

Adopting E-Learning for In-Service Training of Nigeria's Public Servant

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INTRODUCTION

According to Orji and Job (2013), education is a fundamental investment in human capital development. It plays a significant role in long-term productivity and growth at both micro and macro levels. The development of public officers' capacity is essential to the organization's overall effectiveness as such officers are responsible for formulating and implementing policies in critical areas of the economy. Public organizations are established to provide public services, including operational tasks, decision-making, policy-making, implementation of strategy, execution, and supervision of projects. According to Popa (2012), public organizations serve the public interest. Political factors strongly influence decision-making; the organizational system is regulated by law and constituted authorities to determine the administration process. The effective management of human resources is an essential component of the public service and the quality of services offered to the citizens (Yahiaoui et al., 2015).

Learning is continuous, and the requirements and preferences of each learner appear to be different, hence the use of different learning approaches and methods to get knowledge across to learners. Training is one of the approaches devised for the assessment, management, and development of organizations and the modern-day organizational environment requires capacity development as a significant activity for any organization to be competitive (Ojokuku & Adegbite, 2014).

THE CONCEPT OF E-LEARNING

In the current global knowledge economy, learning has become a prerequisite for survival. Social, economic, and technological forces continue to alter the global economy and the culture in organizations and the world. Specifically, these forces continue to revolutionize learning methodologies in institutions and organizations. Technology, the increasing need for knowledge and training, the necessity for just-in-time training delivery, and the pursuit for cost-effective means to meet the learning needs of a globally distributed workforce has reinvented the procedures that underlie the design, development, and delivery of training and education in the workplace.

There are diverse views as regards the definition of e-learning from professionals in the field. Experts such as Dublin (2003) and Oblinger and Hawkins (2005) assert that all researchers accept no definition. They believed e-learning means different things to different people (Oblinger & Hawkins, 2005). Heinze, Procter, Zemsky & Massy in 2004 gave vent to the same opinion, affirming that e-learning is a concept in search of consistent definition. They argued

further that it is problematic to find a universally accepted definition of e-learning (Zemsky and Massy, 2004).

E-learning is identified as an educational outcome that has surfaced from the development of ICT. Its general idea is mostly "learning which involves the usage of any electronic device, from computers to mobile phones, and which might, or might not, involve the usage of the internet or intranet" (Kenan, 2015, p. 24).

The rapid increase of knowledge through e-learning is a necessity for current and future generations. Higher education for adult learners in the public sector has attracted the attention of both researchers and practitioners. Previous studies have shown that wherever and whenever, learning and access to information and communication can be managed through using e-learning (Pena-Ayala et al., 2014). Abachi and Muhammad (2014) posit that all individuals involved in e-learning are keen on utilizing flexible access in terms of time, space, pace, and online collaborative knowledge.

Some other studies offered the following assertions to define and identify the concept of e-learning. Academic scholars precluded the synonymous usage of the terms "e-learning" and "online learning". They endorsed in its place more comprehensive e-learning developed definitions, like using new information and communication technologies in education (Bates, 2001). Ebisin et al. (2017) record that; e-learning is inclusive and similar to other forms of learning, such as Computer-Based Learning (CBL), Technology-Enhanced Learning (TEL), Computer-Aided Instruction (CAI), Internet-Based Training (IBT), Web-Based Training (WBT), Virtual Learning Environments (VLE) - which are also called learning platforms, M-learning and digital educational collaboration.

In Gotschall's (2000) view, online training is categorized as an all-encompassing term that denotes all training carried out with a computer over a network, comprising a company's intranet, local area network, and the internet.

Urdan & Weggen (2000) argue that online learning makes up only a single part of e-learning and defines learning via the internet, intranet, and extranet. Online learning can spread from a basic online learning program that includes text and graphics, exercises, testing, and record-keeping, such as test scores and bookmarks, to a sophisticated online learning program. This complexity would consist of animations, simulations, audio and video sequences, peer and expert discussion groups, online mentoring, links to materials on a corporate intranet or the web, and communications with corporate education records.

