

TRANSFORMING E- LEARNING IN BUSINESS EDUCATION FOR GLOBAL CHALLENGES

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Abstract

This work discussed the transformation of e-learning in business education for global Challenges. Transformation in business education is essential for effective Instruction and learning using electronic modern technologies. The relevance of e-learning in the teaching of business education cannot be over emphasized as e-learning involves the use of computers in acquiring knowledge through the internet; The paper highlighted the concept of transformation, e-learning, business education, e-learning types and tools for various operations and benefits of e-learning to beneficiaries' of business education, and problems affecting extensive utilization of e-learning in business education. The paper showcased e-learning to involve the use of technologies such as digital collaboration, satellite broadcasting, CD-ROMs, video and audio conferencing, mobile technology, interactive TV etc. Also e-learning tools and activities suitable for business education are as follows; exe, flexible learning toolboxes, iLearn, youtube, respondus, smart board interactive whiteboard and so on. Conclusion was drawn. The study recommended that government should map out special ICT and e-learning funds for the management of e-learning education and there should be adequate awareness creation on the importance of e-learning to teachers and recipients of business education in order to compete favourably in Nigeria and beyond.

Keywords: Transformation, E-learning, Business Education

Introduction

The growth and development of any nation is hinged on the level of education attained by its citizens. In other words, education is the bridge to the development of any nation. Education is the key for positive change in the society because of its far reaching effects on growth and development in all sectors of the economy. It was in stressing the importance of education to man that Peters (2020) alluded that an educated man is one whose form of life is exhibited in his conduct, the activities to which he is committed, his judgments and feelings, which are thought to be desirable. One who is trained must have knowledge, skills, and an understanding of principles. The person's form of life should exhibit some mastery of forms of thought and awareness which can be harnessed purely in utilitarian or vocational purpose. Electronic learning commonly called e-learning is basically the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTS) to enhance and support learning/teaching and research (Eteng and Ntui, 2019).

The call for transformation of e-learning in business education for global challenges is to infuse and inject efficiency and effectiveness in curriculum implementation. In developing countries like Nigeria, e-learning is challenged with the problem of material devices such as computer, computer laboratories, internet and e-mail facilities, videophone systems and teleconferencing devices, fax and wireless applications, digital library, digital classrooms, multimedia systems and the problem of multimedia courseware development among others. Other studies indicated that there is dearth of trained teachers for e-learning, inadequate facilities, infrastructures and equipment (Jegede and Owolabi, 2021).

In line with the above, one can infer that change is the only constant factor in life. Thus one form of education that equips its recipients to adapt to the changing world is business education. According to Popham et al. (2021) business education is an educational programme that prepares students for entry into and advancement in jobs within business and prepares students to handle their own business affairs and function intelligently as consumers and citizens in a business economy. If business education should serve this purpose of providing the needs of the learners and the society, there should be continuous review of the curriculum to ensure that the quality of education provided is in line with societal demands.

CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION

Transformation

The word transformation means different things to different people, but one may say that transformation is change of something from bad to good. To transform means to give life or to create new life to something that has died or something that is weak. Ifekudu, (2021) stated that transformation of business education means innovation or giving new life to business education in order to perform its function/s to the society. Ifekudu, remarked that transformation of

business education is a vital phenomenon that would help beneficiaries cope with a new global challenges.

Transformation in Asobie (2022) means a complete change from one situation to another, a total departure from the old order to a new one. The writer opined that transformation does not come accidentally, but requires deliberate effort; calls for practical action and goes beyond mere expression or verbal pronouncement, and require a number of tasks to be performed.

Transformation occurs through a system of continual questioning, challenging, exploration, discovery, evaluation, testing, and creation of an organization's management theory and application; it embraces new learning and taking actions based on the new discoveries (Covey 2019).

This implies that transformation may be a fundamental shift in the deep orientation of recipients of business education, such that the delivery is carried out in new ways with new actions and results becoming feasible.

