

Adult Learners Motivation and Participation in Mylearningspace/Online Facilitation in National Open University of Nigeria.

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Abstract. Participation in e-learning and online facilitation has been a daunting one with most learners having low morale seemingly as a result 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 technologically compliant in line with the best practice(s) in Open and Distance Learning system ODL, established the Mylearningspace platform with the (captivating inscription) (learn anytime, anywhere and anyplace). The learners' participation in the Mylearningspace online facilitation has been dramatically low. It is against this backdrop that this paper seeks to examine adult learners' motivation to participate in online facilitation through the MyLearningspace Platform established under the Learners Content Management Directorate of the National Open University of Nigeria. This study was guided by three research questions and three hypotheses. The paper also delved into the level of variation in the factors that either motivates or inhibits participation in online facilitation across gender. The study focused in two study centers in Lagos ie Lagos and McCarthy study centers. 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 Taro Yamane sampling techniques. A 20 items questionnaire, Student Group Discussion and key Personality Interviews 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. This study opined that adult learners were intrinsically motivated by instructional factors like the videos, facial contact/interactions with facilitators and the inherent zeal to get value for their money

since most adult pay tuition from their own pockets. Again the study revealed that adult learners are also extrinsically motivated by the artistic design of the MyLearningspace platform, however extrinsic social factors motivating the learners are very low. The study also revealed that there is variation in the intrinsic instructional factors and extrinsic social factors motiving 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 relatively low motivation to use the Mylearningspace 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 service, introductory course in ICT for all facilitators and students even as a prerequisite for recruitment/admission and the inclusion of real facilitators and students as part of the artistic design of the platform.

Keywords: Open and Distance Learning (ODL), Adult learners, Motivation, Virtual, Synchronous, Asynchronous.

1. Introduction

The National Open University of Nigeria is adjudged to be a modern pioneer University in the Open and Distance Learning (ODL) system in Nigeria. This is traced back to when it was first established in 1983 and as such ODL is not new to most adult learners in Nigeria. According to Patrick and Abaa (2014), the development of Open and Distance Learning (ODL) 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.

As it is, Modern ODL system is driven by robust technology, using synchronous and asynchronous teaching and learning system (Chukwuma & Patrick, 2015). 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. These are complimented by face to face tutorial facilitation. In 2018 the university introduced the virtual learning system through its learner’s Content Management Directorate, an e-learning portal, immediately this introduced a paradigm shift in the delivery mode of teaching/learning system. This pragmatic move came with daunting challenges on management, facilitators and the learners/students.

Thus, the question of what are the possible variables capable of motivating and inhibiting access of learners in the use of the Mylearningspace platform in NOUN. A deliberate effort to address these issues constituted the problem of this study.

Research Questions: What are the most effective instructional, social, and artistic motivating factors to access Mylearningspace platform among adult learners in NOUN? What are the factors that impedes on access to the Mylearningspace platform of NOUN? Is there any variation in the extent of factors motivating and inhibiting access to the Mylearningspace platform across gender?

On the basis of these research questions, the following null hypotheses were posed and tested:

Hypothesis 1: adult learners in NOUN irrespective of gender do not significantly vary in their instructional expectations to access the Mylearningspace platform.

Hypothesis 2: adult learners in NOUN do not vary in their social expectations to access the Mylearningspace platform

Hypothesis 3: Students/learners in NOUN irrespective of gender do not significantly vary in their opinion of the factors impeding their access to Mylearningspace platform.

