PROBLEMS OF ADOPTING E-LEARNING AMONG STUDENTS OF CHRISTIAN RELIGIOUS STUDIES IN NIGERIA

By

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Abstract
Christian Religious Studies is a field of study that systematically examines Christian faith as contained in Old Testament and New Testament components of the bible; requiring both synchronous and asynchronous mode of e-learning. In 21st century Nigeria education programmes, various disciplines do face problems of adopting e-learning in spite of its benefits; but, not much is known about problems associated with the adoption of e-learning (electronic learning) in the field of Christian Religious Studies (CRS) in Nigeria tertiary institutions of learning. The paper, therefore, aims at exploring problems prevalent and militating against the adoption of e-learning in Nigeria, using Federal College of Education, Eha-Amufu, Enugu State as case study. The work applies qualitative research method with emphasis on the use of secondary sources of data. Materials used include internet materials, journals, and field reports on research. Findings are namely; religious affiliation, personal spirituality and parental influence were not problems; financial factors such as high cost of software, hardware, internet service and electricity were main militating problems; and lack of adequate technical support staff and services were perennial problems. Recommendations, therefore, include that adequate supply of technical support staff, provision of steady supply of electricity, regular training on integration of synchronous and asynchronous mode of e-learning be ensured for effective and efficient adoption of e-learning system among students of Christian Religious Studies in Nigeria.
Christian Religious Studies is a field of study that systematically examines Christian faith as contained in Old Testament and New Testament components of the Bible; requiring both synchronous and asynchronous mode of e-learning. In 21st century Nigeria education programmes, various disciplines do face problems of adopting e-learning in spite of its benefits; but, not much is known about problems associated with the adoption of e-learning (electronic learning) in the field of Christian Religious Studies (CRS) in Nigeria tertiary institutions of learning. There is therefore the need to examine the influence of religious inclinations, personal spirituality, parental influence, negative peer pressure, and religious education of CRS students on adoption of e-learning systems.

Conceptually, Christian Religious Studies (CRS) refers to the systematic study of Christian faith as contained in the Old Testament and New Testament of the Holy Bible (Baiyeri, 2010). It is a field of study that is taught at primary, post-primary and tertiary institutions of learning in Nigeria (Baiyeri, 2012; Baiyeri, 2013; Baiyeri, 2015; Baiyeri, 2016). Ilori (2013) asserted that at primary school level in Nigeria, the aims of CRS, for instance, include developing faith in God as Creator of nature; displaying, illustrating, showing God’s care for the human being created by Him after His image; acquitting students with the teachings, parables and miracles of Jesus Christ. It is at this level also, that, pupils are given “examples of prophets and saints from both Old and New Testament in order to serve as models of virtuous life and moral values, such as love, cooperation, forgiveness, honesty, truthfulness, obedience, and friendship” (Ilori, 2013, p.136). The Federal Government of Nigeria stipulates that “instruction at all levels has to be oriented towards inculcating moral and spiritual principle in interpersonal and human relations” (Federal Republic of Nigeria, FRN, 2004, p.7). In a related manner, the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE, 2004) proposes a philosophy of Nigeria Certificate in Education programme on Christian Religious Studies that is geared towards;

…the production of teachers who possess full awareness of God’s relationship with man and whose personal character and discipline reflect authentic Christian values and virtues, such that they will be able to function effectively as custodians of sound moral and spiritual qualities particularly in their interaction with young learners in the Basic Schools (p.9).

Specific objectives of Christian Religious Studies at this level require that students should be able to do the following at the end of their period of study as NCE graduates (NCCE, 2004):

(a). demonstrate professional proficiency for teaching Christian Religious Studies in primary and junior secondary schools. (b). demonstrate sound knowledge and
appreciation of the moral values needed to live as a Christian. (c). explore the place and significance of religion in life and so make a distinctive contribution to one’s search for a faith by which to live. (d). express accurate knowledge of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit needed to live as a Christian in the community. (e). radiate attitudes and values which are typical of a mature and responsible member of the Christian community such as love, respect, honesty and service. (f). express satisfactory intellectual capacity to benefit from further education in Christian Religious Studies (p.1).

