REVAMPING UNIVERSITY EDUCATION FOR MEETING THE NEEDS AND CHALLENGES OF E-LEARNING IN NIGERIA

DR. STELLA OFOR-DOUGLAS
Department of Educational Management,
University of Port-Harcourt

Abstract

This paper deals with the revamping of Nigerian university education to meet the needs and challenges of e-learning in Nigeria. Revamping means to restructure, change or improve on something. University education refers to education received after the secondary school level. E-learning refers to the use of the internet and ICT facilities to enhance the process of teaching and learning in an educational environment. The aim of this paper is to proffer various ways through which university education can be revamped to meet the needs and challenges of e-learning in Nigeria. The objective of this paper is to identify the needs and challenges of e-learning in Nigerian universities. The process of E-learning was discussed in this paper; the forms and its importance to the modern-day Nigerian universities were also looked into. The needs and challenges facing E-learning in Nigerian university education includes computer illiteracy, inadequate funding, the lack /inadequacy of e-learning facilities, and so on. The paper further discussed ways to revamp university education to meet the needs and challenges of e-learning. This include the provision of e-learning facilities, training of computer illiterates, provision of adequate power supply and increased internet access within the universities. Conclusions made indicate that E-learning is of a vital essence to the modern-day Nigerian universities as it would enable university students to receive quality education and also to compete with their peers globally. Finally, the solutions to the challenges facing the revamping of Nigerian universities fore-learning were discussed in this paper.
.

Key Words: Revamping, University Education, Education, E-learning

Introduction

E-learning can be said to be the use of the internet and ICT facilities to enhance the process of teaching and learning in an educational environment. The world has gradually become a global village using the internet, and it can also be seen that almost every sector of life has inculcated the use of technology. This has greatly improved the

way human beings live as things are done easier and faster. Thus, the use of e-learning in Nigerian universities would greatly improve educational delivery services and would improve the quality of education being given to the students. It would greatly impact on the lives of the students as they would be able to contribute to the development of the nation upon graduation and would also be able to compete with their peers globally. E-learning no doubt is a very enticing method of teaching and learning in Nigerian universities but it comes with various needs and challenges. The aim of this paper is to discuss how e-learning in Nigerian universities can be revamped to meet the needs and challenges of e-learning. The objective of this paper is to identify the needs and challenges of e-learning in Nigerian universities and provide possible solutions.

Education

Duru (2011) observed that education compromises of all the series of instruction and discipline which are intended to enlighten the understanding, correct the temper, and form the manners and habits of youths, and fit them for usefulness in their future stations. Boyi (2014) saw education as a systematic procedure for the transfer and transformation of culture through formal and informal training of people in a society. It deals with mental, physical, psychological, and social development of citizens in each society. Okoorosaye-Orubite (2019) also defined education as a social creation, designed to meet the specific needs of the society at any particular point in time. Asaju and Sunday (2014) submitted that education is a process of teaching and training in schools for the development of knowledge and skills, preparing the individual for functional living in the society. Fafunwa in (Enevoh, Okon and Eking, (2012) posits that it deals with mental, physical, psychological, and social development of citizens in a given society. Education has been described as entirely all the processes by which a child or young adult develops the abilities, attitudes and other forms of behavioural patterns that are positive value to the changing of the society in individual lives (Fafunwa in changing of the society in which the individual lives.)Education here is seen as a way, an approach or means through which things are instilled into the young person to grow with such and use it to make his society a better place than he met it. Akpo (2015) sees education as the process of facilitating knowledge through the transfer of skills, values, beliefs and habits under the guidance of educators through the learners may also educate themselves in a process called autodidactic training. Akpo views education as the acquisition of knowledge planned or unplanned which enhances the all-round development of human potentials for the good of the individuals and his general society. Luther King Junior (1948) cited by Twebaze, (2015) opined that the function of education is to teach one to think intensively and critically. Okojie (2013) mentioned that education is a process for manpower development which is necessary for the achievement of rapid growth and development in any country. Ofojegbe (2014)

