

The Challenges of Utilizing Google Classroom in Ikot Ekpene Rural Community Secondary Schools of Nigeria

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Abstract

The study assessed the challenges of utilizing Google Classroom in Ikot Ekpene Rural Community Secondary Schools of Nigeria. Two research questions and objectives guided the study respectively. With a descriptive research design, a sample of seventy (70) teacher educators participated in the study. The instrument used for the collection of the data was a structured questionnaire. The reliability co-efficient (r) of 0.73 was obtained using Cronbach alpha method. Data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer for the research questions. The results revealed that the proportion of teacher educators that can effectively use Google Classroom is 20% indicating very low. Secondly, all items scored above 2.50. This implies that all the items were challenges of utilizing Google Classroom in Ikot Ekpene Rural Community Secondary Schools of Nigeria. Based on these findings, it was recommended that the Local Education Board in Ikot Ekpene should apply to the Government for the provision of adequate ICT facilities. Also, the school management should organize in-service training programs such as workshops, conferences and seminars for teachers.

KEY WORDS: Google Classroom, ICT facilities, Rural Community, Secondary Schools, Infrastructure.

INTRODUCTION

The novel introduction of technology has brought in a significant improvement in teaching and learning processes. This welcome innovation has actually affected positively the quality of learning in the educational system. The utilization of internet facilities for instance, has enlightens one's scope by divulging global information, broadening ones horizon, linking new

learning in other institutions of the world and bridging communication gap between developed and developing countries. According to Idiong et al (2023) almost every sphere of life requires the use and support of skills in technology.

The traditional teacher centered method of teaching where lessons are usually taught using blackboard and accompanying by verbal explanations or lectures are gradually paving way for a more learners' center and technological method. One of this is Google classroom. Google classroom can be viewed as a digital tool that enables learners to attend classes online. All class works and activities are done without face to face meeting of the teachers and the learners. As a free application, Google Classroom is designed to assist learners and teachers to connect and work together. It enhances learning and teaching to be paperless. The use of Google classroom can increase learners' reception to learning materials and making learning processes more meaningful, interactive and interesting. As a digital tool, Google classroom is accessible only to users with Google apps for education (GAFE). Google Apps is a free collaborative set of tools such as Google drive, Google Docs, Gmail, et cetera. All users must have GAFE account as well as access to these web tools regularly. According to Nseabasi and Emem (2019) the emergence of globalization and communication technology has necessitated scholars and researchers to generate innovative instructional strategies for meaningful and purposeful teaching and learning in classroom.

Google classroom can be used at any grade be it basic, post basic, and tertiary levels but this depends on the competency of the teachers and the learners (Bitner and Bitner, 2015). Udosen and Adie (2019) observed that Google classroom technology has proved a valuable platform for distance learners in term of their experience, perceptions and engagement in the classroom activities. For this to be realized, the teacher has to possess a high level of competence to use Google classroom for instructional delivery. Beside teachers' competency, there are other challenges against the utilization of Google classroom. This study therefore investigates these challenges as well as proffering some recommendations to make the utilization of Google Classroom possible in Ikot Ekpene Rural Community Secondary Schools of Nigeria.

EMPIRICAL REVIEW

It has been supported with so many empirical researches that Google classroom have guided and equipped learners with new skills which have improved their academic performance. Karadag and Keskin (2017) in their research opined that the use of Google classroom as a tool improves student engagement and self-placed learning. This has raised students' motivation and enriched learning activities.

According to Okanlawon and Fakokunde (2019) the flexibility and many features offered by Google classroom makes this application considered practical to support learning activities. The utilization of Google can increase the reception of students to learning in a more meaningful way. With Google Classroom, learners can build new ideas and insights through the global interactions with their counterparts in related issues.

In Nigeria, the Federal Ministry of Education has launched an ICT driven project known as school net. This is intended to equip all schools in Nigeria with computer and communication techniques. A Mobile Internet Unit (MIU) was commissioned by the Federal Government to adequately provide ICT facilities. This is operated by Nigerian National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA). The MIU is a locally made bus that has been converted into mobile training and cyber centre with ten work stations all net worked and

connected to the internet. This efforts notwithstanding, there are several challenges that affect the utilization of Google classroom especially in the rural community like Ikot Ekpene of Nigerian. One of them is the unavailability of computer systems in schools. Greater number of teachers and students do not have regular and reliable access to a computer or Android Phones. The ever increasing cost price of computer hardware and software is a great challenge. An average Nigerian citizen may require more than five months income to purchase a single computer system. Aduwa and Iyamu (2005) observed that the majority of tertiary institutions in Nigeria lacks these institutional resources such as computer, soft ware, multimedia projectors, et cetera. Most schools in Nigeria cannot afford the exorbitant internet connection fees.

Another challenge to the use of Google Classroom is poor infrastructure in Nigeria. Serious obstacle to online learning such as unstable and unreliable electricity in Nigeria has been a major issue. Currently, there is no part in Nigeria where they can boast of stable electricity supply for 12 hours a day except probably areas where government officials live. This obstacle is worse in rural areas like Ikot Ekpene Community where they do not even have access to electricity not to talk of constant electricity supply. In these areas students and teachers are definitely denied of that golden opportunity to benefit from the use of computer technology. It is only in the urban areas of Nigeria that a few internet accesses are available. However, most teachers teaching in these urban areas lack the basic skills to fully utilize the technology. According to Okebukola (2018) those who are designated to use computers in schools do not receive adequate training, at worst do not received any training at all. Thus, there is significant shortage of trained personnel in software application, system operation, network administration and local technicians for services and repairs of the computer facilities. Carlson and Firpo (2018) assessed that teachers need effective tools, techniques, and assistance that can help them develop computer based projects and activities especially designed to raise the level of teaching in required subjects and improve student learning.

