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From the Editor

Dear readers of intWOJDE

Welcome to the first issue of the year 2016, Women Online Journal of Distance Education, intWOJDE. First of all, greetings and happy New Year Wishes team to all you from intWOJDE.

As known well the first issue of the intWOJDE appeared at the begin of April, 2012¹ as Volume 1 Number: 1. intWOJDE aims to establish some more new channels of communication the for the women in distance education world in general from the entire world to its specific target.

Among these goals of the intWOJDE there are to share experiences on effective use of distance education in formal and non-formal education, to provide a communication network among distance education experts in order to able to define new strategies for dealing with the issues of distance education for women. In international scope, this scholarly e-journal will publish refereed articles, researches, case studies, book/conference reviews focusing on the women issues and challenges of providing research and information services to women learners participated or enrolled at any of level of distance education. It will particularly strive to meet the continuing education needs of practitioners by providing a forum for the discussion of extended learning policies and practices, and trends in information technologies as they impact the delivery of any kind of the student support services for distance learners and institutions. And also, intWOJDE reflects that the disciplines of Women' position, benefits, advantages and disadvantages in Distance Education/Learning, Open Learning areas which are interdependent with one another, as education and technology increasingly affects our system, students, colleagues, distance educators, administrators, researchers and our own professional practice and articles ranging from theoretical to practical studies, across a wide range of interests and topics.

Than we are giving a place to some women and DE related sections such as "Notes for Editor", "Re-published Material/s" section which is aiming to inform you by presenting earlier printed articles, reports, speeches or other documents. Other one is "Success Stories" Section inform you success stories of the women who are DE learner or graduated from DE institutions and related subjects women in DE world. Another section is "Book review/s", which aims to inform you from literature and promote women and DE related books from the DE field. With this issue, we started for publishing "Interviews" section which we are planning to give a place some women expert's thoughts in this section. These experts are mostly selected from deal with any sectors who are successful in their professional carriers such as academics, administrators, lowers, artists, engineer etc.

As we are being a intWOJDE team, we decided to dedicate this issue is to the Emeriti Prof. Dr. Christine Von PRUMMER, who was one of pioneer academics studying mostly on "the Situation of women as distance learner" subject in the distance education literature.

She strongly defended and emphasized in her writings deal with women education that *"This is especially true where gender discrimination meets discrimination based on class, race or other factors affecting equal access. Women are also more likely to live in situations which make it difficult to impossible to attend face-to-face classes and/or to afford the direct (e.g. tuition fees, books) and indirect (e.g. childcare) costs associated with attending classroom-based educational programs. It is therefore reasonable to expect that women are the larger target group of distance education."*

In this issue, is published 2 articles, by 4 authors, from 2 different countries. These published articles are arrived to intWOJDE from Nigeria and Pakistan. In addition we placed 6 re-published materials, one book review, one success story and two interviews.

Our first article, entitled as "Inaccessibility of Women Attending Open Distance Learning (ODL) in National Open University Of Nigeria (NOUN), Ekiti-State Branch", written by Adebayo Lawrence OJO, from Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC), Sheda-Abuja, NIGERIA. This paper meritoriously sets out to explore and provide an up-to-date picture on sociological impediments that lead to inaccessibility faced by women attending ODL in their quest to study, specifically at the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) Ekiti-State, Branch. Proportionate sampling technique was used to select three hundred (300) respondents from part 1-4 based on their physical appearance at the centre premises and their claims, evidence presented (Student Identification Card) that they were students of NOUN.

Finding revealed that Institutional, Situational and ICT were significant to the sociological impediment that leads to women inaccessibility on ODL in the covered area of study, because all were big than 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study will be utilized instrumentally and theoretically in informing policy directives by public universities presently involved in ODL programmes at large.

Second article is reached from Pakistan as join research written by Abdul Jabbar BHATTI, Nabi B. JUMANI and Samina Yasmin MALIK from an *International Islamic University Islamabad*. Their study is aimed that finding out effect of mobile phone on the participation rate of women in higher education. The objectives of the study were to find out effect of mobile phone to; encourage women to participate in higher programmes, guide the students during the course, and prevent these students from leaving the programmes uncompleted. It was expected that mobile phone would increase students' participation and decrease dropout. This experimental study consisted of two groups- experimental group and control group, each comprised of 200 women who passed the BA (14 years education) in 2007 and did not continue their further education. The women were selected by convenient sampling method. The experimental group was further divided into four sub-groups.

The study was delimited to the district Muzaffargarh of Punjab province of Pakistan. It was found that the use of mobile phones; increases the participation rate of the women into institutions of higher education, decreases the drop out ratio of enrolled students, and enhances the performance of students of the higher education institutions.

In addition, one of re-published materials is related with "usage mobile" by women in this issue. So their research should be seen an important.

In this issue "re-published" section contains 6 published materials parallel with our journal content. The first one titled as "WOMEN IN DISTANCE LEARNING: 2 ND CHANCE OR 3 RD SHIFT?", presented and written by Aggeli, A., & Vassala, P. Their paper is focusing on the female way of being a distance learner. At first to point out the crucial reasons why women attend open, distance, and flexible learning programs, as well as their objectives and their motives and then, reporting on the factors they consider when they select a distance learning program or course.

Finally, they explore the obstacles hindering women's access to distance education or impeding their successful studies and we will suggest actions that would make their attending easier.

2nd published material was relate winning women' competitive race with extended. This paper By: John Leh, CEO, Lead Analyst at Talented Learning, LLC. It introduces us to the topic(s) of extended enterprise learning and outlines the very tangible, and measurable business benefits. It is discussing tools and technology which we will need to engage the voluntary users of the extended enterprise and give you steps and advice to get going at our organization.

The 3rd published material is very interesting project with conducted ten years before and titled as "Distance Education and Women: Final Project", conducted by Rose Ann SWANSON under supervene by Dr. Gina Wong-Wylie on March 16, 2005. In this project is mention that many women are attracted to the flexibility and accessibility of DE and its potential for attainment alongside childrearing. For women who have committed to raising their children at home, pursuing their education by DE is seen as an ideal opportunity and possibility. As such, one major consideration in examining DE for women is childbearing/parenting and how women incorporate this significant time into their already existing professional goal-oriented activities. Pregnancy and motherhood affects all aspects of a woman's life including the biological, psychological, and social; finding a way to balance these factors along with educational goals is vital to their success. Many women have made a conscious decision to pursue tertiary education alongside childbearing and childrearing without prior knowledge as to what this endeavor entails.

The 4th published material was a report about gender. Summit Gender 7 Europe, Report is titled as "Report From The 2015 European Gender Summit To The European Commission and European Parliament, Research and Innovation Quality through Equality: Mastering Gender in Research Performance, Context and Outcomes, November 6-7 2015, published in Berlin, Germany. The aim of the Gender Summit platform is to help advance gender mainstreaming efforts in research and innovation by making sure that the science community and stakeholders in science endeavors are well acquainted with relevant research evidence and benefits of gender sensitive and responsive knowledge production, application and communication. Helping achieve success in delivering gender objectives in Horizon 2020 is one of the main goals of the European Gender Summit and suggest recommendations for actions, arising from the assessment by the European Commission of the first year of HORIZON 2020.

The fifth and sixth published materials belongs tor UNESCO reports. The fist on titled as "Gender and Mobile Learning", reported by UNESCO'2015. The main question is to findout satisfied answers for how this is best accomplished and what role technology can play is the starting point for Mobile Learning.

The second report Mobile Learning Week 2015 (MLW 2015) aimed to illuminate how increasingly ubiquitous, affordable and powerful mobile technology -from basic handsets to the newest tablet computers- can be leveraged to accelerate high quality education for women and girls, especially those living in disadvantaged communities. The event aims to help direct the world towards greater gender equality, both in education and beyond.

In this issue a book is reviewed by intWOJDE. This book provides valuable insights into the situation of women in distance education around the world. A wide variety of evidence from different countries supports the conclusion that open and distance learning has the potential to provide equal opportunities in higher and continuing education and that these are currently being missed. The author provides conclusive evidence that distance education, while involving a degree of risk to the stability of families and relationships, etc., nevertheless offers women a chance which, on balance, is worth taking.

One success story is placed in this issue. The story tell us Kate's Story, titling as "MY OPEN UNIVERSITY EXPERIENCE" which written by Kate CRUDGINGTON. She mentioned in her story that "I have always relied on literature to help me process things. I cite Ronald Dahl's *Matilda* as one of my earliest and closest friends (I'll allow a 10 second laughing break here). She knew books weren't for 'boffins' (classic year six banter) and your mind is an immensely powerful instrument which needs to be tuned, and re-tuned with all kinds of new information. It's this desire to devour the written word which made me choose The Open University and why, despite my initial traumatic entry into higher education, I never gave up. Regardless of what was happening at work or in my personal life, I always felt I could hit the books and everything would be fine. The quiet, inner knowledge that I was consistently working towards something kept me going for six strong years. People who insist they 'don't read' don't realize what they're missing".

As I mentioned above we started a new column as "Interview". We placed two interviews here. Interviews are realized by Harun SERPIL, intWOJDE, Anadolu University, Eskisehir, TURKEY on the topic of "THE ROLE AND FUNCTION OF DISTANCE EDUCATION WORLD FROM WOMEN PESPECTIVE".

The first interview is realized with Ms. Aysel OZFIRAT who was one of the pioneer people which involved in various aspects of distance education applications of the Ministry of Education. These applications are Open High School, Vocational Open High School, Public Primary School, Vocational and Technical Open Education School, and Vocational Proficiency Certificate programs. Our "Interview" section will start with her views on distance education from the point of view of the Ministry of Education which started in the 1990s.

Our the second guest is Assistant Prof. Dr. Gülser Acar DONDURMACI from Zirve University, Gaziantep, TURKEY, Istanbul branch. She has been involved in distance education since 2002. During this time, first she worked for Ahmet Yesevi International Turkish-Kazakh University and then for Zirve University, Gaziantep, TURKEY where she is still working at.

She has worked especially in the launching and managing of such systems, so she can definitely say that she is experienced in the field of distance education based on her professional and academic experience. She is emphasized in her interview that "there is growing attention paid to distance education both by the private and the public sectors in Turkey. The private sector sees distance education as an effective way of cutting training expenses for their staff".

Dear readers, int.WOJDE wishes to add new sections in its body as "Notes for Editor" and a "Conference Review", "Success Stories", "Interviews", etc. in its future issues as soon as possible. So we are waiting materials for these sections too in due course.

You can reach us online either directly at <http://www.wojde.org> To receive further information and to send your recommendations and remarks, or to submit articles for consideration, please contact intWOJDE Secretariat at the below address or e-mail us at intwojde@gmail.com



Hope to stay in touch and wishing to meet in our next Issue, 1st of April 2016

Cordially,

**Prof. Dr. Emine Demiray
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SOCIOLOGICAL IMPEDIMENTS THAT LEADS TO INACCESSIBILITY OF WOMEN ATTENDING OPEN DISTANCE LEARNING (ODL) IN NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA (NOUN), EKITI-STATE BRANCH

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ABSTRACT

This paper meritoriously sets out to explore and provide an up-to-date picture on sociological impediments that lead to inaccessibility faced by women attending ODL in their quest to study, specifically at the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) Ekiti-State, Branch. Proportionate sampling technique was used to select three hundred (300) respondents from part 1-4 based on their physical appearance at the centre premises and their claims, evidence presented (Student Identification Card) that they were students of NOUN. The study adopted descriptive research design.

The main data collection technique used for the study were questionnaire and structured by researcher titled "Sociological Impediments on Inaccessibility of Women Attending Open Distance Learning Questionnaire (SIIWAODLQ)" and validated by experts at Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti and experts in Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council, Abuja for vetting and clarity. The response from that vetting (both parties) became the basis for restructuring and reviewing questions that provided useful answers to the study. Reliability coefficient of 0.78 was derived after using Spearman Brown prophecy formula technique. Tables, frequencies and simple percentage were the key descriptive statistics used to analyse demographic information and Research question 1. Mean score of 2.50 above was used to analyse Research question 2 and present the findings while linear regression (SPSS) was used to test the Hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Finding revealed that Institutional, Situational and ICT were significant to the sociological impediments that leads to women inaccessibility on ODL in the covered area of study, because all were above 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study will be utilized instrumentally and theoretically in informing policy directives by public universities presently involved in ODL programmes at large.

Keywords: Open Distance Learning, institutional, situational, women, ICT, Education, NOUN.

INTRODUCTION

Education plays an important role in economic and social development. Therefore, many governments, Nigeria included, value basic education and equal educational opportunity. Basic education equips recipients with skills and knowledge that can enable them to deal with problems at a personal and a national level.

In developing countries, governments have enthusiastically embraced distance learning as an affordable solution to address problems of equity and access to education. The various researchers use the term distance education and distance learning interchangeably so also will this article do. Considering the global challenges of higher education, it is not surprising that Open and Distance Learning (ODL) is an important

strategy towards resolving problems of access, quality and equity (UNESCO, 2004). Adopting ODL in Universities is both the matter of responding to global demands and providing opportunities to individual who wish to fulfil their education potential.

Distance education has been conceptualized in numerous ways, but in simple terms distance education refers to a planned and regular educational provision where there is distance between the instructor and the learner. Eastmond, (1995); Kerka, (1996) cited by Ohene and Essuman, (2014) define distance education as the use of print or electronic communications media to deliver instruction when teachers and learners are separated in place and/or time. The Commonwealth of Learning defines distance education as that which refers to situations where learners are physically separated from the educational provider, communicating in writing, (using letter, mail, email, fax or computer conferencing; verbally (by telephone, audio conferencing, video conferencing); or in face-to-face tutorial sessions' (COL, 2003). Distance education or learning is an approach used by providers of education for students who study when and where it suits them best. There is continuous learning by students in this mode of education, which usually suits students who fulfil other commitments such as work, family and community.

Women represent half of the world's population and could represent half of the total productive labour force, we endorse the United Nations Development Program assertion that "it is necessary to seek cultural and educational institutions to train, prepare, and give full opportunity for woman to participate with thought and experience and practice" to develop themselves and the nations in which they live (UNDP, 2007). In addition to advancement, education provides a means for women to protect themselves from exploitation. I can optimistic that distance education, especially the use of e-learning, will move educational systems forward, especially in the most influential aspects that touch the women lives, and especially for disadvantaged or marginalized women who are otherwise denied formal education and developmental opportunities.

National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) was initially established on 22nd July, 1983 as springboard for Open Distance Learning (ODL) in Nigeria. The university, at present, has 47 study centres spread across Nigeria and operates its Administrative Headquarters located in Lagos, Nigeria. From the take-off of the university, pioneer student enrolment stands at 32,400 with over 50 programmes and 750 courses, stair casing through from certificate to diploma and degree level, and maintain a strong commitment to internationalization. The establishment of Open and Distance Learning institutions around the world is to address the education and re-educational needs of individual learners and workforce (Pierrakeas et al., 2004).

NOUN in particular, typically develop educational activities underpinned by an educational philosophy fundamentally different from those held by conventional educational systems. The main aspect of this philosophy is to promote "lifelong education" and to provide an individual with the best alternative mode of accessing higher education (Keegan, 1996) cited by (Raymond, 2012). NOUN is located along Are-Afao Road, Ado Ekiti, Ekiti-State, Nigeria with population over 4000 students offer different courses.

Institutional impediments are those caused by organisational set-up, it may be both physical and non-physical. The physical may include such things as nearness to classroom, road net-work and other academic resources such as the library. Stringent admission requirements, high tuition fees and the mode of paying these fees constitute some of the non-physical. NOUN is an institution running ODL programmes in Nigeria including Ekiti-State Branch face some impediments of serving student population which is diverse in terms of enrolment, demography, location and level of advanced knowledge prior to enrolment into programmes. Currently, ODL students are the fastest growing

segment of tertiary education in the country, in NOUN, women students, who enrol on distance education programmes, it is believed, do so for several reasons, including convenience. Distance education students who are mainly adult workers may be time-bound due to work or location-bound due to geographic or family responsibilities (Galusha, 2012).

Situational impediments are persistent and pertain to the women individual's to a particular situation. It includes process of socialization, cultural, family responsibilities, lack of support from the husband, not being taken seriously, campus climate, lack of network support for coping, time conflicts, and lack of mobility.

Thus, the ability to handle these situational impediments by women will determine ones participation in distance programmes. The individual's situation may refer to her responsibilities at home, place of work or community. Many distance women learners are within the working class bracket and are married adult learners taking care of the family.

Therefore, they need to possess the ability to balance their time for the different roles and responsibilities. Galusha (2012) asserts that students' age, type of work and marital status, lack of adequate money to cover the cost of the programme constitute an important aspect of situational impediment for women. The level of one's salary, access to loan and the desire to improve one's self for a better future may determine the urge to go for a loan to pursue further education.

There is universal recognition of the need to use Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in education as the era of globalization began, where the free flow of information via satellite and the internet holds sway in global information dissemination of knowledge. Braimoh and Osiki (2008) raise concern about this approach of restoring the teaching learning transaction in Africa because of the low development of the Information Communication Technology (ICT) sector.

It is further argued that the use of ICT in distance education poses a lot of challenges due to uneven and unequal access to computers and the internet and most importantly the fact that power supply is unstable. ODL at NOUN in Ekiti- State is presently facing impediment in information dissemination because of instability of power supply that decline the women to have access to immediate information through the internet.

Two types of skills are involved, namely, technical competence and information literacy (Mossberger et al., 2003) that people need in order to have effective access to contemporary ICT is a problem to distance learners. Accordingly, technical competence refers to the skills needed to operate the hardware and software of ICT, including the skills of using networked systems to access and share information.

Collectively, these skills have been referred to as "computer literacy" (Warschauner, 2003). Lack of these skills is a critical impediment as learner may fail to use the various physical, digital and human resources involved ICT.

The potential benefits of ODL related to its flexibility, accessibility, affordability and life based education are numerous. ODL could enable an expansion of tertiary enrolments at less cost per student than under the traditional residential campus system (Pityana, 2004), since it allows the training of more people. Greater flexibility enables ODL courses to adapt to specific student needs or work requirements, thereby enabling greater relevance. ODL also accommodates the growing demand for lifelong learning more easily than do residential programmes. Moreover, ODL can effectively reach those learners who have been denied access to higher education, for example, women who are unable to attend traditional educational programs because of household responsibilities or cultural

constraints, economically marginalized groups, and the imprisoned (Rumble, 2000). Despite the expanding growth of ODL and its perceived benefits, students who enrol with ODL have been shown to face many impediments related to individual, institutional and ICT (Cosmas and Mbwette, 2009; Mbukusa, 2009).

ABOUT the STUDY

Statement of The Problem

Open Distance Learning (ODL) has greater flexibility, relevance and its ability to accommodate the growing demand of lifelong learning education (Daniel, 2005; Pityana, 2004), and is a perseverance avenue to those who have previously one way or the other denied access to higher education to earn their degrees. Yet, studies reported that ODL students facing some impediments which lead to the high drop-out and late completion of their studies (Allen and Seaman, 2010; Zirnkale, 2004). Whereas there is an agreement on the benefits of distance learning, controversy persists with regard to certain fundamental issues among the women attending distance learning such as limited use of technology; lack of awareness of quality parameters of delivery systems among staff, general inefficiency of administrative systems and high attrition rates.

It's on this note that investigating the sociological impediments that leads to inaccessibility of women attending Open Distance Learning (ODL) in National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) Ekiti-State Branch became necessary.

Purpose of The Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the sociological impediments that leads to inaccessibility of women attending Open Distance Learning (ODL) in National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) Ekiti-State Branch.

Objective of The Study

The objective of this study was to examine impediments related to Institutional, Situational and ICT levels facing women attending distance learning in NOUN, Ekiti-State Branch.

Research Questions

The study seeks to find answers to the under listed research questions:

- What are the impediments facing women attending distance learning in NOUN
- What are the perceptions' of women attending distance learning in NOUN

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated and tested for the study:

- Institutional impediments will be a significant to women attending ODL in NOUN.
- Situational impediments will be a significant to women attending ODL in NOUN.
- ICT impediments will be a significant to women attending ODL in NOUN.

Significance Of The Study

It was the belief of my (researcher) that this research work would meet a certain expectations, findings would be beneficial to the ODL stakeholders and public at large. It will help to explain the impediments facing women attending ODL that would be the steppingstone towards its solutions. It would also provide useful information to policy maker and ODL planners, that would be useful for formulating actionable ODL policies on women in the nation. It would contribute to the exiting body of knowledge and better understanding on impediments facing women attending ODL in general.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study adopted descriptive research design. Descriptive research design is a scientific method, which involves observing and describing the behaviour of a subject without influencing it in any way. It is used to obtain information concerning the status of the phenomena to describe, "what exists" with respect to variables or conditions in a situation.

Population

The study population refers to members, individuals, groups or elements involved in the study. The population of this study consisted of all women attending ODL in NOUN Ekiti-State Branch and it focus on 1500 (One thousand five hundred) respondents respectively.

Sample and Sampling Procedures

The sample for this study was three hundred (300) women selected from NOUN study centre Ekiti-State, Branch. Proportionate sampling technique was used to select them from part 1-4 based on their physical appearance in the centre premises and their claims, evidence presented (Student Identification Card) that they were students of NOUN.

Ethical Issues

The researcher requested clearance and approval letters from Director study centre (NOUN, Ekiti-State, Branch) respectively before meeting the respondents. Prior to the main study, all respondents were informed about the purpose and process of the study and were assured that confidentiality will be maintained and that information collected was for academic purpose only.

Instrumentation

Questionnaire was the only instrument used for this study duly designed by the researcher in line with identified variables titled "Sociological Impediments on Inaccessibility of Women Attending Open Distance Learning Questionnaire (SIIWAODLQ)" and it was divided into two sections. Demographic information of the respondents was focused in section A while section B based on independent variables involved.

Validity

Validity determines whether the research truly measures that which it was intended to measure or how truthful the research results are (Golafshani, 2003). It implies that the researcher want to measure what he/she is supposed to measure. The researcher structured questionnaire were subjected to an experts at Ekiti-State University, Ado-Ekiti and experts in Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council, Abuja for vetting and clarity. The response from that vetting (both parties) became the basis for restructuring and reviewing questions that provided useful answers.

Reliability.

Reliability addresses the question of consistence of the research procedures and results. It implies the research process and its ultimate outcomes and it is the degree of consistence demonstrated in a study. In order to ensure reliability for this study, the instrument was also estimated by test-retest method and analyzed using Spearman Brown prophecy formula technique and a coefficient of 0.78 was got indicating that the instrument is reliable.

Data Collection

Three hundred (300) copies of the questionnaire were distributed and administered over a period of 6 weeks, all the completed questionnaire were retrieved immediately and a coding guide was developed to facilitate data analysis.

Data Analysis Procedures

The data was analyzed with Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 18.0 to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance and descriptive statistics of simple percentage was used for demographic information and research question 1 while mean score of 2.50 above was also used for research question 2 respectively.

Results and Discussions.

FINDINGS

SECTION A

Demographic Information

Data collected in respect of demographic information on marital status of the respondents shows that single were 112 (37.3%), married were 188 (62.7%). District of the state shows that 74 (24.7%) were from south, 68 (22.7%) were from north and 158 (52.6%) were also from central, these disparity became imperative because the study centre was located at the central district of the state that gives them the privilege. Age of the respondents pointed out that 64 (21.3%) were below 30 years, 98 (32.7%) were between 31-40 years, 78 (26%) were between 41-50 years, and 60 (20%) were 51 years above, it shows that most of the respondents whose education has been interrupted by one thing or other were involved in distance learning and those that want to elevate herself academically. Mbukusa (2009) found that most of the distance learning students are within 35 to 50 years of age and some are more or less. In contrast, Dabbagh and Bannan-Ritland, (2005) and Dabbagh (2007) documented that, the profile of the distance learner population is changing to one that is dynamic, tentative, younger, and responsive to rapid technological changes.

While Years of study reviewed that 95 (31.7%) were part 1; 80 (26.7%) were part 2; 58 (19.3%) were part 3 and 67 (22.3%) were part 4 respectively, these disproportion were reviewed, it simply because most of them were been denied on admission into direct university and they discovered that distance learning is an alternative access to education.

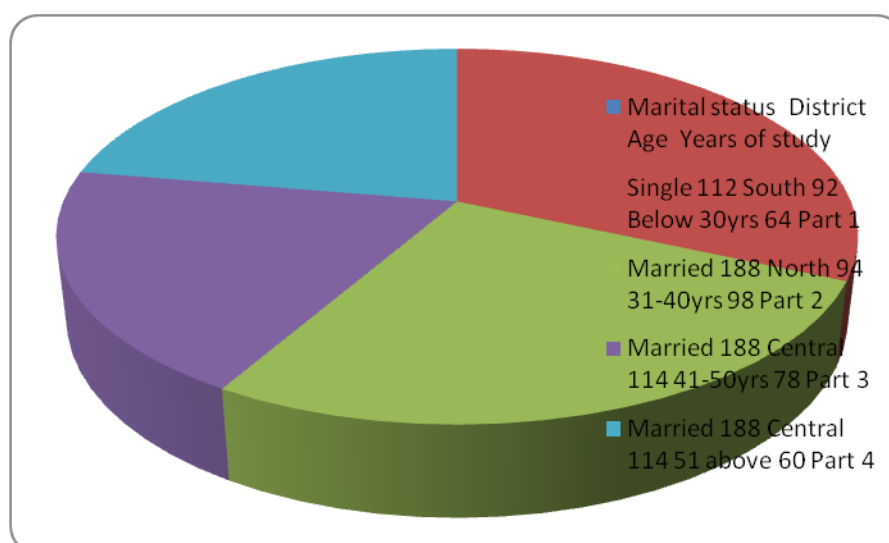


Figure 1:
Demographic information of the respondents

SECTION B

Research question 1: Impediments facing women attending distance learning in NOUN

Table 1:
Different Types of Impediment with percentages

No/s	Different Types of Impediment	Frequency	Percentage
1	Huge cost of the study for women	208	69%
2	Early marriage of the women	198	66%
3	Having new babies during the programme	186	62%
4	In-supportive by the husband/spouse.	120	40%
5	Parental rejection of the programme	168	56%
6	Occupational stress with the house work	80	27%
7	In conducive environment for the study by women	75	25%
8	Preference of the family to educate boys only	92	31%
9	Time allocation for the programme	66	22%
10	Distance covered before getting to programme Centre	70	23%
11	Spinsterhood rejection of the programme	64	21%
12	Parents refused education outside work for woman	56	19%
13	Deficiency in the general secondary exams of the women	50	17%
14	Limited disciplines by the universities on ODL programme	48	16%
15	Work condition for the women	40	13%
16	Health problems of the women	38	13%
17	Others	34	11%

Table 1. above shows result on different types of impediment facing women attending ODL in general.

Huge cost of education was the greatest impediments to continuing a formal education as showed in the table above with (69%), this was not only on cost of tuition and books but includes the cost of lost income from going to school rather than working, and also includes a complex set of substitution costs of not being available to do non-financially rewarding work that a full-time housewife and mother would do to support the family, such as producing food and cooking, caring for children and other dependents, making clothes etc., all as part of supporting other family members who are working to produce an income to support the family group. Early marriage was (66%); having new born babies was (62%); in supportive by spouse was (40%).

These impediments go hand in hand because they are all migrating from one to another. An early marriage for girls is associated with ignorance about birth control, which results in a larger family unit and spouse in supportive because of domestics responsibilities. Parental rejection (56%); occupational stress (27%); in conducive environment (25%); Preference of the family to educate boys only (31%).

These may be related to the fact that most parents fear their daughters leaving the house alone; some parents even do not see any importance for college education, especially for a woman; and some believe that women should only be full-time house wives. The results was supported by findings of the report on the National Committee for Women on the lack of awareness of the importance of education for girls (National Committee for Women, 2005).

According to Mushi (2001); Pierrakes and Xenos (2004); Mbukusa, (2009), unfavourable home learning environment is among the barriers that have routinely impeded ODL students. Time allocation (22%); distance cover (23%); Spinsterhood rejection (21%); Parents refused education outside work for woman (19%); Deficiency in the general secondary exams (17%); Limited disciplines by the universities on ODL (16%); work condition (13%); health problems (13%) and others (11%). Time and distance can be seen as absence from home. Mushi (2001) reported problems of transport and greater distance to regional centre as among the challenges facing ODL students.

This was in line with Vergids and Penagiotakououlos (2002) at Hellenic Open University in Greece found that, fluctuations in the time available for study affected by changes in work and family environments, coupled with an underestimation of the actual effort and time necessary for studies made many students (47%) abandon their studies.

