

## **IMPACT OF E-LEARNING ON THE QUEST FOR THE ATTAINMENT OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA**

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### **Abstract**

*Education and socio-economic development are interrelated concepts crucial for national development. Despite their connection, Nigeria faces socio-economic challenges like unemployment, poverty and low self-esteem. E-learning can play a very crucial role in securing socio-economic progress, promote entrepreneurship, and driving long-term economic growth. This study reviews the impact of e-learning on the quest for the attainment of socio-economic development in Nigeria. It relies on secondary data collected from books, journal articles and was content analyzed in relation to the scope of the paper. The paper concluded that e-learning can bring economic changes in personal lives, workplaces and other relevant situations on futuristic model. It recommends, among others that if government can promote e-learning across all educational sectors, the present Nigeria socio-economic challenges may be substantially shrunk to a historical mirage.*

**Keywords:** E-learning. Socio-economic, Education, Entrepreneurship

### **Introduction**

A country requires an effective educational system that can provide students with the necessary knowledge, attitude and skills to help them relate to and successfully adjust to the rapid socio-economic, culture and political changes in the society. Nigeria, like many other developing countries, faces significant challenges in achieving the socio-economic development and E-learning has been identified as one of the most crucial tools to address some of these challenges due to its role in the development of socio-economic and in the fight against exploitation and poverty. It is a multidisciplinary investment sector that has economic benefit, overcoming the shortcomings of traditional education capabilities, reduces the educational cost rate and combating the economic challenges that education generally suffers from in developing countries. This position paper examines the impact of e-learning on the quest for the attainment of socio-economic development in Nigeria, focusing on the benefits and potential of e-learning to promote economic growth and development. In the current system of education, e-learning has shown to be the quickest and most convenient method of learning which enriches people's understanding, improves the quality of lives of individual and society at large. Dina and Zakariya (2017) opine that e-learning is one of the important requirements for improving and developing the quality of the educational process. It saves both time and money enhances technological support that is available around-the-clock accessibility and has flexible curriculum (Adrian 2017). E-Learning has paved way for a large scale of development over the past few years, allowing people, in even the remotest parts of the country, to have access to schools and higher education, provided that they have efficient internet connection (Adrian 2017). In recent years, e-learning has become extremely popular in some western nations including the United States,

Great Britain, Mexico, Brazil, Italy, Canada but to mention a few. It enables working professionals to have access to whatever they want to learn at their own pace while being able to work to support themselves and their families. Dina and Zakariya (2017) pointed out that e-learning aims to provide opportunities for transferring knowledge to students to develop their skills and abilities so as to enable them contribute to the fields of work efficiently and achieve great productivity, and this in turn, reflects positively on sustainable development and the advancement of society.

There is a vital relationship between e-learning and economic growth, and its development contributes to increasing job opportunities, improving income, and reducing poverty (Al-Muhaisin, 2004). Research on the relationship between e-learning and socio-economic growth is still an ongoing topic in the scholarship of this sector and some studies show that education is the second influential factor in economic growth in terms of importance after technical progress (Dina and Zakariya 2017). With the introduction of the eLearning industry, the world economy has been able to boost its GDP which gradually leads to the growth of nations across the world. Economic theory states that economic growth depends primarily on the growth of employment generation, technological advancement and increases in human capital, leading to the growth of nations around the world and gradually increases its GDP globally. The statistics in developed countries also indicate that more than 50% of its GDP is based on knowledge and its product (Al-Muhaisin 2004). As per statistics, the digital learning market will grow up to \$65.41 billion by the end of 2023 with North America dominating the platform because of the extensive use of smart phones and better internet facilities for e-learning (Debadrita 2019).

