

Overcoming Distance Education Challenges in Nigeria: A Call for Collaborative ICT Integration

¹Ugwu Jovita Nnenna and ²Ugwuanyi Ifeoma Perpetua

¹Department of Publication and Extension Kampala International University Uganda.

²Department of Educational Management Enugu State University of Science and Technology, Enugu Nigeria.

ABSTRACT

This article looks at the benefits of Distance Education (DE) or Open Learning Systems as the means of providing education that meets the growing demand for education on the account of the financial concerns and changing priorities. The historical development of communication methods is one of the factors that shaped the education sector considerably and now we have the open learning systems as a popular way of. The aim of the establishment of DE as highlighted by scholars is to create another parallel system which can be integrated with formal education. Other objectives include promoting flexibility, constructing an egalitarian society, facilitating in-service and lifelong education and utilizing communication technology for wider outreach. ICTs hold the key to global educational initiatives, providing an environment of collaboration and disseminating ideas in the most effective manner. Although ICTs belong to one of the most transformative technologies, Nigeria is faced with challenges of integration of ICTs, among them deficiencies in ICT infrastructure. Distance education has proved to be successful for the purpose of widening educational chances but Nigeria faces problems like low ICT penetration, erratic power supply, and meagre economy. It is noted that ICTs play a critical role in the development of distance education in Nigeria and that this research stresses the need for collaboration among all relevant stakeholders—government, private companies, and international organizations—to enhance ICT infrastructure, implement international cooperation frameworks, and integrate ICT literacy and use into academic courses.

Keywords: Distance Education (DE), Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), OLS, Education Issues, Flexibility in Education, ICT Infrastructure, and Inclusive Learning.

INTRODUCTION

Education is recognized as a foundational factor of the development of the society, and its importance has reached a never before level in the contemporary time. The unlimited desire for education, together with common financial barriers and shifting priorities, require efforts to come up with new approaches to meet the educational needs of distinct population groups [1]. The paper aims at implementing Distance Education/Open Learning Systems are creative alternatives to satisfy the needs of many students unable to pursue traditional classroom programs due to their varied individual characteristics.

Conceptual Framework

Development of communication systems, starting from writing to broadcasting, has been of immense importance to education. It was the consideration of these factors that inspired the adoption of Open Learning Systems which became relevant because of the demand for higher education, as well as use of modern technology, requirements of life-long

learning and integration of the education with the work [Institute of Education, University of Ife]. [2] Ozan O Zeki defined the aim of Distance Education (DE) as an additional system to formal education, the purpose of the system of education, facilitating in-service and lifelong education, an egalitarian society, the use of communication technology for widespread access.

ICT in education Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) may be seen as different technological tools and means of electronic communication used to create, store, disseminate, and manage information [3]. Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) have been playing pivotal role in global conception on education where they are the sources of collaboration and idea exchange. Adoption of their technologies in higher education leads to interactive learning environments, improved information access, and makes a big economic contribution, according to example. Nevertheless, Nigeria has

limitations in the efficient integration of ICTs, as reflected in the external rankings and studies which shows that the country's ICT infrastructure is less developed [5]. The ICT transformative potential is well recognized but is facing hindrances in execution in the Nigerian context. Inequalities are also witnessed in the form of inadequate ICT infrastructure which leads to break down of these technologies as they are embedded in the teaching process. None the less, it is understandable ICTs' contribution to the improvement of education has been acknowledged; however, the fact that there are these infrastructure limitations hinder the practicality of implementation in Nigeria. This fact does not only undermine the studies of modern learning approaches but also prevents larger-scale economic growth supported by the technology. The convergence of information and communication technologies (ICTs) in education is a key strategy in Nigeria's drive to tap into its potential benefits; therefore, there is a need to overcome the challenges and narrow the gap between potential and practical application. The Effect of Distance Learning. Despite initial quarters of doubts, distance education has proved to be a suitable mechanism to widen the avenue of education. The Open University model that exists in UK remains as a model of a proof that distance learning is efficient as evidenced by graduates pursuing post graduate programs in any university either locally or internationally as portrayed by [6]. The achievement is based on the very fact that distance learning is made possible by the flexibility, affordability, and the ability to break down geographical borders. Among the special features worth highlighting is the flexibility of distance education through which the various needs of learners are taken care of irrespective of the constraints limiting them to pursue the full-time courses. This feature enables education to fit into different time frames and lifestyles, which, thus, makes it convenient to a larger group of people. Affordability aside, distance learning is also known for the absence of commitments to housing and commuting which reduce the overall cost. In addition, the capability transferred through the

CONCLUSION

This research stresses the importance of Distance Education (DE) as a delivery capacity NEC, which is vital to meet the ever-increasing demand for education in Nigeria, where the full-time courses face immense challenges in terms of capacity. The DE's achievement, as proven by the Open University in Britain, shows how its flexibility, convenience, and scalability is beyond the physicalities of geographical boundaries. The country of Nigeria is

internet allows for geographical advantage over educational dissonance that may be present in various regions. It creates learning opportunities for those in the hard to reach or poor areas of the country, thus, increasing the equitable distribution of educational resources. In conclusion, distance learning competes with skepticism but also represents a necessary complement to conventional education systems since there are obvious shortcomings in terms of inclusivity and access.

