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Towards Utilization of E-Learning in Preparing Business Education Students for the World of Work

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Abstract

The study was carried out to determine the perception of Business Studies educators towards the utilization of e-learning in preparing business education students for the world of work. The study was conducted in colleges of education in Anambra state. The population of the study consisted of 80 Business Studies educators in the two colleges of education in the state. Two research questions and two null hypotheses guided the study. A structured questionnaire duly validated by experts was used for data collection. The mean statistics and standard deviation were used to answer the

research questions while t-test was used to test the hypotheses. The findings of the study revealed that e-learning facilities are needed in preparing business education students for world of work and also some challenges facing the use of e-learning facilities were identified. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others that tertiary institutions offering Business Education programmes need to be provided with e-learning facilities by the appropriate authorities to enhance the preparation of Business Education students in other to make them relevant in the world of work.

Key words: Business Education, e-learning and Benefits of e-learning

Introduction

Business education is a programme designed to equip students with the necessary skills and competencies needed in the world of work. Given the present day office innovations business education students are expected to possess those skills and competencies that will enable them to be gainfully employed in modern day offices after graduation. Business education according to Aliyu (2006) is education for the acquisition and development of skills and competencies, attitudes which are necessary for efficiency of the economic system. Also, Atakpa (1999) defined business education as that area of education which concerns itself with the vocational and professional preparation for a career in business, teaching business subjects and also with information important for every citizenry and consumer in order that he may better understand and utilize his business and economic surroundings. It could as well be defined as that broad area of knowledge, which deals with the entire enterprise system which identifies the roles of business in a dynamic economy. Due to the rapid changes and development in Information Communication and Technology (ICT) there is need for business education programmes to embrace e-learning in this new technological age in order to enable the graduates of the programmes to fit in the modern office after graduation.

With the advancement in information technology in the 21st century, e-learning has become an invaluable technology for teaching, learning and research in business education. Otuka (2010) sees e-learning as all forms of electronically supported learning and teaching which are procedural in character and aim to effect the construction of knowledge with reference to individual experience, practice and knowledge to the learner. E-learning which has to do with ICT tools and internet facilities can make teaching and learning more efficient and productive by engendering a variety of tools to enhance and facilitate teachers professional activities through the effective use of internet, intranet, video tape, power point, overhead projectors and a host of others. Adrich (2004) defines e-learning as a broad combination of processes, content and infrastructure to use computers and networks

to scale and/or improve one or more significant parts of a learning value chain, including management and delivery.

According to Ajadi (2008), e-learning is an innovative approach for delivery electronically mediated, well designed, learner centred and interactive learning environments to anyone, anyplace, anytime by utilizing the internet and digital technologies in the instructional design principles. Naidu (2006) presents e-learning as incorporating "all educational activities that are carried out by individuals or groups working online or offline, and synchronously or asynchronously via networked or standalone computers and other electronic devices". Therefore, e-learning is concerned with learning through any electronic medium that may or may not be connected to the internet. E-learning implementation will help to change the old pedagogical approach of the learning and changes the teachers from a knowledge transmitter to a knowledge facilitator.

E-learning facilities provide the learners with exciting opportunities to search for more educational facilities. This makes them to develop inquiry mind, creativity and good study habits. World Bank (2003) indicates that when the potential of e-learning is fully harnessed, it could advance knowledge by expanding and widening access, improving the quality of education and reducing cost. When the needs are huge, fully online learning can be crucial and possibly the only realistic means of increase and widen access. In the views of Akudole (2012) e-learning could be beneficial to people through the fact that it:

- fits into learners schedule because it can take place anytime and anywhere.
- gives learners the opportunity to learn at his/her own pace.
- enriches the instructional process through the provision of online interactive learning environments.
- provides online learning environment that is time and cost effective.
- promotes the development of self-directed ability.
- facilitates and enriches the delivery of learning content.
- enhances learning performance; and
- promote independency in learning.

Purpose of the study

The primary objective of this study is to ascertain how e-learning facilities can be used in preparing business education students for the world of work.

Specifically, the study sought to ascertain:

1. The extent to which e-learning facilities are needed in preparing business education students for the world of work.

2. The challenges faced with the use of e-learning in preparing business education students for the world of work.

Research questions

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study.