### **Statement of the Problem**

Traditional learning is the first and foremost approach to learning considered by educators for imparting knowledge which has been there since the time immemorial and it is the type of learning which refers to a setting where a teacher communicates with a group of students in a typical brick and mortar classroom set-up (Neha 2022). There are lots of challenges that the students faced in a regular classroom such as lack of experiential learning, the inadequacy of the curriculum teaching little about the technological realities of the modern world and lack of necessary skills to employ once they start their professional carrier. Again, the problems facing the students include: delay in teaching and learning process, slow evolution of learning content, more emphasis is placed on rote learning than practical utility, less learning outcome among others. E-learning has a great potential to combat the aforementioned problems facing traditional education by improving and replacing traditional schooling with modern educational processes in order to the desired socio-economic development in Nigeria

### **Concept of E-Learning**

E-learning is defined by various authors according to their personal knowledge and perspectives, but they all seem to agree that e-learning comprises all forms of electronically-supported learning and teaching which are procedural in character and aim to effect the construction of knowledge with reference to the learner's own experiences and practices. E-learning has been defined as the use of technology to support learning and improve performance (Khan, 2019). E-learning is designed to use many electronic media, but with the internet, to ease collaboration and provide training and education (Magaji & Adelabu 2012). According to Salawudeen (2010) e-learning is the uses of network technologies to create, deliver and facilitate learning any time, and anywhere. In his own view, Ravichandra (2005) also described e-learning as the learning that delivered via the internet and CD-ROM or other facilities such as radio, television and

telephony. Virtual education is one of the mechanisms and tools that can contribute effectively towards achieving the goals of political and socio-economic development of the country. This is achieved by possessing the capabilities and the ability to open up and exchange ideas and experiences between individuals and groups of peoples in all parts of the world, (Dina and Zakariya 2017).

### **Empirical Study of E-Learning**

Online learning is rapidly spreading throughout the world and people from many walks of life like the simplicity and convenience that online learning offer, especially those who are completing a degree or certification program while balancing our dedication to work, family, and other responsibilities. Due to the flexibility provided by e-learning, anyone with a computer and an internet connection can participate in the learning process from anywhere in the world. This makes the whole process easier and helps avoid course problems. In his view, Drucker (1996) says that 21st century will be the century of the knowledge-based economy and all countries will have the opportunity of fast development. Online education is rapidly expanding as a global phenomenon. However, there are many developed countries that have introduced an e-learning system in their schools and universities and they call them virtual universities, and set their standard for the volume and provide variety of programmes and new advancements.

**United States of America:** Everyone is aware that USA is one of the nations where e-learning has grown dramatically to the point that it virtually competes with traditional learning methods. USA is therefore not only the leader but also an indisputable leader and the model to imitate in the development of online delivery systems worldwide. Even at the master's and doctorate levels, most prestigious US colleges offer at least some of their courses online, and some even have fully designed online degree programmes (Ananya 2017). The majority of its esteemed academic institutions including the University of Florida, Arizona State University, University of Wisconsin- Madison, Pennsylvania State University and many others offer distance learning programmes (Ananya 2017). In support of this view, Adrian (2017) also noted that in USA, university like Stanford, Berkeley, Princeton, UCLA and a number of other institutions have made a place for e-learning classes to help those who want to opt for this method of learning. In the USA, about 77% of the companies provide online courses to help train their employees with 81% of learners partaking in the online study for personal development, and also made a big change in the economy and opened a lot of opportunities for people around the world (Joyleonard 2022).

**INDIA:** India is one of the potential players in raising the level of online learning opportunities throughout Asia Continent. Over the past few decades, India has developed top-notch Universities and Colleges that are offering Asia's best online programs. In India, e-learning has made way for a large scale of development over the past few years, allowing people in even the remotest parts of the country to have access to schools and higher education, provided that they have an internet connection, Adrian (2017). (Ananya 2017) also describes India as a country that cannot afford to use two or more years to pursue traditional college programmes because of her economic concerns, hence she introduces e-learning to empower her citizens with quality education. Adrian (2017) was also of the opinion that the development of e-learning industry was largely influenced by the country's economic climate where individuals frequently have to work in order to make ends meet, which puts their education on hold. With the introduction of e-learning, people can access everything they want to learn about and be opportune to work to support themselves and their family