2. How Mylearningspace platform works and how to participate in the NOUN Mylearningspace

The NOUN Mylearningspace platform was specially designed to make learning exciting and interactive to the learners as the ODL system is self-directed and the learners may feel part of the teaching and learning process. Mylearningspace 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 achieve this, students are expected to login to the Mylearningspace site on <https://mylearningspace.nouedu2.net/node>, create their profile and can access the site using their matriculation numbers. The matriculation numbers are student’s unique identity number or a password that can be used to gain access to the site. Students outside poor internet connectivity who are not able to access the site for any other reason are expected to contact, the student LCM support Centre that can be contacted through lcms@noun.edu.ng. The Discussion forum is where students share knowledge with other students on topics that are related to their course of study and topic of discussion posed by the facilitator, here again students can meet, introduce and get to know each other well. Students can also take a self-assessment test on this platform and submit the assessment as directed by the facilitator on the same site. The Mylearningspace platform has a news session which is for announcements, updates, and feedbacks on the performance of their study centers. Furthermore, the platform also has an introduction video that the students can download to show them how to use the Mylearningspace platform for e-learning.

Studying in the Open and distance learning system the (NOUN perspective) has taken a revolutionary dimensions involving the aid of Learners Content Management System (LCMS), Management of Information System (MIS), Information and Communication Technology (ICT) etc. The National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) has been able to achieve this fit in the open and distance learning through the Mylearningspace platform.

3. Theoretical Perspectives

Adults’ learners are basically students with previous knowledge and clear ideas about what works for them. Most times they are busy and stressed-out individuals out of work schedules, who hate wasting time. They want learning experiences that will help

them meet their needs and achieve their goals. To facilitate learning to this set of people one must understand how adults learn best. When creating any type of e-learning course or programme, it is important to base the design on a good understanding of adult learning theories. Thus: There are multiple theoretical perspectives to explain what motivates adult learners. Thus this study considered Andragogy as the most appropriate: The concept of andragogy taps into the feeling that adults learn best when they feel the need to learn, especially when they have some inputs into “what, why and how they learn. The characteristics of adult learners and how they bring in their experiences to guide them along the journey of learning forms the essence of the Andragogy theory, developed by Malcolm Knowles in the 1970s. According to Knowles et al (2011), adult learners differ from children in the following six ways:

Need for Knowledge: Adults know “why” they should learn.

Motivation: Adults are driven by inner motives. They will learn if they want to learn.

Willingness: For adults, the willingness or readiness to learn comes from perceived outcome and relevance of the knowledge. They want to know how learning will help them better their lives, and they learn best when they know that the knowledge has immediate value for them.

Foundation or Experience: Adults bring with them rich reserves of experiences that forms the foundation of their learning. They analyze, rationalize, synthesize, and develop new ideas or tweak old ones through the filter of their experiences. As an instructional designer, you should tap into their well of experiences to help them make connections, perceive relevance, and derive inspiration.

Self-Direction: Adults are self-directed individuals who want to take charge of the learning journey. They are independent beings who want to be in control.

Orientation to Learning: Adults learn best when they “do.” They find relevance in task-oriented learning, which they can align with their workplace realities.

4. Methodology

The methodology adopted for this study is the descriptive survey design. The study was carried out

in study centres in Lagos 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 740 registered students for 2018/19 academic session at the Post-graduate level. This is made up of 240 students for M. Sc programme, 390 students for MBA programme, 110 students for PGD programme. To determine the sample size, we use the Taro Yamane sampling techniques.

The formula is: $n = \frac{N}{1+N(0.05)^2}$ This is expressed as $\frac{740}{1+740(0.05)^2} = \frac{740}{1+3.07} = 201$.

Thus, our sample size for this study is 201 students, representing 14 percent of the population. We adopted the proportionate sampling techniques to ensure that each of the various strata which are the various programme of study was effectively represented. Thus for every strata 14 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 researcher. The instrument is a four-point rating scale made up of 20 items. The questionnaire was administered during the second semester’s registration period in 2019_2 academic session. We distributed 201 questionnaires and 189 were retrieved representing 98 percent. Of this number, 102 respondents were female and 87 were male. The distribution of the questionnaire was done with the assistance of the Counselors and staff. The instrument was validated by adult education experts and guidance counselors. To complement the questionnaire in the collection of data, the Group Discussion (GD) was used. We also went further to conduct key personal interviews with the student counselors and online academic facilitators. We used mean statistics in the analysis of the response on the motivating and inhibiting factors to participate on the Mylearnspace platform. While t-test statistics was used to determine if there is any significant variation on the basis of gender.

