



ROLE OF E-LEARNING IN ENSURING THE CONTINUATION OF TRAINING IN BUSINESS TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMME DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND BEYOND IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

The study examined the role of e-learning in ensuring the continuation of training in business teacher education programme during the Covid-19 pandemic and beyond in Nigeria. Two research questions guided the study and two hypotheses were tested. Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study comprised 109 business educators from five tertiary institutions in Anambra State. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire developed by the researchers. The instrument was subject to a pilot test on 20 business educators in Asaba metropolis. The application of the Cronbach Alpha reliability test on the returned data yielded coefficient values of 0.81 and 0.78 for clusters B1 and B2 respectively with an overall reliability coefficient value of 0.80 for internal consistency. Data collected from the respondents were analyzed using mean, standard deviation to answer the research questions and t-test for the hypotheses testing. Findings revealed that e-learning ensures the continuation of business teacher education programme during the Covid-19 pandemic and beyond included facilitating ease in learning, promoting flexibility in the use of teaching methods, focusing on the achievement of students' needs, promoting more hands-on learning experiences and allowing students to learn at their own pace among others. Findings also showed that poor government commitment towards the implementation of the national ICT framework in tertiary institutions, misappropriation of funds by heads of tertiary institutions, socio-economic status of parents, poor power supply, poor internet networks, high cost of internet accessible gadgets and failure to collaborate with private it experts are the challenges impeding the adoption of e-learning for the continuation of training in business teacher education programme during the Covid-19 pandemic and beyond in Nigeria. The institutional type of the respondents did not significantly influence their mean ratings. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others, that administrators of business teacher education programme should collaborate with the private sector in the areas of funding, technical support and resource provisions so as to ensure the full and efficient utilization of e-learning platforms in the programme.

Keywords: E-learning, Continuation, Training, Business Teacher Education, Programme

Introduction

The outbreak and spread of the Covid-19 (corona-virus) across the world has resulted in settings in how people interact socially. Michael (2020) noted that the spread of the novel COVID-19 across the globe has led to profound changes in social interaction and organizational changes, and the education sector was not immune. Weeden and Cornwell (2020) stated that in order to curtail the spread of the virus, precautionary measures like "social distancing" or "physical distancing" has been placed to limit physical interaction and thereby decrease the form of group communication that could grow rapidly in crowded social networks as seen in tertiary institutions. Taking a cue from the social distancing initiative, the Federal Ministry of Education in Nigeria ordered the closure of schools on the 19th of March, 2020. This directive meant that all schools at primary, secondary and tertiary levels abruptly suspended their academic calendar. The business teacher education programme being an academic programme studied at the tertiary level of education in Nigeria was also affected by the closure.

The business teacher education according to Udoye and Ndum (2013), is an educational



training process which business teacher-trainees receive with the primary motive of enabling them acquire adequate attitudes, concepts, knowledge, understanding and skills in business activities, for personal or vocational usage, and/or for careers as administrators, managers and teachers wherever they may find themselves in the business world. The business teacher education programme is offered at Colleges of Education and Universities in Nigeria. Ezeani and Ogundola (2016) defined educational training programme through which recipients could fit into or be employed in four major occupational areas such as book-keeping and accounting jobs, clerical and general office jobs, stenographic and secretarial jobs, distributive and marketing jobs. According to Udoeye and Ndum (2013) the objectives of business teacher education are educating business education teachers who will be positively oriented towards teaching business subjects; producing effective business teachers who are highly motivated and conscious of the important role they are expected to play in the development of business education.

Other objectives include producing business teachers who possess sufficient knowledge in the theory and practice of business education which they can in turn teach in the teacher training colleges and equipping the business education students with sufficient knowledge and skills in business management. The attainment of the goals of business teacher education programme appears to have been stalled by the spread of Covid-19 pandemic which resulted in the closure of tertiary institutions. Shivangi (2020) opined that academic programme like the teacher education programme are finding it difficult to find options that will help to mitigate the effect of the pandemic. Rieley in Shivangi (2020) averred that the situation demand adequate planning from all stakeholders in education. This is because trainee teachers who are supposed to be busy with their academic works are suddenly now at home with their parents without any form of academic activities to actively engaging them.

