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## CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS TO POLITICAL SCIENCE EDUCATION CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION IN COVID-19 PANDEMIC ERA IN UNIVERSITIES IN ENUGU STATE, NIGERIA

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**Abstract:** The study established the challenges inherent in the use of e-learning platforms in the implementation of Political Science Education curriculum in universities in Enugu State, Nigeria during the lockdown of schools as a result of the covid-19 pandemic. The study was anchored on the unified theory of acceptance and use of technology (UTAUT) formulated in 2003 by Venkatesh, Morris, Davis, and Davis. Two research questions guided the study; What are the various challenges of Political Science Education curriculum implementation in the covid-19 pandemic era? What are the plausible solutions to Political Science Education curriculum implementation in the covid-19 pandemic era? It was a quantitative study that adopted the descriptive survey research design. The researchers used six private and public universities in Enugu State, Nigeria for the study. The population of the study was one hundred and twelve (112) persons; 84 final year Political Science Education students and 28 of their lecturers. Questionnaire was used to collect data. The researchers collected the data themselves from the six universities. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions. The study found that unreliable power supply, poor internet services, high cost of data, and lack of technical know-how hindered effective use of e-learning platforms in the implementation of Political Science Education curriculum during the lockdown of schools caused by the covid-19 pandemic. This inadvertently affected students' academic performance. The study then recommended that there is need to ensure that broadband facilities are readily available in the university campuses to enhance the use of e-learning platforms for teaching and learning.

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**Keywords:** Curriculum implementation, Political Science Education, e-learning platforms, Covid-19 pandemic, academic performance

### Introduction

Enhanced academic performance of students in institutions of higher learning depends on many variables; the school environment, the pedagogy, the educational resources, the teaching and learning medium, the attitude of the student, and the attitude and experience of the lecturer, just to mention a few. Therefore, for any institution to bring out the good in the student, the effective way of implementing the curriculum to which the learner is exposed to must be

considered. It is in this light that the philosophy of education in Nigeria is based on the integration of the individuals into a sound and effective citizen through the inculcation of appropriate societal values, which include respect for the worth and dignity of individuals, shared responsibility for the common roles of society; respect for the dignity of labour; and faith in man's ability to make national decisions (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2014).

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The actualization of the above national aspiration in various forms is embedded in the curriculum of various subjects at all levels of education in Nigeria. Political Science Education curriculum as part of it was greatly hampered during the lockdown of schools as a result of the covid-19 pandemic. This necessitated the adoption of e-learning platforms in the implementation of the curriculum. Curriculum is an embodiment of all the mapped-out programme of learning planned for a specific group of learners within a time frame in order to achieve pre-determined objectives. The basic components of each school subjects are accommodated in the school curriculum for implementation at the classroom level.

In the context of this study, to be specific, Political Science Education curriculum is an embodiment of elements which equips an individual with the knowledge, attitude, skills, capacities and capabilities needed to make meaningful living in the individual's peculiar environment, and to solve the problem of world survival. Olowo (2012) explain that Political Science Education is concerned mainly with the reciprocal relationships between human and the physical environment. The mission of Political Science Education is to develop capable citizens who are empowered with knowledge, skills and attitudes enabling them to make informed decisions in a culturally diverse and interdependent world (Olowo & Arogunrerin, 2011). Political Science Education equips the youths and other learners with skills that will make them engage in proper interpretation of their environment and serve to assist them to responsibly adapt to the environment or alter the same as situation may demand (Akinola, 2012). Political Science Education curriculum which accommodates societal values therefore, frees learners from the possible imprisonment of the environments and prepares students to match the challenges of the complex society when fully implemented.

According to the National Universities Commission (NUC) (2012), Political Science Education curriculum at

the bachelor degree level was designed to achieve the following objectives: to produce highly motivated, conscientious and efficient classroom teachers for all levels of education system; to help teachers to fit into the political life of the community and the society at large; and to prepare graduate teachers who will inculcate in their learners national adjustment to their physical and political environments through acquisition of knowledge, attitude, values, appreciation and skills necessary for developing political responsibilities.

