International Journal of Innovative Social Sciences & Humanities Research 12(4):94-102, Oct-Dec., 2024

© SEAHI PUBLICATIONS, 2024 www.seahipublications.org ISSN: 2354-2926

doi:10.5281/zenodo.14223549

Educational Collaboration And Distance Learning: A Comparative Analysis Of University Teacher Education In Nigeria

[1]Chioma, ATUZIE & [2]Victor Ojorka AKOR, PhD

[1]Department of Educational Foundations,
Faculty of Education
Rivers State University, Nkpolu-Port Harcourt, Nigeria
atuzie.chioma@ust.edu.ng

[2]Department of Educational Foundations
Faculty of Education, Prince Abubakar Audu University, Anyigba
victorojorka@gmail.com

ABSTRACT
The study investigated educational collaboration and distance learning: A comparative analysis of university teacher education in Nigeria. Descriptive survey design was adopted for the study with two research questions and a hypothesis guided the study. The population was made up of 208 lecturers in the Faculty of Education, Prince Abubakar Audu University, Anyigba and Rivers State University, Nkpolu-Port Harcourt. A sample size of 80 lecturers was drawn using the proportionate stratified random sampling technique. The instrument for data collection was an 18- item questionnaire which was validated by three experts and it gave a reliability coefficient of 0.71 which was obtained using Cronbach Alpha method. The data collected were analyzed with mean and standard deviation while the hypothesis was tested using Z-test. The findings showed that there is high level of educational collaboration for distance learning in university teacher education in the North and in the South, and that there is significant difference between the level of areas of educational collaboration for distance learning in the North and in the South. Thus, the following recommendations were made that strategic educational collaboration for distance learning in university teacher education should begin in the North but the South should maintain their current approach, the university management in Nigeria should hold regular workshops and conference to train lecturers on how to convert theoretical learning to practical application in life, universities in the South should build up educational collaboration with artisans to boost skills acquisition and usage, and to reduce unemployment etc.
Keywords: Educational collaboration, distance learning, teacher education

INTRODUCTION

Educational collaboration is a construct that may mean a lot of things to many people, thus, requires being demystified. It means partnership, it means knowledge sharing, it means networking or infrastructure sharing or the sharing of any other resources that could advance the course of an educational endeavor at any level of education. This means that based on the above presentation that this type of collaboration could be between teacher-teacher, learner-teacher or teacher-learner or among institutions in order to

maximize available resources in the various institutions. Generally speaking, Nwafor (2007) defined collaboration in educational process as a cooperative approach aimed towards jointly harnessing individually owned resources in order to achieve a common goal being pursued. Haq (2022) says that educational collaboration is based on clearly different schools coming together to offer teaching, group goals as well as educational outcomes. Almaguer (2021) had perceived educational collaboration as a form of partnership either between parents, schools and communities for social, language and academic reasons.

These definitions have painted the picture of an idea of educational collaboration as a form of partnership that exist between two or more institutions who have agreed to pursue definite goals with regards to education. In fact, the position of the community in educational collaboration justifies the fact that no one institute can single handedly educate people without the support of other institutions in the society, thus, education is a collaborative effort of all. This is hinged on the history of collaboration in education which was traced back to the 4th century BCE in the Plato Academy where nobody lectured or dictated ideas but that the teacher and learners engaged in dialogues, debates such that challenged several assumptions leading to new discoveries (Husseini, n.d.).

In Australia, the approach had gained relevance since 1972 when distance education was first introduced. Radio, tapes, games, books and school magazines were used to drive home the point (Nwafor, 2007). Thus, a collaboration for education using different professional approaches and person to help bring the dream of education through educational collaboration to fulfillment and because this process was carried out without the teacher and the learner meeting face-to- face, it was referred as learning from distance or distance learning.

Distance learning is a type of educational approach that does not permit the face-to- face contact of a teacher and a learner; say it is a situation or learning approach where students are provided with study material but would not have direct access to the teacher or the school. For Osuji, Deekor and Uriri (2022) distance learning was said to be a type of education and learning where the learners not conditioned based on time, location and that even the age and educational background of the person is not important to probe into. The information given above could convey a meaning that in distance learning, there is physical separation of the teacher and the learner.

Knott (2022) presents distance learning as an educational opportunity made available without teachers and learners having facial contact but are separated by a distance. It was further added that put differently, distance learning took place by correspondence learning approach but due to the experience of covid-19 everything about distance learning has moved online and this has made it innovative and transformative. In the words of Raauna (2022) distance learning has taken e-learning format with the advent of the global pandemic. This also opened more markets to higher institutions that desire to extend their markets and even making education affordable to a many who were financially incapable of assessing higher education even in too far away locations.

Thus, learning management system has found relevance beyond measure and it has provided collaboration with the institution to make for easy access to distance learning. Some of the advantages included own- time choice for learning, provides opportunities for learners to interact and collaborate and encourages blended learning. Its remote nature makes for proper accountability recreates the classroom environment. According (USL, 2023) some other benefits of distance learning include flexibility, boosting of career support etc and this is what would boost teacher educational practice. It also offers opportunity for institutions to collaborate and share own resources with other institution to the advantage of the society. So, because hybrid approach to distance learning is strengthening collaboration just like how it is with content delivery, thus, making distance learning possible. However, while this approach has significantly moved forward in Nigeria, a good number of conventional universities seem not to have taken full advantage of the opportunity made available by educational collaboration and distance learning. Especially in the area of teacher education.