Most of the respondents admitted that deficiency in their secondary exams prompt them to enrol in ODL for further education, no discipline incurred by the authority in respect of ODL is concern and other impediments confronted by women see ODL as alternative for their education uplifting in nature. Whereas Diran and Yoon, (2009) in Jordan found similar results; they documented that students failure to balance time for studying and other family and job obligations is a single most cited barrier by distance learners.

Moreover, lack of time as a challenge facing ODL students is a key theme which emerged from other studies conducted elsewhere in Africa such as Mbukusa, (2009) in Namibia, Ojo and Olakulehin, (2006) in Nigeria, and Basaza et al, (2010) in Uganda. Taking the above literature into consideration, it is obvious that ODL students fail to appreciate the fact that, studying by distance mode demands equal time as traditional mode if not more.

Research question 2: Perceptions' of women attending distance learning in NOUN

Table 2:
Perceptions' of women attending distance learning in NOUN

No/s	Items	N	Mean	Decision
1	Do you think ODL programme is a quickest way of been fully educated by women whose education was interrupted?	300	2.78	Agree
2	Do you prefer ODL programme than regular programme?	300	1.98	Disagree
3	Online internet-based course is more preferable to women?	300	2.54	Agree
4	Do you see poor internet connectivity as a major setback for ODL programme?	300	2.62	Agree
5	Do you think face-to-face interaction of teaching is valuable than computer interaction?	300	2.51	Agree
6	Poor computer knowledge among the women make the ODL miserable?	300	2.53	Agree
7	Do you think printed materials are better than internet conversion on ODL study for women?	300	2.71	Agree
8	Do you think there is age limit for ODL among the women?	300	2.36	Disagree
9	Do you think all the women attending ODL can defend their certificate acquired?	300	2.88	Agree
10	Do you think women are not hiring machinery to do some of their course work and exams?	300	2.50	Agree
11	Can you encourage women to continue participating in ODL programme?	300	2.82	Agree

Table 2. reviewed result on perceptions' of women attending ODL to their level of understanding. All the respondents (women) agree with ODL programme as quickest way of getting educated, online internet-based course, poor internet connectivity, face-to-face interaction of teaching, poor computer knowledge, printed materials, defend their certificate, hiring machinery to do some work and exams, continue participating in ODL programme while preferable ODL programme than regular and age limit for ODL was totally disagree.

From these result, it can be emphatically said that women attending ODL was profitable because they saw it as an alternative for them to be duly educated for one reason that their education has been early instructed.

This result was corroborated with a study by Ukpo (2005) in Nigeria showed that teachers enrolled in the ODL face challenges related to failure of trainees to receive training materials on time, students engagement in other economic activities to supplement their family incomes, and poor learner support services especially where study centre are under resourced and overstretched.

Likewise, Kamau (2007) in Kenya found that, without an effective learners, support services system that provides on-site face -to-face, timely feedback on student performance and access to library services, student achievement will inevitably be undermined and drop-out rates and procrastination will increase, while the advantages of distance education including cost effectiveness, will be undermined. The fact remain that

face-to-face should provide opportunities to students to talk to their tutors and peers around content that seems difficult for them while on their own. Such contact times create many opportunities for students to learn and obtain encouragement from their peers (Mbukusa, 2009). Therefore, face-to-face sessions are unique opportunity for isolated learners to be engaged physically in teaching and learning. Basaza et al, (2010); Juma, (2005); Senanayake and Dadigamua, (2005) suggested that, students often have difficulty when they do not have direct and ongoing contact with academic advising services from their instructors.

Hypothesis 1:

Institutional impediments will be a significant to women attending ODL in NOUN

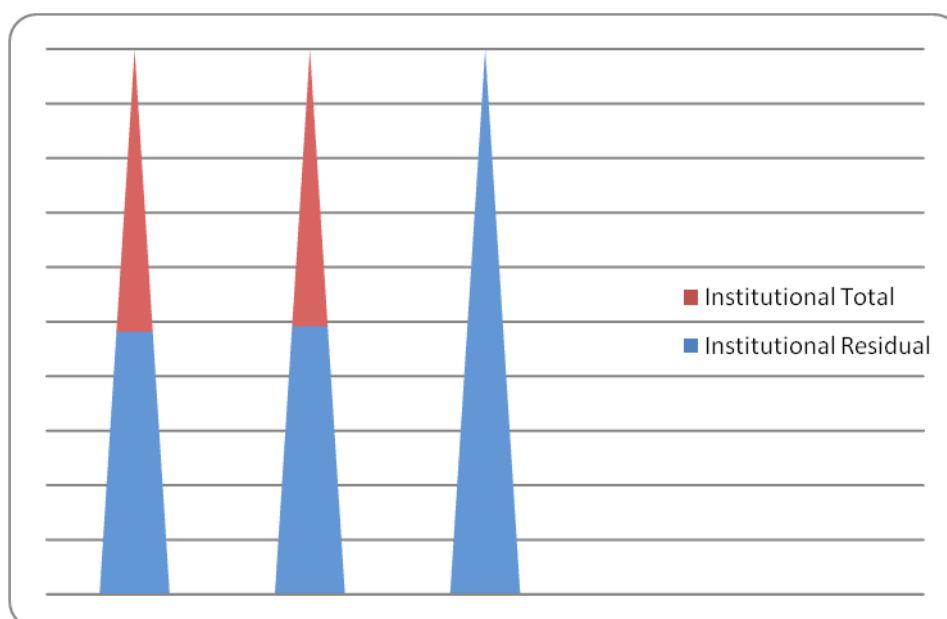


Figure 2:
Linear regression analysis result on institutional impediments.

The above figure 2 shows result on institutional impediments on women attending ODL in NOUN, Ekiti-State branch. The hypothesis that say institutional impediments will be a significant to women attending ODL was accepted due to the fact that 3.302 were above the level of significance 0.05 respectively.

Women viewed that institutional impediments gives them uncomfortable stress which include poor logistics system or a lack of appropriate advising; hence women may be more likely to experience isolation and alienation from the institution due to the lack of proper organizational support.

This result was in line with a research report submitted by some researchers across the globe. Daniel, (2005) viewed that all effective distance-learning programs depend upon the “three legs” of good learning materials, effective student support, and efficient logistics. Principally, the distance learning institution should engineer all these “three legs” for effective students learning.

However, there is evidence from research that the ODL may be causing, or at least contributing, to their own students’ sense of burden (Tresman, 2002, Carnwell, 2000). Institutional impediments are constructed by educational institutions with or sometime without their knowledge (Zirnkle, 2004). This include difficulty in registering and paying

for classes or a lack of appropriate advice provided under the umbrella of students services support (Bruening et al., 2001). Pierrakeas et al., (2004); Tresman, (2002) reported that institutional related factors facing distance education student in some region is general higher lack of guidance and information prior to enrolment. Students reported that the course in which they enrolled took more time, or it was too dense in terms of the pace of programmes, than they had expected. Many students enrol to distance learning with preconceived ideas and expectations, which may be based on prior educational experiences. Thus, guidance and information can be seen as a way to help students reframe their expectations, attitudes, and feelings about the next step in their educational journey (Moxley et al., 2001). Ineffective feedback has effects on students as they are likely to develop fear that they will not finish their programmes on time (Zirnkle, 2004).

This fear of unknown or that which they do not comprehend makes students perform poorly in exams, school and even in real life (Mbukusa, 2009).

Although up to-date NOUN management has put many efforts to make ODL a reality in Nigeria, still students face institutional impediments. Logistics problems such as delayed study materials at regional centre, poor record keeping and inadequate provision of other students' administrative support.

Hypothesis 2:

Situational impediments will be a significant to women attending ODL in NOUN

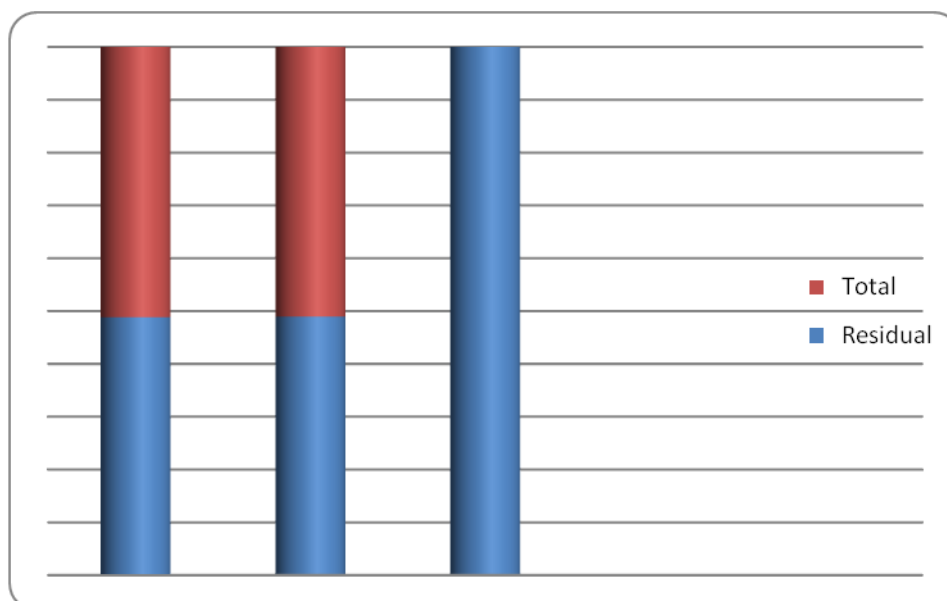


Figure 3:
Linear regression analysis result on situational impediments.

Figure 3 above reviewed analysis result on situational impediments on women attending ODL. It was noted that the hypothesis that says situational impediments will be a significant to ODL was therefore accepted. This was followed by calculated F-ratio that higher than level of significance that is 3.102; 0.05.

Women opinionated reaffirmed that situational impediments characterized all the condition disallowed them to accomplish their desire in ODL. This situational condition occurred in different perspectives such as physical, emotional, spiritual, psychological,

behavioural, cultural, political, family responsibilities, lack of support from the family, not being taken seriously, campus climate, lack of network support for coping, time conflicts, lack of mobility and unidentifiable condition as shown by regression result. This result was pipeline with a research on An ethnographic study conducted by Garland (2007) identified some situational impediments for students to persistence in distance learning. These include poor learning environment and lack of time, for example, students felt that the course took more time than anticipated because they failed to judge the demands of work, home and school. Previously, Kember (1989) cited by Jakani, (2014) argued that poor time management leads to challenges such as learners inability to integrate the demands of off campus study with family, work and social commitments. Bourlova (2005) showed that adult students were seeking educational opportunities that were more appropriate for their circumstances so that they can reconcile their work life with family obligations. Despite the lack of desire to return to the traditional school, they found a solution in ODL. The finding was coincidence with Bourlova (2005) that highlights some of the impediments that facing women in continuing their education and found themselves in ODL such as: work comes first, high financial costs, having young children, and health problems. Mhehe (2002) also lists the obstacles and type of impediments facing women in Tanzania, and includes financial problems, lack of support from family or spouse, the work of women and their inability to reconcile their responsibilities at home and field, and the burdens of studying.

Hypothesis 3:

ICT impediments will be a significant to women attending ODL in NOUN

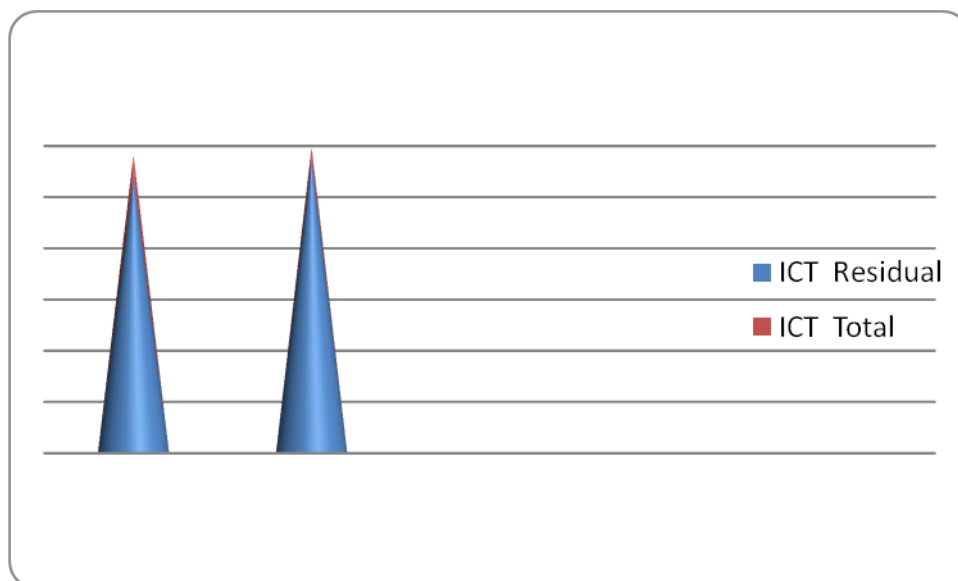


Figure 4:
Linear regression analysis result on ICT impediments.

Above figure 4 shows result on ICT impediments in relation to women attending ODL in NOUN, Ekiti –State Branch. This hypothesis was significant impediments with calculated F-ratio 3.104 and is higher than level of significance which is 0.05. However, the hypothesis was totally accepted as sociological impediments that lead to inaccessibility of women attending ODL in NOUN, Ekiti-State Branch.

This result was corroborated with Warschauner, (2003) that lack of these ICT skills is a critical challenge as learner may fail to use the various physical, digital and human resources involved ICT.

Mossberger et al, (2003) replicated that to distance learners who are not well versed with technical competence and skills of information literacy, the use of an electronic medium in distance learning can inadvertently exclude them or be problematic in their education undertakings. It is therefore fair to anticipate that, though under circumstances some students are unable to access ICT facilities offered by the university, others might be lagging behind time simply because are reluctant to change.

Howell et al, (2003) submitted that many educational institutions especially in developed countries are shifting from purely a campus-centred model of higher education to ODL model using information and communication technologies.

Cosmas and Mbwette, (2009) shows that, lack of or limited knowledge of ICT by academic staff , students and the high workload of staff at University level claimed to have proliferated the problems on how to manage students records.

Maguire (2001) points out in her study entitled "Gender, information technology, and developing countries" that women's access to technology and training is one of the most important requirements for the participation of women in the global knowledge economy.

Therefore, attention should be given to encouraging women to deal with technology and to provide opportunities for them.

She also notes that women in the developing countries in particular face some problems in accessing technology, and so it is important to provide opportunities for them to deal with the technology, as providing enormous potential will improve the status of women.

Information and communication technology has an effect on women's development (Alfrih, 2005) through "a change in ways of thinking and dealing with the modern means of communication, which gives women a broad educational dimension, particularly as they were able to keep pace with technology" (Khalil, 2004).

CONCLUSION

Open Distance Learning (ODL) is an important objective in the development of higher education and has great potential to balance opportunities and take higher education to the door steps of women.

It is expected that this ODL will lead to empowerment of women especially among rural and tribal women.

Further the National Open University of Nigeria Scheme seeks to open the avenues of education to school dropouts, women entrepreneurs and artists, among others, who wish to enhance their natural expertise and aptitudes through formal learning.

Above all, concerning financial constraints, it was expected, because most of the distance learners are adults with family obligations that need money, financial constraints in their studies would be obvious. Almost, all respondents reported being self-financing their studies.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations were made:

- **Women attending ODL should be stimulated and skilled to use ICT for faster and easier learning.**
- **Centres for study with library facilities should be opened in each village to smooth the progress of women.**
- **Certificate discrimination should stop for ODL degrees among the educational institutions, employers and in the society at large.**
- **Contact programmes in ODL should be elastic to suit to the timing of working women in urban and rural areas.**
- **Courses for women in ODL should be application oriented so that it will help them in their money-making and community empowerment.**

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USING MOBILE PHONE TECHNOLOGY TO ENHANCE PARTICIPATION OF PAKISTANI WOMEN IN HIGHER EDUCATION: An Experimental Study

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ABSTRACT

The present study aimed at finding out effect of mobile phone on the participation rate of women in higher education.

The objectives of the study were to find out effect of mobile phone to;

- encourage women to participate in higher programmes,
- guide the students during the course, and
- prevent these students from leaving the programmes uncompleted.

It was expected that mobile phone would increase students' participation and decrease dropout. This experimental study consisted of two groups- experimental group and control group, each comprised of 200 women who passed the BA (14 years education) in 2007 and did not continue their further education. The women were selected by convenient sampling method. The experimental group was further divided into four sub-groups. The study was delimited to the district Muzaffargarh of Punjab province of Pakistan. It was found that the use of mobile phones;

- increases the participation rate of the women into institutions of higher education,
- decreases the drop out ratio of enrolled students, and
- enhances the performance of students of the higher education institutions.

Keywords: Mobile phone, distance education, women's enrolment.

INTRODUCTION

The 21st century is marked with swift developments and changes more than ever before. It is because of the gap between the theory and its application has been reduced considerably. People can now retrieve information and knowledge from any location and at anytime. Challenging the role of education it has made "the relationships between education, society and technology" "more dynamic" (Traxler, 2009, p. 10). People are also effectively using the technological inventions in almost every activity of their life. It is also a fact that sphere of people's activities has expanded geographically too much.

Now people live far away from their home cities or countries. Therefore, they need and are efficiently using mobile technology for mutual interaction, shopping, business transaction, and learning, and electronic mobile devices are now “radically transforming societal notions of discourse and knowledge, and are responsible for new forms of art, employment, language, commerce, deprivation, and crime, as well as learning” (Traxler, 2007, p. 2). Ally (2009, p. 1) contends that considerable expansion in the use of mobile tools by people in every part of the world, ever increasing use of mobile phones by the people for socialization and to accomplish routine tasks, conducting business transactions by the mobile technology, and probable demand of the people to have access to learning resources through mobile technology convey a message that “education and training have no other choice but to deliver learning materials on mobile devices,” so that “the twenty-first century learner and worker,” particularly the nomadic who have to travel much, will be able to “learn from anywhere and at anytime using mobile technology” (p.2).

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The number of users of mobile phones is continuously increasing throughout the world. The wide of variety of prices of the mobile phones, ease of accessibility, and its multiple usages have contributed much in rapid rise in the figures of its users on massive scale. The mobile phone manufacturing industry and the mobile phone telecom companies are continuously expanding not only in developed countries but also in the developing countries. Khanna and Singh (2011, p. 399) rightly assert that:

Mobile phones have changed the entire communication scenario of the World. They have become multipurpose tools which are being used for communication, education and gaming or accessing information. Development practitioners and communication experts see mobile phones as important tools in the hands of all communities for social development.

Mobile education provides personalized learning. Personalized learning accepts the individual differences among the learners and employs diverse learning styles and variety of approaches keeping in view the varied needs of the learners.

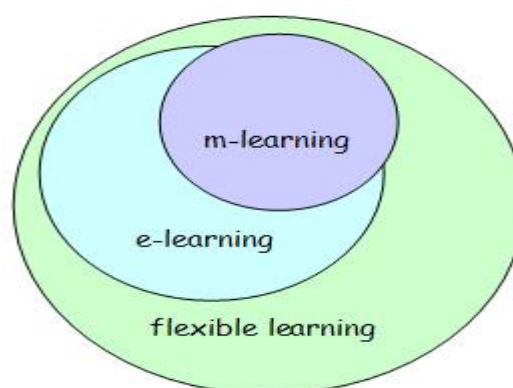


Figure 1.

The ‘just enough, just in time, just for me’ model of flexible learning
(Adopted from Peters, 2007, p. 3)

Mobile education is also much helpful in situated learning or on the job learning or learning in the field. It is also a good means for authentic learning which is learning that addresses real-world problems relevant to the learners or community. Peters (2007, p. 1)

suggests that mobile learning lies within the framework of flexible learning and the e-learning, so it fits to "directly to the 'just enough, just in time, just for me' model of flexible learning". Fig. 1 illustrates his model of mobile learning as flexible learning.

Mobile technology has the potential for transmitting the information and conducting instruction to the people of inaccessible areas, it can reach the areas where there are no educational facilities. Thus the students, workers, businessmen can benefit from it without leaving their homes or work place. Kurubacak (2007, p.222) conducted research to identify research priorities and needs in mobile learning technologies for distance education employing Delphi technique and 72 experts of distance education said that mobile learning is "very important" because of;

1. Changing roles
2. Multicultural curriculum
3. Global patterns influenced by mobile learning technologies
4. Interactive synchronous communications
5. cultural biases and stereotypes
6. The philosophy of mobile learning
7. Current trends that influence the technological managements and leaderships
8. Global values, ethics and norms
9. Trends outside of the organizations
10. Stakeholder involvements

Traxler (2007) mentions following categories of mobile learning:

- Technology-driven mobile learning (Use of new technology in an educational setting for pedagogy)
- Miniature but portable e-learning (Using mobile technology to modernize conventional e-learning, e.g. adding Virtual Learning Environment [VLE])
- Connected classroom learning (use of mobile technology in classroom for collaborative interaction and learning, e.g. interactive whiteboards)
- Informal, personalized, situated mobile learning (Providing the new technology for learning opportunities which are impossible otherwise, e.g. location awareness or video-capture)
- Mobile training/ performance support (Using technology for professional development and just-in-time on the job support of mobile workers)
- Remote/rural/development mobile learning (Using mobile technology where conventional e-learning technologies would fail) (pp. 3-4)

Keegan (2005) rightly claims that distance education is going to be wireless because of the rapid pace as well as deep penetration of mobile technology in the world.

The alacrity with which the people are using this technology forces the educators of the distance education to accept the challenge of harnessing the maximum utilization of the mobile devices for pedagogy as well as andragogy.

Russell (2005) [as mentioned in Rekkedal & Dye, 2007, p. 18] advocates that mobile technologies can provide following services in distance teaching-learning programme;

- Password retrieval for students who have forgotten their password
- Welcome message to students (containing their user name, password, guiding tips, a permission request for interaction with the student via mobile phone)

- The introductory course
- Reminders to students who fall behind their studies
- Reminders to students to register and enroll for exams via mobile phones
- Delivery of interactive quizzes
- Delivery of notification to teachers
- Delivery of notifications related to assignments and grade posted
- Development of a Web interface that allows teachers and administrators to send SMS messages to students, and allows students to send messages to other students
- Allow students to upload pictures and text to their presentation
- Allow students to upload pictures and text to their blog

Researches by Ragus (2004), Deviney and Koschembahr (2004) prove that mobile learning can be effectively used for training managers, teachers, ground staff, new sales associates, and apprentices.

It reduces the "formality of the learning experience", engages the "reluctant learners", and raises the "self-confidence" of learners (Attewell, 2004). Peters (2007) asked seven mobile providers in his study entitled "M-Learning: Positioning educators for a mobile, connected future" and found following students were eager to use mobile for learning because;

- Mobile phones are used for interaction with parents for example SMS about attendance and performance
- Students already have mobile phones and it would be good if they were used more for learning
- Some colleges use mobile phones for communicating with students using text reminders
- SMS is already in place but the opportunities to use it for learning have not been considered in great depth
- Resourceful teachers are incorporating SMS because young people are using it anyway, it's a great motivational tool
- M-Learning allows students to get a response quickly, at all hours. (pp. 10-11)

In a study, Hayes, Stephen and Hall (n.d., p.3) found that students identified that receiving text messaging support was:

- Very useful to inform students of class changes or cancellations
- It makes the lecturer more accessible and approachable
- Good to advise students of topics to be covered in upcoming lectures
- Could be used to summarize lectures or note important points to remember
- Helps consolidate knowledge by asking questions to get students thinking about what they have just learned and remember it.
- Helps to motivate students and remind them of assignments/homework to be done.
- Useful to recommend extra reading or websites for further information.
- Builds rapport between lecturers and students.

CHALLENGES TO MOBILE LEARNING

As we are undergoing through the "first generation of truly portable information and communications technology" (Peters, 2007, p. 1), several problems and different issues have arisen that need to be addressed. In addition to the problems that are associated

with the use of technology such as cost and maintenance, followings are the major problems and issues with particular reference to the use of mobile phones in education;

Small Screen

the mobile phones usually have too small screens to allow availability of all information on it (Rekkedal & Dye, 2007, p. 2). It has limited space.

Limited Data Transfer Rate

"When people use a mobile device with Internet connectivity, the connection speed is traditionally lower than, for instance, that of a traditional mobile phone" (Rekkedal & Dye, 2007, p. 2).

Partially Explored

Although mobiles phones have been used effectively for educating the people, yet its full potentials in the teaching-learning process have not been achieved. It is still challenge for the researchers and educational experts to find out the areas where the mobiles phones can more successfully be used.

SITUATION IN PAKISTAN

In Pakistan the enrolment rate for higher education is only 4.9% (Lynd, 2007, pp.11-12) and rate of enrolment of women is even less than that.

Despite improvements during the last one decade, access to education and particularly higher education remains a problem for women in Pakistan.

In Pakistan social, cultural, economic and historical factors have directly and indirectly affected the status and rights of women at every level and in all sectors, and have negatively impacted on their integration in development.

Financial constraints, unavailability of institutions of higher education in the neighborhood, social taboos, and lack of market demand oriented programmes are some of the factors which are responsible for this less participation rate in higher education level in Pakistan.

However, lack of proper guidance and unawareness of available opportunities for higher are also accountable for non-entrance of Pakistani women into institutions of higher education.

About 70% (131 millions) of Pakistani population are the mobile phone users (Dawn, 2011). This offers an excellent potential for utilizing the mobile phones for educational purposes for the country like Pakistan which has meager resources for human capital development.

The present study is an effort for utilizing the mobile phones for guidance, encouragement, and teaching the women of Pakistan.

The study would be helpful for the administrators of higher education to see possibilities of mobile phone for enhancing enrolment of women. Moreover it would be also helpful authorities of universities with distance learning programmes to use mobile phone for providing guidance to their present and potential students.

THE STUDY

The present study aimed at finding out effect of mobile phone on the participation rate of women in higher education. The objectives of the study were to find out effect of mobile phone to; encourage women to participate in higher programmes, guide the students during the course and prevent these students from leaving the programmes uncompleted.

The study is based on the Anderson's (2003) "learning equivalency theory" which he developed to give a theoretical ground for the learning process from emerging technologies.

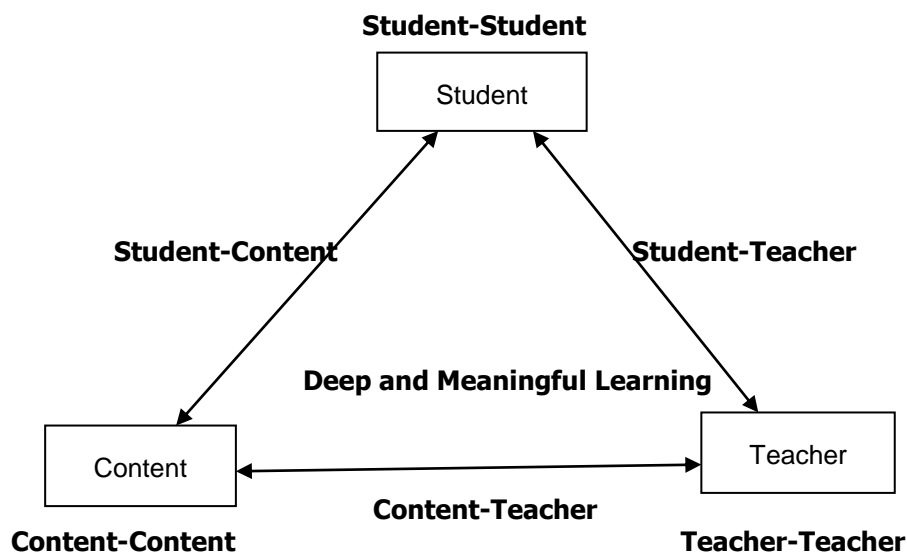


Figure 2.
Learning interactions

Anderson (2010, p. 24) suggests that out of these interactions, "any one type of interaction would be sufficient to create a high-quality learning experience".

In the present study two interactions that is Student-teacher, and student-student interactions were employed as shown in fig. 3 below.

