



## Undergraduate Business Education E-Learning Delivery in Covid-19 Pandemic Era

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**Abstract.** E-learning is the process of utilizing electronic technologies and resources to access teaching and learning with or without physical classroom. This paper examined how business education students access e-learning in covid-19 era. The historical development of covid-19 with its various variants, concept of business education and business education delivery before the covid-19 pandemic era. process of e-learning permit accessibility to learning with physical infrastructure and does not require face to face contact between the teacher and learners irrespective of the distance The state of the business education classrooms before and after the covid-19 pandemic, students, teacher and institutions preparedness were equally discussed and teacher. Historical method was adopted for this study. Vital documents and literature were utilized in the course of the study. The paper concluded that even though there are numerous advantages associated with the adoption of e-learning in business education programme, several issues that need to be addressed and put in place to achieve the maximum benefits. It was recommended that stake holders in education should provide facilities such as good and strong internet, stable electricity, and good working computers among others for students, teachers and institutions to be able to teaching and learning using e-learning delivery.

**Keywords:** E-Learning Delivery, Covid-19 and Pandemic Era

### 1. Introduction

Technology has been seen as a tool or instrument for educational improvement and achievements. In recognition of its importance, the Federal Government of Nigeria ( FGN 2014) in its Educational Policy objective on Information and

Communication Technology (Computer Education), affirmed that students at all levels of educational system should utilize ICT to enable them complete their education and successfully transit into the labour market after graduation. One aspect of Technology through which any educational policy statement objective can be used for actualization of students' educational goal is e-learning.

At present, the educational sector around the world is moving from face to face classroom to e-learning classroom. Business education cannot be left out. This paper therefore examined undergraduate business education e-learning delivery in the era of COVID 19 pandemic under the following sub-headings:

#### 1.1 Concept of E-learning

E-learning refers to the use of Internet technologies to deliver a broad array of solutions that enhance knowledge and performance (Al-Hujran, Aloudat, Al-Hannawi & Ismail (2013). In another broader view, e-learning is defined as the delivery of information for purposes of education or knowledge management via electronic media, such as the Internet, Intranets, Extranets, satellite broadcast, audio/video tapes, interactive TVs and CD-ROMs, (Selim in Al-Hujran et al (2013).

Internet offers numerous advantages compared with other mass media as it provides access to a large amount of information previously known only to individual specialists. It is flexible; permitting the use of images or video, and it allows linkage to Web sites on a specific subject, thus contributing to further expand knowledge. In the context of this paper, e-learning is the process of utilizing electronic technologies to access educational classroom to

which courses or programmes are generally based online. While teaching can be based in or out of the classroom, the use of computers and the Internet form the components of e-learning. Furthermore, e-learning is attractive and motivates students to study more than the normal learning (Dornyei in Al-Jardani (2020). This can be due to the type of materials used and the way teachers communicate with their students.

Using e-learning facilities for knowledge acquisition, learners or trainees do not have to be physically in the school environment or necessarily involve them in face to face contact. Teaching and learning can place irrespective of the distance. It can also be cost effective where trainees live far from the school, quick access to knowledge delivery, accessibility of instructional facilities the learner and trainee's convenience among other numerous advantages. Thus, it became imperative to adopt e-learning facilities during bad weather or clement to avoid outbreak of serious illness such as 'Corona Virus' otherwise known as COVID 19 pandemic. This ensures knowledge, skills and instructions continue during the period when trainees are on lockdown.

### **1.2 Emergence of Covid-19 Pandemic**

COVID is communicable respiratory disease caused by a new strain of corona virus (<https://africacdc.org/covid-19>). COVID is also defined as a potentially severe, infectious and primarily respiratory illness caused by a corona virus. It is characterized by fever, cough, and shortness of breath. In some cases, the disease also damages major organs such as the heart or kidneys (Jibril,2020). COVID-19 is known internationally by scientific and medical professionals and their related organizations which correspond with the American Convention of capitalizing an acronym such as AIDs (Acquired Immune deficiency Syndrome) or SARS (Species Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome) - related Virus of the Genus Betaco Resources.

