

CHALLENGES OF E-LEARNING AND GLOBALIZATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The study focused on the problem of e-learning and globalization in higher education in Nigeria. Globalization is a cluster of social, economic, political and cultural change which opens up unprecedented opportunities for growth and development. It is an emerging worldwide interdependence of individuals and nations through the information and communication technology (ICT) which has created new global networks without borders. The major challenges of e-learning are the creation and transfer of information in a global village. The paper recommended that internet accessibility is one of the major problems confronting all e-learning departments in Nigerian higher education. The paper concluded that the challenges of globalization in the 21st century are that of a knowledge-driven economy for sustainable development and global competitiveness.

Keywords: E-learning, open distance learning, globalization, ICT, computer education.

INTRODUCTION

One of the problems facing e-learning in Nigeria is how to create and transfer information in a global arena. Part of the solution to these problems is providing substantial incentives to Nigerian higher education in order to introduce e-learning courses in various departments in the institution of higher learning. If this is not done, the country would be left behind in the face of globalization. There is need for synergy among the government, lecturers in the higher institute and teachers in all levels of education in order to improve e-learning in Nigeria and other African countries. This is

probably why Holley (2000) observed that e-learning is difficult to implement without the full cooperation and support of teachers and lecturers at all levels of education.

Based on this backdrop, the following considerations for explaining e-learning and globalization in higher education were discussed:

- I. Limitation of computers
- II. Educational system and society
- III. Nigerian universities and E – learning
- IV. E - learning and global education
- V. National minimum standards
- VI. Challenges of e - learning

We shall now discuss the above objectives in turns.

LIMITATIONS OF THE COMPUTER

According to (Eyibe 2014 & Cuban 2000) computers have many limitations: Frequent breakdown, very short lifespan, frequent change of models or technology, difficult to use, bandwidth in cyber cafe is dead slow internet is down most of the time, power failures and outages. One of the most troublesome aspects of this problem is that it is almost impossible to examine e - learning without globalization. This is because global education has come to be understood partly as education without borders and partly as education made possible by the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) (Njoku, 2006). this means that globalization has unified the entire world' into a small village with common habits seen in social, political, cultural and educational systems. These habits appear are supported by attitudes, traditions and modes of feeling resulting in a kind of world economic and educational order.

EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM AND SOCIETY

The forces, which exert a strong influence on any kind of education in a nation's history; in ancient India, for example, the religious and philosophical outlook of the population led them to attach value to what the *guru* taught. It is unfortunate that the Indians met problems in their daily life and perplexities within their minds which, as they saw, could be solved or simplified, if the counsel or instructions of the teacher were sought and accepted (Lauwerys, 1989).

It is becoming increasingly clear that educational system of the society cannot grow above the level of the teacher who implements the curriculum. In addition, of course, the kind of functionally planned education of the 21st century required for constructive social, political and economic development cannot ignore the contributions of the teacher and lecturer. This is probably why Holley (2000; Eyibe, 2004) stated that e - learning is difficult to implement without the full cooperation and support of teachers and lecturers. It is evident that in a modern democracy such as ours the political stability and fruitful legislative contributions of lawmakers can bring about changes to e-learning in an era of globalization in Nigeria. But the questions remain: how can e-learning and computer technology be used to strengthen the primary and post primary education in the country? What factors determine the attitude of a particular society to planning and its readiness to act in accordance with the advice of planners? Are they cultural, social, economic, administrative, or political? Why are developing countries apparently fascinated? Do they see in planning a device for securing rapid development cheaply and easily? In any case, of course, in developing countries almost anything that is done to increase the amount of education provided will have good results in the long run. But in the short run?

We make no pretence that making e-learning and computer technology more affordable and sustainable requires progress and commitment at several levels. First let it be stressed in many areas that the conceptual framework remains weak. Second, much need to be learned with regard to how to do things, how to change behaviour and how to improve living standards practically because of the mutual responsibilities that we all owe to one another, to the future generations, and to the globe. Third, capacity building to implement necessary emerging changes remains weak in many states of the federation and needs to be strengthened.

NIGERIAN UNIVERSITIES AND E-LEARNING

Let us content ourselves by noting that Nigerian "universities, polytechnics, and colleges of education produce some graduates who cannot use effectively the computer and the internet in spite of the introduction of computer literacy programmes or courses in these institutions. It is strange that ever computer science majors from our universities are not employable in the current ICT firms. It appears that it is impossible to devote too much care and attention to the development and improvement of education, for nothing is more important than we may well be grateful for an insistent and continuing demand for clarification coming from a new quarter.

It is becoming clear that it is fitting and proper to educational systems as efficiently and economically as possible. It is equally right that they should prepare future citizens for their roles as producers, teachers, manufacturers, industrialists, technocrats fabricators and more. They need scientific and technological competence. (Ogbuagu and Eyibe, 2015). But the question remains as always: how do we provide an excellent education

for our children in a period of globalizations. How do we help to develop the skills and talents that are in them in 21st century?

