

Nigeria's Education System Policy Review on Virtual Classroom over Traditional Classroom Learning and Management

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Abstract

The effectiveness of the internet as a medium for offering educational packages must be assessed as more tertiary institutions in Nigeria investigate creating educational materials and programmes for distribution via the internet to supplement traditional classroom instruction. With the growth of social media, internet-assisted learning is progressively gaining popularity among young people in school. With its highly competitive e-commerce, e-medical, e-transportation, and e-learning structure, internet learning is acknowledged on a global scale in a digitally civilized society. Beyond the population of school age, individuals need to be aware of and accept how technology is influencing all aspects of their lives. The management of such advancements must be addressed at the learning enterprise's instructional levels. The paper presents an exploratory study that examined the viability of integrating conventional teaching techniques with e-learning in Nigeria. This combination is under the purview of educational policies and implementation frameworks for management. By investigating potential causes/scenarios for the performance and attitude of sampled students toward e-learning, we offer implications and consequences of internet-based education on student learning.

Keywords: Traditional classroom, virtual classroom, policy evaluation, management strategies/analysis.

Introduction

The 2008 National Policy on Education outlines the goals and investments made by the federal and state governments to guarantee that Nigeria is a literate nation. The paper also outlines the structure, roles, and organizational structure of Nigeria's educational administration. The levels of education, professions, planning techniques, and government structure were noteworthy. The NEEDS concept received a lot of consideration when the National Policy on Education was first developed. In order to meaningfully contribute to the development of society, foster unity, and promote self-reliance for the average Nigerian citizen, various parts of the structure and policy bodies highlight the need to develop soft skills (cognition, literacy, and numeracy),

entrepreneurial, and the improvement of the education system from traditional to virtual (ICT) learning technique.

Without a doubt, the Nigerian constitution provides the fundamental legislative framework for the administration of education in Nigeria. The framework takes into account the involvement of the national, state, and local governments in the management and performance of educational duties. The 36 states' various state ministries of education, the Federal Ministry of Education, the 774 Local Government Areas (LGAs), and the Local Government Education Authorities are all in charge of education. The FCT is managed by the secretariat for FCT education. The primary body in charge of developing and carrying out education policy directives is the National Council of Education (NCE). The Federal Minister of Education, State Commissioners of Education, and top administrators from educational institutions and commission officers make up this group. The Joint Consultative Committee on Education (JCCE), which is made up of professional representatives from the federal and state ministries of education as well as their parastatals, provides the Joint Consultative Committee on Education with its technical support.

It is stated that a country's educational system has a significant impact on both its social and economic development. Education is getting easier to get every day. Virtual and traditional classroom learning have become more significant in recent years as a theoretical and practical challenge in education. Theoretically, students with different learning preferences should be able to get the best education possible in a well-maintained virtual classroom setting. This contrasts in several ways with the conventional lecture-based environment, which places a strong emphasis on auditory learners (Weller, 2010).

The usage of computers or the Internet both inside and outside of the educational institution helps to facilitate virtual classroom learning (Adeyeye, Afolabi, & Ayo, 2014). According to Bakia et al. (2010), virtual learning refers to the use of the Internet, computer software, or both to provide instruction to students while completely or significantly minimizing the need for students and lecturers to sit in a traditional classroom. Virtual classrooms are another name for online courses.

This system of computer-mediated communication houses a teaching and learning environment. A method whereby instructors and students collaborate to design and carry out educational activities like group discussions, collaborative projects, and debates, as well as the sharing of solutions to homework problems via emails, bulletin boards, chat rooms, and conferences. It includes a number of group communication and work spaces and facilities that are superior to those found in a traditional classroom. The development of IT and the internet provides the basis for the virtual classroom (Ozgur, 2015).

As a result, while the internet's attributes are missing from the traditional classroom, they are there in the virtual one. For instance, there are no boundaries regarding space, time, or distance, and it is simpler for both teachers and students to obtain more information online. Many people are even striving to use as much virtual technology as is practicable on the physical campus, suggesting that there may be a way for teachers and students to get over all the problems that exist in the traditional classroom. In such a campus, the differences between a traditional classroom and a virtual classroom are disregarded. Additionally, it has shortcomings that prohibit it from replacing the knowledge learned in a typical classroom setting, particularly at a traditional college.

