20

REVAMPING TEACHER EDUCATION FOR MEETING THE NEEDS OF E-LEARNING IN NIGERIA: COUNSELLING IMPLICATIONS

By

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Abstract

Revamping teacher education for meeting the needs of e-learning in Nigeria and its implications for counselling is most appropriate for reflection at this time of comatose economy and coronavirus cataclysm. To this end, this paper examines inter-alia the concept of teacher education, the challenges of teacher education, the concepts of e-learning, rationale for e-learning in teacher education, challenges of e-learning and counseling implications of revamping teacher education for effective implementation of e-learning. This paper contends that e-learning is very relevant to teacher education in Nigeria but it will be more meaningful and productive when implemented with relevant and appropriate counseling services. This paper recommends among others that the curriculum of teacher education should be constantly reviewed to accommodate the needs, challenges and aspirations of e-learning in Nigeria.

Introduction

Revamping the Nigerian teacher education sector, in ordinary parlance, simply means restoring the Nigerian teacher education to "internationally acceptable standards" in today's globalized world in order to meet the needs, challenges and aspirations of e-learning in Nigeria. Teacher education refers to the policies and procedures designed to equip prospective teachers with relevant knowledge, attitude and skills they require to effectively carry out their tasks in the classroom, school and wider community. The current trend of globalization requires that teacher education institutions should be equipped to produce teachers with skills and competencies to develop learners as critical citizens in a digital world. Teacher education institutions in Nigeria need teacher education programmes that will develop high quality teachers with the experience and determination to deliver high quality teaching and learning in a sustainable and inspiring manner supported by innovative research and technology.

Technology today has turned the world to a global village. With technology advancement in the 21st century, e-learning has become a valuable technology for teaching, learning and research in higher institution of learning (Ojeaga, &Igbinedion, 2012). For this reason people have experienced a drastic changed which brought about improvement to almost all places of human life. Such as improving access to services, enhancing connectivity, creating business and employment opportunities, and changing the ways people communicate, interact, and engage among themselves and with their governments. In the knowledge-based economy, level of technology advancement of a nation determines her growth (Awodiji&Ogbudinkpa, 2016).

E-learning according to Ojeaga and Igbinedion, (2012) involve the use of technology to enhance learning which include digital collaboration, satellite broadcasting, CD-ROMS amongst others. (It includes the delivery of content via internet, intra/extranet (LAN/WAN), audio and video-gape, satellite broadcast, interactive TV, CD-ROM, and more). E-learning has so many advantages over the traditional method of teaching and learning. This have impacted greatly on teaching and learning process, school management in a number of ways. E-learning can accelerate, enrich and deepen basic skills in reading, writing and can motivate students to learn as they become more independent and responsible for their learning. Empirical studies revealed that technology encouraged active learning, support teaching, reduce the isolation of teacher and promote teachers and

students in learning and research (Akubueze, 2012). Hall and Snider (2000) viewed e-learning as the process of learning via computers, internet and intranets. It was also referred to as web-based training, online training, distributed learning or technology for learning. This goes beyond digital technologies but give students a greater autonomy regarding the point in time to learn at their own pace. The content and the method by which students learn providing online that eliminate the barriers of time and distance. Cohen (2001) submitted that the use of e-learning has an effect on all aspects of teaching approaches to the curriculum because of the ability to look at and explore information in new ways (Oluwalola&Awodiji, 2019).

However, the wave of advances in information and communication Technologies (ICT) in this millennium is creating problems, even though it has a positive contribution to development. But the negative consequences can easily be checked through counselling (Agabe, Ambali, Idiege, & Ube, 2018). Guidance and Counselling is a relevant tool that could be used to revamp teacher education to meet the needs and challenges of e-learning in Nigeria. This is the thrust of this paper.