Distance Education Dilemmas in Nigeria

The prospects presented by DE seems to be enormous but Nigeria faces various obstacles as well which makes the adoption of DE difficult. One of the key constraints is the low penetration and adoption of the ICTs among distance education [7]. Inadequate ICT infrastructure, unsigned power supply and postal system deficient are aggravating the matter, preventing to realize effective communication and different technological tools needed for distance education.

However, Nigeria's economic problems lead to low integration of ICTs in distance education [10]. A high cost of equipment, scarcity of resources, and a lack of telecommunications infrastructure impede the situation [9]. The emergence of a new ICT literacy knowledge and the Nigerian history of isolation from external aid complicate the problems of distance learning in Nigeria [10,11]. The output of this research shows that ICT is highly influential in the realization of successes and challenges of distance education in Nigeria. Although lots of progress has been achieved in widening educational access, yet it is necessary to examine the tendencies which hinder effective delivery. Stakeholders such as policymakers, educators, and institutions have to cooperate in building up ICT infrastructure, establishing international cooperation as well as incorporating new ICT literacy into academic curriculum [Baron, 2009]. Efforts directed towards meeting these challenges will enable Nigeria to reap the full benefits of distance education as the quality and value of its educational system will improve and will be open to all categories of its citizens.

underserved for distance education provision, as major barriers include insufficient access to information and communication technologies, power supply reliability, and economic difficulties, among others. It is necessary to cooperate among policymakers, teachers, and institutional bodies to conquer these challenges. The introduction of the new ICT infrastructure, promotion of international cooperation, and the incorporation of new ICT

literacy into the academic curriculum are the fundamental measures. This way the Nigeria will be able to manage the whole spectrum of distance

education in a manner that does not exclude any section of the population from the chance to receive quality education.

REFERENCES

1. Anaekwe, C. M. (2008). Information technology: A tool for sustainable development: In Uwakwe (2008) (ed). *Media technology: Issues and trends*. Enugu: Africa Link Books.
2. Chandlers, J. N. (1991). *Management of Distance Education*. New Delhi: Starling Publishers Ltd.
3. Fabian, C. O., Val Hyginus, U. E. and Chinyere, N. U. (2023). Navigating Challenges and Maximizing Benefits in the Integration of Information and Communication Technology in African Primary Schools. *International Journal of Humanities, Management and Social Sciences*, vol. 6, no. 2, pp. 101-108. DOI: 10.36079/lamintang.ij-humass-0602.599.
4. Ifinedo, P. (2006). Acceptance and Continuance Intention of Web-Based Learning Technologies (WLT) among University Students in a Baltic Country. *The Journal of Information Systems in Developing Countries*, Vol. 23 (6), 1-20.
5. Commonwealth of Learning International (2001). *Building Capacity to Deliver Distance Education in Nigeria's Federal University System*. Report prepared for the World Bank. Retrieved from: http://siteresources.worldbank.org/NIGERIA/EXTN/Resources/capacity_de.pdf
6. Keegan, D. (1996). *Foundation of distance education*. (Third Edition). London: Routledge
7. Igwe, U. O. (2005). *Harnessing Information Technology for the 21st Century: Library Education in Nigeria*. *Library Philosophy and Practice*, 7(2): 1-7.
8. Yusuf, M. O. (2006). Problems and Prospects of Open and Distance Education in Nigeria. *Turkish Online Journal of Distance Education*, 7(1): 22-29.
9. UNESCO (1998). *Harnessing Information Technology for Development in Africa*. Retrieved 04/06/2006 from www.unesco.org/education/educprog/Iwf/doc/IAI.html
10. Foster, F. G. (Eds) *Information technology in selected countries*. Tokyo: The United Nations University.
11. UNESCO (2003). *Manual for Pilot Testing the Use of Indicators to Assess Impact of ICT Use in Education*. Retrieved from: <http://www.unescobkk.org/education/ict/urce>

CITE AS: Ugwu Jovita Nnenna and Ugwuanyi Ifeoma Perpetua (2024). Overcoming Distance Education Challenges in Nigeria: A Call for Collaborative ICT Integration. IDOSR JOURNAL OF ARTS AND MANAGEMENT 9(1) 22-24. <https://doi.org/10.59298/IDOSRJAM/2024/9.1.222489>