



STRATEGIES FOR DIGITALIZATION OF MANAGEMENT OF UNIVERSITY EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

Digitalization is a powerful engine for economic growth, Digital technologies are being utilized in higher institution of learning but there is a gap that is yet to be filled. Today's University leaders and Faculties especially in Nigeria must reconsider higher education in a digital-dominated new world, since it is becoming more globalized increasingly important for institution to quickly, efficiently, and appropriately plan the digital information to achieve flexibility. This research reviewed existing literature on the concepts of digitalization as a multi-disciplinary tool for facilitating learning.

Keywords: Strategy, Digitalization, Education and University Management

Introduction

Managerial skills of most educational sector are currently preferred in the digitalize world. Abdullahi and Tijani (2019) agree that modern education system uses technology to impart knowledge. Digitalization of management system is an opportunity to develop a cognitive resource-based mechanism in university education administrators and improve the skills, lifelong learning and continuous education. Digitalization is a term that has been used frequently by researchers in recent years, with many variants of the term used, and in many cases, misused or misleading. Accordingly, Gorenšek and Kohont (2018) posit that caution must be exercised when using the term as different conceptual meanings define different processes of digitalization and the role that these processes play in the context of the impact of information and communication technology on society and its systems.

The growth of information technology has impacted higher education institution operations, with institutions adopting Learning Management Systems (LMS). In agreement to the above, Telukdariel & Munsamy (2019) mentioned that LMS is an online platform that integrates various systems providing access to academics, students and administrators. The authors further reported that for students the services include access to lecture notes, assignments, virtual classrooms, examination and results and submission of assignments, whilst for academics it includes management of course content, submission of student assessment marks and tracking of students' progress and attendance. In view of the foregoing, management job descriptions, managing finances, organizing examinations and computation of results, and a whole lot more.

Digitalization leads to the development of the Internet in digitalized-based institutions. Digital materials can be transmitted, sorted and retrieved easily and quickly. It is cheaper to access electronic information than its print counterpart when storing files in an electronic device with compatible facilities and equipment. Digital



texts can be linked and made interactively and improves the retrieval of more information. From the above, it is necessary to examine the strategies for Digitalization of Management of University Education in Nigeria.

Concept of Strategy

Strategy can be defined as a method, step, means, approach or procedure of achieving the stated goals of education. It can be defined as a plan designed to achieve a particular purpose. Strategy can be seen as that which top management or administrators do that is of great importance to the organization or institution. Strategy is a plan, a how, a means of getting from here to there. It is a pattern in actions over time; for example, a company that regularly markets very expensive products or an institution that graduates its students with more first or second class upper division is using a high end strategy. Amesi, Akpomi and Okwuanaso (2014) concluded that strategy answers the question; what should the lecturer be doing and what are the ends the lecturer seeks and how should the lecturer achieve these ends. In the context of this study, strategy can be defined as the ways and means through which teaching and learning objectives are achieved. It plays very important role in teaching and learning process. In the educational sector, a good teaching strategy must cater for the three major ways through which learning can be done auditory, visual and kinesthetic. More so, a good teaching strategy must consider students' background knowledge, environment and learning goals. Effective strategies are very crucial in teaching and learning job skills in institutions of learning. This is because the consequences of lack of effective teaching of job skills may be devastating as this may result to poor or zero skills acquisition among graduates of business education programme.

Concept of Digitalization

Digitalization of education according to Akinyemi, Amaechi, and Etoh, (2022) is a concept adopted to ensure the innovative incorporation of modern technology and digital tools to assist the progress of teaching and learning and to create more room for remote learning. It is the process of converting educational resources from material forms to electronic forms where they can be stored and manipulated by a computer. The transfer of data from analogue to digital is viewed as a crucial driver of innovation in teaching and learning (Gillpatrick, 2020). Digitalization is the process of converting manual information or data to a digital format for a more meaningful interpretation. Digitalization in education is conceptualized by Titus (2018) and Olatunde-Aiyedun, Eyiolorunse-Aiyedun and Ogunode, (2021) as the process of transferring traditional teaching and learning materials such as online learning platforms, educational apps, and multimedia resources online courses, online assessments, and web seminars/conferences or workshops to electronic model for deployment in the school.

In support of the above, Bejinaru (2019) observed digitalization is the conversion of text, pictures, video, and music into digital format utilizing technologies such as a laptop computer, the internet, mobile devices, a scanner, a digital camera, a projector, and printer, among others, that may be played by a computer. Machekhina (2019) viewed digitalization as the translation of all information kinds, such as text, audio, pictures, video, and other data from multiple sources into digital language. From the above, digitalization can be conceptualized as those facilities that aid the conversion of teaching and learning into platforms like online courses, online assessments, and web seminars/conferences or workshops through the use of electronic platforms. Digitalization is an umbrella term that includes all technologies for the manipulation and communication of information. Digitalization considers the uses of all digital technology that already exists to help individuals, business and organization. Digitalization is the process of transforming physical teaching and learning resources into packages or platforms or electronic forms where they can be stored and manipulated by a computer for the implementation of teaching and learning programmes in school. A number of scholars have analyzed the effects of digitalization on social structures among which are education.

