

Distance Learning and E-Learning in Non-Formal and Informal Education Among Local Communities in Lagos State, Nigeria

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Abstract: This study examined the incorporation of e-learning and distance learning into the non-formal and informal education programme among local communities in Lagos state, Nigeria. Six research questions were raised to guide the study. The descriptive survey research design was used for the study while the scope covered two Local Government Areas (Shomolu and Eti-Osa LGAs) in Lagos state, Nigeria. The total population was used for the study because of its small size which comprised 47 administrators/supervisors/instructors/volunteers and 150 students as participants of this study. Two research instruments were developed by the researchers to elicit responses from school administrators and students. The first research instrument was a questionnaire titled “Non-formal and Informal Education: Distance Learning and E-learning Community” (NIEDLELC) designed for administrators/supervisors/instructors while the second instrument was titled “Distance Learning and E-Learning in Non-formal and Informal Education Questionnaire” (DLELNIEQ) specifically designed for the learners. Descriptive statistics such as frequency counts and mean score was used to answer all research questions and conclusions were drawn from the findings. Likewise, based on the findings of this study, recommendations were made among others that, awareness about the mass literacy programme should be intensified among local communities; the government should make support services and facilities available to enhance distance learning and e-learning in the non-formal and informal education programme; the administrators should ensure adequate supervision that assures that the goals of non-formal education are fully accomplished.

Keywords: Mass Literacy, Distance Learning, E-learning, Non-formal Education, Informal Education, Local Communities

1. INTRODUCTION

Access to education is one of the fundamental rights of an individual, regardless of age, tribe or social class. Non-formal and informal forms of education have been put in place to substitute formal learning in localities where people are not opportune to acquire the formal education, as a way of providing access to education. Non-formal education refers to education that occurs outside the formal school system, it is often used interchangeably with terms such as community education, adult education, lifelong education and second-chance education. It refers to a wide range of educational initiatives in the community, ranging from home-based learning to government schemes and community initiatives. It includes accredited courses run by well-established institutions as well as locally based operations with little funding (World Health Organization, 2010).

Latchem (2018) mentioned that in open and distance education most of the teaching is conducted by some provider removed in time and space from the learner, using content and approaches that are openly accessible, enabling learners to

learn individually or collaboratively at the time and place of their choice.

Adult literacy rate has a percentage of people of ages 15 and above who can read and write with understanding a short simple statement about their everyday life is very instructive. Historical data presents the literacy rate in Nigeria by year from 1991 to 2018 as best in 2006 with a literacy rate of 70.20%, however, a steep decline in 2008 brought the percentage down to 51.08% while in 2018 there was an increase in literacy rate to 62.02% at a time in history when Nigeria occupied a second place among some 23 countries of similar ranking (Macrotrends: Nigeria literacy rate 1991-2021).

A prominent role of non-formal education according to the Federal Republic of Nigeria in the National Policy on Education (NPE, 2013) is to provide functional literacy and continuing education for adults and youths who have not had a formal education or did not complete their primary education as well as provide functional and remedial education for the young people who did not complete their secondary education. Beyond non-formal education at the

basic and secondary education levels, studies are exploring the feasibility of non-formal education at higher education level as findings suggest a growing demand for growth in and diversification of the recognition of non-formal education ((Judy Harris and Christine Wihak, 2018).

The recent health challenges worldwide with reference to the Corona Virus Pandemic named Covid -19 has brought new normal in various spheres of life including education as an industry. The move onto the cyberspace became the way out to reach students at home during the total lockdown, connecting the classrooms to the homes so as to mitigate the adverse effect of prolonged school closure and leaving the students unattended to for a long time. This also had great effect on the running of the mass literacy programmes so much that many of the learners became disconnected from the learning process. Since, e-learning has been the order of the day for formal education during the covid-19 pandemic, this study seeks to find out how much of distance learning and e-learning is taking place in the non-formal education sector to mitigate the effect of Covid-19 and forestall another sharp decline in the overall mass literacy programme.

In the context of this study, the distance learning anticipated included the use of technology to reach learners at home or in remote areas that allows learning to continue unabated despite the presence of Covid-19 while the e-learning refers to the use of technology in the learning space that facilitates speedy coverage of whatever might have been lost during the series of lockdowns and social distancing as well as to accomplish the curriculum within the specified period of time.

