E-Learning as an Alternative Platform for Enhancing Knowledge and Managerial Skills: Evidence from Ahmadu Bello University in Sub-Saharan Africa

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Abstract:

The advancement in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has revolutionised activities across all facets of human endeavours including learning and management. e-learning is an evolving educational platform and the scheme like other ICT inclined sectors, is facing series and peculiar challenges in Sub-Saharan Africa. These challenges ranges from poor infrastructure, poor funding, poor/low oriented masses, inadequate government policies, poor infrastructure such as electricity, technological deficiency on the part of service providers among many others. Nevertheless, e-learning has proven to possess the capacity to offer an alternative learning environment to boost knowledge and by extension enhance managerial skills, especially for those whose job schedules offer them limited time to travel over some relatively long distances to acquire knowledge through the conventional system. Thus, using the Ahmadu Bello University Distance Learning Centre (ABU DLC) in Nigeria as a case study, the paper argues that,

the prospects offered by the e-learning platform can improve on Nigeria's educational sector and individual managerial skills as well as organisational outputs. Therefore, using primary and secondary/documentary information, the paper stresses that e-learning in Nigeria though challenging, can add value to both individual and the country's educational sector and by extension boost managerial skills. When adequate resources among others are committed and properly harness to e-learning, it can comfortably serve as an alternative platform for learning, especially for interested individuals as obtainable in advanced countries in the contemporary global society.

Keywords: E-Learning, Management/Managerial Skills, Educational Sector, Nigeria.

1. Introduction

Since the advent of industrial revolution, the world has been searching for alternative/easier methods of conducting global affairs using technology to ease labour, replace overdependence on human and to boost productivity. The continuous innovations as achieved in the contemporary global system have affected virtually every aspect of human endeavour including learning and management. As such, a technical term connoting technological learning- "e-learning" emerged. e-learning is an all-inclusive term as opposed to distance learning that is electronically or technologically enhanced. It is undoubtedly, a product of global technological revolution which set it apart from the traditional/conventional face-to-face mode of learning. As such, it could be argued that e-learning is relatively a novel system of education not only in Nigeria, but a global phenomenon which has provided learners of higher institutions, universities and college in particular, and secondary (as the case may be in developed countries like America and Western Europe and some developing countries) the opportunity to acquire education collaboratively from tutors/instructors separated from each other. Tao, Yeh, and Sun, (2006) alluded to the novelty of e-learning and its electronic inclination as the new was to make education available to masses of people who need it.

In the case of Nigeria, the current waves of distance education owe their origins to the establishment of the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) in July 1983, by an Act of the National Assembly as the first distance learning tertiary institution in Nigeria. The aim was to meet the growing demand for education by Nigerians which could not be met by the traditional system of face-to-face instructional delivery. The institution was closed few weeks after its establishment, but with necessity to key into the advantage of emerging developments in the field of ICT which have revolutionized learning, necessitated the reactivation of the suspended NOUN Act of 1983 in 2002 (Fredrick, 2015). Although, there had been attempts by universities such as Ahmadu Bello

University, Zaria through Teacher Improvement and Skills Educational Programme (TISEP), and Agricultural Extension Services in the 1940s and the1980s, the establishment of NOUN gave a boost to distance learning.

Notwithstanding the breakthrough in e-learning or distance education globally, e-learning as a new and emerging form of education has its challenges. The Nigerian system has its own peculiar challenges, particularly with regards to ICT and other infrastructural deficiencies. Nevertheless, e-learning in Nigeria has proven that it can be an alternative platform for enhancing knowledge and managerial skills given the progress that has been recorded in the recent years in some institutions of higher learning since the introduction of Open and Distance Learning (ODL) and Open and Distance Education (ODE). Mondal (n.d) in emphasizing the importance of ODL in Netaji Subhas Open University (NSOU) India, notes that in the last twenty years ODL has expanded its affordability and flexibleness to common people. Besides, following its inherent learner friendly features and flexibilities, the ODL system is designed to enable learners to deal with the challenging and difficult situations of society.

Given the above assertion and the truism that management by its character is tasking and time demanding, e-learning thus becomes an alternative platform for managers to improve their personal skills and outputs in their organisations while discharging their daily duties. These skills are made possible through enhanced knowledge that could be obtained electronically. Isaacs and McAllister (n.d) asserts that management is an explicit process that can be taught and learned. However, it takes time, dedication, and self-discipline, as such, management is a distinct task that demands a time commitment from the leaders of the organization. It follows then to add that the e-learning model of Ahmadu Bello University (ABU) with it synchronous and asynchronous dual mode offers managers the opportunity to improve their skills to meet up with new challenges and add value to their organisations. This paper therefore is of the opinion that e-learning, despite its shortcomings, can suitably and conveniently serve as an alternative platform for managers to improve their managerial skills given the seriousness of their engagements.

