

Awareness and Perception of Lecturers towards Using E-Learning Tools for Instructional Delivery in Universities

¹Ekhurutomwen, M-G, and ²Akporhonor, B. A

¹University of Benin, Benin City, Edo State.

²Delta State University, Abraka.

¹mariagetti@gmail.com

Abstract

The study examined the awareness and perception of lecturers in using e-learning tools for instructional delivery in universities. The specific objectives of the study were aimed at examining the level of lecturers' awareness of the use of e-learning tools for instructional delivery, the perception of lecturers in using e-learning tools for instructional delivery as well as the level of use of e-learning tools for instructional delivery in universities. Three research objectives were raised, and the descriptive survey research design was adopted. The population of the study was 1884 respondents drawn from lecturers in the different faculties of the University of Benin. The sample size was 188 respondents, and the simple random sampling technique was adopted. The instrument used for data collection was the questionnaire. The data collected were analysed using descriptive statistics. The study revealed that lecturers are aware and have a good perception of the use of some E-learning tools for instructional delivery in universities. The study also revealed that the level of use of E-learning tools for instructional delivery in universities is very high for some E-learning tools such as smartphones, Google search, and personal computers. Others are Twitter, YouTube, CD ROMs, Google reader and digital television. Moreover, it is shallow for e-learning tools such as Audacity and Delicious. The study recommended that university management should, in addition to providing ICT training; equip the school environment with reliable internet connectivity and technology devices enough for teachers and students.

Keywords: Awareness, Perception, Lecturers, E-Learning Tools and Instructional Delivery

Introduction

Computers have become an essential tool not only in businesses but also to the education arena. E-learning is also best described as online learning and networked learning (Latt, 2012). The adoption of e-learning tools has significantly developed in higher education (Long, 2016). These e-learning tools range from wikis, blogs, social networks, podcast, instant messengers, blackboards, and the like. With the establishment of these e-learning tools, the Web is changing into an interactive space and control of the content that has been devolved to permit the learners to create, collaborate, publish, subscribe, and share information (Asmus, Bonner, Esterhay, Lechner, & Rentfrow, 2008). (Latt, 2012) identified E-learning tools to include Blackboard E-learn, search engines, instant messaging, YouTube, Microsoft PowerPoint, Facebook and email in campus-based classrooms.

According to (Kashima, Matsumoto, and Ihara 2011), future educational deliberations have become increasingly active with the feasibility of using digital textbooks and e-learning

systems as information technology progress. The prevalence and rapid development of ICT have changed human society from the information technology age to the knowledge age. The term e-learning has several definitions. (Laudon, & Laudon, 2012) defined e-learning as instruction delivered through purely digital technology, such as CD-ROMs, the Internet, or private networks. This definition centred on the technology viewpoint. According to (Naidu, 2006), e-learning involves incorporating all educational activities that are carried out by individuals or groups working offline or online, and asynchronously or synchronously via network or standalone computers and other electronic devices. Thus e-learning includes, among other things, teaching and learning facilitated by technology which with or without the timely presence of lecturers and students.

Furthermore, e-learning is sometimes synonymously referred to as virtual classroom, online learning, Web-Based Training, Computer-Based Training (CBT), and mobile learning. The impact of e-learning is enormous. These include cost-effectiveness; access to knowledge, social interaction, ease of revision, pedagogical richness, and personal agency.

The awareness and usage of e-learning platforms by lecturers in universities are analysed to determine their perception, level of training, accessibility and adoption. The educational sector, over the years, has embraced the adoption of ICT in its different facet. Despite this, nothing substantial has changed in universities as students are given many notes in the manual form to memorise and reproduce. Also, there is the notion that computers are expensive and enigmatic equipment that must be delicately protected. This phenomenon tends to deter lecturers and students from actively engaging with computers to enhance their motivation in order to participate in e-learning. One of the most persuasive arguments for taking new digital technologies into schools and other educational institutions is that, by doing so, we would trigger pedagogical advancement (Laurillard, Oliver, Wasson & Hoppe 2009). ICTs, consequently, are considered to be critical to educational innovation across the world. Universities are still embracing a traditional method to pedagogy, where there is a lot of 'chalk and talk', where the lecturer is the 'sage on the stage', finds itself in a technology-dominated era. Although several factors could hinder the acceptance of e-learning tools for instructional delivery, they include lecturers' awareness on the use of the various e-learning tools as well as lecturers' perception of the use of e-learning tools for instructional delivery.

