

TRAINING SUPPORT AND FACULTY DEVELOPMENT A PREREQUISITE FOR SUCCESSFUL ONLINE EDUCATION DELIVERING IN NIGERIAN UNIVERSITIES

By

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Abstract

The outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic has a nostalgic implication on education and methods of searching. This ushered in an online teaching method also known as e-learning, which was found to be suitable and more convenient in reducing Covid-19 negative impact on education method of delivery. This new normal introduced and necessitates faculty members' upgrade in skills and competencies to be able to carry out online teaching activities with ease. Faculty who are trained and supported as professionals for online teaching are likely to understand and deliver online models effectively. This study adopted a survey design with a population of 51 faculty members of Library and Information Science departments from MOUAU and IMSU. Twenty-one (21) item rating scale questionnaire was used to elicit information from the respondents while mean scores and simple percentages were used to analyze the collected data. Findings revealed that these skills and competencies required for effective online education delivery can be accessed through workshops, seminars, panel discussion, mini-courses, directed publications and teleconferences. Faculty disinterest in professional development online teaching is identified among others as a major challenge for faculty professional development. Recommendations were made by the researchers.

Keywords: Online Education, Teaching Method, Training Support, Faculty Development, Nigerian Universities, Covid-19 witnessed a shift from the usual traditional face-to

Introduction

Online education is an educational module delivered via technological gadgets such as personal computers and web technologies for the facilitation of learning beyond the face-to-face approach. It is the application or integration of technology into the teaching and learning environment. This new environment has changed faculty members' role in higher education to encompass new technologies and communication modes have changed as well. New skills and

competencies are required us effectively deliver online instruction. This is beyond the traditional competencies and skills an instructor or faculty member uses in face-to-face teaching approach Training and development is a continuous exercise for any system or institution. Training occur to master of keep new innovations or to update existing knowledge for productive Experience. Higher education in Nigeria has face teaching approach to technology base approach. Iris no doubt has mandated an upgrade in knowledge, skills and teaching methods of online instructors. Some faculty members luck the knowledge on skills to teach successfully online. Gregory and Martindale (nd) asserts sometimes faculty members are resistant to online teaching because it is unfamiliar or they have doubts about its effectiveness Le and Himi (2020) rightly added that even though many educators see the importance of online education many still lack the experience or knowledge to teach online effectively. One of the sens principles for good practices for higher education as described by Chickering and Ehrmann to encourage contacts between students faculty. Having students faculty contact to and out of class is essential to motivate students for enhanced students intellectual commitment, in shifting to technology-based education, an instructor should employ mom suitable communication technologies that increase access faculty members and strengthen faculty interactions with all students

Faculty development is a range of activities that are believed to help academics improve their professional skills for effective teaching MeQuiggan (2012) opines most have experience with online teaching, having spent the majority of their years as a learner in a traditional face-to-face classroom. Ukoro and Nwauwe (2021) noted that e-learning has recently been adopted instance of higher learning worldwide as a preventive measure in searching and leaning against the traditional face-to-face approach to curb the effect of Covid-19 pandemic on the educational sector. Faculty members who were not originally. Teaching online courses need to prepare and acquiring the necessary skills mad pedagogy that will enable them to teach successfully online institutions of higher learning have the responsibility of reviewing what other institutions are doing to support their faculty members for effective online education delivering Frass, Rocker and Washington (2017) asserts that as move traditional institution move to online courses and programs, preparing instructors to teach online and to use new technologies is important. Also, McQuiggum (2012) posits wide availability of the internet has advanced creative uses of new technologies, changed classrooms, and placed new and different demands on faculty: Faculty development is essential for the growth and development of the teaching staff as well as adequate training in shifting from classroom method of teaching to technology-based approach. Okano and Nwauwa (2021) posit that academies perception towards the use of e-learning in teaching and learning has a long way to Influence the use. They further reiterate that a variety of complex and dynamic factors such as background, and knowledge inflames adoption and utilization of e-learning there is no doubt that reality members teach as they are taught. The researchers studied the need for faculty members to access training and have ICCT laboratories for a successful online education experience.

Objectives

This study is guided by the following objectives

1. To determine relevant areas for training and faculty development for successful online education delivery
2. To determine types of faculty development programs for effective online education delivery
3. To identify avenues through which faculty training development occurs
4. To identify challenges towards faculty developments and training for successful online education delivery in Nigeria universities

Research Questions

1. What are the relevant areas for training and faculty development for successful online education delivery?
2. What are the types of faculty development programs for effective online education delivering?
3. What are the avenues through which faculty training and development occur?
4. What are the challenges towards faculty development and training for successful online education delivery in Nigerian universities?

