

Assessment Of E-Learning Platforms And Tools Required By Business Education Students In Universities, In South-South, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This study assessed E-learning platforms and tools by Business Education Students in Universities South-South, Nigeria. Two research questions and six hypotheses guided this study. This study adopted descriptive survey design. The population comprises 149 lecturers in the Universities in South-South Nigeria. The population served as sample. An 18-item questionnaire was used as instrument for data collection. The instrument was validated by nine experts. This was subjected to internal consistency with a Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient of 0.89 and 0.82 on research questions 1 and 2 respectively. Mean and standard deviations were used to analyse the data collected. The findings on e-learning platforms are; informal E-learning, Collaborative Learning, Computer-Based Training (CBT), and the study showed all as items highly required by Business Education students. The findings also show that on e-learning tools that are highly required includes: eXe, Flexible learning toolboxes and video conferencing among others. It was thus recommended that school authorities should provide e-learning platforms and e-learning tools to enhance teaching and learning in Business Education Programme.

Keywords: E-learning; Platforms; Tools; Universities; Business Education.

INTRODUCTION

A common way of referring to Business Education is education for and about business. Aliyu (2011) describes education for business as that training provided for some students to be effective workers and for all students to be informed citizens. This implies that the business education programme is patterned towards equipping individuals with economic understanding which will enhance the individual's standard of living and promote their business endeavours. To the understanding of the illiterate man, Business Education simply means education about how to do business while the layman on the street sees Business Education as just a course of study in school with emphasis on shorthand and typewriting or secretarial activities.

As a vocational course, Business education equips the recipients with skills, attitude and knowledge needed to participate and contribute effectively and efficiently as

producers and/or consumers of business products. Business education builds up world. It also equips the individuals with business knowledge and skills. A major aim of Business Education is to train students who will graduate with the required vocational skills and competencies to function effectively in modern offices and schools. However, the extent to which the Business education programme has been able to achieve this aim in its classrooms and laboratories remains questionable. That is not to say that this aim is not achievable. It could be achieved when Business Education programme is modified to suit modern offices and schools' technological needs through e-learning platforms and tools in this new technological era. The success of Business Education programme depends on e-learning platforms and tools used for effective teaching to enable the students acquire the desired skills.

E-Learning involves using computer terminals to prepare and deliver educational contents with graphics, audio, video, texts and

other electronic devices. Nwagwu and Azih, (2016), refer to E-learning as the use of information and communication technology (ICT) to enhance and/or support learning in tertiary education. There are many systems students are using for mail and to access course contents while studying a course on campus through programmes and lectures delivered online. E-learning could be campus-based programmes in which course materials are presented through E-learning links on the internet or other online networks (Nwagwu & Azih, 2016). E-learning is learning via the internet and a network of separate computers. E-learning is basically a network-enabled conveyor of knowledge and skills. It ensures effective learning outcomes through the use of electronic applications and processes. These E-learning applications and processes include computer-based learning, web based learning, digital collaboration and virtual classrooms.

E-learning encompasses the use of electronic media to facilitate teaching and learning. Some of these electronic media are satellite broadcasts, digital collaboration, mobile technology, CD-ROMS, interactive TV, web-based technologies, video and conference (Bennink, 2014), Ekund, Kay and Lynch (2013) note that E-learning as a component of flexible learning comprises a wide set of applications and processes which use all available electronic media to deliver education and training. It provides people with a flexible and personalized way to learn. Students could stay at home and hook up to a network of computers. E-learning was very useful during the COVI-19 pandemic.

E-learning should be seen as offering solutions to the challenges of education, Business Education inclusive (Nwagwu & Azih, 2016). Through e-learning, students of Business Education are able to communicate, collaborate and cooperate with other learners worldwide and access worldwide libraries, thereby bringing to fulfilment the goal of Business Education as stated in the National Policy on Education (2013). According to Panda and Swain (as cited in Oduma et al., 2019) e-learning will benefit teaching and learning in the following ways:

- ❖ For learners, e-learning knows no time zones, and location or distance is not an issue;
- ❖ In asynchronous e-learning, students can have a direct unlimited access to online materials;

- ❖ In a Synchronous e-learning arrangement, students are given access to real time interaction with their instructors;
- ❖ The internet can be used by E-learners to gain access to updated information and relevant teaching and learning materials, and can interact online with the intent of seeking answers from experts in the field in which they are studying.
- ❖ Situated learning is enhanced, since learners can graduate from online courses while working on the job and at their own pace and can contextualize the learning;
- ❖ Online materials can be updated with ease by learners as they require and learners are able to access the updates immediately, and
- ❖ As learners access materials on the internet, instructors can easily direct them to the appropriate information based on their needs.