The Concept of Teacher Education

Teacher education is the totality of policies procedures and programmes, designed to equip prospective teachers with relevant and appropriate knowledge, skills, values and competencies they require to effectively and efficiently carry out their tasks in the classroom, schools and under community (Nwalado 2018). For Oyekan (2006), teacher education is the provision of professional education and specialized trainings within a specified period for the preparation of individuals who intend to develop and nurture the young ones into responsible citizens. To Agogo (2004) teacher education is a process of instilling professional competence relevant to the nation development in our-would-be teachers for our economic growth and nation building. Thus, teacher education includes the preparation of administrators, supervisors, guidance counselors and other members of the workforce needed for nation building (Maduewesi&Ofojebe, 2013).

Teacher education means the policies and procedures designed to equip prospective teachers with the knowledge, attitude, behavior and skills required to perform tasks in the classroom and wider community (Wikipedia, 2015). Indeed, teacher education is the continuous process of training and retraining throughout the active life of the teacher. It

involves the use of a wide body of knowledge about the subject being taught, and another set of knowledge about effective ways to teach a subject to different kinds of learners which they are required to undertake a complex set of tasks every minute.

Teacher education can be considered as a process of developing skilled teaching manpower to enable them provide good quality and relevant education to students at various levels of education (Ijov&Kpurkpur, 2019). Teacher education according to Perraton (2010) include four elements which vary widely and they are ; improving the general educational background of the trainee teachers, increasing their knowledge and understanding of the subjects they are to teach, pedagogy and understanding of children and learning and the development of practical skills and competencies.

Teacher education is often divided into three phases, namely:

- Initial teacher education (a pre-service course before entering the classroom as a fully responsible teacher);
- Induction (the process of providing training and support during the first few years of teaching);
- Teacher development or continuing professional development (CPD) (an in-service process for practicing teachers).

Generally, teacher education curricula can be broken down into four major areas:

- Foundational knowledge in education-related aspects of philosophy of education, history of education, educational psychology, and sociology of education.
- Skills in assessing student learning, using technology to improve teaching and learning, and supporting students with special needs.
- Content-area knowledge and skill including ways of teaching and assessing a specific subject, in which case this area may overlap with the first "foundational" area.
- Practice at classroom teaching or at some other form of educational practice usually supervised and supported in some ways, though not always. Practice can take the form of field observations, or student teaching.

Today, teacher education in Nigeria has improved significantly from what it was before independence and few decades thereafter. The National Policy on Education (2014) clearly articulates the importance attached to teacher education and states the goals of teacher education as follows:

a) Production of highly motivated, conscientious and efficient classroom teachers for all levels of our education system;
b) Encouraging the spirit of enquiry and creativity in teachers;
c) Helping teachers fit into the social life of the community and the society at large and to enhance their commitment to national goals;
d) Providing teachers with the intellectual and professional background adequate for their assignment and to make them adaptable to changing conditions and;
e) Enhancing teachers' commitment to the teaching profession.

The policy makes it possible for all teachers in Nigeria to be trained and stipulate Nigeria Certificate of Education (NCE) as the minimum qualification to the profession. The policy also provides that "teacher education shall continue to take cognizance of changes in methodology and in the curriculum" and that teachers shall be regularly exposed to innovations in their profession. It further recognizes the need for in-service training "as an integral part of continuing teacher education".

The type of teachers needed in Nigeria have become clearly defined in the National Policy on Education Implementation Committee blueprint. It was prescribed that the types and qualifications of teachers required should be as follows:

a) Pre-primary Education: Grade II Teacher with NCE teachers as heads.
b) Primary Education: NCE teachers and graduate teachers as heads
c) Junior Secondary Schools: NCE and University graduates
d) Senior Secondary Schools: NCE and University graduates with professional qualifications.
e) Technical Colleges, Polytechnics and Colleges of Education: University graduates with post-graduate qualifications in their disciplines together with professional; qualifications, practical industrial exposure and experience.
f) University: University graduates with post-graduates together with professional qualifications and experience (Omo-Ojugo, 2011).