Literature review

The recent pandemic, talking about Covid-19 have initiated a new normal in higher education all over the world. Institutions of higher learning embracing technological-based education alleviate the impact of Covid-19 pandemic in the educational sector. There is a shift from the traditional face-to-face classroom teaching method to a virtual learning centre. Faculty members who were taught in the face-to-face method and have all their lives exposed to teaching in the face-to-face method may have some challenges adapting to the new technology-based education delivery. This shift has placed a new demand on faculty members to acquire the necessary competencies, skills and upgrades for a successful online teaching experience. Rhim and Han (2020) assert that the sudden change from the traditional teaching approach to sampling-based education may be a challenge for educators who are new to this territory. When faculty members who teach online are well-trained and prepared, it will ease the course development process and create a better learning experience for students' high performance. This also Marek outline as cited by Frass et al (2017) as one fundamentally important component need for institutional support for faculty who teach online. Further reiterate that many Institutions considered fully online have also implemented requirements for training faculty to teach online. Baran, Correio, and Thompson as cited by Frass et al., (2017) have identified common rules an online instructor undertakes, that are similar to that of traditional face-to-face method as pedagogy, facilitation, and instructional design, social, managerial, and technical assistance. Me-Quiggan (2012) asserts that professional development programs to prepare

faculty to teach online are needed not only to learn the technical aspects of teaching online but, more importantly, to consider new and different ways of teaching.

Kosgei (2015) carried out a survey on challenges facing staff development and training in Kericho county secondary schools, established that more of the teachers fell short of the exported competencies, and advocated for more in-service training for serving teachers. His study further stated that staff development and training serve three purposes: first. It equips the teacher (faculty) with new knowledge, skills and attitudes to cope with new challenges and trends. Secondly, it will equip the faculty with new teaching methodologies and skills necessary for effective teaching. Thirdly, staff (faculty) development programmes to motivate teachers, adding that highly motivated teachers are likely to be more effective and highly productive, Egielewa, Idogho. Iyalomhe and Cirella (2021) in their survey of perception of Nigerian institutions of higher learning using learning, revealed that students are not satisfied with the virtual learning embarked upon by many higher institutions in Nigeria; and also many staff are feeling "forced" and difficulty in determining the advantage of Over the traditional method However training and remaining of staff becomes necessary to position and embrace non-traditional method of educational delivery which can be costly and time-consuming. According to a review of the literature by Baran and Correia as cited by Gregory and Martildale (nd) and there is a direct program correlation between online quality and professional development for online faculty Moghch (2020) saw education as having the ability to operate radical and durable changes regarding the competitive edge. In his study "e-learning as a new construct of sustainable educational delivery in Nigeria revealed that fear of technology and fear of change by the older generation swore challenges facing e-learning development in Nigeria.

Research Methodology

A survey research design was adopted. The population of the study comprised 50 faculty members from the Department of Library and Information Science in Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike and Imo State University, Owerri. A self-developed questionnaire rating scale was used as instrument for data collection Cronbach Alpha was employed to ascertain the instrument reliability which yielded coefficients of 0.70.0.72. 79 and 0.82 for each of the clusters. This was deemed fit to elicit answers to the posed questions. Data collected were analyzed using mean statistics and simple percentages: A criterion mean of 2.5 was used as a benchmark for the degree of acceptance of opinions of respondents

Data analysis and result

Research Question One: Relevant areas for training and faculty development for successful online education delivery

Table 1: Summary of Mean Statistics and Simple Percentage for relevant areas for training and faculty development for Online Education Delivery

S/N	Relevant Training Developments	Areas for and	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	Mean	Remark
1.	Knowledge of tools that create or support a virtual learning Environment		29(52)	23(41)	4(7)	0(0)	3.4	Accepted
2.	Knowledge of tools that support communication and cultivate relationships		24(43)	18(32)	14(25)	0(0)	3.2	Accepted
3.	Resources to support teaching and learning.		24(43)	30(54)	2(4)	0(0)	3.4	Accepted
4.	Knowledge of tools enabling students create artifacts representing what they are learning		18(32)	29(52)	9(16)	0(0)	3.2	Accepted
5.	Knowledge of tools for online student assessment		26(46)	30(54)	0(0)	0(0)	3.5	Accepted
Grand Mean							3.3	

Decision Rule Agreed factor 25-40 Disagree factor-24-1.0

Table 1 presents mean and simple percentages, and responses on areas faculty members feel training support and development should take place for a successful online teaching experience. From the table, the respondents all agreed that the various listed areas above are relevant and should firm areas for training and development for faculty members having attracted a grand mean of 3.3

Research Question Two: Types of Faculty Development

Table 2: Summary of Mean Statistics and Simple Percentage of types of faculty development

S/N	Types of Faculty Development	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	Mean	Remark
1.	Institutionally supported sell teaching	29(52)	18(32)	9(16)	0(0)	3.3	Accepted
2.	Collaborative course design	29(52)	24(43)	3(5)	0(0)	3.3	Accepted
3.	Mentoring (formal or informal)	41(73)	14(25)	1(2)	0(0)	3.7	Accepted
4.	One-on-one assistance	30(54)	24(43)	2(4)	0(0)	3.5	Accepted
5.	Self-paced online resource	31(55)	25(25)	0(0)	0(0)	3.6	Accepted

Grand Mean	3.5
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Decision Rule: Agreed factor 2.5-4.0 Disagree factor= 2.4-1.0