Statement of the Problem

Management is a tasking position and managers at any level need managerial skills to improve their capacity and productivity. Consequently, managerial knowledge and skills can be learned in school or through practical implementation of tasks. Thus, due to the challenge of time faced by

managers to meet up with their daily managerial activities and to acquire more knowledge in school through the face-to-face mode, the e-learning mode of learning that is flexible and recognizes diversity is advance to aid managers and other distance learners meet up with their daily task as well as study to acquire more skills. Thus, the study seeks to unravel whether the e-learning model provided by Ahmadu Bello University Distance Learning Centre (ABU DLC) is providing the needed environment as an alternative learning platform for managers despites its challenges.

Research Questions

The following basic questions are raised to guide this study:
1. How tasking are managerial roles and how can its skills be improved?
2. How effective is ABU DLC mode of e-learning delivery?
3. What are some of the challenges of ABU DLC mode of e-learning delivery and how can they be improved?

Objectives of the study

The broad objective of the study is to investigate whether distance learning can be an alternative platform for enhancing knowledge and managerial skills. Other specific objectives the study intends to achieve are as follows:
1. To ascertain the extent of tasking of managerial roles and how its skills can be improved
2. To assess the effective of ABU DLC mode of e-learning delivery
3. To unravel the challenges of ABU DLC mode of e-learning delivery and how they be improved.

2. Literature Review

Conceptual Issues

E-Learning

The definition of e-learning is sometimes confusing when viewed from different perspectives. For example, Dublin (2003) to come up with a common definition of the concept of e-learning posed the following questions: Is e-learning an on-line coursework for students at a distance? Does it mean using a virtual learning environment to support the provision of campus-based education?

Does it refer to an on-line tool to enrich, extend and enhance collaboration? or is it a totally online learning or part of blended learning? Irrespective of the divergence of views on e-learning, the definition of e-learning may be divided between those who view it from the blended perspective and those that see it from the complete online mode. In the former case, reference can be made to conceptualization of e-learning by Oblinger and Hawkins (2005), who note the transformations of e-learning from a complete online course to using technology to deliver in part or all of a course independent of permanent time and place. The European Commission (2001) in a similar vein conceives e-Learning as the use of new multimedia technologies and the Internet to enhance learning quality by easing access to facilities and services as well as distant exchanges and collaboration. While in the latter and broadest case/sense, Abbad Abbad, Morris and de Nahlik (2009), defined e-learning to mean any learning that is enabled electronically. Similarly, Kassa and Balunywa, (2013) define e-learning as opposed to distance learning to mean all ICTs, networks, internet, and other forms of electronic media that can be used to enhance teaching and learning so as to transfer knowledge and skills.

Management/Managerial Skills

Koontz (n.d) sees management as the process of designing and maintaining an environment in which persons working together in groups can efficiently accomplish selected goals. Management is concerned with planning, policy formulation and coordinating functions. Managerial skills are the knowledge and ability of the individuals in a managerial position to fulfil some specific management activities or tasks. This knowledge and ability can be learned and practiced. However, they also can be acquired through practical implementation of required activities and tasks. Therefore, you can develop each skill through learning and practical experience as a manager. Arising from the definition of management, managements skills and e-learning, it is clearly that management is an embodiment of tasks. However, there is need for managers to improve their management skills through learning. Therefore, the best alternative learning platform is e-learning which offers them the opportunity to study while handling their busy schedules (Isaac & McAllister n.d).

E-Learning: An Alternative Platform for Acquiring Managerial Skills

The advancement in global technology has compelled the educational sector to key in to exploit its maximum opportunities and by extension impact on the global educational system. As such, e-learning has become a new culture of the educational system that is used to enhance learning. Relating the importance of the current transition in learning from the conventional system, Aduwa-Ogiegbean and Iyamu, (2008) concur that technology enhanced learning, either distance or online, is recognised as a viable tool for preparing citizens to participate in the technologically driven global society. This fact is also recognized by multidisciplinary approach to online educational research that e-learning enhanced teaching and learning which is critical in the mixture of diverse strategies. Thus e-learning (computer-managed instruction, blended or complete online) is a culture that is completely opposed to elitist views of education as a privilege. A culture rooted in the belief that a more open education system enables increased contribution to the global marketplace of ideas. This new culture empowers citizens of the world to share knowledge globally where diverse voices are often underrepresented. The culture has been exemplified by an open movement, with diverse champions from remote village classrooms to ivory towers. Despite the challenges facing Nigeria development in ICT application, the system still has its benefits. Similarly, the European Commission (EU) in stressing the contribution of internet and multimedia technology to learning, notes that its developments have enable the e-learning sector the ability of consulting, content, technologies, services and support which are identified as the five key sectors of the e-leaning industry (European Commission, 2000). Following this breakthrough, e-learning can be adopted, used or applied in education for effective teaching and learning irrespective of the level or stage of education. E-learning by its nature is flexible which makes it learner-controlled, and it operates under a self-managed education environment where the learners have authority over the learning environment; thereby allowing learners to work at their pace and convenience (Eke, 2011).

