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Integrating E-learning in the Teaching and Learning of Education Economics needs for Enhancing Students' Learning Output in Nigerian Tertiary Education for Global Competitiveness

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Abstract

Globally, teaching and learning in school system has taken a different dimension for effective functioning of education for global competitiveness. Therefore, demanded for integrating e-learning in the teaching and learning of education economics needs for enhancing students' learning output in Nigeria tertiary education for global competitiveness. Thus the paper discussed the concept of e-learning, prospect of e-learning, advantages and disadvantages of e-learning. The paper further x-ray the effective e-learning utilization challenges. The paper concluded that education in a broad sense is any act or experience that has a formative effect on the mind, character or physical ability of individual which become imperative for e-learning functionality which is an indispensable tool for improving teaching and learning process in Nigerian schools. It recommended among others that teachers used for e-learning processes should be retained to update their knowledge to acquired computer skills and internet browsing skills.

Introduction

Information and communication technology play a major role in the acquisition and diffusion of knowledge which are fundamental aspects of the education process. It is offering increasing possibilities of codification of knowledge about teaching and for innovation in teaching activities through being able to deliver learning cognitive activities anywhere at any time (Larsen & Vincent – Lanerin in Anashie, Offem & Okeke, 2018). The availability of the internet has given rise to an electronic approach to educational system called e-learning. Generally, ICTs have been applied in

so many ways in the learning pursuit and e-learning is one of it. E-learning is also part of the ICT application. Sutherland, Robertson and John (2004) stated that technology and ICT being a new way of learning and teaching should be accompanied by new pedagogies and new approaches and strategies. What will be the impact of e-learning opportunities in future as well as on education and learning global framework is a very important issue. Similarly, e-learning is essentially the computer and network enabled transfer of skills and knowledge. According to Wikipedia (2013), e-learning (or elearning) is the use of electronic media, educational technology and information and communication technologies (ICTs) in education.

E-learning includes numerous types of media that deliver text, audio, images, crimination and streaming video and include technology applications and processes such as audio or video tape, satellite TV, CD-Rom and computer-based learning, as well as local intranet/extranet and web-based learning. Information and communication systems, whether free standing or based on either local networks or the internet in networked learning, underlie many e-learning processes. According to Ofojobe, Olibie & Chukwuma (2015), e-learning can occur in or out of the classroom. It can be self-paced, asynchronous learning or may be instructor – led, synchronous learning. It is suited to distance learning and flexible learning, but it can also be used in conjunction with face-to-face teaching, in which case the term blended learning is commonly used. E-learning includes, and is broadly synonymous with multimedia learning, technology – enhanced learning (TEL), computer-based instruction (CBI), computer managed instruction, computer-based training (CBT), computer-assisted instruction or computer – aided instruction (CAI), internet – based training (IBT), flexible learning, web-based training (WBT), online education, virtual education, virtual learning environment (VLE) which are also known as learning platforms, m-learning and digital education. These alternative names individually emphasize a particular digitalization approach, component or delivery method, but conflate to the broad domain of e-learning (Wikipedia, 2013). Today, one of the greatest challenges faced by educators is redefining literacy in terms of the new skills and competencies that will be relevant to a more international and increasingly technological society (Obumneke-Okeke). Brown & Voltz in Anashie et al (2018) posited that "the design of e-learning resources requires understanding in education, multimedia contents, resources publication, and electronic technologies". Since it is difficult for one individual to possess this level of understanding, designing e-learning is often a teamwork involving teacher and media specialists among others. While the teacher is expected to have knowledge of the content learning strategies and the expected learning outcomes, there is need to seek professional assistance from technologies and media specialist for digitalization of the content.

Myrcha (2011) identifying reason why e-learning essential for students learning highlighted the following: students need to be engaged with what they are doing to improve learning outcomes – technology engages them to do so, enable students to become thinkers/learners/risk takers in a sheltered environment; learn not to rely on the teacher… be accountable themselves…become independent; teachers digital literacy; valuable employable skills in a digital world are learnt –

appropriate online behaviour, good digital citizenship, cyber safety, plagiarism, working with virtual team self discipline in a virtual world, digital and global entrepreneurship, globalization are examples; broadens the horizons of many students as it exposes students to the world outside their city or country town; fits in with rural education where students in small rural schools need no longer be disadvantaged by distance and isolation as technology allows them to learn virtually and maintain their subject choices, allows e.g LOTE (language other than English) and other specialist subjects to be taught across schools by a virtual teacher; allows a mobile learning environment – anywhere, anytime, anyhow and inspires students to seek more from school (Murcha, 2011).