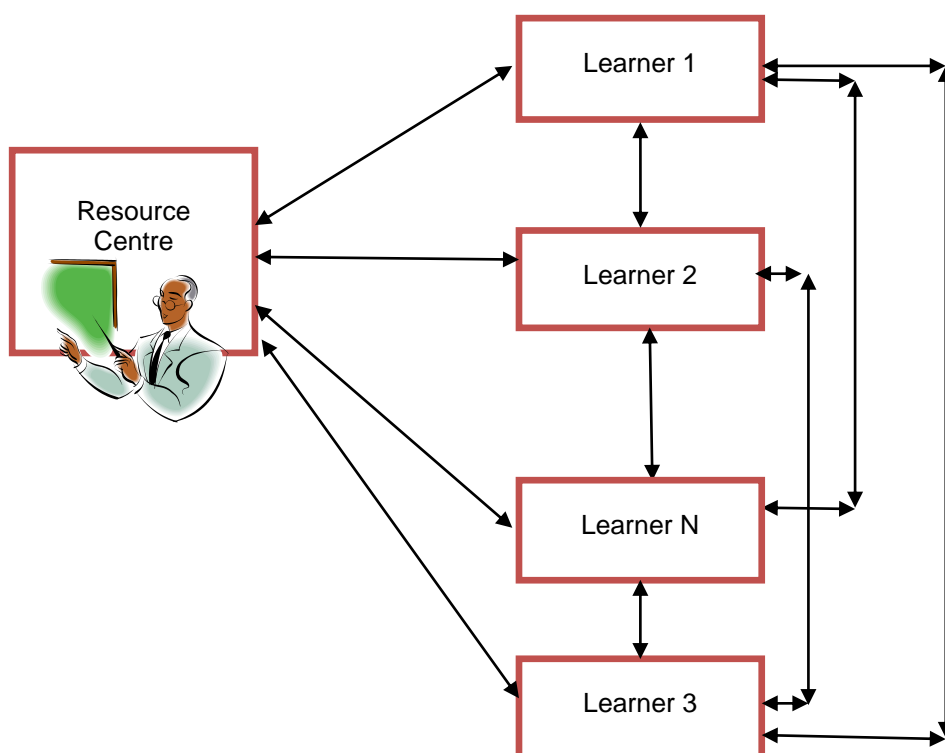


Figure 3.
Interactions of the participants in the study

Definition of Variables and Terms

Bachelor Programme

Two years programme after 12 years of schooling.

Contact: Here contact refers to communication by mobile phone either by direct call or through SMS.

Mobile Phone

A Portable telephone device that does not require the use of landlines.

Postgraduate Programme: After bachelor, a one year diploma or two years masters programme.

Resource Center

The researchers' mobile phone to which the students made calls which were answered by the researchers or their associates. This mobile phone also had the function to divert the call to a particular teacher so that he may guide the student.

Hypothesis

H₁: The students' participation into programmes of higher education can be increased by using the mobile phone

H₂: The use of mobile phone would decrease dropout ratio of students.

Sample

This experimental study consisted of two groups- experimental group and control group, each comprised of 200 women who passed their bachelor programme in 2007 and did not continue their further education.

The experimental group was further subdivided into sub-experimental and sub-control groups. The women were selected by convenient sampling method. The study was delimited to the tehsil Muzaffargarh of Punjab province of Pakistan.

METHOD

The list of female students who passed the B.A. examination as regular or private students was got from the examination department Bahauddin Zakaria University Multan was got along with the contact numbers.

Keeping in mind the social constraints (many people think it unethical that an unknown person contacts/talks to even on phone a person of opposite sex), the researchers got services of an educated woman to talk to the students.

They were contacted through mobile phone call, congratulated on success in the examination, and requested to participate in the research. In this way, a list of 200 students was completed. Initially the students were divided into two groups by random sampling method. The names of the groups were;

1. "A" (The experimental group consisting of 100 members)
2. "B" (The Control group consisting of 100 members)

The members of the group A were contacted and they were informed about the dates of admission into the universities for master degree programmes.

They were also encouraged to take into some programme by explaining them the advantages of the higher education.

The parents of the students who wanted to take admission but their parents were unwilling to allow them were also contacted. 68 members of group A got admission into post graduate programmes, out of which 18 got admission in formal education institutions of higher education while 50 members got admission in distance education programmes different universities.

These 68 students who had got admission were divided into two groups that are Ax and Ay. Ax group consisted of 18 students who got admission in institutions of formal education and Ay consisted of 50 students who got admission in distance education institutions. These two groups were further subdivided into two more groups of each by random sampling method so that following subgroups were formed

- Ax1 (Consisting of nine students studying in formal education institutions)
- Ax2 (Consisting of nine students studying in formal education institutions)
- Ay1 (Consisting of 25 students studying in distance education institutions)
- Ay2 (Consisting of 25 students studying in distance education institutions)

Ax1 and Ay1 were the treatment groups while the Ax2 and the Ay2 were the control group. Every one of the students of Ax1 group was given the mobile number of other eight members of the group.

Similarly, every one of the students of Ay1 group was given the mobile number of other 24 members of the group. The students of the treatment group were asked to contact with one another or the resource centre in case of any problem concerning their studies.

At the resource centre the researcher had arranged the teachers of relevant field to properly answer the queries of the students and provide them guidance.

The students of the treatment group were contacted off and on, asked about their academic progress, and were encouraged to study. So, the students of the treatment group were in contact with one another and with the resource centre. While the students of control group, after the admission, were neither contacted by the resource centre nor they were given the contact numbers of other students by the resource centre. However, they themselves might know or had contact with one another.

This support was provided to the students for approximately two years- the duration necessary for the completion of their postgraduate programmes. During this period the performance of the students of all the groups (Ax1, Ax2, Ay1, and Ay2) in their respective institution was recorded.

FINDINGS

1. Table 1. shows that more students from group A (68%) continued their studies than those of group B (31%). There was no difference in the percentage of the students successfully completing their programmer between the two sub-groups.

Ay1 and Ay2. The Sub-group Ax1 had the highest (96%) success percentage of others. The successful completion percentage of group A was higher (91%) than that of B (55%).

Table: 1
The success rate of the students

Group	Total No. of students in group	The of students who got admission		Group	Total No. of students in group	The students who successfully completed	
		Number	Percentage			Number	Percentage
A	100	68	68	Ax1	25	24	96
				Ay1	9	8	89
				Ax2	25	15	60
				Ay2	9	8	89
B	100	31	31	B	31	17	55

2. The Fig. 4 shows that net success percentage of group A was much higher (81%) than that of group B (55%).

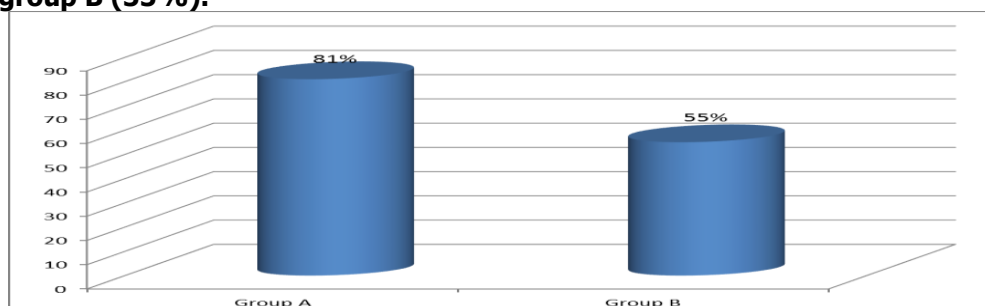


Figure: 4
Net Success percentages of the students

3. Table 2 shows that the students of the Ax1 made significantly more contacts (about five contacts per student per month) with the resource centre as compared to those of the Ay1 group. The students of Ax2 and Ay2 never contacted the resource center.

Table 2.
Number of contacts per month made by the students with the resource centre

Group	Total No. of students in group	Number of Contacts initiated by the students	Average contact per student
Ax1	25	119	4.76
Ay1	9	17	1.89
Ax2	25	0	0
Ay2	9	0	0

4. Fig. 5 shows that the students of Ax1 group had the highest (64) average than those of other groups. The average score of the Ax1 was better than that of Ax2 and the average score of Ay1 was better than that of Ay2.

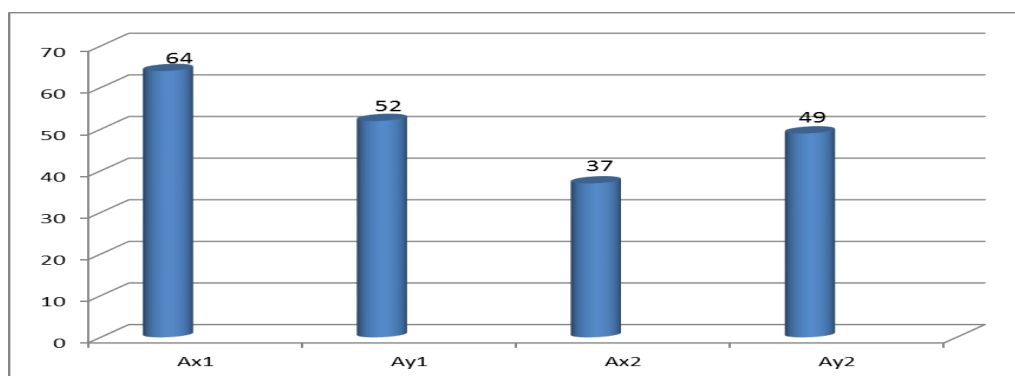


Figure 5.
Average marks of the students in final transcript

CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

It is clear that the participation rate in higher education of the students who were guided and encouraged through the mobile phone was significantly greater than those who were not guided.

Similarly, there was a marked difference in the rate of successful completion of the programmers between the distance-learners who had been continuously contacted and the distance learners who were not contacted. However, the contacts did not contributed much to the success of the students of the formal education institutions. The net success percentage of group A was much higher (81%) than that of group B (55%). It shows that the contacts through mobile phones have a positive effect on the enrolment and the success of the students.

The students of distance education institutions contacted more than the students of the formal institutions. It means that the distance education students need more help and they can be effectively guided through the use of mobile phones. The performance of the students who got continuous help through the mobile phones was significantly better than those who did not. This difference was greater (27%) between the students of distance education institutions and comparatively less (3%) between the students of the formal institutions.

The drop out ratio of the students who were guided through the mobile phone contacts was significantly less (19%) than those who were not guided (49%). Similarly, there was a remarkable difference (36%) of drop out ratio between the distance students who were provided continuous guidance (4%) and those of who were not provided (40%). There was no difference of drop out ratio between the students of formal institutions.

BIODATA AND CONTACT ADDRESSES OF THE AUTHORS



Professor Dr. N. B. JUMANI is working as Professor, Department of Education, Faculty of Social Science, International Islamic University Islamabad, Pakistan. Prof. Jumani has acquired his academic credentials for B.Ed, M.Ed., M.Phil., Ph.D., and Post Doc. His areas of study and specialization have been Teacher Education, Curriculum Development, and Distance Education. Having studied and researched in traditional education and distance education fields, he has acquired relevant competencies to deal with formal face-to-face education and distance education systems.

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For his Post Doctorate he has undergone training at Deakin University, Australia and for Modern Distance Education technology, he underwent training at Jilin University, China. This international exposure has enabled him to apply the acquired knowledge to the modern educational systems.

Prof.Dr. Jumani has been widely published in different journals of repute both within Pakistan and outside. He has been publishing his research with highly reputed and recognized research journals over a decade. His work has got space in the International Journals published not only in Pakistan, also from India, USA, Turkey, Japan, South Africa and Azerbaijan etc. He has written a good number of chapters/units/books on education in general and teacher training in particular.

Moreover, has also written and reviewed a lot of scripts of educational programs/teacher education programs for radio and T.V. He is member of national curriculum review committee of Higher Education Commission as well as Federal Ministry of Education Pakistan.

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WOMEN IN DISTANCE LEARNING: 2 ND CHANCE OR 3 RD SHIFT?.

By Aggeli, A., & Vassala, P.

Distance learning offers flexible new learning routes and continually renewed opportunities for educational expansion and personal development and contributes to life-long learning. It is estimated that over half the several million world distance-education population are women. (Kramarae 2000, Furst- Bowe 2001). In the postgraduate "Distance Learning" course of the Hellenic Open University (HOU) female attendance is 57.2%, confirming the international data. Women's testimonies concerning their experiences in distance learning internationally (Faith 1988) along with the reliable findings of much research according to which gender issues influence comparative levels of achievement, drop-out rates and motivation to learn, forced educational circles to become increasingly aware of the diversity offered by gender differences in various components of distance education. (Evans, 1995, Burge and Lenskyj 1990). Moreover, it has been argued that recognition of diversity in any conception of the student body is a key area of successful development. So, if the designers of corresponding programs are willing to meet the needs and the expectations of not only women themselves, but also of society, it is important to understand that current and future student body.

This paper will focus on the female way of being a distance learner. At first we will point out the crucial reasons why women attend open, distance, and flexible learning programs, as well as their objectives and their motives. Then, we will report on the factors they consider when they select a distance learning program or course. Finally, we will explore the obstacles hindering women's access to distance education or impeding their successful studies and we will suggest actions that would make their attending easier.

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WOMEN IN DISTANCE LEARNING: 2ND CHANCE OR 3RD SHIFT?

Athanassia Aggeli and Paraskevi Vassala, Hellenic Open University, Greece

Introduction

Distance learning offers flexible new learning routes and continually renewed opportunities for educational expansion and personal development and contributes to life-long learning. It is estimated that over half the several million world distance-education population are women. (Kramarae 2000, Furst-Bowe 2001). In the postgraduate "Distance Learning" course of the Hellenic Open University (HOU) female attendance is 57.2%, confirming the international data.

Women's testimonies concerning their experiences in distance learning internationally (Faith 1988) along with the reliable findings of much research according to which gender issues influence comparative levels of achievement, drop-out rates and motivation to learn, forced educational circles to become increasingly aware of the diversity offered by gender differences in various components of distance education. (Evans 1995, Burge and Lenskyj 1990). Moreover, it has been argued that recognition of diversity in any conception of the student body is a key area of successful development. So, if the designers of corresponding programs are willing to meet the needs and the expectations of not only women themselves, but also of society, it is important to understand that current and future student body.

This paper will focus on the female way of being a distance learner. At first we will point out the crucial reasons why women attend open, distance, and flexible learning programs, as well as their objectives and their motives. Then, we will report on the factors they consider when they select a distance learning program or course. Finally, we will explore the obstacles hindering women's access to distance education or impeding their successful studies and we will suggest actions that would make their attending easier.

1. The factors that motivate adult women to enroll in DE programs, to select specific distance learning programs and courses

Most women in distance learning share goals and ambitions similar to those of students in the conventional education system. This means that they are seeking degrees for a number of reasons including economic (career advancement, higher wages) and individual development. They take up vocations and skills for personal fulfillment from obtaining a degree itself or from gaining useful knowledge to fulfilling personal or social goals. They are searching for knowledge itself as well as the sense of achievement that this offers. (Evans 1995, Furst-Bowe 2001). Educators' research in the Hellenic Open University (HOU) investigating the reasons why women who followed the module "Course and curriculum design for the teaching of French" in the HOU enroll in a distance postgraduate program, confirm that career and personal concerns urged Greek French teachers to do so. More often they report their desire to be informed of the developments in education (specialization, education, theoretical training, and practical improvement of their teaching). The personal reasons - status and career development is one more answer yet remarkable is also their mentioning the chance of attending such a postgraduate/distance post graduate program itself. (Androulakis et al 2001).

Generally, women prefer distance learning because of its nature (May 1994, Kokkos and Lionarakis 1998, Keegan 2000), since studies of this type allow them to fulfill their family and career responsibilities. Furthermore, it enables them to learn at their own pace, while minimizing costs - saving money and time on commuting and child care. Older women students, in particular, comment that the "virtual classroom" minimizes the discomfort and alienation they sometimes experience on conventional college campuses populated by 18 to 22 year-olds. (Kramarae 2000, Furst-Bowe 2001).

When selecting a distance learning program, in addition to considering the nature or the degree and the type of delivery system, female students consider several general factors including the program availability

and quality, the institutional reputation and its location, the service quality and costs (Furst-Bowe 2001, Mowen and Parks 1997). Furthermore, adult women students may be more likely to select a distance learning program because of the way it fits in with the other demands of their lives. (Furst-Bowe 2001).

As far the selected courses are concerned, women choose to enroll in greater proportions in arts, human studies and social sciences. It seems that despite the development of technology over the past decade introducing to the home many more computers and the emphasis on computer skills within the school curriculum, (Lockwood 1995), "the belief continues to persist that females are by nature technologically ignorant and unable to absorb scientific and technological information or to acquire technical skills" (Deligianni-Kouimtzi and Zioogou 1993, Frangkoudaki 1985).

2. Barriers to participation

Any learning at any age requires time, space and support. At a distance, the onus is on the learner to organize the necessary space and structure their available time, often accompanied by external and internal conflicts. These are conflicts related to a series of corresponding barriers whose relative significance varies according to the level of education and training, the age of the women (young/mature) and the cultural context. (Evans 1995)

Further to this point, we will summarize and categorize the barriers to women's participation in distance learning; barriers which are underpinned by contemporary ideological and social structures. Improving the indicators that concern the participation among women in distance learning will only succeed when the educational institutions comprehend these obstacles, given that despite high enrollment rates, a large percentage of female students drop out before program completion, for non-academic reasons. (First-Bowe 2001)

2.1 Conflicting responsibilities (work, family, educational, social-political) – Lack of time

For all the benefits of distance learning for women, these students still have to make tremendous sacrifices to balance the demands of work, family, and school (study, writing assignments, research etc.) being mothers, female partners, employees and citizens. That is why the majority of women declare anxiety, and many others (especially mothers of young children) often do their coursework while the other family members are sleeping (Morgan 1991, Stalker 1997, May 1994) commented that taking on distance study roles often results in "double duty" and Kramarae (2000) concludes that working mothers interested in furthering their education are adding a difficult "third shift" to their responsibilities. "We need to deal with the time bind that all parents and older students face if we want to make the rhetoric of "lifelong learning" for the "information economy" a reality", she suggests.

Yet, King and Hill (1993) point to the phenomenon of upper class women who bring in low-paid domestic labor of other women in order to pursue their educational/career aspirations. This phenomenon, though, can be found only in developed and developing countries and is an advantage that is limited to the privileged affluent classes.

2.2 Emotional barriers: guilt, fear of success, lack of confidence and self esteem, as far as educational goals are concerned

Even though they try hard to combine study with their other various responsibilities and roles, and despite the motivation and dedication on-line learners demonstrate, many are still made to feel that they are letting their families down when they try to further their education. (Kramarae 2000) Distance learning demands devotion and time and there are male partners that experience anxiety owing to the extent that they are alienated from this new concern in women's lives. Tolerance is conditional based on length of time spent and potential neglect of relationships and responsibilities, but on the understanding that this is an aberration. Some women felt obliged to "pay back" this tolerance through restricting time spent and normalizing relationships. (Burke 2000).

Dowling (1983) argues that the fear of women achieving success leads them to choices beneath their possibilities and generally hinders their social development. "It seems as if women are consumed by "gendered panic" in the face of success", she points out. One can assume the consequences that this

attitude will have on women's self-esteem and confidence." (Nova 1994) and evidently on their studies, especially in the distance learning mode, where initiative plays a decisive role.

2.3 Lack of partner support, the children and the wider family – gender stereotypes

As feminists have pointed out for decades, when women pursue an interest or activity which does not relate directly to their domestic role, and effectively expose and challenge unequal power relations within the family, they often meet with strong resistance from male partners because of suspicion/jealousy as well as ridicule. (Evans 1995)

Sometimes wider family (children, parents and parents-in-law) creates and sustains (internal and external) barriers to studying, reinforcing gender stereotypes. Greek grandmothers while baby-sitting during the face-to-face Team Counseling meetings usually state, "She should be at home taking care of her family. What does she want with this course of action?"

Common patterns in lack of family support for women engaged in distance learning are the cultural and cross-cultural social norms and traditions by which the subservient status of women is maintained. (Effeh 1991, Kirkup and Abbot 1997, Athanasiadou 2002). However, the intersection of discourses in the home is located where traditional and postmodern gender expectations collide. Burke (2000) cites vigorous examples of women's experiences: "Sometimes I work from home. On these days I usually put some washing in the machine early on in the day and dry it during coffee breaks or between tasks. Although my husband is supportive if he is working from home then he is WORKING and would not dream of incorporating domestic tasks into his day." "My partner is also in academia. He prioritizes his work over mine every time even when I am working to a deadline. I work at college as much as I can although child care responsibilities mean I cannot often work during the evening or weekends because my partner has the computer."

2.4 Lack of sufficient or appropriate support from the state: cost of studies, child-care availability

Tuition fees in distance learning are very expensive in some countries. It is obvious that the high cost of the studies inevitably hinders women's participation. This is a crucial factor especially for those who depend on their family for financial support or on sponsorship from their employers. Even women who have their own source of income are on average paid less than their male counterparts, and as a result the economic obligations for study become insurmountable.

In Greece, for example, not only is the issuing of student loans for distance learning not foreseeable (even though the Hellenic Open University provides scholarships for economically disadvantaged students), the lack of low-cost, all-day child care for the children of students is clear. Paying private baby-sitters at home is also economically difficult. The mention by women of childcare as a factor preventing study center use clearly shows that children are the responsibility of women. Good, affordable childcare is difficult to arrange. In this way, women find it difficult to ensure the necessary time for study, the completion of assignments and research as well as the attending of face to face meetings.

2.5 Learning obstacles: undereducation, difficulty in adapting to principles - methods - tools of distance learning, women's ways of learning

The undereducation of women due to cultural restrictions at their expense, not only in developing countries (Commonwealth Secretariat 1987), and in many developed countries (United Nations 2000, Vergidis 1995) is one more limiting factor since it deprives women of the basic prerequisite necessary for distance learning studies. The principle of the autonomy of the program participants with their interaction with the teaching material, as well as the development of critical thinking abilities, that are applied in distance learning, create additional problems of adaptation in women that follow the general model of passivity of their gender. (Evans 1995, May 1994)

Further difficulties may present themselves in lessons that demand the extended use of computers for example. (Furst-Bowe 2001, May 1994) due to the fact that women may have (whether they believe or not) less ease of use and experience working with technological interfaces. Female students may have less experience with working with technology than do their male counterparts and may become frustrated with

distance learning courses that require extensive use of computers. Despite this, the belief continues to persist that females are by nature technologically ignorant and unable to absorb scientific and technological information or to acquire technical skills.

One more obstacle related to the nature of distance learning programs is that students experience isolation and lack of individual attention. The sense of isolation that women students experience in their studies is due to the lack of natural contact with their peers. (Kirkup and Von Prummer 1990, Furst-Bowe 2001). Gilligan (1982) confirms the difference of women, supporting that the tendency of women to share their studies with their classmates, their friends and their families is not connected to any type of inferiority or to any negative personal experiences, but to a positive stance of participation and "dependent - connection." This stance probably extends from their social role that strengthens a model of behavior which is less independent. (Beauvoir 1989).

3. Strategies for reducing the barriers

In order to eliminate or at least minimize the barriers that women experience in distance learning education, the educational organizations and the professors-counselors of distance learning education should become activated along with the women themselves and wider social groups.

3.1 Principles - methods - tools - content of distance learning education

The educational institutions that provide distance learning education must recognize that student learning environments comprise the home and local center from which women study as well as the educational institutions itself. First and foremost, the role that the house and the local setting play in the learning environment of the woman student must be recognized and the fact that this education, like technology must be adapted to local circumstances (May 1994). The next step is to conduct research into the special way in which women engage in distance learning, into the types and levels of interaction between students and tutors that suit a female way of learning, as well as the documentation of the major social aspects that influence women's learning.

As far as the program of study is concerned, more women's studies courses must be made available via distance learning programs and a feminist perspective must be incorporated in the curriculum in other disciplines. More women administrators, teachers and students should be involved in the planning process for on-line courses so that their experience can contribute more directly to the benefit of others. (Kramarae 2000). This means that the possibility of adapting study programs to the needs of women can be utilized in such a way that steadily the educational demands of other categories of learners can also be satisfied.

3.2 Supporting Services

The scholarships, the low tuition costs and the widening of economic assistance for distance learning study programs are ways in which the educational institutions and the state can make it easier for women with economic dependence to break free of social and educational isolation. The establishment of more local study centers is one way to counter the isolation that women distance learners experience (thus ensuring a quiet place for study - supportive services and one-on-one lessons). (Effeh 1991)

Educational policy-makers must be sensitized to the needs in particular of working mothers who are engaged in distance learning programs. The services for professional orientation, finally, belong to that category of supportive mechanisms which give meaning to all of the previous effort. Otherwise, there exists the strong possibility that women distance learners will be unable to utilize the knowledge and skills that were gained through the program thus rendering their efforts futile both typically and essentially.

3.4 Professors - counselors

Professors and counselors can decisively contribute to the removal of barriers that women in distance learning encounter by treating distance learners as responsible and intelligent human beings, not as passive educational consumers (Kramarae 2000) and by creating a safe and supportive environment in accordance with the principles of adult education (Rogers 1999), with the intent of dispelling women's

fears concerning education. Educators need to be sensitive to women's personal and unique circumstances and to investigate ways to help students develop effective support systems. Supportive conditions which raise the self-confidence and self-awareness of the learner in the context of distance learning education can be ensured by the use of a variety of communication means and pedagogical methods - strategies as well as with the promotion of interaction between students, professors- counselors and technology. (Furst-Bowe 2001, Kirkup and VonPrummer 1990).

3.5 Women students and the social-cultural context

In order to promote distance learning education, the broad dissemination of information to women's populations that can benefit from the advantages of distance learning programs of study but for whom it would be impossible otherwise to access the typical sources of information such as web sites must be ensured. Within this category are unemployed women, older women, women living in rural/agricultural areas, and women in prison. Women themselves can contribute to this effort through the network of the women's movement and of women's professional organizations.

Discrimination against women must be confronted more generally. This means that parental prototypes must be changed that assign to women the bulk of child care (important here is the role of the mass media), and at least the legal provision of dependable - specialized and economic child care during the course of study and of work for parents.

Conclusions

Distance learning offers an essential opportunity for the beginnings or continuation of education for women (especially for women living in rural agricultural regions or mothers of small children), precisely because the program can be adapted to the rhythm and the life style of each woman individually. These same women believe that distance learning education is easier for men and that of course "it does not constitute a panacea" for all the problems of access to the traditional educational system, while at the same time "it is not for all" (May 1994). It demands self-discipline and self-confidence and the dilemmas that are present that have been addressed by the women's movement are those stemming from the male-centered concepts that persist in the area of education.

Nevertheless, the local and global restrictions that operate at the expense of women's educational efforts should not obscure the issue that "women constitute a varied and complex category so that we cannot speak of educational opportunities for women generally, as if they were all the same amongst themselves." (Burke 2000) Distance learning education, as "open", is characterized by a lack of restrictions. This characteristic must not lead to the assessment of learners as a homogenous body. On the contrary, emphasis must be given to the personal dimensions of distance learning, that is based in the self-determination of distance learners, whether they be women or not.

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WIN YOUR COMPETITIVE RACE WITH EXTENDED

Enterprise Learning

By: John Leh, CEO, Lead Analyst at Talented Learning, LLC

Extended enterprise learning is facilitated by a Learning Management System (LMS) to keep track of all your users, content and the relationship between the two. For over twenty years corporate organizations have been using LMSs and eLearning to provide mandatory and self-service training to their employees. Historically, LMS systems were successful in reducing training delivery costs and ensuring regulatory compliance but they fell woefully short in engaging learners, being easy to use or facilitating ecommerce. They were all about saving money. The new cloud LMSs leverage the advances in technology to finally facilitate easy engagement with global extended audiences at a fractional price point to traditional LMSs.



With these hurdles removed organizations are focusing on delivering a measurable impact to their business metrics through training and they can prove it. *Training your corporate extended enterprise audiences is all about making money, impacting business change and winning your competitive race.*

This paper will introduce you to the topic of extended enterprise learning and outline the very tangible measurable business benefits. We'll discuss tools and technology you will need to engage the voluntary users of the extended enterprise and give you steps and advice to get going at your organization.



Win your Competitive Race with Extended Enterprise Learning

By: John Leh, CEO, Lead Analyst at Talented Learning, LLC

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Are you impacting your business with extended enterprise training? If not, you are behind. Organizations in every industry globally - including yours - use extended enterprise training as a strategic tool to grow and improve their business and profitability.

Extended enterprise learning is any training, knowledge, certification or performance support provided to your non-employees such as channel distribution partners, resellers, dealers, franchises, members, customers and end-users of your products and services.

The evolution of cloud computing, mobile devices and social media changed the learning and development market in ways that no one could have predicted. While progressive L&D experts have been leveraging these new technologies for their employee learners, the greatest beneficiary has been opportunistic organizations who maximize their interaction and training contact with their corporate extended enterprise learners.

Extended enterprise learning is facilitated by a Learning Management System (LMS) to keep track of all your users, content and the relationship between the two. For over twenty years corporate organizations have been using LMSs and eLearning to provide mandatory and self-service training to their employees.

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"53% of survey respondents said they use their LMS to support reseller/channel partners, customers and other supply chain partners."

Source: eLearning Magazine

What is Extended Enterprise Learning?

Extended Enterprise (EE) learning is any training effort targeted at your non-employees with the goal of impacting measurable behavior change. Every industry globally uses some form of EE learning and they all have the same fundamental challenge. Extended enterprise users are voluntary users and thus need to be treated differently – better than employees.

