CONSTRAINTS TO ENHANCING E-LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES FOR PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

The primary goal of every educational system is to achieve optimum delivery of service for effective teaching and learning. To remain competitive and profitable in this country, the primary school teachers require a workforce that is updated with the new knowledge and skills. This survey study investigated the constraints to enhancing e-learning opportunities for primary school teachers. The study was guided by two research questions. The sample for the study comprised ninety (90) primary school teachers from three education zones in Nsukka. The instrument for data collection was questionnaire. Mean score was used for data analysis. The result of data analysis revealed that e-learning opportunities are still low. Eight items were identified as the constraints. Also nine ways of enhancing the learning opportunities were identified. It was recommended that there should be immediate capitation of primary school teachers in e-learning through workshop, seminar and in-service training in Nigeria.
Introduction

The modern world has become technologically driven, globalised, competitive and competency based. Thus for any nation’s educational system to remain relevant, there must be a redefinition of fundamental educational practices. As Nigerians embrace technology, the development of a technologically skilled workforce becomes a major concern and the continuous development of human capital becomes a vital source of economic values. As skills and knowledge are considered important elements of success, it follows that teaching and learning are essential element of successful workforce.

The apparent information outburst in education system world over has created an advancement in technology causing knowledge, ideas and techniques to change so rapidly that they quickly become obsolete (Anikweze). It is believed that the use of information technology can be successfully utilized to enhance children acquisition of knowledge and skills (Adamu, 2001). The whole of technologies involved in information processing and electronic communications are referred to as Information and Communication Technology (ICT) (Mailer 2005), it includes the radio, television, computers, e-mail, internet etc and all the software and materials which are employed by teachers for teaching and learning.

Educators throughout the world are accepting the fact that ICT plays a significant role in the world (Lefoka 2004). It facilitates the acquisition of basic technological skills, thinking skills and problem solving skills. It enables learners and teachers to access wider range of information resources for developing
appropriate technological concepts. Ajagun (2003) Information and Communication Technology would help teachers prepare resources for instruction, access information and educational software through the internet, communicate and exchange information with experts in specific fields with other schools and with other teachers and parents for the benefit and development of pupils. Also, it can enhance and complement educational service delivery.

One important educational structures through which services of ICT especially e-learning can be delivered is primary schools. (Anigbogu and Umeh (2003). This can only be possible if deliberate efforts are put in use to ensure that primary school teachers are given the adequate and necessary opportunities in their services. It is worthy to note that primary education as the name implies is prime. It must therefore be given the prime position and we should learn that the prime task is to do first thing first and well (Aminu, 1998). A sound primary education according to Maduemesi (2005) is a pre-requisite not only to sound secondary and tertiary education but to continuing education. Therefore, children need a sound primary education which are technologically based as a house needs that sound foundation in order to stand.

Thus for primary education to have profitable theory, require a workforce that is updated with new knowledge and skills and one way of encouraging this is to use various electronic learning (e-learning). Information and Communication Technology is a powerful tool for the development of quality teaching and learning. It is a catalyst for radical change in existing school practices and a
veritable vehicle for service delivery in primary schools. ICT can be applied in several ways to bring about far-reaching service delivery in primary school especially among primary school teachers. One of the specific area ICT can be applied is e-learning.

E-learning simply means electronic learning. It is a term that refers to a variety of methods for delivering and distributing knowledge and enhancing learning through the means of technology and an internet (Rosenburg, 2001). He further stated that the core criteria for something to be e-learning is that it is internet based, networked and focuses on a much broader view of learning and knowledge delivery than traditional teaching and learning methods. It is the delivery of learning and teaching using electronic media, for example using computer, internet, and intranet. According to Anigbogu, 2003), e-learning is defined as a Computer-Supported Collaborative Learning (CSCL) system whereby structured instructional materials are passed from a repositioning to the learner. E-learning is a ground breaking paradigm shift in the field of learning that provides such speed access to knowledge and information. It relates to the active engagement of pupils in knowledge building activities through explanation, reflection and collaborative learning.