These changes in education have led to a paradigm shift from the face-to-face traditional system to learner centred education delivery (Kassa & Balunywa, 2013). The extent to which e-learning alternate or substitutes the traditional system or other learning and teaching approaches varies in types and ranges from none to fully online distance learning or from computer-based and the internet-based e-learning and from the mixed or blended more, assistant mode, and completely online mode (Bates & Poole, 2013, Algahtani, 2011 & Zeitoum 2008). These categorisations are

a matter of semantics with little categorical differentiation. Nevertheless, it is evident that e-learning can be an alternative to the traditional system given the global level of technological advancement which gives managers the opportunity to study in spite their tight schedules.

Reiterating the use of ICT to enhance the novel learning environment, Tao, Yeh and Sun (2006) also assert that the innovations permit learners in institution of higher education to receive personalised support and learning schedules that are more suitable to them as well as separate them from other learners. This facilitates a high interaction and collaboration between instructors or tutors and learners than the traditional setting for learning. Therefore, e-learning according to Liaw, and Huang, (2007) in Arkorful and Abaidoo (2014) is an academics that is characterized by the use of multimedia constructs which makes the process of learning more active, interesting and enjoyable. The main constructs that have made e-learning the most promising educational technology according to some writers in field like: Hammer and Champy, Liaw and Huang all cited in Arkorful and Abaidoo (2014) include service, cost, quality, and speed. Therefore, it is apparent that e-learning can empower students at higher educational levels to acquire their education while simultaneously perusing their personal objectives as well as maintaining their own careers, without the intimidation of rigid schedule and programmes (Borstorff and Lowe, 2007). From this analogy, it is obvious that e-learning is the best alternative platform for managers to explore to increase their skills for greater managerial tasks.

E-Learning Milieu and its Impact on Education and Management

Going further, it is imperative to briefly explain the modus operandi of e-learning environment, its impact on education and by extension, its accorded potentials as an alternative learning platform for managers. In the just concluded theme, the paper attempts to unravel the types and range of online delivery as an alternative of the traditional system. However, these categorisations shall be explained here for the purpose of clarity and to understand where the ABU DLC model and the Nigerian system fits into. Algahtani (2011) notes that there are different classifications of e-learning, some are classified according to the extent of their engagement in education while some are classified according to the timing of interaction. However, he divided e-learning into two basic types: the computer-based and the internet-based e-learning.

Furthermore, Algahtani (2011) explains that the computer-based learning has to do with the use of a full range of hardware and software that are available for the use of ICT and where each

component can be used in either for: computer-managed instruction and computer-assisted learning. In the former category he maintains that computers are used for the purpose of storing and retrieving information to aid in the management of education. While in the latter category computers are employed instead of the traditional methods by providing interactive software as a support tool within the class or as a tool for self-learning outside the class.

Explaining the internet-based learning further Almosa (2001) submits that it is an additional improvement of the computer-based learning where the contents are made available on the internet, with prepared links to related sources of materials or course wares. In this case, e-mails and references for example, that could be used byss learners at any time and place as well as the availability or absence of tutors (teachers) or instructors are made ready. Following the emphasis on the internet mode of delivery, Zeitoun (2008) classified this by the extent of the features use in e-learning such as: mixed or blended mode, assistant mode, and completely online mode. Starting with the second category he notes that the assistant mode complements the traditional method as needed. The mixed or blended mode offers a short-term degree for a partly traditional method. While the completely online mode involves the exclusive use of the internet network for learning. Explaining further the completely online mode Algahtani (2011), using the application of optional timing of interaction described it or divided it into: synchronous or asynchronous. The synchronous timing comprises alternate online access between tutors or instructors and learners, or between leaners. Therefore, the synchronous type allows learners to discuss with the tutors/instructors and among themselves via the internet at the same time with the use of forums such as the videoconference and chat rooms. The asynchronous, to him allows all participants to post communications to any other participant over the internet. Thus, the asynchronous mode also allows learners to discuss with the tutors/instructors as well as among themselves over the internet at different times. It is therefore not interactional at the same moment but later, with the use of forums such as thread discussion and emails.