In order to achieve the objectives of Political Science Education curriculum, effective implementation is very essential. Osuji and Suleh (2017) considered curriculum implementation as the translation of curriculum components into action. Political Science Education curriculum empowers students to be informed, responsible citizens of a nation and the world and through participation in the democratic process to improve the society (Foran, 2014). The extent to which Political Science Education curriculum achieves the above objectives has been debated by people in the education industry. For instance, Olojo, Adewumi, and Ajisola (2012) found that Political Science Education has been structured and taught to provide learners with the relevant knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that would enable them to become functional citizens capable of addressing the problems and issues of their society. On the contents area of Political Science Education curriculum, a critical analysis shows that the course content needs more innovation (Taiwo, 2013). Since the curriculum of pre-service Political Science Education teachers does not reflect strict value course content, Taiwo further observed this as part of the curriculum inadequacies. Studies conducted by Obot, Essien and Akpan (2019) however observed that Political Science Education curriculum is structured to be teacher centred; hence, not including online mode of teaching and learning.



Therefore, the outbreak of the covid-19 pandemic which caused the closure of schools in Enugu State awakened the spirit of innovation in the education sector. The closure of schools forced learners and their teachers to be on a total lockdown at their homes. This had a lot of impact on their academic performance especially as some categories of students; the four hundred level students prepared for their final year examinations. It is worthy to mention that academic performance defines an institution of learning. Schools' abilities are often measured by the academic performance of their learners in a standardised examination for example. Therefore, learners' academic performance serves as a bedrock for knowledge acquisition and the development of skills, positive attitudes and values for the formation of the heart and the transformation of the society. Therefore, the employment of varied and diverse pedagogical approaches and instructional materials help to boost academic performance of learners.

The lockdown of schools due to covid-19 was a global issue. It had a major influence on teaching and learning. Drawing from an experience in the USA, Soland, Kuhfeld, Tarasawa, Johnson, Ruzek, and Liu (2020) opined that students were missing face to face instruction. They established that parents and teachers were worried that when the covid-19 pandemic subsides, students would return to school with lower achievement. Furthermore, that the gap between high and low achieving students would widen. They also disclosed that the lockdown had added to the time that most students already spent at home during the summer holiday without explicit face to face instruction from teachers. That teachers were scrambling to adapt content for an online platform. More so, that students themselves are faced with isolation, anxiety about the dreaded covid-19, and uncertainty about the future. This explicitly leads to their lack of concentration on their studies, hence leading to poor academic performance. In the same vein, Harris (2020) considered how time out of school due to covid-19 would affect students' academic

performance. His projection indicated that students may be substantially behind in their studies. That teachers may wish to coordinate in order to determine where to start instruction. That they would also need to find ways to assess students early, either formally or informally, to understand exactly where students are academically. He reiterated that students were likely to enter school with more variability in their academic skills than under normal circumstances. Therefore, teachers may need to consider ways to further differentiate instruction or provide opportunities for individualised learning.

In the period of lockdown, the situation in the society, that is, the covid-19 pandemic forced schools; primary, secondary, and universities to adopt online teaching and learning. Therefore, some of these schools employed varied teaching and learning platforms such as Zoom, WhatsApp, Google classroom, Microsoft teams, Edmodo, Skype, Google meet and school's learning management systems. These are beautiful technologies for teaching and learning. Despite their usefulness in helping learners improve their academic performance, there were some common problems that created a barrier to the online teaching and learning. Mahdy (2020) listed some of the common problems with online teaching and learning as follows: poor internet connection in rural areas, low speed and high cost of the internet, inadequate learning devices such as laptops, tablets, and smartphones, and poor electricity generation. These hindered effective online teaching and learning in this covid-19 era. This actually created a digital divide among the rich and the poor; both learners and their teachers.

In the same vein, Edeh et al. (2020) also found that poor digital skills, school policies, digital divide, poor electricity, network issues, and inadequate facilities such as lack of computers, internet facility were some major barriers for online teaching and learning during the covid-19 pandemic school closures. Their study disclosed that covid-19 disrupted academic activities. It had a lot of



impact on students and teachers. It created barriers in teaching and learning. This implies that the covid-19 lockdown was a big determinant factor to learners' academic performance. It is against this background that the current study focused on the challenges and solutions to Political Science Education implementation in covid-19 pandemic era in universities in Enugu State, Nigeria.