E-Learning

E-learning is an abbreviation of electric; it indicates the provision of education and training on internet or the Word Wide Web. (Pinto et al, 2018). They also opined that e-learning provides access to a wide amount of information previously known to Individual specialist; It is flexible, permitting the use of images and videos; and it allows linking to Website, on a specific subject, thus contributing to further expand knowledge. E-learning as a sub-system within ICT, is the electronic process which enhances the delivery and administration of learning activities and support via computer, networked and Web based technology to help individual performance and development. The basic of e-learning is connectivity - the process by which computers are networked to share information which can connect people. This is provided for by what is often called the e-learning landscape or architecture, which refers to hardware, software and connectivity component required to facilitate learning (Okoro, 2021). In the view of Eklund et al.(2023) e-learning as a component of flexible learning involves a wide set of application and processes, which use all available electronic media to deliver education and training. It provides people with a flexible and personalized way to learn and offers learning- on-demand opportunities and reduces learning cost. Bennink (2021) submitted that e-learning engages the use of learning to enhance learning including digital collaboration, satellite, broadcasting, CD-ROMs, video and audio conferencing, mobile technology, interactive TV and Web based technology. To buttressed, e-learning technologies offers learners control over content, learning sequence, pace of learning, time and often media, allowing them to tailor their experience to meet their personal learning objectives. E-learning presents numerous opportunities for faculty, along with continuing challenges for documenting scholarship (Olaniyi, 2020).

E-learning can be said to be the use of internet technologies to deliver a wide range of solutions that enhance knowledge and performance. It improves individual customized learning and allows individual to review performance at

their own pace via numerous electronic media such as computer-based learning, Web-based learning, Virtual classrooms and digital collaboration. The uses of e-learning to create, advance, deliver and facilitate learning in business education are likely to bring about a desired transformation in delivering of the program and most importantly on the recipients all things being equal. Oguejiofor and Ezeabasili (2014) also stressed that development of any nation depends on the technical knowhow as most developing countries are yet to reap the benefits ICT offers.

Business Education

Business education as a course that prepares students for entry in advancement of jobs within business, prepares them to handle their own business affairs and to function intelligently as consumers and citizens in a business economy. (Agwumezie, 2019). Similarly, Amaewhule (2020) added that business education encompasses knowledge, attitude, and skills needed by recipient in order to effectively manage their personal business and economic system. Atakpa (2021) remarked that business education is an embodiment of vocational knowledge and skills needed for employment and advancement in a broad range of business careers.

Business education as an education program that orientates students in: act of business making (marketing), typing and shorthand skills (currently competing with computer appreciation and operation), service delivery, secretarial jobs, stereography, account clerking, office information system and management. (Okoye (2023). He also explained that business education prepares students in two interrelated areas.

1. Education for business
2. Education about business.

Okoye (2023) believed that education for business provides professional training on:

- i. Method of business making
- ii. Techniques in business making
- iii. Tactics to attract client and make profit
- iv. Scheming ideas for profitable venture
- v. Appropriate attitude and behavior of the business man.

And that education about business prepares individuals to know:

- i. How and when to buy goods for profitable outcome (in-season and out season).
- ii. Where to obtain goods for profitable sales
- iii. Where to situate business for continued existence
- iv. When to make best sales (increase turnover rate).
- v. When to make sales for increase profit.
- vi. Tricks in season forecast for good business making.
- vii. Self- conviction indicator about risk taking in business.

From the foregoing definitions, one can say that business education is a program that prepares students for the demand of business world both in private

and public sector. The essence is to tackle poverty, which is a global challenge. In the worlds of Usman (2018) business education is a vital tool in the hand of government to combat unemployment crises. It is keeping with this challenges that stakeholders found it pertinent to strategic that it will be more practical using e-learning to prepare recipient for the demand of business either as their employee or job provider.

Objectives of Business Education

The general aim and objective of business education as stated by Nwando (2019) are as follows:

- i. To make available to all students opportunities to explore and learn the world of business, possible interest and potential careers it has to offer.
- ii. To develop in all students the ability to choose discriminately and to use widely the goods and services that business is to offer.
- iii. To assist in developing, on the part of the students interest in the various opportunities to be found in the world of business.
- iv. To develop in all students the practical way of understanding and appreciating the actual functioning of our economic system
- v. To enable students acquire basic skills in business occupations as beginners who expect to follow business as a career.
- vi. To prepare students to enter and succeed in business occupations as beginners who expect to follow business as a career
- vii. To prepare students to perform business activities common to many professional, industrial, agricultural services and home making careers
- viii. To prepare students for more effective study in the field of business and education beyond the secondary school education levels.