Drawing lessons from the explanation of mode of online delivery and its environment in other parts of the world like India which forms the background for Alghatani's and Mondal's explanation among other researchers and scholars that have written in the area, it is imperative to state that across Nigeria, different universities have adopted varied approaches and models of e-learning. The models ranging from none to fully online distance learning or from computer-based and the internet-based e-learning and from the mixed or blended mode, assisted mode, and

completely online mode or from the synchronous and asynchronous mode. However, these modes may be improperly or haphazardly designed and implemented due to the challenges facing the implementation of e-learning in Nigeria. Nevertheless, some institutions like the Ahmadu Bello University (ABU) Distance Learning model have recorded a high level of success and has gone as far as implementing the internet base mode that incorporates the blended mode, assistant mode, and the completely online mode of delivery. These modes of delivery are implemented depending on the convenience of the learner(s). For example, despite the completely online mode, the centre makes provision for two or three weeks optional face-to-face contact tutorial for her students. This is in addition to provision of hard and soft copy course materials for students to study. Similarly, the examinations are purely supervised as provided by NUC.

Thus, the feat achieved so far in distance education in Nigeria can be exploited by managers to boost their knowledge and skills. Distance education has thus impacted positively on the Nigeria's educational sector despite its challenges. Daniel (2009) observed that e-learning plays an important role in professional development for adults in the workforce. This is particularly as the world strives to meet development goals, there is increasing recognition of the potential of e-learning to meet growing educational challenges. Similarly, Kartha (2006), in support for e-learning argues that the number of courses online has vividly increased because of the attained benefits for both learners and universities.

Benefits, Challenges, and the Prospect of E-Learning in Nigeria

The Nigerian state over the years has consistently been formulating policies aimed at ensuring that equal and adequate educational opportunities are provided across levels. Since 1977, the Nigerian government started searching for alternative models of education away from the traditional conventional system. Thus, a semblance of e-learning idea was conceived which led to the establishment of the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN). It can therefore be said that the foundation of e-learning educational system in Nigeria was laid through the National Policy on Education of 1977, subsequently revised in 1981 (Terande, 2012). Owing to advancements in education so far, and referring to the discussion thus far, it is clear that e-learning has its benefits as well as challenges or pitfalls, as the case may be. The Nigerian state also has its peculiar challenges. Consequently, the discussion here will attempt to briefly itemize the key issues.

Some of the benefits and challenges for the adoption of e-learning in education, obtained from review of literature and cited in Arkorful and Abaidoo (2014:401-403) include the following:

Benefits of e-learning:

i. The adoption of e-learning makes the delivery of education flexible for both the students or learners and the tutors with respect to time and place.

ii. E-learning enhances the efficacy of knowledge and qualifications by means of ease of access to a huge amount of information.

iii. It also provides opportunities for relations between learners by the use of discussion forums. Thus, e-learning helps eliminate barriers that have the potential of hindering participation including the fear of talking to other learners. E-learning motivates students to interact with other, as well as exchange and respect different point of views.

iv. E-learning is relatively cost effective in the sense that it reduces the cost of students traveling and also offers opportunities to accommodate many learners without the necessity of structures or buildings.

v. E-learning always takes into consideration the individual learners' differences where some learners prefer to concentrate on certain parts of the course, while others prefer to review the entire course.

vi. E-learning helps compensate for scarcities of academic staff, such as instructors, facilitators, lab technicians etc.

vii. The use of e-learning allows self-pacing. For instance, the asynchronous mode permits each student to study at his or her own pace and speed. It therefore increases satisfaction and decreases stress.

The Following are the Challenges or Pitfalls of e-learning:

i. E-learning as a method of education makes the learners undergo contemplation, remoteness, as well as lack of interaction or relation. It therefore requires a very strong inspiration as well as skills to the management of time in order to reduce such effects.

ii. With respect to clarifications, effective explanations and interpretations to learners, the e-learning method might be less effective compared to the traditional method of learning.

The learning process in this respect is much easier with the use of the face-to-face encounter with the instructors or teachers.

iii. E-learning as a method might have a negative effect with respect to improvement in communication skills of learners. As such learners might have an excellent knowledge in academics but may not possess the needed skills to deliver their acquired knowledge to others.

iv. It will be difficult, if not impossible to control or regulate bad activities like cheating, since assessments such as forums, quizzes, assignments etc. in e-learning are possibly done by proxy.

v. E-learning may also probably be misled to piracy and plagiarism predisposed by inadequate selection of skills, as well as the ease of copy and paste.

vi. E-learning may also weaken institutions' role of socialization and also the role of instructors as the directors of the process of education.

vii. Also, not all fields or discipline can employ the e-learning technique in education. For instance, the purely scientific fields that include practical cannot be properly studies through e-learning. Research have argued that e-learning is more appropriate in social science and humanities than some fields like medical science and pharmacy etc. where there is the need to develop practical skills.

viii. E-learning may also lead to congestion of operational websites, this may lead to unexpected costs in both time and money.