maintained that at any given time, education is important for any country's socio-economic, cultural and political development. In Ada (2012), education is a tool for self-development and the development of the society. It provides descriptions given to education by these individuals that it would be difficult to separate education and entrepreneurship from one another. Obasi, Obih and Ndukwu (2017) asserts that education is the brain behind the scientific and technological innovation and inventions we see and enjoy today. Unachukwu (2009) submits that, through education the individual citizen is fully equipped to contribute meaningfully to the social and economic development of his nation. The researcher viewed Education as a way of reducing one's poverty mindset, reformation, and enlightenment of the people in the society to attain a greater height. Tuemi (2016) supplied the meaning of education as the transmission of what is worthwhile to those who become committed to it and must be lived or acted out to qualify the person as having acquired education. Education all over the world is seen as a means of fostering social mobility, achieving independence, political stability and promoting economic development (Olulube, 2009) in Darusa, 2015).

University Education

University education is education obtained after the secondary school level. The purpose of the university is to train future leaders who will be politicians, educationist, lawyers, engineers, doctors, and scientist etc. The purpose of university education is teaching, learning, research, community, and skill development. The lofty goals of university education are to be achieved through teaching, research, dissemination of existing and new information, services to community, skill development and a storehouse of knowledge.

Benefit of University Education

- Individuals are required to have degrees for a wide range of careers such as medicine, education, engineering, accounting and law and the university provides for the obtainment of such degrees.
- University education will help an individual to succeed in today's workforce and establish an enjoyable career of his/her choice
- The job market is extremely competitive, and employers require the services of skilled employees to work for them. This skill can be developed in the university.

E-Learning

E-learning can be defined as a teaching and learning environment constructed in software, which supports collaborative learning among students who participate at times

and places of their choice through computer networks (Aremu, Jacob and Ogedebe (2013).Asah in Mmeremikwu-Fiac and Onukwe (2016) established that e-learning as the use of information and communication technology (ICT) which include computer network, communication and mobile technologies to enhance and extend learning. Continuing, Aremu, Jacob and Ogedebe (2013) mentioned that e-learning can is an innovative approach for delivering electronically mediated well designed, learner-centered and interactive learning environments to anyone, at any place and anytime by utilizing the internet and digital technologies. Similarly, Babu and Sridevi (2018) observe e-learning as a formalized teaching done with the help of electronic resources. Otuka (2010) who posits that e-learning as all forms of electronically supposed learning of teaching which are procedural in character, practice and knowledge of the learner. Torruaim (2012) is of the opinion that e-learning is the use of the internet and digital technologies to create experiences that educate our fellow human beings. Wang and Ran (2011) asserted that students' performance rating system is easier on e-learning system than any other system like, their performance will be recorded and tracked through the system and then the teacher can easily distinguish the high achievers among the average and low achievers. Nwokike (2010) posited that e-learning is the use of computers as a key component of the education environment. In this wise, the computer can be used for localized or distant or digital learning, which involves changing from analogue system of education delivery to a digital system of education delivery. Egbokhare and Iyawe (2013) maintained that e-learning can reduce the hurdles and provide a systematic way forward for Nigerian universities. If the universities apply the e-learning system in their institute's students will acquire education even sitting at home. Riahi (2015) sees e-learning as an internet-based learning process which uses internet technology to design, implement, manage, support, and extend learning which will greatly improve the efficiency of education. Hedge and Hayward (2004), agreed that it as an innovative approach for delivering electronically mediated, well-designed, learner-centered and interactive learning environments to anyone, anyplace, anytime by utilizing the internet and digital technologies concerned with instructional design principles'-learning has a lot of advantages such as flexibility, diversity, measurement, opening etc. It is broadly used in different education stages in today's world. Such stages include development in higher education, continuous education, education through the internet, online problem solving, virtual classrooms and digital collaboration where content is delivered via internet, intranet/extranet, audio tape; satellite T.V. (Riahi, 2015). Littlejohn and Pegler, (2014) rightly put it that the e-learning method is a different from the traditional classroom environment, student's support and collaboration is required for the success of the program.