Hall & Snider (2000) support this assertion in their definition of e-learning as the process of learning via computers over intranets and the internet. They further argue that e-learning is referred to as online training, web-based training, distributed learning, or technology for learning. Distance learning was, however, exempted from the e-learning definition. Instead, it was defined as a learning process meeting three criteria: a geographical distance separates communication between the trainer and participant; the communication is two-way and interactive, and some form of technology is used to facilitate the learning process.

E-learning, according to Ryan et al. (2016), "is in contradistinction to face-to-face (F2F) learning". "Its most characteristic feature is the absence of the physical classroom, which is substituted by the deployment of web-based technologies offering opportunities for out-of-class learning independent of time, place and pace" (Potter, 2015). In the backdrop of higher education, Ryan et al. (2016) assert that online learning is referred to courses offered online.

Characteristically, the online learning framework is launched through learning management systems (LMS) or virtual learning environments (VLE) such as Moodle and Blackboard (Pellas & Kazanidis, 2015). Docimini & Palumbo (2013) stated that e-learning is a dynamic technological learning environment that enhances collaboration among learners and instructors, access to a wide range of resources and improves learning. Accordingly, e-learning supports learners with specific unique capabilities such as interactivity, robust search, immediacy, physical mobility and situating of educational activities, self-organized and self-directed learning, corporate training, personalized learning, and effective technique of delivering classes and gaining knowledge.

According to Garrison (2011), e-learning represents an asynchronous and synchronous means of communicating and constructing knowledge. Sangrà et al. (2012) suggest that "e-learning can be viewed as a natural advancement of distance learning, which continually takes advantage of the latest tools to emerge in the framework of technologies for structured education".

E-learning connects two key extents; learning and technology. While learning is a cognitive process for attaining knowledge, technology is a facilitator of the learning progression. The implication, therefore, is that technology is utilized just like any other apparatus in the education practice, as is a pencil or a notebook, for instance (Aparicio et al., 2016). While this seems quite elementary and logical, a pen is a more technologically transparent tool, and its use may, therefore, look more ordinary to many. Additionally, technology reinforces other challenging circumstances because it embraces several dimensions.

Conclusively, new technologies, including computer networks, interactive media, the internet, and digital technologies, significantly increase the reach of e-learning delivery. It enables and allows learners to connect and interact with each other and their instructors at will, thus opening up a universal market. Hence, most institutions are attracted to e-learning systems, and the e-learning community has grown nonstop (Harun, 2001). In 2003, industry analysts placed the size of the e-learning market at 3 billion USD in the United States; the number grew to almost 15 billion USD by 2005, 18 billion USD in 2010. The e-learning market size exceeded 200 billion USD in 2019 and is expected to grow at 8% between 2020 and 2026 (Adkins, 2011). The dawn of several new technologies, such as cloud computing and Artificial Intelligence, coupled with increasing internet penetration across the globe, will drive market growth. Increased cloud adoption provides flexibility in content storage, sharing, and access to learners and content providers (Wadhwani et al., 2020).

The demand for the development of e-learning is increasingly growing. Nevertheless, the need for research on potential factors that influences e-learning adoption, such as quality, which is the core of education and training in most countries (Ehlers & Hilera, 2012), is felt particularly in developing countries (Masoumi & Lindstrom, 2012). Several authors agree that e-learning is

regarded as a new solution to bridge the inequality gap in education in many developing countries, including Pakistan, Nigeria, and Thailand (Iqbal & Ahmad, 2010; Foloruns et al., 2006; Siritongthaworn et al., 2006).

E-LEARNING IN NIGERIA

Occupying a landmass of about 923,768 square kilometres and over 274 ethnic groups, Nigeria has over 198 million people (NPC, 2018). The country's culture, commerce, and education have brought her international outlook; hence, it is not surprising that Nigeria is recognized as a leading country in ICT infrastructure and Training in Africa. Presently, various initiatives have been undertaken by the Government and the private sector to support e-learning in Nigeria. Through the Ministry of Education and other relevant educational agencies, Nigeria's Government carries out ICT projects to support e-learning in Nigeria. Some of which are:

1. The Nigerian Universities and Polytechnics Network Project
2. The Teachers Network (TechNet) Project
3. The School Net Project
4. The National Virtual Library
5. The Nigerian Education, Academic and Research Network (AARNet)
6. National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) (Odunayo et al., 2013, p. 206)

These initiatives notwithstanding, implementation and management is usually a challenge, hence the low exploitation of e-learning in Nigeria. To be current with the rest of the world in issues, particularly training issues, electronic training will be appropriate in the Nigerian civil service. For these reasons, the Nigerian Government has tried to promote technology adoption and use by creating programs like the National Telecommunication Policy, Science and Technology Policy and National Information Technology Development Agency (Zainab et al., 2015, p. 544). "However, the Nigerian public sector is slow in implementing technology despite it being a significant sector" (Eze et al., 2013).

