# PROMOTING E-LEARNING IN BUSINESS EDUCATION BEYOND THE ERA OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC IN NIGERIA

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**Abstract:** *The use of e-learning is prioritized in Nigeria's current strategy for teaching and learning across all disciplines. Ideally, no effective educational programme can function without modern technologies. This is the case because they are crucial to instruction and learning that aims to create digital natives. Students today inhabit a society that is essentially dominated by technology. They deal with concerns and problems that have technological roots throughout their entire lives. The application of digital media in business education can help students gain problem-solving abilities, a positive mindset, an appreciation and interest in science, as well as technology literacy. These abilities are acquired through a combination of technology-enabled education and general life preparation for young people.*

**Key words:** Promoting, E-learning, Business Education, Covid-19, Pandemic

## Introduction

Computers have given humanity so much power, abilities, and capabilities that one can today claim of being able to accomplish everything on this planet including teaching and learning. So much has been achieved through the incredible functioning and operating capacity as well as substantial advancements in electronics and communication technology. Education and learning erstwhile restricted to human variables—teachers and students—teaching and learning are no longer limited by conventional barriers, techniques, and tools and have steadily grown into a topic of technological advancement. The field of teaching and learning has been nearly revolutionized by computer operation and networking. Instead of being completely reliant on the teachers' guidance and the content knowledge contained in printed materials, students can now use the device's repository and networking capabilities to not only discover source material, but also to interact with it digitally in the same way that they would in a real-world classroom. By interacting electronically, students can acquire crucial knowledge and abilities in nearly every imaginable discipline at their own pace. The secret to digital education is e-learning.

E-learning is a modern style of education that uses electronic technologies to facilitate learning. Remote education, distance learning, online learning, internet learning, and other terms may be used, but they all refer to the same thing. Online learning offers teachers and students a wide range of possibilities. Through the use of e-learning technology as a teaching tool, students can learn important skills and information in almost any field conceivable in

their own time. The majority of the internet-based classes may be self-paced, enabling learners to fit learning in personal schedules instead of planning daily routines during class times. E-learning offers more flexibility, better quality, and more knowledge than traditional educational methods, which rely heavily on textbooks and printed materials. As a result, people have been able to efficiently search out, gain, then share knowledge at a small expense. E-learning has the ability to help students with a wide range of academic objectives, conceptual as well as pragmatic, in both solo and mutually supportive settings. It can serve as a great repository of information and knowledge for all disciplines included in the curricula. In today's fast-paced world, we can only survive by equipping ourselves to keep up with the rate of change and technological advancement, and e-learning is the requirement of the hour.

Individuals are becoming even more interested in e-learning than before. This is more so because of the pandemic of Covid-19, which has forced billions of pupils to adopt new ways of learning. To stay up with the times, schools have embraced new methods. In some ways, by promoting e-learning, the traditional academic education system has normalized it. E-learning is gaining in popularity due to the rapid growth of the World Wide Web and Internet in this era of information and communication technologies. A computer and an internet connection are all that an e-learner requires. The internet has grown thousands of times in size since its inception two decades ago. Currently, there are about 60 million host's systems online, serving approximately 200 million people throughout more than 200 nations and regions (Cathy and Fara, 2020). However, it is uncertain whether staff members and students in Nigerian education institutions are receptive to and are also leveraging the academic potential of advanced educational technologies.

In contrast to sophisticated countries of the world, numerous educators and learners in poor economies seem to be oblivious of and neglect to use all the massive possibilities of the World Wide Web for learning, which has led to the growing influence of printing and paper-based materials innovations, in-person dialogues, and print materials in our education sector (Manir, 2007). Manir (2007) went on to say that, despite the Internet and e-learning technology, most learners and educators still use conventional teaching techniques of completing academic duties, despite the obvious dearth of reading resources in bookstores and academic institutions. Even when academic resources exist, bad records management systems make them difficult to obtain. These issues arise at a time when the student population is growing, learning resources are scarce, and admittance is difficult. E-learning is a good alternative that can help to decrease, if not completely eliminate, the aforementioned hurdles that are commonly associated with traditional teaching and learning approaches.