The benefits and pitfalls of e-learning discussed above may be generalize globally. However, Nigeria, like other developing countries, has her own peculiar challenges. Pal (2006), Kizito and Bijan, (2006) cited in Thomas and Omotoke (2015) noted that studies conducted on e-learning in developing countries show a lack of vision and framework in implementing e-learning have led to the failure of e-learning projects. However, this position may not be true as e-learning platform is just evolving particularly in Nigeria. Some institutions like ABU Zaria among other are recording huge successes in this area. Nevertheless, Nigerian universities are having the challenges of insufficient manpower on ICT, poor orientation toward e-learning (lecturers and students inclusive), negative attitudes from traditionalist who are averse to use of technology in learning leading to wrong and bad perception, infrastructural deficiency, inadequate policies and budgetary

allocation for e-learning among others. Thomas and Omotoke (2015) summarized the challenges of e-learning in Nigerian universities as follow:

i.   Inadequate security for universities Cyber Café,

ii. Inadequate e-learning experts or manpower to train both the staff and the students,

iii. Internet facilities adopted in most universities are not functioning very well,

iv. Hardware used for e-learning classes are costly and some universities cannot afford it,

v.   Inadequate supply of electricity to e-learning centres for effective teaching and learning,

vi. Inadequate funding of the universities to buy e-learning technologies and

vii. Inadequate laptops or computers for both the students and staffs (Thomas and Omotoke (2015:303).

Despite the challenges facing e-learning in Nigeria, the prospect for of it cannot be disputed. As discussed earlier, e-learning is an evolving learning platform particularly in Nigeria and other developing countries. Therefore, it would be out of place to remark that the scheme has failed because of its entangled challenges.

3. Methodology

The study area for this research is ABU DLC. The centre is currently running six (6) programmes viz: Business Administration, Public Administration, Economics, Nursing Science, Postgraduate Diploma in Education, and master's in business administration (MBA). Both quantitative and qualitative sources of information were used while the instrument used to elicit information for the paper was questionnaires. The population for the study was the MBA students of ABU DLC, and they were reached during their 2019 May semester examination. The MBA students were majorly targeted on the assumption that most of them occupy managerial positions, thus, their responses are very important. A sample size of 322 was chosen as representative of the total population of 2400 MBA students currently on the programme according to Krejcie and Morgan criterion of determining sample size (Krejcie and Morgan 1970). The questionnaires were distributed on percentages according to student population of each centre as presented in table 1.1

S/No	Examination Centre	Total Population Per Centre	Sample Size Per Centre
1	Abuja	1013	136
2	Gombe	59	8
3	Lagos	797	107

4	Port Harcourt	156	21
5	Zaria	375	50
6	**TOTAL**	**2400**	**322**

The 322 questionnaires were proportionately allocated to each examination centre based on its population, using the formula K = N÷TN × SS÷1 express as: examination centres population ÷ total population × sample size ÷ 1, to determine the appropriate and proportionate number of questionnaires that goes to each centre. The data was interpreted using SPSS and presented in frequency table.

4. Result and Discussion of Findings
Analysis of Bio data variables
Table 4.1: Sex Distribution

Observations	Frequency	Percent	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Male	188	58.9	58.9	58.9
Female	131	41.1	41.1	100.0
Total	**319**	**100.0**	**100.0**	

Table 1 shows that a total of 188 respondents representing 58.9% are males and the rest 131 or 41.1% are female**s. This indicates that both male and female are adequately represented in the study.**

Table 4.2: Age Distribution

Observations	Frequency	Percent	Percent	Cumulative Percent
21-30	73	22.9	22.9	22.9
31-40	180	56.4	56.4	79.3
41-50	52	16.3	16.3	95.6
51-60	10	3.1	3.1	98.7
61 and above	4	1.3	1.3	100.0
Total	**319**	**100.0**	**100.0**	

Table 2 shows that 73 or 22.9% of the respondents are between the ages 21-30, those in age range 31-40 accounted for 180 or 56.4% of the respondents, 52 or 16.3% of respondents are in the age range of 41-50 while 10 or 3.1% of them are between 51-60 years and the rest 4 or 1.3% are within the age range of 61 and above. **Therefore, most of the respondents in this study falls within age range of 31-40 years.**

Table 4.3: MBA Specializations

Observations	Frequency	Percent	Percent	Cumulative Percent
no response	2	.6	.6	.6
Finance and Investments	194	60.8	60.8	61.4
Human Resource	87	27.3	27.3	88.7
Marketing	36	11.3	11.3	100.0
Total	**319**	**100.0**	**100.0**	

Table 3 shows that 2 or 0.6% of the respondents had no response, 194 or 60.8% of them specializes in finance and investments, 87 or 27.3% of them specializes in human resource while the remaining 36 or 11.3% specializes in marketing. **Finance and investment are more represented in this study.**