E-Learning Tools Suitable For Business Education

There are so many e-learning activities and tools that can be suitable for learning in business education. The Australia common wealth (2007) enumerated some of this tool, which is likely to improve the quality and quantity of teaching and learning in business education. Some of the e-learning paraphernalia includes:

1. **eXe:** the eXe project is a freely available, authoring application to assist teachers and academic in the publishing of web content without the need to become proficient in HTML or XML mark-up. eXe project is an environment for authoring web-based e-learning content with the eXe, users can develop learning structures that suit their content delivery needs and build resources that are flexible and easily updated. eXe is an open source software project which is free to download and use and the source code is also freely available to allow customization to suit the teachers and students need. Instructions in business education can be transmitted through this mode.
2. **Flexible learning toolboxes:** Ron (2018) opined that a toolbox is a collection of high quality resources, suggested learning strategies and supporting material to

support online deliveries of recognized training packages which could be suitable for learning. They are high quality, cost effective interactive e-learning and assignment resources featuring scenario, images and support online deliveries of recognized training packages for any training imaginable. Toolbox materials come in an integrated learning program in co-operating a number of units of competency which are available on a CD-ROM for installation on a server or for use on a standalone computer and a learning object format allowing users to download smaller self-contained component of content for free. Use of flexible learning toolboxes in business education could motivate new student into the program and also help the old ones to learn at their pace. Teachers and trainers can use toolbox material to support traditional classroom delivery or as a learning object to help them deliver learning content. Learning materials can also be customized to suit different learner need and interest at any time.

3. **ilearn:** Indiana Department of Education (2023) stated that this is a scalable, open-source e-learning platform with which functionality for course management, online communities, learning management, and content management. It is an academia platform where student can download learning content such as PDF courseware, laboratory exercises, teaching slides, ISO DVDs. Business education instructors can use ilearn to support their courses and teach their entire course online. On the other hand, they can choose to customize their use of ilearn features by combining it with other learning material. Business education instructors who decide to use ilearn can apply it to enhance teaching and learning by sharing online resources, facilitating students interactivity and collaboration or by appraising students performance and getting students feedback.
4. **Video Conferencing:** this is a collaborative communication tool which allows several individual or group to communicate in real time across distances using the data network to transfer packets of learning content containing audio and video using voice network. In business education classroom, video conferencing technology could be linked to cameras, computers and white board. Julia Kagan (2022) defined video conferencing as an online technology that allows users in different locations to hold face to face meeting without moving to a single location together. It is very suitable for distance and self-paced education. With the use of video conferencing in business education, the barrier of traditional method of learning is removed and this goes a long way to favour the goal of inclusive education. This is possible because video conferencing integrates video and audio to connect users anywhere in the world as if they are in the same classroom, e.g. Zoom, Outlook etc
5. **YouTube:** is an online public communication site. Weprin (2022) opined that YouTube is an online video sharing platform. The site allows for registered users to upload and have available for the public their videos for viewing. In this case, instructors of business education and student who desire to use YouTube have to register online which is usually free. The teacher there after prepares the desired lesson, including videos and uploads online for the student to use. Anyone who goes to the site can view the lessons and videos that are posted on

the site. The students also have opportunities of having access of other relevant literature worldwide.

6. **Respondus:** this is mainly an assessment tool which the business education teacher can use to access student learning progress. Respondus is a program that interacts with blackboard, but it is basically separate from it. Respondus can be use to compile test offline, which can then be exported to one or more blackboard courses to be completed online. The teacher can create question online using the respondus program or he/she can import questions from MS-Word into Respondus and print out test questions. It supports so many question types including calculated and algorithmic format. Meanwhile the teacher can choose to import questions from MS-Word or use the Resondus exam wizard to create an assessment in minutes among other benefits.
7. **SMART Board interactive whiteboard:** An interactive white board is a large interactive display that connects to a computer and projector. This is highly suitable for students' project presentations and seminars. A projector, projects the computers desktop unto the board surface where users control the computer using a pen, finger, stylus, or other device. The board is typically mounted to a wall or floor stand. They are used in a variety of setting, including classroom at all level of education, in cooperate board room and work groups. Instruction in business education can be transmitted through this mold. It is impossible to apply all these packages to business education program in one setting. They can be adapted to many aspect of the program depending on the socio-economic, cultural and political setting where the program is operated.

Benefits of E-Learning in Business Education

E-learning should be seen as offering solution to several challenges currently facing higher education globally especially in business education. Bassey (2021) stated that through e-learning students of business education will be able to cooperate, collaborate and communicate with other learners worldwide and access worldwide libraries irrespective of their geographical location and to bring to fulfillment the goal of business education as enshrined in the national policy of education (2004). Panda and Swain (2019) stated that e-learning will benefit teaching and learning in the following ways

1. For learners, e-learning knows no time zone, location and distance are not an issue;
2. In Asynchronous e-learning, students can access the online materials any time;
3. Synchronous e-learning allow for real time interaction between students and instructors;
4. e-learning can use internet to access up- to-date and relevant learning materials, and can communicate with experts in the field in which they are studding;
5. situated learning is facilitated, since learners can complete online courses while working on the job or in their own space and can contextualize the learning;
6. Online materials can be updated as per the needs of the learners and the learners are able to see the changes at once.