Lending weight to the concept of e-learning, Masuch, Anwar and Huang (2012) stated that the popular e-learning technologies include:

- Content-delivered via the internet, audio, satellite, television.
- Voice-centred technology such as CDs/DVDs or eb casts.
- Video technology such as instructional videos, DVDs and interactive video conferencing.
- Computer-centred technology: This is delivered over the internet or corporate internet.

Hubackova and Golkova, 2014 mentioned that many researchers encourage learning courses under the e-learning system as it saves time and energy of those students staying at any far-off distance regions from the university or colleges they have enrolled. E-learning which is also known as web based learning is the delivery of education in a flexible and easy way through the use of internet to support individual learning or organizational performance goals (Clark and Mayer, 2011, Maqableh, Rajab, Quteshat, Khatib and Karajeh (2015).).Arasteh, Pirahesh, Zakeri and Arasteh (2014). , Draghici, Popescu, Fistis and Borca (2014). and Mustea, Muresan, and Herman (2013).

Types of E-Learning

Algahtani (2011) divided e-learning into two basic types:
- Computer-based e-learning
- Internet based e-learning.

Computer-based e-learning: According to Algahtani (2011), the computer-based learning comprises the use of a full range of hardware and software generally that are available for the use of Information and Communication Technology and also each component can be used in either of two ways: computer managed instruction and computer-assisted-learning. In computer assisted- learning, to him, computers are used instead of the traditional methods by providing interactive software as a support tool within the class or as a tool for self-learning outside the class. In the computer-managed instruction, however, computers are employed for the purpose of storing and retrieving information to aid in the management of education.

Internet-based e-learning: According to Almosa (2001) this is a further improvement of the computer-based learning, and it makes the content available on the internet, with the readiness of links to related knowledge sources, for examples e-mail services and references which could be used by learners at any time and place as well as the availability or absence of teachers or instructors.

Advantages and Disadvantages of E-Learning

Callian and Framework (2010) and Garrison (2011) identified various advantages of e-learning:

- Less expensive to deliver, affordable and saves time: With e-learning, one can download learning material at an affordable price.
- Flexibility in terms of availability: Learners can access learning materials at any place and at any time.
- E-learning allows more effective interaction between the learners and their instructors through the use of e-mails, discussion boards and chat room.
- The e-learning could improve the quality of teaching and learning as it supports the face-to face teaching approaches.
- It helps learners to develop knowledge of using the latest technologies and the Internet.
- Learning is done at one's own pace and this reduces stress levels and increases satisfaction and retention of what has been taught.
- It allows for access to global resources and materials that meet students, level of knowledge and interest.
  Other advantages of e-learning practices are:
- It is very helpful to students who do not have the time or funds to attend proper universities due to some challenges.
- It encourages individual growth of the student who will have to depend on himself to learn.
  Bouhnik and Marcus (2006) provided disadvantages of e-learning:
- Lack of a firm framework to encourage students to learn.
- Absence of a learning atmosphere in e-learning systems.
- A high level of self-discipline or self-direct is required, learners with low motivation or bad study habits may fall behind.
- The distance-learning format minimizes the level of contact, e-learning lacks interpersonal and direct interaction among students and teachers.
- When compared to the face-to-face learning, the learning process is less efficient.

Other disadvantages of e-learning include:

- Some online teaching programs may be faulty or have security technicalities.
- Online classes usually offer only objective questions which hinders the students' skills in practical work.
- It is difficult to ascertain if the student's assignments are original and not copied from the internet.
- Students cannot ask for clarity about a topic from the lecturer.

Needs and Challenges of E-Learning

E-learning processes require a lot of things to enable its efficiency in a university. The absence of these things would pose as a challenge to its effectiveness and efficiency. The following serve as some of the needs and challenges of e-learning processes.