COVID – 19 is a highly infectious respiratory disease discovered in China in December 2019 and then spread around the World, causing an unprecedented public health crisis. For health, safety, and medical emergencies during this period, many countries adopted distance learning programme such as e-learning in their programmes at all levels of education, including undergraduate business education. According to Maatuk, Elberkawi, Aljawarneh, Rashaideh, Hadeal, and Alharbi (2021), the unexpected closure of educational institutions as a result of the emergence of COVID 19 prompted the

authorities of many countries to suggest adopting alternatives to traditional learning methods in emergencies to ensure that students are not left without studying and to prevent the epidemic from spreading. The authors further stated that the traditional educational methods were replaced by e-learning when the COVID 19 virus appeared because social gathering in educational institutions are considered an opportunity for the virus to spread.

E-learning therefore, became the best option available to ensure that the epidemic does not spread as wide fire. E-learning guarantees spatial distancing despite the challenges, it became the best option to arrest the menace. Actual some studies indicated that students are less likely to benefit from the type of e-learning as against face to face contact learning (Lizcano, Lara & White (2020). However, the adoption of e-learning approach in educational deliveries in COVID 19 pandemic era will definitely be better than students not accessing knowledge at all levels and in particular to Business Education students.

### **1.3 Concept of Business Education**

Okoli (2010) described business education as an important part of the general education which emphasizes on skills and competencies acquisition for use in offices and business-related occupations. In the view of Onajite (2016), business education encompasses education programme for business, office occupation, economic understanding, entrepreneurship and it seeks to develop in the learners basic skills for personal use in the future.. Business education is often times described as education for and about business whose primary purpose is to prepare individuals for gainful employment in business occupations. Business education is an educational programme that equips individual with functional and sustainable knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that would enable them operate effectively in the economic environment which they find themselves. Business education with regards to this paper is an all-encompassing education such that the trainees on graduation can function in office occupations, business teachings, business administrations and other business related areas. The trainees can be self-reliant or an employee, this will bring about economic development and sustainability.

Business education offer the recipients the ability to cope with emerging changes in education and in business where he/she is expected to manifest all the skills acquired while in training. Therefore, business

education is planned programme for training, exposing and developing recipients in the fields of business and other related professions. It consequently expand the way of imparting competences for economic development of the individual and the society at large.

#### **1.4 Business Education Delivery before COVID 19 Pandemic**

A course delivery method is the way in which educational content is conveyed from instructor to students. Business education delivery in higher institutions in Nigeria has been of great concern to many stake holders. It had been a far reaching outcome which called for repositioning. In recent times graduates from the nation's tertiary institutions of learning including business education graduates have been plagued by the inability to get jobs both in corporate industries and companies, hence the high rate of unemployment in the country. This however, can be related to the quality of training received by these graduates. For instance, business education programme in most tertiary institutions has for a long time been taught theoretically. Apparently, this could be due to lack of equipment or as a result of insufficient funds to purchase the necessary required practical teaching equipment and instructional facilities for teaching and learning. Consequently, the students continue to lack the expected skills that would equip them for productive work life or become employers of labour. The failure of the education offered in most tertiary institutions especially in the area of business education skill has rendered many graduates jobless because there is skill gap between labour market and the training received from training institutions. Furthermore, literature has shown that there is poor quality in the programmes of various higher institutions in Nigeria due to poor delivery which are seemingly below expectations. This has been due to lack of modern facilities for teaching and learning and poor skills among the teachers.

The problem of how to effectively structure the classroom to achieve the laudable goals of business education under the e-learning approach has become a major concern to both educators and students in the programme especially in the era of information and communication in a globalized economy (Ojeaga and Igbinedion (2012). Globally, there is a paradigm shift from the traditional approach of teacher-centeredness to student centred approach where ICT plays a significant role, hence business education cannot be exempted. In view of the foregoing, there is need to suggest the integration of alternative method of teaching business education such as e-

learning to help students focus and achieve the set out objectives of the programme in the automated world of today.