### ***Statement of the Problem***

Covid-19 pandemic was a scourge in all the sectors in Nigeria. The education sector was worse hit, especially the effective implementation of the Political Science Education curriculum. The pandemic induced a sudden shift in the educational system creating a move from the traditional classroom settings to the feasible adoption of online teaching and learning. There is a social concern on how the covid-19 lockdown would impact learners' academic performance as they strive to adapt to the new virtual learning system. This is because the closure of schools forced learners and their teachers to engage in online teaching and learning from their respective homes. This happened in a time where the nation was still struggling for some portion of the population to be enrolled in schools. Therefore, allowing them to study from home would presumably affect their academic performance.

Some studies have shown that the online teaching and learning has not been without some challenges in Nigeria especially in Enugu State. Among some of the major challenges of online teaching and learning in the covid-19 era were poor digital skills, digital divide, school policies, poor electricity, network issues, high data tariff, inadequate educational facilities, lack of training, lack of funding, and resistance to change. From these myriads of barriers to online teaching and learning as a result of covid-19 pandemic, can the learners really improve on their academic performance? It is against this backdrop that this study established the challenges and solutions to the implementation of Political Science Education curriculum

in covid-19 pandemic era in universities in Enugu State, Nigeria.

### ***Research Questions***

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the challenges of Political Science Education curriculum implementation in the covid-19 pandemic era?
2. What are the plausible solutions to Political Science Education curriculum implementation in the covid-19 pandemic era?

### ***Significance of the Study***

The study has both theoretical and practical significance. Theoretically, the study hinged on Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) by Venkatesh, Morris, Davis and Davis (2003). The study explicates the explanatory power of the UTAUT in predicting technology acceptance and use in information systems especially in the context of a developing nation. It further advances the UTAUT in measuring antecedent of adoption and use of technology. Overall, UTAUT was adopted as theoretical framework for this study because of its comprehensiveness, validity and reliability in determining factors influencing adoption and use of technology.

Practically, the findings of this study when disseminated will benefit the following stakeholders: students, lecturers, ministry of education, other researchers. For the students, the findings of the study will help them to fully embrace e-learning as a hedge to the labour market. The findings of the study will be relevant to lecturers as it will expose them to the better and faster approach of teaching using computer tools. It will reveal the need for the lecturers to possess a certain knowledge of computers and its proper usage. The findings of the study would be relevant and beneficial to ministry of education as it will help in their educational policy formulations. It is hoped that this study will enlighten them more on the need to create a platform that promotes online learning. The findings of the study



will also serve as a resource material to other researchers interested in carrying out further research in this field.

#### ***Scope and Delimitations of the Study***

The study had both geographical, content and level scope. Geographically, the study was delimited to all the public and private universities in Enugu State, Nigeria. The content scope covered the availability of e-learning platforms in the implementation of Political Science Education curriculum in the covid-19 pandemic era, and the extent of the utilization of the platforms in the implementation of Political Science Education curriculum. The population/level scope covered the 400 level students and lecturers in Political Science Education programme. 400 level students were chosen because they were at the verge of writing their final examinations and as such needed not to relent in their studies. The lecturers were also chosen because they were the main facilitators of learning and as such should provide information about the state of e-learning in Political Science Education curriculum implementation.

#### **Related Empirical Studies**

There are quite some challenges impeding the effective implementation and full actualization of the aims and goals of Political Science Education curriculum. These challenges may differ with the location of the schools even though some are general. This section critically looks into scholars' view on the challenges impeding Political Science Education curriculum implementation in schools in the covid-19 pandemic era. The section also looked at the possible solutions to these challenges.

One of the scholars; Nompumeleloabu (2016), carried out a study titled "Challenges towards Political Science Education Curriculum Implementation in high Schools in Timor-Leste." The study employed qualitative paradigm. Data were generated by means of open-ended interview questions and documents review. The population of the study was 170 selected students from the 3 selected schools. The sample size was 170 respondents. The data

were coded and thematized. It became apparent from the findings that there were major curriculum challenges in the implementation of Political Science Education curriculum. Some of these challenges were Poor ability of teachers in successfully implementing the curriculum and poor availability of necessary resources. These included lack of resources, inadequate training and heavy workloads. The study is similar to the present study in terms of subject matter. Both studies differ in context – covid-19 pandemic era, location, research design and data analysis.