In order to improve education and encourage students' participation in their chosen field of study, today's culture heavily relies on technology. Ekwonwune and Oparah (2020) claim that the utilization of a virtual learning environment for teaching and learning delivery is one concept that is changing the frontlines of knowledge acquisition in the modern educational landscape. The creation of virtual universities or universities based on information, communication, and technology (ICT) was permitted in developed countries (Anekwe, 2017). Only a very small percentage of Nigerian conventional institutions use virtual learning in some capacity for academic activity. Many educational institutions continue to view virtual learning as a myth due to their weak technological infrastructure.

The creation of appropriate technology infrastructure and services, such as online learning environments and virtual library systems, is urgently needed by higher education institutions, in

particular by the government, to support accessibility, learning, and student obligations (Nwabude, Ogwueleka, & Irhebhude, 2020). Conversations between teachers and students about access to these technological resources will increase the bar for usefulness. Many organizations in developed and some developing countries have adopted the use of a virtual learning environment (VLE) platform to facilitate and aid teaching and learning in tertiary institutions. By improving its citizens' information and communications technology (ICT) skills, the Nigerian government is focusing on higher education institutions in an effort to close the digital divide. The government promised to provide facilities and the necessary infrastructures to promote ICT and e-learning through the new Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) in order to achieve sustainable development in the twenty-first century. In this study, we provide the results of an exploratory study that examined the viability of integrating traditional teaching techniques with e-learning at the university level in Nigeria.

Nigeria's National Education Policy

The objectives, guidelines, anticipations, expectations, requirements, and standards of the National Policy on Education in Nigeria are met in order to guarantee the provision of high-quality education in Nigeria. Nigeria's National Policy on Education is a way for the government to use education as a weapon to achieve national objectives. A key element of Nigeria's current national education policy is prioritizing education. This is because it facilitates any fundamental movement in the social and intellectual direction of a society, education is the most effective change agent. The educational system has advanced over time, including improvements in terms of technology.

As a result of technical innovation and governmental policy changes, Nigeria now has a visible electronic educational system, including the Open University and others that have a virtual education system that consists of e-Books, e-Classrooms, e-Libraries, and e-Exams. A high-quality outcome is ensured by an effective educational system. In order to bring about good change in all facets of the nation's development, the National Policy on Education in Nigeria promotes raising educational standards in Nigeria. Even though the National Policy on Education in Nigeria primarily focuses on the educational system of the nation, it is rather lacking to restrict its policy

on e-learning to its higher institutions; rather, it should go all the way back to basic education as a solid foundation and a platform for higher echelons of study in the field of education for significant change.

Introduction of Virtual Classrooms

The virtual classroom's computer conference serves as its prototype. It was initially used to communicate and reduce long distances in particular fields. Then, the application's range quickly broadens. To start, the internet makes it possible for people to interact with the virtual world. Everyone is allowed to act and speak however they like. Users may find almost any kind of information they need online. And there's no need to worry about your appearance, gender, age, race, profession, or any other issue that would make it difficult for you to communicate in person. Second, educational philosophy is also developing. The educators concur that because it is teacher-centred rather than learner-centred, the average classroom is unsuccessful. Learners can only fully and properly develop in this way. The internet is hardly adequate for enabling students to reach the core of their study. With the aid of instructors, they can learn over the internet at their own pace, according to their individual skill levels.

Thirdly, the virtual classroom is a great way to ensure educational parity, especially for those who are underprivileged, live in remote locations, or don't have regular access to time to attend school. The top professors and the same courses as other students will be available to them in the virtual classroom, provided they have access to the internet. Education equality is therefore guaranteed. Therefore, this newly chosen approach seems to provide solutions to many issues that are practically impossible to address in the traditional classroom, at least in the near term. This is all accurate. But we must always remember where we really stand.

Types of Virtual Classroom

When doing virtual learning, the participant's location and time are the two primary factors to take into account. It is an example of remote learning that calls for students, mentors, and a scattered

location. Since both synchronous and asynchronous communication occurs in virtual learning, there are two main categories when learning time is taken into account (Racheva, 2017).