#### **2. E-learning to the Rescue of Education all over the World**

In response to the unprecedented health crisis that has affected the world and the associated restrictions, many universities were faced with the difficult decision on whether to shut down and suspend teaching. Some schools were indeed shut down. The other option was to proactively change the approach to teaching and learning using online delivering and streaming. This was gradually being introduced in some technologically advanced countries of the world to enhance teaching and learning. The emergence of e-learning therefore, has assisted so much in the growth in student enrolments, and accessibility to high-speed Internet and home-based computers.

The improved digital technology enables virtual classrooms and considerably changed the delivery of undergraduate teaching. However, it should be noted that such changes were not completely adopted in many undergraduate business education, science, and medical programs as they require a "hands-on" aspect. For instance, in undergraduate business education programme, learning is often centered on practical classes, which are often peer - or group-based in nature. This exposure to practical enables the trainees to acquire skills for work place survival. However, in the interim, e-learning generally appears to be poorly utilized in Nigerian Tertiary Institutions. As a result, business education students in many institutions appears not have access to e-learning facilities, being able to access facilities that aid e-learning seems to pose big challenge to both students and educators. Many lecturers lack adequate skills to utilize e-learning platforms and where the skills are adequate the environment inhibits e-learning. E-learning utilization is influenced by the students' computer operating skills, strong internet accessibility, good electricity and other facilities that enhance e-learning. It seems many business educators and trainees do not have these facilities needed to effectively and efficiently learning using e-learning approaches. In other words, corona virus pandemic era has exposed the huge socio-economic inequalities in the Nigeria education system. Many wealthy families in Nigeria have to send their children to private schools leaving the poor resources and facilities in many public schools in Nigeria. These might make business education undergraduate students in public schools to experience great deal or

absolute disruption to their learning. This may be so, because many private universities where business education programme exist are apparently not well equipped with ICT infrastructures and so may ordinarily not afford remote learning using e-learning facilities. It therefore, left for business education undergraduate students, especially those from vulnerable and disadvantaged communities, without access to computers and other devices outside school, struggling without access to learn.

### **3. Types of Resource/Facilities for E-learning**

To carry out distance or e-learning activities there is the need to provide training resources for teachers and students especially with regards to tools for the use and management of Information and Communication Technologies (UNESCO 2020). In other words, for there to be a successful teaching and learning using e-learning in business education to achieve its major objectives, the use of instructional resource facilities cannot be overstressed. Ukata, Wechie, and Nnehille (2017) asserted that technologies for learning put the learner in control of the instructional process to allow for student centered learning. In other words, the provision of devices like laptops or tablets, e-mail, cellphone, internet, intranet, extranet, interactive CDs, Satellite TV, Video phone system, power point, and video conferencing is not negotiable.

Jegbefume, Utebor, and Kifordu, (2014) equally stated that the new technologies components have played vital role in educational process, especially as it is relates to teaching and learning business education content. In the context of this article, resources for e-learning delivery can be found in a host of devices, software applications, computers and connectivity. Other resource facilities include assessing the Internet, local networking, teleconferencing, video and audio conferencing, digital collaboration, satellite broadcasting, CDROMS, mobile technology, Interactive TV and Web based technologies among others (Bennink in Ojeaga & Igbiniedion (2012).

In the same vein, Oluwalola and Awodiji (2019) in more comprehensive approach identified the following as e-learning facilities that can be utilized for effective teaching and learning of management and business courses. These include - Modem, Printers, Flash drive, Memory Cards, Video Conferencing, Projectors, Computers, Personal Digital Assistants, Hard disk drives, Ipad, SMART, Interactive Whiteboard, Mega Phone, Audio Tapes, Video/video Tapes. Others are Virtual Classroom,

Network, Exe, Flexible learning toolbox, Respondus, Voice over Internet, Local Area Network, Software packages, Internet facilities, Virtual library, Wi-Fi, Email, E-book readers, YouTube, ILearn and Podcasting.