1. **Lack of Internet Facilities:** This refers to a situation whereby there is an absence of internet facilities to tend to the needs of e-learning. This also poses as a major challenge to e-learning in universities in Nigeria. E-learning requires internet facilities to function as most e-learning programmes are gotten online.

2. **Lack of Power Supply:** The e-learning facilities need to be charged to function. Where there is a lack of or inadequate power supply, these systems cannot function thus, e-learning processes cannot take place.

3. **Inadequate ICT and e-learning facilities:** E-learning processes require the use of some ICT related facilities to function effectively. Thus, the lack of these facilities would mean the absence of e-learning within the universities in Nigeria. Memam Cafffercella and Bavingantrer cited in Parker (2010) maintained that the concern of potential online learners have limited access to technology which is increasing, the digital divide and widening gap between the have and have nots.

4. **Maintenance of ICT and E-learning facilities:** The e-learning facilities require maintenance as they are machines. Irregular or lack of maintenance of these facilities, they might not function properly, thus e-learning would not be able to take place effectively.

5. **Computer-illiteracy:** This refers to a situation whereby a person is not competent in the use of ICT facilities. This situation serves as a major challenge to e-learning in universities in Nigeria. E-learning requires ICT facilities to function thus it cannot take place if the students and lecturers do not know how to use them.

6. **Lack of Encouragement:** Lecturers need to be encouraged by university administrators so that e-learning will be enhanced. This encouragement can come in many forms (motivation, supervision, opportunities to attend workshops/conferences etc.).The benefits derived when university administrators encourage lecturers for enhancement of e-learning within the university include the use of ICTs, providing incentives to both the teachers and the learners, and organization of seminars, workshops and conferences regularly for teachers to train them on how to properly use the e-learning facilities.

How to Revamp University Education to Meet The Needs And Challenges Of E-Learning

- **Adequate Funding:** Funding refers to the process of providing financial resources in order for activities to run within an institution. Money is a very important

resource needed in the educational system and requires adequate provision because through it, all other vital elements in the school can be obtained (Nzepueme, 2011). Ogbonnaya (2012) asserts that funding involves the provision of physical cash, credit facilities, that is trade credits, bank credits, allowances or discounts received, differed expenses such as differed taxes, rents, rates, bill, undistributed profits in the form of retained earnings, reserves, depreciation provisions, and others. Funds need to be provided for e-learning processes to take place as it would help with the provision of e-learning and ICT facilities, internet supply and power supply.

- **Motivation:** This is very essential for the improvement of the use of e-learning processes in Nigerian universities. Motivation is a process that encourages people to push forward, work harder or do better. It is what drives someone to do something. Motivation needs to take place in Nigerian universities that want to inculcate e-learning, as the lecturers and students who are so used to the traditional method of teaching and learning would not readily accept the idea of e-learning.

- **Partnership (Local and Abroad):** This is also another essential necessity for the revamping of e-learning in Nigerian universities in order to meet the needs and challenges of e-learning. For e-learning processes to be revamped, Nigerian universities must partner with organizations, especially technological based organizations, to provide e-learning facilities and much more. This would also attract global attention to the universities as they would be recognised as a digital force in the educational sector in Nigeria.

Conclusion

Every university in Nigeria has the goal to provide quality educational services for their students to produce students who will contribute positively to the growth and development of the nation and also compete with their peers abroad. The world is fast becoming digital as technology is being inculcated in almost every area of life. Thus, it is necessary for universities in Nigeria to meet up with the global trend of technology by adopting e-learning processes for teaching and learning. This paper has shown the importance of e-learning in Nigerian universities. It discussed the types of e-learning and its advantages and disadvantages. It also looked at how e-learning in universities in Nigeria can be revamped to cater for its needs and challenges. The needs and challenges of e-learning were also discussed in the paper to include the lack of internet and ICT facilities, Poor training and motivation of staff, computer illiteracy amongst others. These challenges can be solved through the following ways:

Solution

1. The universities should inculcate e-learning processes and discard the old method of teaching and learning as the world is becoming digital.
2. There should be a provision of adequate funds by the federal government and other educational agencies such as TET Fund, to cater for ICT and e-learning facilities.
3. The universities should ensure the provision of adequate power supply to power the ICT and e-learning facilities.
4. Internet access should be provided for all members of the university.
5. Universities should partner with technological organizations for the provision of the necessary and required ICT and e-learning facilities.
6. There should be training of both staff and students in the proper use of ICT and e-learning facilities.
7. Seminars, conferences, and workshops should be held to train lecturers to inculcate the e-learning processes and materials into the university curriculum.
8. Motivation should be given to both lecturers and students so as to encourage them to indulge more in the e-learning processes.

References

Ada, N.A. (2012). Curriculum and entrepreneurship skills acquisition in Nigeria. *Nigerian Journal of Curriculum Studies. 19(2), 5-19.*

Akpo, B. (2015). Education for emotional balance. In D.I. Denga (Ed) *Educational fitness for sustainable development in Nigeria.* Calabar: Rapid Educational Pub. Ltd

Algahtani, A.F. (2011). Evaluating the Effectiveness of the E-learning Experience in Some Universities in Saudi Arabia from Male Students' Perceptions, Durham theses, Durham University.

Almosa, A. (2002). Use of Computer in Education, (2nd ed), Riyadh: Future Education Library.

Arasteh, B., Pirahesh, S., Zakeri, A., &Arasteh, B. (2014). Highly Available and Dependable E-

Learning Services Using Grid System. Procedia Social and Behavioural Sciences, 143, 471-476

Aremu, D. R., Jacob, B.P. &Ogedebe, P.M. (2013). Cloud based e- learning model for open and distance learning in Nigerian Universities. International Journal of science and research (IJSR). Retrieved from www.ijacsa.net.

Bouhnik, D., & Marcus, T. (2006). Interaction in Distance-Learning Courses. Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology, 57, 299-305.

Boyi, A. A. (2014). Educational sustainable national development in Nigeria: Challenges and way forward. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences,* 148-150 (18), 4.

Babu, G.S&Sredevi, K.(2018). "Importance of E-learning in Higher Education: A case study" *International Journal of Research Culture And Society,* 2(5),84-88.

Callian, V. J., Bowman, K., & Framework, A. F. L. (2010). Sustaining E-Learning Innovations: A Review of the Evidence and Future Directions: Final Report, November 2010.

Clark, R., & Mayer, R. (2011). E-Learning and the Science of Instruction: Proven Guidelines for Consumers and Designersof Multimedia Learning. Pfeiffer; 3rd Edition (August 16, 2011).

Darusa, P. (2015). Assessment of professional development programmed for teachers of secondary schools in Bayelsa State. Unpublished B.Ed. project of the Department of Educational Foundations, Niger Delta University.

Draghici, A., Popescu, A., Fistis, G., &Borca, C. (2014). Behaviour Attributes That Nurture The Sense of E-Learning Community Perception. Procedia Technology, 16, 745-754.

Duru, V.N. (2011). *Curriculum studies concepts, development, and implementation.* Owerri: Avan Global Publications.

Egbokhare, F. A., &Iyawe., B. I. (2013). Assessing E-Learning Adoption in Nigeria Universities Using Students' Perspective, a Case Study of the University of Benin. Global Journal of Educational Research, 11 (2), 123-128.

Enevoh. E.S., Okon, J.K. &Ekeng, C. (2012). International Vocational and technical education: A catalyst for economic transformation is Nigeria. *Journal of Educational Research.* 11(2): 110-120.

Garrison, D. R. (2011). *E-Learning in the 21st Century: A Framework for Research and Practice*. Taylor & Francis.

Hedge, N. and Hayward, L. (2004). Redefining roles. University e-learning contributing to Life- long learning ina networked world. E-Learning, 1:128 – 145 http://www.nationmaster.com/country/ni/Internet

Hubackova, S., &Golkova, D. (2014). Podcasting in Foreign Language Teaching. Procedia Social and Behavioural Sciences, 143, 143-146.