**CHINA:** China is another country with a booming e-learning market. The rising need for highly skilled workers from China in the global workforce is driving the rapid rise of numerous big online education organizations. (Adrian 2017) opines that China has over 70 online institutions and colleges, which has made learning significantly more accessible to people who wish to attain further education. Due to the sheer competition in the working sector in China, the need to get higher qualifications is more vital than ever before and at the same time, people want to hold onto their jobs so that they can work and earn their living, this was borne out of economic necessity and has come as one of the biggest boons contributing to economic development of the country. (Adrian 2017)

**SOUTH KOREA:** South Korea is another Asian country investing in e-learning and according to Dos Santos (2017) who noted that there are at least 17 South Korean universities committed to offering online education and training access not only to their citizens, but also to students from other countries around the world. He also described Asia as the second leading market for the e-learning industry valued at over \$10.9 billion. Adrian (2017) also described South Korea as the country which uses e-learning to transform the education industry as a whole. And other countries in the world are also following their footsteps so as to improve their educational sectors and their literacy rates.

### **Types of E-learning**

Educational scholars have identified different types and paradigms of e-learning based on categories such as learning style, delivery method, teaching tools, and online course platforms used. Here are some common types of eLearning based on the delivery method:

- i. **Synchronous:** Synchronous online learning allows groups of students to participate in activities anywhere in the world simultaneously in real time. This real-time interaction is facilitated by online chat and video conferencing, allowing students and teachers to interact with one another without delays. Tamm (2023) describe synchronous learning as one of the quickest growing types of eLearning because it eliminates the social isolation and poor teacher-student relationships common in eLearning. Skylar (2009) also noted that a synchronous learning environment is an environment where the teacher and the students meet online on a specific online platform for teaching and communicate about a lesson.
- ii. **Asynchronous:** Asynchronous learning is a self-paced learning, where learners access content and complete activities on their own schedule, without real-time interaction with instructors. Asynchronous environments provide students with readily available material in the form of audio/video lectures, handouts, articles and power point presentations (Perveen 2016). Asynchronous learning allows students to log on to an e-learning environment at any time and download documents or communicates with peers or teachers via message boards (Stefan 2008)
- iii. **Blended eLearning:** Blended eLearning is an educational approach that combines synchronous and asynchronous learning to provide a more engaging, flexible and effective learning experience by leveraging the strengths of face-to-face and online learning. This view is in line with Ben (2024) who opined that blended learning leverage the power of technology to create a more personalized and interactive learning experience. In his view, Graham (2023) defined blended learning as the combination of on0line and face to face insruction

### **E-learning Platform**

E-learning has revolutionized the way we access education, with several platforms offering flexible and remote learning opportunities. Platforms such as:

- i. **Google Classroom:** Google Classroom is a free web-based platform for educational organizations and schools by offering a more efficient approach to handle assignments, interact with students and monitor progress. Goggle classroom provide a more interactive and interesting learning environment which can motivate students to be more involve in the learning process (Rima et al 2024). It is used to support Central-Based Learning (CBL) and Project-Based Learning (Rachel & Collin 2015)
- ii. **Blackboard:** Blackboard is a comprehensive cloud-based Learning Management System (LMS) enabling educational institutions to create, administer and deliver online courses and programs .Blackboard learning technology development have made teaching and learning easier and increased results both inside and outside of the classroom (Rahmatullah, 2021). According to Omar and Al-Musabi (2017), Blackboard technology was developed to provide flexibility in digital learning while encouraging modification and flexibility of learning experiences
- iii. **Docebo:** Docebo is a cloud-based Learning Management System (LMS) that assist an organizations in delivering excellent ELearning training programs and facilitating social learning to establish a culture of continuous learning that drives.**it aims to enhance learning experiences, foster employee development and improve organizational performance through efficient training and learning strategies** Docebo is extremely safe and compatible with a wide range of well-liked teaching strategies such as blended learning initiatives, social media and mobile (Allan Jay 2024). It ranked first in customer experience and was named a Valued Index Leader in TCO/ROI and fifth in Product Experience (Ventana 2023).
- iv. **Moodle:** Moodle is an open-source learning management system that stands for Modular Object-Oriented Dynamic Learning Environment. It's an extremely adaptable platform for setting up and overseeing virtual classes, training courses, and learning communities. The Moodle Learning Management System (LMS) has several advantages, such as support for teaching and learning, user-friendliness, lack of licensing fees, ability to handle online courses, scalability (with users ranging from a few to a million), security and privacy, accessibility, and community support (Moodle, 2018). Furthermore, Using Moodle as an LMS offers synchronous e-learning experiences in addition to traditional classroom instruction through live online teaching session, self-paced e-learning and distance learning (Francescucci & Rohani, 2018). According to Mulhayatiah et al. (2019), Moodle-based e-learning enhances the potential for problem-solving and collaboration between students and lecturers