Edafiogbo (2007) stated that e-learning is flexible learning using ICT resources, tools and applications and focusing on interaction among teachers, learners and the online environment and on collaborative learning. E-learning usually refers to structured and managed learning experiences and may involve the
use of internet, CD-ROM, software and other media. Furthermore, it is the convergence of learning and the internet.

By virtue of the fact, the Nigeria’s hope for technological development lies on educational programme, the primary school supposed to take a leading role in ICT application and opportunities. E-learning opportunity is a product of technology and is set as a means to technological developments in Nigeria. It is very much required in order to ensure adequate and current information. Presently, the competitiveness of many teachers is determined by their ability to capture the benefit of innovation (Mumah 2004). Globalization he opined cannot be reversed or slowed down, the critical question is how to respond to the trend more effectively so that the associated benefits can be maximized.

The benefits of the E-learning opportunities for primary school teachers will enhance the quality of teaching and learning processes in education. It has the capacity of exposing learners to other parts of the world. It provides life-long learning opportunities by making formal learning available at home as well as in the workplace and community.

Nigerian government realizing the importance of ICT utilization instituted enabling policy framework. These framework include National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA), National Information Infrastructure (NII) etc. The products of these efforts can be seen in increasing use of electronics such as Computer, Laptops, Global Systems Mobile Network (GSM), JAMB/WAEC and admission scratch cards. British government had given
computer technology the greatest stand in the classroom (ward, 1996, Vera 1998). The United States of America enhanced their technology by forming co-operative, schools and government forming partnership for the promotion of technology. It is worthy to note that these new technological set up by these countries were to improve the opportunities for effective educational service delivery.

E-learning as a powerful technological tool has the potential to enhance knowledge, attitude and skills through its application. Though these seem not to be the case with primary level of education. Efforts being made invariably depend on many other factors such as interest, commitment fund, awareness etc. It is then very necessary to investigate the constraints to and enhancing e-learning opportunities for primary school teachers in Nigeria.

**Purpose of the Study**

The main purpose of this study was to investigate the constraints to enhancing e-learning opportunities for primary school teachers in Nigeria. Specifically the study investigated:

(a) The constraint to e-learning opportunities for primary school teachers.

(b) Ways of enhancing e-learning opportunities for primary school teachers.

**Research Questions**

(a) what are the constraints to e-learning opportunities for primary school teachers.

(b) What are the ways of enhancing e-learning opportunities for primary school teachers.
Methodology

Research Design

Descriptive survey research design was used to carry out the study. This design enabled the researcher to collect detailed and factual information of the constraints to enhancing e-learning opportunities for primary school teachers inNsukka Education Zone of Enugu State.

Population/Sample

The population of this study consisted of all the primary school teachers in the zone. Simple random sampling technique was used to select a sample of ninety (90) respondents, (thirty (30) teachers from each of the three education authorities that make up the education zone).

Instrument

Questionnaire was used for data collection. The instrument was developed by the researchers. It had 20 items. The instrument was validated by three experts, two from measurement and evaluation and one from childhood, all from the University of Nigeria Nsukka. The instrument was reviewed based on the correction by the three experts. The instrument had four point rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). Thus:

- Strongly Agree (SA) - 4
- Agree (A) - 3
- Disagree (D) - 2
- Strongly Disagree (SD) - 1
For analyzing the responses, items with mean of 2.50 agreements with the statement while items with mean below 2.50 indicated disagreements with the statement.

**Reliability of the Instrument**

The reliability of the instrument was tested using the responses of 300 primary school teachers from three education zone of Nsukka. The reliability was determined through the internal consistency of the items. The data collected were analysed using Cronbach alpha coefficient formula. Values of 0.70 and 0.72 were from the instrument and were considered satisfactory.

**Method of Data Collection/Analysis**

The researchers distributed and retrieved all the copies of the questionnaire with the help of research assistant. Mean ratings were used to analyse the data collected.