The use or application of programme instruction in the teaching of business education content is a remarkable reference of new technologies and relevance to business education process. Infact, these technologies motivate and encourage students to be independent learners. In addition, technologies allow students to have control over their learning environment and to act as self-directed leanings and thereby promoting more active learning.

### **4. Ways of improving e-learning in covid-19 pandemic era**

The following ways can be used to improve e-learning in covid-19 pandemic era:

#### **5.1 Lesson notes can be uploaded and recorded**

Lesson can be recorded so that when there is challenge with internet during classes such as incompatible software, poor network, power failure are other, the students can still access the notes at their convenience. There are several benefits when lesson are recorded, example students who are sick or otherwise unable to attend class, for instance, can watch the video later. Those who attended the class can also re-watch parts of it to refresh or update their notes for better understanding. Some educators have even made recordings an essential part of e-learning experience. Students watch the recording outside of class and then spend their time in class asking questions and doing homework

#### **5.2 Make presentation as brief as possible**

Most people can only pay attention for few minutes if the lesson is not physical. They tend to get bored or distracted when lessons get long. Students' attention span sometimes gets shortens with younger learners, especially those who are learning by way e-learning. The teacher should break the lessons into small bits such as 10-minutes lecture followed by a five-minute activity.

#### **5.3 Make information available to student in divers' ways**

In a traditional classroom experience, students can ask the teacher to explain something or ask for more context. This may not be possible in the e-learning experience. Information should be

presented in different ways to enable learners with different abilities understand the lesson. Also, the lessons should be made available in different formats. This could be as simple as downloading the text or notes of each lesson. The teacher can equally share his/her PowerPoint, as additional resources to students to learn more.

#### 5.4 Ensure students do assignments virtually

Some assignments may not translate well in virtual classroom. The teacher should think of a better way to get the work done because some videos can actually be too complicated or require resources that students do not have. If the teacher is not sure about the workability of the assignment, he/she should test it out with another teachers before using it. **Collect feedback from students and parents** Even if you develop unique virtual lesson plans and take steps to lead your classroom better than you ever thought you could, there will always be room for improvement. Keep an open mind always, and listen to what students have to say about the lesson.

#### 5. Advantages of E-learning in Business Education:

There are numerous advantages of e-learning to business education students which will enhance their, skill acquisition, programme understanding and development. At such a time, when learners are required to grapple with immense volume of information on a daily basis, it becomes extremely important to understand why e-learning in higher education is currently being preferred over the tried and tested, more conventional methodologies (Hurix (2020). The following advantages of e-learning as they relate to business education programme include: **Greater Access to information and flexibility:** One of the greatest advantages of e-learning to business education students in higher institutions is that it transcends geographical boundaries. In other words, it allows students benefit from classes if when they are not physically available that is access classes irrespective of their physical location and time.

**Saves Time and Money:** E-learning enables business education trainees save a great deal of time and money. In this regard, they may not incur any form of expenditure in terms of transportation cost, hiring instructors, purchasing equipment and many others. Rather, they can use these saved up resources to improve the quality of the overall learning process.

**Lectures can referred many time and better retention:** The use of e-learning will no doubt improve business education undergraduate

productivities, augment their focus and thereby, provide better academic results. Knowledge can be saved to be referred to at a future date. Going over recorded teaching will invariably aid better knowledge retention.

**Cost Effectiveness:** E-learning serves cost as against traditional form of learning. This is because learning through this mode happens quickly and easily. A lot of training time is reduced with respect to trainer and trainees travel, course materials and accommodation. However, in the long run, these economical rates empower students to give their professional careers a tremendous boost.