E-learning, as conceived in this work, is the application of electronic technologies toward facilitating learning. There are two modes of e-learning pertinent to instructional delivery; the asynchronous mode of e-learning can be defined as “a learner-centred process which uses online learning resources to facilitate information sharing regardless of the constraints of time and place among a network of people” (Shahabadi & Uplane, 2014, p.131); and the synchronous mode of e-learning which is a learner-centred process that allows “live, real-time (and usually scheduled), facilitated instruction and learning-oriented interaction” (p.131). Asynchronous and synchronous e-learning activities are simultaneously needful for effective integration of e-learning into curriculum implementation (Koohang, Riley, & Smith, 2009; Torruam, 2012; Swan, 2005; Davidson, 2014).

It is instructive to note that most writers, scholars, researchers and educational technologists differ in opinions on what should be regarded as e-learning; this is better captured in the work of Sangra, Vlaachopoulos, and Cabrera (2012, pp. 148 – 150) as shown below,

(a). Technology-Driven Definitions
[i]. E-learning is the use of electronic media for a variety of learning purposes that range from add-on functions in conventional classrooms to full substitution for the face-to-face meetings by online encounters (Guri-Rosenblit, 2005).
[ii]. E-learning is to take a course online using a modem, wireless, or cable connection to access academic course material from a computer, phone, or handheld device (Governors State University, 2008).
[iii]. E-learning is distance education through remote resources (Marquès, 2006).
[iv]. E-learning is the use of technology to deliver learning and training programs (Elearning portal, 2009).

(b). Delivery-System-Oriented Definitions
[i]. E-learning is the delivery of education (all activities relevant to instructing, teaching, and learning) through various electronic media (Koohang & Harman, 2005).
[ii]. E-learning is an on-line education defined as the self-paced or real-time delivery of training and education over the internet to an end-user device (Lee & Lee, 2006).
[iii]. E-learning is the delivery of a learning, training or education program by electronic
means (Li, Lau & Dharmendran, 2009).

(iv). E-learning is defined as education delivered, or learning conducted, by web techniques (Liao & Lu, 2008).

(c). Communication-Oriented Definitions

[i]. E-learning is education that uses computerised communication systems as an environment for communication, the exchange of information and interaction between students and instructors (Bermejo, 2005)

[ii]. E-learning is learning based on information and communication technologies with pedagogical interaction between students and the content, students and the instructors or among students through the web (González-Videgaray, 2007).

[iii]. E-learning is defined as learning facilitated by the use of digital tools and content that involves some form of interactivity, which may include online interaction between the learner and their teacher or peers (Ministry of Communication and Technology of New Zealand, 2008).

(d). Educational-Paradigm-Oriented Definitions

[i]. E-learning is the use of new multimedia technologies and the Internet to improve the quality of learning by facilitating access to resources and services, as well as remote exchange and collaboration (Alonso et al., 2005).

[ii]. E-learning is a broad combination of processes, content, and infrastructure to use computers and networks to scale and/or improve one or more significant parts of a learning value chain, including management and delivery (Aldrich, 2005).

[iii]. E-learning is defined as information and communication technologies used to support students to improve their learning (Ellis, Ginns & Piggott, 2009).

[iv]. E-learning refers to educational processes that utilise information and communications technology to mediate synchronous as well as asynchronous learning and teaching activities (Jereb & Šmitek, 2006).

Guragain (2016) classified e-learning systems for purpose of clarity; furthermore, the various types are indicative of varied levels of adoption of e-learning in educational institutions. The groupings below provide the various types of e-learning according to interactive capabilities of the systems:

**Type 1:** E-learning systems with low interactive capabilities, which mainly consist of texts or multimedia materials. The examples of this type of systems mainly consist of power point presentations, learning from an ebook or learning from watching videos or audio podcasts.

**Type 2:** E-learning systems with moderate interactive capabilities. The examples of this type of systems mainly consist of quizzes with feedback, interactive resources, reflective learning, and learning by using simulators or demonstrations.

**Type 3:** E-learning systems with high interactive capabilities either with student to student or student to teacher or even both. The examples of this type of system mainly
It is clear from the description above, that the three (3) different categories of e-learning systems are based on their interactive capabilities. It is evident from the description that type 3 is more advanced, in spite of the usefulness of type 1 and 2. To illustrate further, at Federal College of Education, Eha-Amufu, Enugu State of Nigeria where the author of this paper was privileged to serve as member of College E-learning Committee (2015 – 2018), participant observation shows similar categorization (See Appendix A). It is an adapted version of categorization of e-learning systems as practiced among students and staff of Federal College Education, Eha-Amufu; which was observed as participant observer from 2015 – 2018. Christian Religious Studies programme of the College equally benefited from the three categories of e-learning systems; but not without problems of adoption which were noted to deserve investigative study. This is not to say that the first category started merely few years ago; rather, as an internal observer, the three categories were noted simultaneously within the stated periods and considered relevant for the purpose of critically examining problems associated with adopting e-learning among students of Christian Religious Studies in Nigeria. It was observed that category 3 above was associated with the following problems in the College:
(a). Epileptic electricity supply
(b). Inadequate internet bandwidth which negatively affected video conferencing, live streaming and downloading training video files
(c). High cost of internet service by Internet Service Provider