Given the sudden shift from conventional classroom instruction in many regions of the world, some people are speculating on whether online learning acceptance will continue after the epidemic plus how this type of change may affect the worldwide school systems. Although some people think that such an unexpected and quick switch to online learning would have a negative experience for users and slow long-term development, many believe that a brand new mixed model of instruction would evolve with a number of benefits. Lots of other people believe that the pace of digital technology adoption for teaching and learning will pick up and that someday, online learning will emerge as an essential component of the education process. As a result, it is no exaggeration to suggest that the practices of e-learning will

have a big impact on how education and classroom teaching are delivered in the future.

## Concept of e-learning

The word electronic learning is abbreviated as e-learning. Electronic learning, in its most literal sense, refers to any sort of learning that is aided by one or more electronic gadgets, media, or resources. The phrase e-learning has a much broader definition. E-learning in this sense, is learning that is aided through the application of electronic means, including audio and videotapes, microphones, and listening devices. Although it can be used to describe whatever form of education that is supported and made easier by the usage of technology for information and communication in broad sense, in instruction, its application is restricted as it is currently affiliated with the field of innovative educational technology, that interacts with both the innovations and associated methodologies in learning that uses intranet and or multimedia (Vidhya,2022). E-learning may make use of cutting-edge digital communication and information tools like CD-ROMs, DVDs, videoconferencing, computer-based unified communications, e-mail, web chat, Web surfing, digital reference library resources, simulations akin to video games, Web blogs, and personalized e-learning courses. Viewed from this perspective, e-learning is defined as learning that is carried out electronically and is aided and supported by the use of sophisticated learning technologies, primarily computers, intranet, and multimedia (Vidhya,2022).

E-learning is the application of online media technologies to provide a huge spectrum of information as well as performance-enhancing remedies (Rosenberg, 2013). E-learning, from this point of view, can be defined as an advanced method that employs internet services and web technologies such as e-banking, e-mail, e-commerce and e-booking to provide students with an online learning experience. E-learning encompasses all forms of electronically supported teaching and learning (Umet, 2017). It describes a computerized and virtual educational strategy wherein students could receive words, voice, photos, graphic elements, and video files simultaneously at the same time online. It is a method for interacting with digitally provided content, networked services, and tutoring assistance.

Much like words such as e-banking, e-mail, e-commerce and e-booking, the term e-learning has infiltrated the teaching and learning sector. What appears to be typical in the composition, functionality, and application of these expressions is summed up in the following:
- They all require the use of computers, laptops, and related technology in order to function.
- For them to function, they must utilize internet services and web technologies.

E-learning can be self-contained, collaborative, or facilitated. Individual learners who complete learning activities or modules at their own pace, on their own schedules, and in their own setting are referred to as independent learners. The learner is self-sufficient and avoids dealing with instructors and possibly other students. This does not imply that the student has no access to other services, such as a facilitator; instead, it is up to the student to decide whether or not to get in touch with them and, if necessary, at what point. Collaborative learning refers to online collaboration with other students while facilitated learning is designed to be completed through contact with teachers. Falana (2015) gave the examples of an email conversation with other students on a certain subject and of everyone participating in a course room or forum of educational group discussing a particular topic. On the other hand, a leaner might complete a chunk of learning online and then discuss significant concepts with instructor or classmates via email.

## E-learning styles for delivering lessons

1. Assisted learning: E-learning can be used to supplement the teaching-learning processes that take place in the classroom. Thus, a student use it to learn what they need to know, for example, they can utilize multimedia, the Internet, and Web services to enrich their classroom activities and an instructor can apply it to better his instruction.

2. Blended learning: This method tries to combine conventional and Information and Communication Technology (ICT)-enhanced e-learning activities. Its activities are designed then implemented in such a way that they present a harmonious blend of traditional classroom teaching methods and e-learning-based training. As a result, one can profit from both traditional and e-learning approaches.

