



IMPACT OF E-LEARNING ON OFFICE TECHNOLOGY AND MANAGEMENT EDUCATION

By

Ogbusuo Grace Nkemjurumuafo

Department of Office Technology and Management Education

School of Business Education

Federal College of Education (Technical) Akoka, Lagos

E-mail: ogbusuograce@yahoo.com

Abstract

Impact of e-learning on office Technology and Management Education is a paper that highlights the efficiency, effectiveness and productivity of graduates of office technology and management (OTM) who made their learning through electronic media. This paper reveals that Office Technology and Management Education (OTME) made through e-learning otherwise known as Online learning yields better positive result since it produces graduates who are highly equipped intellectually and practical in the use of computer, internet and other technological facilities in handling their office activities and thus undoubtedly result to (lead to) fast and effective office practice and management, and as well a better technological tomorrow. There are also some major challenges of (OTM) graduates, examples are Database management, Customer services, Report writing, Budget management system analysis, Accounting sales etc. It recommends that Office Technology and Management Education is better done through e-learning that regular class system and that even in regular class system e-learning should not be overlooked.

Keyword: *E-learning, OTME, Gradua*

Introduction

E-learning comes from using information communications Technology (ICT) to broaden educational opportunity and help students develop the skills they and their countries need to thrive in the 21st century. While conclusive, longitudinal studies remain to be done; an emerging body of evidence suggests that e-learning can deliver substantial positive effects on the students, teachers, family society and the economy at large.

Office Technology and management education is a course of study which focuses on the use of computer system, software and network for processing and distribution of data and communicating information in the organization, in the planning, organizing and administering activities in an office.

Organizational office technology consists of technical devices and tools used by business organizations in executing everyday tasks, such as managing clients, managing pay roll information, analyzing sales records, fulfilling orders and communication. For an organization to take significant advantage of technology, it requires personnel in such areas of computer networking, administrations and computer system analyst.



Office Technology and Management Education Courses which includes Business documentation, admin office management, principles of record management, legal office procedure, Entrepreneurship in business education and computer appreciation among others prepares students to occupy these positions available in the technological offices. In recent decades, the use of Information and Communication technologies (ICT) which is referred to e-learning has increased, and the spread of network technologies has caused, e-learning practices to evolve significantly (Kahiigi, Ekenberg Hanson and Danulbon (2008). This paper therefore focuses on the concepts of e-learning and office technology and management education in combating the challenges of technology developments in our offices today.

Concepts of e-learning

Meaning: The definition of e-learning has been a debate issue among professionals. Any definition of e-learning must settle the issue of what is and what is not e-learning (Guri-Rosenbitt, 2005). The multiplicity of perspectives surrounding e-learning causes confusion and, sometimes, even contradiction (Mason and Rennic. 2006). Not only have different concept been attributed to e-learning, but the term has also been substituted by others, such as computer-based learning and technology-based training, which actually predated the first mention of e-learning in the mid 1990s (Friesen, 2009) or the more recent online learning. Moreover, some people confuse the concept of e-learning with the concepts of a virtual campus universe but do not sufficiently define it. E-learning is defined in different context. In technological context, e-learning is the use of electronic media for a variety of learning purposes that range from add-on functions in conventional classrooms to full substitution for the face-to-face meeting by online encounters (Guri-Rosenblit, 2005)

According to (Governors State University, 2008) , It is to take a course online using a modern, wireless or cable connection to access academic course material from a computer, phone, or hand held device.

In delivery system context, Koohang and Harman, (2005) defined E-learning as the delivery of education (all activities relevant to instructing, teaching and learning) through various electronic media. It is also defined as education delivered or learning conducted by Web techniques (Liao and Lu, 2008).