Table 4.4: Examination Centres

Observations	Frequency	Percent	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Zaria	73	22.9	22.9	22.9
Abuja	104	32.6	32.6	55.5
Lagos	130	40.8	40.8	96.2
Gombe	12	3.8	3.8	100.0
Total	**319**	**100.0**	**100.0**	

Table 4 shows that, 73 or 22.9% of the respondent's examination centre was in Zaria, 104 or 32.6% of them sad for their examination in Abuja, 130 or 40.8% of the respondents' centre was in Lagos and the remaining 12 or 3.8% of the respondents' centre was in Gombe. **This indicates that Abuja and Lagos centres have more MBA students compare to other centres.**

Table 4.5: Job/designation Distribution

Observations	Frequency	Percent	Percent	Cumulative Percent
no response	5	1.6	1.6	1.6
Professional	297	93.1	93.1	94.7
Teacher	11	3.4	3.4	98.1
Business	4	1.3	1.3	99.4
Unskilled	2	.6	.6	100.0
Total	**319**	**100.0**	**100.0**	

Table 5 shows that 5 or 1.6% of the respondents did no response, 297 or 93.1% of them are professionals, 11 or 3.4% are teachers, 4 or 1.3% of them are in business while 2 or 0.6% are unskilled. Majority of the respondents representing 93.1% are in the professional cadre designation. **These include Doctors, Engineers, Lecturers, and Lawyers etc.**

Table 4.6: Rank Distribution of Respondents

Observations	Frequency	Percent	Percent	Cumulative Percent
no response	7	2.2	2.2	2.2
Professional	295	92.5	92.5	94.7
Teacher	11	3.4	3.4	98.1
Business	4	1.3	1.3	99.4
Unskilled	2	.6	.6	100.0
Total	**319**	**100.0**	**100.0**	

Table 6 shows that 7 or 2.2% of the respondents did not response, 295 or 92.5% of them were professionals, 11 or 3.4% are teachers, 4 or 1.3% of them are in business while 2 or 0.6% are unskilled. **Most of the respondents are professionals by ranks.**

Analysis of Managerial roles of the DLC of the ABU

Table 4.7: The extent of tasking of managerial roles

Observations	Frequency	Percent	Percent	Cumulative Percent
very tasking	202	63.3	63.3	63.3
Tasking	107	33.5	33.5	96.9
not tasking	5	1.6	1.6	98.4
not very tasking	5	1.6	1.6	100.0
Total	**319**	**100.0**	**100.0**	

Table 7 shows, 202 or 63.3% of the respondents affirms that managerial roles are very tasking, 107 or 33.5% chose that it is tasking while 5 or 1.6% of them responded that it is not tasking and the remaining 5 or 1.6% maintains that it is not very tasking. **In summary a total of 309 representing 96.8% believe that managerial roles are really tasking.**

Table 4.8: The extent to which managerial roles require extra skills to cope with

Observations	Frequency	Percent	Percent	Cumulative Percent
no response	3	.9	.9	.9
very large extent	152	47.6	47.6	48.6
large extent	158	49.5	49.5	98.1
minimal extent	6	1.9	1.9	100.0
Total	**319**	**100.0**	**100.0**	

Table 8 shows the extent to which managerial roles require extra skills to cope with, 3 or 0.9% of the respondents did not response, while 152 or 47.6% of them confirmed that managerial roles require extra skills to a very large extent, 158 or 49.5% of the respondents chose that it is to a large extent, while 6 or 1.9% of them said it is to a minimal extent. **A total of 310 representing 97.1% believe that managerial roles require high extra skills to cope with.**

Table 4.9: The extent to which ABU DLC is aiding students to acquire knowledge that has improved or is improving their managerial skills

Observations	Frequency	Percent	Percent	Cumulative Percent
no response	1	.3	.3	.3
very large extent	105	32.9	32.9	33.2
large extent	194	60.8	60.8	94.0
negligible extent	17	5.3	5.3	99.4
very negligible extent	2	.6	.6	100.0
Total	**319**	**100.0**	**100.0**	

Tale 9 shows the extent to which the ABU DLC aids students to acquire knowledge that has improved or is improving their managerial skills. Therefore, 1 or 0.3% of the respondents did not response, 105 or 32.9% of them confirmed that it is to a very large extent, 194 or 60.8% of the respondents responded that it is to a large extent while 17 or 5.3% of them said it is to a negligible extent and the remaining 2 or 0.6% of them wrote that it is to a very negligible extent. **This implies that a total of 299 representing 93.7% believes that the ABU DLC to a very large extent is aiding them to acquire knowledge that has improved or is improving their managerial skills.**