Concept of E-learning

Technology-based e-learning encompasses the use of the internet and other important technologies to produce materials for learning, teach learners, and also regulate courses in an organization (Fry, 2001). Furthermore, E-learning is extending the frontiers by further removing distance from education and help individuals who can, to access education anywhere, anytime, at their own space and at any place (Richard & Haya, 2009).

E-learning offers students excellent opportunities for individual communication with their study materials, study resources, and their tutors. Tagoe (2012). E-learning is the interactive exploits of technology and communication systems to improve the learning experience. It has the potential to transform the way we teach and learn across the board (i.e 24 house/7 days) throughout the year. It can raise standards and widen participation in life long learning (Tagoe, 2012).

Advantages of e-learning

The key advantages of e-learning as identified by the Wikipedia (2013) includes: improved open access to education, including access to full degree programs; better integration for non-full-time students, particularly in continuing education; improved interactions between students and instructors, provision of tools to enable students to independently solve problems; acquisition of technological skills through practice with tools and computers, and no age – based restrictions on difficulty level, that is student can go at their own pace. Other areas of growth include staff development, where employees can learn valuable workshop skills (Wikipedia, 2013).

E-learning is beneficial to education, corporations and to all types of learners. It is affordable, saves time, and produces measureable results. E-learning is more cost effective than traditional learning because less time and money is spent to travelling since e-learning can be done in any geographic location and there are no travel expenses, this type of learning is much less costly than doing learning at a traditional institute.

Flexibility is a major benefit of e-learning. E-learning has the advantage of taking class anytime anywhere. Education is available when and where it is needed. E-learning can be done at the office, at home, on the road, 24 hours a day, and seven days a week. Also, it has measureable assessments

which can be created, so both the instructors and students will know what the students have learned, when they completed courses and how they have performed.

E-learning accommodates different types of learning styles. Students like e-learning because they have the advantage of learning at their own pace. Again, students can learn through a variety of activities that apply to many different learning styles learners have. Learners can fit e-learning into their busy schedule if they hold a job, then this opinion is available. Learners can sit in their homes in their pyjamas and do the learning if the desire.

E-learning encourages students to pursue through information by using hyperlinks and sites on the worldwide web. Students are able to find information relevant to their personal situations and interest. E-learning allows students to select learning materials that meet their level of knowledge, interest and what they need to know to perform more effectively in n activity. E-learning is more focused on the learners and it is more interesting for the learner because it is information that they want to learn. It is flexible and can be customized to meet the individual needs of the learners.

In the global trend of event, according to Ngozi (2013), e-learning helps students develop knowledge of their interest. This knowledge will help learners throughout their carriers. E-learning encourages students to take personal responsibility of their own learning. When learners succeed, it builds self-knowledge and self-confidence in them.
Similarly, other advantages of e-learning include:

Serwatka (2002), pointed out the advantages of e-learning when compared to the classroom education as follows:

- Students have the chance to decide how long they want to be educated. E-learning enables the individual to plan and direct his/her own learning process, so each student takes the responsibility of his/her own learning.
- Students do not have to pay expenses for transportation or accommodation because the forums, created within the e-learning system, provide students with a discussion environment where problems are solved cooperatively in chat rooms.
- An effective e-learning system enables a students to determine and process his/her learning style, content, aim, current knowledge and individual skills.

  Oblinger & Hawkins, (2005) noted that e-learning has transformed from a fully-on line course to using technology to deliver part or all of a course independent of permanent time and place. It uses information and communication technologies to enable the access to online learning/teaching resources.

Disadvantages of E-learning

One disadvantage of e-learning is that learners need to have access to a computer as well as the internet. They also need to have computer skills with programs such as word processing internet browsers and e-mail. Without these skills and software, it is impossible for the student to succeed

in e-learning. E-learners need to be very comfortable using a computer. Slow internet connection or older computers may make accessing course material difficult. This may cause the learner to get frustrated and give up. Another disadvantage of e-learning is managing computer files and online learning software. For learners with beginner – level computer skills it can sometimes seem complex to keep their computer files organized without good computer organization skills, learners may lose or misplace reports causing them to be late in submitting assignment. Some of the students also have trouble in stalling software that is required for the class.

Prospects of E-learning

On the evaluation of the National learning network (NLN), below are the major vision, view, possibility and prospect of e-learning in Nigeria.

