



Distance Education Learning in Business Education: Issues and Prospects

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Abstract

The near collapse in formal system of education as a result of inability to cope with increasing high rate of students enrolment, frequent strikes by both students / lecturers, a high turnover of unemployment graduates. The quest for white collar Jobs has seriously left most graduate roaming the cities without jobs. The paper therefore concludes that Distance learning Education programme in Business Education has the advantage if harnessed properly to impart the only knowledge which may be credible to the graduates for job opportunities. The paper recommends among others that Distance Learning Education programmes needs to be periodically evaluated to attain the aim of business education which is primarily to make its products acquire knowledge facts, saleable skills in order to be gainfully employed.

Key words: Distance Learning, Business Education & Job Opportunity

Introduction

In many advanced and lately the developing countries, Distance Education has come to be regarded as a vital supplement to regular educational process. In some cases, it is a creation of circumstances and expediency. Distance Education is an innovative learning system, which is part of the big plan to create educational opportunities for those who for personal, family and other social reasons have been denied access to the formal school system. In both industrialized and developing nations, there is a growing awareness of the importance of distance education and its contribution to national development. It is not necessary for a channel to provide cheap education neither is it a remedial programmes as erroneously being viewed at by the majority in the Nigerian Society. It is a programmes for people who need to update their skills and knowledge in the face of changing technology or society.

Emenyonu (2009) opined that, “it does not call for any reduction in standards or any compromise of any known quality established for the system educational system”. The introduction of UBE

in Nigeria Educational system coupled with the expected increase in the number of pupils entering the school system calls for more trained teachers. The need for acquisition of skills and educational system gave impetus to distance education for business education.

Concept of Distance Education

Dohmen (2005) defines Distance Education as: an Educational process in which a significant proportion of the teaching is conducted by someone removed in space and time from the learner.

In the same view, Holber (2011) States that, the term Distance Education covers the various forms of study at all levels, which are not under the continuous immediate supervisor or tutors present with their student in lecture rooms or on the same premises, but which, never the less benefit from planning, guidance and tuition of a tutorial organization.

However, Peter (2013) opines that distance education is a method of imparting knowledge, skills and attitudes which is rationalized by the application of division of labour and organizational principles as well by the extensive use of technical media especially for the purpose of reproducing high quality teaching materials which makes it possible to instruct a great number of students at the same time, where they live. It is an industrialized form of teaching and learning.

Abinbola (2013) argues that Distance Education is a systematic organized form of self-study in which student counseling is done by team of the teachers, each of whom has responsibilities of student's success; it is made possible at a distance by means of media, which can cover long distance. While Amoor (2014) defines Distance Education as all those teaching methods in which because of the physical separation of teachers and learners, the interactive (stimulation explanation, questioning, guidance) as well as the proactive phase of teaching (selection of objectives, planning curriculum and instructional strategies is conducted through print, mechanical or electronic devices.

In general, distance education has been described variously as correspondence study, home study, external study, independent study, teaching at distance off-campus study, open learning, educational broadcasting network e.t.c. analytical view of the above definition has

some common features that is, the separation of the teacher and the learner which is fundamental to all forms of Distance Education which distinguishes it from face to face teaching as follows:

- a. Sharing responsibility for determining course contents and providing industrialized material to meet special needs and goals of Business Education because adults frequently have well –defined learning goals and because they come to the course with wide and varied experience, it is important that they share in the responsibility for determining course content and methodology. This shared responsibility is easily managed in formal settings where programmes goals are impose without any constraints and almost all of the course content can be based on expressed interest.
- b. Creating opportunities for interaction. Same critics may question the possibility of interaction in Distance learning in Business Education is a course, which normally involves the teacher and the students informally. The students have to interaction and question the teacher to know.