Table 4.10: The extent to which your skills has improved or is improving

Observations	Frequency	Percent	Percent	Cumulative Percent
very large extent	70	21.9	21.9	21.9
large extent	224	70.2	70.2	92.2
negligible extent	22	6.9	6.9	99.1
very negligible extent	3	.9	.9	100.0
Total	319	100.0	100.0	

Table 10 shows responses to the question on the extent to which their skills have improved or is improving. Thus, 70 or 21.9% of them confirmed that it is to a very large extent, 224 or 70.2% of the respondents agreed that it is to a large extent while 22 or 6.9% of them wrote that it is to a negligible extent and the rest 3 or 0.9% of them wrote that it is to a very negligible extent. **A**

combined total of 246 representing 77.1% asserted that their skills have improved largely with the help of ABU DLC intervention.

Table 4.11: The extent to which ABU DLC mode of e-learning delivery is effective

Observations	Frequency	Percent	Percent	Cumulative Percent
very effective	61	19.1	19.1	19.1
Effective	189	59.2	59.2	78.4
not effective	49	15.4	15.4	93.7
not very effective	20	6.3	6.3	100.0
Total	**319**	**100.0**	**100.0**	

Table 10 shows the extent to which the ABU DLC mode of e-learning delivery is effective, as such 61 or 19.1% of the respondents said it is very effective,189 or 59.2% said it is effective, 49 or 15.4% of them said it is not effective while 20 or 6.3% of them said it is not very effective. **This shows that the effectiveness of the ABU DLC mode of e-learning delivery is high because a total of 250 representing 78.3% consider it effective.**

Table 4.12: The extent of flexibility of ABU DLC mode of e-learning delivery

Observations	Frequency	Percent	Percent	Cumulative Percent
very flexible	116	36.4	36.4	36.4
Flexible	179	56.1	56.1	92.5
not flexible	16	5.0	5.0	97.5
not very flexible	8	2.5	2.5	100.0
Total	**319**	**100.0**	**100.0**	

Table 12 shows the flexibility of ABU DLC mode of e-learning delivery. As such, 116 or 36.4% of the respondents said it is very flexible, 179 or 56.1% of them confirmed that it is flexible, 16 or 5.0% said it is not flexible and the remaining 8 or 2.5% said that it is not very flexible. The flexibility in **ABU DLC mode of e-learning delivery is high because a total of 295 representing 92.5% affirmed that.**

Table 4.13: The extent to which the ABU DLC mode of e-learning delivery allows students to work and study

Observations	Frequency	Percent	Percent	Cumulative Percent
very large extent	108	33.9	33.9	33.9
large extent	181	56.7	56.7	90.6
negligible extent	28	8.8	8.8	99.4
very negligible extent	2	.6	.6	100.0
Total	**319**	**100.0**	**100.0**	

Table 13 shows the extent in which the ABU DLC mode of delivery allowed respondents to work and study, 108 or 33.9% of them confirmed that it is to a very large extent, 181 or 56.7% of the respondents confirmed that it is to a large extent while 28 or 8.8% of them said it is to a negligible extent and the remaining 2 or 0.6% of them maintains that it is to a very negligible extent. **Majority of the respondents believe that ABU DLC mode of delivery allows them to work and study to a very large extent as acknowledged by over 289 or 90.6% of the respondents.**

How effective is ABU DLC mode of e-learning delivery?

Table 4.14: The adequacy of ABU DLC mode of e-learning delivery

Observations	Frequency	Percent	Percent	Cumulative Percent
grossly adequate	37	11.6	11.6	11.6
Adequate	224	70.2	70.2	81.8
Inadequate	58	18.2	18.2	98.7
Total	319	100.0	100.0	

Table 14 show responses on the adequacy of the type of ABU DLC mode of e-learning delivery, the table indicates that 37 or 11.6% of the respondents confirmed that it is grossly adequate while 224 or 70.2% of them said it is adequate. 58 or 18.2% said it is inadequate.

Therefore, the type of ABU DLC mode of e-learning delivery can be considered adequate as acknowledged by a combined total of 261 respondents representing 81.8%.

Table 4.15: The maintenance of ABU DLC standard mode of e-learning delivery

Observations	Frequency	Percent	Percent	Cumulative Percent
no response	1	.3	.3	.3
strongly agreed	76	23.8	23.8	24.1
Agreed	152	47.6	47.6	71.8
Disagreed	80	25.1	25.1	96.9
strongly disagreed	10	3.1	3.1	100.0
Total	**319**	**100.0**	**100.0**	

Table 15 shows the response on how to maintain the standard of ABU DLC mode of e-learning deliverer. Therefore, 1 or 0.3% gave no response. 76 or 23.8% of the respondents strongly agreed while 152 or 47.6% of them agreed. 80 or 25.1% disagreed and the remaining 10 or 3.1% strongly disagreed. **A combined total of 228 or 71.4% are of the agreement that ABU DLC mode of e-learning delivery be maintained.**

