also explains the fact that the adult learner is a goal related and oriented learner and is motivated to succeed in his learning endeavour. This finding further collaborates the observation of Singh, Singh and Singh (2013) that male and female students in open and distance learning have varying level of motivation.

In the Focus Group Discussion (FDG) when asked why the women are quick in checking their result online, one of the female participants has this to say: "as a mother, it has been long I left school, I never knew I can still go to school again and even write examination and pass,... each time I heard that result has been released I become anxious and sometime afraid because if I fail my children and husband will look down on me as I use to boost of my performance when I was young in secondary school..." Another participant in the FDG said we have to quickly check the result online because that is the only platform in which results are published and most often the results are resealed late just a few weeks into the next semester examination and towards the end of submission of Tutor Marked Assignment (TMA)... We have to check the result so that any one we fail we can quickly register it and do the TMA before the examination. You know everything in this university is time bound, they said they are flexible but I don't see the flexibility in the programme, there is time when the portal will be open for course registration and there is also time when the portal for TMA will be open if you miss it you are on your own... and

have to wait for the next semester.’’ Checking result is an extrinsic motivating factor. Kawachi (2006) identified wanting to pass examination and with a good grade as an academic extrinsic motivator while to prove one’s capability to people is a personal extrinsic motivator to the ODL learners. The statement of one of the participants in the FGD also shows that the female adult learners are extrinsically motivated than their male counterparts in respect of checking result online. Furthermore, the findings of this study affirms assertion of Singh et al (2013) that given the characteristics of the adult learners as self-reliant, and been engaged in some other occupation, the personal aspiration of the learners extends merely to passing the examination and obtaining the degree.

The study also reveals that female learners’ participation in the ilearn tutorial facilitation is low as compared to their male counterparts in the programme. In the FDG most of the participants claim that they do not login to the ilearn platform for tutorial class because this requires having data and that they do not have money to buy data to access the server. One of the participants has this to say: ‘‘I do not access the ilearn platform for tutorial.... no data to do so; the Port Harcourt centre does not provide wi-fi for people to access free internet within the premises of the centre as it is provided in centres like Lagos and Abuja... in fact the university should stop charging ilearn fee of Two thousand five hundred Naira since we do not access it.’’ When one of the facilitators who facilitate online was asked on the learners participation in one of the Key Personality Interview (KPI) she has this to say: ‘‘when it is time to facilitate, I wait for students to login and it is until I get a student online that I can start the facilitation. Our people seem to have low knowledge of the online facilitation otherwise they would have been studying at the comfort of their home....., those who participate at the online facilitation are likely to pass the examination because most of the times discussion centres on the most critical aspect of the subject matter of the course and examination clues are also given’’.

The study also reveals that the social motive of participating in the ilearn platform of NOUN among the adult learners is low. The social motivating factors include finding friends, joining study groups, sharing notes, and chatting with friends. This is a portal designed like the social network but specifically designed for only NOUN students. If you are not a registered student you cannot access the platform. The social uses of the ilearn portal is low ilearn platform. It can be used to find friends, share notes, send message and chat with friends. When the social uses was examined across gender to ascertain if there is variation in the level of motivation among female and male adult learners, the hypothesis which states that the female and male adult learners do not varies in their level of social motivating factors were rejected indicating that there is variation in the level of social motivating factors. The female adult learners seem to have low social motivating factors to use the ilearn platform. In all the six social variables the female respondents have low mean response while the male respondents have three high responses out the six. What does this imply? This implies that the adult learners as busy learners do not have enough time for social interaction. This study therefore, collaborate the observation of Gall (2013) that the demands of work and family obligation can limit the time available to focus on studies; and by extension on social networking which the ilearn platform seem to provide among the learners in NOUN. Group learning is an important and effective learning strategy for the ODL students according to Northedge, (2007). In NOUN what seem to be common is the physical study groups rather than online study group. The ilearn platform provides for the online study group but the result of the study shows that the learners have not been forming or joining study groups online, they rather prefer the physical group. In the FDG the participant all express their dislike for the online study group. Some said they were not aware of the existence of such platform in the ilearn. For those who express their dislike the reason advanced is their inability to buy data to enable them access internet. If the ilearn portal has been effectively used there would have been stronger and friendlier sense of community of learners at the postgraduate level. Our observation shows that most of the postgraduate students do not know their course mates.