In communication context, e-learning is education that uses computerized communication systems as an environment for communication and exchange of information and interaction between students and instructors (Bermejo, 2005) it is learning based on Information and Communication. Technologies with pedagogical interaction between students and the content, students and the instructors or among students through the web. (Gonzalez – Videgercy, 2007) In the context of educational paradigm, e-learning refers to educational processes that utilizes information and communication technology o mediate



synchronous as well as asynchronous learning and teaching activities (Jerrel & Smite, 2006). It is also an information and communication technologies used to support students to improve their learning (Ellis, Ginns and Piggott 2009). Never the less, a preliminary definition of e-learning containing aspects of all four general context is as follows: E-learning is an approach to teaching and learning, representing all or part of the educational model applied, that is based on the use of electronic media and devices as tools for improving access to training, communication and interaction and that facilitates the adoption of new ways of understanding and developing learning.

Parts of E-Learning

According to Friesen,(2009), Virtual Campus, on-line learning and Distance learning are part of e-learning universe; these are areas where E-learning is optimally utilized.

Virtual campus: This refers to the online offerings of a college or university course where college work is completed either partially or wholly online, often with the assistance of the teacher, professor, or teaching assistant (Wikipedia free dictionary).

Online Learning: Online learning according to Frostburg University includes learning with the assistance of the internet and a personal computer. Article posted to the website of university of Edunburgy August 17 2015 states that online learning is a way of studying for an internationally recognized qualification without needing to attend classes on campus.

Distance Learning: The United States distance learning association defined distance learning as an “Educational system whereby students may complete all or part of an educational programme in a geographical location apart from the institution hosting the programme. The free dictionary by Farlex (2015) defines distance learning as an education in which students take academic courses by accessing information and communication with the instructor over a computer network.

Open University: Open University usually refers to as a university with an open-door academic policy, ie no entry requirements (Wikipedia Encylopedia). It is largely self instructional university offering independent education through such means as television, computers and mailed course materials. Hornsby 1978)

Reasons for E-Learning

Online programme can capture students performance data in real-time across the school allowing teachers more time to help students who need it (Ho metal, us). In addition to the more personalized, learner centric academic pathway, students and parents express interest on online and blended learning environment due to the opportunities to offer



expanded courses option. Today, five times as many parents even go to the extent of acquiring technological facilities at home.

Heera Edwin (2015) states 12 reasons for you to embrace e-learning.

1. Learn on your own device: if your organization is against its employees bringing in their own device to work, you can access your learning when you are not at work.
2. Learn at your own pace. E-learning recognizes that your needs are unique and lets you learn in your own time, in your own way, at your own pace.
3. You will have access to a unique learning plan that has been designed keeping your job role and capacities in mind.
4. Get access to information as soon as you need it. Courses are well structured so that you can find the information you need easily.
5. The industries best practices are at your finger tips; because the e-learning contents can be easily updated, you can be sure that you are accessing the most recent information.
6. Self- evaluate; self assessments after every course, let you know where you stand and give you opportunity to retry a course until you get it right.
7. Get immediate answers to your most pressing questions; through the interactive interface that connects you with peers and industry experts across the globe.
8. Train in a safe environment with simulated learning.
9. E-learning is eco friendly and drastically reduces your carbon footprint.
10. Increase your overall productivity by training in your free time, when we are at home or travelling. It is accessible every day.
11. You don't have to be connected to the internet organization whose employees are constantly on the move; make sure that they can train online.
12. Perform better, and have greater retention of what you have learnt, than your classroom trained counterpart, and enjoy the fruit of being top performer.

In addition to these reasons, (Murtha, 2011) added these reason

1. Students need to be engaged with what they are doing to improve learning outcome
2. Students become thinkers, learners, and risk takers in a sheltered environment.
3. Students learn not to rely on the teacher but be accountable themselves and become independent.
4. Students learn more on the use of digital technology and electronic gadgets.
5. Students learn valuable employable skills in a digital world such as appropriate online behaviour, good digital citizenship, cyber safety, plagiarism, working with virtual teams self discipline in a virtual world, digital and global entrepreneurship, globalization etc.



6. Student's horizons get broadened as e-learning exposes students to the world outside their city or country town.
7. E-learning allows a mobile learning environment, anytime anywhere, anyhow.
8. It inspires students to seek more from school
9. It gets kids to go to school
10. It fits in with rural education where rural based students have equal opportunities with city students.