All extended enterprise audiences are voluntary but to differing degrees. For example, students who register for a college MOOC course and then pay for a certificate that has questionable value are much more voluntary than an

employee of a restaurant franchise.

The more voluntary the audience, the tougher the challenge to capture their mindshare.

You can make your employees take training but you can't make the EE voluntary learners consume content. Organizations need to make voluntary learners want to take content, pay for content and come back and do it again and again. As a result, experts in extended enterprise learning need to be equally skilled in business, marketing and measuring success as well as the traditional learning technology skill set.

Extended Enterprise Use Examples

Extended enterprise learning comes in many shapes and forms. Here are some examples of how you can use extended enterprise training to gain a competitive advantage.

Partner Channel Training and Certification

Manufacturers, software providers, insurance companies, investment brokerages and telecommunication companies usually have global, independent partners that resell and service their product lines as well as provide local value added services and support.

These global partners often represent competing product lines from competing organizations. The organization that best trains and certifies its partners on their products and services and provides just-in-time performance support will win the mindshare battle. In every industry, those organizations that train and certify their partner channel see dramatic increases in channel sales, complexity of sales and end-customer satisfaction.



"According to a satisfaction survey, 95% of partners who had successfully passed our sales certification confirmed that our education helped them better understand and sell the product"

Source: Peter Ruchatz, Chief Marketing Officer at Veeam

Dealer/Franchise Onboarding and New Product Rollout

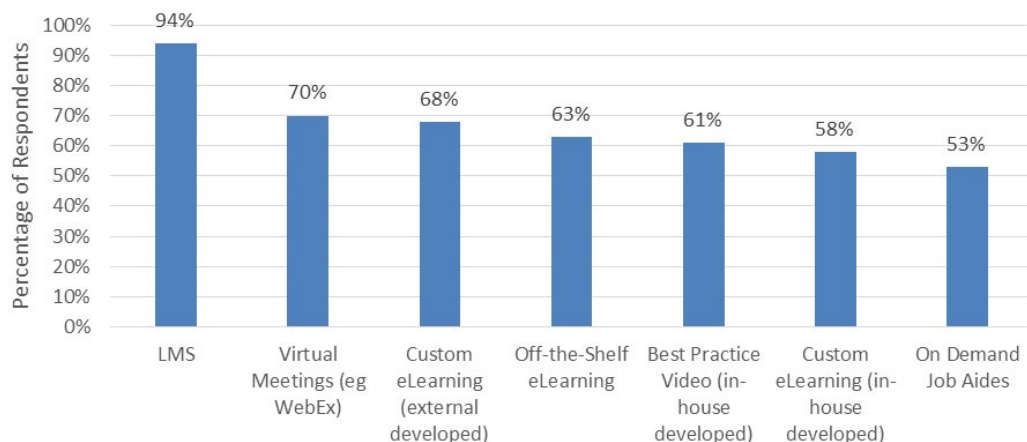
While channel partners can represent many organizations, dealers and franchises usually only represent one. Automobile manufacturers, gasoline service stations, restaurant and hotel chains, car rental agencies and beauty aid organizations all sell exclusive dealer or franchise rights to independent partners usually limited to a geographic area.

These partners pay a hefty initial fee and ongoing royalty for the proven business model, brand recognition, marketing, defined products and training to make them successful.

Most dealers and franchisers provide training and certification to their franchisees for every job role from owner to maintenance in a prepackaged LMS, content and performance support learning environment.

In a recent [research report](#) by Towards Maturity and Raytheon Professional Services, 22 European automotive manufacturers were surveyed about their learning technology and dealer training programs. 100% responded that increased learning access and flexibility was a top business goal, 94% of respondents used a Learning Management System and 45% agreed that eLearning has made a significant contribution to increasing revenue.

Use of Learning Technologies in Auto Dealer Training



Source: Driving Innovation in Dealership Training for the Automotive Sector: www.towardsmaturity.org/automotive2014

Customer Training Academy

Over the last few years customer learning has evolved into a strategic marketing, sales and support tool. If you have a product or service that requires any level of customer expertise, then you better be training your customers in a measurable way. A learning management system branded as a "customer academy" is used as the backbone of the customer learning system delivering eLearning, tutorials, videos and social learning that can be created once and reused countless times.



"A challenge for 2015 is to continue to center the organization - and every employee - on the customer"

Source: What will 2015 Bring for Customer Experience?

Knowing if your customers have been trained or not gives you the power to measure the return on your investment by comparing their buying and use behavior. Organizations with formal customer learning programs enjoy higher customer satisfaction rate, decrease in support calls, increase in customer renewal rates, upsells and cross sells.

Contract Workforce Compliance

In the oil and gas, transportation, large scale construction industries and even retail, many workers are independent contractors. The regulatory compliance nature of these industries and positions require employers to be incredibly diligent in training contractors and ensuring their training or regulatory certifications are current.



"Of the six digital trends we asked about, executives expect the largest share of their digital growth in the coming years will be from digital customer engagement."

Source: McKinsey: 2014, The digital tipping point

An extended enterprise LMS allows contracting organizations to deliver compliance mobile enabled content and verify compliance adherence. Using APIs these organizations integrate contractor ID card readers, building

entry access, starting of vehicles or even a helicopter ride to an off shore drilling platform to real-time LMS compliance completion status records.

Compliance violations can cost lives at the worst and millions in fines at the best and can be solved with a good extended enterprise LMS.

Continuing Education and For-Profit Training

Many professional jobs such as accountants, architects, dentists, doctors, nurses and teachers to zoologists are required to take a certain amount of professional development training every year. The amount of training is usually expressed in credit hours and varies by professional and geographic location but 20-50 hours/year is common. Many types of organizations compete to provide continuing education content and certification to these professionals including associations, training providers and universities. The ability to attract professionals, sell them content, provide them value and have them come back next year is vital to success, stability and longevity of any organization providing training.

The professional continuing education industry is huge. For example, the healthcare continuing education industry is centrally accredited by the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education. In 2013, CME providers conducted over one million hours of instruction.

U.S. CONTINUING MEDICAL EDUCATION (CME) PRESENTED BY ACCME ACCREDITED PROVIDERS

# of ACCME Accredited CME Training Providers	1950
# of Unique CME Learning Activities	138,196
Total Hours of Instruction	1,010,301
Total Participants	24,694,113

Source: Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education 2013 Annual Report

Public Training

Governments at all levels and non-governmental agencies like the Red Cross have the mission of educating the public on a multitude of topics. Emergency responders, families of veterans, new business owners, unemployed workers and traffic violators are all examples of the public audience that needs to be trained and it's not always for free. Selling courses to these audiences is common and is an amazing

income generator due to the high number of users that are typically associated with public initiatives. Historically, this training was provided by live instructors or sending out paper materials, but has migrated to the extended enterprise LMS as preferred delivery method because of low cost of distribution and the ability to measure effectiveness and change in behavior.

Why Train your Extended Enterprise Audiences?

Winning your competitive race is a matter of percentages and few organizations outdistance everybody for a long period of time. Continual investment and growth in training your extended audiences and providing them targeted performance support has a proven positive impact on core business metrics. Smart organizations use this fact to their advantage.

Unlike internal employee training it is easy to measure the business impact of extended enterprise learning. An extended enterprise learning management system will allow you to report on the training completions of your extended audience groups. Compare trained vs. untrained groups or individuals in any metric you are tracking such as renewals, support calls or channel sales performance to determine the measurable impact.

The measurable benefits can be easily grouped into three main categories:

- **Increase Income** - Extended enterprise learning is about making money for an organization. If you train your channel partners about your products and how to sell them, channel partners will sell more. Similarly, if you train your customers on how to use the software they just purchased, they have a better chance to get a good start, use the product as intended, be successful and renew their subscriptions. Organizations also sell their content and certifications and create a new stream of revenue from the sale of content and channel partner certifications.

- **Decrease Costs** – Educating your partners, prospects and customers increases customer satisfaction and decreases the cost of customer support. Extended enterprise learning technology also decreases overall training delivery costs through the reuse of learning materials and elimination of travel and instructor costs and also reduces the regulatory compliance risk. Finally, the cost to build and support a growing and global network of partners and customers is greatly reduced through extended enterprise training and performance support.
- **Accelerate Timelines** – Through the use of extended enterprise training organizations can shorten timeframes for many activities. Rolling out new products, expanding into new global areas, ramping up external sales are all measurable impact areas. Onboarding new customers to successful customers is dramatically decreased with focused training and just-in-time learning interventions.



"There is a constant demand to see increased sales as soon as a new product launch is done. Efficiency and cost are paramount." KIA Europe"

Source: Driving Innovation in the Dealership Training for the Automotive Sector

Few activities in the corporate world have the ability to impact so many of the above business metrics. Deploying an ever evolving extended enterprise outreach and training initiative can provide you a sustainable competitive advantage to outpace your competition.



"This research clearly shows that the opportunity for technology-driven learning innovation exists - with 45 percent of respondents agreeing that learning technologies have made a significant contribution to increasing revenue"

Source: Driving Innovation in the Dealership Training for the Automotive Sector

Extended Enterprise Case Studies

To be really successful in extended enterprise learning it is important to develop a measurable success plan from day one. Define who you are going to target, what behavior you want to change and how you will measure it. By knowing the impact to the business you have all tools to ask for more budget and then prove the impact.

One software organization I know has over 400 team members developing content because they can prove the impact each piece of content has on the business, so they keep growing. Here are four case studies of organizations that have proven the worth of training their extended enterprises. Click on the company name to access full case story and many more.

- [VeeamSoftware](#), a global leader in data protection disaster recovery and virtual environment management, provides training content to over 50,000 channel partners and 90,000 customer users, resulting in 3000 learning engagements per month and 10,000 revenue generating certifications. 95% of trained partners agree that training helped them to improve
- knowledge and ability to sell, improving results and productivity.
- [Autodesk](#) certifies instructors who can train users and organizations to help them obtain the greatest return on their Autodesk software investment. Autodesk lowered their training delivery costs, increased global reach, generated income and improved content consistency while certifying over 5000 instructors in 13 countries.
- [Sealed Air](#) is a global packaging and cleaning products manufacturer that developed and deployed a for-profit client academy to certify their clients on their products and how to properly use them. Sealed Air analyzes training completion data combined with business data to benchmark goals and measurable performance.
- [International Parking Institute](#) utilizes Docebo to train, certify, measure and report on learning for parking professionals from member organizations in every industry globally.

What Do You Need to Get Started in Extended Enterprise Learning?

Getting started in extended enterprise learning is easy and the initial investment is modest. Because all efforts are targeted at demonstrating measurable business results, it is easy to start small, prove the worth of the program and then expand and improve your efforts.

There are only three items needed to get started:

1. Measurable Business Case - To fund the content and a LMS, you need a measurable business case. The measureable business case is the only way to secure the budget needed to launch an extended enterprise program and is the language of the executives who hold and allocate the budget. If you can frame the argument of why your organization needs to invest, proof of any past results and the predicated future results, you have a good chance to get your initial budget and build your extended enterprise program from there.

2. Content can be delivered in any format from the formal to informal including self-paced learning, virtual classrooms, live training, documentation, tutorials, videos, social learning and mobile learning. The best content is internal sales and product content because it can easily be repurposed for external audiences and has a huge influence on external sales channels.

3. An extended enterprise LMS is the backbone of the program and is most typically cloud-based software providing a storefront or portal that houses your catalog of content for any media and keeps track of users and the association between the two. With a LMS you can track who has or has not completed training activities making it possible to measure your success.

Top 15 Features of an Extended Enterprise LMS

So how do you know what an extended enterprise LMS is? Many people define an extended enterprise LMS as one that has ecommerce capabilities, but it is so much more than that. Since extended enterprise learning is about attracting learners, getting learners to want to purchase, participate in communities, providing value and enticing them to return because they see value, there is a different set of features required to support that mission. A good extended enterprise LMS will have the following features:

#1 - Cloud LMS – The cloud LMS is mandatory in extended enterprise learning. It's quicker, easier, cheaper and more reliable than trying to do it yourself and allows you to get to your measurable results quicker. If your usage explodes, a cloud LMS can scale immediately with no issue. The LMS needs to be technically flawless and maintenance free. Let your vendor host the channel LMS and spend your time and money on developing great content. Good cloud LMSs leverage technologies like Content Distribution Networks (CDN) to replicate content to local geographic areas facilitating fast content in bandwidth challenged areas.



"70% of companies surveyed report reinvesting money saved back into their business as a result of moving to the cloud"

Source: PC World: Infographic: SMB Cloud Adoption Trends in

#2 - Consumer Based Interface – Think of an extended enterprise LMS learning interface like an Amazon, eBay and BestBuy site for learning. Searching, refining, researching learning products and information should be easy and require zero time to learn how to do it. If the main page of the LMS looks like an Excel spreadsheet or needs to reload with new search criteria, you are not looking at an EE LMS.



86% of buyers will pay more for better customer experience.

Source: Customers 2020 – The Future of B-to-B Customer Experience

#3 - Customer Relationship Management (CRM) –

Extended enterprise audiences are voluntary users so you have to spend time marketing to them. A CRM allows you to send more and more targeted communication campaigns to segments of your audience based on their profile demographics, content completion, stage in the sales cycle or past purchase history. A CRM tracks and provides analytics on who opened the email, links they clicked on and then actions they performed on the LMS like buying content. Good LMSs either provide their own CRM type capabilities or leverage existing cloud CRM software like Salesforce.com.



"Gartner predicts CRM will be a \$36B market by 2017"

Source: Forbes.com

#4 -- Domain Management – Extended enterprise initiatives need to support many diverse audience groups with branded, private portals. Many times large customers or partners require their own private area of the LMS with their own log-on page, content, users, language and workflow. An extended enterprise LMS easily manages the interrelation of all these groups and the sharing/not sharing of content.

#5 - Dynamic Audience Grouping – In internal LMSs, the ability to group users by job, role or organization is used to assign content and run reports has been around a long time. An EE LMS builds upon that by allowing any user profile demographic field –even custom fields populated with data from external systems- to be used as group creation criteria. Via an API feed to a CRM or social platform, users are added in or removed from a group real-time as their profile demographics change. Through dynamic audience grouping, EE owners can send targeted email marketing campaigns and promotions to sell content, assign and recommend content and have detailed effectiveness reports available for continual analysis and improvement.

#6 - Continuing Education Management – Being able to manage continuing education is key. Earning credits, completing programs of study, obtaining certification, recertification, accreditation and managing the whole process is a complex and deep set of functionality. Additionally, certification business rules, credit values and recertification criteria can vary from state or country level and all need to be managed concurrently and easily.

#7 - eCommerce – Selling training to individuals or to groups with individuals is a core requirement in many extended enterprise LMS initiatives. Storefronts, shopping carts, checkout and payment gateway integration all facilitate business to learner commerce. Purchase orders, e-checks, tokens, credit accounts, debit accounts and organization charge backs are all methods of tracking organizational commerce. Bundles, subscriptions, timed access, content recommendations and related content provide tools to help you offer promotions. Advanced features include taxation and multi-currency support.

#8 – Social Learning – Creating an active community of your partners, customers, members or learners is the ultimate goal of extended enterprise learning because each new interaction with learners costs nothing but has an incremental impact. The LMS social feature set includes but goes far beyond the old features of threaded discussions, chat, wiki and moderated groups. Social learning now includes being able to create an account and sign in with your public social media profile, newsfeeds and the ability to engage experts for just in time performance support.



51% of executive respondents indicated that they use Web 2.0 technologies to increase the speed of access to knowledge for their channel partners.

Source: How companies are benefiting from Web 2.0: McKinsey Global Survey results

#9 - Gamification – Gamification learning is often thought of and described at the content level. LMS gamification includes contests and games that overarch all the content in the LMS. Learners are awarded points for using the LMS, taking content and participating in social learning. As points accumulate, users earn new levels, badges and distinctions that are displayed on their profile, “leaderboards” and social

news streams.

At certain configurable thresholds, learners can also earn tangible rewards such as gift cards or discount coupons.

#10 - Mobile Enabled – External users are not sitting at their desktop at work. They are not your employees. They have their own jobs and are voluntarily taking your training at night, weekends, on the train, plane or anywhere they can squeeze in. Most extended enterprise content will be consumed via mobile devices. Everything you do for the extended enterprise needs to be mobile first. The LMS and any content need “responsive” design that automatically tailors the screen for no-scrolling on any device. Advanced mobile features include native iOS and Android apps that allow for the downloading of content, offline consumption and eventual reporting back to master LMS.



“With a compound annual growth rate of 18.2% for the next five years, it is estimated that the worldwide mobile learning market in 2015 will reach \$8.7 billion and it will even reach \$12.2 billion by 2017”

Source: The 2012-2017 Worldwide Mobile Learning Market

#11 - API Connectors – The extended enterprise LMS is no longer a “destination” but integrated into a complete ecosystem that can display and share content with many other core systems. Through the use of open APIs software systems can talk to each other but setting integrations up requires experienced IT help. Smart extended enterprise LMSs have API connectors that are prebuilt and all you have to do is activate them. This allows you, with no IT help, to integrate into any cloud based software such as CRM, single sign on, ecommerce, social media, learning content and virtual classroom applications.

#12 - Globalization – It’s tough to find examples of extended enterprise solutions that don’t have the potential for global rollout and a good EE LMS makes the process simple, straightforward and cost effective. Globalization includes the first tier of localization of the interface into multiple languages based either on a user profile or dynamically sniffing the language of the browser. Enhanced globalization includes the ability to manage a piece of content and create local variation to be dynamically served up to users, yet have one reporting record for administrators.

#13 - Virtual Classrooms -- One of the hurdles in getting started with channel learning is the time and cost of creating good content. The easiest way is to use a virtual classroom tool to provide live virtual training at a regular time every week. The live presentations can be recorded and made available for self-paced playback building your library over time inexpensively. Finding a LMS with an integrated virtual classroom simplifies the integration, contracting, maintenance and end-user experience.

#14 - Reporting and Analytics – Without this, you never get the funding in the first place. Extended enterprise LMS solutions exist because they have an easy to measure impact in the business. It is simple to compare groups of users who have vs. who have not taken sales training and see if they sell more for example. Reporting proves the ROI value for purchasing organizational leadership. Reporting needs to be modern, easy, secure, automatic, dynamic,

real-time, inclusive of custom fields and modifiable. All data fields in the LMS should be available. Data should be exportable for comparison with data in other systems or be capable of being the warehouse.

#15 - Corporate Experience – Although not a feature, vendor experience is the most important aspect of choosing an extended enterprise LMS. If you can't find mention of partners, sales channel, customer, members or the general public eLearning on the main page of the LMS vendor website, you are looking at an internal LMS. If you have to explain to a vendor more than once that the LMS is not for internal employees, you are looking at an internal LMS. To be successful in extended enterprise learning you want a LMS that focuses its product and its services around the support of external training including the marketing and growth aspects of the solution.

Conclusion

Training, certifying and providing ongoing performance to your extended enterprise audiences is a sustainable competitive advantage. You can start the program small and targeted, predict impact, measure and improve. With each additional piece of content you can grow your cumulative impact on the business. Being a training professional is so much more fun when you are making a measurable impact.

Having the proof that extended enterprise learners consumed content is the baseline you need to prove that the content improved the business in some metric. Once you learn how to measure and improve the impact, you will be able to grow your initiatives and make a larger and larger measurable impact on your organization's business. If you don't take the time to develop your extended enterprise audiences, your competition will.

You don't need to start big. You just need to start and you will be outpacing your competition in no time.



About the Author

John Leh, CEO and Lead Analyst at Talented Learning, LLC, is an LMS selection consultant and training industry blogger focused on helping organizations plan, buy and implement technology strategies that support extended enterprise learning. He has 19 years of experience in the eLearning and LMS industry having served as a trusted advisor to more than 100 learning organizations.

Appendix 1

Ten Tips to deploy your Extended Enterprise LMS

Ten Tips to deploy your Extended Enterprise LMS



1. Reaching your global audience

In a Global Economy, your Extended Enterprise Users can be located worldwide. To satisfy their needs, you need to bear in mind two things: speed and latency. The speed at which your users can download the content they need from the internet, or your company academy, should be high. The latency - the time needed to establish the connection between the final user and the remote service - should be low. One of the most effective ways to ensure both of these things is to use a content distribution network (CDN).

This is a technology that replicates the learning materials on different datacenters, located worldwide, and delivers that content from the closest server to the user. This enables the learning materials to get to all users, wherever they are, with optimal speed and latency.



2. It's all about brand

Delivering learning materials to different countries is likely to involve meeting several conditions. If, for example, your product is branded differently in different countries, you'll need to create different customer academies with different product logos and even different content, based on each of your target audiences.



3. Fitting your clients' brand identity

When using Extended Enterprise, you can build separate academies for each of your clients - tailoring the environment to the client's logo and corporate identity to enhance the user experience and "fidelization".



4. Different brands, different policies

Using the Extended Enterprise concept to manage different audiences might mean that you need different policies for each one. For example, in an LMS that delivers Internal, Customer and Dealer training with different brands, you may need to set up three separate login policies - mixing a Single Sign On system with the internal systems for those accessing the Internal learning materials. Dealer users can reach the LMS from the Dealer portal, while Customers can be handled via self-registration.



5. Different countries, different laws

Privacy and Data Protection regulations differ between the US and Europe – and variations in these regulations occur from country to country. Furthermore, laws in the world's emerging markets are evolving swiftly. With the Extended Enterprise approach, you have to ensure that your Extended Enterprise Vendor is cross-compliant with the relevant Privacy and Data Protection laws. Usually European Union (EU) laws in this area are stricter than are US laws (you may wish to view the Safe Harbor policy).



6. Don't forget your CRM

Selling complex products involves the Four Keys of Social Media - Engage, Educate, Excite, Evangelize. This is a concept that can be applied to Extended Enterprise.

Allowing prospects to self-register in a Customer Academy means that, thereby, you acquire a potential lead to record in your customer relationship management (CRM) tool. This starts a new sales funnel. An Extended Enterprise LMS must provide the API which allows it to send the lead to the CRM - and then update the lead with useful information (such as how much time the user spends online, how many times the user logs-in and so on) in order to better qualify the lead.



7. Don't forget Mobile users

The rapidly growing popularity, as learning methods, of mobile learning and video pills mean the Extended Enterprise LMS - including the Branding/ Sub Portal - must offer learners the opportunity to have their learning materials delivered to smartphone and/or tablet.



8. Focus on a single product and vendor

In the Extended Enterprise, it's to your benefit to have a single system that can meet your needs across different situations. Consider the benefits of dealing with a single vendor, having a single system to learn and a single set of procedures to distribute and maintain between the people who work on the LMS.



9. Help your Help Desk team

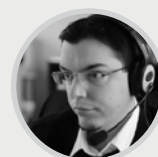
Training your customers has a direct impact on your Help Desk workload. The more your customers know about your product, the more they are engaged and motivated - and the less time they'll spend calling your Help Desk team.



10. How fast will you grow?

Since business growth is a company's key goal, company systems should be able to scale and adapt to cope with new projects and the acquisition of new customers. An LMS, especially one tuned to the Extended Enterprise, must be able to meet your needs and, especially, be capable of scaling up and down dynamically to support your business.

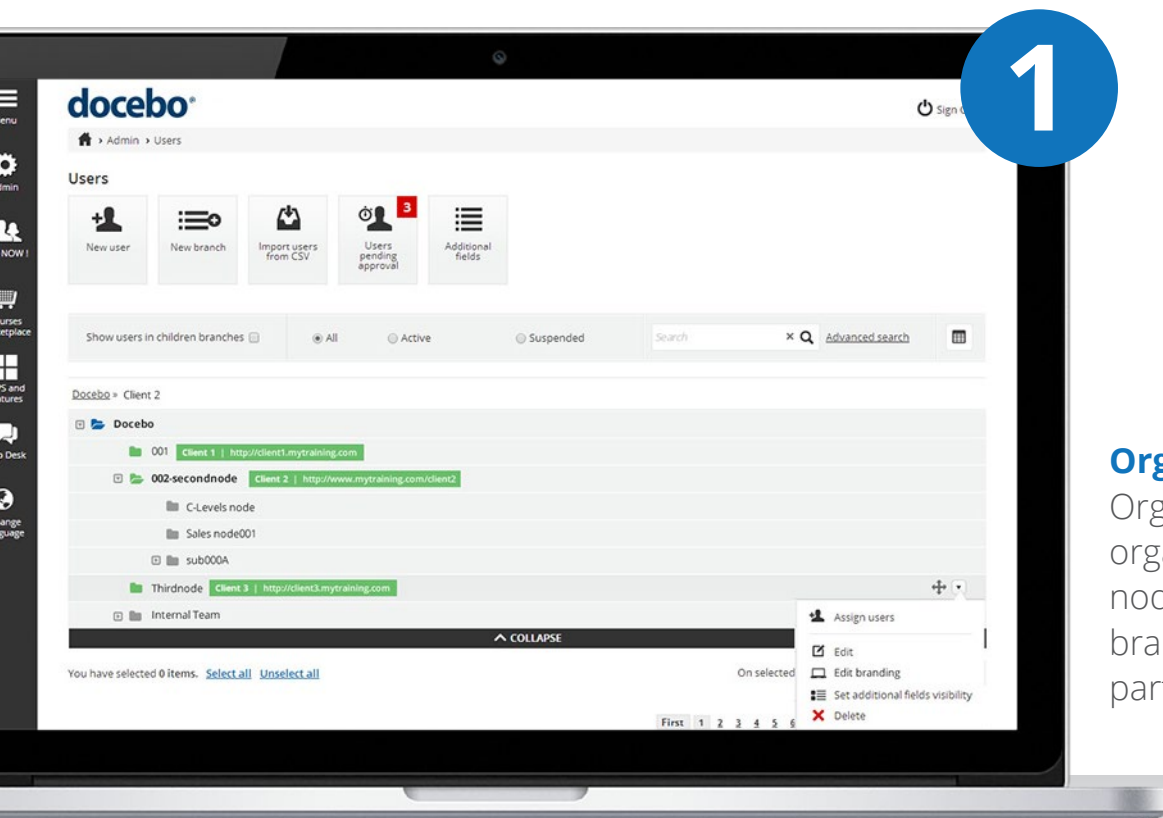
Fabio Pirovano,
Chief Technology Officer (CTO), at Docebo



Appendix 2

How to setup your Extended Enterprise

Your Extended Enterprise can be set up in six easy steps. Follow the below steps to create an organization chart, and then easily manage clients and partners using the Extended Enterprise dashboard.