Synchronous

Online seminars, communication, and mobile connections are all part of synchronous virtual learning, which takes place in live mode. Demonstration, discussion, and lecture stations can be carried out in a synchronous setting by enabling the student and mentor to take part in one-on-one and group discussions. Quick feedback is made possible by this strategy through just-in-time clarification and information. This feedback helps to assess the student's comprehension and can guide mentors to concentrate on the important subject matter. To guarantee attendance for synchronous learning, video conferencing is used. Participants can converse with one another and engage in discussion at the same time thanks to a feature provided by the virtual learning environment. The VMLS (Virtual Management Learning System) platform is where it takes place, according to both Racheva (2017) and Vdocipher.com (2018).

Asynchronous

In this type of learning, students finish their assignments at their own pace and on their schedule. The ability to regulate the order of occurrences is sought after and is time independent. There is no need to download study materials because they are available on the website; at any point throughout the learning process, one can access the available content via the online platform. Direct contact with other learners and the mentor is optional in this scenario because the student can choose to learn at their own desired time by selecting from reading resources, video courses, seminars, and discussions. This sort of virtual learning is asynchronous because the applicants connect with one another via emails and private messages (Maanvizhi et al., 2020).

Essential Features of Virtual Classes

Because of their wonderful advantages, virtual classrooms are valued. It is affordable, adaptable, simple to use, collaborative, and experimental.

Adaptable: Comparing virtual classrooms to conventional classroom environments, more flexibility is reportedly possible. It enables the student to get in touch with the teacher of a particular course whenever it's convenient from anywhere in the world. Above all, since they are not physically obligated to be in class, students can use their free time for studying. (Eztalks.com, 2017)

Simple to use: Students can join the topic(s) that interest them by searching for it, and it is easy to access from anywhere in the world. Candidates can learn at home, saving them the inconvenience of traveling and waiting. It is a rescuer, then.

Affordable: Virtual learning is cost effective since the student does not need to spend a huge number of money to enroll in a course or travel a considerable distance to come and pursue specialized courses away from home. (Majumda, 2016) underline the importance of enrolling in the necessary course at a specified charge that the candidate may pay.

Collaboration: These days, virtual students are working together more successfully. For projects or group discussions, teams or groups are formed, and candidates compete for high leaderboard points. Students can interact with one another in a virtual classroom by sharing a shared interest. 2018 (Racheva).

Experimental: Both students and teachers can benefit from creation, which is a quality of learning. Tutors now have more innovative ways to provide material in a creative, engaging, and safe manner thanks to virtual learning. Through online learning, prospective candidates in the appropriate field who are knowledgeable about novel ways that illustrate what functions well and what does not can be identified (Ferriman, 2019)

Methods / Capabilities

Below is a list of the numerous attributes of virtual classrooms that promote successful and interactive learning.

Live audio and video support: The use of audio and video in a virtual classroom for e-learning is advantageous. This gives the learner the option to exchange movies over an audio conference while studying verbally. By forming personal connections with learners, experts can share videos with them. As a result, students develop confidence in pedagogy (Maanvizhi et al., 2020).

Session description: The entire class period is recorded on video and kept on file in the library for future use. Absentees really benefit from this because they can review the topics the teachers covered by watching the film. Most importantly, students can later go back to the recorded films (Maanvizhi, et al., 2020).

Sharing desktop educational resources: This makes it possible for the instructor to present the students with several content formats. MS Word, MS Excel, PPT, PDF, and Flash are the formats that academics utilize the most frequently. Sharing different subject materials, such as notes, diagrams, instructional videos, and so on, is tremendously helpful with the help of this resource. Learning is interactive and predictive thanks to this content (Ferriman, 2019).

Whiteboard: An alternative to the conventional method is to utilize a whiteboard. It is the device used in online classes to doodle pictures and numbers. Professors utilize it to visually convey concepts via drawings or other methods. The lecturer makes the graphics that the pupils ask for. According to Basat (2018) and Learncube.com (2018), it is beneficial to emphasize the ideas.

A classroom run by the professor with engaged students In order to prevent chaos during a session, students are not allowed to communicate with one another before the teacher starts. Do an audio/video conference; the instructor will correctly manage the attendees. When a student has a question that needs to be addressed, they can change this state to "raise hand," which demands that the lecturer address the student's concerns. Only one student may interact at a time in order to prevent disturbance (Maanvizhi, et al., 2020).