**Quick Lesson Delivery:** As compared to traditional method, e-learning can be said to be much more sophisticated, dynamic and quick; as most e-learning lessons are put together within a single academic session. **Personalization:** Customized Course Structure, Instant Up skilling and helps to Expand students' capabilities,

#### 6. Level of Preparedness for E-Learning

Preparedness can be seen to mean the extent which one read to tackle a task given or assigned. In this study preparedness is taken to mean how ready the institutions, lecturers and student to use e-learning for teaching and learning. What question will be what are the facilities needed to do inline class, to what extent are this facilities in place to ensure effective utilization of various technological strategies that will help students acquire the desired knowledge where contact with people is reduced as much as possible because of COVID-19 that is terrorizing the world at large. The educational sector has experienced explosive change which has transformed teaching and learning from traditional face to face teaching to e-learning that is gradually becoming the new trend in the field of education. Technology use in educational institutions dates back to 19<sup>th</sup> century when Skinner, an American Psychologist and a behaviourist developed educational media resource that profoundly influenced learning. The level of preparedness for e-learning utilization among business education student and lecturers, preparedness by teacher/lecturers, students and the institutions will be treated under three subheading, the institution's preparedness, students' preparedness and teachers/lecturers' preparedness.

A good number of tertiary institutions are seriously advocating that teaching should be done using e-learning. Notes and other teaching materials should be put online for students to access, assignment and test should be done using e-learning. With the realities of the time, many institutions are now

embracing e-learning as a way out of the predicament of shortness of time to cover enough ground as a result of the effect of COVID-19 pandemic. For e-learning to yield the desired result, the institutions have a major role to play. Facilities such as internet services, constant power supply, computers and other accessories must be on ground. According to Nwagwu (2019) e-learning preparedness refers to the state of mental, physical and material readiness of stakeholders of an e-learning project for fruitful learning experience and action. To utilize e-learning institutions should provide adequate environmental, technological and other facilities. providing the necessary environment.

Enemali, Aliyu, & Bulam (2016) posited that absence of opinions of these significant players in e-learning could result to continuous recycling and implementation of e-learning strategies that might not yield the desired results. Availability of electronic materials is a major success factor in e-learning utilization for teaching and learning. Unfortunately many of the institutions in Nigeria especially the public institutions are clamouring for e-learning but are not prepared in terms of investment in e-learning facilities. Most institutions do not have stable and working internet with which students can connect to e-learning. Most institutions do not have enough computers where they have they are either not adequate or not in good working condition for e-learning.

Students also are not well prepared to embrace e-learning in most institutions offering business education programme before COVID -19 outbreak. Many do not have personal laptops, a few do not have smart phone and where there have, they do not have access internet with which to connect to e-learning. Only those who can afford data or have Wi-Fi around the institution. In institutions where there is internet connectivity, network may not be strong enough to sustain the e-learning. At times the e-class is distorted as a result of poor network unlike other developed world where e-learning is very functional.

In addition some Lecturers also seem not to be prepared for e-learning utilization in business education programme. As a good number of lecturers were trained before the 21<sup>st</sup> century to use the conventional or traditional methods, and as such switching over to new technology appears not too easy. Others are faced with the challenges such as poor power supply, lack of internet facilities and others. It becomes challenging to introduce new technologies if the target audience are not ready to absorb the information presented by new methods;

students need some preparedness before they can learn effectively in an electronic environment. New technologies are only useful if teachers see how these technologies can improve the quality of the learning process (Renda dos Santos, Okazaki, 2015)

## 7. Conclusion

Based on the available related literature reviewed, it was concluded that though there are numerous advantages that are accrued to business education programme if e-learning is integrated or fully adopted into the teaching and learning of business education. However, there are also several foreseen challenges that need to be addressed and put in place for the realization or achievement of the maximum benefits associated with teaching and learning of business education using e-learning technology.

## 8. Recommendations

From the literature reviewed the following recommendations are put forth for policy options:

- Business educators should be adequate and continually trained to be able them deliver lectures and impart skills through e-learning delivery
- The curriculum of business education programme should be structured in a way to lend credence to distance learning delivery system;
- Educational facilities that will enhance e-learning should be provided by Government and other stake holder in education for efficient and effective implementation of e-learning delivery.
- Private public partner should be encouraged to provide good internet facilities and make them accessible to both students and lecturers in universities where business education programme is offered.
- Organizations that produce and/or import the necessary internet-enabled electronic devices should be encouraged to establish in Nigeria so that the cost of acquiring the devices will be reduced both to the individuals, educational institutions and organizations.

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