It is therefore imperative that measures to protect and save students, faculty, academic staff, communities, societies, and the nation as a whole are sought. It is based on the preceding that some authors have suggested for the utilization of e-learning platforms as veritable tools for continuing academic activities during the pandemic and beyond. E-learning according to Adeoye, Adenikan and Adenikan (2020) are educational technologies that facilitate the teaching and learning process. Singh and Thurman (2019) stated that e-learning is the use of technologies to carry out teaching and learning. Singh and Thurman further stated that students can be anywhere (independent) to learn and interact with instructors and other students. According to Eze, Chinedu-Eze and Bello (2018), e-learning education is concerned with the holistic incorporation of modern telecommunication equipment and ICT resources into the education system. Shivangi (2020) comprehensively defined e-learning as learning experiences in synchronous or asynchronous environments using different devices such as mobile phones, laptops, among others with internet access.

The synchronous learning environment is structured in the sense that students attend live lectures, there are real-time interactions between educators and learners, and there is a possibility of instant feedback, whereas asynchronous learning environments are not properly structured. Raheem and Khan (2020) opined that the applications of e-learning include, computer based learning, web-based learning, virtual education opportunities and digital collaboration. Pande, Wadhai, and Thakare (2016), stated that some essential tools of e-learning are Weblog, Social bookmarking, Wiki, RSS, Podcasting, Instant messaging, Text chat, and internet forums. In agreement, Adeoye, Adanikin and Adanikin (2020) held that current e-learning platforms that could help in ensuring the continuity of the business teacher education programme are Microsoft teams, google hangout (meet), skype, Bamboo learning, google classroom, Docebo, WIZIQ, Adobe captivate, Elucidat, Blackboard learn and Zoom amongst others. Pande, Wadhai, and Thakare (2016) further noted that e-learning has an important role for ensuring the continuation of training in business teacher education programme.

Shivangi (2020) averred that e-learning provides flexibility, efficiency in knowledge and qualification enhancement, motivation of students' interaction and cost-effectiveness. Guragain (2016) also posited that the value of face-to-face class contact content development, distribution and maintenance cost are exclusively high as compared to e-learning which is of lower cost. Abbasi, Ayoob, Malik and Memon (2020) noted that the acceptability of e-learning for students are because e-learning ensures ease of use, flexibility and better control over the environment. However, in spite of its multiple advantages there are quite a few limitations of e-learning such as social isolation, lack of student teacher interaction and connectivity issues among others (Abbasi, Ayoob, Malik & Memon, 2020). Mohamedbhai (2020) revealed that inequality is a problem affecting the application of e-learning in the business teacher education programme. According to Mohamedbhai, this is seen in



the existential differences between urban and rural students; between students from rich homes and those from poor homes who cannot afford the cost of internet. The Trade Union Advisory Council (TUAC) (2020) opined that the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic has affected parents and has significantly impacted on their ability to provide the necessary e-learning hardware and internet accessibility needed for partaking in online education. In another vein, Adeoye, Adenakin and Adenakin (2020) noted that the utilization of e-learning for continuation of education programme has been challenging to public tertiary institutions. According to the authors, the level of resources accrued to tertiary institutions could determine the ease with which they can utilize e-learning in continuing their academic calendar. However, this view is theoretical and has not been empirically proven. This study will thus examine the role of e-learning in ensuring the continuation of training in business teacher education programme during the Covid-19 pandemic and beyond in Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

The business teacher education programme is a very important academic programme that contributes towards building human capital in Nigeria. However, the advent of the Covid-19 has abruptly halted the progression of academic activities in the programme. Sadly, this resulted in students of the programme going home to be with their parents and guardians. Unfortunately, since the closure of schools, there has been increase in reported cases of criminal activities among youths. Incidences of rape, armed robbery, cyber crimes and prostitution which have been on the increase and many scholars and researcher have blamed this on the closure of schools (Adeoye, Adenikan & Adenikan, 2020).

The situation is worrisome and has increased call for the adoption of a system of education like the use of e-learning which adheres to the principles of social distancing and allows teaching and learning to continue. Despite successful use of e-learning to continue academic activities in some developed countries and even in some private institutions in Nigeria, it is worrisome that business teacher education programme in public tertiary institutions have found it difficult to incorporate e-learning system in continuing their academic programme. The researchers are worried that if this situation is left to continue, undergraduates of business teacher education programme will lag behind in their pursuit of academic excellence and in life compared to their peers in private tertiary institutions in the country.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the roles of e-learning in ensuring the continuation of training in business teacher education programme during the Covid-19 pandemic?
2. What are the challenges impeding the adoption of e-learning for the continuation of training in business teacher education programme during the Covid-19 pandemic?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of business educators in colleges of education and universities on the role of e-learning in ensuring the continuation of training in business teacher education programme during the Covid-19 pandemic in Nigeria.
2. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of business educators in colleges of education and universities on the challenges impeding the adoption of e-learning for the continuation of training in business teacher education programme during the Covid-19 pandemic in Nigeria.