1. Empowerment of learners: As stated by National policy on education (NPE, 2004) one of the primary aim of the philosophy of Nigeria Education is to produce a self-reliant citizen that can be useful to themselves, their society and to the development of the country at large.
2. Creative and innovative teaching and learning: With E-learning, teaching and learning of curriculum content could be more creative and innovative in preparation for the 21st century global knowledge society.
3. E-learning offers flexibility: Wide range of curriculum content deployment to learner that will make the philosophical framework of Nigeria education to be ascertain on the level of equity. NPE recognize equal education for all citizen and with E-learning, the goal can be achieved.
4. E-learning achieves better value: Education leaders, evaluators and including classroom lecturers and teachers could develop innovative ways of deploying their resources, exploiting e-learning alongside with other teaching methods to improve quality and economics of scale (Arabasz, Piraim & Fawcelt, 2003).
5. Generates a professional workforce and fulfilled citizens: E-learning would enable a community, group and workforce for the knowledge society would have a high proportion of people capable of continually updating their knowledge and skills, e-learning will help in managing knowledge transfer and contribute to practitioner knowledge in all its forms.

Effective E-learning utilization challenges

In the Nigerian situation, current scenario and observation shows that utilization of e-learning in the educational institutions clearly seems to be at its infancy stage as result of some challenges. Lillian – Rita (2012) affirmed the nature and aim of e-learning design indicate that to design appropriate e-learning encounter, the designer needs to possess a good knowledge of learning theory and the appropriate technologies for delivering the content. Information from the web, www.digitalstrategy.Govt.nz/resourced/tossary-of-key-terms purported that the process of e-learning is not a perfect one. It encounters several problems pertaining to e-learning. There are several problems encountered in the process of e-learning, but the two issues and stand out. The

first is that course material used in e-learning sometimes is unattractive and non – compelling. Secondly, is the poverty of pedagogies for e-learning.

Mass unawareness, low computer literacy level and cost were identifies as critical factors affecting the acceptability of e-learning by students and lecturers (Oblinger & Hawkins, 2005). E-learning places high demand on learners who have to be more proactive and disciplined than in traditional face-to-face education. Also, lack of financial support to build the required infrastructure and to produce learning materials hinders effective utilization of e-learning. Thus, some students are unable to afford computers due to the relative cost to the average income workers in the country. Non-availability of internet access in some educational institutions poses great challenge because of the recurrent cost of bandwidth.

Similarly, Serwatka (2002) identified the following as factors hindering e-learning effective utilization:

a. Internet connectivity: The cost of accessing the internet in Nigeria is still on the high side.
b. Energy related problems: Irregular and frequent interrupted power supply in Nigeria is a perennial problem affecting almost every aspect of the economy, including education. Most rural areas in Nigeria are not even connected to the national grid. The consequence of this is that students residing in such areas may find it difficult to use e-learning effectively.
c. Limited expertise: Lack of inadequate trained personnel hinders the use of e-learning in most Nigerian educational institutions.

The pedagogies refers to the teachers' teaching the various chapters of a course via the e-learning process. These two issues are related to each other as well. There is a link between the pedagogies and evaluation of materials for instance, proper evaluation of materials could be done by experts in the field. There are lots of logistics in the pedagogical approaches to learning. These logistics problems could be overcome with expertise ideas and interventions. What is perhaps surprising is that a very limited heed is being paid to the issue of pedagogies required in e-learning. There are many criteria that should be considered while evaluating the learning course. The two most important criteria for evaluating application and quality in e-learning are that it should function technically without problems across all users and have clearly explicit pedagogical design principles appropriate to learner type, needs and context. Similarly, Nwana (2012) identified e-learning challenges in Nigeria to include: problem of inadequate material device such as computer, computer laboratories, internet and e-mail facilities, video phones systems and teleconferencing devices, fax and wireless applications, digital library, digital classrooms, multimedia systems, the problem of multimedia courseware development and the problem of both staff and students' readiness.

Other challenges of e-learning according to Deubber (2004) include:

- Limits of current technology infrastructure
- Ensuring learners have time and space to participate
- Providing appropriate support for learner

- Finding attractive, relevant and high-quality content
- Gering line manager support and commitment
- Employee hostility towards e-learning
- Motivating learners to complete courses and
- Lack of basic IT skills in the workforce.

Conclusion

From the above narrative/discussion, education in a broad sense is any act or experience that has a formative effect on the mind, character or physical ability of an individual which become imperative for e-learning functionality which is an indispensable tool for improving the teaching and learning process in Nigerian schools. In order to achieve greater excellence in instructional delivery for enhancement of students' learning, maintain quality and quality services, achieve positive outputs and partake in the world's globalization era gearing technology; the practice of e-learning in education must be highly considered.

Recommendations

1. Adequate funding and budgetary allocation is encourage for ICTs and e-learning to be highly integrated into Nigerian education system.
2. Teachers used for e-learning processes should be retrained to update their knowledge to acquired computer skills and internet browsing skills.
3. Instructional designs – which is done during curriculum placing should be carried out to make teaching and learning practicable through e-learning processes.
4. Professionals should be employed to tackle the logistic challenges in pedagogical approaches to e-learning so that Nigerian school/education system will succeed.

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