3. Complete e-learning: Digital classroom instruction entirely replaces regular classroom instruction in this type of education. Classrooms, schools, and teaching-learning environments do not exist as they do in traditional schooling. With the support of a well-designed e-learning course, students can finish their learning activities at their own pace. And yet, students also may have access to well-stored materials plus education packs mostly in form of taped CD-ROM, DVD, and other media. The bulk of the educational activities are conducted entirely online.

**Benefits of e-learning**

According to Pappas (2015), e-learning has the following benefits:

- There are other programme options: The flexibility that allows students to learn from anywhere also allows e-learning platform creators and contributors to offer and build on a wide range of programmes. Space, teacher availability, and other constraints limit brick-and-mortar learning facilities. Teachers, like students, are no longer limited by their geographical location. This gives teachers the flexibility to teach in a range of settings and capacities. This greatly broadens the range of possibilities, allowing people to learn nearly anything.

- Cost-effectiveness: In addition to being cost-effective in and of itself, e-learning allows students to work full-time while pursuing their education. This is a long way from where we were not long ago, when returning to school meant finding a part-time work or losing your employment entirely. This increases the amount of students who can enroll in courses, bringing e-learning to those who might otherwise be hesitant to continue their education. This financial gain is a gift that keeps on giving because the same students not only continue their education on a shoestring budget, but also boost their long-term earning potential by applying their newfound knowledge and accomplishment to their professional activities.

- Availability: In the past, people had to choose between quality and availability when it came to e- learning, but those days are gone. The ability to learn from anywhere has been combined with the availability of high-quality education that can be accessed from any location having Wi-Fi. Education is no longer limited by distance; rather, it is truly available to anyone who is committed to their studies. Instead than working around a school timetable, people now work around the school schedule. This same accessibility is extended to students whose first language is not the same as the teacher's. Foreign language subtitling, dubbing, and voice-overs allow people to learn from everyone, not just from a certain location.

- Flexibility: It is difficult to create a healthy work/life balance when there is a lack of flexibility in education and at work. While everyone in an individual's sphere expects him to work on their terms and on

schedule, the quality of your work, as well as the quality of your life, suffers. E-learning gives an environment that accommodates to the flexibility that makes intelligent time management and consistent workflow a reality, from working at one's own pace to revisiting lectures and videos. Suddenly, a parent who has to learn during their child's nap or a full-time employee who needs to work evenings and weekends may both benefit from continuing their education through the e-learning format.

- Independence and time management: Online learning provides a level of flexibility that promotes strong time management and discipline while also encouraging independence. These abilities are equally as valuable as the course information and are worthwhile to pursue on their own. People frequently set objectives to improve and increase these life skills, but they are unsure how to achieve them. Fortunately, most e-learners have discovered that as a result of traveling through online courses, time management and educational independence both tend to emerge organically. Whatever the future holds, it is apparent that e-learning is here to stay. The online format's flexibility, combined with lower costs and more programme possibilities, contribute to the growth and sustainability of something that was considered sub-par only a few years ago. When one considers the programmes' diversity, life skills, and accessibility, it's no surprise that this ever-growing platform represents the future of education. E-learning has established itself as not only a feasible but also a premium educational choice, gaining a spot on the short list of educational considerations

## Limitations of e-learning

- It may be a one-man show: While digital training is convenient and adaptable, it represents a one-man show. Some students may be hesitant to engage in online discussions or communicating very intensely with their digital instructors or colleagues. Additionally, for certain students to study effectively, instructor involvement is necessary. Although it can be extremely beneficial, criticism may be limiting when it is given correctly. Moreover, certain learning difficulties could be challenging to manage digitally, and several queries might get buried in an ocean of demands and questions. Students may experience a lack of confidence as well as encouragement as a result of this.

- It could be impersonal: Despite our best efforts to completely translate human relationships to digital platforms, and despite how easy it may seem for relationships to grow in front of computer systems, a virtual environment cannot be entirely human. Nothing will ever replace face-to-face interaction.

- Spending too much time in front of a computer can be harmful: The trend today is to always be online, but too much computer or tablet use can result in eye difficulties, problems with stress, injuries, and possibly other physical ailments. Your audience will cheer you on if you include instructions on the proper sitting position, workstation, altitude, plus other issues in your online class.