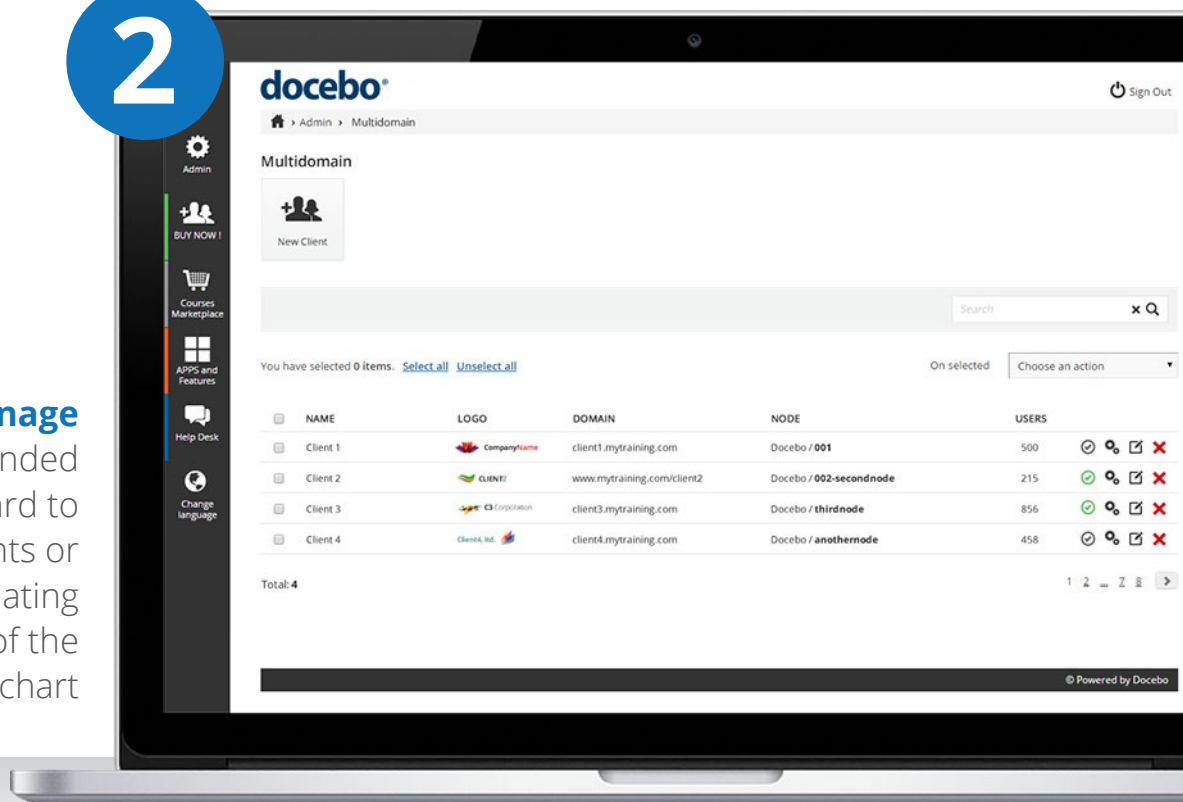
Organise

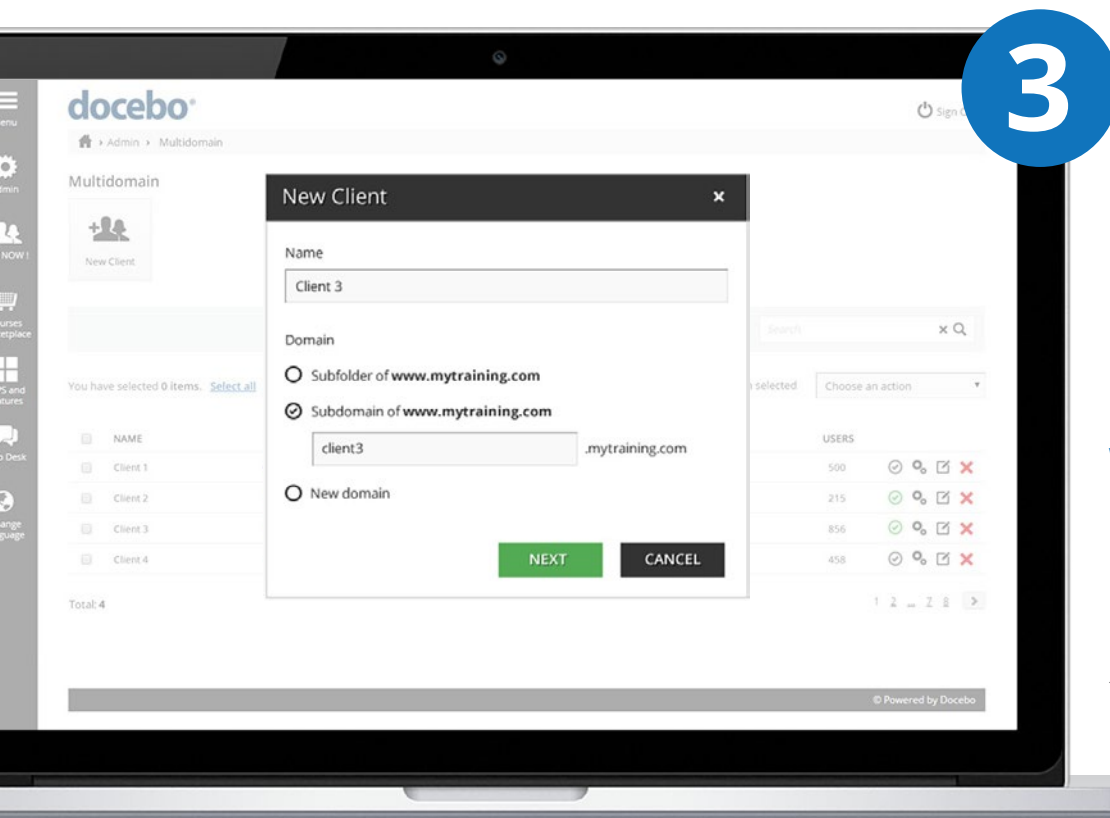
Organise your organization chart: each node can be a company branch, or one of your partners or clients

2

Manage

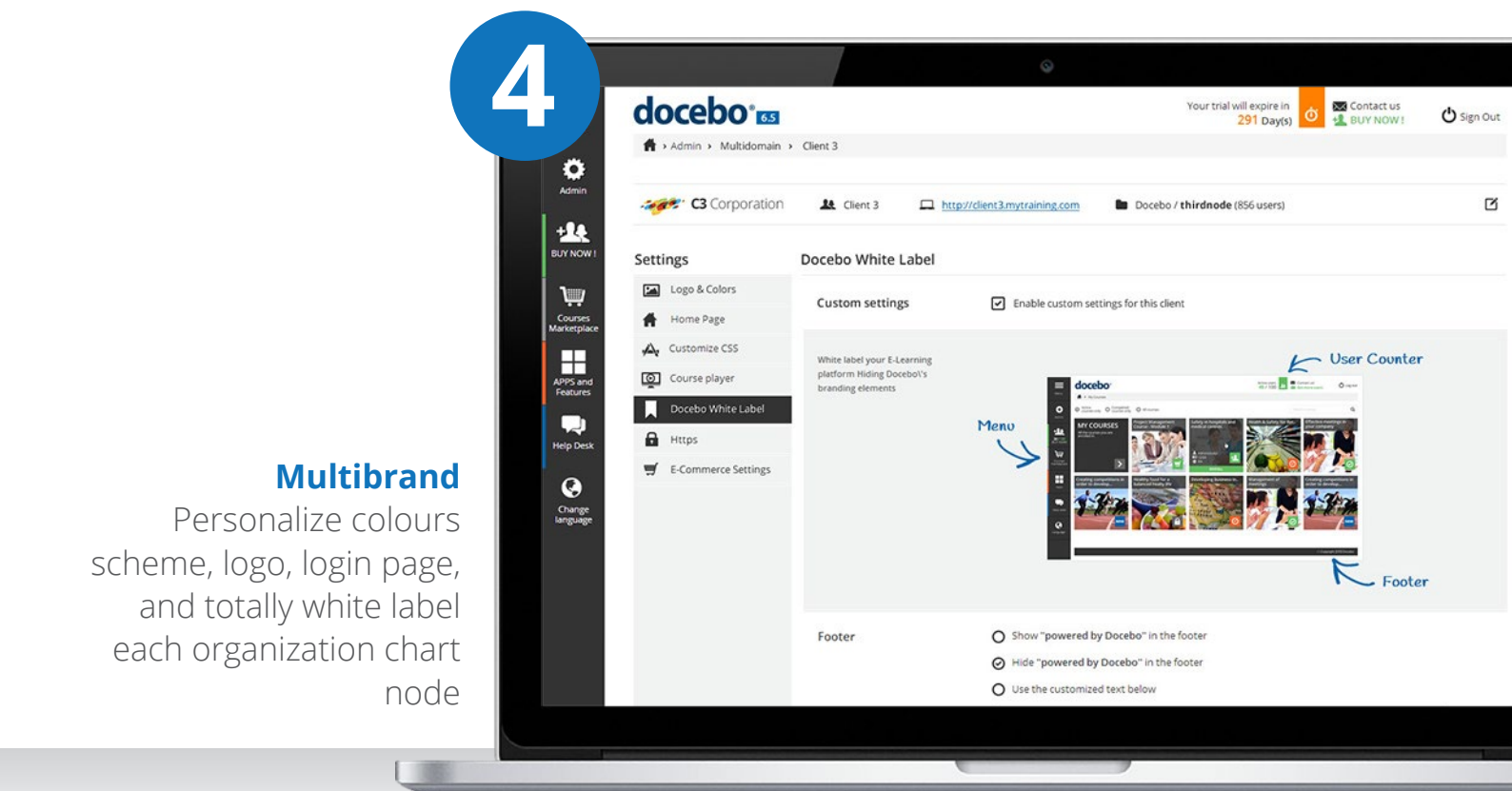
Access the Extended Enterprise dashboard to organise your clients or partners, by associating them to a node of the organization chart





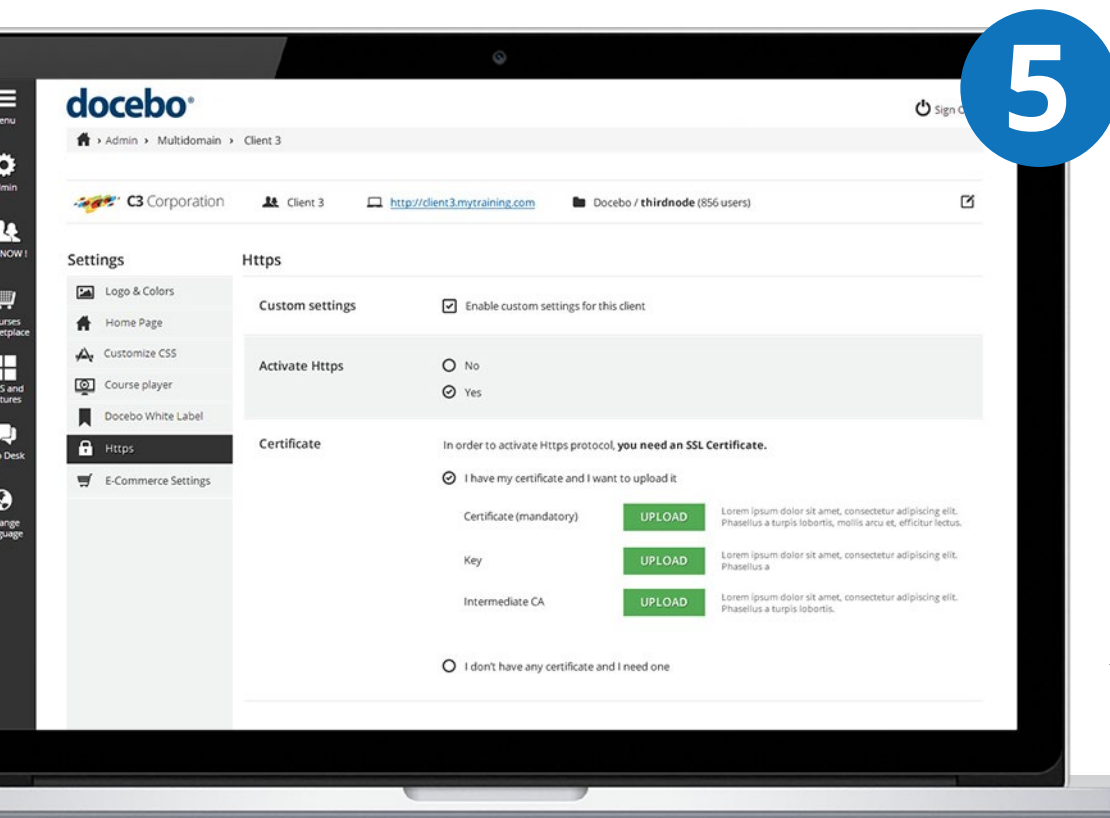
Web address

Create a subdomain, a subfolder or a new custom domain for each organization chart node to make them unique



Multibrand

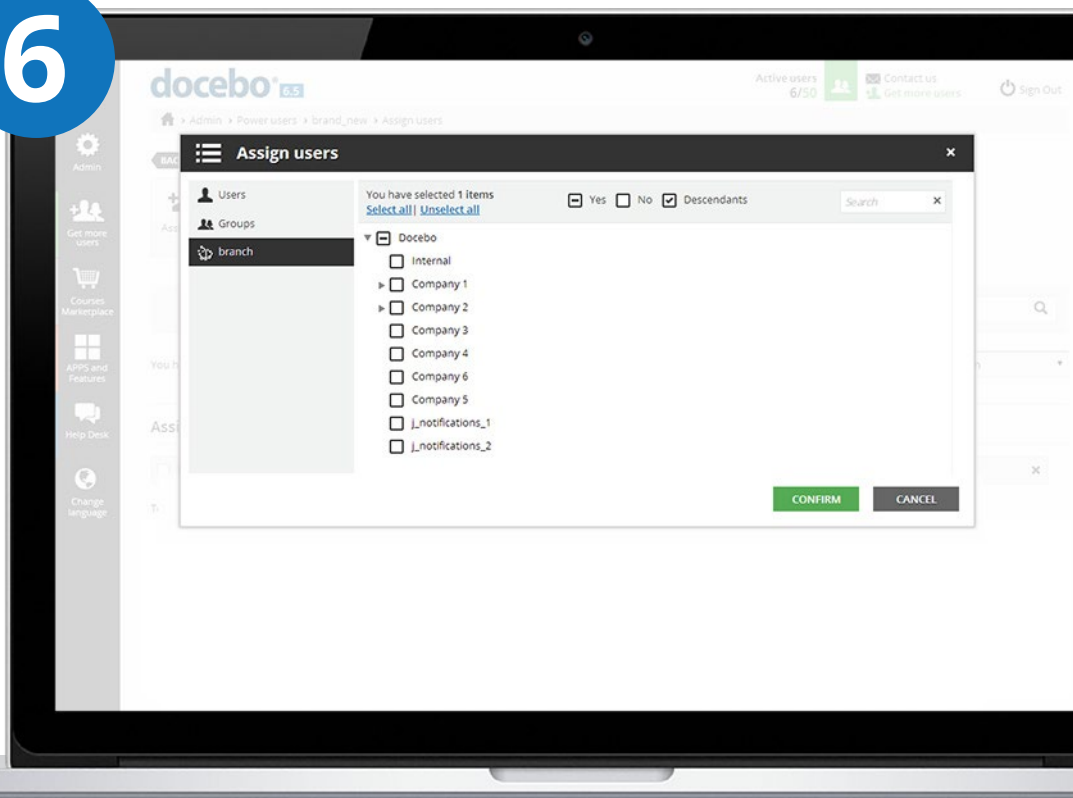
Personalize colours scheme, logo, login page, and totally white label each organization chart node



Security

It's all about security! Add a custom SSL certificate and enable https protocol for each personalised organization chart node

6



Power Users

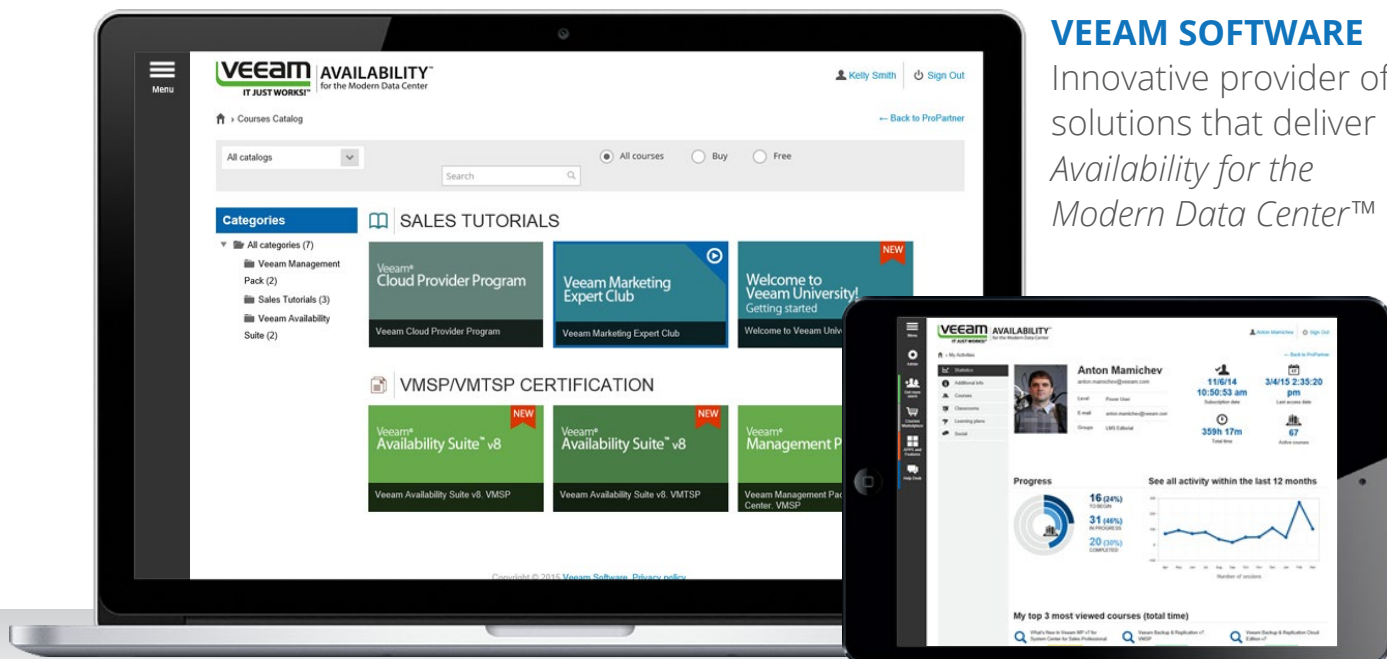
Associate Power Users with specific privileges and super-admin rights to each organization chart node to ensure better management

Extended Enterprise Examples



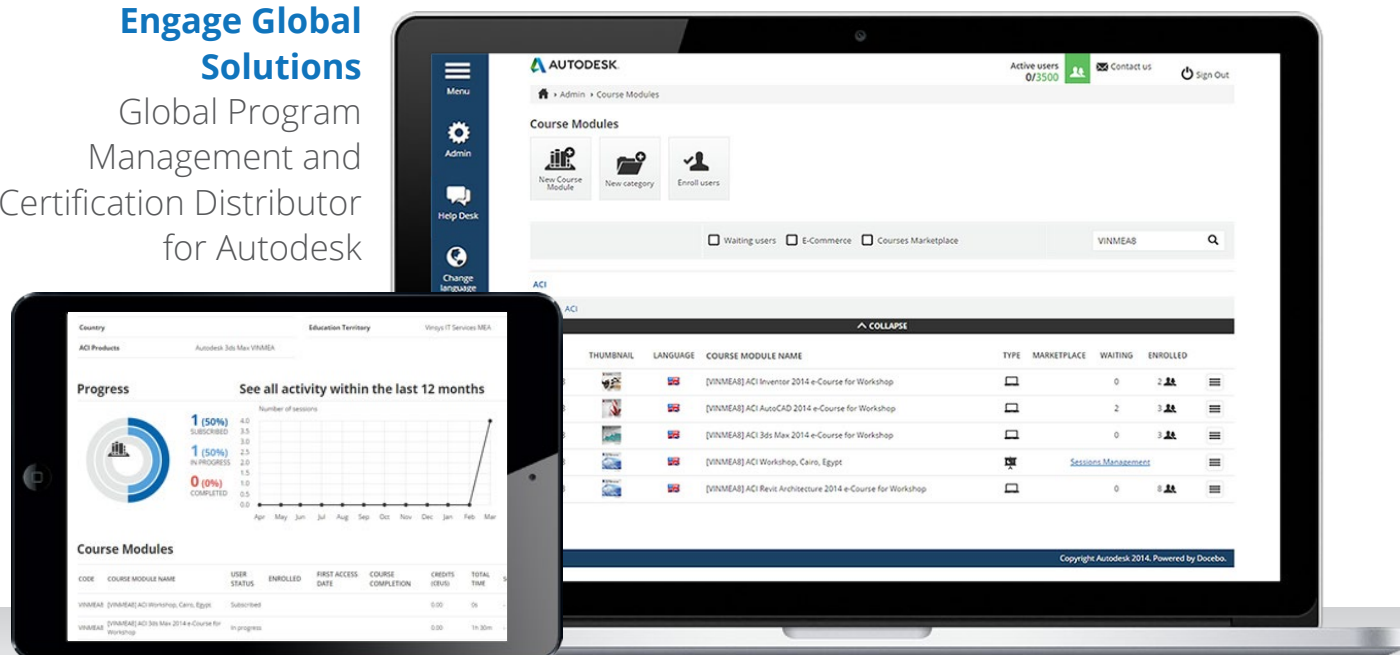
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DISTANCE EDUCATION AND WOMEN

Final Project

By Rose Ann Swanson
Supervisor: Dr. Gina Wong-Wylie
March 16, 2005

Statistics reveal that the majority of distance learners in North America are women who are often managing multiple life roles. Many women are attracted to the flexibility and accessibility of DE and its potential for attainment alongside childrearing. For women who have committed to raising their children at home, pursuing their education by DE is seen as an ideal opportunity and possibility. As such, one major consideration in examining DE for women is childbearing/parenting and how women incorporate this significant time into their already existing professional goal-oriented activities. Pregnancy and motherhood affects all aspects of a woman's life including the biological, psychological, and social; finding a way to balance these factors along with educational goals is vital to their success.

Many women have made a conscious decision to pursue tertiary education alongside childbearing and childrearing without prior knowledge as to what this endeavor entails. Von Prummer (2000) asserted "in reality the everyday lives of family women are characterized by a degree of chaos and constant interruptions, where the mother is at the beck and call of her children (and sometimes her husband) and their immediate needs which tend to take precedence over the women's desire for uninterrupted and concentrated study time".

Women face many barriers/challenges when pursuing post-secondary education through DE and the effects of these barriers on them can cause undue stress and attrition. Cross (1981) has identified three types of barriers that women face: situational, dispositional, and institutional. Situational barriers include lack of support from family, friends, and employer. Dispositional barriers include lack of self-confidence, fear of failure, and anxiety related to computer usage. Examples of institutional barriers include lack of technical assistance, support services (counselling), and access to library and administration needs. These barriers can be the source of many difficulties such as chronic stress, decreased motivation, and inability to cope with heavy course loads.

Running head: DISTANCE EDUCATION AND WOMEN

Final Project Letter of Intent

Campus of Alberta Applied Psychology: Counselling Initiative

Issues and Perspectives in Women and Distance Education:

A Guidebook

Supervisor: Dr. Gina Wong-Wylie

By Rose Ann Swanson

March 16, 2005

Problem Statement and Project Rationale

Distance learning has been in existence for at least 100 years, and due to changes in technology, has advanced rapidly in the last forty years (Galusha, 2004). Distance Education (DE) is defined by Rezabek (1999) as:

The transportation of information and the involvement of a learner in the acquisition of knowledge and understanding of an area of study through planned, usually structured, and organized (but also incidental) communication, that also uses supplemental resources and media-assisted two way communication, where the learner and instructor are separated by distance and/or time. (p. 12)

DE provides the opportunity for study with freedom in relation to time and place of study for those unable to attend traditional classroom based instruction. It allows for a high degree of flexibility for individuals pursuing education for professional purposes or as part of their leisure pursuits. Consistent with this perspective, Chung (1990) advocated that:

Distance education provides opportunities for adults to change careers later in life; to enhance their skills and qualifications while retaining their jobs; to bring up a young family while continuing with their education; to keep up with ever-changing technologies; and to improve their social position and status. (p. 61)

In addition to vocation and vocational purposes, intellectual satisfaction/personal fulfillment, being a role model for family members (Furst-Bowe & Dittman, 2001), the privacy of home study (Leiper, 1993), and gaining cultural knowledge have also been identified as advantages to pursuing DE.

Statistics reveal that the majority of distance learners in North America are women who are often managing multiple life roles. Many women are attracted to the flexibility and accessibility of DE and its potential for attainment alongside childrearing. For women who have committed to raising their children at home, pursuing their education by DE is seen as an ideal opportunity/possibility.

As such, one major consideration in examining DE for women is childbearing/parenting and how women incorporate this significant time into their already existing professional goal-oriented activities. Pregnancy and motherhood affects all aspects of a woman's life including the biological, psychological, and social; finding a way to balance these factors along with educational goals is vital to their success.

Many women have made a conscious decision to pursue tertiary education alongside childbearing and childrearing without prior knowledge as to what this endeavor entails. von Prummer (2000) asserted "in reality the everyday lives of family women are characterized by a degree of chaos and constant interruptions, where the mother is at the beck and call of her children (and sometimes her husband) and their immediate needs which tend to take precedence over the women's desire for uninterrupted and concentrated study time" (p. 46).

Women face many barriers/challenges when pursuing post-secondary education through DE and the effects of these barriers on them can cause undue stress and attrition. Cross (1981) has identified three types of barriers that women face: situational, dispositional, and institutional. Situational barriers include lack of support from family, friends, and employer. Dispositional barriers include lack of self-confidence, fear of failure, and anxiety related to computer usage. Examples of institutional barriers include lack of technical assistance, support services (counselling), and access to library and administration needs. These barriers can be the source of many difficulties such as chronic stress, decreased motivation, and inability to cope with heavy course loads.

Andrusyszyn, Cragg, and Fraser (2004) purported that "technological advancements and the explosion of knowledge are making it more difficult to remain current and maintain professional competence" (p. 4). For many women, DE is one of the most convenient ways to accomplish both personal and professional goals simultaneously. Acknowledging and making provisions for

situational, dispositional, institutional, and other barriers has the potential to enhance the learning experience and quality of life of female distance learners.

The intent of this comprehensive literature review is to examine the history of DE and what the extant literature to date reveals as the trends, issues, and perspectives of women in DE. This writer will explore the scholarly literature on women and DE, barriers and challenges that women learners face and coping strategies that these women learners can utilize to support their success in DE studies. Subsequently, these influencing factors will form the basis for the development of a guidebook for women embarking on DE. The development of this guidebook will be emergent based on the issues and perspectives discovered; however, it may include relevant aspects of the DE female learner's reality such as concerns, needs, successes, and celebrations. This guidebook will strive to alleviate some of the anxieties and frustrations that females may experience as a result of their new role as a post-secondary DE student by presenting coping strategies that other female DE students have utilized.

Reference to Literature

As mentioned previously, keeping updated with technology, and remaining current in the workforce (fulfilling employer expectations) can be difficult, and for many women who assume multiple life roles, DE is one of the most convenient and flexible ways to fulfill their aspirations.

Houle (as cited in Qureshi, Morton & Antosz, 2004) classified DE learners into a three-category system. He described *Goal-oriented learners* as “those who use learning to gain specific objectives, such as learning to deal with particular family problems, learning better business practices, or pursuing a particular area of interest” (p. 3). *Activity-oriented learners* are “those who participate primarily for the sake of the activity itself, to join a group, or to escape an unhappy situation” (p. 3) and *Learning-oriented learners* are “those who pursue learning for its own sake, the lifelong learners” (p. 3). Given the increasing expectations of employers and the

apparent motivations towards self-directed, lifelong learning it stands to reason that the number of DE learners will continue to increase into the 21st century.

Srivastava (2002) stated that “Enrollment in higher education has been on the rise and so has the number of female graduates” (p. 6). At Athabasca University (AU), Canada’s Open University situated in Athabasca, AB, “the proportion of women graduates grew steadily in the past five years from 38 percent in 1998-99 to 54 percent in 2002-03” (AU 2003 Annual Report). AU currently has 24,136 students (22,019 undergraduate and 2117 graduate) enrolled in DE courses (AU Student Enrollment: Statistics, 2004).

Most studies of distance learners in North America have indicated that more women than men are enrolled in courses through DE. Typically a distance learner is 1) older than the typical undergraduate, 2) female, 3) likely to be employed full-time, and 4) married (Thompson, 2004). Bontempi (2004) reported that the majority of distance learners are between 25 and 34 years old and over seventy percent of recent graduates who studied by distance worked full time during their degree program. It is significant to mention here that childbearing years are also typically between the ages of 25 and 34.

In September of 2001 a report released by the American Association of University Women (Carlson, 2001) indicated that women who take DE courses face substantially more challenges than do men. Reflective of some of these challenges, Cross (1981) maintained that the five most prevalent barriers are (a) lack of money, (b) not enough time, (c) forgot how to study and too difficult, (d) student thought they were too old, and (e) institution was too far away. Furst-Bowe and Dittmann (2001) stated, “Balancing a job, family, community and academic responsibilities can be a major challenge” (p. 405). Lack of student support and services, difficulties accessing necessary childcare, insufficient time and energy for studies due to employment or family responsibilities, change of job or residence, changed family responsibilities, lack of financial

support, illness of self or family member, and pregnancy are all factors that can hinder academic success. Also, Galusha (2004) mentioned that a “student’s lack of adequate hardware and the subsequent cost barrier of obtaining equipment could place undue hardship on some remote students” (p. 9).

Geographical isolation and lack of social interactions with other students is a major problem for DE students according to Galusha (2004) and can lead to feelings of alienation and the denied perception that they belong to a scholarly community. Burke (2001) described “expectations and attitudes, arising from their position in society” (p. 610) as an obstacle to women’s success in their studies. She also indicated that lack of social support, lack of guidance, study conditions at home, and lack of communication are anxiety-promoting challenges that women in DE can experience.

Another difficulty encountered by DE students is lack of experience and training in reference to technical issues (e.g., e-mailing, word processing) and DE (Galusha, 2004). This inexperience can promote feelings of insecurity and helplessness. Student inability to manage the volume or level of work has also been mentioned throughout DE literature as a challenge to learning.

The fact that most DE learners are female and that these women face a multitude of barriers/challenges (including multiple life roles) speaks to the importance of examining and reporting on the perceptions of these learners and learning from their unique experiences. A culminating guidebook geared for women who are involved or considering becoming involved in DE learning will provide support and normalization of the experience for these women.