The Government has managed to sustain the project of the National Open Universities in Nigeria after a myriad of challenges and difficulties. The aim was to meet the pressing need for distance learning to manage the country's educational and training needs of equality and access to education by all Nigerians. Winifred Ekanem Oyo-Ita, the Head of Civil service of the Federation, in 2018, launched an e-learning platform called the Public Service Learning Management System (PSLMS).

This platform is a Multi-Tenant Learning Management System that allows the simultaneous delivery of online training to over a million users globally. This innovation was in line with the Government's 2017-2020 Economic Recovery and Growth Plan (ERGP) and the 2017-2020 Federal Civil Service Strategy and Implementation Plan on capacity building and personnel development of public servants. The system is a simple, direct training method and will further improve capacity building methods in public services.

The private sector in Nigeria also plays a vital role in the development of e-learning. At the forefront of developing telecenters to support e-learning in Nigeria is the private sector. These telecenters are used to train the public, especially the poor masses, on some necessary skills and essential knowledge to help them improve their standard of living (Mbangala & Samzugui, 2014). Most of these telecenters are affordable and accessible to low-income earners. Although

some of these telecenters are profit-oriented, their services are not of less quality. Some of the telecenters are:

1. Community Teaching and learning centres
2. Lagos Digital Village by Junior Achievement Nigeria
3. Owerri Digital Village by Youth for Technology Foundation
4. Computer Literacy for Older Persons Programme by Mercy Mission (Mac-Ikemenjima, 2015)

Regardless, the adoption of e-learning to build and develop the capacity of public servants in Nigeria is still at its early stage. Numerous developing countries lack essential components, which are vital to implementing e-learning, such as computers and internet access (Rhema & Miliszewska, 2012). This issue is coupled with a lack of technically qualified staff to pass out necessary installations, insufficient funds to acquire all the essential infrastructure, and poor planning (Oliver, 2001). "Those factors increase the possibility of failure of e-learning projects and student access limitation to e-learning infrastructure" (Bhalalusesa et al., 2013).

E-LEARNING METHODOLOGIES

E-learning is among the essential explosion propelled by the internet revolution. E-learning uses web technology as its necessary technical infrastructure to deliver knowledge (Oye et al., 2012). This medium permits users to gather knowledge by both synchronous and asynchronous methodologies to effectively face the need to acquire up-to-date know-how within productive environments rapidly. With its potential to transform how and when employees learn, training becomes more incorporated with work and will use shorter, more integrated, just-in-time delivery systems. E-learning provides content through electronic information and communications technologies (ICTs) (Oye et al., 2012).

According to Ajayi (2008), the utilization of these facilities comprises various techniques, which include computer-based operation networks, systematized feedback systems, audio and video conferencing, internet worldwide websites, and computer-assisted instruction. These delivery methods increase how, where, and when public servants can take part in lifelong learning. As the recent trend of academic and industrial realities is to increase the use of e-learning, demand for technical support will be higher. Precisely, software tools supporting the crucial task of instruction design should deliver automated support for the analysis, design, documentation, implementation, and deployment of instruction via the web.

INTERACTION IN LEARNING

There are two types of interactions among humans; Learner(s) - Tutors(s) Interaction, and Learner(s) – Learner(s) Interaction (Oye et al, 2012, p. 50). Consequently, most scholarly study converges on these types of interaction, particularly in the research of Computer-Supported Collaborative Learning (CSCL). Havalais (2016) posits that CSCL represents the learning component in a broader set of communication theories related to digital networks and also informs the understanding of collaborative structures more broadly. According to Hiltz et al. (2002), if collaboration rather than individual learning designs were applied in an online class, students should be more encouraged to participate actively. They should see the medium as comparatively friendly and personal as a result of online social interactions. This enhanced active group interaction and collaboration in the online course, resulting in better self-reported

learning experiences. While individuals working alone online tend to be less motivated, perceive decreased levels of learning, and perform lower on the test of mastery.

