5

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

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Abstract

Education has the potential to become the major provider of higher education in Nigeria if it succeeds in meeting the needs of e-learning .The paper reviews the contemporary relevance of education for meeting the needs and challenges of e-learning in Nigeria that confronts the present scenario. The paper identifies the challenges that militate against education from achieving its main objectives for the purpose of e-learning, how to restructure education in Nigeria were discussed which include: Increase funding to education sector, quality and affordable education should be made available,challenges of e-learning was discussed briefly. Among others the paper suggested that e-learning curriculum that maintains ICT courses should be placed much premium as well as commitment on the part of the government, private sector, teachers, learners, and other stakeholders to join hands to implement effective and efficient programmes to sustain relative system and relevant curricular. The paper concluded that e-learning is indeed a laudable educational programme. It is an innovative response to the new demands to learning in the education sector.

Key words: Education, curriculum, Information and communication technology, restructure education, e-learning

Introduction

The rapid growth in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) have brought remarkable changes in the twenty-first century, as well as affected the demands of modern societies. ICT is becoming increasingly important in our daily lives and in our educational system. Therefore, there is a growing demand on educational sector to use ICT to teach the skills and knowledge students need for the 21st century. Realizing the effect of ICT on the workplace and everyday life, today's educational institutions try to restructure their educational curricula and classroom facilities, in order to bridge the existing technology gap in teaching and learning. This restructuring process requires effective adoption of technologies into existing environment in order to provide learners with knowledge of specific subject areas, to promote meaningful learning and to enhance professional productivity, Tomei in Charles (2012).

Restructuring is the process or instance of changing the way which something is organized or arranged or as to organizing something in a new way, give a new different structure, Advance oxford dictionary 8th edition (2010). It could be regarded as a positive process or effort by individuals, groups, organizations and government to enhance or influence for novel status in individuals, groups and nations that provide the citizens those congenial opportunities that would enable them provide the basic and essential means of achieving socio-economic independent.

Education is the hub of any economy of a nation just as the wheel rotates around the hub, the economic sector of Nigeria rotates around education considering the current socio-economic, scientific and technological development of Nigeria. Rashtriya in Ukuma (2013) pointed out that, the wealth and prosperity of a nation depends on the effective utilization of its human and material resources through industrialization. Ukuma, (2015) maintained further that, the use of human material for industrialization demands its educational skills.

Revamping process in education is paramount to the country's economy. The issue bedevilling the education system are insufficient and unqualified teachers, lack of workshops or laboratories, lack of machines, equipment, hand tools and other infrastructures. Education in Nigeria is more or less theory not practical, but if education is

practicalized as it is done in the developed nations, it would pave the way for a radical change in the entire education system and this would enhance e-learning. Revamping education is a process of applying scientific knowledge into the education sector with a view of identifying, studying, analysing, evaluating and continuing the education programme to suit the current trends.

Education is regarded as a powerful instrument of social change and national development. This holds for all societies, developed and less developed to the extent that promoting and sustaining quality education are never left to chances. To this end, it is believed that the quality of life in the society can be greatly enhanced through education, hence the five main national goals of Nigeria, which have been endorsed as the necessary foundation for the National Policy on Education are the building of: (a) a free and democratic society (b) a just and egalitarian society (c) a united, strong and self-reliant nation (d) a great and dynamic economy and a land full of bright opportunities for all citizens, Esene (2014).

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. Its form, content, methodology and clientele are determined by the society. Nzewu in Birabil and Ogeh, (2020) sees education to play a role of preparing or nurturing individuals to live in society and thus being able to perform specific functions for society. Clark cited in Vikoo (2016) aptly describe education as an interaction between a teacher and a student under the teachers responsibility in order to bring about the expected change in the student's behaviour. O'Connor as cited in Birabil and Ogeh, (2020) also noted that educational system of any society is a more or less elaborate mechanism design by society to instil in individuals certain skills or attitude that are judge to be useful and desirable in that society. In a related development, Adelowo (2010) conceptualised education as an enterprise which sets out to instil values, attitude and skills in members of the society. This was aptly supported by Pauley and Buseri (2019), that see education as a socializing agent that equips all its beneficiaries with the necessary tools such as knowledge, skills, attitude, cultural values, language and social skills to enable them conform to the desires/demand of their society.