Fable two shows the meat responses and its simple percentage representation for types of faculty development from the data presented in the above table, institutionally supported self-teaching: collaborative course design, mentoring, one-on-one assistance and self-paced online resources were all indicated as types of faculty having attracted above the criterion mean of 2.5

Research Question Three: Avenues through which training and faculty developments occur

Table 3: Summary of Mean Statistics and Simple Percentage of avenues of training and faculty developments

S/N	Avenues through which Training and Faculty Developments occur	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	Mean	Remark
1.	Workshops	30(54)	18(32)	7(12)	1(2)	3.4	Accepted
2.	Seminars	29(52)	20(38)	4(7)	0(0)	3.3	Accepted
3.	Panel discussion	19(34)	32(57)	5(9)	0(0)	3.3	Accepted
4.	Mini courses	24(43)	30(54)	2(4)	0(0)	3.4	Accepted
5.	Directed publications	41(73)	14(25)	1(2)	0(0)	3.7	Accepted
6.	Teleconferences	18(32)	29(52)	9(16)	0(0)	3.2	Accepted
Grand Mean						3.4	

Decision Rule Agreed factor 2.5-4.0 Disagree factor-24-1.0

All the lied avenues through which training and faculty development lake place where all indicated viable avenues at all attracted shove the criterion mean thereby as accepted to mount of acquiring training and faculty development.

Research Question four: Challenges to training support and faculty development

Table 4: Summary of Mean Statistics and Simple Percentage of challenges to training support and faculty development

S/N	Challenges	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	Mean	Remark
1.	Faculty disinterest	43(77)	13(23)	0(0)	0(0)	3.4	Accepted
2.	Time	30(54)	24(43)	2(4)	0(0)	3.5	Accepted
3.	Space	24(43)	30(54)	2(4)	0(0)	3.4	Accepted
4.	Resources	29(52)	23(41)	3(5)	0(0)	3.4	Accepted
Grand Mean						3.4	

Decision Rule: Agreed factor -2.5-4.0, Disagree factor-24-1.0

The responses in Table four indicated that faculty disinterest, time: space and resources were all challenges to training support and faculty development.

Discussion of findings

Assessing responses on the relevant areas for training and development for successful online education delivery, faculty members indicated that knowledge of tools that create or support a virtual learning environment; knowledge of tools that support communication and cultivate relationships; resources to support teaching and learning knowledge of tools enabling students to create artifacts representing what they are learning; and knowledge of tools for online students assessment were relevant areas training and development should occur. This finding confirms Baran, Correia, and Thompson as cited by Frass et al., (2017) assertion that common roles or areas in online instructor undertakes, that are similar to that of traditional face-to-face methods are pedagogy, facilitation, instructional design, social, managerial, and technical assistance. Faculty members mastering these areas for online teaching will positively impact good teaching experience and student outcomes.

It was revealed from the study that the type of faculty development and training a faculty member needs for enhancement ranges from Institutionally supported self-teaching, collaborative course design, mentoring (formal or informal); one-on-one assistance; to Self-paced online resources. Faculty members teach as they were taught. These were set of individuals who throughout their lifetime time have been exposed to traditional face-to-face teaching and have continued teaching in the same method. Training support and development become necessary for a smooth online teaching experience. Given this, Gregory, R. and Martindale, T. (nd) asserted that through professional development, faculty can learn many skills related to technical tools, pedagogy, and communication strategies.

Looking at means or avenues of getting this training, workshops, seminars, panel discussions, mini-courses, publications and teleconferences were all affirmed as means of faculty development. This collaborates Gregory, R. und Martindale, T. (nd) assertion that Professional development for instructors who teach online exists in various formats, ranging from in-house workshops to online certification courses

Faculty disinterest in professional development for online teaching is identified among others as a major challenge for faculty professional development. No doubt interest will always produce means & faculty members' interest or disinterest in acquiring further skills or competencies for online teaching may be characterized by many factors such as background: principles experience practices etc. which will shape their perspective and influence their choice. MC-Quiggan (2012) asserts that faculty development only recently has been skirted in adult learning, which focuses on the unique arrests of adults as learners. She further stated that faculty characteristics must be taken into consideration as an adult learner, not a one-cap-fit-all approach.

Conclusion

Conclusively, as more Nigerian universities prepare for this new normal of virtual learning environments, efforts should be made to assess the current level of faculty members' skills and competencies to ascertain the actual areas where training fits most appropriately. One cap-fit-all method of training should be avoided. When faculty members acquire the necessary skills and competencies for online education delivery, makes them more involved and fulfilled in an online environment.

Secondly, viewing faculty members as an adult learner requires putting me consideration the same characteristics peculiar to adult learning.

Recommendation

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

1. There is for training support to lessen the burden on faculty members, Faculty members who are battling with time to meet the excess workload and resources will be less motivated to further carry out other activities that sell be time and resources consuming
2. In designing professional development programs for online education delivery considerations of different levels of faculty members' ICT competencies should be factored in to avoid the one-cap-fit-all syndrome

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