In Computer-Supported Collaborative Learning (CSCL), researchers typically distinguish two types of interactions between learner-tutor and learner-learner. The first one, synchronous interaction, entails that all learners are online at the same time. Instances include video teleconferencing, Internet voice telephone, text-based virtual learning environments, text-based chat systems, instant messaging systems, graphical virtual reality environments, and net-based virtual auditorium or lecture room systems. (Oye et al., 2012). This interaction model fosters faster problem solving, scheduling and decision making and affords increased opportunities for development.

The second form of interaction is asynchronous interaction. Here learners or tutors have the liberty of time and location to partake in the interaction. Some of these forms of interaction include interaction using e-mail, bulletin board systems, and discussion forums. Haythornthwaite (1999) reports that more constant communication and closer interpersonal connections among students can occur by expanding exchanges to times outside of classes. As a result, while one cannot entirely simulate a real classroom with synchronous interaction, one can present asynchronous interaction that offers better reflection and promotes global communication unbounded by time zone limitations. Asynchronous interaction thus is more frequently provided in CSCL systems than the more expensive synchronous interaction.

Amongst several options for in-service training, adopting e-learning is being supported by several factors.

EFFECTIVENESS OF E-LEARNING

Research studies investigating the effectiveness of e-learning has intensified in recent years. Primarily it is associated with the increased potentials for IT and learning and improved political and organizational attention to 'what works in learning. E-learning helps learners to take responsibility for their learning, becomes autonomous and self-confident. It empowers introverted students to interact freely, provides diversification of activities, fosters their intrinsic motivation, and permits the acquisition of valuable study and time management skills. The need for alternative learning methods is growing exponentially. The utilization of corporate electronic learning is increasing as many organizations have adopted e-learning for employee training and learning to establish a collaborative learning environment (Kuznia, 2014).

The current global nature of business has caused several organizations to rely on e-learning as the future because of its capability to reach large groups of people in different areas or countries, reducing costs, reducing the environmental impact of regular business travel, and efficient dissemination of information. E-learning gradually became the preferred learning method for many individuals due to its global reach and accessibility. Nigeria adoption and usage of technologies are backward, as seen by the low level in the diffusion of e-learning (Salawudeen, 2010). Nigeria, having the largest economy in Africa, has the financial resources and people to design and deliver e-training programs successfully.

However, the country still has inadequate financial policies and a low level of technological development and engineering (Salawudeen, 2010). However, within the Nigerian public service, the Public Service Institute of Nigeria (PSIN), NIGCOMSAT, and Sawtell Technologies have signed a tripartite agreement to implement and deploy a Multi-Tenant Learning Management System in the institute. (PSIN to Digitalize Training, 2018). PSIN is mandated to provide transformational Training to Public Servants and the delivery of training to participants who must comply with global best practices. With the e-learning Management System, the cost implications for training will be reduced, and public servants can undertake training and re-training for efficiency and productivity. The effectiveness of a learning process is achieved when its results are lasting and transferable to other situations.

Training Approaches and Methodologies in Organizations

The age we presently live in is described as filled with disruptive change by Christensen & Overdorf (2000), whereby organizations are required to deliver higher value through a unique combination of innovation, quality, efficiency, and customization. These new foundations of weight cannot be attained by doing more of the same or tinkering with the familiar. Instead, obsolete operating models and thought patterns must be substituted with fresh and novel ones. To achieve this, organizational leaders must stimulate new thought processes and actions among employees (Bontis et al., 2002). In our disruptive world, an organization's capacity to learn, acquire, apply and spread new insights has been famed as the essential strategic capability and as a leading source of competitive advantage

LEARNING AS A CONTEMPORARY TRAINING METHOD

In response to the demanding change in the workplace, most organizations depend on traditional training and various contemporary forms of training (Rozar et al., 2011). E-learning, the latest form of use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to improve and expedite teaching and learning, has become a popular and significant subset in education technology. It offers online learning and teaching platform for specific knowledge through the help of Internet technology all over the world (Brahma. 2017).