- It necessitates self-discipline: If a web-based learning client lacks confidence, it is unlikely that they will be motivated to study alone. While some students prefer to have their progress routinely checked in order to perform well, conventional education and training provide the advantage of promptly identifying progress and falling behind.

- It is impossible to resist cheating: E-learning, like classroom learning, includes assessment. But, there are not any instructors or invigilators there to supervise throughout

examinations. When no one is watching, it is easy for virtual learners to communicate solutions.

## COVID-19-related disruptions in Nigeria education sector

The economical and educational systems of Nigeria were not crippled by previous epidemics of Lassa fever, avian flu, monkey pox, Ebola illness, and other diseases, but the Corona virus did following its outbreak in 2020. At the height of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, when the world seemed to come to a halt and all hope seemed to have vanished, educational institutions closed their doors to students and scholars. Concerned educational workers, aware of the potential consequences of a prolonged pandemic, look for ways to study in the middle of the crisis. As Nigeria and the rest of the world battled the COVID-19 epidemic, which interrupted educational operations around the world and showed new ways of doing things, it appears that e-learning and other educational technology were indispensable instruments that gave remote learning chances.

During the epidemic, the rising problem in Nigeria's educational sector presented a challenge to government authorities and parents. As part of efforts to preserve appropriate management of the education industry during lockdown, leaders in education rolled out a variety of technology services and tools which support remote learning and instruction and were created to match contemporary academic requirements (Adelakun, 2020). Although the size of the class was uncertain, radio systems and televisions in media houses were utilized more frequently than ever to impart knowledge to many children at once. The majority of educational technology providers also modified their platforms to support virtual education. A rise in educational websites featuring a variety of learning resources to help engage both primary

and secondary school kids occurred during this time. During this time, educational technology tools underwent a redesign with features that made it simpler for parents to use them (Jegede, 2020). These developments ranged from high-tech alternatives as well as large-scale, low-tech ones (Adelakun, 2020).

Sadly, the engaged employees considered working with educational technologies in the midst of the pandemic to be a difficult assignment since the possibility of a lockdown due to a pandemic was never envisaged, let alone having appropriate preparedness to assure proper management of such developments. In truth, the majority of the innovations adopted to secure the educational sector's continued operation were copied and pasted from other countries. Higher education institutions had to remain at home more than lower levels of education during the Corona virus outbreak because there was no means to provide a supportive environment for public university institutions to switch from conventional instruction to remote learning. The brief shutdown of schools encourage parents to become more actively involved in their children's education on a higher and much more technical level because their children were present and they could understand their academic capacity in detail. Several parents found this challenging because they became personal responsibility for the academic success of their school-age children. On the other side, some parents found it intriguing to determine the roles of teachers and make sure they transfer valuable knowledge to their kids who were still relatively new to educational technologies. This made it easier for parents who could afford it to teach their kids how to be contributing, respectable society members (Babatunde, 2020). Children whose parents could not afford e-learning resources had a different experience, as they stayed at throughout the Covid-19 pandemic-related

school closures. This affected all academic programmes including business education.

The goal of business education is to prepare students for careers as employees, business owners, managers, or self-employed people (Anao, 1986). Business education specifically attempts to produce people who are well-equipped with competences to support anyone in seeking a job, whether it is through starting a new firm or being hired and putting their abilities to use (Uko-Aviomoh and Ajuluchi, 2008). According to Osuala, two components of the business education educational curriculum are office education and general business (2004). A general business education curriculum provides participants with the knowledge and skills needed to run their own businesses and reap the benefits of the corporate world. Workplace education is a course that prepares students for a job in today's office.