The implication of the absences of functional online study group is that the adult learners at the post graduate level may not have adequate forum for sharing and reflecting on their learning experiences. Greer and Mott (2010) pointed out that group discussion and chatting online

provide a forum for self-directed learners to self-assess, to highlight the value of the individual contributions to the learning community, and to provide a means of reflection on their learning. The study also shows that among the adult learners in NOUN community of inquiry is low. The community of inquiry is applicable to integration of technology in ODL and the motivation to learn in the virtual learning environment because it encourages learners to listen to one another, build on one another's ideas, challenge one another to supply reasons for otherwise unsupported opinions, assist others in drawing inferences from what has been said according to Lipman as cited in Garrison and Anderson (2003). Furthermore, the implication of this study is that the second key element of motivating adult learners in the ODL system as identified by Garrison et al which is Social presence ("the ability of participants in a community of inquiry to project themselves socially and emotionally, as real people, through the medium of communication being used) is very poor. The ilearn platform has not been able to achieve this perhaps because of the level of low awareness of the diverse uses of the platform and the problem of connectivity expressed by the learners.

From the theoretical perspective of U&G, users of internet may be motivated by the way they randomly browsing various site and the way they navigate on the web as well as web site information such as news, weather or travel information. These refer to the artistic aspect of the web design. The study reveals that the learners both female and male are motivated to access the ilearn platform because of the artistic design. When asked in the FDG what specific background presentation that attract their attention, the participants all said the background is colorfully designed with the Lagos office complex at the background, you can get news from the university. They said you they can download the app into their Android phone. One of the participants has this to say. "I most time brow the site on my phone just for the sake of browsing at my leisure time; you know we women like pressing our phone when we do not have any serious thing to do". This study thus validates the theoretical framework of U&G.

Despite these motivating factors there are several inhibiting factors that the students experience that could constitute a de-motivator. The study reveals that poor IT skill, regular network failure, and untimely response to the questions asked by learners and response to inquiries and absence of the facilitator on the site at the scheduled facilitation time are de-motivating factors for the adult learners to participate in the ilearn platform. On whether there is variation in the extent in which these factors de-motivate the learner across gender, the hypothesis which states that female and male learners do not varies in their inhibiting factor was accepted which implies that that there is no significant variance in the factors inhibiting female and male adult learners in NOUN to access ilearn platform. When asked in the FDG what are the inhibiting factors in accessing the ilearn platform the participants were unanimous in pointing out that the platform is not working properly in the way it is intended, that you can post question on a course it will never be responded to, that there is no class discussion in some courses, that as a student when you rise topic for discussion nobody will respond. Greater percentage of the learners said they have stopped assessing the ilearn platform for tutorial facilitation, chatting and group discussion except that of checking news update, checking examination results, obtaining TMA and submitting TMA.

5. CONCLUSION

Motivation can be triggered intrinsically, from within or internal; and extrinsically, external. Not everyone is motivated by the same things, but overall a person is more vested in their learning experience when they are intrinsically and extrinsically motivated, so designing ODL technology that promote intrinsic and extrinsic motivation makes the process more meaningful. Motivational design focuses on motivation to learn by concentrating on appealing and engaging learners. The adult learners are self-directed learners but because of their busy engagements, social and family commitments, they would prefer learning systems that is convenient and flexible. The ilearn platform is a technological driven ODL system; an e-learning portal designed to make learning exciting and well rounded. The extent to which the learners use

the portal depends on how appealing and convenient the system is. The motivation to participate in the ilearn platform of NOUN among the adult learners varies and these could be instructional, social and artistic. The instructional motives are intrinsic in nature and very germane for the success of the learners in the study. But learners continuous access and dependence in this delivery system depends on the level of gratification according to the U&G media theory. From the findings it can be concluded that the ilearn portal has not been very effective and maximally used by the adult learners following the several inhibiting factors which are de-motivating. The social motive to participate in the ilearn platform such as chatting and sharing notes with friends is very low and these varies among the female and male learners with the male adult learners more motivated to use the portal than the female adult learners.

The success of the learners depends on how enthusiastic and participatory are the learners in the delivery systems in the ODL, having some inhibiting factors to participate lower morale and therefore de-motivate the learners. Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that NOUN should provide a robust learner support services on ICT for the learners; organise intensive orientation programmes for fresh students and continuous orientation programme for old students on the system of delivery in Open and Distance Learning and in particular on the use of ilearn portal; inclusion of an introductory courses in ICT and Application of ICT in ODL systems that covers broad areas of needs in the ODL system such as course delivery. Also there should be continues capacity building programmes for the Instructional and Tutorial Facilitators not only in ICT skills but on facilitation skills in online conferencing and chat room discussions online; the facilitators should also be given andragogical training to enable them understand the character and learning needs of the adult learners in the ODL system so that they can effectively assist the adult learners to effectively use ICT in ODL system. Also the institution should upgrade their ICT system and provide wi-fi in all the study centres to enable the learners at the various centres have free internet connectivity.

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