1. To what extent are e-learning facilities needed in preparing business education students for the world of work.

2. What are the challenges faced with the use of e-learning facilities in preparing business education students for the world of work.

Null hypotheses

1. Male and female business educators will not differ significantly in their mean rating on the extent to which e-learning facilities are needed in preparing business education students for the world of work.

2. Business educators in federal college of education and their counterparts in state college of education will not differ significantly in their mean rating on the challenges faced with the use of e-learning in preparing business education students for the world of work.

Method

The design adopted for the study was descriptive survey. The study was carried out in colleges of education in Anambra state. The population of the study was made up of 80 business educators in one federal and one state college of Education in the state. The instrument measured on four point rating scale of: very great extent (4), great extent (3), small extent (2), and very small extent (1). The questionnaire was validated by experts in business education. The reliability test was carried out using the test - re –test reliability method. The Pearson Product Moment correlation was used to compute the scores obtained from the questionnaire administered. This produced a co-efficient of 0.86 considered to be satisfactory for the study. A total of 80 copies of the questionnaire were produced and administered by the researchers with the help of two research assistants. The data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation. The level of agreement or disagreement with each questionnaire item was determined based on the midpoint for the scale which is 2.50. Mean scores of 2.50 and above were regarded acceptable while mean scores below 2.50 were regarded as unacceptable. The t-test statistics were used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. A null hypothesis was rejected if the calculated t-value was equal to or greater than the critical t-value, otherwise the null hypothesis were accepted.

Results

Research Question 1: *To what extent are e-learning facilities needed in preparing business education students for the world of work?*

Table 1: Mean Responses on the Extent e-learning Facilities are Needed in Preparing Business Education Students.

S/N	Names of Facilities	$\overline{x}$	SD	Remarks
1	Satellite broadcast	3.70	0.46	Great extent
2	CD Rom	3.00	0.45	Great extent
3	Online video conferencing	2.50	0.72	Great extent
4	Websites	3.10	0.94	Great extent
5	Personal computers	3.70	0.46	Great extent
6	Internet	3.70	0.46	Great extent
7	Intranet	2.80	1.09	Great extent
8	Audio tapes	3.30	0.70	Great extent
9	Video tapes	3.40	0.48	Great extent
10	Local Area Network (LAN)	2.60	0.80	Great extent
11	Wide Area Network (WAN)	2.50	1.02	Great extent
12	Overhead projectors	3.00	0.45	Great extent
13	Data projectors	2.80	1.09	Great extent
14	Slide projectors	2.80	1.09	Great extent
15	Facebook	2.30	1.19	Small extent
16	Film strip projectors	2.60	0.80	Great extent
17	Clever board	2.90	1.15	Great extent
18	Podcasts	2.50	1.02	Great extent
19	Computer software packages	3.70	0.46	Great extent
20	Power point	2.50	1.02	Great extent

The results in Table 1 indicate that business educators rated all the items as been of great extent in preparing business education students for the world of work expect item 15 with the mean of 2.30 and S.D 1.19 which was rated of small extent to be used in preparing business education students for the world of work. The S.D in the group ranged from 0.45 to 1.19 indicating a wide dispersion among the respondents which means that the opinions of the respondents differ.

Research Question 2: *What are the challenges faced with the use of e-learning facilities in preparing business education students for the world of work?*

Table 2: Mean Responses on the Challenges Faced with the use of e-learning Facilities Preparing Business Education Students

S/N	Challenges of e-learning	$\overline{x}$	SD	Remarks
1	High cost of procurement	3.70	0.65	Agreed
2	Shortage of skilled manpower	3.64	0.50	Agreed
3	Non-availability of internet connectivity	3.65	0.60	Agreed
4	Erratic power supply	3.70	0.65	Agreed
5	Lack of skills to access information online	3.73	0.69	Agreed
6	High cost of maintenance	3.57	0.51	Agreed
7	Lack of well-designed e-learning syllabus	3.50	0.52	Agreed
8	Lack of specialized e-learning centres	3.65	0.60	Agreed
9	Lack of ICT facilities	3.32	0.77	Agreed
10	High cost information transmission	3.37	0.69	Agreed

All the items on the challenges faced with the use of e-learning facilities were accepted by the respondents. The items score mean scores between 3.24 – 3.73 respectively. The SD in the group ranged from 0.50 to 0.82 indicating a fair dispersion among the respondents which means that the opinions of the respondents do not differ.