Concept of Education

Education has been defined in numerous ways by various scholars, experts, and organizations. According to United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2019, Education is the process of acquiring knowledge, skills, and values throughout one's life, enabling individuals to adapt to changing circumstances and contribute to society in meaningful ways. It is a comprehensive and integrated process that fosters the intellectual, social, emotional, physical, and ethical growth of individuals, preparing them to live

fulfilling and productive lives. It means helping people to learn how to do things and support them to think about what they learn: its transformative process enables individuals to discover their potential, build their confidence, and develop their identity. Education is both the act of teaching knowledge to others and the act of receiving knowledge from someone else. It refers to the knowledge received through schooling or instruction and to the institution of teaching as a whole. There are plenty of reasons why education is important. Generally speaking, they all tie closely to a person's goals in life and to their future well-being.

1. Education helps a person improve their communication skills by learning how to read, write, speak and listen.
2. Education develops critical thinking as a vital skill in teaching.
3. It promotes gender equality and helps empower girls and women.
4. Education reduces child mortality.

Management of University Education

Management is defined as the coordination and administration of task to achieve a goal. Management of university education can be looked at from different dimension. The internal management of tertiary education in each university is represented by a simple organogram. University management plays a vital role in fostering social cohesion, reducing inequalities and raising the level of knowledge, skills and competences in society. The list of the management in university includes The Visitor/Proprietor, Chancellor, Pro-Chancellor, Vice Chancellor, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Registrar, Bursar, University Librarian, Deans of Faculties and Heads of Departments.

Strategies for digitalization in University Education

To successfully drive digital transformation in university education, it is pertinent to ensure that adequate practices are put in place in order to achieve results. The strategies are:

1. Develop a comprehensive digital transformation strategy.
2. Foster a culture of Innovation and Collaboration.
3. Redefining Learning Space.
4. Secure funding and resources.
5. Collaborate with industry partners.
6. Continuous evaluation and improvement

The Role of Digitalization in the Administrative Processes of University Education

Today, administrative tasks are often managed by generalists across a wide variety of units Digitalization is not just about the need to secure computers, software, and other equipment or about replacing existing technology with new ICT systems. The introduction of new ICT technology is aimed at bringing about organizational change in service delivery, processes, and the execution of task. It is difficult in this day and age to imagine carrying out the logistics processes surrounding education, such as timetabling courses and the student administration, without digital support. These developments enable institutions to improve student services. Whether it concerns study progress, the availability of study areas at the campus.

Rapid growth in the field of education has made governance in academic sector a very complex task. Digital Technology (ICT) plays a vital role in supporting powerful, efficient management and administration in education sector. It is specified that technology can be used right from student administration to various resource administration in an education institution. It is also mentioned that digitalization in Higher Education administration involves harnessing technology for better planning, setting standards, effecting change and monitoring results of the core functions of Universities. One of the key conclusions arrived at is that the integration of digital technologies in Higher Education is inevitable.

Mustea, Muresan, & Herman, (2019) said that digitalization enhances day-to-day management of institutions and the various functional areas in which it could be used are Time-tabling, Student admission and Tracking, Financial Management, Medical services, Procurement and Store management, Data distribution and management.



Challenges of Digitalization of Education in Nigeria

There are many challenges facing the university education in Nigeria. The story of university education in Nigeria today has largely been a story of mixed fortune. In this paper, some of the problems include:

1. Inadequate Financing

Poor funding of university education has been the greatest problem in the educational sector. Today, there is no doubt that the present condition of Nigerian universities shall continue to be the problem until all stake holders participate in the funding of higher education.

2. Poor ICT Literacy

The poor ICT literacy in Nigerian universities is affecting the usage of e-learning programmes. Amos (2019) opined that poor ICT literacy among Nigerian students is another challenge to the effective use of ICT for learning in their schools. Attah (2021) confirmed this and blamed the limited access of students to the Internet on what is described as entrenched social norms and prevailing socio-economic challenges.