The crucial agent to national development and restricting of the country's wealth and human development is geared towards education. The crucial agent to restructuring process is the creative individuals in the country. It is a process of growth and expansion in new areas in the society with useful form of the individuals, national and man-made resources of a given region. The most salient indicator of self-reliant is creative individual using information and communication technology and this can be achieved through an organized system that is the education system. A self-reliant nation is when the individuals that constitute it can attain some level of ICT skills and meet their basic requirements without waiting for others or the nation. If the education system reflectively restructured and apply the learning strategies of e-learning, it will produce graduates with information technology awareness and skills crucial to succeed in today global knowledge economy, Deke and others (2013).

Challenges that militate against education from achieving its main objectives for the purpose of e-learning in Nigeria.

Poor management of education

When responsibilities are given to those who are not qualify there is a tendency of mismanagement. Management of education in Nigeria at all levels may continue to suffer from ineffectiveness until policy prescriptions are passed as Act to the national assembly through the provision of legal backings. Sometimes, there exist educational conflict between the roles of federal, state and local government on the management of public schools.

High cost of education

Parents / guardians are mostly of low income, the take home pay for parents cannot take them home as such it affects the financing of their children's education. Some that manage to finish from primary or secondary school could not further or acquire tertiary education.

Inadequate Instructional Materials

1Instructional materials are all forms of information careers that can be used in recording, storing, transmitting or retrieving information for purposes of teaching and learning. According to Ezike and Obodo in Adewole, (2015) instructional materials are those instruments teachers use in classroom for teaching. Instructional materials are one of the factors influencing functional education in Nigeria. Regrettably, instructional materials used in teaching education in Nigeria are not adequate to address modern trends of skill acquisition in the society. There are inadequate computers in schools even the teaching methods in use does not suit the practical aspect of e-learning, Adekola as cited in Adewole (2015). Sub-standard teaching aids are a challenge because when you buy them they will not give you the accurate results.

Students' attitude to education*:*

Some of the students their life style leads to lack of concentration in the class and this affect their learning abilities. Some involve in chatting, making calls among others during lectures. Their orientation, interest and values toward learning are not encouraging.

Teachers' welfare*:*

Lack of motivation is a contributor when teachers are not promoted when due, accommodation workshops/seminars among others. Nigerian teachers are not motivated to produce their maximum productivity. They are not only poorly paid but cannot measure up with their counterpart in other areas.

Inadequate budgetary allocation/ under funding:

The greatest challenges facing education in Nigeria is inadequate funding by the federal, state and local government. Funds are required and necessary to maintain both human and material resources of the system in order to achieve desired goals.

Quality of supervision:

Inadequate supervision can be a barrier to education when unqualified personnel is appointed to oversee or supervise the affairs of education.

Inadequate facilities and equipment for teaching and learning:

Another area of concern facing education in Nigeria is inadequate facilities and equipment for teaching and learning. Business and every aspect of education in the world is technology-driven with most critical changes occurring in the area of information and communication technology (ICT).Unfortunately, this facilities and equipment are insufficient in our institutions of learning, even some that are in schools are obsolescence and no proper maintenance.Many schools lack basic equipment for conducive learning, most especially for science practical classes, and those that claim to have are managing the old ones. Hence, the students only learn the theory rather than carrying out the practical aspect. Also, the libraries in schools are lacking the needed books, journals and magazines.

Teachers' attitudes:

The teachers' attitude is another challenge to the educational system, it is believed that if teachers perceived technology programs as neither fulfilling their needs nor their students' needs, it is likely that they will not integrate the technology into their teaching and learning. Among the factors that influence successful integration of ICT into teaching are teachers' attitudes and beliefs towards technology Keengwe and Onchwari, as cited in Charles (2012). If teachers' attitudes are positive toward the use of educational technology then they can easily provide useful insight about the adoption and integration of ICT into teaching and learning processes. Demici in Charles (2012) conducted a study on teachers' attitudes towards the use of Geographic Information systems (GIS) in Turkey. The study used questionnaire to collect data from 79 geography teachers teaching in 55 different high schools. The study revealed that though barriers such as lack of hardware and software existed, teachers positive attitudes towards GIS was an important determinant to the successful integration of GIS into geography lessons.

Other challenges include Economic, Social and Political Factor

Apart from the factors listed above, there are other major factors which play a role in the education sector. Economic factors such as policy reversals, high and double taxations, difficulty in procuring educational materials, high inflation and unstable exchange rates are some of the areas of concern for the education system. Politically, some of the government policies seems to favour colleagues, families, friends and associates. Even when it comes to award of contracts and other government patronages, cronyism is the word. This creates a situation of uneven advantage to certain people while others are meant to look like mediocre irrespective of pedigree, ability and expertise (Onwubiko, 2011)

How to restructure education in Nigeria for e-learning

E-learning is one of the most efficient tools for advancing knowledge, skills and development in any nation. Electronic learning, also known as e-learning, is generally defined as instruction and learning experiences that are delivered via electronic technology such as the Internet, audiotape and videotape, satellite broadcast, interactive television, and CD-ROM. Web-based learning, computer-based learning, and virtual classrooms are some of the processes and applications used to distribute e-learning. E-learning is a growth industry in both education, business and industry, Olutola, and Olatoye, (2015).

