A NEW DISTANCE EDUCATION JOURNAL "PJDOL" FROM ALLAMA IQBAL OPEN UNIVERSITY, PAKISTAN
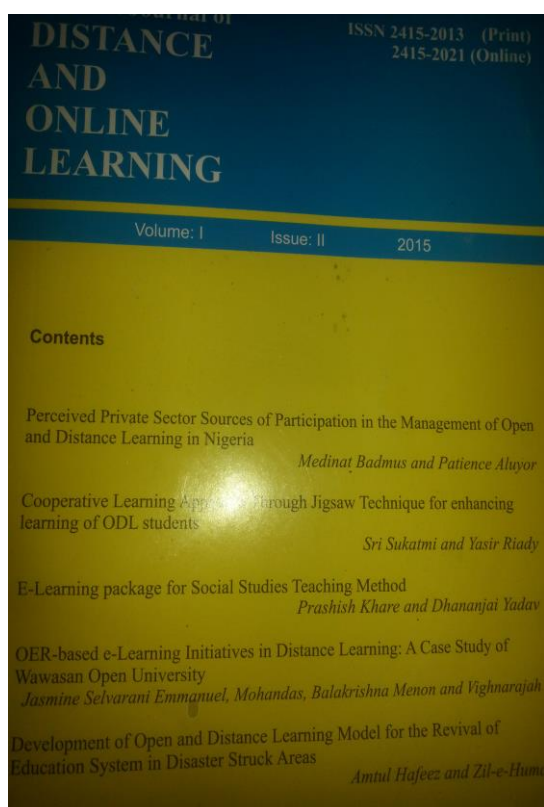
Pakistan journal of Distance & Online Learning (PJDOL)

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Welcome Pakistan journal of Distance & Online Learning (PJDOL) to the distance education world, published by Allama Iqbal Open University, Islamabad, Pakistan with 2515-2013 (print ISSN and 2415-2012 (online ISSN.

Pakistan journal of Distance & Online Learning (PJDOL) Pakistan journal of Distance & Online Learning (PJDOL) is a peer-reviewed journal of the Allama Iqbal Open University. It is biannual journal both in printed and online versions.

The journal publishes original papers, review papers, conceptual framework, case studies, empirical research and scholarly material in the fields of open, distance and flexible education.

The journal aims to promote research and disseminating information about distance education. PJDOL explores topics about all teaching-learning relationships where the learners are geographically separated, and communication takes place through radio and television, internet, teleconferences and recordings, printed study guides, and multimedia systems such as audio and video broadcasts, teleconferences and internet.

This biannual journal publishes empirical research, case studies and scholarly material in the fields of open, distance and flexible education. The journal covers all aspects of distance education, non-formal education, adult education, online learning, e-learning, m-Learning, u-learning distributed learning, asynchronous learning, and blended learning.

The Editorial Board for the journal invites researchers, scholars and practitioners of distance and online education to contribute articles. For more information, visit http://pjdol.aiou.edu.pk

EDITORIAL

In the past few decades, the learning paradigm shifted from traditional instruction to technology-enhanced learning. Open and Distance Education system acknowledged catering to the needs of those who are not able to go to formal educational institutions. Advances in e-learning, expansion of information & communication technology, globalization, entry of Public & private sector universities are some of the factors contributing to the growth of open and distance learning programs/courses.

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In Pakistan, some universities began offering ODL programs. At present there are two universities and 16 directorates of Distance Education in formal universities offering ODL programs. However, this expansion posed some challenges to the ODL system. These challenges range from instructional design to student support services. Quality assurance and accreditation of distance learning programs and institutions are also a big challenge, as the formal universities offering ODL programs without basic requirements and modalities and other pre-requisites for offering distance and online courses. They deliver courses/programs in unsuitably structured system and through untrained faculty.

The quality of distance education programs remained a matter of concern throughout the world. In Pakistan, quality assurance of higher education programs/institutions was greatly felt due to opening of increased number of private institutions for-profit. Also the public universities funding dried out and movement to curtail government influence in university matters took strength. Higher Education Commission took a number of steps including establishment of National Accreditation Council for Teacher Education (NACTE). The council accredited a number of teacher education program of higher education institutions. Now, the NACTE is in the process of developing standards for accreditation of ODL programs and institutions. The recent emergence and increased institutions and programs of higher education in the country demand development of quality standards by the accrediting body/Higher Education Commission. The NACTE should review the existing guidelines keeping in view the nature and issues of ODL and develop standards accordingly. However, the NACTE must have representatives knowledgeable about ODL. The issues that must be addressed in formulation of standards for accreditation of distance education are:

Mission and objectives of the university, human resources, programs, instructional material, physical resources, learners, student support systems, library, Assessment/examination, research & technology and finance.

All these challenges call for research that will guide practitioners of distance education about planning, organization, development, delivery and assessment of the distance and online courses. The launching of this journal will fill this gap and it will provide a platform for researchers of distance and online education to share their research findings with the rest of the world. I extend my thanks to editorial board and administration of the university for helping in this noble cause.

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