5. Results

Motivating factors to Access the Mylearningspace platform

Table 1: Instructional Motivates to Access the Mylearningspace platform of NOUN

S/N	Factors motivating Access to Mylearningspace platform	Female Mean	Female SD	Male Mean	Male SD
1	To source for instructional materials	3.1	0.38	2.0	0.72
2	To chat with course mates on topical issues	4.1	0.46	2.50	.52
3	To participate in course forum to share knowledge with other students.	3.3	0.42	2.20	.69
4	To ask course facilitators questions on course of study.	4.3	0.63	2.20	.79
5	To do self-assessment test.	4.0	0.78	4.3	0.77
6	To obtain latest news from the university.	4.0	0.78	4.1	0.85
7	To check result online.	4.2	0.76	4.3	0.87
8	To receive tutorial facilitation.	4.1	0.63	4.2	0.79
9	To access smart books and other research materials.	3.9	0.99	4.2	0.79
	Grand Mean and Standard Deviation	4.76	0.75	4.1	0.78

Table 1 indicates the instructional factors that motivates the learners to access the MyLearningspace platform. The table shows that the extent to which female adult learners’ login to Myleanspace 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 3.3 and 2.20 respectively. The female adult learners have higher extent of motivation to use the Mylearningspace. 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.

Table 2: Social Motives for accessing Mylearningspace Platform of NOUN

S/N	Factors motivating Access to Mylearningspace platform	Female Mean	Female SD	Male Mean	Male SD
1	To chat with course mates on social and non-topical course issues.	2.3	0.73	1.8	0.81
2	To join study group.	2.1	0.55	3.0	0.98
3	To share notes with friends or study group,	1.9	0.94	3.2	0.88
4	To find friends.	2.2	0.65	2.0	0.49
5	To find people and course mates.	2.2	0.65	2.9	0.94
6	To send messages.	2.0	0.49	1.9	0.84
	Grand Mean and standard Deviation	2. 11	0.66	2.46	0.82

Table 2 shows that the social motivating factor to access the Mylearningspace platform among both the female and the male adult learners in NOUN. The grand mean response on social motives for accessing Mylearningspace platform is low. The female grand mean is 2.11 while the male grand mean is 2.46. Table 2 also shows that to share notes with friends or study group is the least motivating factor for the use of Mylearningspace among the female adult learners whereas to send messages through the Mylearningspace platform is the least motivating factor among the male adult learners. 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 Mylearningspace

Table 3: Artistic Motives for accessing Mylearningspace Platform of NOUN

S/N	Factors motivating Access to Mylearningspace platform	Female Mean	Female SD	Male Mean	Male SD
1	The style of presentation in the portal.	2.2	0.65	2.6	0.62
2	The features of the portal.	2.9	0.94	2.5	0.59
	Grand Mean and Standard Deviation	2.55	0.79	2.55	0.61

Table 3 shows that the artistic motivating factor to access the Mylearningspace 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 force to access the Mylearningspace platform; whereas among the female respondent the mean response on the feature of the portal is 2.9. However, the female respondents have very low mean score in the style of presentation in the portal. The mean response of the female respondents is 2.2