Some industrialists and technocrats have criticized harshly what is provided in institutions of higher education saying that much of the content of curriculum is irrelevant to the work being done in industry, commerce, or factory and that the attitudes of university men and women do not result in efficient work. Where knowledge for its own sake is still held in high esteem in universities, fundamental research is regarded as more important than applied research (Eyibe, 1989; Holley, 2002; Njoku; 2006, Jones 2000) confirmed this sad situation and warned that if traditional institutions are to remain dominant education providers and advance technically and technologically, they must embrace the knowledge and experience of foreign observers, industries, and recipient nations in the latest, e-learning revolution.

Criticism of the programme above has not been limited to industrialists, employers, foreign observers and recipient nations. There has been a strong and vocal group opposition within the developing economies. Clearly, Dobbs (2000) rose to the defense of Nigerian universities when he stated that while traditional higher education institutions strive to implement e-learning from external organizations, they must be very cautious with regard to how they connect themselves to potentially precarious organizations. Yet, in spite of these criticisms and doubts, open distance learning or e-learning programmes have gone on developing and are gathering momentum. E-Learning has come to stay because it appears to be the saving grace for knowledge-driven Nigerians who could not be absorbed by conventional Nigerian universities.

E-LEARNING AND GLOBAL EDUCATION

Globalization is defined as a new perspective designed to integrate the developing countries into the mainstream of the world-economy by opening new market opportunities for their exports and increasing the financial resources available for investment of physical and intangible assets. This definition implies that, to benefit from the process of globalization, the government must update and provide basic infrastructure, improve access to education, including open distance learning, enhance trade, communication and stabilize power supply nationwide. The provision of basic infrastructure will enable business to thrive in the economy.

The first key concept in globalization is quality. The second-key concept in globalization is competition. Unfortunately, these two concepts make the developing countries remain vulnerable to the unbalances emanating from the forces of globalization. Clearly, then, the benefit from globalization could be maximized through prudent national policies and transparent institutions (Volary, 2000).

The formation of partnership is an important variable in the process of globalization. This is because the essence of strategic alliance with state or foreign counterparts will assist local firms to modernize their machine and equipment. Suffice it to say that to achieve competitiveness and ensure efficient allocation of resources, the growth and development of Nigeria economy must be anchored on the global economy. This is the only way to meet the challenges of globalization. Admittedly, the formation of partnership will make made-in-Nigeria goods internationally competitive and acceptable. Where lies the task of the nation's managers, in the new millennium of

globalization? The challenges before the nation's managers (national leaders, vice chancellors, rectors, provosts, bank managers, technocrats, and football coaches, in our period of globalization, should be to put the economy, the product and services on the path of competitiveness and strengthen them to participate effectively and also compete favourably with the global system.

EDUCATIONAL REFORM

One urgent problem facing Nigeria education today is the teacher who is poorly trained and poorly motivated. As we reflect on this we have in mind the pathetic situation in which our teachers work in our nursery, primary, and secondary schools. During the supervision of Federal Teachers under the Universal Basic Education (USE) Scheme, many of the practicing teachers and the teachers-on-probation wept bitterly. They complained of delaying payment of salaries, inadequate accommodation, inability to pay exorbitant rents, tracking long distances, sometimes across the river to attend lessons etc.

Teaching is, indeed, the primary and mother profession that should not be allowed to suffer the neglect of past years. The private schools are the worst example in this regard where many graduate teachers are paid less than N10, 000.00 per month. Since teachers are critical to national development, they should be well remunerated so that the sector can attract the best brains as used to be the case in the past. Any civilized nation that is worth its salt must hold her teachers, the builders of national etiquette, in high reverence. Treating teachers with civility attests to why traditions of social conducts were deeply enshrined in one country more than the other.

E-learning is a means of education that incorporates self-motivation, communication, efficiency and technology. One of the causes of students anxiety in the classroom

work is their low awareness of career opportunities and the teacher's teaching methods. Commerchero (2006) refereed to e-learning as a flexible term used to describe a means of teaching through technology, and can be used in any combination to create the best instruction possible. This means that e- learning takes into account different students learning difficulties, especially the student reported anxieties in the classroom encounter (Mkpa, 2004).

The educational effects of e- learning process have been incalculable, perhaps the largest of al in terms of persons reached and the degree of social and education change produced. Since e-learning accommodates different types of learning styles student learn at their own pace and through a variety of activities. In any case, e-learning is learner - centred. The greatest lesson learned from e-learning is that it is more focused on the learner and also more interesting to the learner as learners are allowed to select learning materials that meet their level of knowledge, interest and what they need to know to perform more effectively is an activity. There is a growing realization that it is almost impossible to talk about globalization without e-learning. Global education has come to be understood as education without borders because it is made possible by ICT (Njoku, 2006, Eyibe, 2004). In addition, globalization urges the developing nations to modernize their various sectors with large scale technical/ technological innovations. This means that the education sector should occupy the front position in this process of modernization.