According to Oduma, et al. (2019), since 1999, advancement of e-learning has taken different forms. Much of the current online learning situations is on the use of web-based modules which individual access through their personal computers (Claudia & Popa, 2008). The following are the e-learning platforms; Collaborative Learning, informal E-learning, Computer-Based Training (CBT), Web-based training, world wide web and internet. In the same vein, Oduma, et al. (2019) identified the following e-learning tools such as flexible learning, toolboxes, eXe, iLearn, video conferencing, YouTube, Respondus, smart board and interactive whiteboard. Business Education students are expected to have indepth knowledge of e-learning platforms and e-learning tools to enable them perform effectively after graduation in the world of work. Unfortunately, these platforms are not available to students to gain knowledge from. The statement of the problem, therefore, is what are the e-learning platforms and tools required by Business Education students in Universities South-South, Nigeria.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the study is to assess the e-learning platforms and tools required by Business Education students in Universities South-South, Nigeria. Specifically, the study will;

1. Enhance the teaching and learning of Business Education Programme.
2. Enables student to be self reliance thereby reducing unemployment.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study.

1. What are the e-learning platforms required by Business Education Students in Universities, South-South Nigeria?
2. What are the e-learning tools required by Business Education Students in Universities, South-South Nigeria?

HYPOTHESES

The following hypotheses guided the study.

1. No significant difference exists in the mean ratings between male and female lecturers on e-learning platforms required by Business Education students in Universities, South-South Nigeria.
2. No significant difference exists in the mean ratings between male and female University lecturers on e-learning tools required by business education students in Universities, South-South Nigeria.
3. No significant difference exists in the mean ratings between State and Federal University lecturers on e-learning platforms required by business education students in Universities, South-South Nigeria.
4. No significant difference exists in the mean ratings between State and Federal University lecturers on e-learning tools required by business education students in Universities, South-South Nigeria.
5. No significant difference exists in the mean ratings between Experienced and Less Experienced University lecturers on e-learning platforms required by Business Education students in Universities, South-South Nigeria.
6. No significant difference exists in the mean ratings between Experienced and Less Experienced University lecturers

on e-learning tools required by Business Education students in Universities, South-South Nigeria.

Methods

This study used the Descriptive Survey design to access the e-learning platforms and tools required by Business Education students in Universities South-South, Nigeria. The population comprises 149 lecturers in Universities in South-South Nigeria namely; Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma; Delta State University, Abraka; Niger Delta University, Yenagoa; Ignatious Ajuru University of Education, Port-Harcourt; Rivers State University, Port-Harcourt; Cross River State University of Science and Technology while Federal Universities are; University of Benin, Federal University, Otuoke; University of Uyo; University of Calabar. The population serves as sample.

A 22-item questionnaire was used as data collection instrument. It has two parts. Part A contains information on demographic variables of the respondents such as; name of school, sex, university type and job experience while Part B contains information on the research questions. The questionnaire was formulated on a 4-point rating scale ranging from Very Highly Required (VHR), Highly Required (HR), Moderately Required (MR) and Not Required (NR). It was validated by nine (9) experts. Three (3) in measurement and evaluation and three (3) in Business Education and three (3) experts in computer science in Delta State University, Abraka.

The questionnaire was administered to 11 lecturers at Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka to establish its internal consistency. The data drawn from administering the questionnaire to these lecturers were analysed using Cronbach alpha which yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.89 and 0.82 on the stated questions 1 and 2 respectively. 155 copies of the questionnaire were then administered to all Business Education lecturers in Universities, South-South, Nigeria, which make up the sample. 149 copies of the questionnaire were duly completed and returned representing 96.13 percent retrieval rate. The data collected were analysed using mean and standard deviation.