Modern technology like satellite communications, the internet, and electronics are alternatives available to enhance and advance the quality of training in organizations. Horton (2000) is of the opinion that the application of technology does not change how people learn, and it changes how they can be taught.

CHALLENGES ASSOCIATED WITH E-LEARNING IN NIGERIA'S PUBLIC SERVICE

Countries are making the conception and distribution of information and communication technology (ICT) of critical importance worldwide. Several reasons have been given for the emergence of e-learning. Some of which is the desire to reach many persons within the same time frame, increase the population of educated individuals and the opportunity to share knowledge across boards (Odunayo et al., 2013). E-learning in Nigeria rose as a response to the global task of making education accessible and affordable for all that desired learning as well as meeting up with the global trend in learning. A key asset to the Nigerian State is her vast population, which is a fundamental human resource. The staff and members of the Nigerian public service make up a good number of this population. As a result, for Nigeria to have a dependable and productive human capital, the national workforce must be adequately trained (Zainab et al., 2015).

E-learning in Nigeria has recently gained wider attention and acceptance both within and outside the public service system. E-learning in Nigeria's public service has continued to advance, albeit not without challenges. Salawudeen (2010) observes that the advance in ICT has led to the augmentation and near phase-out of the conventional education delivery methods. These modern technologies increased flexibility in education and ensured that more persons were reached in many countries worldwide. This flexibility and the increasingly redefined roles of individuals within the sector has posed a new challenge for stakeholders in education. While technology-based education cannot substitute formal learning, it rather complements it. The e-learning process facilitates the transfer of knowledge with the use of electronic devices. According to Odunayo et al. (2013, p.207), the advent of electronic learning has redefined the dawn of learning, changed educators' functions, and offered more prospects for formal training and continuing education. The tremendous boom in Information Communication Technology (ICT) in Nigeria has led many organizations to consider using e-learning abilities to promote lifelong learning and the promotion of distance education (Ume, 2016).

In recent times, mobile learning has been practised in most developed nations (Ayodele, 2010). Nigerian training institutions, however, have been behind in the adoption of these modern technologies as there is a meagre diffusion rate to online learning; hence, the lag in adoption. The effectiveness of an e-learning process depends on several factors, including a suitable medium for proper dissemination of information, availability of technological devices, reliability of the process, and learners' acceptability. An effective e-learning process "breeds new ways of thinking and adds to the improvement of collaboration and interaction among learners" (Pamfilie, Bumbac & Orindaru, 2014, p. 374).

The Nigerian public sector is faced with various challenges that might hinder the delivery of effective service delivery. According to Zainab et al. (2015), the key challenge within the public service is infrastructure. This challenge is a common challenge for most developing countries still unable to adopt e-learning. Organizations face a situation where employees are not readily equipped technologically, making it challenging to fully implement e-learning (Ellis and Kuznia, 2014). To build an enabling environment for the adoption of e-learning, infrastructure, information, and communications technology literacy are the requisite combinations essential in the creation, management, evaluation, and integration of information. With this in mind, the Nigeria Computer Society 2013 Conference supported the development of a robust infrastructure positioning for Nigeria (Zainab, 2019). The conference proceedings agreed that infrastructural development must be a priority to successfully create, manage, and execute e-learning within the polity.

Salawudeen (2010) stated that Nigeria lacks mostly in technological development and engineering, besides a poorly instituted education finance policy. Of importance are learners commitment towards learning as the process is driven by the learner (Odunayo et al., 2013).

Factors mitigating successful e-learning, as identified by Montgomerie et al. (2016), are lack of peer support, organizational culture, time allocation, technical delivery, and learners discipline towards learning. Acquiring technological devices and internet subscriptions for employees in the Nigerian public sector is a challenge. As stated by the National Communication Commission (NCC) in a study conducted in 2013, over 50 million persons within the country have access to

a mobile phone. Regrettably, a meagre 5% of the population can afford to gain access to the internet (Odunayo et al., 2013, p. 208). Therefore, the financial and social status of the learner determines the effective distribution of e-learning.