Method

A comprehensive literature review will serve to explore the evolution of DE, reveal the issues and perspectives in women and DE and provide rationale for further study into this area. I have identified a wide range of preliminary sources and primary research journals as appropriate

and relevant to my topic. Various primary research journals include the *American Journal of Distance Education Report*, *New Horizons in Adult Education*, and the *Distance Education Report*. Texts such as *Women and Distance Education: Challenges and Opportunities* by Christine von Prummer, *Feminist Critique of Adult and Continuing Education* by June Thompson, the *Handbook of Distance Education* by Moore and Anderson, and *The Third Shift* by Cheris Kramarae will also provide useful and pertinent data. Searches using databases such as Academic Search Premier, PsychINFO, EBSCO host, EMBASE: Excerpta Medica, PsychArticles, and Psychology and Behavioral Sciences Collection will be conducted. Search words potentially used will be: trends in DE; issues in DE; women and DE; gender and DE; successes in DE; perspectives of women in DE.

This writer will analyze and consolidate the literature in an organized and meaningful fashion to inform future research and aid as a resource for women entering DE through the development of a guidebook. The following outline is a tentative template for the literature review and subsequent guidebook.

1. What is DE?
2. Brief overview of the history of DE
3. Trends in DE (e.g., student/enrolment, technology, academic, faculty, economic)
4. Who are the users of DE? (e.g., characteristics, demographics, statistics)
5. Why do women learners choose DE over traditional education?
6. Issues women face in DE (e.g., gender gap, androcentrism, childbearing/parenting)
7. My Journey (e.g., introduction, personal experience with DE)
8. How to make DE work for you
9. Successes and Celebrations

Sections 1 to 6 will form the central basis of the literature review and will be summarized briefly, in a user-friendly way, in the guidebook. The brief overview of the history of DE will include information accumulated from searches of literature published from January 1975 to the present time, 2005. Information highlighting trends in DE, current issues affecting women in DE, potential barriers and facilitative factors (successes and celebrations) in the experience will be drawn primarily from the last 15 years.

Section 7 (my experience with DE) will follow the aforementioned summarization, as will sections 8 and 9. Section 8 will be more extensive in nature and will constitute the practical component of the guidebook. Section 9 will provide stories of hope and inspiration for the DE student as she begins her journey.

Implications

As Conhaim (2003) suggested “Online higher education is part of the growing trend in lifelong learning” (p. 1). Women must integrate their post-secondary education into lives characterized by multiple roles such as employee, wife/partner, mother, family member, caregiver, and volunteer. Many women are “torn between self-development, careers, and family commitments” (Younes & Asay, 1998, as cited in Fram & Bonvillian, 2001, p. 2). Stressors can produce strain in the individual’s biological, psychological and social systems, which can result in attrition and chronic stress.

The gathering of information in the area of women and DE and the development of a guidebook will be beneficial to female DE learners in that they could become more aware of what it takes for them to accomplish their academic and career goals. A user-friendly guidebook that complements current scholarly literature would provide necessary steps for success for women students embarking on their DE journey. An emphasis, in this review, on the successes and celebrations of women in DE would reveal to new DE women learners that success is within

their reach. I aim to provide encouragement, hope, and instil a firm belief that with motivation and perseverance, accomplishing career goals is not only a distinct possibility but a probability.

The review and guidebook will additionally provide an overview of relevant and useful information that will assist in informing developers, administrators, and instructors of DE programs in fostering more effective delivery of integrated support and flexible learning technologies to women students of DE programs.

Additionally, this research will add to the body of literature in the area of DE. Steps will be taken to disseminate this research at conferences such as the Canadian Association for Distance Education (CADE) Conference, the Web-Based Teaching and Learning (NAWeb) Conference and the Association for Media and Technology in Education (AMTEC) Conference. Findings will be submitted to various DE journals such as the CADE: Journal of Distance Education, the CJLT: Canadian Journal of Learning and Technology, the New Horizons in Adult Education Journal and the Distance Education Report.

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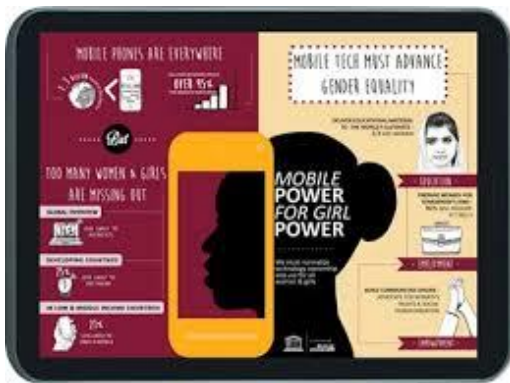
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Gender and Mobile Learning; Report by UNESCO'2015

MOBILE LEARNING WEEK 2015 February 23–27



Education empowers women and girls. It provides them with the ability and knowledge needed to direct their own lives. The positive ripple effect of education for women and girls is so far-reaching that a number of international organizations, UNESCO and UN Women foremost among them, have persuasively argued it may be the single most effective tool for development.

When girls receive education they; marry later; have smaller and healthier families; gain skills needed to enter and succeed in the labour market; recognize the importance of health care and seek it for themselves and their children; understand their rights and gain the confidence to insist on them. Several international frameworks have formalized commitments to improving learning opportunities for women and girls. The 1995 Beijing Platform for Action called on countries to ensure equal access to education for girls, eradicate female illiteracy and expand the availability of vocational training for women. Girls' education was singled out again in the 2000 Dakar Framework for Action and codified as one of six Education for All (EFA) goals. The goal on gender established two specific targets:

- eliminate gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and
- achieve gender equality in education by 2015.

These agreements frame and add urgency to questions about the place of women and girls' education in the post-2015 development agenda. A consensus has emerged that renewed impetus is needed to fully -and finally- ensure that women have equitable access to high quality education. The question of how this is best accomplished and what role technology can play is the starting point for Mobile Learning



PREFACE

Education empowers women and girls. It provides them with the ability and knowledge needed to direct their own lives. The positive ripple effect of education for women and girls is so far-reaching that a number of international organizations, UNESCO and UN Women foremost among them, have persuasively argued it may be the single most effective tool for development.¹

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These agreements frame and add urgency to questions about the place of women and girls' education in the post-2015 development agenda. A consensus has emerged that renewed impetus is needed to fully – and finally – ensure that women have equitable access to high quality education. The question of how this is best accomplished and what role technology can play is the starting point for Mobile Learning Week 2015.⁴

THE NEED FOR FOCUS ON WOMEN AND GIRLS

Without question, opportunities for girls to receive education have expanded significantly over the past several decades. From 1970 onwards female enrolments have increased faster than those for males at all education levels. Today the percentage of girls enrolled in primary and secondary schools either equals or surpasses the percentage of boys in many countries.⁵ Worldwide, women and girls have better access to educational opportunities than at any time in the past, and these gains are translating into improved social and economic opportunities. Between 1980 and 2008, a period of explosive growth in female access to education, 552 million women joined the labour force, and today 4 out of every 10 workers globally are female.⁶

Yet despite this commendable progress, the quality of education remains unsatisfactory in many contexts, and access to education is still inequitable across gender lines. The character and magnitude of inequity vary from country to country, but the most serious problems tend to be concentrated in Africa and South Asia. Alarming, gender gaps in sub-Saharan Africa have widened at higher levels of schooling, a reverse of the global trend towards greater parity: between 1999 and 2010 the ratio of girls in secondary

Globally, two out of every three illiterate adults are women.

school fell from 83 to 82 girls per 100 boys, and from 67 to 63 girls per 100 boys at the tertiary level.⁷ This represents not only stalled progress but a reversion to the deep gender inequalities that characterized previous eras. At the primary school level, impressive gains made in the early 2000s have levelled off. In several low income countries it is not atypical to find only 7 girls enrolled in school per every 10 boys.⁸ The 2013/4 EFA Global Monitoring Report summed up the situation unambiguously: Worldwide 'girls are more likely to miss out on primary education' than boys and are afflicted by the 'most extreme cases of inequality in secondary education'.⁹

These disparities result in disproportional literacy rates for males and females.¹⁰ Globally, two out of every three illiterate adults are women.



In a handful of countries the literacy rate for women has yet to exceed 50 per cent. There are parallel problems in the youth population: of the 126 million youth who are illiterate, 61 per cent are female. Solving the illiteracy crisis has, to a large extent, become synonymous with strengthening learning for women and girls.

Gender inequalities in education are often exacerbated by socio-economic and geographic factors. Compared to men, women are far less likely to have access to quality education if they are poor and live in rural areas. For example, in sub-Saharan Africa 87 per cent of male children from rich, urban families complete primary school, but only 23 per cent of female children from poor, rural families do the same. Similarly, in South and West Asia nearly 90 per cent of rich, urban boys finish lower secondary school, versus only 13 per cent of poor, rural girls.¹¹ Girls, already at an educational disadvantage without accounting for class and geography, are at a substantially greater disadvantage relative to boys if they are poor and/or live outside of cities.

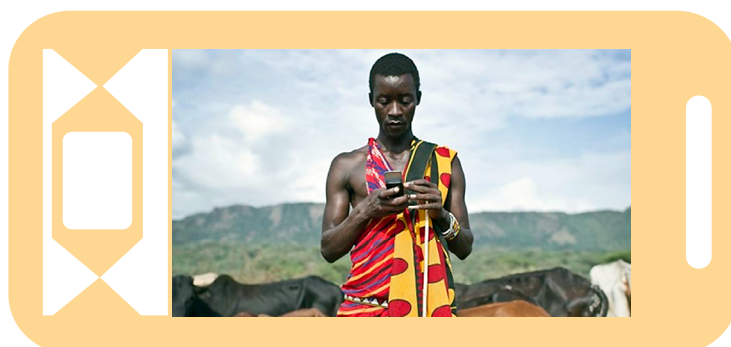
In low to middle income countries a woman is 21 per cent less likely to own a mobile phone than a man.

In addition, women in developing countries face unique challenges when it comes to using information and communication technology (ICT)

to unlock educational opportunities. Worldwide, men are far more likely than women to use ICT both for learning and for professional purposes. Part of this is a problem of access. In low to middle income countries a woman is 21 per cent less likely to own a mobile phone than a man, and the divide is similar for internet access.¹² Nearly 25 per cent fewer women than men have internet connectivity in developing countries and this gap rises to nearly 50 per cent in some regions.¹³ Another problem relates to ICT training. While access to technology is important, the mere availability of ICT does not always translate into its productive use. Targeted training helps people understand how to utilize mobile technology effectively, yet this training, when it exists at all, is often aimed at men or reflects male biases. This puts women at a disadvantage. In the twenty-first century, ICT proficiency is a core competency and increasingly a prerequisite for employment. According to the UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 'if girls are to leave school ready to participate equally in the knowledge economy, then they too [like boys] will require the benefits of ICT-assisted instruction, including the knowledge, skills and attitudes imparted by using these tools'.¹⁴

Even in situations where girls and boys have equal access to ICT and ICT training, girls tend to lag behind boys in technology-related fields. A number of studies indicate that girls lack confidence in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) and, as a result, do not regularly pursue high-paying careers in fields like computer science.¹⁵ These perceptual problems can be traced to gender stereotypes, cultural barriers, inappropriate pedagogical practices and a dearth of gender-sensitive teaching and learning content. Gender gaps in STEM have persisted for far too long and solutions are urgently needed, particularly as employment prospects in STEM-related fields expand.

Collectively, the information above tells a clear story: despite progress over the past three decades, the goal of gender equality in education remains unfulfilled.



MOBILE LEARNING WEEK 2015

Mobile Learning Week 2015 (MLW 2015) will seek to illuminate how increasingly ubiquitous, affordable and powerful mobile technology – from basic handsets to the newest tablet computers – can be leveraged to accelerate high quality education for women and girls, especially those living in disadvantaged communities. The event aims to help direct the world towards greater gender equality, both in education and beyond.

MLW 2015 will provide a venue to learn about and discuss technology programmes, initiatives and content that are alleviating gender deficits in education.

Although not a panacea, mobile technology is a promising vehicle for improving education, due to a proliferation of educational content tailored for use on widely owned mobile devices. Current estimates from the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) indicate that of the seven billion people on Earth, over six billion now have access to a working mobile device, meaning that mobile technology is now common in areas where women are underserved and educational opportunities are limited.¹⁶ Concurrent with this trend, a burgeoning number of programmes are utilizing mobile devices for learning and many have successfully targeted women and girls.

MLW 2015 will give participants a venue to learn about and discuss technology programmes, initiatives and content that are alleviating gender deficits in



education. The event will further encourage conversations about gender-sensitive approaches to the application and use of ICT in education. Participants will demonstrate how mobile technology can provide a tool for closing the access, knowledge and confidence gaps between males and females worldwide. The gender theme of the 2015 event will allow UNESCO and UN Women opportunities to engage questions that are not

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strictly about teaching and learning. For example, research indicates that women feel safer when they have and know how to use a mobile phone.¹⁷ In light of this, MLW 2015 will seek to improve participants' knowledge of strategies for using mobile devices to improve women and girls' safety and security, especially within the context of education.

It is vital that mobile learning's challenges are understood as clearly as its benefits. MLW 2015 will explore difficulties associated with the integration of mobile technology in education as well as its opportunities and advantages. The event will also examine mobile learning from a value perspective: that is, how the return on mobile learning investments compares to other non-ICT educational investments. As in previous years, MLW participants are encouraged to ask hard questions. The event aims to avoid boosterism and instead cultivate an atmosphere of critical inquiry, where sceptics as well as advocates of mobile learning can engage in constructive dialogue.

THE PATH AHEAD

With 2015 marking a major crossroads for a number of global normative agreements on education and development, the stakes for MLW 2015 could not be higher. Despite decades of progress, the world still has not achieved gender equality: women account for the majority of people living in poverty;¹⁸ one in three women will be a victim of violence;¹⁹ in most countries women's wages are between 70 and 90 per cent of men's wages;²⁰ less than 22 per cent of national parliamentarians are female;²¹ and only 18 per cent of companies worldwide have a top-level female manager.²² Mobile learning, if implemented appropriately, has the potential to begin reconciling these sobering deficits and move us closer to a world that embraces women as equal to men. MLW 2015 will explore how this crucial goal is best realized.



THEME AND GUIDING QUESTIONS

MLW 2015 will examine how various stakeholders can best utilize mobile devices – now and in the future – to achieve gender equality in education. This overarching theme will be underscored by four sub-themes, each with their own guiding questions:

1) EQUITABLE ACCESS

For women and girls to benefit from mobile learning they must be able to access, use and ideally own mobile technology. However, in many parts of the world women – whether for economic, social or cultural reasons – are unable to access even inexpensive devices such as basic mobile handsets. In low to middle income countries, 300 million more men than women own mobile phones,²³ and men are far more likely to use them to connect to the internet and download applications that increase economic, professional and educational opportunities.²⁴

How can access to technology be expanded to ensure women participate equally in mobile learning? How can gains in mobile device ownership for women be strengthened and sustained, especially in countries where there are cultural barriers to female technology use? What are the strategies for providing women and girls access to education through mobile technology? What are the best ways to assure the safety of women and girls who use mobile technology?

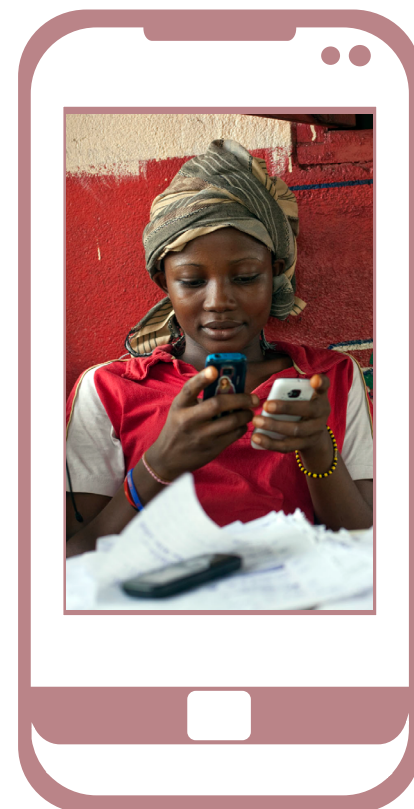
2) GENDER-SENSITIVE CONTENT & PEDAGOGY

Mobile learning content is often created without taking into account the specific needs of women and girls and the contexts in which they live. Existing content may perpetuate counterproductive gender stereotypes or rely on material which is either culturally irrelevant or inappropriate. Mobile learning initiatives should embrace gender-sensitive approaches and draw on lessons learned from previous initiatives. Also, because mobile learning content is frequently built from scratch, educators have a window of opportunity to incorporate gender-responsive material into mobile resources and pedagogies from an early stage.

What gender-sensitive mobile content and instructional approaches have worked well to encourage the equitable engagement of women and girls in education and combat negative attitudes and stereotypes? How can mobile technology



contribute to the development and distribution of gender-sensitive content, curricula and teacher training? In what ways can mobile devices be used to recruit and support female teachers? How can mobile learning address gender gaps in STEM subjects and facilitate women and girls' engagement in topics such as innovation, entrepreneurship, empowerment, individual rights and reproductive health?



3) LITERACY

Due to a history of educational inequity, many more women than men are illiterate: globally, 64 per cent of illiterate people are women.²⁵ Limited access to physical books and other learning materials disproportionately affects women, particularly in developing countries. Cultural norms can make it difficult for girls to leave home in order to attend literacy trainings or participate in outreach activities. Motherhood and assumed family obligations can further prevent women from building literacy skills in formal education settings.

How can mobile learning interventions break through barriers and promote literacy for women and girls in ways that are sustainable and scalable? How can mobile technology help develop essential literacies beyond reading and writing, such as media and technology literacy?

4) SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

In addition to supporting growth in traditional academic disciplines, mobile technology can be leveraged to help women find work, achieve autonomy and overcome poverty. Mobile devices can also help women connect with others and build networks to support learning and empowerment. Additionally, mobile technology can provide women with a portal to financial services, allowing them to gain access to credit and start businesses.

How can mobile technology promote gender equality in society at large? How can mobile learning help women transition from education to employment and become active citizens in their communities? How have mobile technologies helped to enhance the learning of women and girls outside of school, through lifelong learning programmes, technical and vocational education and training (TVET) initiatives, and efforts to bridge informal and formal education?

OBJECTIVES AND TARGET AUDIENCE

MLW 2015 has four core objectives, aligned with the four tracks of the week-long event:

- ◆ Build the capacity of mobile learning practitioners through knowledge-sharing **workshops**.
- ◆ Convene government representatives, education and mobile learning experts, gender specialists, project managers, researchers, and industry partners to share mobile learning innovations and best practices as they relate to gender equality during a two-day **symposium**.
- ◆ Provide a **policy forum** for government representatives to discuss ideas for mainstreaming and scaling up successful mobile learning interventions to promote gender equality in education. Building on existing policy and programming recommendations – such as the Education for All goals and the Beijing Declaration on the Status of Women – the forum will also ask officials to deliberate the role mobile technology should play in the post-2015 education and development agendas.
- ◆ Inform the future development of mobile learning to support gender equality through the sharing of research. The **research seminar** will provide insights into what questions need to be answered and how the field should move forward to extend the benefits of mobile learning to more women and girls. The seminar will further examine how to ensure women are actively engaged in shaping the future of mobile learning research.

MLW 2015 will host a diverse audience made up of:

- ◆ Representatives of intergovernmental organizations and government sectors, particularly representatives from ministries of education, gender, ICT and finance.
- ◆ Civil society actors with a focus on gender and/or education.

MLW 2015 aims to cultivate an atmosphere of critical inquiry, where sceptics as well as advocates of mobile learning can engage in constructive dialogue.



- ◆ Researchers and practitioners in mobile learning and gender.
- ◆ Leaders of schools and teacher training institutions.
- ◆ Private sector stakeholders.

EXHIBITION

Since the first MLW in 2011, UNESCO has hosted an exhibition space where companies, individuals and NGOs are invited to showcase mobile learning initiatives, innovations, content and technology. The exhibition adds value to the overarching event by giving participants an outlet for disseminating information. It also ensures the participation of the private sector, which is a major stakeholder in the field of mobile learning.



SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

The MLW 2015 week will be broken into four distinct tracks to engage a wide range of participants, including policy-makers, project managers, educators and researchers.

Monday, 23 February	Tuesday & Wednesday, 24–25 February	Thursday, 26 February	Friday, 27 February
WORKSHOPS	SYMPOSIUM	POLICY FORUM	RESEARCH SEMINAR
The workshops will be dedicated to hands-on training and interactive demonstrations of mobile learning content, technology and interventions.	The symposium will feature keynote speakers, expert panels and numerous breakout presentations. An exhibition will accompany the symposium, allowing various organizations opportunities to showcase work and share information.	The policy forum will bring together senior representatives from different countries to discuss how mobile learning can accelerate progress towards gender equality in education. The event will also explore how new educational technologies can contribute to post-2015 development priorities.	The research seminar will allow participants to share findings from investigations of mobile learning implementations. The seminar will also help improve communication between the research community and other stakeholder groups.

KNOWLEDGE DISSEMINATION EVENTS

New UNESCO and UN Women publications will be presented at MLW 2015. Anticipated UNESCO reports include a series of papers that describe and analyse mobile learning initiatives targeting women and girls; a comparative review of mobile learning projects to support teacher development in Mexico, Nigeria, Pakistan and Senegal; and information about an ongoing review of national mobile learning initiatives in Latin America. Relevant UN Women publications and documents will also be shared. UNESCO and UN Women further plan to release a joint statement articulating the potential of ICT to promote the education of women and girls.

IMPORTANT DATES

October 2014 Registration opens; call for presentation proposals (workshops and symposium)

December 2014 Notification of selected proposals

February 2015 UNESCO Mobile Learning Week

EVENT WEBSITE

www.unesco.org/new/en/mlw



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Summit Gender 7 Europe, Report

REPORT FROM THE 2015 EUROPEAN GENDER SUMMIT TO THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION AND EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT Research and Innovation Quality through Equality: Mastering Gender in Research Performance, Context and Outcomes

**7th GENDER SUMMIT-Europe
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The aim of the Gender Summit platform is to help advance gender mainstreaming efforts in research and innovation by making sure that the science community and stakeholders in science endeavours are well acquainted with relevant research evidence and benefits of gender sensitive and responsive knowledge production, application and communication. Helping achieve success in delivering gender objectives in Horizon 2020 is one of the main goals of the European Gender Summit and suggest recommendations for actions, arising from the assessment by the European Commission of the first year of HORIZON 2020.

Three gender concerns dominated the debate at the Summit in Mastering gender in research perform, as pleaded here:

- The persistence of the 'leaky pipeline', still 80% of professors are men
- Implicit gender bias in assessment of scientific merit of women and men, which favours the success of men (i.e. promotion, in awarding grants, in selection to teams, etc.)
- Gender bias in science knowledge, which produces science that has more evidence for men than for women resulting in outcomes that are often poorer for women than for men.
- Three gender-mainstreaming actions stood out as effective enablers of lasting change:
- Gender equality plans initiated from the top leaders, rooted in legislation, and supplied with field-specific expert panels have proved effective and should be encouraged
- Quotas have shown to lead to rapid increase of women in higher positions and in panels and should be accompanied by powerful incentives and/or sanctions
- New and transparent transnational indicators and criteria are needed for evaluation of scientific merit to counteract the "leaky pipeline" and the unconscious negative bias in the assessment of excellence of women.

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Report



*Mastering gender in research
performance, contexts, and outcomes*

Quality Research and Innovation through Equality
6 -7 November 2015, Berlin



7th GENDER SUMMIT - Europe

Berlin, 6 – 7 November 2015

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TO THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION AND EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

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REPORT FROM THE 2015 EUROPEAN GENDER SUMMIT TO THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION and EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Mastering gender in research performance, context and outcomes

1. Executive Summary

Three gender concerns dominated the debate at the Summit:

1. The persistence of the 'leaky pipeline', still 80% of professors are men
2. Implicit gender bias in assessment of scientific merit of women and men, which favours the success of men (in promotion, in awarding grants, in selection to teams, etc.)
3. Gender bias in science knowledge, which produces science that has more evidence for men than for women, resulting in outcomes that are often poorer for women than for men.

Three gender-mainstreaming actions stood out as effective enablers of lasting change:

4. Gender equality plans initiated from the top leaders, rooted in legislation, and supplied with field-specific expert panels have proved effective and should be encouraged
5. Quotas have shown to lead to rapid increase of women in higher positions and in panels and should be accompanied by powerful incentives and/or sanctions
6. New and transparent transnational indicators and criteria are needed for evaluation of scientific merit to counteract the "leaky pipeline" and the unconscious negative bias in the assessment of excellence of women.

2. Background and programme

The 2015 European Gender Summit coincided with several important occasions: 15 years have passed since the publication of the influential ETAN report; the Gender Summit platform reached its 5th anniversary; Germany embraced the idea of quotas for women; and the European Commission announced a new vision for ERA calling for "open innovation", "open science", and being "open to the world". Holding the Gender Summit in Berlin established a link to the Falling Walls celebrations as an analogy that gender inequality in science represents a wall that also must fall: science has to be as 'open to women' as it is to men.

The programme included discussion of:

- **Efforts by research funding organisations to implement concrete gender equality plans.** Important examples presented included: the German Federal Environment Agency's (FDA) efforts to improve quality of environmental health research, and the agency's operations as an organization; the UK's Biotechnology and Biological Research Council's range of actions to improve proposal submission rates from women, and to ensure gender equality in how institutions receiving grants manage the funding; and the Swedish Research Council's efforts to 'gender proof' the peer-review process.
- **Results from empirical studies of the use of quantitative indicators of performance and of criteria of scientific excellence** in assessment of intellectual competence and academic merit, which show that implicit gender bias influences collection, analysis, and interpretation of performance data; affects assessment processes and decisions; and reinforces science gender stereotypes.
- **Efforts to integrate gender into Horizon 2020 programme, and as a criterion in funding decisions,** to make the processes transparent, systematic and coherent for all involved, and in particular where cross cutting impacts are expected, since these areas are key to improving Europe's innovation capacity. Examples were provided of how gender-sensitive approaches can enhance quality of research outcomes in: biobank and biomarkers research, efficacy of drugs, stem cells therapies, cardiovascular diseases, environmental health, and adaptation to climate change.



- **Government-led initiatives involving multi-stakeholder cooperation** can produce impactful policies and action plans that focus on local, national, and regional research and innovation needs and opportunities. Benchmark examples included: the Swedish government's efforts to mainstream gender into 41 government agencies; the Nordic countries joint efforts implemented via Nordforsk, the Welsh government's actions to address gender issues in STEM for the benefit of Wales.
- **Transferring the strategy of using scientific evidence and consensus as the basis from which to tackle gender issues in research and innovation to help enhance science-led measures to implement the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).** It was announced in Berlin that the Gender Summit platform will also be used in the future to raise awareness of research evidence relevant to the gender issues underlying all SDGs targets. This process has already started with a first report, prepared with the help of 27 experts, to be published in January 2016 in Seoul, as a first in a series edition to be updated and expanded regularly in the future.

3. Key speakers and major contributors

The high-level policy makers included:

1. **Cornelia Quennet-Thielen**, State Secretary at the Federal Ministry of Education and Research, Germany
2. **Carlos Moedas**, EU Commissioner for Research, Science and Innovation, European Union [via video]
3. **Prof Marja Makarow**, Chair of the Board at NordForsk.

Keynotes included

1. Dr **Emilie Marcus**, CEO, Cell Press, Elsevier
2. Prof **Rolf Tarrach**, President of the European University Association (EUA).

Full list of speakers available in Section 5.

The five plenary and 12 parallel sessions focused on the following topics (presentations are available at www.gender-summit.com):

- New approaches and lessons from government-led policy actions targeting gender issues in research – reported cases included Norway, Sweden, Wales, Germany, and Finland.
- New directions and recommendations to promote gendered innovations in research performing organisations, and promoting research goals that are inclusive and socially responsible – advanced through a report produced by the League of European Research Universities.
- New methodologies and applications for gender-aware health research and practices – concrete gender mainstreaming actions were reported by the Swedish Research Council for Health, Working Life and Welfare; German Federal Environment Agency, The George Institute for Global Health, Novartis, Institute for Gender Medicine.
- Developing new and improving existing gender equality indicators – new efforts were reported by NordForsk, European Association of Science Editors, InterAmerica Development Bank; and Swedish Secretariat for Gender Research.
- New evidence and practical measures (gender equality plans, guidelines, quotas) to improve gender equality at organisational level – cases included analysis by European Molecular Biology Organization's of the benefits and risks of using quotas; Robert Bosch Foundation's "no more excuses" approach; and Elsevier's new 'road map' to promote gender equality as a science publisher, and as an employer.
- New gender mainstreaming best practices – cases were presented by FP7 and H2020 projects, including GENERA, GENDER-NET ERA-NET, GARCIA, STAGES, FESTA, and GenPORT.
- Exchanging knowledge, providing access to expertise, and to female experts – cases presented included Robert Bosch Foundation's Academia NET database, US project TIDES, and the global project GenderInSITE.
- Advice on how to promote and respond to H2020 gender criteria – explained by Chair of the Horizon 2020 Advisory Board; director of the Umea University Department of Biobank Research; and director of Swedish Secretariat for Gender Research.
- Enhancing quality of methods for measuring competence, merit, and performance – reported studies focused



on gender budgeting; analysis when and how segregation in science careers happens; identifying and interpreting individual performance related data; understanding how gender bias manifests itself; pros and cons of using metrics for measuring institutional excellence.