Method

Descriptive research design was adopted for the study and the study was carried out in Anambra State. The population of the study comprised 109 business educators in the five tertiary institutions offering business education in the State. No sampling was done because the researchers found the population of the study to be manageable. The instrument for data collection was a researcher developed structured questionnaire. The instrument was titled "Questionnaire on the Role of E-Learning In Ensuring the Continuation of Training in Business Teacher Education during Covid-19 Pandemic and Beyond (QRECTBTE)". The instrument was structured on a four-point rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). The instrument had two



sections:-A and B. Section A contained information relating to respondents type of institution (college of education/universities), while Section B contained 20 items in two clusters. Cluster B1 contained 12 items on the role of e-learning in ensuring the continuation of training business teacher education programme during the Covid-19 pandemic and beyond, while Cluster B2 contained eight items on the challenges impeding the adoption of e-learning for the continuation of training in business teacher education programme during the Covid-19 pandemic in Nigeria. The instrument was validated by three experts in business education and one in measurement and evaluation from Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. The instrument was subjected to a pilot test on 20 business educators in Asaba metropolis. The application of the Cronbach Alpha reliability test on the returned data yielded coefficient values of 0.81 and 0.78 for clusters B1 and B2 respectively with an overall reliability coefficient value of 0.80 for the two clusters.

The researcher administered 109 copies of the questionnaire through email to the respondents; out of which 81 copies were retrieved. Data collected from the respondents were analyzed using mean, standard deviation and t-test. The mean value was used to answer the research questions while the standard deviation was used to ascertain the homogeneity or otherwise of the respondents' ratings. In analyzing the mean, any item with mean score between 2.50 to 4.00 was deemed to be agreed while any item with mean score between 2.49 and 1.00 was disagreed. For the hypotheses, t-test was used to test all the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Where the calculated t value was less than the critical value of t, it meant that the variable did not significantly affect respondents' mean ratings and the hypothesis was accepted. Conversely, where the calculated t value was equal to or greater than the critical t value, it meant that the variable had a significant effect on the respondents' mean ratings and the hypothesis was rejected.

Results

Research Question 1

What is the role of e-learning in ensuring the continuation of training in business teacher education programme during the Covid-19 pandemic in Nigeria?

Table 1: Mean Ratings of Business Educators on the Role of E-learning in Ensuring the Continuation of Training in Business Teacher Education Programme during the Covid-19 Pandemic and Beyond (N=81)

S/No.	The role of e-learning in ensuring continuation of BTE include:	Mean	SD	Remarks
1.	It facilitates ease in learning	3.10	0.87	Agree
2.	It promotes flexibility in the use of teaching methods	2.87	0.76	Agree
3.	It focuses on the achievement of students needs	3.22	0.72	Agree
4..	It promotes more hands-on learning experiences	3.05	0.81	Agree
5.	It allows students to study independently	3.11	0.76	Agree
6.	It encourages active engagement of learners	3.28	0.84	Agree
7.	It ensures the achievement of learning objectives	2.65	0.77	Agree
8.	It promotes more interactive learning experiences with online applications like Zoom, Youtube etc.	2.89	0.71	Agree
9.	It allows students to learn at their own pace.	3.19	0.80	Agree
10.	It promotes the ease of monitoring of teaching and learning activities	3.12	0.78	Agree
11.	It also facilitates ease of documentation	3.15	0.72	Agree
12.	It allows students to ask questions and give feedback without disclosing their identity during online class	3.09	0.74	Agree
Cluster Mean		3.06		Agree



Data in Table 1 reveal that all the items, achieved mean ratings ranging between 2.65 and 3.22 and standard deviations ranging between 0.71 to 0.87. This means that they are all roles of e-learning in ensuring the continuation of training in business teacher education programme during the Covid-19 pandemic. The cluster mean of 3.06 indicates that the role of e-learning in ensuring the continuation of business teacher education programme during the Covid-19 pandemic and beyond in Nigeria are that it facilitates ease in learning, it promotes flexibility in the use of teaching methods, it focuses on the achievement of students needs, it promotes more hands-on learning experiences, it allows students to study independently and It allows students to learn at their own pace among others.