Hypothesis 1: *Male and female Business Educators will not differ significantly in their mean rating on the extent to which e-learning facilities are needed in preparing business education students for the world of work.*

Table 3: t-test Analysis of the Responses of Male and Female Business Educators on the Extent e-Learning Facilities are needed in Preparing Business Education Students for the World of Work

Variable	N	$\bar{x}$	S^2	Df	$\propto$	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
Male Business Educators	35	3.49	0.92					
				78	0.05	0.005	1.960	Not rejected
Female Business Educators	45	3.56	33.98					

Analysis of data in table 3 shows that the calculated t-value is 0.0058 at 78 degree of freedom at 0.05 level of significance. Since the calculated t-value (0.0058) is less than critical value of 1.960, the null hypothesis was not rejected. This indicates that male and female business educators do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on the extent e-learning facilities were needed in preparing business education students for the world of work.

Hypothesis 2: *Business educators in federal colleges of education and their counterparts in state colleges of education will not differ significantly in their mean rating on the challenges faced with the use of e-learning facilities in preparing business education students for the world of work.*

Analysis of data in Table 4 shows that the calculated t-value is 0.02 at 78 degree of freedom at 0.05 level of significance. Since the calculated t-value (0.02) is less than critical value of 1.960, the null hypothesis was not rejected. This shows that business educators in federal and state colleges of education do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on the challenges faced with the use of e-learning facilities in preparing business education students for the world of work.

Table 4: t-test Analysis of the Responses of Business Educators in Federal and State Colleges of Education on the Challenges Faced with the use of e-learning in Preparing Business Education Students for the World of Work

Variable	N	$\bar{x}$	S^2	Df	$\propto$	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
Business Educators in Federal	50	3.56	33.98					
				78	0.05	0.02	1.960	Not rejected
Business Educators in State	30	3.21	0.52					

Discussion of findings

The result of the study in Table 1 revealed that all the items listed expect one had the mean scores of 2.50 and above which proved that e-learning is a tool for preparing business education students for the world of work especially now that the world had became a global village. This is in line with Agomuo (2007) who opines that business education programmes at tertiary level must blend with the technological skills and this concerns both students and business educators. Dabesaki (2005) is also of the opinion that e-learning ensures broad viability and availability of educational opportunities and that learning materials can be accessed irrespective of time and space.

The study also found that male and female business educators do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on the extent e-learning facilities were needed in preparing business education students for the world of work.

The results in Table 2 indicated that there were some challenges faced with the use of e-learning facilities in preparing business education students which include: high cost of procurement, shortage of skilled manpower, non-availability of internet connectivity, erratic power supply, lack of skills to access information online, high cost of maintenance, lack of ICT facilities. Osuagwu (2010) indicated that the paucity of ICT infrastructure and inadequate funding were among the factors that limit the infusion of ICT in educational institutions in Nigeria. This is also in line with Owenvbiugie, Iyamu and Ekhovbiye (2010) assertion that problems of electricity,

poor telecommunication facilities and lack of access also inhibit the adoption of e-learning in teaching and learning.

The study equally indicates that business educators in federal and state colleges of education do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on the challenges faced with the use of e-learning facilities in preparing business education students for the world of work. This is in agreement with Akudolu (2010) discovery that high cost of ICT facilities and erratic power supply affects the use of e-learning facilities in teaching and learning.

Conclusion

From the findings of the study, it is concluded that for business education graduates to be able to fit in, in the modern day offices, there is need for e-learning facilities to be used in preparing business education students for the world of work. This will help the students to acquire the necessary skills and competencies required in the world of work.

Recommendations

In line with the above conclusion, the following recommendations are made.

1. Tertiary institutions offering business education need to be provided with e-learning facilities by the appropriate authorities to enhance the preparation of business education students for the world of work.

2. Computer and internet studies need to be properly integrated into the business education curriculum.

3. Students should be allowed to have access to the e-learning facilities provided in the departments without paying any fee.

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