- Analysis of gender equality in science at national level by conducting in depth, across field scientific authorship of women and men - showcased by Elsevier in a study focused on Germany.
- Expanding Gender Summit as a regional and a global platform - now covering Europe, North America, Asia – Pacific, Africa, and Latin America - to promote gender-sensitive and responsive science, and the development of regional and global communities of experts and practitioners.

3. Notes on Gender Summit

The aim of the Gender Summit platform is to help advance gender mainstreaming efforts in research and innovation by making sure that the science community and stakeholders in science endeavours are well acquainted with relevant research evidence and benefits of gender sensitive and responsive knowledge production, application and communication.

Helping achieve success in delivering gender objectives in Horizon 2020 is one of the main goals of the European Gender Summit. The recommendations for action listed below, arising from the assessment by the European Commission of the first year of HORIZON 2020, will be used to shape the programme of the 2016 European Gender Summit:

1. Continued efforts to address the gender dimension upstream when preparing future work programmes and increase awareness among applicants, National Contact Points (NCP) and evaluators on what the gender dimension in research content means and encompasses;
2. Identifying new and more gender-related topics as well as specific studies in order to develop a better understanding of the role of gender in Horizon 2020 domains/challenges such as climate change, energy, cities, etc.;
3. Going beyond generic language and propose more meaningful wording in future Horizon 2020 topics; as part of this include the gender dimension under the 'impact' part of topics;
4. Developing guidelines/methods for monitoring and assessing the inclusion of the gender dimension in the various domains of Horizon 2020.

The 2016 Gender Summit will also respond to the new ERA vision. The programme is organised under the theme ***Gender as a dimension of scientific, innovation, and socio-economic impact: Creating synergies between actors, agendas, and actions***

4. Explanatory Notes

1. The Partners of the 2015 European Gender Summit included: Robert Bosch Foundation, Elsevier, NordForsk, The Committee for Gender Balance and Diversity in Research (KIF), and the Swedish Secretariat for Gender Research.
2. Numerous science institutions from across Europe supported the Summit by enabling their representatives to attend.
3. The convenors of the event were Portia Ltd and the Da Vinci Institute
4. The Gender Summit builds on the approach for advancing gender equality and gender dimension in science developed as part of the FP7-funded genSET project, coordinated by Portia.



5. The Gender Summit started in Europe in 2011. In 2013, the National Science Foundation introduced Gender Summit – North America. In 2015, Africa and Asia-Pacific joined the regional expansion. In 2016, they will be joined by Latin America.

6. Further details regarding the content of this report can be obtained from Dr Elizabeth Pollitzer, ep@portiaweb.org.uk

5. List of speakers and contributors (presentations available on the website)

1. **Cornelia Quennet-Thielen**, State Secretary at the Federal Ministry of Education and Research, Germany.
Opening Keynote
2. **Dr Ingrid Wüning Tschol**, Senior-Vice-President Health and Science, Robert Bosch Stiftung, Germany.
Welcome and Keynote - No more excuses: Europe's science needs women
3. **Prof Rolf Tarrach**, President of the European University Association (EUA), Former Rector, University of Luxembourg, Luxembourg.
Closing address
4. **Commissioner Carlos Moedas**, Commissioner for Research, Science and Innovation, European Union
Women in Science and Innovation: real action in Europe [video]
Plenary 4: Opening
5. **Dr Emilie Marcus**, CEO, Cell Press, Elsevier.
Keynote: Plenary 2
6. **Prof Marja Makarow**, Vice-President for Research, Academy of Finland – the Finnish Research Council and Chair of the Board, NordForsk, Finland.
The NordForsk strategy for gender equality policy in Nordic countries
Panel 5: Realising the full scope of policy impact through strategic alliances among key players
7. **Prof Alice Abreu**, Director, GenderInSITE; Professora Emérita Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.
KEF 6: Transforming policies in funding, hiring and publishing
8. **Prof Conny Aerts**, Director of the Institute of Astronomy; Vice-Dean Communication & Outreach; Faculty of Science, Leuven University, Belgium
Gender perspectives from the ERC evaluation panels
Parallel 2: Gender perspectives from the ERC: From application to funding
9. **Dr Nike Alkema**, Administrative Officer, Quality Assurance and Programme Development, German Research Foundation (DFG), Germany.
Chair, Panel 2: Assessment of scientific excellence: practices, processes, outcomes
10. **Dr Nina Almgren**, Gender Equality Specialist, Human Resources Division, Uppsala University, Sweden.
Results from the FESTA project – Female Empowerment in Science and Technology Academia
KEF 2: Dealing with gender differences in the early stages of scientific careers
11. **Ana Arana Antelo**, Head of Unit, Science With and For Society, Directorate General Research & Innovation, European Commission, International.
Gender mainstreaming in Horizon 2020
Parallel 6: Policy actions for systematic change
12. **Dr Tatiana Arrigoni**, Researcher, Bruno Kessler Foundation, Italy.
Results from the FESTA project – Female Empowerment in Science and Technology Academia
KEF 2: Dealing with gender differences in the early stages of scientific careers
13. **Dr Ingvar Bergdahl**, Associate Professor, Umeå University, and Scientific Secretary, Department of Biobank Research, Umeå University, Sweden.
Good and bad ways to deal with sex-gender differences in biomarker and biobank research, and issues I would look for as an evaluator of planned studies
KEF 3: Integrating gender dimension in study design
14. **Dr Thomas Berghöfer**, Senior researcher, Deutsches Elektronen Synchrotron, Germany.
The GENERA project: fostering gender equality and the importance of mixed teams in physics
KEF 4: Mainstreaming gender at national and field level: new evidence, better measures



15. **Alison Bert**, Editor in Chief, Elsevier Connect.
Gender in Science - how to make people understand why it matters
KEF 1: Improving access to experts and knowledge
16. **Prof Gloria Bonder**, UNESCO Regional Chair on Women, Science and Technology; GenderInSITE Regional Focal Point for Latin America and the Caribbean; Director of the Gender, Society and Policies Area of FLACSO Argentina (Latin American School of Social Sciences, Argentina).
Gender, Science, Technology and Innovation in Argentina: between facts and the mirage of equality
Parallel 5: Scientific inclusion and diversity in science structures and practices
KEF 6: Transforming policies in funding, hiring and publishing
17. **Dr Fredrik Bondestam**, Director, Unit for Gender Research, Swedish Secretariat for Gender Research, NIKK – Nordic Information on Gender, Gothenburg University, Sweden.
Research Funding and Gender: A Research Review - Conclusions and Challenges
Parallel 6: Policy actions for systematic change
Chair, KEF 3: Integrating gender dimension in study design
18. **Dr Hans M. Borchgrevink**, Former Special Adviser, International Staff, The Research Council Norway (RCN), Norway
Chair, KEF 4: Mainstreaming gender at national and field level: new evidence, better measures
19. **Prof Jean-Pierre Bourguignon**, President, European Research Council (ERC).
Stimulating Ambitious Bottom-up Proposals by Scientists
Plenary 2: Assessment of scientific excellence: practices, processes, outcomes
20. **Professor Jean-Pierre Bourguignon** President, European Research Council (ERC).
Stimulating Ambitious Bottom-up Proposals by Scientists
Plenary 2: Assessment of scientific excellence: practices, processes, outcomes
21. **Prof Simone Buitendijk**, Vice-Rector, Leiden University, Netherlands, and Chair of League of European Research Universities (LERU) Gender Equality Group.
Gendered Innovations: the new position paper from LERU
Panel 5: Realising the full scope of policy impact through strategic alliances among key players
22. **Prof Stephen Curry**, Professor, Faculty of Natural Sciences, Imperial College, UK.
The changing landscape for research metrics
Panel 1: Assessment of individual excellence: metrics, merits and gender
23. **Lillemor Dahlgren**, Head of Operations, gender equality, Swedish Secretariat for Gender Research, University of Gothenburg, Sweden.
Gender mainstreaming in 41 Swedish governments agencies
Panel 4: Demonstrating the benefits of supporting gender mainstreaming policy in science
24. **Dr Elena Del Giorgio**, Research Fellow, STAGES Project, University of Milan, Italy.
Results from the STAGES project – Structural Transformation to Achieve Gender Equality in Science
KEF 2: Dealing with gender differences in the early stages of scientific careers
25. **Prof Roseanne Diab**, South Africa, GenderInSITE Regional Focal Point for Southern Africa.
KEF 6: Transforming policies in funding, hiring and publishing
26. **Dr Matteo Grazi**, Economist Competitiveness, Technology and Innovation Division, Inter-American Development Bank (IDB).
Gender Gaps in Science, Technology and Innovation Activities in LAC Countries
Parallel 6: Policy actions for systematic change
27. **Prof Gunnel Gustafsson**, Director, NordForsk.
Chair, KEF 5: Nordic Call for gendered science knowledge
28. **Dr Shirin Heidari**, Director and Editor, Reproductive Health Matters (RHM), and Chair of the Gender Policy Committee, European Association of Science Editors (EASE).
Topic: Sex and Gender Equity in Research (SAGER) reporting guidelines
KEF 3: Integrating gender dimension in study design
29. **Prof Margarethe Hochleitner**, Professor for Gender Medicine, Medical University of Innsbruck, Austria.
How to include Gender Medicine in clinical research
Parallel 3: Gender as cross cutting issue in research and innovation
30. **Florian Holzinger**, Researcher, JOANNEUM RESEARCH Forschungsgesellschaft, Austria.
Results from the gendERC project – Gendered dimensions in ERC grant selection
KEF 2: Dealing with gender differences in the early stages of scientific careers



31. **Prof Jackie Hunter**, CEO, Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council, UK.
What can research funders do for researchers
Panel 2: Assessment of scientific excellence: practices, processes, outcomes
32. **Dr Fiona Jenkins**, Senior lecturer, School of Philosophy, Australian National University; Convenor, ANU Gender Institute, Australia.
Which Part of the Story does Unconscious Implicit Bias Capture?
Parallel 4: Sources and effects of gender bias in career development
33. **Assoc. Prof Shulamit Kahn**, Associate Professor, Boston University's School of Management, USA.
The unequal segregation in science careers
Panel 4: Demonstrating the benefits of supporting gender mainstreaming policy in science
34. **Dr Judith Kamalski**, Head of Analytical Services, Elsevier.
Elsevier Content and Analytics - Comparing gender authorship across fields
Parallel 5: Scientific inclusion and diversity in science structures and practices
35. **Prof Ineke Klinge**, Visiting Professor, Institute of Gender in Medicine (GiM), Charité Universitätsmedizin, Berlin and Chair of Horizon 2020 Advisory Group on Gender.
Scientific inclusion and diversity in science structures and practices
KEF 3: Integrating gender dimension in study design
36. **Dr Marike Kolossa-Gehring**, Department of Environmental Hygiene, Section Toxicology, Health related Environmental Monitoring, German Federal Environmental Agency, Germany.
Mainstreaming gender into methodologies and human resources development
Parallel 3: Gender as cross cutting issue in research and innovation
37. **Dr Lisa Kolovich**, Economist, International Monetary Fund (IMF), International.
Gender budgeting for science
Panel 4: Demonstrating the benefits of supporting gender mainstreaming policy in science
38. **Dr Helga Kumrić**, Researcher and Lecturer, Physics Department, University of Stuttgart, Germany.
Chair, Parallel 3: Gender as cross cutting issue in research and innovation
39. **Prof Marek Kwiek**, Director, Center for Public Policy Studies, and Chairholder, UNESCO Chair in Institutional Research and Higher Education Policy, University of Poznan, Poland.
Women in Science: Internationalization, Academic Role Orientation, and Productivity. New Large-Scale Evidence from European Universities in 11 Countries
Panel 5: Realising the full scope of policy impact through strategic alliances among key players
40. **Prof Hilary Lappin-Scott**, Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Research and Strategic Development, Swansea University, Wales, UK.
The recommendations for action of the Welsh Government's Task Force
Panel 5: Realising the full scope of policy impact through strategic alliances among key players
41. **Prof Heisook Lee**, President of Center for WISET (Women in Science, Engineering & Technology), Seoul, Korea.
Impact of and lessons from GS6 Asia-Pacific
Panel 3: Shaping the Gender Summit's regional and global mission
Mainstreaming gender research into the implementation of the Sustainability Development Goals (SDGs)
Parallel 6: Policy actions for systematic change
42. **Prof Carmen Leicht-Scholten**, Head of Department GDI "Gender and Diversity in Engineering" and Dean of Studies Affairs, Faculty of Civil Engineering, RWTH Aachen University, Germany.
One size fits it all? Perceptions of young male and female researcher on career perspectives in STEM
Parallel 5: Scientific inclusion and diversity in science structures and practices
43. **Prof Petra Lucht**, Guest Professor on "Gender Studies in Engineering", Technische Universität Berlin, Germany.
De-gendering STEM: Lessons learned from the physics lab
Parallel 3: Gender as cross cutting issue in research and innovation
44. **Eva Lübke**, Integration Team - Human Resources, Gender and Diversity Management, RWTH Aachen University, Germany.
Results from the FESTA project – Female Empowerment in Science and Technology Academia
KEF 2: Dealing with gender differences in the early stages of scientific careers



45. **Prof Jacques Mairesse**, Professorial Fellow, Maastricht University, Netherlands.
Does gender affect scientific productivity: looking at Physics
Panel 1: Assessment of individual excellence: metrics, merits and gender
46. **Prof Shirley Malcom**, Head, EHR, AAAS; GenderInSITE Co-chair.
Chair, KEF 6: Transforming policies in funding, hiring and publishing
47. **Dr Kirsten McEwen**, Career Development Fellow, Faculty of Medicine, Imperial College London, UK.
Sex, stem cells and regenerative medicine
Parallel 1: Representing human diversity in biomedical research
48. **Dr Anne McMunn**, Professor of Comparative Politics and Inequality Issues, Nijmegen School of Management, Radboud University Nijmegen, Netherlands
Gender perspectives from the ERC evaluation panels
Parallel 2: Gender perspectives from the ERC: From application to funding
49. **Dr Jörg Müller**, Senior researcher, Internet Interdisciplinary Institute, and Coordinator GenPORT, Spain.
GenPORT - Your Gateway to Gender and science
KEF 1: Improving access to experts and knowledge
50. **Dr Annalisa Murgia**, Research Fellow, Department of Sociology and Social Research, University of Trento, Italy.
Results from the GARCIA project – Gendering the Academy and Research: combating Career Instability and Asymmetries
KEF 2: Dealing with gender differences in the early stages of scientific career
51. **Dr Mihaela Nica**, Value & Access Manager, Novartis Farma, Italy.
Post-hoc analysis of gender effects in therapeutics
Parallel 1: Representing human diversity in biomedical research
52. **Dr Sabine Oertelt-Prigione**, MScPH, Junior Research Group Leader "Gender in Prevention and Implementation", Institute of Gender in Medicine, Charité – Universitätsmedizin, Germany.
Implementation strategies for gender-sensitive public health practice
Parallel 4: Sources and effects of gender bias in career development
53. **Dr Ingeborg W. Ovesen**, Senior Adviser, BALANSE-program coordinator, Research Council of Norway (RCN).
The Norwegian Balanse-programme
KEF 5: Nordic Call for gendered science knowledge
54. **Dr Rachel Palmén**, Researcher, notus applied social research, Spain.
Chair, KEF 1: Improving access to experts and knowledge
55. **Dr Lei Pan**, Content & Analytics Product Manager, Elsevier.
Elsevier Content and Analytics - Comparing gender authorship across fields
Parallel 5: Scientific inclusion and diversity in science structures and practices
56. **Dr Anne Pépin**, Director, Mission for the Place of Women at CNRS, Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS), France.
Gender equality and gender mainstreaming in the ERA: findings and policy recommendations from GENDER-NET ERA-NET
KEF 4: Mainstreaming gender at national and field level: new evidence, better measures
57. **Dr Sanne Peters**, Research Fellow in Epidemiology, The George Institute for Global Health, Nuffield Department of Population Health, Oxford Martin School, University of Oxford.
Sex differences in risk factors for cardiovascular disease: large-scale meta-analyses summarising all available evidence
Parallel 1: Representing human diversity in biomedical research
58. **Assoc. Prof Barbara Poggio**, Vice Rector and Responsible for Equality and Diversities Policies, University of Trento, Italy.
Results from the GARCIA project – Gendering the Academy and Research: combating Career Instability and Asymmetries
KEF 2: Dealing with gender differences in the early stages of scientific careers
59. **Dr Elizabeth Pollitzer**, Director, Portia Ltd, Gender Summit co-founder, UK.
Chair, Panel 3: Shaping the Gender Summit's regional and global mission
60. **Prof Vera Regitz-Zagrosek**, Director, Institute of Gender in Medicine, Charité - Universitätsmedizin Berlin, Germany.
Chair, Parallel 1: Representing human diversity in biomedical research



61. **Dr Katrin Rehak**, Head of Section, Science and Research, Robert Bosch Foundation, Germany
AcademiaNet: The Portal to Excellent Women Academics
KEF 1: Improving access to experts and knowledge
62. **Sybille Reidl**, Scientist, Joanneum Research Forschungsges.m.b.H., Austria.
Gender in Research – Policies, Practices and Experiences
Parallel 5: Scientific inclusion and diversity in science structures and practices
63. **Prof Curt Rice**, Rector, Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences and Head of the Committee on Gender Balance and Diversity in Research, Norway.
Chair, Panel 1: Assessment of individual excellence: metrics, merits and gender
Panel 4: Demonstrating the benefits of supporting gender mainstreaming policy in science
64. **Ulrike Roehr**, Board member, GenderCC - Women for Climate Justice
GenderCC - Women for Climate Justice
Strengthening gendered climate change knowledge by building up Competence Network
Parallel 3: Gender as cross cutting issue in research and innovation
65. **Arn Sauer**, Research Officer for Gender Mainstreaming, German Federal Environment Agency, Germany.
Mainstreaming gender into methodologies and human resources development
Parallel 3: Gender as cross cutting issue in research and innovation
66. **Dr Helene Schiffbaenker**, Senior Researcher, JOANNEUM RESEARCH Forschungsgesellschaft, Austria.
Results from the genERC project – Gendered dimensions in ERC grant selection
KEF 2: Dealing with gender differences in the early stages of scientific careers
67. **Prof Martina Schraudner**, Head of Department, Gender and Diversity in Organizations, Technical University Berlin, and Director of Responsible Research and Innovation Unit, Fraunhofer Gesellschaft, Germany.
Gender equality advancements in the German research landscape
Panel 1: Assessment of individual excellence: metrics, merits and gender
Gender and Diversity in Scientific Organizations: a focus on the early stages of careers
KEF 2: Dealing with gender differences in the early stages of scientific careers
68. **Dr Jesper W. Simonsen**, Executive Director, Research Council of Norway (RCN), Norway.
Gender in the Nordic Research and innovation Area – A New Nordic Initiative
KEF 5: Nordic Call for gendered science knowledge
69. **Dr Jesper W. Simonsen**, Executive Director, Research Council of Norway (RCN), Norway.
Gender in the Nordic Research and innovation Area – A New Nordic Initiative
KEF 5: Nordic Call for gendered science knowledge
70. **Assoc Prof Lisbeth Söderqvist**, Senior analyst, Swedish Research Council, Sweden.
Gender equality observations of peer review process
Panel 2: Assessment of scientific excellence: practices, processes, outcomes
71. **Dr Julia Taguena**, Deputy Director, CONACYT, Mexico.
Plans for GS8 North America in Mexico City in April 2016
Panel 3: Shaping the Gender Summit's regional and global mission
72. **Britta Thomsen**, Adjunct Professor, Copenhagen Business School (CBS), Politician and Former Member of European Parliament, Denmark.
Chair, Panel 5: Realising the full scope of policy impact through strategic alliances among key players
73. **Angelika Trübswetter**, Research Associate, Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft, Germany.
Gender and Diversity in Scientific Organizations: a focus on the early stages of careers
KEF 2: Dealing with gender differences in the early stages of scientific careers
74. **Prof Peter van den Besselaar**, Professor, Department of Organization Sciences and the Network Institute, VU University Amsterdam, Netherlands.
Cognitive network and gender bias in early career grant decision-making
Parallel 4: Sources and effects of gender bias in career development
75. **Dr Romy van der Lee**, Assistant professor, Department of Social and Organisational Psychology, Leiden University, Netherlands.
And the grant goes to... Gender bias in early career research funding
Parallel 4: Sources and effects of gender bias in career development
76. **Prof Krista Varantola**, Professor and rector emerita, Tampere University, Finland.
Gender balance in the Finnish educational sector
KEF 5: Nordic Call for gendered science knowledge



77. **Prof Mieke Verloo**, Professor of Comparative Politics and Inequality Issues, Nijmegen School of Management, Radboud University Nijmegen, Netherlands.
Gender perspectives from the ERC evaluation panels
Parallel 2: Gender perspectives from the ERC: From application to funding
78. **Prof Isabelle Vernos**, ICREA Research Professor, Center for Genomic Regulation (CRG, Spain), Member of the European Research Council (ERC) scientific Council, Europe.
Chair, Parallel 2: Gender perspectives from the ERC: From application to funding
79. **Serge Villemure**, Director, Scholarships, Fellowships and Chairs for Women in Science and Engineering, Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC), Canada.
Plans for GS11 North America in November 2017 in Montreal
Panel 3: Shaping the Gender Summit's regional and global mission
80. **Assoc. Prof Claartje Vinkenburg**, Associate Professor, VU University Amsterdam, Netherlands.
Examples of bias interruptions
Parallel 4: Sources and effects of gender bias in career development
81. **Dr Valda Vinson**, South Africa, Deputy Editor, SCIENCE.
KEF 6: Transforming policies in funding, hiring and publishing
82. **Dr Gerlind Wallon**, Deputy Director, European Molecular Biology Organization (EMBO).
Gender Quotas in Science
KEF 4: Mainstreaming gender at national and field level: new evidence, better measures
83. **Prof Lars Wärngård**, Director Planning and Process Development, Forte, Sweden.
Gender mainstreaming at Forte
KEF 5: Nordic Call for gendered science knowledge
84. **Dr Miyoko O. Watanabe**, Deputy Executive Director, Japan Science and Technology Agency (JST); Director, Office for Diversity and Inclusion, JST, Japan
Plans for the second GS10 Asia-Pacific in Japan 2017
Panel 3: Shaping the Gender Summit's regional and global mission
85. **Dr Kate Winter**, External Evaluator, Teaching to Increase Diversity and Equity in STEM (TIDES), USA.
The TIDES approach to increasing diversity in Computer Science
Parallel 3: Gender as cross cutting issue in research and innovation

PARTNERS



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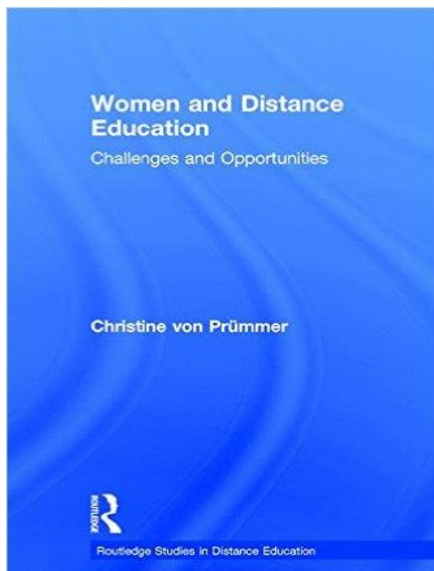


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WOMEN AND DISTANCE EDUCATION: Challenges and Opportunities

Written by Christine von Prummer

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'Though some of the findings of this research based book may not be applicable to all distance learning situations and to all women learners everywhere, it does flag up some very pertinent issues for consideration. It makes one acutely aware of some of the barriers, which some women face when they enter distance learning institutions and beckons the designers to listen closely to all potential learners so that they can accommodate their needs in the distance learning experience.'

*Cheryl Ann Armstrong,
Teaching in Higher Education*

This book provides valuable insights into the situation of women in distance education around the world. A wide variety of evidence from different countries supports the conclusion that open and distance learning has the potential to provide equal opportunities in

higher and continuing education and that these are currently being missed. The author provides conclusive evidence that distance education, while involving a degree of risk to the stability of families and relationships, etc., nevertheless offers women a chance which, on balance, is worth taking. The author says that it is up to distance education policy makers to provide a framework for women students which will limit the risks and maximise the opportunities. Drawing on fascinating case study material, this book presents vital information for these policy makers.

ABOUT the AUTHOR



Christine von PRUMMER holds degrees from Smith College/USA (B.A.), Konstanz University (M.A.) and Dortmund University (Ph.D). She was Senior Researcher and Head of the Evaluation Unit at the German FernUniversität, a single-mode distance teaching university. For 34 years -from 1978 until her retirement in 2011- her institutional research spanned a wide range of issues such as access and exclusion, choice of subject areas, use of technologies, learning styles and the evaluation of courses and curricula. Since the early 1980s, her research and writing have focused on gender in distance education and gender issues in virtual, open, and distance learning environments and has done comparative research on the situation of women in distance education in Germany and Britain. She is co-author of the seminal paper *Support and*

Connectedness. The Needs of Women Distance Education Students (1990) and the author of *Women and Distance Education: Challenges and Opportunities* (2000). Currently she is analyzing the data of a large-scale survey on the situation of women and men studying at the FernUniversität which she conducted in 2011. She continues to work as a consultant on distance education research and on gender issues in ODL and e-learning.

KATE'S STORY

"MY OPEN UNIVERSITY EXPERIENCE"

Kate CRUDGINGTON

What do you do when you hit eighteen, go to university to study Drama & Literature, and realize you've made a whacking-great mistake? Well, I'll tell you.



You spend a solid month in your campus bedroom panicking in silence. To distract yourself from your anxiety, you listen to Kings of Leon's 'Sex on Fire' on repeat, and spin in circles on your swivel chair. You occasionally venture outside, wandering to Tescos to buy rotisserie chicken (and DVDs, *so many DVDs*). You try to ignore the state you're in, but feel like imploding when anyone asks you: 'How's uni going!?' You let the panic build, and build, until you finally realise: 'I *have* to get out. I have to get out - *NOW*'. You eventually find the courage to tell your parents this. You tell your Mum first (she's just forked out for a celebratory Pizza Hut on her first visit to see you). She's shocked, concerned, and goes home to tell your Dad. He picks you up from the train station later that night, with half the contents of your bedroom packed in to your bags. You insist to them both you'll do *absolutely anything* if they let you quit university, and move back home.

They try to talk you out of quitting, but eventually oblige you because they love you, and they're concerned your skin now has the texture of a rotisserie chicken. You break the news to friends and teachers: everyone thinks you've made a life-altering mistake, but you *know* you haven't, regardless of how awful it feels (and how chicken-like your skin is).

The above is what happened when I quit university in 2008. I came home with a sense of simultaneous relief and dread to reassess my options. I was an A-grade Drama and English student at my secondary school, as well as Head Girl (a title I wish I'd never accepted). When news spread that I couldn't hack university, it was an absolute shocker. 'Clever Kate' had failed. Oh dear...

I was out of work for three months, so I hit-up the job centre for pennies. I was distraught; I didn't know what to do. Fortunately, I found a part-time job after three months of panic, got off benefits, and realized I still had that burning desire to learn, to know more.

I considered higher education again, but knew I couldn't handle another campus university. I looked to The Open University for inspiration and that's exactly what I found.

I discovered a network of like-minded students and skilled tutors whose united goal was to achieve educational and personal success.

I began studying English Literature with The Open University part-time in 2009 and last week I finished my final module, completing my degree. My first act as a deadline-free

adult was to play David Bowie's 'Heroes', full blast, prancing round my bedroom. For the entirety of the song I felt infinite. When the music stopped, I wanted to cry. *Six years of my life, over.*

I began reminiscing with an intensity that would shame Uncle Albert from *Only Fools and Horses*. I remembered how hard it was to convince people The Open University was a *real* university, and that I was a legitimate student (difficult to do that when you're reading/crying over Beatrix Potter's *Peter Rabbit* as part of your Children's Literature course). Friends and family made jokes about my 'fake' degree, but I took it all in my stride, because I was running this educational marathon for a reason. I will graduate with a BA Hons degree in English Literature in September. That's right: a *real* degree.