Olutola (2015) identified four challenges associated with the successful adoption of online learning as; poor or inadequate internet connectivity, lack of right and appropriate technological gadgets, unavailability of required software and lack of strategic planning in determining training needs.

Al-Hujran et al. (2013, p.1199) identified the following issues from the learners perspective; lack of awareness about the usefulness of e-learning, vague understanding of e-learning, resistance to change traditional learning methods, and organizational's role in determining learners use of e-learning tools.

Salawudeen (2010) focuses on the significant challenges that mitigate against the effective adoption of e-learning in Nigerian institutions: low IT literacy levels among learners, high cost of internet connectivity, and slow network in many areas within the country lackadaisical attitude of learners. E-learning allows for autonomous learning; however, some learners do not possess the discipline and commitment to focus on learning without guidance from a trainer and an epileptic power supply. The challenge of power in developing countries is a central impediment for an enhanced technologically developed system. Learners resident in cities, towns and within rural communities suffer from constant power failures. Nwabufo et al. (2013) inform that this situation is worse for residents in the countryside as they are not even connected to the national power grid, hence a total absence of electricity.

Bhalalusesa et al. (2013) categorized challenges associated with the adoption of e-learning into four categories;

- The individual component
- The technological category
- The curriculum-related issues (instructions, activities and diverse supports) and
- Contextual factors which involve the training institution, its administrative and operational efficiency.

In the review of Bhalalusesa et al. (2013), it was concluded that factors pertinent to the individual learners' characteristics are yet to be effectively managed in developing countries. In contrast, the hierarchical educational approaches prevalent in many developing countries may have to be advanced into an instructional technique that is more familiar to the individual learners' activities, self-learning, and enthusiasm. This transformation is imperative as it hopes to gradually alter both the student and the facilitators' conventional function. Kenan (2015, p. 41), agrees that this transformation will necessitate due emphasis on the individuals' activities and perceptions and how these changes to learning were triggered e-learning effects.

The identified challenges can provoke training institutions to develop the improved educational curriculum and learning techniques for an efficient online learning experience capable of providing measurable results and involvement for all learners and educators (Odunayo et al., 2013).

LIMITATIONS OF E-LEARNING ADOPTION IN THE NIGERIAN PUBLIC SERVICE

Several factors have been suggested as limitations to e-learning adoption in the public service. Although e-learning is viewed as an essential component of the modern teaching and learning process, it has also challenged organizations to redefine their training approaches (Castillo-Merino & Serradell-Lopez, 2014). The limiting factors identified affects the learners, trainers and the organization.

Organizational Readiness

Technological advancements within the organizations have undoubtedly created possibilities for easy administration and made lots of dynamism in organizational culture. According to Dasguta & Gupta (2010), the growth of technology in recent years has impacted how governments at all levels work, and the use of information electronically in the Government is frequently on the rise. The recent development in technology made it apparent to develop and implement strategies and policies that will enable the adoption of online learning. A significant limitation identified is a lack of organizational willingness to accept change and consider additional administrative expenses. Organizations are faced with situations of not being fully ready to introduce and implement e-learning (Msomi et al., 2016).

Employees readiness

Another limitation identified is employees readiness to accept e-learning as a form of organizational training. Learners are resistant to changing traditional ways of acquiring knowledge (AlHujran & Aloudat, 2013). Learners are expected to self-manage their learning experiences and techniques with little guide and supervision from the instructors, as with other varied forms of distance and distributed learning, which might affect their communication skills. According to Akorful & Abaidoo (2014, p.403), e-learning "makes the learners undergo contemplation, remoteness, as well as lack of interaction or relation". Therefore, learners require a strong determination and willingness to go through the learning course until completion.

Lack of technological infrastructure and skills

Government organizations face a funding challenge, which will limit their adoption of e-learning. E-learning requires putting in place technological gadgets with internet connectivity to ensure the beneficial acquisition of knowledge. The needed technical infrastructure to aid the learning process, like the computer and internet connection, must be accessible to the learner to optimize their e-learning experiences. Lack of proper and adequate technological devices such as computers, mobile devices, internet connectivity negatively impact adoption and implementation of e-learning (Tarus et al., 2015). Developing local e-learning content will also be challenging as it requires lots of resources. Lack of adequate technical skills is also a challenge in the public sector. Most organizations need funds to train technology officers in skills required, as lack of technological skills limits organizations from taking advantage of e-learning benefits (Msomi et al., 2016).