This prescription implies that the minimum qualification to teach in our primary school in Nigeria is NCE. The government had since taken steps to ensure the implementation of this prescription.

Today, teachers are being educated online and via programmed learning techniques. The type of teacher education now in vogue is the one that produces specialist

teachers with expertise in Educational Management, Guidance and Counselling, Special Education, Vocational Education and others. The contents of teacher education have been responding greatly to the changing needs and challenges of the society.

Challenges of Teacher Education

The challenges of teacher education in Nigeria among othersinclude the following:

- Curriculum relevance in teacher education
- Inadequate quality assurance mechanism in teacher education
- Brain drain-academic
- Unqualified teachers
- Poor working conditions
- Inadequate infrastructure and facilities for e-learning
- Inadequate partnership and collaboration in teacher education
- Poor funding

The concept of E-learning

E-learning is seen as the process of delivering knowledge via electronic media, which include the internet, intranet, extranet, satellite broadcast, audio video tape, interactive TV and CD-ROM, electronic board and e-library. E-learning is a global phenomenon fuelled by a variety of economic, technological and social forces, as well as students' demand. The demands amongst students, employers and communities for lifelong learning and awareness amongst educators to the need to enhance the quality of traditional learning via greater interactivity, collaboration, access to resources and remote.

E-learning refers to electronic learning which means using a computer to deliver part or all of a course whether it is in a school or elsewhere. It deals with the use of all types of technology, including electronic technologies in learning and education. E-learning is the use of electronic technology to deliver education and training applications, monitor learner's performance and report learner's progress. Hedge and Hayward (2004) regards e-learning as an innovative approach for delivering electronically mediated, well designed, learner-centered and interactive learning environments to anyone, any place, any time by utilizing the internet and digital technologies.

E-learning, according to Liaw and Huang (2003), is defined based on the summaries of its characteristics. In the first place, they propose a multimedia environment. Secondly, they incorporate several kinds of information. Thirdly, e-learning system support collaborative communication, whereby users have total control over their own situations of learning. In the fourth place, e-learning support networks for accessing information. And fifth, e-learning allows for the systems to be implemented freely on various kinds of computer operating systems.

E-learning according to Oakley (2000) is a learning process in which learners can communicate with their instructors and their peers, and access learning materials, over the internet or other computer networks. E-learning is the application of the internet to support the delivery of learning skills and knowledge using a holistic approach which may not be limited to a particular course, technology or infrastructure. It provides flexibility which allows for just-in-time training when and where they are needed. ,e-learning creates room for integration into the work place in terms of relevance, access to express and collaboration for team working (Ijov&Kpurkpur, 2019).

Anthony and Chinweoke (2012) cited Leasure, Davis &Theleyon; Sener& Stover; Kearsley; Maenoft; Fjermestand; Hultz& Zhang; Wheeter and Reil in Olaniyi (2016) as who perceived e-learning as:

- Being convenient and flexible;
- Offering a greater access to quality learning resources;
- Increasing students' motivation and self-esteem;
- Promoting learner participation and interactivity;
- Improving learning quality;
- Promoting sharing of learning resources and spaces.
- Promoting collaborative learning and autonomous learning.

Furthermore, the internet is central to e-learning but it is not by any means the only technology for it (Okigbo and Ndolo, 2011). Essentially, e-learning is another way of teaching and learning which includes instruction delivered via all electronic media including the internet, intranets, extranets, satellite broadcasts, audio/video tape, interactive TV and CD ROM (Obunadike, 2019). Hall and Snider in Nwalado and Ikenokwalu (2019) also viewed e-learning as the process of learning computer over the internet and intranet. Hall and Snider noted that e-learning comprises any electronic learning materials like CD

ROMs, Email, computer-aided assessment, online conferencing, simulation and other related methods. E-learning technology is presumed to be a pedagogical paradigm shift from the traditional training and learning process to an ICT based (computer assisted). E-learning has a potential to revolutionize the way teaching is done in high education. The above assertion agrees with the view of Otuka (2010) who defined e-learning as all forms of electronically supposed learning of teaching which are procedural in character practice and knowledge of the learner. This means that e-learning is the use of electronic medium is fostering learning and teaching (Nwalado and Ikenokwalu, 2019).