Statement of the Problem

It has been observed that a country with a high literacy rate will develop richly than a country whose population is occupied by illiterates. In order to improve the literacy rate in the country, the government thereby approved non-formal education as a form of education outside the four walls of a school. During the pandemic lockdown, as the formal institutions were trying all means to continue to keep in touch with their students intellectually through virtual education, it seems the local communities were lost in the place of virtual learning. This seems to have affected the enthusiasm of the learners towards learning and also seems to have affected the motivation of the teachers towards teaching after the lockdown. Therefore, this study decided to examine the issues behind the incorporation of distance learning and e-learning in non-formal and informal education in the local communities.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to examine incorporation of distance learning and e-learning in non-

formal and informal forms of education. The specific objectives of this study therefore include:

1. To determine the level of incorporation of e-learning (visual teaching and learning aids) into the non-formal education programmes in Lagos state, Nigeria.
2. To find out how non-formal education manages distance learning;
3. To examine the level of accomplishment of the goals of the non-formal education among continuing/adult education centers.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study;

1. What is the level of incorporation of e-learning (visual teaching and learning aids) into the non-formal education programmes in Lagos state, Nigeria?
2. How does the non-formal education programme manage distance learning?
3. How are the goals of non-formal education accomplished in your local government/ community?

2. METHOD

The study used the descriptive survey research design in order to specifically describe the issues of e-learning and distance learning in the local communities. The population of the study covered two Local Government Areas (LGAs) in Lagos state, Nigeria which are Shomolu and Eti-Osa LGAs, this is to ensure in-depth investigation. The population size of this study consisted 47 administrators, supervisors, instructors or volunteers as well as 150 learners who were all included as participants for the study. Therefore, no sampling technique was adopted to determine the sample size of this study as the population was quite small. Two research instruments were developed for the study to collect data that was used to answer the research questions raised for this study. The first research instrument was a questionnaire titled “Non-formal and Informal Education: Distance Learning and E-learning Community” (NIEDLELC) designed for administrators/supervisors/instructors while the second instrument was titled “Distance Learning and E-Learning in Non-formal and Informal Education Questionnaire” (DLELNIEQ) specifically designed for the learners. The questionnaires were administered in the LGAs by the researchers and collected in full giving a hundred percent return. The descriptive statistics; frequency counts and mean were employed to answer all the research questions.

Findings

Table 1
Instructors’ Responses on Distance Learning and E-Learning in Non-formal and Informal Education

S/N	Items	Responses			Mean
1	Provision of the mass literacy programme is free.	No 12	Somewhat 5	Yes 30	2.38

2	How do you rate the mass literacy awareness programmes among members of your community?	Weak 13	Average 24	Strong 10	1.94
3	What is the level of patronage from members of your community in response to the	Low 20	Average 25	High 2	1.62

	sensitization programmes?				
4	Kindly rate the availability and use of the following support services and facilities in your community; a. IT infrastructure facilities; b. Community reading rooms; c. Mobile rural libraries; d. E-library facility; e. TV viewing Centres; f. Community radios; g. Radio programmes.	Unavailable 31 29 40 38 38 35 30	Inadequate 10 12 4 6 5 7 5	Available 6 6 3 3 4 5 12	1.47 1.51 1.21 1.26 1.28 1.36 1.62
5	Kindly rate the level of Public Private Partnership in the organization and funding of mass literacy in your community.	Unavailable 27	Inadequate 13	Available 7	1.57
6	Are you satisfied with the funding of the mass literacy programmes?	No 27	Somewhat 13	Yes 12	1.68
7	Do you find the curriculum for the mass literacy programme adequate?	No 6	Average 21	Yes 20	2.30
8	Is the literacy network committee at the local government operating efficiently? (i.e. Literacy network among the private continuing education centres, skill acquisition centres, extra mural classes and the adult & non-formal programmes).	No 12	Average 22	Yes 13	2.02
9	Are the goals of non-formal education fully accomplished in your local government/community?	No 12	Average 24	Yes 11	1.98
10	Kindly rate the level of incorporation of e-learning (visual teaching and learning aids) into the non-formal education programmes in your community.	Low 17	Average 30	High 00	1.64
11	How does your local government	Non-existence	Low 19	Average 10	1.83

	fare in the management of distance learning within your community (i.e. reaching your students at home through online means)?	18			
12	How would you rate the supervision of the mass literacy, adult and non-formal education by the ministry of education and the FCT educational secretariat?	Average 30	Good 12	Excellent 5	1.47
13	Are you satisfied with the implementation of the National Policy on Education on mass literacy in your community?	No 11	Average 15	Yes 21	2.21

Mean > 1.5

The information on table 1 shows the mean responses of the supervisors' views on the questionnaires administered.