Technical Issues

Time zone variations is considered as a foremost challenge to online learning as it is with any real-time event, particularly with the synchronous learning space. This becomes a more significant concern as learners are drawn out over broader demographics creating extra technical glitches, especially in virtual meetings enabled through videoconferencing.

Considering poor internet connectivity in Nigeria, technical issues relating to quality visuals and audio also pose limitations. Learners are often confronted with technical glitches, which are expected while using technology, posing an additional strain to the e-learning experience.

Team Effort

A primary impediment to designing e-learning programs is the capacity and experience of the trainer. Hence, in the case of insufficient expertise on the trainer's part to efficiently design the online course curriculum. Unlike the conventional pedagogy that solely relied on the instructor to develop the lesson note, e-learning involves a plethora of skill mastery such as website design and development, manipulating relevant software, all to aid in creating appropriate content for the online course.

SYNCHRONOUS OR ASYNCHRONOUS CLASSROOMS

The asynchronous learning space allows students to access the designed online content at their convenience. This online hub provides a forum for instructors and learners to interact simultaneously utilizing relevant technological infrastructures such as chat features, audio, and video interfaces.

However, a drawback to the asynchronous learning space is its inability to allow for quick and interactive feedback. Sometimes, trainees may require instantaneous responses during an interaction, which is not feasible in the asynchronous classroom. Training within this space is always for a limited time, say 60-90 minutes. Late entrants to a class can diminish the significance of the lesson if everything must be recapped.

Appana (2008, p. 15) notes that because online learning can seem to be "an impersonal exercise", there is a tendency for learners to feel "isolated" from the instructors and other co-learners. As argued previously, virtual learning does not have the gestural features which are vital components in the conventional face-to-face interaction, thus leading to a diminution in communication. Odunayo et al. (2013) believe that certain situations where physical learning cannot be substituted with online interaction. Specific learning contents are not entirely appropriate for teaching on the web due to their nature, relative value, or importance.

To a high degree, online learning happens asynchronously with the resultant lag in feedback and limited dialogue, which naturally benefit certain levels of learners and challenge others. A deficiency in spontaneity identifiable in an asynchronous learning environment can be neutralized by the chance learners get to have ample time self-examination and to provide planned responses.

Since online learning is self-paced and self-directed, managing learners' participation in active learning can pose a challenge. Some individual learners may lack self-worth and enthusiasm to perform credibly in an online program when left to oneself. There is a tendency for learners to get distracted while on an e-learning course on the internet. Distractions such as surfing the web, viewing unrelated programs, playing a computer game, or listening to songs are common among learners.

Hence online learning institutes must design systems that inspect the learning process, ensuring that learners participate in the program. Perhaps adequate training guidelines that

prevent learners from indulging in non-elearning related activities during the study duration can aid in dealing with distractions in a learning environment.

BENEFITS OF ADOPTING E-LEARNING IN THE NIGERIAN PUBLIC SERVICE

According to Ungureanu et al. (2013), e-learning is an essential, efficient and innovative instructional strategy for providing teaching and learning to employees. E-learning offers a more comfortable and faster means of acquiring knowledge and information while eliminating barriers. E-learning is a means of learning facilitated electronically (Kasraie et al., 2010) and is more prevalent in the teaching-learning process due to the advances of internet technologies through Web-Based Training (WBT). The web-based technologies enable learners to interact with each other and instructors (Sasikumar, 2013). E-learning has made education learner-centred as the individual learner drives the process. In the organization, e-learning as a training method enables control of learning for learners, consistency, reduced costs avoid employee absenteeism (Brown & Charlier, 2012).

Kasraie & Kasraie (2010) categorized the benefits of e-learning in the organization into hard and soft. The complex benefits are objective and easily measured; the example is increased productivity, while soft benefits are harder to measure, such as improved communication in the organization.