NATIONAL MINIMUM STANDARDS AND CHALLENGES OF E-LEARNING

There is a growing realization that in fast developing economies, the classroom is simply an integration of ICT with virtually every teacher having

a computer and at most two students sharing a computer right there in the classroom. This means that formative and summative e-assessments have clearly become common in these countries (Atkinson and Davis, 2011). 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).

The tide of e-learning continues to run strongly. Technology is critical to the growth of any economy. Our partnership is to look at ways by which we can use technology to drive the economy, governance, and education and emphasize; Primary school readiness, secondary school readiness, college of education readiness, polytechnic readiness, university readiness, employee readiness, workforce readiness and youth readiness.

It is obvious that effective e-learning comes from the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to broaden educational endeavor and so help students to develop skills needed to compete in the global market. The question of the readiness of relevant institutions, teachers, students, employers, employees, learners, governments is a proactive approach that can be followed to make e-learning a reality in Nigeria so that we can become a major player in this global race. It is gratifying and dramatic that students through increased interest in on-line exposure occasioned by the activities of JAMB, NECO and WAEC examinations, the students are getting deeper into the opportunities presented by web of connecting parts.

In the 21st century, people in the education service need to be engaged in the technology of learning to become relevant and competitive in a global arena. It is probably because of this that we shall, as a matter of urgency, be making a paradigm shift as shown below.

S/N	From	To
1	School building	Knowledge infrastructure (schools, laboratories, radio, T v, internet services etc)
2	Classrooms	Individual learners
3	Teachers as repository of knowledge	Teachers as facilitator
4	Some textbook and few audio/visual aids	Multimedia materials such as print, audio, video etc.
5	Teacher teaches students to Learn	Teachers and students motivate themselves intrinsically to learn the
6	Teacher/lecturer teaches Students	Teacher/lecturer shows students where to find the information and motivates them to

Recommendations

Based on the studies above, the following recommendations are made:

1. We should engage the right facilitator to handle e-learning programmes.
2. Internet access should be made available to lecturers, teachers and students.
3. We should adopt gradual digital train -the- trainer (trainer update) programme so as to retrain the instructors,
4. There is an urgent need for NOUN to provide office blocks for Staff in all the states and Local Government Area headquarters of Nigerian federation.

5. We should allow and welcome partnership to help us look at ways by which we can use technology to drive education and governance (World Bank, 2004).
6. We should expose people to capacity building so that people can believe that they need technology to fast track so many things.
7. Technology is critical to sustaining Nigeria's new economic growth in an era of globalization.
8. We must expose our educational institutions to acquire technology of e- learning "as to encourage inventions and innovations nationwide.
9. We must encourage Nigeria's local software sector, especially the startups because software development is a low asset sector
10. Software development demands only a PC or laptop and software development skills to start off. We must train our people to acquire skills.
11. Lectures and teachers should be encouraged by their institutions to embark on training in ICT programme on a regular basis,
12. Teachers and lectures should be training regularly through seminars, conferences, workshops, short term and long term on ICT to enable them acquire relevant competencies in e- learning process.
13. Regular training of teachers will enable them to meet the demand of open distance learning programme.

14. The federal and state governments should ensure constant power supply to facilitate regular use of ICT facilities in our institutions (Eyibe, 2004)

CONCLUSION

The 21st century is one in which only knowledge-driven societies will be able to accomplish more than mere survival. It is important to educate our people particularly our students, teachers and the elite on this socio-economic and cultural change so that the Nigerian nation, or indeed, the African continent will be able to survive in an era of globalization (Eyibe, 2014). The good news is that he who says globalization says global race in which only knowledge-driven societies will be able to run fastest of all and then come to dominate the world in technology and international diplomacy. Once again we are led to the view that the technology of e-learning innovation could be a means of enhancing and extending the educational Experiences of many Nigerian and African learners through the medium of ICT so as to position the African continent for sustainable development and global competitiveness. Globalization and e-learning education are unstoppable and irreversible process, but within their dynamics, there is a serious threat of marginalization and exclusion of development countries to which Nigeria belongs unless the issues of improved productivity and skills development and acquisition are squarely addressed for the attainment of global education. Globalization and E-learning are driven by powerful underlying forces like the new capability of information and communication technologies, and a rising sense among the people everywhere that open distance learning or e-learning education is the key, for through it, attitudes and feelings, prejudice and hate could be changed for a better global village, and the people will be entitled to participate openly in their governments and society. We would like to

conclude by saying that globalization brings distant parts of the world functionally closer together, and E-learning education multiplies the range of positive and acceptable skills, attitudes, and feelings. But again, equally important is the need for some specific empirical studies aimed at throwing more light on various aspects of these enormous innovative practices in our education and examination systems

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