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An Evaluation of The Use Of E-Learning Strategies In Business Education Program In Tertiary Institutions In River State

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ABSTRACT
The study looked at an evaluation of the use of e-learning strategies in business education program in tertiary institutions in River State. Two research questions and one hypothesis was used in the study. The study used all the 11 tertiary institutions in the state as population of the study. Random sampling method was used to select two universities based on the availability business education program. The survey research design was used in the study. The researcher used an instrument titled "use of E-learning strategies in Business Education Program" (UESBEP). The instrument is a four point rating scale consisting of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). The items were weighed as 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively. The study used mean and standard deviation for data analysis for research questions. The hypothesis was analyzed using t-test. Findings from the study revealed that e-learning facility is not available in business education program in tertiary institutions in Rivers State. Further findings from the study revealed that most lecturers are not trained on the use of e-learning strategies. The null hypothesis was accepted as it was stated that there is no significant difference between the availability of e-learning facility and training of lecturers on e-learning strategies. Finally, it was recommended that e-learning facilities should be incorporated in the department of business education in tertiary institutions in Rivers State.
Keywords: Evaluation, E-Learning, Strategies Business Education, Tertiary Institutions

INTRODUCTION

E-learning is essential for current educational advancement. The world is currently moving towards online education. E-learning education provides the pathway to reach their destiny. Education helps in inculcating social responsibilities as well. The main core of education is to learn. Learning is a process of acquiring knowledge or skills through study, experience, or being taught. Any freak accident that happens in the world will always leave its impact on education. E-learning is quite simple to understand and implement. The use of a desktop, laptop, or smartphones and the internet forms a major component of this learning methodology. E-learning provides rapid growth and proved to be the best in all sectors, especially in education during this lockdown.

After a first period in which several only-virtual universities were created (e.g. the British Open University, the Globe wide Network Academy in Denmark, the World Lecture Hall of the University of Texas, the Athena University, etc.), some prestigious institutions have joined their efforts to build non-profit alliances aimed at creating distance-learning programs. A significant example is represented by the agreement among the Universities of Stanford, Princeton, Yale and Oxford, in October 2000. Subsequently, on-line education entrepreneurs and for-profit associations, with or without traditional university partners, have appeared: today, there are more than 700 university institutions of this kind

(with initiatives distributed in all the continents), as well as more than 2000 corporate Universities. At the end of April 2001, the MIT announced that, within a 10 year program, its almost 2000 courses will be put on-line, available for free to everybody. In addition, technological advances have increased permanent education demands, which are becoming more and more widespread, eventually leading to permanent links between institutions and their graduates. In fact, life cycles of new technologies not only require new teaching paradigms, but also recurrent updating of courses. According to Christopher Galvin, President and CEO of Motorola, ''Motorola no longer wants to hire engineers with a four year degree. Instead, we want our employees to have a 40 year degree''. Thus, besides institutions providing certified courses with a final diploma, there are a growing number of university consortia, organizations, publishers and industries aimed at developing and distributing on-line permanent instruction programs.

The activity of the Information Technology industry in the multimedia instructional sector has been very intense in the last few years. Currently, on the market, more than 100 different Learning Management Systems administer libraries for course storage and production, provide related information, and control course distribution and student interactive access. Like for all technologies approaching maturity, standardization activity is very intense in this phase to assure interoperability and ease of update and reuse of multimedia instructional products. Major changes are then taking place also in classical higher education institutions and universities, owing to the impact of new technologies and on the basis of the newcomers in the field. Universities have become pioneers in adapting to this new reality through the introduction of new technologies as a complement to on-site courses.

Among the several benefits of E-learning, we can list the following: it is usually less expensive to deliver, it is self-paced (usually, e-learning courses can be taken when they are necessary), it is faster (learners can skip material they already know), it provides consistent content (while in traditional learning different teachers may teach different material about the same subject), it works from anywhere and anytime (e-learners can take training sessions when they want), it can be updated easily and quickly (online e-learning sessions are especially easy to keep up-to-date because the updated materials are simply uploaded to a server), it can lead to an increased retention and a stronger grasp on the subject (because of the many elements that are combined in e-learning to reinforce the message, such as video, audio, quizzes, interaction, etc.), it can be easily managed for large groups of students.