Awareness of the use of e-learning tools is a pre-requisite to subsequent use of e-learning tools for instructional delivery. Awareness simply refers to "knowing and understanding a lot about something that is happening in the world or around someone" (Mukherji, 2009). Oyekan (2007) identified a lack of awareness as one of the issues which adversely militate against the use of the different e-learning tools for learning in Nigerian Universities. He explained that the lack of awareness of the use of e-learning tools for instructional delivery is high in the country's academic and research institutions. Ellison (2007) further noted that more than 74% of the respondents surveyed during his research are entirely unfamiliar with new e-learning tools. This implies that knowledge of e-learning is deficient among lecturers in the developing region like Nigeria. Omolayole (2008) noted that many lecturers in Africa are not aware of the use of e-learning tools

for instructional delivery; hence, there is a learning gap between Lecturers in Africa and the other parts of the world.

Furthermore, the perception of lecturers towards using e-learning tools for instructional delivery in university is another variable that may influence the use of e-learning tools for instructional delivery. Schacter (2011) stated that "perception is the identification and interpretation of sensory information in order to represent and understand the environment". It involves noticing, the understanding and belief of that real phenomenon. Perception not only creates our knowledge of the world around us, but it also permits us to act within our environment. The critical fact is that perception can vary widely among individuals open to the same reality. The ease of teaching and learning, enabled by modern technological advances, combined with the high transaction costs of enforcement, makes widespread voluntary compliance necessary for the acceptance of e-learning for instructional delivery.

Problem Statement

Computers have become an essential tool not only to the businesses but also to the education arena. Various factors could be responsible for the reduced use of e-learning tools for instructional delivery in university, observation and interactions with some lecturers revealed that some lecturers are not aware of the use of e-learning tools for instructional delivery in universities. At the same time, others who are aware do not have a good perception of the use of e-learning tools for instructional delivery in universities. It is against this premise that the researcher sought to examine the awareness and perception of lecturers in using e-learning tools for instructional delivery in universities.

Objectives

The study has the following objectives

1. To find out the level of lecturers' awareness of the use of e-learning tools for instructional delivery in universities.
2. To understand the perception of lecturers in using e-learning tools for instructional delivery.
3. To discover the level of use of e-learning tools for instructional delivery in universities.

Literature Review

The e-learning system is one of the many methods of education (the teaching and learning method) that permits flexible learner-centred education. It is an information system built on the World Wide Web. During the past few years, the use of e-learning has extended immensely (Westera et al., 2005; Mangalwede&Rao, 2009). E-learning can be defined as electronic learning, which is primarily meant as collections of teaching and information packages in further education. They are also available at any time and any place, and are delivered to learners electronically (Dichantz, 2001). According to Jowati (2000), many institutions of higher learning education use e-learning system in a mixed-mode environment known as blended e-learning,

whereby a mixture of e-learning and face to face learning are used together. Higher learning institutions play an essential role in safeguarding the successful use of e-learning.

Educators need to be aware of the labour serious nature of online learning and the resources available to assist with the development of effective and efficient online instruction. The university's reward and the promotional system should acknowledge lecturers' activities by increasing successful online learning and mentoring other staff members in their online delivery of units (Siragusa& Dixon, 2007). In their study, Muhammad and Yusu (2004) discovered that lecturers are not aware of the various e-learning tools used for instructional delivery. They even find it difficult to identify different e-learning tools, let alone being skilful in its use.

Perception denotes a belief or opinion, often held by people and based on appearances. The perception of e-learning by stakeholders of an educational institution varies. Agboola (2006) identifies adoption, readiness, confidence, and e-learning training, as some critical parameters used in measuring perception of staff towards using e-learning. Adoption refers to the decision to start using something such as an idea, a name, a plan or a technology. In the case of e-learning, adoption refers to the decision of schools, educators or instructors as well as students to use e-learning and its tools for instructional delivery and learning (Elgort, 2005). Research on e-learning adoption indicates that although the number of courses that incorporate ICT has improved vividly in the last three to five years, e-learning has not extended its potential. E-learning readiness, however, is another way to measure lecturer's perception of e-learning Edumadze, J. et al. (2014). Lecturers play an essential role in how to ensure successful e-learning implementation as an alternative teaching tool to replace the traditional face to face method in higher education. Many researchers have discussed the study on perceptions of academic staff in using e-learning. An investigation by Siragusa, Dixon, and Dixon (2007) pointed out that lecturers perceive the importance of online learning will influence how online learning is utilised and integrated into their teaching practices. The findings also reported that lecturers with a low perception of the significance of online learning might not fully consider how to relate online strategies to enhance their students' learning.