Live technical assistance: This feature offers text-based chat and live technical support to both learners and users. Live tech assistance allows users to interact on the spot. It is yet another advantageous aspect of the virtual classroom (Maanvizhi, *et al*, 2020).

Trends and Challenges in Virtual Training

There is a current trend toward condensing virtual classroom sessions. Reports from 2012 indicate that the majority of virtual classroom sessions lasted 60–90 minutes (Huggett, 2019). Virtual classes currently only last around 60 minutes, and 15% of respondents found that virtual sessions only last 45 minutes or less. In this day and age, only 23% of mentors in virtual classes use web cameras, which is remarkable. About 42% of users just turn on their cameras at the beginning of a

session before turning them off. There were numerous justifications offered for this, with the most frequent ones being a lack of internet speed as well as audio and other technical issues.

All study materials, including the daily lectures, have to be uploaded online for this program. Since students were out of sight and out of mind, many institutions were concerned about the relationship between teachers and students as well as how to change dependent learners into autonomous ones who could communicate with their professors and peers. Other difficulties with learning in a virtual classroom include:

Both teachers and students lacked technical expertise: For online users, a number of technical issues restrict or slow down the teaching-learning process. Favale and others (2020). Since some teachers lack the necessary technology skills, they face several difficulties when working on or planning for online lessons. Gadio and Carlson (2002). Due to the fact that the majority of online lessons are not technically oriented, students may also find it challenging to analyze them. (Song 2004)

Online teaching requires a large amount of time and money, and is also pricey: The expense of acquiring the tools and technology, keeping them in working order, educating the workforce, and producing internet content is all substantial.

Inadequate electric power supply: Nigeria's epileptic power supply has been one of the challenges keeping online teaching initiatives there from becoming successful. Many urban Nigerians who expect to have access to power for 24 hours a day can only hope to have it for at least three hours a day. On the other hand, because they live in rural areas without access to power, many students are unable to participate in online education (Emeka and Nyeche, 2016).

Nigerians have extreme poverty: This may prevent certain teachers and students from having access to all digital tools, the internet, or Wi-Fi. Children in Nigeria's rural and underdeveloped areas are lagging behind because they lack the skills necessary to change their learning styles or transition to new ones. Many Nigerian parents struggle to feed their families three square meals a day, let alone pay for mobile phones, computers, data plans, and other internet tools or equipment so that their kids may do online classes (Ngumbi, 2020). In addition, parents will still be unable to

leave the house to go to work since they must stay with the kids to help them operate the equipment safely.

Issue with slow learners: One limitation of online education is the educator-learner relationship's lack of direct interaction. There are differences among students and learners in terms of their confidence, skills, and knowledge (Karabenick, 2004). Without the teacher's aid, some slow learners could have trouble understanding. Some of these slow learners rely on their peers to reiterate the concepts that the teacher has taught them, but how will they handle the issue now that they are cut off from the rest of the class? The effects of this achievement gap will be felt long after the pandemic has ended, and many students may never catch up with their peers.

Flexibility nature of online education: Online learning's adaptability is hampered by students' inability to receive one-on-one attention. Slow students might never find the time to pursue online education because it is too flexible. Additionally, when it comes to making time to attend online classes, students show little planning or dedication. Students are free to do whatever they want with their time because teachers cannot be seen to supervise and monitor what they are teaching. If parents don't keep an eye on certain sluggish kids, they won't be focused on online education; instead, their attention will be diverted and they'll use the internet for other activities like chatting with friends, watching movies, playing games, and so on.

Difficulty in evaluating students: The majority of schools who use online instruction during the lockdown find it challenging to evaluate their students, according to Kapsasia (2020). How will the teacher grade the work and give feedback to the pupils if the evaluation questions are not objective? Exams couldn't be held at some universities that use online learning platforms to instruct their pupils. It was difficult for professors and students to interact by asking and responding to questions during or after each online lesson.