**Presentation and Analysis of Data**

**Research Question One:** What are the constraints to e-learning opportunities for primary school teachers?
Table 1: Mean Rating on Constraints to E-learning Opportunities for Primary School Teachers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Constraints</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Remark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Lack of adequate power supply</td>
<td>30.2</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Lack of fund</td>
<td>2.66</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Lack of Internet services on the part of the teachers and pupils</td>
<td>2.57</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Inadequate ICT infrastructure e.g. computer, software, access, etc.</td>
<td>3.53</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>There is no in-service training workshop and seminar for teachers to upgrade their knowledge of ICT.</td>
<td>2.63</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Lack of ready access to internet</td>
<td>3.02</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Lack of professional teachers to teacher ICT</td>
<td>3.27</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Unwillingness to change to the new method</td>
<td>3.27</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Lack of appropriate building</td>
<td>2.40</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Lack of motivation on the part of the teachers</td>
<td>2.27</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key: Agree = A  
Disagree = D

Table 1 indicates that 8 out of 10 items were accepted by the respondents as constraints to e-learning opportunities. Only two items were rated below 2.5 the cut-off point for agreement.

Research Question 2: What are the ways of enhancing e-learning opportunities for primary school teachers?

Table 2: Mean Rating of the Ways for Enhancing E-learning Opportunities for Primary School Teachers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Ways of Enhancing E-learning Opportunities</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Remark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Adequate funding should be provided</td>
<td>3.02</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Adequate and regular power supply</td>
<td>3.02</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>E-learning should be included in curriculum of primary schools.</td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Government should work with the private sector to ensure affordable access to ICT interaction</td>
<td>3.22</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Provision of enough computers to all teachers</td>
<td>3.04</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Providing in-service training for teachers</td>
<td>2.84</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Provision of wired access</td>
<td>2.69</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Motivation of both teachers and pupils</td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Sensitization of both teachers and children on application of ICT</td>
<td>2.63</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>There should be proper supervision on part of the head teachers.</td>
<td>2.33</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key: Agree = A  
Disagree = D
Table 2 shows that nine items were considered as ways of enhancing e-learning opportunities for teachers of primary schools. Only one item was not agreed upon.

**Discussion of Findings**

Expectation is that teaching and learning in primary schools should improve through e-learning opportunities of their teachers. The finding indicates that e-learning opportunities are still low.Ekpunobi (2003) stated that even though ICT has invaded and dominated education, its infusion into the education systems in Nigeria is rather slow due to the fact that most professionals in education have minimal or no ICT skills. The presence of ICT in education can only be justified by the application in instructions among pupils and enhancing their teachers’ opportunities.

On the constraints to e-learning opportunities for primary school level, the findings of the study shows that with exception of two items, all others constitute obstacle to e-learning opportunities. These difficulties that cause obstacle are all pre-requisites to e-learning opportunities. Naidoo (2004) stated that due to the absence of ICT infrastructural pre-requisite and teledensity, Africa clearly is disadvantaged and unlikely to achieve the millennium development goals (MDG) in future. Supporting this view, Wali (2004) stated that many schools in Africa cannot afford and therefore do not have access to computer let alone internet connectivity.
The findings of the study further reveal ways of enhancing the e-learning opportunities for primary school teachers. All the other items were agreed on as ways of enhancing e-learning opportunities with the exception of one. This finding lend credence to Lefoka (2003) who asserted that some of the most important activities that manifest and guide the use of e-learning in education is to have among other things well articulated policies, well designed curriculum, adequate regular power supply, and adequate financial support.

Conclusions

This study has indicated that e-learning opportunities are few due to nyraid of constraints. Fortunately, there are calculated ways that can be taken to overcome the problems as identified in the study.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made.

- There should be adequate power supply to enable both the teachers and pupils operate e-learning resources.
- Efforts should be made by government to expand access to ICT facilities to primary school teachers so as to make e-learning relevant to children.
- There is the need to update the methods and educational technology components of the curriculum for primary education to include the use of e-learning.
• There is the need for ICT capacity building materialism that will empower teachers in their usage of ICT to continuously improve their teaching.

• Government should improve funding in the primary level to enable them to acquire more ICT facilities.

• Workshops/seminars to be organized at intervals for primary school teachers on acquiring necessary skills in the use of ICT.

• State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB) should enter into partnership with parents teachers association and big corporations for the aim of funding technology education in primary schools.

• Finally, all primary school teachers in the state should be provided with computer facilities with full internet connection in their classroom.
REFERENCES