The International Development Bank has observed multiple justifications for implementing e-learning programme thus:

1. Improving economic competitiveness by preparing students for a technology saturated workplace through educational and social initiatives.
2. Creating equity of access to digital resources and reducing the digital divide increasing the quality of education through new practices such as student centred learning.

Misconceptions about E-learning

According to Popvic (2015) five misconceptions about online courses include

1. Online degrees are not respected by employers
2. Online degrees are not certified degrees
3. Online education provides no interaction with the professor
4. Online degrees are not engaging
5. Online degrees are easy and take less time to complete

These misconceptions have been proved wrong by surveys and researches. It is discovered that e-learning is the most effective learning method in this stage of rapid technological development.

E-Learning in Office Technology and Management

Office Technology and Management Education (OTME) is a course that provides the business world with multi-skills knowledge workers who manage information efficiently, equipped with a comprehensive range of skills including managerial, technological and communication skills. Its graduates find employment in variety of fields in the business world. The work involves the management of information in administrative, financial, public relations, human resources, legal, e-commerce, event management or education and training environment.

Office Technical and Management is a subsidiary of Business Education whose nature was described by Federal Republic of Nigeria in the National Policy on Education (2004) as to provide trained manpower in the applied sciences, technology and business particularly at craft, advanced craft and technical levels. Business Education of recent has



developed into more complex learning which requires knowledge of other subjects. It is more complex with increase in technology and computerized society (Ugochukwu, 2013) The emergence of Information Communication Technology in the 21st century has created a more dimensional change in Office Technology and Management education. Keyboarding which was originally done with the use of typewriter is now done using Microsoftword. Accounting and record keeping now replaced by excel, Peachtree and other accounting packages, files are no more created on papers but with data base.

Effect of E-learning on OTM Graduate

1. Perfect use of computer and network.

According to Boyd (2004) Characteristics of students who enrol and successfully complete e-learning/distance learning education courses may be categorized as environmental technical and personal or learning oriented. Environmental factors include timing and scheduling as well as competing family or work responsibilities, Technical characteristics include computer skill and internet savvy.

2. Easy and quick employment

Survey conducted by zogby (2005) revealed that nearly two-thirds of employers familiar with online education believe that degrees earned are as credible as those earned through a traditional program; and that online programs offer courses taught by experienced professors and are therefore highly accredited.

3. Discipline at work

According to Popvich (2015) obtaining an online degree requires self-discipline, time management skills, commitment and the ability to keep procrastination at bay.

The Farment State University outlines qualities of online students thus:

1. Independent workers: OTM graduates of e-learning can work without any supervision
2. Goal oriented: As they passed through educational system that separates learner from teacher, they are more focused to achieving their goals.
3. Proficient in Communication: Online classes are reading intensive this modifies and polishes their communication skills;
4. Basic computer skills: The computer is an integral part of the e-learning. While mastering their lessons, OTM students do not want to be saddled with less-than-adequate computer skills, these basic skills include proficiency in sending and receiving e-mails with attachments, cutting, copying and pasting from word, and communicating with fellow students in discussion threads.



5. .Setting and keeping s schedule: Online students are organized in setting a schedule that allows them to meet their deadlines; this is of a greater value in office functions.
6. Not easily frustrated: Online students are faced with obstacles that are out of their control. A successful online student indentifies solutions for unexpected “Catastrophes” by thinking ahead about solutions to potential problems.
7. Comfortable in Cyberspace: Online graduates make use of cyberspace in creating pictures and images which e-learning denies them from having in visual terms.
8. Remember Netiquette: OTM graduates of e-learning exhibit respect for work-environment and remember their “manners” when communication to their colleagues and clients.
9. Take Responsibility for productivity: As online students were trained to take responsibility of the learning process, the graduate to taking responsibility of the productivity process in their work places. Successful online students are not afraid to ask questions, however, they ask for clarification after they have attempted to understand the process themselves.