Disparity in the scheme of work: Each school has a different work scheme, thus a topic that is scheduled for the first term at one school could be moved to the second term in another. There is no uniformity, proper quality control, or e-content delivery in the learning processes, and the government doesn't establish any explicit requirements in their educational policy. According to the national policy in Nigeria, Sambo, (2020), it has been noted that schools do not all have the same organizational structure, but the curriculum is the same.

Network and internet connectivity issues: A lack of suitable digital resources, internet access, or Wi-Fi can lead to a number of setbacks and cause many students to stop participating in the learning process. In these trying times, digital equity is essential, but sadly, not all teachers and students have access to digital services.

Lack of favourable learning environments: This is a major problem for students at home since children are easily distracted by noise and other activities going on around them, which can affect their academic performance (Sambo, 2018). According to Obed et al. (2018), a child's learning environment affects how well they learn and may determine whether they succeed or fail in school.

Traditional vs. Virtual Classroom

In a traditional classroom, the subject to be studied is given, the schedule for its study is provided, the teachers for each topic are assigned, a room with four walls is provided, the time for each teacher is allotted, the time for students is also fixed, and in some cases, in addition to black board projectors and smart TVs, there are also times when students hunt for their teachers to get questions answered or teachers are made to wait for all students (Maanvizhi, *et al*, 2020).

Students have the option of synchronous or asynchronous learning in a virtual classroom. If synchronous is selected, a teacher will organize online education where students can engage and get their questions answered simultaneously. The internet, used on any kind of device, is used to achieve this. The student can use their leisure time to learn about their chosen subject asynchronously and outside of conventional classroom settings.

The same group of individuals are present in both a traditional classroom and a virtual classroom. These individuals are teachers, learners, and fellow students. For instance, in a traditional classroom, teachers utilize a chalkboard to create diagrams and figures while interacting with the students and assessing them. In a virtual classroom, a whiteboard is available for drawing the essential objects, a live chat option is offered for any questions, and frequent examinations are given to gauge the performance of the students (Maanvizhi, *et al.*, 2020).

Conclusion and Recommendations

Since education is the foundation for a country's potential growth, it is crucial and cannot be ignored. Although the national education strategy aims to ensure that the educational system is properly administered, there has been a substantial setback as a result of the numerous issues, and the obstacles must be severely addressed for a better educational system in Nigeria. The comfort of the pupils serves as the main driving force behind this type of instruction. The best way to connect with learners who are spread out over the world is through this. The student will have more time to learn or pursue other hobbies because it saves time and money. It is a great field since students may get their questions answered from anywhere at any time. It encourages a competitive mind-set, which promotes intellectual development. Because they study because they want to and not because they are required to, as is typical in traditional classrooms, students who learn in a virtual classroom seem to have more knowledge and perform better.

However, a number of difficulties, including the percentage of the virtual classroom and the conventional difficulty, have not yet been resolved. For various students, educators should employ various tactics. However, there are some benefits of the virtual classroom that exceed some of the drawbacks of conventional classrooms. As a result, some teachers think it is also possible to integrate virtual courses into conventional classroom settings. Additionally, there is proof that ordinary American students enroll in online courses. As a result, teachers ought to consider more carefully which classes are best taught in conventional classrooms and which ones are better suited for online learning. Textbooks, curriculum, and virtual course materials must all be properly crafted.

The study therefore, recommends the following:

1. As a result of technological developments and improved instructional delivery methods, many students and schools looking to advance have found that virtual learning is a viable option to traditional brick and mortar institutions. All those involved in education should support this.

2. Students should be helped to flourish in a virtual environment since they lack time management skills and are consequently unmotivated (Ekwonwune & Oparah, 2020).
3. Virtual learning should be acknowledged as a crucial part of any school's plan for institutional resilience and academic continuity because it does not require a huge building or significant student support services.
4. It is simple to make the case that virtual learning programs would offer the same quality of instruction at a fraction of the cost to enhance student learning skills and knowledge in our Nigerian colleges. Programs for virtual learning should be supported as a result.
5. Because the virtual learning environment is congruent with digital development, it should be systematically brought to our overwhelmingly traditional learning environment.
6. According to Burgess and Sievertsen (2020), the government should immediately start integrating online education into all higher and intermediary education institutions, which should be run by reputable experts in various study fields. By doing this, learning and teaching materials and methods would be improved and made more approachable for a wider spectrum of pupils.

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