The perception of quality learning and teaching, in the last decade, has been producing a lot of discourse (Ramsden 2003; Biggs & Tang 2011). Universities, in both advanced and developing countries, are clamouring for the learning-teaching skill to be improved significantly (Livingstone 2014; Raturi&Boulton-Lewis 2014). To ensure the delivery of quality teaching and learning, instructional leadership must take centre stage. Some studies have shown many issues influencing teachers' technology integration in the classroom (e.g., Mumtaz, 2000; Franklin, C. 2007; Afshari et al., 2009; Chigona, A., &Chigona, W., 2010). Mumtaz, for example, conducted a review to highlight factors that influence teachers' decisions to use e-learning tools in the classroom. He mentioned several factors such as; access to resources, ease of use, quality of software and hardware, incentives to change, school and national policies commitment to professional learning, background in recognised computer training and support and collegiality in their school. Moreover, he cited that the teacher's beliefs about using e-learning tools in teaching

and learning are central to integration. Finally, he addressed the school, teacher and policymakers as the three intertwining frameworks for successful change in technology integration.

Methodology

The study employed a descriptive survey research design. The population of this study was 1884 lecturers (from Assistant lecturers to professors) in the twelve (12) faculties of University of Benn, Benin City. The sample size of the study was 188 respondents. A questionnaire was used for the collection of data. The data collected were analysed using descriptive statistics.

Finding and Results

Level of Lecturers' Awareness of the Use of E-Learning Tools for Instructional Delivery in Universities

Table 1: Awareness of the Use of E-Learning Tools for Instructional Delivery in Universities

Awareness	Very High Level		High Level		Low Level		Very Low Level		Total
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
personal computers	103	65.6	44	28.0	7	4.5	3	1.9	157
CD-ROMs	91	58.0	32	20.4	14	8.9	20	12.7	157
Digital Television	78	49.7	24	15.3	16	10.2	39	24.8	157
PDA's	44	28.0	31	19.7	65	41.5	17	10.8	157
Smartphones	140	89.2	10	6.4	2	1.2	5	3.2	157
Twitter	78	49.7	24	15.3	16	10.2	39	24.8	157
Delicious	22	14.0	14	8.9	47	30	74	47.1	157
YouTube	96	61.1	41	26.1	15	9.6	5	3.2	157
Google Reader	79	50.3	35	22.3	13	8.3	30	19.1	157
Google Docs	36	22.9	37	23.6	56	35.7	28	17.8	157
WordPress	44	28.0	31	19.7	65	41.5	17	10.8	157
Slideshare	36	22.9	37	23.6	56	35.7	28	17.8	157
Google Search	103	65.6	44	28.0	7	4.5	3	1.9	157
Audacity	12	7.6	19	12.1	37	23.6	89	56.7	157
Firefox	91	58.0	32	20.4	14	8.9	20	12.7	157

Table 1 shows that lecturer has a very high level of awareness of the use of Smartphones (89.2%), personal computers (65.6%), Google search (65.6%),

Table 1, revealed level of awareness of e-learning tools of used by the lecturers. Based on the results on the table, CD ROMs and Firefox (58%), Google reader (50.3%), Twitter (49.7%) and digital television (49.7%) for instructional delivery. The study revealed that lecturers are aware of the use of some E-learning tools for instructional delivery in universities. The study further revealed that the level of lecturers' awareness of the use of Smartphones, personal computers, Google search, CD ROMs, Firefox, Google reader, twitter and digital television for instructional delivery is very high. This finding is in agreement with Edumadze (2014) that lecturers in Nigerian universities are aware of the use of some E-learning tools for instructional delivery.

Perception of Lecturers in Using E-Learning Tools for Instructional Delivery in Universities

Table 2: Perception of Lecturers in Using E-Learning Tools for Instructional Delivery

Perceptions	SA		A		D		SD		Total
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
I think the use of e-learning tools will make instructional delivery more efficient	140	89.2	10	6.4	2	1.2	5	3.2	157
I understand that the use of e-learning makes the instructional delivery faster	103	65.6	44	28.0	7	4.5	3	1.9	157
I feel that the use of e-learning tools for instructional delivery ensures that learning takes place at anytime	78	49.7	24	15.3	16	10.2	39	24.8	157
Use of e-learning tools makes learning possible at any place	79	50.3	35	22.3	13	8.3	30	19.1	157
Use of e-learning for instructional delivery reduces lateness to lectures by students.	91	58.0	32	20.4	14	8.9	20	12.7	157
I think that the use of e-learning tools for instructional delivery reduces distractions in class	103	65.6	44	28.0	7	4.5	3	1.9	157