The questionnaire items were weighted as follows; Very Highly Required (VHR) – 4 points, Highly Required (HR) – 3 points, Moderately Required (MR) – 2 points and Not Required (NR) – 1 point. In decision rule, any

item with a mean score of 2.5 and above was regarded as highly required while any item less than 2.5 was regarded as not required. The decision rule for testing the null hypothesis is that the calculated t-value is less than the table or critical t-value, the null hypothesis is accepted. On the other hand, if the calculated t-

value is greater than the table or critical t-value, the null hypothesis is rejected.

RESULTS

The result of the study is presented as follows

Table 1: Mean Ratings of Respondents on e-learning platforms required by Business Education students in Universities, South-South Nigeria.

S/N	Items on e-learning platforms Required by Business education Students	X	SD	Remark
1.	Collaborative Learning	2.59	0.86	Highly Required
2.	Informal E-learning	2.95	0.99	Highly Required
3.	Computer-Based Training (CBT)	2.88	0.67	Highly Required
4.	Web-based training	2.73	0.81	Highly Required
5.	World wide web	2.92	0.92	Highly Required
6.	Internet	2.78	0.86	Highly Required
	Grand Mean	2.67	0.85	Highly Required

In table 1, all the 6 items on e-learning platforms required by Business Education students have a mean score which ranges from

2.59 – 2.95 which is higher than 2.50. Therefore, all the items are highly required.

Table 2: Mean Ratings of respondents on e-learning tools required by Business Education students in Universities, South-South Nigeria.

S/N	Items on e-learning tools Required by Business education Students	X	SD	Remark
1.	eXe	2.75	0.73	Highly Required
2.	Flexible learning toolboxes	2.83	0.92	Highly Required
3.	iLearn	3.02	0.79	Highly Required
4.	video conferencing	2.66	0.59	Highly Required
5.	YouTube	2.72	0.71	Highly Required
6.	Respondus	2.84	0.65	Highly Required
7.	Smart Board	2.77	0.73	Highly Required
8.	Interactive whiteboard	2.93	0.83	Highly Required
	Grand Mean	2.67	0.85	Highly Required

In table 2, all the 8 items on e-learning tools required by Business Education students have a mean score which ranges from 2.66 – 3.02 which is higher than 2.50. Therefore, all the items are highly required.

1. No significant difference exists in the mean ratings between male and female lecturers on e-learning platforms required by business education students in South-South Universities, Nigeria.

RESULT OF HYPOTHESES

Table 3: T-test Result on the mean ratings between male and female lecturers on e-learning platforms required by business education students in South-South Universities, Nigeria.

Variables	N	X	SD	df	t-cal.	t-tab	Decision
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Male Lecturers	82	2.95	0.93	147	1.41	1.96	Not significant
Female Lecturers	67	2.68	0.74				

In table 3, since the t-calculated is 1.41 which is less than table value 1.96, the hypothesis which states no significant difference exists in the mean rating between male and female lecturers one-learning platforms required by business education

students in South-South Universities, Nigeria is therefore retained or accepted.

- No significant difference exists in the mean ratings between male and female lecturers on e-learning tools required by business education students in South-South Universities, Nigeria.

Table 4: T-test Result on the mean ratings between male and female lecturers on e-learning tools required by business education students in Universities South-South, Nigeria.

Variables	N	X	SD	df	t-cal.	t-tab	Decision
Male Lecturers	82	2.76	0.84	147	1.54	1.96	Not significant
Female Lecturers	67	2.71	0.92				

In table 4, since the t-calculated is 1.54 which is less than table value 1.96, the hypothesis which states no significant difference exists in the mean rating between male and female lecturers one-learning platforms required by business education

students in Universities South-South, Nigeria is therefore accepted.

- No significant difference exists in the mean ratings between State and Federal University lecturers on e-learning platforms required by business education students in South-South Universities, Nigeria.

Table 5: T-test Result on the mean rating between State and Federal University Lecturers on e-learning platforms required by business education students in Universities South-South, Nigeria

Variables	N	X	SD	df	t-cal.	t-tab	Decision
State Universities Lecturers	89	2.79	0.75	147	1.62	1.96	Not significant
Federal Universities Lecturers	60	2.84	0.86				

In table 5, since the t-calculated is 1.62 which is less than table value 1.96, the hypothesis which states no significant difference exists in the mean rating between State and Federal University lecturers on e-learning platforms required by business

education students in Universities South-South, Nigeria is therefore retained.

- No significant difference exists in the mean ratings between state and Federal University lecturers on e-learning tools required by business education students in Universities South-South, Nigeria.