In the same vein, Mutisya and Makokha (2016), carried out a study on the challenges affecting adoption of e-learning in education curriculum implementation in public universities in Kenya. This research was conducted between February 2012 and February 2014 to determine the challenges affecting the adoption of e-learning in these institutions of higher learning. The study employed experimental design. Data were collected using questionnaires administered to 420 lecturers and 210 students, and analysed through the use of simple descriptive statistics. Lecturers ranked heavy workloads the most serious challenge affecting the adoption of e-learning, followed by insufficient Internet connectivity, denial of copyrights for their developed e-learning modules, limited information and communication technology (ICT) skills, lack of incentives, shortage of computers/laptops, inadequate computer laboratories, and insufficient time for online interaction. Students, on the other hand, ranked insufficient Internet connectivity as the first challenge, followed by lack of computers/laptops, inadequate computer laboratories, limited ICT skills, and insufficient time for online interaction. The study concluded that as a result of these challenges, the adoption of e-learning was slow and still at its infancy stage in public universities in Kenya. The study focused on the general university programme while the present study exposed how the current pandemic has necessitated the opportunity to introduce e-learning platforms in the field



of Political Science Education curriculum implementation in universities in Enugu State, Nigeria. Secondly, the research design, and the study location were different from the two studies, but the target population were the same in the two studies. Therefore, the previous study complemented the current study.

As part of the possible ways of addressing these challenges, Umar (2017) conducted a study on solutions to the implementation of e-learning in Business Studies in high schools in Semarang, Indonesia. The study employed survey research design and the aim of the study was to proffer solutions to the current state of e-learning in Semarang province. The study had five research questions. The respondents for the study were the lecturers of Business Education and School Management staff of the school. The population of the study was 108. The whole population was used for the study. Therefore, there was no sampling. The instruments for data collection were structured questionnaire, observation schedule, and checklist. The data were analyzed using Pearson product moment correlation at an alpha of 0.05 level of tolerance. The study revealed significant relationship between implementation of Business Education curriculum contents and adequate curriculum content coverage, the qualification of lecturers, and the provision of fund by the government, and attendance of seminar, conference workshop, lectures. Concretely, the study revealed full government support in terms of policy on network provision, and educational resources as panacea to the challenges of the adoption of e-learning in the implementation of the Business Studies curriculum. Despite looking at different subject matters, the present study found the findings of the previous study relevant. It put the present study in its context of curriculum implementation using e-learning. However, the previous study didn't consider covid-19 pandemic era. More so, the two studies differ in location; Semarang, Indonesia and Enugu Nigeria.

### **Methodology**

The study was a quantitative study. It adopted descriptive survey research design. It was appropriate for this study as it ascertained the opinions of respondents on the challenges and solutions to the implementation of Political Science Education curriculum in covid-19 pandemic era in Universities in Enugu State, Nigeria. The study was carried out in all the public and private Universities in Enugu State, Nigeria. Enugu State covers an approximately 12, 727sq kilometres, lies partly within the tropical rain forest belt to the south, and is located in the South-East geo-political zone of Nigeria. The native population is entirely from the Igbo tribe. Enugu state was chosen because its schools were in lockdown and students lost hope of lectures. Hence, the idea of online teaching and learning (E-learning).

The population for this study comprised all the Political Science Education lecturers and 400 level students from the Universities in Enugu State. There was a total of 84 final year students of Political Science Education and 28 Political Science Education lecturers in the 6 Universities. The total population was 112. The researchers studied the whole population. The population size was manageable. Therefore, there was no sampling.