Kayode,A&Sunday,O.(2014). Functional Education in Nigeria : A catalyst for effective poverty alleviation. Research Journal in Organizational Psychology and Educational Studies 3(4) 313-318.

Littlejohn, A., & Pegler, C. (2014). Preparing for blended e-learning.

Mascuh, M.H., Anwar, H. and Huang, X (2012) An E-learning system architecture based on cloud computing. Journal world academy of science, engineering, and technology, 62(3), 125-135.

Maqableh, M. M., Rajab, L., Quteshat, W., Khatib, T., &Karajeh, H. (2015). The Impact of Social Media Networks WebsitesUsage on Students' Academic Performance. Communications and Network, 7 (4), 159-171.

Mmeremikwu-Fiac, C.&Onukwe, V.E.(2016).Assessment of the extent of utilization of e-learning opportunities for effective teaching and learning in business education. Nigerian Journal of Business Education, 3(2). 212-221

Mustea, A., Muresan, M., & Herman, C. (2013). Integrating E-Learning into the Trans disciplinary Methodology as a Solution to the Challenges of 21st Century Society. Procedia Social and Behavioural Sciences, 128, 366-372.

Nzepueme, E.U. (2011). Provision of educational resources for quality assurance in public secondary schools in Imo State. *Africa Journal of Educational Research and Development* (AJERD), 4 (2b), pp209-225.

Nwokike, F. O. (2010). Economic implications of e-learning in Nigerian educational system. A paper presented at the 2010 annual conference of the Faculty of Education Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka.

Obasi,V.A.,Obih,S.O.A&Ndukwu, E.C.(2017). Effect of moral bankruptcy on Education. Contemporary issues in Education.

Ofojebe, O. (2011). Educational Leadership capacities and conditions for actualizing vision 20-2020: Views of principals. In Journal of the Nigerian Academic of EDUCATION 7(2).

Okojie, J. (2013). *Quality Assurance and the Challenges of Mandate Delivery in Nigerian Universities.* Lecture delivered at the 18th Convocation Ceremony of Lagos State University, Lagos, February 19th.

Okorosaye-Orubite, A.K.(2019). Education in Nigeria. In Y.M Abdulrahman &F.GPaulley. Education and development in Nigeria Port Harcourt : PI African Press.

Ogbonnaya, N.O. (2012). *Foundations of educational finance* (2nd ed.). Nsukka: Hallman.

Otuka, J.O.E.(2010).E-learning in Nigeria: Problems and Prospects.Being a Keynote address presented at the 2010 Annual Conference of Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Anambra State.

Parker (2019) The online Adult learners Profiles and Practices in kid Tented Online Education and Adult learning New frontiers for Teaching practice Texas,Hershey, New York Information Science (G/GWL Reference USA 9(2) , From www.elearningno.gov/aboutelearning/what is elearning /E-learning www.elearninggnc.gov Retrieved 5:05pm Mon 4thMarch,2019.

Riahi, G (2015). E-learning systems based on cloud computing: A review. International conference on soft computing and software engineering. Retrieved from http://crativecommons.org/license/www.sciencedirect.com.on 22/6/20.

Torruan, J.T.(2012). Application of educational teaching and e-learning in Nigerian educational system. Academic Research International 3(1), 30-36.

Tuemi, T.A. (2016). *Education and sustainable development in the Niger Delta.* Port Harcourt: University of Port Harcourt Press.

Twebaze, R.M.(2015). Commercialisation of Education in Uganda: Causes and Consequences. International Journal of Recent research. 6(7), 5107, 5112 www. Recentscientific.com.

Unachukwu, C. (2009). *Organized behavior in education.* Port-Harcourt: Highclass Publishers Nig.

Wang, M. D., & Ran, W. (2011). Creating a performance-oriented e-learning environment: A design science approach. Information&Management,48(7),260-269. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.im.2011.06.003

.