7. When learners are able to access materials on the internet it is easier for instructors to direct them to appropriate information based on their needs.

Challenges in the Use of E-Learning in Business Education

Ndume (2018) opined that in many e-learning projects, students are faced with challenges of bad perception during their studies: inadequate pedagogy or ideology in the curriculum, inadequate resources, inadequate users' touch and feeling in their learning platform. At home, more e-learners cannot manage to study as they are responsible for domestic activities like caring for children and solving some household chores (Ostlund 2019). Furthermore some instructors are not knowledgeable enough in coaching or in the use of multimedia tools; they lack telecoaching skills (Pal, 2019). Gunga (2020) in his own contribution added that why the urge to embark on e-learning, it is still a dream because of weak ICT infrastructure, insensitive populace and technophobia workforce. The wide gap between the experience of ICT experts who develop e-learning and slow, and sometimes, unwillingly designers of education instructional system planner are also a challenge.

Limited access to computer and modems as a factor that is detrimental to the success of e-learning environment and high cost met by the learners when connecting to internet as stated by Gunga (2020). Connecting to internet the writer stated might be unreliable, slow or limited and might cause frustration and failure of learning outcome, and learning material can't be downloaded and accessed in time to support efficient learning. Gunga (2020) therefore maintain that "electronic" content cannot currently sustain the qualities and multidimensionality of the kind of tutor-student relationship that learning in business education seems to require; moreover, the high cost of personal computer, laptop, software, internet and technical support, power instability, blackout in towns and unconnectivity in rural areas as problems that militate against utilization of e-learning in tertiary institution and business education in particular.

The issue of computer literacy among students and teachers and the availability of personal computer (PC) among teachers and students are lacking as opined by (Alu, 2021). There is no rigorous computer training in the process of teacher preparation to help teacher usage. Thus a greater number of teachers and learners are not computer literate. Alu stressed that unless technology becomes reliable, the universe use of e-learning will be difficult, Alexander (2019) supporting Alu said that he is not convinced that the society have technology that is reliable enough for people to relay as heavily as it is being talked about. Agu, (2021) pointed out that many e-learning do not provide enough content for good understanding of subject matter. Some of them for example only provide power point slides of lectures and online discussion forum which are not enough for users to obtain a good understanding of the subject content.

These problems and others, slow down the pace of e-learning utilization and in tertiary institutions in Nigeria as a whole. To overcome some of this problem,

the business education teachers should be constantly updating their skills in computer operation, networking, media, communication, etc. and this will help them to cope with the new innovations in ICT technologies for global challenges ahead.

CONCLUSION

The utilization of e-learning technologies in business education instructional delivery is low despite the varied prospect. E-learning technologies like e-lectures, e-examination, e-drill, e-books, e-library, gamification, virtual reality, microlearning, big data, artificial intelligence, cloud computing, machine learning etc, are available for use in teaching and learning the course, however, they are faced with diverse constraint such as shortage of staff with capacity for e-learning application, inadequate facilities, equipment and infrastructure for e-learning purposes, power outage, cost etc. it is believed that if these challenges are addressed the endeared transformation would be realized to a large extent in business education; thus competing favorably with global challenges through her products.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The researcher made the following recommendations based on the finding:

1. There should be sensitization, and awareness creation about the potentials and prospect of e-learning in Nigeria institution of higher learning.
2. There should be short training courses for both teachers and students on the use of e-learning method and procedures in business education.
3. Computer laboratories with internet facilities should be provided for all business education departments in universities, polytechnics, college of education, and other tertiary institution in Nigeria.
4. Alternative power supply should be made available in the department of business education in all institution to ensure constant power supply for internet and e-learning services.
5. Government should introduce a workable ICT policy and realize with other stakeholders in education sector to make internet connectivity and other e-learning resources such as computers, projectors, scanners, printers etc. available in teaching and learning business education.
6. Teacher preparatory institutions should incorporate computer mediate communication strategy in the relevant areas of the curriculum unit and so expose teachers to strategic learning.
7. Government should map out special ICT and e-learning funds for the management of e-learning in business education.
8. There should be adequate awareness creation on the importance of e-learning and the available e-learning activities and tools to teachers and learners in business education

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