Rationale for E-learning in Teacher Education

According to Obunadike (2019) the e-learning facilities when judiciously and fully implemented would achieve the following among others:

- Reduce and/or eliminate the costs for instructor fees and materials to a certain level;
- Increased retention and enhanced hands-on application unlike traditional methods;
- Reduce time of learning and the time teachers and employee's absence from duty;
- Help managed instruction and progress via portal;
- Make easy use of multimedia in practice and assessment according to learners' abilities;
- Allow for automated monitor of user's progress with supervisor and teachers;
- Be highly interactive as it engages users and pushes them than pulling them to progress;
- Help fast learners go with their speed in any course and avoid redundancy;
- Make slow learners go on their own pace by eliminating frustration with themselves; their fellow learners, and on the subject matter;
- Make knowledge cumulative as lessons are built consecutively and more flexible;
- Assist e-learners to create, have access, view, modify and print or send documents;
- Make learning take place anytime, anywhere and greatly increases knowledge retention;
- Enhance evaluation as it become self-paced because e-learning is a networked phenomenon;
- Make easy delivery of content using standard internet technology as it enhances surf ability; and

- E-learning supersedes training and instruction as it is a tool that improves behavior performance.

The benefits of e-learning are numerous. It may as well include cost-effectiveness, enhanced responsiveness to change, consistency, timely content, flexible accessibility, and providing customer value (Olomo in Obunadike, 2019).

Challenges of E-learning in Teacher Education

The current developments on e-learning facilities have an extraordinary potential for transforming education to meet the growing need for customized, and on-demand learning (Nwalado and Ikenokwalu, 2019). However, in spite of the promising prospect of e-learning in teacher education in Nigeria, there are some challenges militating against the effective and efficient implementation of e-learning in teacher education. These challenges among others include the following:

- **Unstable power supply:** irregular supply of electricity to operate e-learning devices appears to be one of the greatest problems militating against the use of e-learning facilities. Virtually, all the e-learning devices depend on electronic power to function. Electricity instability has been a majority setback for e-learning development (Nwalado and Ikenokwalu, 2019).
- **Inadequate basic e-learningfacilities:** the cost of purchasing e-learning facilities is high and still on the increase. Most faculties of education, schools in Nigerian and Colleges of Education do not have state of the art facilities or well-equipped laboratories for e-learning training (Nwalado and Ikenokwalu, 2019). Most colleges of education in Nigeria where the e-learning facilities are partially available, the few available one, are used for administrative purposes. Ezoem and Akiti (2010) observed that lack of computer hardware and software are some of the challenges faced in the use of e-learning facilities for teaching.
- **Inadequate funding:** in Nigeria, education is completely underfunded. The government investment for e-learning growth is wholly low, as can be observed by the ratio of students per computer (Ezeugbor and Nwachukwu, 2001). The Nigeria economy is poor and helpless to finance the complete utilization of e-learning in our colleges of education as means of teaching. The poor state of the economy has adversely affected the educational growth and development of the country

(Nwalado and Ikenokwalu, 2019). Thus, inadequate fund or finance is a major challenge to the management of e-learning facilities because it takes money to maintain these facilities (Nwadiokwu, 2019).