Table 4: Inhibiting Factors to Access the Mylearningspace Platform of NOUN

S/N	Factors motivating Access to Mylearningspace platform	Female Mean	Female SD	Male Mean	Male SD
1	Having Poor Information and technology (IT) skill	3.0	0.93	2.3	0.64
2	Frequent network failure	2.5	0.61	2.6	0.46
3	Lack of access to internet facilities	2.6	0.52	2.5	0.68
4	Timing for the group discussion online not convenient	2.8	0.72	2.4	0.61
5	Timing for tutorial facilitation not convenient	2.5	0.53	2.1	0.51
6	Facilitators' style of facilitation and course delivery	2.4	0.62	2.6	0.97
7	Feeling intimidated and shy to chat with others online	1.9	0.83	1.9	0.83
8	Have dislike for the groups online	1.9	0.83	1.9	0.83
9	Feeling that the topic for discussion is irrelevant	1.7	0.58	2.3	0.59
10	News on the i-learn platform are not regularly updated	2.3	0.64	2.9	0.99
11	Non-presence of facilitators at the scheduled time.	3.3	0.78	3.0	0.84
12	Untimely response to questions sent through e-mails	2.7	0.58	2.6	0.58
Grand Mean and Standard Deviation		2.27	0.68	2.26	0.71

Table 4 shows the several factors inhibiting adult learners from accessing the Mylearningspace platform. Among female adult learners, 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 has a mean response of 2.8, and timing for tutorial facilitation not convenient has a mean response of 2.5. Whereas among the male adult learners the inhibiting factors to access the Mylearningspace platform are facilitators' style of facilitation and course delivery. The inhibiting factors that are common to both genders are: frequent network failure and lack of access to internet facilities.

Table 5: Summary of t-test Analysis on the instructional motivating factors to access the NOUN Mylearningspace 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 5 shows the t-critical value of 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance and the calculated t-value of 4.85. Since the 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 Mylearningspace, 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 Mylearningspace.

Table 6: Summary of t-test Analysis on the social motivating factors to access the NOUN Mylearning platform among female and male Adult Learners

vVariable	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				

The table 6 above shows that there is significant variation in the social factors motivating female and male adult learners. 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 computed t-value is greater than the t-critical table value we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis; this therefore indicates that male and female adult learners do significantly varies in the social factors motivating them to access the Mylearningspace.

Table 7: Summary of t-test Analysis on the factors inhibitingfemale and male Adult Learners from access the NOUN Mylearningspace platform

Variable	N	Mean	SD	DF	t-cal	t-crit.	Decision
Female	165	3.27	0.69	295	0.12	1.96	Accept Ho1
Male	132	3.26	0.71				

The table 7 above shows that there is no significant variation in the factors inhibiting female and male adult learners to access Mylearningspace 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 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 Mylearningspace platform.

6. Discussion of Findings

The study reveals that, there are several motivating factors that prompt adult learners in NOUN to participate in Mylearningspace platform. These could be instructional, social, and artistic. The result reveals that instructional motives is 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 Mylearningspace. Again, male adult learners have higher mean scores in several instructional motives for accessing the Mylearningspace platform than their female counterparts.

In the Group Discussion (DG) 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..." We have to check the result so that any one we fail we can quickly re-register. You know everything in this university is time bound. 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. Most of the participants claim that they do not login to the Mylearningspace platform for tutorial class, because this requires having data. One of the participants has this to say: "I do not access to the Mylearningspace platform for tutorial.... no money to do so". When one of the facilitators 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.

The study also reveals that the social motive of participating in the Mylearningspace platform among the adult learners is low. 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 vary in their level of social motivating factors were rejected indicating that there is variation in the level of social motivating factors. The Mylearningspace platform provides for the online study group but the result of the study shows that the learners have not been joining study groups online.

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 community of inquiry is applicable to integration of technology in ODL and the motivation to learn in the virtual learning environment. 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.

From the theoretical perspective of andragogy, the study revealed that the learners both female and male are motivated to access the Mylearningspace platform because of the artistic design. When asked in the DG 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. One of the participants has this to say. "I most time browse the site on my phone just for the sake of browsing at my leisure time.

Despite these motivating factors, there are several inhibiting factors. 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. 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 vary in their inhibiting factor was accepted which implies that that there is no significant variance in the factors inhibiting female and male adult learners.

7. Conclusion

Motivation can be triggered intrinsically, from within or internal; and extrinsically, external. Not everyone is motivated by the same thing, 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.

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