Table 2
Learners' Responses on Distance Learning and E-Learning in Non-formal and Informal Education

S/ N	Items	Responses				Mean
		15-20years	21-25years	25-30years	31-above	
1	Age group	3	29	18	100	3.43
2	Occupation	Employed 76	Self-employed 39	Unemployed 24	Apprentice 11	1.80
3	How did you get to know about this Mass Literacy (Adult Education/ Continuing Education) Programme?	Friends 40	Newspaper 75	Markets 15	Community 20	1.77
4	Kindly indicate your type of mass literacy programme.	Continuing Edu. 10	Adult Edu. 127	Skills 10	A and C 3	1.98
5	Which certificate do you look forward to earn at the end of the literacy programme?	BECE 7	SSCE 23	NABTE 83	OTHER 37	3.00
6	How long have you been on the programme?	Months 40	1year 65	2years 30	3years 15	1.80
7	The mass literacy programme is free.	No 7	Somewhat 45	Yes 89	Nil 9	2.49

8	How do you rate the mass literacy awareness programmes among members of your community?	Weak 21	Average 92	Strong 37	Nil 0	2.11
9	What is the level of patronage from members of your community in response to the sensitization programmes?	Low 48	Average 79	High 22	Nil 1	1.82
10	How close is your learning center to your house/work place?	Very near 34	Near 75	Far 32	Too far 9	2.07
11	Kindly rate the availability and use of the following support services and facilities in your community. a. IT infrastructure facilities e.g. Projector, Computer etc.; b. Community reading rooms; c. Mobile rural libraries; d. E-library facility e.g. Computers in the library with electronic books etc.; e. TV viewing Centres; f. Community radios;	Unavailable 123 129 129 137 137 113	Inadequate 20 16 17 13 9 33	Adequate 4 5 4 0 4 4	Nil Response 03 00 00 00 00 00	1.21 1.17 1.17 1.09 1.11 1.27
12	Do your instructors teach you through radio programmes?	Yes 4	Sometimes 66	No 76	Nil Response 04	1.49
13	Are you satisfied with the programme with respect	Yes 128 107 72	No 19 40 77	--- --- ---	Nil Response 03 03 01	1.85 1.71 1.48

	to: The teachers? The center? The learning materials					

Mean>1.0

Table 3
Learners' View on the Incorporation of Distance Learning and E-Learning in Non-formal Education

S / N	ITEM	OPTIONS		
		Agree	Disagree	Mean
1	Informal education can take place with the use of computers and internet.	104	46	1.69
2	I learn better through the aid of visuals or graphics.	102	48	1.68
3	Video conferencing is an interesting form of learning.	87	63	1.58
4	My teachers encourage chats as a medium to ask questions.	99	51	1.66
5	I do not enjoy learning using downloaded materials.	50	100	1.33
6	My learning center provides appropriate tools for distance learning (computers, internet, projector etc.).	57	93	1.38
7	I am equipped for distance learning (Internet compliant phone).	34	116	1.23
8	I have other learning materials (books).	78	72	1.52
9	I pay for the books.	Yes 40	No 110	1.27
10	I pay to write examinations from time to time.	48	102	1.35

3. DISCUSSION

The level of incorporation of e-learning (visual teaching and learning aids) into the non-formal education programmes in Lagos state, Nigeria

Findings showed that the availability and usage of support services for distance learning from the perspective of the administrators, supervisors, instructors and volunteers as shown in table 1 is very low which answered research question 1. The table also showed that e-learning is not fully incorporated in the literacy programme and facilities are not even available to enhance distance learning or e-learning, confirming the responses on the part of the learners too thus, item 3 on table 2 showed that the rate of availability of the support services and facilities in the local communities are unavailable, that is, a low rate of its use as well. Item 10 on the table 2 showed a mean score of 1.68 for the incorporation of e-learning facilities which is greater than the minimum mean, it implies that the use of visuals and other learning aids are incorporated into learning but the usage is low. This finding was supported by the findings of the research work done by Nadia Rashid and Muhammad Rashid (2012) when they concluded that,

distance education and its relationship to emerging computer technologies have together offered many promises to the field of education, however, in practice, the combination often fall short of what it attempts to accomplish, some of the short comings are due to problems with the technology; others have more to do with administration, instructional methods, or students.

In table 3, majority of the learners believed that e-learning can be incorporated into informal education but

many learning centers do not provide appropriate tools to enhance distance learning. Moreover, many of the learners are not equipped for distance or e-learning but are given free learning materials and do not pay for books or to write examinations.