- **Slowinternetconnection:** this has negatively affected both teachers and students from using e-learning facilities in effective teaching and learning in our colleges of education of higher learning. According to Nwakwudo, Oguejiofor and Nwankwo cited in Nwalado and Ikenokwalu, (2019), e-learning provides students and teachers with practical and functional knowledge of computer, internet and other associated areas. Moreover, internet facilities should be made available 24 hours to teachers and students in order to prepare them to meet up with the current information era.
- **Inadequate Curriculum:**withinthe education sector, the curriculum determines what happens, how it happens, where it happens, with what it happens, and to be sure that it has happened, no educational goals and objectives can be achieved without having a curriculum that is appropriate and adequate (Egenti, 2019). However, the non-inclusion of e-learning inteacher education curricula is increasingly being questioned by parents and the public. Most teachers have no computer education knowledge because it was not enriched in the curriculum at their primary or secondary school level. However, the curriculum designed for training teachers at various level of education has not completely implemented e-learning oriented programmes (Jimoh-kadiri and Bupo, 2011). Ohakwu (2008) found out that, some aspect of e-learning training is not included in the teacher education curricula.

Counseling Implications

From the foregoing, it is an empirical veracity that e-learning would help to achieve the objectives of teacher education in Nigeria, but of equal importance is the inclusion of relevant counselling services in teacher education. E-learning is very crucial to educational development, but education becomes more impactful with appropriate and relevant counseling services.

However, the wave of advances in information and communication Technologies (ICT) in this millennium is creating problems, even though it has a positive contribution to

development. But the negative consequences can easily be checked through counselling (Agabe, Ambali, Idiege, & Ube, 2018). These authors further stated that the use of a computer to defraud which isbeing tagged 419 can be checked through prosper counseling. The use of ICT for immoral acts such as the watching of pornographic films can also be checked through proper counseling. This can be done both in school and at home. Parents also need counseling so as to guide their wards and salvage their future. The students can be counseled in school. Both teachers and parents can make the students know the implication of the wrong use of ICT, as well as the benefits and the advantages of its proper usage (Agabe, Ambali, Idiege, & Ube, 2018).

When an individual better understands himself and the world around him through counselling services, there is more effectiveness, productivity and happiness in the individual (Sanni, 2016). There is the ability to achieve greater awareness of not only who they are but who they can become through personal, social, vocational and education counseling (Shertzer and Stone in Sanni, 2016).

Counseling is the hub on which the achievements of teacher education goals lie. There is a significant relationship between the goals of teacher education and guidance and counseling. The differential, developmental and integrative functions of teacher education can only be achieved through a revamped education with the provision of relevant and appropriate counseling services in the educational system.in Nigeria, Guidance and Counselling is based on the achievement of the five main educational objectives. The idea that every individual will be allowed and indeed encouraged to develop into a sound and effective member of the society through a programme that provides equal opportunities and freedom of choice, is the bedrock or basic foundation of guidance and counselling. Thus, Guidance and counselling is a sine-qua-non for the achievement of teacher education objectives in Nigeria.

Conclusion

From the above analysis, it is obvious that no meaningful e-learning is possible in Nigeria without revamping the teacher education to cater for the needs, challenges, ideologies, aspirations and philosophies of e-learning in present day Nigeria. Counseling is necessary for the improvement of students, teachers and parents understanding of e-learning so as to minimize frustration and challenges encountered in the course of

implementing e-learning in Nigerian schools. To this end, when we succeed in promoting best practices in restoring teacher education in Nigeria to international standard, we have succeeded in revamping teacher education in Nigeria to meet the needs of e-learning.

Recommendations

The following recommendations become imperative if teacher education must be revamped to meet the needs of e-learning in Nigeria:

1. Regular power supply by governments and private organizations.
2. Funding should be adequate and regular.
3. Teachers are motivated and morale boosted through prompt payment of salaries and allowances.
4. Teacher education curriculum should be restructured to cater for the needs, challenges, aspirations and philosophies of e-learning in Nigeria.
5. Provision of effective learning system with relevant and appropriate guidance and counseling services required for effective, efficient and productive implementation of e-learning in teacher education.

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