Literature Review

E-learning in Nigerian Educational System

In Nigeria, every year, about a million students apply for admission into various Universities in the country, but only about 10% of them get admitted into the Universities through Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB). The alternative to regular university schooling is e-learning. Unfortunately, the e-learning in Nigeria has not developed due to a number of factors which are as Oye et al. (2011) observed ranges from mass unawareness, low computer literacy level and cost, these factors according them were identified as critical in affecting the acceptability of e-learning by students and lecturers of Nigerian universities. Despite the emerging technologies challenges, the traditional process of teaching and learning, and the way education is managed in Nigeria there is increasing awareness on the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in teaching and learning. Adomi and Kpangban noted that there are developments in the Nigerian education sector with regards to the application of ICT in institutions.

Technology enhanced learning, includes distance and online instruction, which are recognized as a viable tool necessary for preparing citizens to participate in the technologically driven global environment. The concepts computer-aided teaching and computer-aided learning have given birth to computer-aided instruction, which represents a combination of both teaching and learning. Access to instruction through the internet is flexible, ensures broad viability and availability of educational opportunities. It is cost effective system of instruction and learning materials can be accessed irrespective of time and space. The use of ICT in education has become more and more popular globally. E-learning according to Craige

(2011) is the computer and network enabled transfer of skills and knowledge for the diffusion of innovative teaching.

E-learning according to Rosenberg is the process by which people acquire skills or knowledge for the purpose of enhancing their performance through the internet or intranet and multimedia which leads to reinforced learning by means of video, audio, quizzes and other forms of interaction. Ahmad (2005) maintained that E-learning is all about learning with the use of technologies presumably computers and other modern day tools. E-learning involves the use of electronic technology to deliver education and training, to monitor learner's performance and to report the learner's progress. Hedge and Hayward (2004) view it as an innovative approach for delivering electronically mediated, well-designed, learner-centered and interactive learning environments to anyone, at any place, at any time. Its success is mainly based on its benefits and distinctive features; it is easily accessible, cost efficient, gives students the flexibility of learning, it helps provide uniform delivery to all users reducing chances of misinterpretations, as well as promoting team learning and collaboration. ICT applied to education is being deployed in varying modes from sector to sector; these range from basic e-learning or distant learning to the use of small device such as mobile phones. Education has shifted from the traditional form of education towards new methods of teaching and learning through the explosion of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT). The continuous advances in information technology have enabled the realization of a more distributed structure of knowledge transfer through the development of e-learning. The developing countries have embraced ICT and consequently e-learning so as to keep pace with unimaginable speed in the area of technology. The use of ICTs in Nigeria and African countries generally is increasing and dramatically growing. Economist Intelligence Unit in (2008) ranked Nigeria 62 among the nations in terms of the ability of a nation's institutions to use ICT to achieve their mission and vision. Nigeria ranks below South Africa and Egypt – which ranked 39 and 57 respectively. Nigeria's e-readiness ranking highlights the need to seek innovative solutions to improve teaching and learning (Tella et al, 2012). While there is a great deal of knowledge and information about how ICTs are being used in developed countries, there is not much information on how ICTs are being introduced into schools in developing countries (Beukes-Amiss and Chiware, 2012).

In Nigeria, such recent developments and awareness of the government on Information and communication technology (ICT) have opened an opportunity for the adoption of E-learning in delivering distance education (DE) for educating a vast mass of uneducated or less educated Nigerians (Ajadi, Salawu, and Adeoye, 2008)).

Purpose of the Study

The study looked at evaluation of the use of E-learning strategies in business education program in tertiary institutions in River State. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Find out the state of e-learning facilities in tertiary institutions in Rivers State
2. Find out if lecturers are trained on e-learning systems in tertiary institutions in Rivers State

Research Questions

The study adopts the following research questions:

1. What is the state of e-learning facilities in tertiary institutions in Rivers State?
2. What is the level of training of lecturers on e-learning systems in tertiary institutions in Rivers State?

Hypothesis

The hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance.