To restructure the education sector is to give more priority to see that the citizens are well educated, everybody will know his/her right and there will be rapid development. There is a great deal of work to be done in order to restructure the education sector for e-learning to be effective.

Increase funding to education sector:

Adequate funding with good management will provide high-quality education in Nigeria. Funds for renovation of schools and institution, acquiring quality training facilities, research grants, decent teachers' salaries and welfare, among others are the things that need to be increased, released and spent appropriately.

Quality and affordable education should* be *made available:

The first step towards reviving the education lies in the hands of the government. Necessary steps need to be taken in order to restructure and save the sector. The government at all levels needs to commit to the delivering of a competitive quality and affordable education across the country. Also, the right investments need to be done in order to get the desired results.

Training of teachers/lecturers:

Proper training of teachers with current materials and information and communication technology gadgets (ICT) also will improve the condition of education in Nigeria. Necessary vetting measures should be taken to make sure that only qualified teachers/lecturers are employed. One of the basic principles that should guide education is that teachers/lecturers should be experts in the use of modern facilities.

Improve teachers/lecturers salaries:

Teachers/lecturers' salaries must be reviewed and improved. Fair wages will also motivate teachers to do their job on a high-quality level. Also, there should be regular payments of teachers' salaries. This will attract qualified and dedicated teachers to public schools and will change the attitude of young people towards the teaching profession and youth will study to become teachers.

Establishment of ICT centers at all levels of learning:

The federal government should take it upon themselves to build ICT centers in both primary, secondary and tertiary institutions. This will enable learning to be effective.

Challenges of e-learning in Nigeria

The key roles of e-learning in Nigeria education include: convenience due to minimal disruption of family and work life, elimination of space, time and geographical constraints, increased peer interaction due to a collaborative rather than competitive learning environment, increased interaction with more accessible teachers with decreased

feedback turnaround time, increased quality of learning with deeper critical reflection and systematic scaffolding of ideas taking place Odili, (2016). Despite the benefits associated with e-learning, there are lots of barriers that need to be tacked in order to achieve its stated objectives. This include lack of awareness, connectivity, absence of infrastructural facilities/equipment, instructor incompetence in using online platform and inadequate/lack of electrical power supply among others. The major challenge of e-learning is skills acquisition. Capacity building should be our priority. This is because the creation of the proper skill set is crucial to developing technology- based economy, Ikeoku and Enendu, (2012).

Conclusion

Education in Nigeria could only be revamped if the government will increase its funding to the education sector at all levels of education, improve on infrastructure, good policy formulation, provision of adequate training facilities/equipment. Based on the findings of the study, there are various challenges to contend with in the course of implementing e-learning which ranges from inadequacy in the supply of ICT equipment and facilities, instructor incompetence in using online platform and inadequate funding. However, these challenges could be overcome if the various strategies which include consistency in government policy are adopted. All educational courses curriculum, could further be enriched with the inclusion of ICT courses that will not only make the graduate to be marketable but also self-reliant. E-learning is indeed a laudable educational programme. It is an innovative response to the new demands to learning in the education sector.

Recommendations

Since education is the responsibility of all tiers of government it should make sure that it provide an enabling environment to achieve the following solutions.

1. Government and all other stakeholders in education sector should make provision for adequate facilities and training equipment for effective service delivery and implementation of e-learning curriculum.

2. Government should be able to subsidise textbooks, instructional materials, abolish tuitions and introduce free education at all levels for those who cannot afford.

3. Qualified and professional personnel should be appointed to supervise the educational sector.

4. Teachers/lecturers should be well motivated in terms of salary and other allowances so as to enable them discharged their duties effectively. Students on the other hand should develop more interest while the school authority should introduce innovative and interesting programmes in education.

5. Nigerian schools should be equipped with standard ICT centres that can stand the test of time.

6. Government should appoint people with integrity to manage the education sector and hold them responsible for any mismanagement.

7. E-learning curriculum that maintains ICT courses should be placed much premium as well as commitment on the part of the government, private sector, teachers, learners, and other stakeholders to join hands to implement effective and efficient programmes to sustain relative system and relevant curricular.

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