### **Benefit of E-Learning to Socio-economic Development**

Globally, e-learning continues to be the cornerstone of social and economic progress and it has also been recognized as a crucial motor that can drive socio-economic growth in Nigeria. Jay Leonard (2022) noted that, e-learning has made a big change in the economy and has opened a lot of opportunities for people from around the world. The opportunities for using the Internet for learning are numerous in Africa in which over half of the population has access to mobile phone. Brahima (2016) noted that as at 2016, 341 million Africans has access to the internet connection, making up the majority of those who could potentially become internet learners. One of the factors used to judge whether a nation is developed or not is the standard of living and individual quality of life. E-learning does not only help students learn critical skills and improve

career opportunities, it also helps countries save money, attract foreign investment, and maintains a strong economy for the benefit of the nation as a whole.

Job creation allows people to earn more, leads to increase in disposable income and gradually increases demand for goods and services. E-learning remains the best option for those who want to obtain higher degrees without leaving their current job. E-learning is one of the greatest revolutions in education, reshaping the learning process and contributing to it by providing countless employment opportunities for people to earn a living and meet their economic needs. It also provides more opportunity for educated workforce to improve a nation's economy, and also allows the creation of a competitive market for foreign investors. Debadrita (2019) also noted that the e-learning industry has created multiple job opportunities for people to earn a livelihood and fulfill their financial needs. It grants work from home facility by giving the opportunity to the disable people like a woman who cannot indulge in full-time jobs, students who wish to pursue higher studies among others

### **Conclusion**

Due to the educational institutions that have become chains, socio-economic inequality still prevails in society and little has been done by federal, state, and local governments to close the opportunity gap that exists between the students from economically advantaged and disadvantaged backgrounds. And this study ascertains that online learning would be a successful educational strategy in making the world a better place for any developing nations, especially Nigeria, by promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all the citizens so as to bridge the gap between the privilege and less privilege in a society. It also instrumental to the production of skilled workforce and it thereby makes a significant contribution to the global socio-economic and national development. This opinion is in line with research findings by Al-Muhaisin, (2004) who noted that there is a vital relationship between e-learning and economic growth, and that the development of e-learning contributes to increasing job creation and employment opportunities, improving income, and consequently reducing poverty.

### **Recommendations**

It is therefore recommended that the following policies should be enhanced in order to make e-learning impact on the quest for the attainment of socio-economic development in Nigeria.

- i. Government should promote e-learning across all educational sectors, by developing the standard level of human capital, which in turn will support socio economic growth and overall national development of Nigeria. Government should establish specialized centres and supply computers to people at affordable price thereby expanding their use both horizontally and vertically in the area of information and communication technology
- ii. It is important to promote the idea of virtual education as a means of personal development in all sectors.
- iii. ICT and other media technologies must be used in education initiatives that are structured to give teachers and tutors more flexibility in carrying out their duties. This helps to deliver true online education.
- iv. Tutors and students must also undergo regular training and retraining on e-learning and appropriate incentives must be put in place to incorporate ICT into the teaching, learning, and assessment processes.
- v. Government officials and policymakers must work to subsidize internet connectivity, especially for tertiary institutions as instructors and students are enabled to access the internet for e-learning and research.

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