1. There is no significant difference between lecturers' skills on e-learning systems and availability of E-learning facilities in tertiary institutions in Rivers State.

Scope of the Study

The study is limited to Rivers State tertiary institutions and the use of e-learning.

METHODS

The survey research design was used in the study. The population of the study consists of 11 tertiary institutions in the Rivers State. Random sampling method was used to select two universities based on the availability business education program. The researcher used an instrument titled "use of E-learning strategies in Business Education Program" (UESBEP). The instrument is a four point rating scale consisting of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). The items were weighed as 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively. The study used mean and standard deviation for data analysis for research questions. The hypothesis was analyzed using t-test.

DATA ANALYSIS

Research Questions 1

What is the state of e-learning facility in tertiary institutions in Rivers State?

Table 1: State of E-learning facility in tertiary institutions in Rivers State

S/NO	ITEMS	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION	DECISION
1	E-learning facility is not available in business education department in Rivers State Universities.	4.80	0.24	Accepted
2	Internet services are not available for e-learning activities in business education department in Rivers State Universities.	3.50	0.15	Accepted
3	The Universities do not have budgetary provision for e-learning programs in business education department.	4.50	0.21	Accepted
4	**GRAND MEAN**	**4.30**	**0.20**	**Accepted**

Findings obtained from research question 1, table 1 showed that item 1, 2 and 3 were all accepted to the various questions. This indicated that e-learning facility is not available in business education program in tertiary institutions in Rivers State.

Research Questions 2

What is the level of training of lecturers on e-learning systems in tertiary institutions in Rivers State?

Table 2: Level of training of lecturers on e-learning systems in tertiary institutions in Rivers State

S/NO	ITEMS	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION	DECISION
1	Most lecturers do not have the required training for e-learning programs in business education in Rivers State Universities	4.4	0.21	Accepted
2	The curriculum structures do not include e-learning training in business education programs in Rivers State Universities.	4.7	0.23	Accepted
3	**GRAND MEAN**	**4.6**	**0.22**	**Accepted**

Findings obtained from research question 1, table 1 showed that item 1 and 2 were all accepted to the various questions. The study revealed that most lecturers are not trained on the use of e-learning strategies.

Hypothesis
There is no significant difference between lecturer's skills on e-learning systems and availability of E-learning facilities in tertiary institutions in Rivers State.

Table 3: T-test Analysis between lecturer's skills on e-learning systems and availability of E-learning facilities in tertiary institutions in Rivers State

S/NO	ITEM	No	MEAN	SD	df	t-cal	t-crit.	Decision
1.	lecturer's skills on e-learning systems	2	4.60	0.22	2	1.71	2.920	Not Signf.
2	Availability of E-learning facilities in tertiary institutions in Rivers State	2	4.30	0.20				

The findings from the hypothesis revealed that t-calculated value of 1.71 is less than t-critical value of 2.920. This implies that the null hypothesis was accepted as it was stated that there is no significant difference between the availability of e-learning facility and training of lecturers on e-learning strategies.

DISCUSSION
The findings of research questions 1 revealed that e-learning facility is not available in business education program in tertiary institutions in Rivers State. This is in line with the view of Anene and Odumuh (2014) that technical infrastructure in developing countries is not highly developed, which means that phone-lines and Internet connections are unreliable or slow due to narrow bandwidth. Most users access the Internet in cyber cafes, with shared bandwidth, thus slow Internet connections, as not everyone has a personal computer or laptop. In Nigeria our problem is further worsened by the lack of adequate power.
Also, the findings of research question 2 revealed that most lecturers are not trained on the use of e-learning strategies. This is in line with the opinion of Folorunso et al.(2006) observed that mass unawareness, low computer literacy level and cost were identified as critical factors affecting the acceptability of e-learning by students and lecturers of Nigerian universities.
Findings from the hypothesis revealed that there is no significant difference between the availability of e-learning facility and training of lecturers on e-learning strategies. This is in accordance to the view of Olakulehin, who noted that infrastructures necessary for deploying an effective ICT platform is lacking in low-income countries like Nigeria.

RECOMMENDATIONS
Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended that those e-learning facilities should be incorporated in the department of business education in tertiary institutions in Rivers State.

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