Adeshina (2014) has emphasized that proper attention must be paid to efficiency if the obstacles which frequently affect the operation of Distance Education courses, are to be overcome. This may be instructor occasionally to verify issues when in doubt, or entertain regular visits of distance learners. Adeshine (2014)went further to list the conations, which must be met if efficiency is to be attained and maintained:

- c. The academic product must be of satisfactory quality.
- d. The infrastructure must ensure that the Educational services offered reach the user.
- e. There must be a feedback mechanism to improve the educational services provided.
- f. Ensuring opportunities for industrial success. Business Education Students perform better where there is opportunity for individualized success. Frequent quizzes and questions can cause them unnecessary anxiety, especially those who have another commitment that prevent them from preparing for quizzes.

Problems of Distance Education

According to Akintola (2012), Distance Education by its very nature is a complex system that requires elaborates planning. There are bound to be some problems which effective

administration must tackle so as to make the system worthwhile. Some of these problems include:

- (1) Staff: Distance Education by its very nature and scope, requires team of people performing different task and working at different levels to accomplish a maximum institutional goals. Hence all staff teaching Business Education courses in Distance Education system requires orientation and training in order to equip them with professional knowledge and skills, attitudes and approaches which are appropriate to distance Education. However most of the teachers of business education who engaged in distance Education have never been so trained; they came into the Job by accident and in many cases learn on the Job.
- (2) Finance: A Substantial amount of money is needed to get the programmes off the ground. To expand also, much money is required for infrastructural facility, laboratory equipment vehicles e.t.c. Business Education need capital to procure equipment like typewriters, computers, and others. These infrastructures are not provided due to lack of fund.
- (3) Communication: - Inadequate provision of the basic communication devices, such as the media, roads postal and courier services or some are not affordable by some individuals student and teachers hinders the operation of Distance learning system.
- (4) Lack of political will: - There should be political will for Distance Education to succeed. Even well to do individual in the society can invest on establishing private universities for running courses in Distance Education.
- (5) Lack of constant power supply: - A lecture may be scheduled for 7:00pm on the radio or television, or for days running, some students at different locations may not have electric power supply due to one reason or the other. The lecturers may not be aware of that and will continue to dish out lectures.
- (6) Delays in postal delivery system: - Where the Distance Education is of the correspondence type, the postal system will be used. The student may want to mail his response to some of the questions raised which requires a give time to handle, because of the attitude of some of our postal staff as well as the obstacle equipments in use, what

would have got to its destination in few days, may take months hereby affecting the entire education system.

- (7) Attitude of the Student: Some Students may not take the entire exercise serious. There concern may be to just get the certificate at the end of the programmes, not minding the achievement. Assignment, which will help them to improve their skills, may be done by those hired by these students. Some of the students may take bribe their way through having the view that the end justified the means.

Prospects

There is no doubt that the emergence of Distance Education in Business Education is a great Omen when viewed in the light of the follow:

1. Job Procurement: - with the changing face of business in the area of innovating/technological changes, being an avenue for acquisition of skilled manpower, the death of man power in office, distributive and marketing occupations will be a thing of the past.
2. Employment of Self: In this period of uncertainty and high rate of unemployment, graduates of Business Education through distance learning and being skilled in their different occupational areas have little or no problem of setting up ones business.

Conclusion

In the light of the challenges mentioned, Distance Learning Education programmes in Business Education have the advantage if harnessed properly to impart knowledge which will be credible to the graduates for job opportunities.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusion, the paper recommends that:

- (1) Distance Education Programmes need to be periodically evaluated for their relevance needs and efficiency.
- (2) The administrators must be motivated adequately so that they can put in their best for the good of the programmes.
- (3) A good percentage of income (Money) realized through the running of Distance Education should be used in the procurement of the necessary infrastructure, materials and equipment towards achieving the stated goals and objectives.
- (4) All components of administration and management of Business Education through Distance Education should be used to achieve the expected result.
- (5) Constant Seminars and workshops should be organized so as to achieve a common work force that will adequately motivate both teachers and students.

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