Another identified challenge is poor ICT policy and project implementation strategy. The Nigerian Federal Government's 2005 policy on National Computer Policy, introduced computer education to be a compulsory course in schools (Okebukola, 2018). The only way this policy was implemented was the distribution of computers to Federal government higher schools, which were never used for computer education for the students. Due to the differences in the education standards and requirements, the available software development does not integrate into Nigeria education curriculums. Software that is appropriate and culturally suitable to the Nigeria education system is in short supply.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objective of this study was to examine the challenges of utilizing Google Classroom in Ikot Ekpene Rural Community Secondary Schools of Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to:

- i. Identify the proportion of teacher educators who can effectively use Google Classroom in Ikot Ekpene Rural Community Secondary Schools of Nigeria.
- ii. Examine the challenges of utilizing Google classroom in Ikot Ekpene Rural Community Secondary Schools of Nigeria.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions guided the study

- i. What proportion of teacher educators can effectively use Google Classroom in Ikot Ekpene rural Community Secondary Schools of Nigeria
- ii. What are the challenges of Utilizing Google Classroom in Ikot Ekpene Rural Community Secondary Schools of Nigeria.

METHODOLOGY

This research is a survey research with a descriptive research design. A sample of 70 teacher educators participated in the study. The instrument used for the collection of the data is structured Questionnaire titled challenges of Utilizing Google Classroom in Ikot Ekpene Rural Community Secondary Schools of Nigeria. The reliability co-efficient (r) of 0.73 was obtained using Cronbach alpha method. Data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation statistics to answer for the research questions.

Results

Research Question 1: What proportion of teacher educators can effectively use Google Classroom in Ikot Ekpene Rural Community Secondary Schools of Nigeria?

Table 1: Proportion of teacher educators who can effectively use Google Classroom in Ikot Ekpene Rural Community Secondary Schools of Nigeria.

Variable	Number	Proportion	Decision
Teacher Educators	70	20%	Very Low

The result showed that the proportion of teacher educators that can effectively use Google Classroom is 20% indicating very low.

Research Questions 2: What are the challenges of utilizing Google Classroom in Ikot Ekpene Rural Community Secondary Schools of Nigeria.

Table 2: Mean and standard deviation on challenges of utilizing Google classroom in Ikot Ekpene Rural Community Secondary Schools of Nigeria.

S/N	ITEMS	MEAN	SD	DECISION
1	Lack of skills	3.42	1.7	Accepted
2	Poor ICT Policy/Project Implementation Strategy	2.96	1.0	Accepted
3	Lack of relevant software	3.14	1.2	Accepted
4	Limited Access to the internet	3.04	1.3	Accepted
5	Low self-efficacy	3.23	1.5	Accepted
6	Access	3.23	1.5	Accepted
7	Cost	3.00	1.3	Accepted
8	Poor Infrastructure	3.14	1.2	Accepted
9	Inadequate skilled personnel	3.65	1.8	Accepted
10	Teacher Attitude and beliefs	3.21	1.4	Accepted

Results in Table 2 shows that all the items scored above 2.50. This implies that lack of skills, poor ICT Policy/Project Implementation Strategy, lack of relevant software, limited access to the internet, low self-efficacy, access, cost, poor infrastructure, inadequate skilled personnel,

teacher attitudes and beliefs are challenges of utilizing Google classroom in Ikot Ekpene Rural Secondary Schools of Nigeria.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The study revealed that there are challenges of utilizing Google classroom in Ikot Ekpene Rural Secondary Schools of Nigeria. This is in line with the findings of Aduwa at al, (2018) that most schools do not yet offer ICT training Programs. Nigeria is really lacking behind other Africa countries such as South Africa, Uganda and Senegal who are already providing the necessary technological facilities to help their students to become better information users. Sequel to these challenges of Google classroom, the result also supports Carlson and Firpo (2018) who opined that teachers need effective tools, techniques and assistance to help them develop computer based projects. Idiong (2018) purported that ICT training should be made compulsory part of teachers' training curriculum to equip teachers with the necessary ICT skills and knowledge. If adequate ICT training are provided and teachers are well trained then learners will benefit much from Google classroom.

CONCLUSION

It was concluded in the study that there are low proportion of teachers as educators in the use of Google classroom. Lack of skills, poor ICT policy/Project implementation strategy, lack of relevant software, limited access to the internet, low self efficacy, access, cost, poor infrastructure, inadequate skilled personnel, teachers attitudes and beliefs are the challenges of utilizing Google classroom in Ikot Ekpene Rural Community Secondary Schools in Nigeria.

RECOMMENDATION

Base on the study, the following were recommended:

- (i) The Local Education Board (LEB) which takes care of the managements of Secondary Schools in Ikot Ekpene Rural Community should apply to the Government for the provision of adequate ICT facilities. This will enhance the use of Google Classroom.
- (ii) The School Management should organize in-service ICT training programs such as workshops, conferences and seminars for teachers so as to bring about improvement in innovative teaching approaches.

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