The researchers used a structured questionnaire to collect data from the respondents. Specialists in curriculum studies, and measurement and evaluation face validated the questionnaire. The specialists checked the adequacy of the items and the weighting of the response options. They also ascertained whether the instrument measured what it purported to measure. The reliability of the instrument was established by trial testing using students and lecturers in Political Science Education programme in another university outside the study area that has similar characteristics with the study area. The researchers used Cronbach Alpha reliability technique to determine the internal consistency of the instrument, and came up with a



reliability estimate of 0.76. This indicated that the instrument was positive and highly reliable for the study. The researchers administered the instrument to the respondents. On data analysis, the researchers used mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions. The questionnaire was based on a 4-point rating scale. Any item that had mean value of 2.5 and above was accepted and those that fell below 2.5 were not accepted.

**Findings**

The researchers presented the findings based on the two research questions that guided the study. These research questions were: What are the challenges of Political Science Education curriculum implementation in the covid-19 pandemic era? What are the plausible solutions to Political Science Education curriculum implementation in the covid-19 pandemic era? The results are presented as follows:

*Challenges of Political Science Education Curriculum Implementation in the Covid-19 Pandemic Era in Universities in Enugu State, Nigeria*

**Table 1**

*Challenges of Political Science Education Curriculum Implementation*

S/NO	ITEMS	Lecturers			Students		
		Mean ( $\bar{X}$ )	Standard deviation	Decision	Mean ( $\bar{X}$ )	Standard deviation	Decision
1	Lecturers’ poor knowledge in information and communications technologies (ICTs)	2.51	1.20	Accepted	3.37	1.26	Accepted
2	Lecturers’ lack of interest on Political Science Education implementation process	3.48	1.18	Accepted	3.87	1.19	Accepted
3	Lecturers’ poor understanding of the curriculum content	2.54	1.22	Accepted	1.13	1.12	Rejected
4	Laxity on the part of some lecturers	2.52	1.20	Accepted	3.02	1.23	Accepted
5	Poor remuneration of lecturers	4.15	1.21	Accepted	2.58	1.12	Accepted
6	Lecturers’ lack of relevant competencies necessary for curriculum implementation	4.37	1.26	Accepted	2.54	1.22	Accepted
7	Erratic electric power supply in most parts of the country	3.87	1.19	Accepted	2.52	1.20	Accepted
8	Inadequate telephone service particularly in the rural areas	1.13	1.12	Rejected	3.15	1.21	Accepted



9	Non-inclusion of ICT programmes in teachers’ training curricula and/or at basic levels of education	3.02	1.23	Accepted	1.13	1.12	Rejected
10	Lack of finance	2.58	1.12	Accepted	3.02	1.23	Accepted
	<b>Grand Mean</b>	2.99	1.16	Accepted	2.58	1.12	Accepted

Table 1 displays some of the challenges in the implementation of Political Science Education curriculum in the covid-19 era. The result showed a grand mean of 2.99 for lecturers and 2.58 for students. These scores were above the bench mark of 2.5. Therefore, the corresponding listed items that garnered scores of 2.5 and above were the

main challenges/hinderances to the effective use of e-learning platforms in the implementation of Political Science Education curriculum during the covid-19 pandemic era in universities in Enugu State, Nigeria.

*Plausible Solutions to Political Science Education Curriculum Implementation in the Covid-19 Pandemic Era in Universities in Enugu State, Nigeria*

Table 2

*Solutions to Political Science Education Curriculum Implementation*

S/NO	ITEMS	Lecturers			Students		
		Mean ( $\bar{X}$ )	Standard deviation	Decision	Mean ( $\bar{X}$ )	Standard deviation	Decision
1	Resource materials should be made available and effectively utilized	2.75	1.21	Accepted	3.37	1.26	Accepted
2	Government should provide adequate financial resources	2.78	1.16	Accepted	3.87	1.19	Accepted
3	Strong leadership should be put in place to support innovation	2.67	1.26	Accepted	1.13	1.12	Rejected
4	There should be a strong network for the dissemination of information	3.76	1.22	Accepted	3.02	1.23	Accepted
5	Administrative systems should facilitate communication at all levels	2.55	1.20	Accepted	2.58	1.12	Accepted
6	Stimulants such as e-learning fellowships with attractive incentives can increase participation in digital local content creation.	3.31	1.21	Accepted	2.54	1.22	Accepted