E-learning, also known as distance learning, enables the learner to study at an individual's pace and schedule, more straightforward navigation of learning materials, and access to broader information.

According to Zainab et al. (2015), adopting e-training in the Nigerian civil service have increased awareness of the use of technology in the workplace, expanded learning culture, integrated e-training in work activities and a better understanding of communication tools. E-training in the public organization allows the delivery of knowledge to build a skilled workforce and improves organizational performance.

Further, with the adoption of e-learning in the Nigerian public sector, essential facilities required to project a positive image of the service will be put in place and transform the organization into a current operational public service.

The dramatic shift to e-learning by organizations has led to a dramatic reduction in the cost of training (Kasraie, 2010) and automatically expanded the e-learning market. In the Nigerian public service, e-learning allows consistent specialized education for a more significant number of employees irrespective of their location.

E-learning is considered a critical form of learning in the educational system as it imposes an innovative shift in the learning environment. The creative change and effective implementation of e-learning in the public service lead to flexibility in training programs, completion of learning activities at learners pace, accessibility of learning materials at any location, delivery of consistent content to a higher number of trainees, reduction in time of teaching and ICT competency improved in the learner. E-learning is now widely used as a strategic element among educational institutions and corporate organizations to enhance learners skills, performance, and academic outcomes (Jabli & Qahmash, 2013).

The majority of organizations are aware that e-learning increases organizational flexibility in presenting training at the right time. It also allows flexibility in the design and delivery of materials to suit the trainees' pace, choice location, and instructors capacity to train several persons simultaneously. E-learning is a learner-centred learning process as it focuses on the needs of individual learners (Arkorful & Abaidoo, 2014).

Subramanian (2016, p. 401) affirms the following as advantages for the adoption of e-learning in education;

- i. Flexibility in dealing with the challenges of time and place of learning
- ii. Extensive access to information. Ease access to broad information to enhance knowledge (Akorful & Abaidoo, 2014).
- iii. Eliminates the discussion barrier by providing a platform for learners and instructors to interact among themselves. Platforms such as online classrooms, discussion forums, and assignment forums improves communication
- iv. Reduces the cost of travel and risk associated with travelling for learners.
- V. E-learning increases satisfaction in learning and decreases stress associated with learning as learning is self-paced (Algahtani, 2011)

CONCLUSION

The capacity development of public servants is a priority to the Federal Government of Nigeria. This has prompted the Government to ensure that public servants are entitled to at least one training program each year as a catalyst in providing organizational performance (Gberevbie, 2010).

According to Jones & George (2008), training and development allow employees to take on new responsibilities and adapt to changing conditions. This assertion also justifies reasons why training and capacity development is being promoted in every sphere of Government.

The method of designing annual training and capacity programs by the MDAs is geared at providing continued development to improve productivity and enhance job performance. Such a program aims to enhance employees' knowledge and competence required to carry out assigned tasks effectively. Such programs tend to generate revenue, improve organizational performance revenue, and encourage competitiveness.

E-learning breaks barriers of cultural diversity in learning as learners from different locations and can interact and learn at other times. All learners have equal access to information irrespective of diversities. An e-learning environment accommodates all and enables instructors and learners to complete tasks within a short time than traditional classroom learning.

E-learning further aids in the preparation of society to globally communicate and dialogue with others, improved communication, and the provision of instantaneous feedback (Zeitoun, 2008; Akorful & Abaidoo, 2014).

Although there are limitations to the deployment of e-learning, such as organizational readiness, technical issues, etc., this review further indicated that the benefits far outweigh the burdens.

Therefore the adoption of e-learning can improve the organizational workforce, contributes to economic growth, and enable policymakers to seek the support of the Government in providing the necessary infrastructure and finance required for a seamless e-learning process within the public service (Zainab et al., 2015).

Likewise, e-learning adoption in Nigeria's public service will cause a reduction in the cost of training, and more funds can be diverted to developmental projects.

This review has highlighted the key factors affecting e-learning in Nigeria, including its limitation, benefits, and application to public servants' delivery and capacity development. Deliberate efforts by all relevant stakeholders and key players are required to encourage the adoption of e-learning for the capacity development of public servants.

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