Challenges of OTM Graduates in a Rapid Technologically Developing Economy

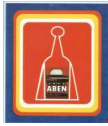
Since the invention of typewriter in 1868, the Business education curriculum has gone through tremendous changes (Crews, 1999). These changes have occurred at an alarming rate since the invention of the microprocessor in 1971. The change becomes more pronounced since early 80’s when the personal computer and telecommunication dominated office automation. According to Heick (2012) “as technology advances at a blistering rate, the inertia of institutions of formal learning struggle to keep up with them.

As the education curriculum changes, the business world also changes. The development of computers and telecommunications transformed the business economy into technological world. Information Technology offers new way of exchanging information, and transacting business, change the nature of the financial and other service sectors Oshikoya and Hussain (2005) Hence more expectation from graduates. As earlier stated, OTM education provides graduates whose field of work includes information management, Administrative functions, financial analysis and management, publicity roles legal functions, e-commerce and event management.

Barett (2015) stated that “from ball-point pens to copy machines and wifi networks, many technology changes have affected life in the office. Barett therefore analyzed the challenges facing these graduates in this new era of rapid technological advancement as follows.

1. Use of Computers

The trend toward multi-core computers will continue, letting you use more sophisticated software on your desktop computer. In 2012, microprocessors commonly offer two or four central computing cores, technology advances will bring, this number into the



hundreds for entry-level devices, and thousands to millions for high performance machines. Flash memory storage has been steadily becoming more capable and less expensive since 2000, appearing in a range of devices including USB drives smart phones and notebook PCS. Eventually, flash memory will replace traditional hard drive altogether

2. Intelligent Agents

Intelligent Agents are software programs that assist you in gathering information, remind you of appointment and coordinate phone calls and other communications. Programs such as apple's Sir and IBM's Watson will help you with everyday tasks in running a business. They will become capable of "data mining" or perform statistical analysis on your own records and outside database.

3. 3-D Printing

For those companied that designs and manufacture goods, more of them will take advantage of rapid prototyping tools such as 3-D printers. These devices operate under computer control to build objects from thin layer of plastic. Using 3-D printing, you can send a design to an overseas factory by emanating them a file.

4. Network in Office

The modern office is not without network which means interconnectivity of office activities within a specified range or area. The various Networks used in offices include:

Internet: This is the worldwide interconnectivity of computers which enables dissemination of information across the globe/world.

Wi-Fi: A local area wireless computer networking technology that allows electronic devices to be interconnected.

MAN: Metropolitan Area Network that interconnects users with computer resources in a geographical area or region

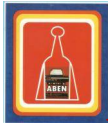
WAN: Wide area network, a telecommunications network or computer network that extend over a large geographical distance.

LAN: Local Area Network: Interconnects computers within a limited area such as residence, school, office building etc.

The major challenges of Office Technology and Management graduates in this rapid technologically developing economy are: Customer service, Report writing, Budget management, Database management, System analysis, Accounting Sales and marketing, Records management, Form/Template Design, Website maintenance, Project management, Recruitment, Purchasing and recording. Etc.

Conclusion

E-learning as a system of education has brought about tremendous improvement in today's educational system of Nigeria and more especially to Office Technology and Management Education. These improvement which includes the introduction of and use



of computer (computer appreciation) and other technological equipment to schools, Equipment of OTM teachers with adequate technological skills and P.Cs, and most importantly the integration of online and distance learning into the educational system of Nigeria.

Recommendation

1. This paper recommends that e-learning should be introduced to every institution to enable Office Technology and Management students to be highly equipped intellectually and practically in the use of computer, internet and other technological facilities in handling their office activities.
2. Office Technology and Management Education is better done through e-learning than in regular class system, and that even in regular class system e-learning should not be overlooked.
3. Laptops should be provided to the OTM students and their teachers in order to perform well in this Information Technology era.
4. Inexperienced teachers in OTME should be trained in order to be abreast with technological changes
5. Computer proficiency should be included in the curriculum of Office Technology and Management Education.
6. All business educators in OTM department should be encouraged to be friendly with the Information Technology environment.

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