Through an academic framework that provides not only marketable skills, as technical and vocational education currently does use conventional instructional approach, and also higher - level thinking, problem-solving abilities, as well as collaborative expertise, workers must all be primed for entry into and progress in the place of work of the next century (Doolittle and Camp, 1999). According to the National Policy on Education (2013), the goal of business education will be achieved by students becoming able to interact and collaborate with other learners all over the globe via online learning and evaluating worldwide library functions from wherever they may be. The traditional method of instruction does seem to be missing the mark of this goal in the twenty-first century (Hanley, 1995). In the age of information, communication, and globalization, the challenge of successfully structuring the class to reach the admirable goals of business education utilizing the conventional means of instruction is now a key problem both to students and instructors in the course. The change rate driven about by technological innovation, according to Kwache (2007), has significantly altered how individuals lead, work, and enjoy all across the globe, and business education is no different. For this reason, the traditional approaches to instruction plus studying in addition to the manner in which education is run are under danger from evolving plus new innovations. Business education is not immune to the global paradigm change from traditional teacher-centered education towards contemporary methods that incorporate e-learning.

## Ways of promoting e-learning in business education beyond the Covid-19 Pandemic

The methods for promoting e-learning in Business Education in our academic institutions are as follows.

1. The first and most important thing to accomplish is to cultivate a favorable attitude toward e-learning procedures and products. For this reason, serious efforts should be made to create a society that value e-learning as highly as conventional, in-person learning. The benefits of e-learning should be made clear to the recipient of Business Education. In any event, they must not be given the impression that digital learning is less effective.

2. Create the infrastructure needed for educating as well as preparing business education students, instructors, and support personnel in the fundamental technical know-how and abilities related to the use and operation of communication systems, computer systems, and their connectivity, with an emphasis on the Web and Internet technology.

3. Ensure that staff and students receive the appropriate training, not only to prepare them technologically to engage in e-learning but also to ensure that they completely

comprehend all possible benefits gained from such initiatives. The following actions could be made in this regard:

i. Business education students may be guided to online resources for their course work, basic knowledge, character building, creativity improvement, and enhancement of their special interests and abilities.

ii. Introduce students to individual sites that offer benchmark resources and tools such as multilingual dictionaries, grammar and spelling tools, maps and globe atlases, encyclopedias, and historical, geographical, scientific, and cultural milestones in human progress.

iii. Introduce business educators and support staff to websites that offer classroom management tools, such as software for creating on-line or paper tests, explaining the technique of grading or classification or even performing these tasks independently, problems and questions for classroom drill, practice, and recapitulation work, diagnostic testing and remedial measures.

iv. Introduce faculty, staff, and students to websites that offer standard academic resources, such as worksheet generators for involving students in activities like specific crosswords, dictionary lookups, obfuscation techniques, arithmetical workouts, fractal geometry and sketch practice, as well as interactive media study guides.

v. Make internet access and websites for the classroom available to business educators and their students so they can use e-learning to carry out classroom tasks. An institution can use its website to provide appropriate support or additional services to traditional classroom instruction and school activities, or it can construct a successful on-line learning program that can serve as a substitute for live classroom instruction.

## Conclusion

The word electronic learning is abbreviated as e-learning. It can be thought of as a type of ICT that is utilized to provide students with online learning experiences via the application of internet services plus computer web technologies. However, in today's world, the word e-learning refers to more than just the use of the Internet and Web technology. As a result, modern e-learning can be defined as learning that is carried out, supported, and assisted by cutting-edge multimedia facilities, in addition to Web-based and Internet-based technologies, and supplied to target consumers via relevant ICT devices, E-learning is said to have some significant downsides, that users face, including but not limited to difficulty in getting sufficient access to the application of interactive media, world wide web, as well as digital world, teacher resistance to or difficulty in making it available to students, and a feeling of loneliness felt by users. Inspite of the limitations associated with e-learning, e-learning may benefit learners in a variety of ways, including providing personalized learning tailored to each student's needs, capabilities, studying preferences, and aspirations, providing direct connection to an infinite variety of learners with the same threshold of information as a full-time pupil, and encouraging collaboration among students from various locations and cultures. In order to promote and arrange for e-learning in Business Education in our schools and universities, a variety of measures could be used, such as cultivating a positive mindset towards the e-learning processes and outcomes, supplying the necessary equipment for instructing students, as well as supporting staff, in the use and operation of interactive media devices, computer systems, plus their network technology, and raising full awareness about all.

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