Table 2 revealed that 89.2% think that the use of e-learning tools will make instructional delivery more efficient, 65.6% think that the use of e-learning tools for instructional delivery reduces distractions in class, 65.6% understand that the use of e-learning makes instructional delivery faster. Another 58% believe that the use of e-learning tools for instructional delivery reduces lateness to lectures by students. In comparison, 50.3% perceive that the use of e-learning tools makes learning possible at any place. This, therefore, implies that lecturers have a good perception of the use of e-learning tools for instructional delivery. The study revealed that lecturer has a good perception of the use of e-learning tools for instructional delivery. This finding conforms with Mitchell, Clayton, Gower, Barr, and Bright, (2005) who discovered that it is safe to say that many lecturers have a good perception of the use of E-learning tools for instructional delivery. Many of them are very ready to adopt the e-learning system fully.

Level of Use of E-Learning Tools for Instructional Delivery in Universities

Table 3: Level of Use of E-Learning Tools for Instructional Delivery

Level of Use of E-Learning Tools	Very High Level		High Level		Low Level		Very Low Level		Total
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
personal computers	139	88.5	7	4.5	6	3.8	5	3.2	157
CD-ROMs	91	58.0	32	20.4	14	8.9	20	12.7	157
Digital Television	78	49.7	24	15.3	16	10.2	39	24.8	157
PDA's	44	28.0	31	19.7	65	41.5	17	10.8	157
Smartphones	144	91.7	6	3.8	4	2.5	3	1.9	157
Twitter	103	65.6	44	28.0	7	4.5	3	1.9	157
Delicious	22	14.0	14	8.9	47	30	74	47.1	157
YouTube	96	61.1	41	26.1	15	9.6	5	3.2	157
Google Reader	79	50.3	35	22.3	13	8.3	30	19.1	157
Google Docs	36	22.9	37	23.6	56	35.7	28	17.8	157
Word press	44	28.0	31	19.7	65	41.5	17	10.8	157
Slide share	36	22.9	37	23.6	56	35.7	28	17.8	157
Google Search	140	89.2	10	6.4	2	1.2	5	3.2	157
Audacity	12	7.6	19	12.1	37	23.6	89	56.7	157
Firefox	36	22.9	37	23.6	56	35.7	28	17.8	157

Table 3 revealed the level of use of e-learning tools for instructional delivery in universities. The Table revealed that smartphones (91.7%), Google search (89.2%), personal computers (88.5%), Twitter (65.6%), YouTube (61.1%), CD ROMs (58%), Google reader (50.3%) and digital television (49.7%) are used to a very high level for instructional delivery.

The study revealed that the level of use of E-learning tools for instructional delivery in universities is very high for some E-learning tools such as smartphones, Google search, and personal computers. Other e-learning tools include Twitter, YouTube, CD ROMs, Google reader and digital television, and it is shallow for other e-learning tools such as Audacity and Delicious. This finding supports the study of Jowati (2000) that many institutions of higher learning education use e-learning system in a mixed-mode environment known as blended e-learning whereby a mixture of e-learning and face to face learning are used together.

Conclusion

In summary, lecturers in the University of Benin are aware of the use of E-learning tools for instructional delivery. They also have the necessary skills in using information and communications technology for teaching, but they need more training to integrate it professionally. E-learning is the delivery of teaching and learning opportunities via web-based technologies to help lecturers and students' performance and development. From the quantitative data collected, most respondents have a positive perception of using e-learning tools in university. The findings of this study can be used by the university to continue its efforts in enhancing the use of e-learning among lecturers. It is a big challenge to realise, attract, motivate, and create trust and confidence of the lecturers involved in e-learning. However, in order to ensure that all courses offered in the university are using E-learning tools, we need continuous promotion and training of the usage of e-learning among the lecturers and students. Besides that, lecturers and students must have technical and cognitive skills in ICT so that they can become productive users of the technology.

Recommendations

In light of the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. University management should provide a training program, workshops and seminars to improve lecturers' skills in integrating technology.
2. University management should equip the school environment with reliable internet connectivity and technology devices enough for both teachers and students.
3. Lecturers should be provided with enough time to prepare for using e-learning tools.

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