My degree took six years instead of the traditional three because I opted to study part-time. This meant I could gain financial support, so I avoided accruing hefty student debts.

I kept my part-time job, and this funded all of my weekends at The Pink Toothbrush (90% of weekends in a year), and several trips down to Brighton to see my friend John, who was studying at Sussex University. I've managed to squeeze a lot of living and laughing in between my deadlines and work schedule, but there were times when I genuinely thought I might implode from the stress of it all.

These were dark days. I was not prepared for the crippling loneliness of being an Open University Student. My 'days off' were actually days on the books, on the laptop, on the edge of sanity, trying to cram in as much information as my little walnut brain could take. I'd stare blankly at my laptop screen, silently willing my grey matter in to action. It wouldn't respond and the frustration was ridiculous; I'd panic, talk in a gibberish rage to my Mum, then run upstairs to cry for a solid thirty minutes. I'd snot out all the fear, have a pep talk with my reflection, then return to the laptop to write like a beast.

Fortunately, encouraging emails from tutors and student forums bursting with similar 'I CAN'T DO IT, HELP ME!' messages, reassured me that it was normal to feel paralysed and lonely when deadlines approached. (I also discovered that power naps were the ultimate ally on deadline days, and this made the crying/snot less frequent).

ANYWAY, ENOUGH COMPLAINING: Now for the Praise

I have always relied on literature to help me process things. I cite Roald Dahl's *Matilda* as one of my earliest and closest friends (I'll allow a 10 second laughing break here). She knew books weren't for 'boffins' (classic year six banter) and your mind is an immensely powerful instrument which needs to be tuned, and re-tuned with all kinds of new information. It's this desire to devour the written word which made me choose The Open University and why, despite my initial traumatic entry into higher education, I never gave up.

Regardless of what was happening at work or in my personal life, I always felt I could hit the books and everything would be fine. The quiet, inner knowledge that I was consistently working towards something kept me going for six strong years. People who insist they 'don't read' don't realize what they're missing.

I'm all for living in the real world and putting yourself in the way of experience, but vicarious experiences is equally as valid.

I'm glad I have travelled through the minds of some of the most intelligent writers in the English language in the company of The Open University. (If you think I'm nuts, [a recent](#)

study has proved readers of fiction tend to have higher empathy levels aka are really quite nice, lovely people)

It was this intense belief in the power of the written word which made me set the following target for myself: in my last two years of studying, I vowed to score a minimum of 70% on all assignments.

In between the working, panicking, and being hung-over, I excelled this target and scored between 80-85% on my essays.

Sometimes I had to ask for extensions (ill health played a major role in this), and sometimes I had to sit up until the wee hours, then wake up at 5am before an 8 hour day at work to meet the seemingly unachievable deadline. Now, all of that sweating and studying is over, and I'm strangely sad that the student chapter of my life has come to a close. It's time to set myself new targets (preferably ones that don't have deadlines too).

If you find yourself in the same situation as I did when I first considered university, please don't panic, please don't think you've ruined your life, and for the love of God: PLEASE DON'T WASTE ALL OF YOUR SAVINGS ON ROTISSERIE CHICKENS.

Stand up, take a deep breath, accept it's not working and look at The Open University's website. If you're hesitant about starting, my advice is to pick a module that appeals to you, and *go for it*.

The Open University is D. I. Y for the mind. With the tools they provide, you'll be able to build something useful, sustainable and concrete. If you want it, you can have it, all you have to do is apply yourself and keep going, regardless of how hard it gets. You *can* do it, and you won't regret trying.



EDITOR's NOTE:

intWOJDE's thanks go to dear **Kate CRUDGINGTON** for her tolerance and giving us her kindly re-publishing official permission.

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THE ROLE AND FUNCTION OF DISTANCE EDUCATION WORLD FROM WOMEN PERSPECTIVE:

Interview with Aysel OZFIRAT for intWOJDE

Interviewed by Harun SERPIL
intWOJDE, Anadolu University,
Eskisehir, TURKEY



Distance education is a powerful and growing force in education system of any country and especially in developing countries all around the world. It enables large numbers of individuals to access educational opportunities which might not be possible through conventional system of education. Harun SERPIL from intWOJDE team, has interviewed with Ms Aysel OZFIRAT whom she worked at the Educational Technologies General Directorate (now, name is changed as Innovations and Educational Technologies Directorate) of the Turkish Ministry of Education between 1993 and 2005.

Education between 1993 and 2005.

Being a part of the administration team, she was involved in various aspects of distance education applications of the Ministry of Education. These applications are Open High School, Vocational Open High School, Public Primary School, Vocational and Technical Open Education School, and Vocational Proficiency Certificate programs. Our "Interview" section will start with her views on distance education from the point of view of the Ministry of Education which started in the 1990s. Purpose of this interview was to explore her experience, feelings, perception about distance learning/education application in her working life. For this purpose semi-structured interview was constructed to have the complete and in-depth and valid information regarding distance education applications of the Ministry of Education in Turkey.

Int.WOJDE: Hi! How are you? Can you tell us who Ms Aysel OZFIRAT is?



ANSWER: I am fine, thank you. I am glad to have this opportunity to share my experiences about distance education applications of our National Ministry of Education -MONE-. The information I am going to give about distance education applications in Turkey will reflect only the works at the time when I worked at MONE. I graduated from the Samsun Education Institute Turkish Language Teaching, and started teaching at Sokullu Mehmet Pasha Middle School in Ankara. I completed the License

Completion program of the Anadolu University, Open Education Faculty which is a distance education program provided to teachers graduated from three-year university program. While teaching, I also attended to the Ankara University Communication Faculty.



Later on, I participated in the Public Administration Proficiency Program of the Public Administration Institute for Turkey and the Middle East (TODAIE). This program offered MA degree, and my MA thesis was on

"The Examination of the Educational Radio Programs Produced by the Film Radio Television Education Center, And the Effects of Those Programs on the Students". I

became a part of this institution later on and worked for 14 years serving the distance education system at different parts and levels starting from working as a designer and script writer to working as deputy general director.

Int.WOJDE: What are your views or perceptions about distance education?

How distance education supports your country's education system?



ANSWER: First of all, there are naturally many changes, new developments in distance education every day. In this interview, the information I am going to give about distance education applications in Turkey is going to cover only the works at the time when I worked at MONE. I consider distance education/learning as a significant part of the whole education system as it provides lifelong learning. It is important also because, with the rapid developments in technology, it enables a greater number of people to access education. Disadvantaged individuals have the

opportunity to receive education through distance education. It also provides variety in the educational services. Distance education is a second chance for some people and a first opportunity for the others. Through distance education, many individuals have the opportunity to access education independent of time and space, and thus the number of educated people in our country increases.

Int.WOJDE: How was your job experience at Ministry of Education regarding distance education/learning? What are the major differences you perceived during the job in distance and traditional learning applications of the Ministry of Education?



ANSWER: I took part in the establishment of some the distance education schools, and in the formation of education and teaching services those schools provide. I also, worked in the initiation process of the certificate programs. I would like to give a brief description of the distance education programs of the MONE. Open High School (OHS) and Public Primary School (PPS) provide education with distance education materials and give diploma. There is course completion system in the OHS, and class completion system in the PPS. In Vocational Open High School (VOHS), which uses course completion

system, vocational subjects are given through face-to-face education, and culture subjects are given through distance education materials. The VOHS students do their apprenticeship in enterprises to receive a certificate before they obtain VOHS diploma. And finally, in Vocational and Technical Open Education School (VTOES), students receive the theoretical information through distance education while working at the enterprises. They receive vocational qualification certificate according to their success at the workplace and the examination they take, and can start their own businesses with this certificate. Distance education is different from the traditional school system in that it provides individuals to access education through technologies such as satellite, internet, video, audio, graphics, computer, multimedia technologies. It also has the advantage of accessing education/learning without time, space, and age limitations unlike traditional schooling. The course completion system is another advantage of the distance education/learning over traditional education system.

Int.WOJDE: According to you, what are the advantages of distance education model of learning over traditional model of learning?



ANSWER: If we should speak in general terms, the flexibility, providing learning at one's own pace, being independent of the classroom environment, and having no age limit are the most significant advantages of distance education/learning over traditional model of learning.

Int.WOJDE: According to you, why people prefer attending distance education instead of traditional education?



ANSWER: Female and male individuals who were not sent to school, ones who could not go to school for the various reasons, the ones who did not somehow have access to schooling, and the ones who has to work and study at the same time, and finally, the ones who refuse to receive traditional education prefer distance education institutions. Distance education programs are preferred to traditional education for reasons such as giving a second, third chance, and being independent of time, space, and age.

Int.WOJDE: How does distance education contribute to the welfare of women in the country? What other measures does your country have to take for women development? Did you have any different distance education applications for women who are considered as the disadvantaged group?

ANSWER: Distance education help women obtain a profession, earn their living through this way, and thus have economic freedom and become equal individuals in the society. Only through the education received, can women then become better informed and conscious individuals and mothers which are crucial for the development of a society.

Int.WOJDE: Which aspects of distance education in your country should be improved more?

ANSWER: Distance education programs should be very well designed with more inclusion of new/advanced technologies in-service teacher training programs, diversification, increasing the certificate programs and their countrywide distribution.

Int.WOJDE: What are your suggestions for distance learners?



ANSWER: Distance learners may become distracted and confused as they experience something very different than the traditional classroom environment which may cause failure.

I suggest distance education students to plan their study program/timing well, and to develop disciplinary strategies to follow their plan. Distance education/learning requires study and research discipline.

Int.WOJDE: What are your suggestions for distance education teachers?

ANSWER: Distance education teachers need to apply DE methods and techniques consciously within contemporary curriculum, use DE tools effectively, and employ applications/activities to keep their students active. We should keep in mind that those are the basic factors directly affecting the student success in DE. There should be activities to encourage students do research.

Int.WOJDE: What are your suggestions for distance education administrators?



ANSWER: Orientation training should be provided for both students and teachers of distance education. DE students and teachers need to be informed that they are a part of the distance education/learning practice. Quality student and teacher materials should be prepared and distributed with care. Provision of examination safety is also important.

Finally, DE administrators need to take every step to provide up-to-date contemporary DE institutions around the world, should observe their applications, to be in contact with their foreign colleagues for sharing new developments and their implementation into practice, and so on.

Int.WOJDE: What were the areas of distance education application that your distance education experience covered apart from the Open High School, Vocational Open High School, Public Primary School, and Vocational and Technical Open Education School?



ANSWER: Apart from the distance education schools I mentioned, MONE Information Management, and Computer Programming courses were initiated in collaboration with the Sakarya University in 2002-2003 academic-years. I took the responsibility of the work in this process, and was actively involved in the planning of the service. Those programs provided the same opportunity for both university and high school students, and the credits they obtained through those programs were accredited in their diplomas and grades. The program was available also

for the individuals outside the school who wanted to learn computer programming or information management. I was also actively involved in the preparation of a pilot project in collaboration with the Sakarya University which is The Language Learning Certificate program via internet in 2003-2004 academic-years.

Int.WOJDE: Did you have different applications to provide support for the education of women and girls at the MONE distance education schools?

ANSWER: We provided face-to-face education to increase the school achievements of women at Public Primary Schools.

K12 Learning Centers were established in different provinces in collaboration with UNICEF to provide face-to-face education. Suitable physical conditions were provided to mothers to come to the centers with their children.

Int.WOJDE: As a woman, what would you propose to be paid attention or what do you consider that should be done for a more effective education of women with regard to distance education?



ANSWER: Women, especially those living in rural areas, need to be informed about the distance education programs they can attend. They need to be informed that attending distance education programs would not prevent them from doing their household duties. They need to be informed about and encouraged to attend different programs towards acquiring a profession.

Int.WOJDE: You must have had interesting experiences during your work with the distance education institutions of the MONE. Could you tell us some of those?



ANSWER: Distance education is a significant opportunity for those imprisoned (victims of misfortune). Thus, we had a large number of students in prisons. At once, we went to the Eskisehir Prison to give the diplomas of our graduates there. It was a very touching experience for all of us as a whole, but one thing made us speechless. When we asked one of the graduates the time of his release, he said he was sentenced to death.

"He knew he was going to be executed but had not given up education".

I have always been proud of what we did as a distance education providing institution. We had a father and son receiving their diplomas at the same time. One of our students was a shepherd who completed school with a high degree. According to him, he owed his success to the radio programs that he was listening to while shepherding his herds.

Int.WOJDE: Have you ever faced gender discrimination at your institution?

ANSWER: I have never experienced any kind of gender discrimination regarding my administrators or workers. However, research show that gender discrimination against women is quite widespread not only in our country but also worldwide.

Int.WOJDE: Our highly thanks go to Ms Aysel OZFIRAT for sharing her distance education/learning experiences as distance education student, and as staff in MONE as women with int.WOJDE which we consider valuable for our readers. Once more, many thanks to you for spearing time to us.

ANSWER: It is my pleasure to be given the opportunity to share my experiences regarding distance education/learning. My all respects go to the intWOJDE readers. And also, happy new year to all them. December, 2015.



THE ROLE and FUNCTION OF DISTANCE EDUCATION WORLD FROM WOMEN'S PERSPECTIVE: Interview with Dr. Gülser Acar DONDURMACI for intWOJDE

Interviewed by Harun SERPIL
intWOJDE, Anadolu University,
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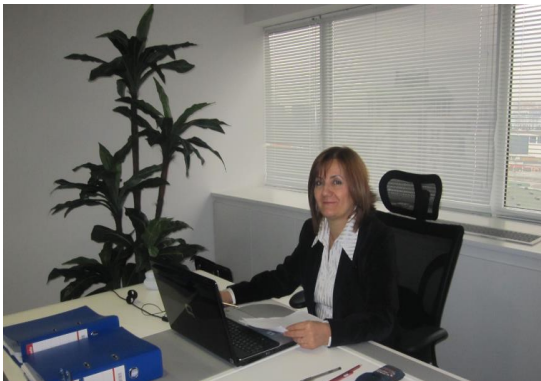
Distance education -DE- has an increasingly powerful impact on the education systems around the world and plays an especially vital role in the education of developing countries. It enables a large number of populations to access educational opportunities which would not be otherwise possible through conventional systems of education. As being a member int.WOJDE team, Harun SERPIL has interviewed with Asst. Prof. Dr. Gülser Acar DONDURMACI from Zirve University, Istanbul, Turkey. Our "Interview" section starts with her views on distance

learning/education practices. This semi-structured interview aims to benefit from her experiences, feelings, and perceptions about distance learning/education by eliciting her deep insights on the issue.

Int.WOJDE: What is your overall view on distance education? How do you think distance education supports the education system in Turkey?

Dondurmaci: Distance education is getting more and more popular around the World. I think IT technologies are crucial in such popularization. The tremendous development in mobile devices has made this type of education particularly more relevant and prominent. Distance education system is a very important tool in making education accessible in the remote corners of our country, and achieving "life-long" education goals. In the countries where the number of academic staff is inadequate, current academic staff can serve the whole country only through distance education systems. Therefore, DE also needs to be factored in determining education policies. In Turkey, distance education has now become an important component within the higher education system.

Int.WOJDE: How has your job experience been with distance education/learning? What are the major differences you have encountered during your distance learning career in private versus government sector?



Dondurmaci: I have been involved in DE since 2002. During this time, first I worked for Ahmet Yesevi International Turkish-Kazakh University and then for Zirve University, where I am still working at. I have worked especially in the launching and managing of such systems, so I can definitely say that I am experienced in the field of distance education. Based on my professional experience, I can say that there is growing attention paid to distance education both by the private and the public sectors in Turkey. The private sector sees distance education as an effective way of

cutting training expenses for their staff.

Moreover, they use distance education tools to introduce and promote their products. The traditional methods of education in the public sector are being replaced by distance education methods. If we are to think of the private foundation universities as a type of public institution, the most important development is can be said to have been occurring

in this area. We are witnessing that almost all the universities are interested in the issue of distance education and most have begun to serve through this medium. We also see that some DE projects are under way in other public institutions. For instance, Ministry of National Education and Ministry of Health are seriously interested in this issue and are offering distance education activities. Considering the issues I have mentioned, it is clear that the private sector is especially focusing on in-service staff training, and the public sector is aiming to extend its already available formal education to the wider society through DE.

Int.WOJDE: What are the advantages of DE compared to the traditional model of learning? And why do people go for distance education instead of traditional education?

Dondurmaci: The biggest advantage of DE is its independency from time and place, clearing the way for personal learning. The student is able to plan his/her own learning processes. This is the greatest distinction DE has compared to the traditional learning model. Another advantage concerns the students that have to work full-time. Such students do not have any education opportunities outside of distance education. In addition, when the specific nature of "life-long learning" is considered, this type of distance education becomes imperative. It is one of the best methods of learning for disabled learners as well. Distance education systems also enable academic staff living abroad to get directly involved in the teaching activities in Turkey. Also, the academicians living in the western part of Turkey are able to teach the students living even in the remotest towns of our country.

Int.WOJDE: How does DE contribute to the welfare of women in Turkey?

What other measures need to be taken to improve it?

Dondurmaci: In Turkey where 26% of the working population is made up of women, women are not duly represented in the professional life. Therefore, their education needs to be improved urgently.

That means housewives must be a part of the business life, which requires proper education. We find DE as the most appropriate method to deliver education at all levels to their homes. Completing secondary education, receiving higher education or acquiring another profession can only be made possible for them in this way. The educated housewives can also work as teachers in this system.

Int.WOJDE: Which aspects of distance education in Turkey need to be improved and how?



Dondurmaci: In order for DE in Turkey to progress up to the desired level, first and foremost the existing educational practices in this field need to be revised. In particular, Computer and Instructional Technologies (ICT) programs need to be revised and the students should be trained in subjects like distance education technologies, content quality, and academic quality. Further, initiatives to produce such software in Turkey should also be launched. For example, Learning Management Systems, virtual classrooms, content production tools, performance analysis tools and such product development activities should be supported, and by revising the ICT program curricula, the students studying in these departments must be encouraged to work in collaborative projects with software producers. I don't think we will be able to achieve the national DE objectives specific to our country just by importing all the software.

I strongly believe that Turkey has to become a producer of distance education technologies at all levels, for which it has to execute effective education planning.

Int.WOJDE: What are your suggestions for distance learners?



Dondurmaci: For the distance education students to be able to fully benefit from the opportunities of provided by this system, they must first grasp the purpose of this system. This system requires the student to plan his/her own learning. Therefore, the student needs to learn how to use the presented tools well. For example, course content is one of the most important learning tools and that is why the student has to focus intensively on the course content,

according to his/her study plan. The student in a virtual classroom is also expected to follow the courses very carefully. However, to be able to do all these activities he/she has to have the proper requisite equipment. For virtual classroom applications, the student will obviously need a broadband internet connection.

He/she has to perfectly understand the messaging, forum participation, taking online tests, and interaction functions of LMS, otherwise he/she cannot effectively benefit from the systemden.

Int.WOJDE: What are your suggestions for distance education teachers?

Dondurmaci: Distance education instructors need to pay attention to some points. First of all, they have to have more robust technical equipment and structure than their students because they are the broadcasters in virtual classrooms and that necessitates proper internet band capacity.

The camera and sound system must also be of high quality. DE instructors are expected to have prior training in how to use LMS and virtual classroom software. Most importantly, instructors need to have a facility with this education method and be competent users of computer technologies.

Int.WOJDE: What are your suggestions for distance education administrators?



Dondurmaci: It is critical that distance education administrators are aware that DE technologies are constantly evolving and act accordingly. Since DE differs from the traditional teaching methods, the administrator must first focus intensively on the organizational structure of DE. New professional DE positions are emerging.

The work definitions of the conventional education do not meet the needs of distance education. I would recommend that administrators be very selective in hiring for their distance education organizations and try to pick ICT graduates. Also, in choosing the LMS, content development and virtual classroom software, national products should be given priority. Setting up the technical infrastructure is also crucial. Especially the virtual classroom servers must be powerful and the internet band capacities must be easily upgradable when necessary.

Int.WOJDE: What changes would you propose for distance education, and what would be the possible disadvantages for women?

Dondurmaci: I believe that, as DE course content, video-based ones should play a more prominent role because I have observed that students prefer to watch video presentations rather than reading traditional course content or coursebooks. I suggest course contents be produced via "Interactive Video" method. Further, I think that television-based learning called "T-learning" can also be incorporated into DE. None of these will pose a disadvantage for women.

Int.WOJDE: As a woman, what do you think would be more effective or helpful for women with regard to their distance education?



Dondurmaci: If we look at this question from the perspective of women's benefiting from distance education activities as students, I believe the system can be used as a medium to implement the economic and social policies targeting women. This medium can be used as a social and economic education tool to teach women what their rights are, how they can participate in the economic activities, how to become micro entrepreneurs, how to market their handcrafts and so on. It is obvious that especially for those women spending much of their time at home; this system could offer great opportunities and benefits. Such training programs for women should be increased, and vocational programs to facilitate their integration into the economic system should be prioritized. As a women myself, I strongly propose that by revising the distance education projects in Turkey, the projects focusing on women should be given higher priority than others and it's high time such a process using distance education methods be started. I believe that by providing distance education options for the housewives who want to get education but am unable to do so due to their physical restrictions, their contribution to the development of our economic system can be increased.

Int.WOJDE: You must have experienced some interesting cases and episodes in your career. Do you have any such memories you can not forget?

Dondurmaci: I have been working in the distance education field for almost 13 years now, so naturally I have come across many interesting and proud cases. I would like to tell you one such anecdote. Working now as part of the distance education system administration, one of our past students sent me this message: "My dear teacher, I am one of your distance education students from Posof.

I am a civil servant here. Living right on the country border and having a freezing winter here and it is impossible to go out. At the moment my whole family is by the computer watching a lecture by Boğaziçi University professor Fikret Hoca on "Computer Architecture" in virtual class. What a great blessing, my dear teacher!"

Int.WOJDE: Have you ever faced gender discrimination in any of the places you have worked?

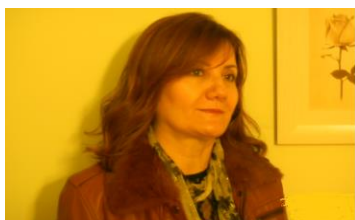
Dondurmaci: No, never.

Int.WOJDE: Which organizations have you worked for so far?

Dondurmaci: I started my career by working in the automation project for the *General Directorate of Monopolies*. This project covered the *General Directorate of Monopolies'* large and extensive network of factories, tobacco leaf processing centers and sales units. As the chief engineer of the Project, I mainly managed the financial projects. Then I moved on to the private sector and worked as the Education Director in *Ant Education*.

Afterwards I worked as a free-lance consultant in some private sector projects. Later I worked in academic capacity in Ahmet Yesevi University Distance Education Co-Coordinator and as the head of the Management IT Systems Program. Right now I am the deputy manager of Zirve University Distance Education Center.

Int.WOJDE: Which distance education projects have you been involved so far?



Dondurmaci: The distance education project of Ahmet Yesevi University began in 2002 and I was involved in the project from its inception until 2010. This project was the first university in the current sense in distance education. In the first year nine programs offering associate, undergraduate

and masters degrees were opened. The project was a pioneer in the DE field and spearheaded many others. We started using virtual classrooms in 2004 for the first time in our country. We bought an LMS system from a professional software company, and used international software as the virtual classroom.

We produced our own course content at the university. The main campus of the universitynin was in Kazakhstan and its distance education units were in Turkey. Therefore, the distance education system registrar's, personnel and accounting services were provided via the LMS. The structure of the system was ensured to be an independent "Virtual University". I began to work in Zirve University in 2010. Maintaining most members of the team, we started to work in the new University.

Int.WOJDE: Are you working on any distance education projects at Zirve University?



Dondurmaci: Yes. Armed with the experience we had by solving the problems at Ahmet Yesevi University, we began this current project. As a matter of fact, these problems are experienced by most of the DE centers today, arising particularly from LMS and virtual classroom software. Purchasing these two products from different companies and trying to force them to work together created some compatibility problems. Additionally, the failure of these existing software products to meet the demands leads to subpar quality in education. This type of change demands could not be met especially with the foreign software. Also, Learning Management System Works independently of the existing IT systems of the institutions. For example, Learner Automation System is not integrated with the systems like Human Resources

System and Accounting System software.

Int.WOJDE: What methodology did you employ to solve these problems you have just mentioned?

Dondurmaci: To solve all these problems we had identified, all the software was produced by our team by taking the LMS and Virtual Classroom not as separate entities but as a whole. We had built this infrastructure before transferring to Zirve University. It was totally local software and it worked on the web. System has the basic functions of the traditional Learning Management System and virtual classroom software and had architecture to immediately respond to change demands as well. It was equipped not only to address the distance education needs but also had the tools to integrate with the other systems in the University.

In service for six years now, the system offers five postgraduate (Master's) and three undergraduate programs. Besides, 30% of the face-to-face courses at the university have been transferred to the distance education system.

Int.WOJDE: Can distance education tools be used in open education? Are any ideas or suggestions on this?

Dondurmaci: The biggest difference between Open Ed and Distance Ed is the lack of online courses, in other words, the lack of virtual live courses in Open Ed. We can say that a significant portion of higher education in Turkey consists of open education. Given that Anadolu University Open Education Faculty has over one million active enrolled students, the massive size of the student population can be understood better. Offering synchronous virtual class courses is not possible in such enormous organizations. TV-based solutions are suggested for such environments. We recommend the use of interactive TV platform.

I am going to introduce the Interactive TV platform at Anadolu University on December 22.

Int.WOJDE: What is interactive TV, what is it used for?

Dondurmaci: Interactive TV can be thought of as a web TV. However, it is not an IPTV platform. Neither is it a distribution channel for the available TV programs over the internet but it is about broadcasting TV programs via the Internet. Interactive TV is an environment whereby programs are delivered to viewers over the Internet with the help of browsers. TV programs on all kinds of subjects can be broadcast by using this platform, and thanks to some of its advanced features it also enables DE activities.

Int.WOJDE: Are there such programs broadcast in Turkey?

How are they different from your model?

Dondurmaci: We see that in Turkey some web TV type programs are produced. Such programs are currently broadcast in some universities, such as Istanbul, Ankara and Hacettepe Universities. Some private companies offer web TV services as well. However, with some of its qualities our system differs from all these, especially by the level of interaction it facilitates. Most importantly, we think that, with its interactivity and extra features, this system can be used as an effective distance education platform.

Int.WOJDE: What type of features does the Interactive TV platform offer?



Dondurmaci: Studies for this platform are very simple to set up. For example, by turning a corner of your house into a studio, you can broadcast to the whole wide world from there. Also, with low-budget micro broadcast studios, you can go on air at schools or businesses. If so wished, professional studios can also be created. A network of multiple studios can broadcast from one single center as well. These studios can broadcast live or recorded

videos. One of the most important qualities of the system is that it is interactive, which means that the viewers can participate by signing up and getting online with a camera. Since this platform also allows mobile applications, viewers become natural "reporters" of the system.

Similar to how Twitter's Periscope works, when viewers get a news scoop, they can instantly post that news story via their smart phones. The system also enables management of live broadcast streaming devices as well. The studio module of the platform performs the video-mixing functions of the normal TV studios. It allows basic functions such as managing cameras, broadcast streaming, screen captioning/tickers, news programs, and video production.

Int.WOJDE: On which media devices can the programs aired via this platform be watched?

Dondurmaci: Interactive TV programs can be watched on personal computers as well as on iOS and Android phones, tablets and Facebook apps. Moreover, an app to be used on smart TVs is also being developed at the moment.

Int.WOJDE: Can you tell us about the broadcast quality of the system?

Dondurmaci: The quality of the programs broadcast via Interactive TV ranges from the lowest level to HD quality, depending on the Internet connection capacity. Adjustments to the program quality can be made over the studio app that manages these programs.

Int.WOJDE: Can this system be used as a distance learning environment?

Dondurmaci: Thanks to the features I have mentioned, this system can be used in distance education. It offers all the virtual classroom features needed for distance education. It features standard components like broadcasting virtual classroom presentations, White board, screen-sharing, instant-polling, and chatting. In addition to these standard virtual classroom features, it offers some extra capabilities such as using document camera, LMS integration and virtual classroom integration.

Int.WOJDE: We deeply appreciate Dr. Gülser Acar DONDURMACI for sharing her invaluable distance education experiences with int.WOJDE. Once again, thank you so much for your time.

Dondurmaci: You are welcome. My sincere regards to the intWOJDE readers. And also, happy new year to all them. December, 2015