Research Question 2

What are the challenges impeding the adoption of e-learning for the continuation of training in business teacher education programme during the Covid-19 pandemic in Nigeria?

Table 2: Mean Ratings of Business Educators on the Challenges Impeding the Adoption of E-Learning in Ensuring the Continuation of Training in business teacher education programme (N=81)

S/No.	Challenges impeding adoption of e-learning in BTE include:	Mean	SD	Remarks
13	Poor government commitment towards the implementation of the national ICT framework in tertiary institutions	3.48	0.74	Agree
14	Misappropriation of funds by heads of tertiary institutions	3.21	0.72	Agree
15	Socio-economic status of parents	3.45	0.81	Agree
16	Poor power supply	3.02	0.70	Agree
17	Lack of students knowledge of the use of e-learning tools	2.85	0.82	Agree
18	Lack of experts to resolve technical difficulties from the use of e-learning learning platforms	2.80	0.82	Agree
20	Poor internet networks	3.01	0.79	Agree
21	High cost of internet accessible gadgets	2.87	0.80	Agree
22	High cost of data services	3.10	0.77	Agree
23	Failure to collaborate with private IT experts	3.33	0.84	Agree
Cluster Mean		3.11		Agree

Data in Table 2 reveal that business educators opined that all the items, achieved mean ratings ranging between 2.80 and 3.48 and standard deviation ranging between 0.70 to 0.84 and are thus seen as the challenges impeding the adoption of e-learning for the continuation of training in business teacher education programme during the Covid-19 pandemic and beyond in Nigeria. The cluster mean of 3.11 indicates that poor government commitment towards the implementation of the national ICT framework in tertiary institutions, misappropriation of funds by heads of tertiary institutions, socio-economic status of parents, poor power supply, lack of students knowledge of the use of e-learning tools, lack of experts to resolve technical difficulties from the use of e-learning learning platforms, poor internet networks, high cost of internet accessible gadgets and failure to collaborate with private it experts are the challenges impeding the adoption of e-learning for the continuation of training in business teacher education programme during the Covid-19 pandemic and beyond in Nigeria

Hypothesis 1

There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of business educators in colleges of education and universities on the role of e-learning in ensuring the continuation of training in business teacher education programme during the Covid-19 pandemic and beyond in Nigeria.



Table 3: t-Test Analysis of Respondents Mean Ratings on the Role of E-Learning in Ensuring the Continuation of Training in Business Teacher Education Programme During the Covid-19 Pandemic and Beyond in Nigeria

Variable	N	\bar{X}	SD	df	α	t-cal.	t-crit.	Decision
COE Bus. Edu.	56	3.01	0.76	79	0.05	0.21	1.960	Not Significant
Univ. Bus. Edu.	25	2.98	0.82					

Data in Table 3 show that the calculated t-value of 0.21 at 79 degree of freedom at 0.05 level of significance is less than the critical value of 1.960. This shows that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of business educators in colleges of education and universities on the role of e-learning in ensuring the continuation of training in business teacher education programme during the Covid-19 pandemic and beyond in Nigeria, hence the hypothesis is accepted.

Hypothesis 2

There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of business educators in colleges of education and universities on the challenges impeding the adoption of e-learning for the continuation of training in business teacher education programme during the Covid-19 pandemic and beyond in Nigeria.

Table 4: t-Test Analysis of Respondents Mean Ratings on the Challenges Impeding the Adoption of E-Learning for the Continuation of Training in Business Teacher Education Programme During the Covid-19 Pandemic and Beyond in Nigeria

Variable	N	\bar{X}	SD	df	α	t-cal.	t-crit.	Decision
COE Bus. Edu.	56	3.00	0.76	79	0.05	0.43	1.960	Not Significant
Univ. Bus. Edu.	25	3.18	0.79					

Data in Table 4 show that the calculated t-value of 0.43 at 79 degree of freedom at 0.05 level of significance is less than the critical value of 1.960. This shows that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of business educators in colleges of education and universities on the challenges impeding the adoption of e-learning for the continuation of training in business teacher education programme during the Covid-19 pandemic and beyond in Nigeria, hence the hypothesis is accepted.