Table 4.16: The major challenges of ABU DLC mode of e-learning delivery

Observations	Frequency	Percent	Percent	Cumulative Percent
no response	13	4.1	4.1	4.1
the course materials are bulky and need to be precise	48	15.0	15.0	19.1
the centers are inadequate	54	16.9	16.9	36.1
communication gaps between students and e-learning tutors	107	33.5	33.5	69.6
Others	97	30.4	30.4	100.0
Total	**319**	**100.0**	**100.0**	

Table 16 shows the opinions of the respondents on the major challenges of ABU DLC mode of e-learning delivery. 13 or 4.1 of the respondents gave no response, 48 or 15% are of the opinion that the course materials are bulky and needed to be precise while 54 or 16.9% said that the centers are inadequate, 107 or 33.5% of them complained about the communication gaps between students and e-tutors while the remaining 97 or 30.4% had other opinions. **This shows that the major challenges of ABU DLC mode of e-learning delivery, include majorly communication gaps between students and e-tutors and inadequate centers among others**

Table 4.17: The possible ways to improve the standard of ABU DLC mode of e-learning delivery

Observations	Frequency	Percent	Percent	Cumulative Percent
no response	17	5.3	5.3	5.3
reduce number of students per e-tutor	52	16.3	16.3	21.6
adequate funding	52	16.3	16.3	37.9
it should be more affordable	98	30.7	30.7	68.7
Others	100	31.3	31.3	100.0
Total	**319**	**100.0**	**100.0**	

Table 17 shows responses on the possible ways to improve the standard of ABU DLC mode of e-learning delivery. 17 or 5.3% of them had no response while 52 or 16.3% said to reduce the number of students per e-tutor, 52 or 16.3% said through adequate funding 98 or 30.7% said it should be more affordable and then 100 or 31.3% had other suggestions. **The best ways to improve the standard of ABU DLC mode of e-learning delivery, include reduction in school fees to make it affordability, reduction of students per e-tutor ratio and provision of more funding for the ABU DLC.**

Summary of Findings

The followings are the summary of the major findings:

1. A total of 309 representing 96.8% believe that managerial roles are really tasking and suggest that more funding be provided for the DLC ABU for proper management

2. Majority of the respondents believe that ABU DLC mode of delivery allows them to work and study to a very large extent as acknowledged by over 289 or 90.6% of the respondents

3. the major challenges of ABU DLC mode of e-learning delivery, include majorly communication gaps between students and e-learning tutors and inadequate centers, bulkiness of course materials among others

5. Conclusion and Recommendation

The semblance of e-learning was first introduced in 1982 with an Act that established the National Open University, but now eight (8) Nigerian universities are running Distance Learning Centres dully accredited by the National University Commission (NUC) (2018). With some universities including state's owned are working and designing plans to establish their Distance Learning Centres, e-learning has come to stay in Nigeria. Therefore, with the progress made so far, e-learning as an educational medium for teaching and impacting knowledge, could be an alternative platform especially for those in management position to explore due to their tight schedules.

The introduction of e-learning as a platform for learning has transformed and impacted positively on the global educational system. As a scheme or medium for teaching, e-learning offers learners the opportunity to acquire knowledge using networks unlike the face-to-face mode of education. This opportunity is made possible by advancement in technology particularly ICT. The developed parts of the world have advanced in e-learning obviously due to corresponding advancement in technology compared to third world countries. Nevertheless, the nature and modus operandi of e-learning offers a better opportunity and platform for those in management position to explore with a view to improving their knowledge and skills. This opportunity is having been confirmed by this study that, the ABU DLC mode of e-learning delivery is quite effective due to its flexibility and recognition of diversity. As such learners can study and at the same time work, albeit its peculiar challenges of teacher to student ratio, bulkiness of course materials and lack of adequate funding in which the burden of payment have been shifted to the students.

Recommendations

Based on the outcome of the study, the following reconditions are noteworthy:

1. The student numbers to a tutor ratio should be investigated for effective online facilitation and learning to be achieved. In this wise more tutors should be engaged to reduce the high ratio of tutor to students.

2. In addition, ABU DLC should find a means of alternative income or at best the members of staff of the centre can be absorb by the University in order to reduce the cost of running the centre. This will in turn impact on the amount of money that students are charged for their programmes. As such the students complains on fees can be mitigated and more students can afford to enroll for the DLC of ABU.

3. Additional Liaisons offices should be established particularly in Southeast geopolitical zone that has no.

4. Lastly, the ABU DLC course material particularly that of MBA programme should be reviewed to reduce the volume of the course material while ensuring that the substance is maintain or improve. This will make the course material easy to handle and study by the students.

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