Non-formal education programme and the management of distance learning

Table1 showed that the management of distance learning is on the average from the perspective of the administrators etc. based on the mean score of 1.83 (item 11). However, 18 of the respondents attest to the non-existence of distance learning in the management of the non-formal education while nineteen (19) of the indicated that it is low. While from the learners' responses, item 13 on table 2 showed that the learners are not satisfied with the teachers and the center as responses to item 14 showed that the learners want more teachers and wished that the learning environment be improved upon in terms of infrastructure. It is heartwarming that learners like to go further in their education after the mass literacy programme. When looked at wholistically, it can be taken that the non-formal education managers at the local governments do not fare well in the management of distance learning within their communities studied, that is, reaching the students at home through online means is low which answered research question 2. In non-formal education, learning participation is an inseparable part of the circuit of the learning (Nugroho, 2018). Those many types of non-formal education are not matched by proper management, so that they have not produced good and quality NFE, which has more social impact on the community. "Non-formal education was designed as an alternative to cultivating positive attitudes towards change and towards developing the social competences needed in real-life contexts. (Rahma, 2019)

Accomplishment of the goals of non-formal education in the various communities studied

On the NPE requirement that the mass literacy programme be free, table 1 shows that 30 of the respondents attested to the fact that the mass literacy programme is free while others (12, 5) felt that it is not free. This is corroborated by the high mean score of 2.38 which gives credence to the number that responded in affirmation. Items 2 and 3 have mean scores of 1.94 and 1.62, both of which are above average. This answers the research question 3 meaning that, the level of awareness and

patronage of the mass literacy programme in Lagos state, Nigeria is above average.

From the nerspective of the learners, a large number of the learners who are young adults (31 years and above) and majority of the young adults are employed. Majority of the learners got awareness of the literacy programme more through newspapers and friends (item 3). The table clearly shows that the literacy programme awareness is on the average level with a mean of 2.11 which further confirms the answer to research question 1. More than half of the participants are into the adult education literacy programme and many are interested in receiving NABTEB certificates at the end of the programme. Empowerment is one of the efforts to strengthen the ability and skill, which refers to the condition or results attained by a social change, through the enhancement of physical, mental, social, and economic ability to fulfill the basic needs (Rahma, 2021).

In terms of the curriculum and its accomplishment, Item 7 on the table 1 showed that the curriculum for the mass literacy programme is adequate with a mean score of 2.30. Items 5, 6, 8, 9, and 13 answered research question 3 with mean scores of 1.57, 1.68, 2.02, 1.98 and 2.21 respectfully. Overall, item 9 on the table showed that the accomplishment of the goals of non-formal education is above average in the literacy centers with a mean of 1.98. It can also be deduced from the table that the rate of supervision of the mass literacy, adult and non-formal education by the ministry of education and the FCT educational secretariat is low at a mean score of 1.47 (item 12, table 1) in the two local government areas researched. Educators will find it easier to deliver learning material with the help of the media. Thus students will be facilitated and be able to study comfortably. One way of delivering learning materials is by utilizing digital technology, such as augmented reality. Augmented reality will help students access various learning materials because it contains two or more content in the form of text, images, sound, animation, video, and others (RA Rahma, 2021).

4. CONCLUSION

This study concluded that the level of incorporation of e-learning into the non-formal education programmes is low. The management of distance learning in the literacy programme within communities studied (i.e. reaching your students at home through online means) is low. The accomplishment of the goals of non-formal education is above average in the mass literacy centers researched.

Recommendations

Based on the findings from this study, the study recommended that:

1. The awareness about the mass literacy programme should be intensified among local communities;

2. In the era of Covid-19 where virtual learning has been embraced, the government should make support services and facilities available to enhance distance learning and e-learning in the non-formal and informal education programme;
3. Besides the availability of e-learning facilities, the usage must also be encouraged in non-formal and informal education;
4. The administrators/supervisors/instructors/facilitators should ensure that the implementation of the curriculum of non-formal education are adequate;
5. Supervision is a necessary tool to enhance quality education, the administrators should ensure adequate supervision that assures that the goals of non-formal education are fully accomplished;

Contribution to Knowledge and Implication for Practice

This study has been able to answer the research questions raised thus identified grey areas in the administration of non-formal and informal education with respect to the incorporation of e-learning and distance learning in the teaching-learning process. This study has implication for practice as government at various level will hence forth focus attention to the issue of provision of support services and facilities that enhance the accomplishment of the goals of non-formal and informal education.

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