3. Inadequate Technological Facilities

Many higher institutions in Nigeria still grapple with insufficient technological facilities that will support the e-learning programme. It is another major problem facing the e-learning programme. (Attah 2021) affirms that 60 percent of Nigerians do not have access to smartphones or digital devices and as such lack the knowledge and skills of computer application

4. Unstable Power Supply

Unstable power has become one of the most challenging institutional issues. Ohiwerei, Azih and Okoli (2013) as cited by Samuel, Victor (2023) by opined that Nigeria being a developing nation cannot boast of twenty-four hours electricity supply to its citizens. The schools are directly connected to Power, yet no electricity is supplied to the schools. Consequently, both the teachers and students are handicapped and may not be able to offer the e-learning initiatives. Thus, the inability of educational institutions to access stable power supply is affecting the utilization of ICT for administrative functions in those institutions (Ogunode & Jegede 2020).

5. Poor Internet Services

Poor internet services are a major problem preventing effective usage of e-learning packages in some universities in Nigeria. The Internet service in Nigeria has limited coverage across the federation. Many rural areas are still not connected to internet services. Internet services are still very expensive in the country. Accessing the services in the schools by school administrators is on the high side in terms of cost implication. (Attah, 2021) expressed regret that access to technology has remained a major challenge facing Nigeria, noting that Internet penetration stands at 42.06 percent in Nigeria where most of the population lives in rural areas.

6. Political Interference

It has been observed that higher institutions are not totally free from the hand of politics. Government of the day, most especially in state-owned institutions, interferes a lot in terms of selection and choice of the different positions.

7. Inadequate Staffing

The shortage of qualified and professional staffing in Nigerian educational institutions presents problem for teaching, learning and research. Deebom and Zite (2016); and Olatunde-Aiyedun (2021) submitted that the shortage of professional ICT skilled teachers is another problem hindering the effective use of ICT by students for learning. As the world is changing, individuals need to change too.



8. High Cost of ICT Facilities

The e-learning facilities are very expensive due to the problem of the unstable Dollar in the market. Many higher institutions and parents cannot afford to buy such facilities for their schools and children due to the high cost of acquisition. The high cost of digital devices and access to the internet creates another barrier for vulnerable children.

9. Lack of Technical Support for Repairs and Maintenance of ICT Facilities

Another challenge preventing the usage of e-learning packages in higher institution is the lack of technical support staff that would handle maintenance and repairs. This prevents the effective lesson implementation and delivery of lessons in the classrooms due to the absence of trained ICT professional and technicians.

10. Corruption

Corruption is a cankerworm that has an in depth effect in the educational system of Nigerian. It has penetrated the administration of education in Nigeria. The high rate of corruption in the administration of higher institution is responsible for the poor utilization of ICT by students learning in their schools. Funds released for such capital programs are sometimes diverted into private pockets and mismanaged.

Suggestions

It is very worthy to note that we're living in a technology-driven world. It is reshaping university education landscape with educators at the forefront. By empowering educator with the necessary resources and support, institutions can leverage the full potential of technology to enhance the learning experience, improve student outcomes, and prepare students for success in the digital era. To address these problems, the following were suggested:

1. There should be provision of adequate funding of the ICT programs in all institution and the Nigerian higher should also seek alternative sources of revenue.
2. The government should employ more qualified staff who are expert in the field and also ensure continuous training of all educational managers.
3. There is need to improve and provide adequate infrastructural and instructional facilities in order to meet the increasing student population.
4. The government should ensure that the power supply is stable and available to all educational institutions.
5. The government should ensure that internet service providers are providing quality internet services across the country.
6. The granting of autonomy to universities would help reduce the extent of political interference in the affairs of universities, especially in the appointment of key positions.
7. There should be new orientation in order to have strong consciousness and commitment on the part of the staff towards our nation's educational development, management and administration.
8. The government should subsidize the high cost of e-learning facilities for students and educational institutions they should develop the political will to implement all ICT policies across the country.
9. There should be continuous training for all ICT user and technician support teams in order to curb future challenges.
10. The government should fight all forms of corruption in the administration of Basic school education in the country. ICT facilities installed in schools should be properly monitored and supervised

Conclusion

Digitalization has no doubt changed our education system, but we cannot say that it has diminished the value of our old time classroom learning. Neither do we want something so priceless to turn into dust. The best part about the digitalization of education in the 21st century is that it is combined with the aspects of both; classroom learning and online learning methods. Walking hand in hand both acts as a support system to each other, this gives a stronghold to our modern students. Today, the internet dominates many aspects of our life. We're so used



to it that we don't even think about all the areas it touches. It helps us communicate effectively in the academic institutions. We access our entertainment online. A teacher instructs a student or a group of students, who use their studies to learn to become members of society. A few will then go on to become teachers themselves, and pass their knowledge along to the next generation. Technology has come a long way in helping students conduct research, participate in debates and projects, and even gain hands-on experience that will help them better understand and navigate the world and their future careers.

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