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7	Training & retraining of lecturers through seminars, workshops, and/or conferences.	3.22	1.14	Accepted	2.52	1.20	Accepted
8	Proper monitoring of curriculum implementation	2.58	1.26	Accepted	3.15	1.21	Accepted
9	Curriculum planners should always review the curriculum to meet the taste of times.	2.56	1.16	Accepted	1.13	1.12	Rejected
10	Administrative support such as expertise, time and resources should be provided	2.52	1.20	Accepted	3.02	1.23	Accepted
<b>Grand Mean</b>		2.63	1.24	Accepted	3.09	1.12	Accepted

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Table 2 establishes the plausible solutions to Political Science Education curriculum implementation in the covid-19 pandemic era. Drawing from the table, the lecturers and students rejected only items numbers 3 and 9 as plausible solutions. However, their mean responses on the other items show that the use of e-learning platforms in the implementation of Political Science Education curriculum is possible.

#### ***Discussion of the Findings***

The study found government related factors, school related factors and lecturer related factors as some of the barriers faced in the implementation of Political Science Education curriculum in universities in Enugu State, Nigeria during the covid-19 pandemic era. Supporting the findings of the study, Akpochafo and Filho (2016) stated that the quality of education of a country largely depends on the quality of teachers. In other words, the quality of education is as good as the quality of teacher. If the quality of lecturers is poor, the quality of education will be poor. What this means, therefore is that the quality of lecturers will determine the effectiveness of curriculum implementation. The University education system needs adequately trained and motivated lecturers in order to succeed in its programme. For instance, the intended curriculum includes content for

ICT needs but trained personnel to handle such is inadequate. Hence, in some cases, they end up being taught by unskilled lecturers. While the ill-trained lecturers lack subject matter, the well-trained lecturers fail to implement the curriculum out of frustration because he has not been given the material resources needed for the professional discharge of his duties. This finding also corroborates with Ali (2020) who stated that after pre-service training which provides foundation for professional service, lecturers need to keep abreast with new developments in the system through in-service training. Other professional staff such as laboratory technicians and librarians also need to be in-serviced in order to give sound support to the teaching staff in the implementation of the curriculum. Employers such as the teaching service commission needs to ensure that teachers are well paid and on time so that curriculum implementation is not hindered by all means necessary. This is also in line with the UTAUT theory that this present study anchored on, which posited that adoption of e-learning in educational system is influenced by the ease of use, performance gain, public sway, adequate support, and proficiency.

The result of the study also indicated some solutions to the challenges encountered. The findings of the study



encouraged the provision of resource material and incentives to ease the effective implementation of the Political Science Education curriculum. This finding agrees with Falana (2015), who stated that for effective implementation of curriculum especially in the covid-19 era, there is need for the government to build on the opportunities e-learning offers educational institutions even post covid-19. He equally stated that appropriate measures should be given to maintenances, provision of stable internet provider to support easy and fast learning and teaching. Supporting this view, Eze, Chinedu-Eze and Adenike (2018) stated that for an effective implementation of curriculum via e-learning platforms, there is need for basic knowledge on how to operate computer and computer related tools should be given to both the students and teachers. The findings validated the UTAUT theory, which opined that with stronger resources like internet experience, the effect of performance expectancy increases, and the influence of effort expectancy decreases.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

The effective use of e-learning platforms in the implementation of Political Science Education curriculum in covid-19 pandemic era cannot be overemphasized. Universities were the worst hit in this period of the pandemic especially universities in Enugu State, Nigeria. That was the need for this study to establish the challenges and solutions to the implementation of the curriculum. The findings of the study revealed myriads of challenges ranging from government related to university and lecturer related. However, full support of the lecturer in terms of educational resources and in-service training in ICT were the key to the success implementation of the curriculum. Based on these findings therefore, the researchers recommend the following:

1. The government and non-governmental bodies should ensure that basic ICT gadgets like Computers, laptops, iPads and other mobile devices be made available and accessible to all

lecturers and students in education through subsidies and loan facilities.

2. The university management through the ICT department should ensure that broadband facilities are readily available in the university campuses to enhance the use of e-learning platforms for teaching and learning.
3. Lecturers should avail themselves for in-service training on the use of ICTs in teaching and learning.

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