However, the attempt to adopt category 3 form of e-learning system at Federal College of Education, Eha-Amufu (2015 – 2018) benefited from the College authorities in the following ways:
(a). Moral support from Provost of the College as evidenced in his constant encouragement to members of e-learning Committee who were main training participants (including this researcher).
(b). Training centre located directly in the Office complex of the Provost of the College.
(c). Provision for electricity generating set to give support to e-learning training participants during training session.

Amidst these incentives and support, there were problems that impacted negatively on students of Christian Religious Studies who should have gainfully adopted e-learning mode of study. Meanwhile, Guragain (2016) elucidated in concrete terms the advantage of e-learning over its disadvantages as shown below:

(a). Advantages of E-Learning Systems
i. It reduces the need to travel longer distances or away from home to get the desired education.
ii. It is a convenient way of learning things as it can be accessed any time
anywhere and on self-demands. iii. It is a self-paced private learning system and is mostly flexible for learners. iv. It uses the media resources, thus making it easy for learners to understand. v. It is repeatable as the content is stored in storing devices and each time the learner accesses it, the same content can be repeated. vi. It is easier to track the progress of learners in the e-learning system. vii. The content of learning materials is consistent for all users regardless of the location or time of accessing.

(b). Disadvantages of E-Learning Systems
i. It lacks face-to-face interactions that students in the normal classroom would get. ii. Lack of strict guidelines may demotivate students and lead to dropouts from the learning process prematurely. iii. It is sometimes difficult to measure the reliability of the placed learning systems. iv. Slow internet connections or server problems may make the learning process frustrating. v. It may take some learning time just to understand the learning systems. vi. Students may feel isolated due to lack of social interaction. vii. Real-time interactions may not be available at the time of need for students, which can be frustrating.(p.10).

Theoretically, the social learning theorists or constructivists consider the engagement of students in meaningful experiences as the essence of learning (Swan, 2005; Koohang, Riley & Smith, 2009). Learning, in this context, refers to a “process whereby a change in behavior results from some form of experience, activity, training, observation and the like” (Klausmeir as cited in Aggarwal, 2007, p.52). Obi (nd.) argued that constructivists embrace a shift from passive transfer of information to active problem solving…constructionists believe that learning occurs most effectively when students are engaged in authentic tasks that relate to meaningful contexts. The ultimate measure of learning is therefore based on the ability of the students to use knowledge to facilitate thinking in real life. The constructionists provide a rich learning environment and allow learners to create their own meaning, using a variety of media and technology (p.112).

Empirical reports of field studies and investigations into the awareness, adoption, and problems of e-learning in Nigeria are better captured as shown in the following case studies below:

Case Studies

The cases below point out problems entailed in adopting e-learning in Nigeria. Some of the problems are peculiar to university education system, some are features of colleges of education, some others are found in secondary school education system in Nigeria; however, the focus in this study is tertiary institutions of learning.
Case Study One: Federal University of Technology, Minna, Nigeria

Atsumbe, Raymond and Duhu (2012) studied availability of e-learning infrastructures in Federal University of Technology, Minna, Nigeria. The study used descriptive survey research design to sample 182 lecturers and 382 students. The following findings were made:

(a). There were no adequate infrastructures for effective teaching and learning particularly for e-learning, moreover, internet services could not be easily accessed outside the university campus.
(b). Lecturers do possess electronic devices and laptops that could facilitate e-learning but could not effectively use those devices to teach.
(c). Most students who possessed electronic devices and laptops were found to be ineffective to use their devices for learning purpose particularly for e-learning.
(d). Major problems discovered to be associated with the adoption of e-learning were poverty, poor funding, poor electric power supply in and around the university.
(e). Attitudinal problems of resistance to change on the part of lecturers was found to inhibits the use of e-learning infrastructures for teaching and learning purposes at Federal University of Technology, Minna, Nigeria.