Discussion of Findings

The findings on the first research question revealed that the role of e-learning in ensuring the continuation of business teacher education programme during the Covid-19 pandemic and beyond in Nigeria are that it facilitates ease in learning, promotes flexibility in the use of teaching methods, focuses on the achievement of students needs, promotes more hands-on learning experiences, allows students to study independently and allows students to learn at their own pace among others. These findings show that e-learning is a veritable tool for realizing the continuation of academic activities in the business education programmes in Nigeria. This finding is in agreement with the views of. Abbasi, Ayoob, Malik and Memon (2020), who held that the acceptability of e-learning for continuing the teaching of students are because e-learning ensures ease of use, flexibility and better control over the environment. Also, the study is in agreement with Adeoye, Adanikin and Adanikin (2020) who stated that the integration of e-learning in the teacher education programme will reduce the issues of insufficient classrooms for lectures as student can easily take the lectures online without any disruption at their convenience. In the same vein, Raheem and Khan (2020) opined that e-learning is the best and most convenient way for students to learn independently. Similarly, Rajhans, Memon, Patil and Goyal (2020) outlined the benefits of adopting e-learning for tertiary education programme to include that it enables ease of learning, is cost-effective and provides the lecturers and students with variety of teaching and learning.

Further findings revealed no significant difference in the mean ratings of business educators in colleges of education and universities on the role of e-learning in ensuring the continuation of training in business teacher education programme during the Covid-19 pandemic and beyond in



Nigeria. This shows that business educators in both colleges of education and universities agree that the adoption of e-learning could play a crucial role in ensuring the continuation of training in the business teacher education programme in Nigeria. This is in line with the views of Adeoye, Adanikin and Adanikin (2020) who posited that e-learning when adopted by public tertiary institutions in Nigeria would alleviate the encumbrances resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic.

Findings on the second research question showed that poor government commitment towards the implementation of the national ICT framework in tertiary institutions, misappropriation of funds by heads of tertiary institutions, socio-economic status of parents, poor power supply, lack of students' knowledge of the use of e-learning tools, lack of experts to resolve technical difficulties from the use of e-learning learning platforms, poor internet networks, high cost of internet accessible gadgets and failure to collaborate with private information technology (IT) experts are the challenges impeding the adoption of e-learning for the continuation of training in business teacher education programme during the Covid-19 pandemic. This indicates that the adoption of e-learning is affected by the factors related to power, government commitment and misappropriation of funds by heads of tertiary institutions. This situation makes it impossible to adopt e-learning in the country. Another area is the problem of inequalities and socioeconomic status which was seen as a challenge to e-learning adoption. This finding is in line with Mohamedbhai (2020) who revealed that inequality is a problem affecting the application of e-learning in the business teacher education programme. Mohamedbhai further stated that differences between urban and rural students; between students from rich homes and those from poor homes who cannot afford the cost of internet would greatly hamper the adoption of e-learning. The Trade Union Advisory Council (TUAC) (2020) opined that failure to provide necessary e-learning hardware and accessibility to internet are challenges to the adoption of e-learning for the continuation of training in business teacher education programme during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Furthermore, findings revealed that there was no significant difference in the mean ratings of business educators in colleges of education and universities on the challenges impeding the adoption of e-learning for the continuation of training in business teacher education programme during the Covid-19 pandemic. This shows that business educators in both colleges of education and universities agree that the adoption of e-learning for ensuring the continuation of training in the business teacher education programme in Nigeria is being hampered by certain factors. This is in agreement with Adeoye, Adanikin and Adanikin (2020), who noted that issues relating to fund management, internet services, cost of e-learning tools and poor electricity supply affects the adoption of e-learning during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, the researchers conclude that e-learning is a veritable tool for improving training in the business teacher education programme. This is because e-learning facilitates ease in learning, flexibility in teaching style, independence in learning and centered on the achievement of students needs. Despite the benefits of utilizing e-learning in business teacher education programme, its utilization in the programme has been abysmal. Factors like poor fund management, poor internet services, cost of e-learning tools and poor electricity supply have been blamed for impeding the adoption of e-learning during the Covid-19 pandemic. Given the important role e-learning plays in ensuring the continuation of academic activities, it is imperative that remedial measures are put in place to check the impediments of e-learning adoption in the business teacher education programme in Nigeria.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made based on the findings of the study:

1. Government at all levels in Nigeria should show serious commitment towards the review and implementation of a national information and communication technology (ICT) framework that is geared towards e-learning adoption in the nation's tertiary institutions.
2. Administrators of business teacher education programme should collaborate with the private sector in the areas of funding, technical support and resource provisions so as to ensure the full and efficient utilization of e-learning platforms in the programme.



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