Table 6: T-test Result on the mean rating between State and Federal University Lecturers on e-learning tools required by business education students in Universities South-South, Nigeria.

Variables	N	X	SD	df	t-cal.	t-tab	Decision
State Universities Lecturers	89	2.74	0.91	147	1.58	1.96	Not significant
Federal Universities Lecturers	60	2.66	0.87				

In table 6, since the t-calculated is 1.58 which is less than table value 1.96, the hypothesis which states no significant

difference exists in the mean rating between State and Federal University lecturers on e-learning tools required by business education

students in Universities South-South, Nigeria is therefore retained.

5. No significant difference exists in the mean ratings between Experienced and

Less Experienced University lecturers on e-learning platforms required by business education students in Universities South-South, Nigeria.

Table 7: T-test Result on the mean rating between Experienced and Less Experienced University Lecturers on e-learning platforms required by business education students in Universities South-South, Nigeria.

Variables	N	Mean	SD	df	t-cal.	t-value	Decision
Experienced Lecturers	111	2.64	0.95	147	1.59	1.96	Not significant
Less Experienced Lecturers	38	2.53	0.97				

In table 7, since the t-calculated is 1.59 which is less than table value 1.96, the hypothesis which states no significant difference exists in the mean ratings between Experienced and Less Experienced University lecturers on e-learning platforms required by business education students in Universities South-South, Nigeria is therefore retained.

6. No significant difference exists in the mean ratings between Experienced and Less Experienced University lecturers on e-learning tools required by business education students in Universities South-South, Nigeria.

Table 8: T-test Result on the mean rating between Experienced and Less Experienced University Lecturers on e-learning tools required by business education students in Universities South-South, Nigeria.

Variables	N	Mean	SD	df	t-cal.	t-value	Decision
Experienced Lecturers	111	2.82	0.95	147	1.74	1.96	Not significant
Less Experienced Lecturers	38	2.70	0.97				

In table 8, since the t-calculated is 1.74 which is less than table value 1.96, the hypothesis which states no significant difference exists in the mean ratings between Experienced and Less Experienced University lecturers on e-learning tools required by business education students in Universities South-South, Nigeria is therefore retained.

DISCUSSION AND FINDINGS

The study is focused on assessment of e-learning platforms and tools required by Business Education students in Universities South-South, Nigeria. The findings on the e-learning platforms are that informal E-learning, Collaborative Learning, Computer-Based Training (CBT), Web-based training, world-wide web and internet are all highly required by Business Education students.

The findings on e-learning tools which are highly required include; Flexible learning, video conferencing, eXe, YouTube, toolboxes, iLearn, Respondus, smart board interactive whiteboard. This study is in consonance with

the earlier study of Oduma, et al. (2019) which identified similar e-learning platforms and tools.

The result of the hypotheses are; no significant difference exists in the mean ratings between male and female lecturers on e-learning platforms required by Business Education students in Universities South-South, Nigeria; no significant difference exists in the mean ratings between male and female University lecturers on e-learning tools required by Business Education students in Universities in South-South, Nigeria; no significant difference exists in the mean ratings between state and Federal University lecturers on e-learning platforms required by Business Education students in Universities, South-South, Nigeria; no significant difference exists in the mean ratings between state and Federal University lecturers on e-learning tools required by Business Education students in Universities South-South, Nigeria; no significant difference exists in the mean ratings between Experienced and Less Experienced University lecturers on e-learning platforms

required by Business Education students in Universities South-South, Nigeria and no significant difference exists in the mean ratings between Experienced and Less Experienced University lecturers on e-learning tools required by Business Education students in Universities South-South, Nigeria.

CONCLUSION

Business Education students require e-learning platforms and e-learning tools in Universities South-South, Nigeria to enable them acquire relevant skills and knowledge in Business activities and to enable them set up their own businesses for self-reliance thereby reducing unemployment in Nigeria. Business Education lecturers should expose the students to these e-learning platforms and tools to enable them have required competencies to perform effectively in whatever business or work they find themselves in.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are made for the study;

1. School authorities should provide e-learning platforms to enhance teaching and learning in Business Education Programme.
2. School authorities should provide e-learning tools also to promote teaching and learning in Business Education Programme.
3. Students in Business Education should undergo part-time training and retraining to acquire more knowledge on e-learning platforms and tools.

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