Case Study Two: A Sample of Two Hundred And Twenty Eight Students of Nigeria Universities Drawn from the Six Geo-Political Zones of Nigeria

Anene, Iman, and Odumuh, (2014) examined the problem and prospect of E-learning in Nigerian Universities, specifically, to determine availability of facilities for e-learning in Nigerian Universities, availability of e-learning materials in Nigerian Universities, and to find out if students make use of e-learning in their studies in Nigerian Universities. Descriptive survey research design was adopted with a sample of two hundred and twenty eight students drawn from the six Geo-political zones of Nigeria. It was found that many obstacles to the adoption of e-learning include infrastructure deficiencies. Moreover, “majority of the students [studied] reported that their Universities do not have e-learning library domain, no online seminars and no discussion with lecturers, no online examination, and there are limited bandwidth” (p. 320).

Findings on Problems of Adopting E-learning among Students of Christian Religious Studies

Web. 2.0 technologies, such as social media, and interactive online learning platforms, such as Moodle have been classified as type 3 category of e-learning system (Guragain, 2016). It was assumed that most students of CRS would reject adoption of e-learning and related educational technologies due to religious indoctrination, personal spirituality and parental influence; as such a study of problems associated with adopting e-learning among students of CRS, using descriptive survey of 147 (two hundred level N.C.E.) students of Federal College of Education, Eha-Amufu, Enugu State, out of total
students’ enrollment of 3,526 students in the College was conducted to ascertain the assumption stated above. The two hundred level students were selected for the study because they had undergone basic professional and general training in educational communication needed for the study. Attempt was made to examine influence of parental influence, negative peer pressure, religious inclinations, personal spirituality, and religious education of CRS students on adoption of e-learning systems.

It was discovered that most CRS student-teachers have positive attitude toward the use of e-learning (such as the use of social media for academic purposes, the use of Moodle platform, WebEx application software for audio conferencing and video conferencing, and do participate effectively in computer-based test of the College). In specific term, the researcher engaged the students in the Use of email and WhatsApp for lectures and assignments; the students were engaged in the use of online audio and video clips for instructional purposes; few students were engaged in practical use of WebEx software for teaching and learning. Furthermore, the following findings were made thus, (a). CRS students do not consider it sinful to use social media for educational purposes. (b). Religious inclinations, personal spirituality, parental influence, negative peer pressure, and religious education of CRS students, were not found to be obstacles to the use of e-learning technologies. (c). However, financial challenge, technical challenge such as inadequate supply of electricity and broadband internet service remain problematic.

Implications of Case Studies on Problems of Adopting E-learning among Students of CRS
(a). It was assumed that religious inclinations, religious doctrine, parental background and peer influence would negatively affect adoption of e-learning among students of CRS, but those factors were not problematic. (b). However, the general issues of weak infrastructure, high cost, lack of relevant skills, lack of relevant software, limited access to the internet, inadequate electricity supply, deficit in well-equipped e-learning centres, low level of computer literacy among support staff, inadequate training of students and staff on e-learning technologies were found to be perennial problems to adopting e-learning for educational purposes in Nigeria.

Conclusion
The paper examined problems prevalent and militating against the adoption of e-learning in Nigeria, using Federal College of Education, Eha-Amufu, Enugu State as case study. Academic disciplines do face problems of adopting e-learning in spite of its benefits, and not much is known about problems associated with adoption of e-learning (electronic learning) in the field of Christian Religious Studies (CRS) in Nigeria tertiary institutions of learning. Moreover, there was a need to examine the influence of religious inclinations, personal spirituality, parental influence, negative peer pressure, and
religious education of CRS students on adoption of e-learning systems. Paradoxically, those factors were found not to be problematic in adopting e-learning among students of Christian Religious Studies. The study emphasized the fact that asynchronous and synchronous e-learning activities are simultaneously needful for effective integration of e-learning into curriculum implementation.

**Recommendations**

The paper recommends the followings:

[a]. **Instructional Goals** - Facilitators of e-learning should identify the instructional goals of learners.

[b]. **Technical Support Staff** - Facilitators of e-learning should identify relevant necessary technical support and appropriate e-learning technologies.

[c]. **E-learning Software** - Appropriate e-learning software should be selected and installed in computers available for learners.

[d]. **Training Workshops** - Relevant training on the use of selected software for e-learning should be organized for students and support staff, examples of such software include WebEx, Moodle, and Microsoft Office.


**References**