The simplest definition on teacher education is that it is a process of preparing teachers for the future. Akor and Agbo (2021) say it is a set up aimed at preparing teachers and sending them out to the wider society for the purpose of teaching and any other roles associated to it. Akor. et al (2024) asserted it is an intentional act and art of forging human personality traits in to desirable professional characters who would take interest in shaping the lives of younger people in the future. Perhaps, the reason teacher education has been perceived as a mechanism which enables the professional shaping and sharpening as well as training of teacher trainees in knowledge, skills, attitudes and values needed for their future professional practice. Akor et al (2024). If this is the case then there is adequate room to encourage educational collaboration at various levels. This same idea of collaboration may be what Osuji, Deekor and Uriri (2022) meant by the concept institutional partnership which could take the form of collaboration, networking or partnership. Teacher education as a professional development process cannot be fully developed except when collaboration among people and institutions have satisfactorily been observed. By observation several dimensions of collaboration is required in teacher education process to include: teacher education-information and communication technology, teacher education- subject specialist collaboration, teacher education- basic/ secondary education collaboration, teacher education-administrative collaboration etc. All these are aimed at building on the skills of teacher trainees obtained in the classroom to make them fit adequately in to the wider society upon graduation from school. In Particular, one of the goals of teacher education according to (FRN, 2016) says to provide teachers with the intellectual and professional background adequate for their assignment and make them adaptable to changing situations; a leeway one would say was paved for collaboration but the challenge is if one would asks. At what level does that take place? Again, of the many goals o the f university, this one, that the university shall embody technically based courses which shall have as components, exposure to relevant future working industrial and professional experience for the students so ands out However, it has been observed that there are gaps created in bringing these collaborative opportunities to fruition which may have been as a result of lack of resources required, lack of will power to strike up a partnership deals with the industries and other institutions, poor communication between or among collaborating institutions and even the unwillingness of the trainees to cooperate with collaborating institutions mars the required effectiveness or efficiency or both. Hence, the need to carry out this study educational collaboration and distance learning: A comparative analysis of university teacher education in Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to achieve the following objectives:

1. Determine the level of educational collaboration for distance learning in university teacher education in Nigeria.
2. Determine the levels of areas of educational collaboration in the North and in the South for distance learning in university teacher education in Nigeria.

The following research questions guided the study:

2. What is the level of educational collaboration for distance learning in university teacher education in Nigeria?
3. What are the levels in areas of educational collaboration in the North and in the South for distance learning in university teacher education in Nigeria?

This hypothesis guided the study (P=0.05)

e. There is no significant difference between the levels in areas of educational collaboration in the North and in the South for distance learning in university teacher education in Nigeria

RESEARCH METHOD

The study was carried out in Nigeria, particularly, in Prince Abubakar Audu University, Anyigba (North), Rivers State University, Nkpolu-Port Harcourt (South). The study adopted descriptive survey design. The population for the study was 208 lecturers in the faculty of education of the two universities (104 and 104) while the sample size for the study was made up of 80 lecturers who were drawn using the proportionate stratified random sampling technique from different departments of the faculty of education

in the two institutions. The instrument used by the researchers for data collection was a questionnaire titled: Questionnaire on Educational Collaboration for Distance Learning: A Comparative Analysis in University Teacher Education in Nigeria (QECDLACAUTEN) which was constructed by the researchers. It consists of 18-items which were arranged in two sections A and B. Section A contains the biodata, while section B consists of two subgroups: level of educational collaboration and areas of educational collaboration in the North and in the South. The questionnaire was built on a modified four-point Likert Scale, namely: Very High Level (VHL), High Level (HL), Low Level (LL) and Very Low Level (VLL) and the levels of responses are weighted as 4, 3, 2, and1 respectively.

The instrument was face validated by three experts, one from Measurement and Evaluation Unit and one from Curriculum and Instruction unit of the Department of Educational Foundations, Faculty of Education, Prince Abubakar Audu University, Anyigba, Kogi State and another one from Educational Technology unit of the Department of Educational Foundations, Faculty of Education, Rivers State University. The suggestions given were used in producing the final copy of the instrument. Cronbach alpha was used in calculating the reliability to determine the internal consistency which gave an alpha value of 0.71 which was considered high after ten (10) copies of questionnaire were administered on Lecturers of the Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Rumuolumeni. The instrument was administered and collected by the researchers on the spot. The data obtained were analyzed using mean and standard deviation for answering the research questions. Hence, 4+3+2+1= 10/4=2.5.Therefore, items whose mean were less than 2.5 were seen as low level (LL) responses while those whose mean were 2.5 and above were seen as high level (HL) responses. The decision rule on the null hypothesis was to reject the hypothesis with calculated Z-value lesser than the critical Z-value but otherwise accept.

RESULTS

Research Question 1: *What is the level of educational collaboration for distance learning in university teacher education in Nigeria?*

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation on the Level of Educational Collaboration for Distance Learning in University Teacher Education in Nigeria

S/N	Items	North Mean	SD	Remark	South Mean	SD	Remark	N
1.	Educational collaboration for distance learning in ICT facilities provision	3.2	1.9	**HL**	3.4	1.44	**HL**	80
2	Educational collaboration for distance learning with entrepreneurs	3.1	1.3	**HL**	3.2	1.9	**HL**	80
3	Educational collaboration for distance learning with banks	3.2	2.37	**HL**	2.1	0.95	**LL**	80
4	Educational collaboration for distance learning with book publishers	3.5	1.58	**HL**	3.0	1.41	**HL**	80
5	Educational collaboration for distance learning with traders	3.2	1.9	**HL**	1.9	1.3	**LL**	80
6	Educational collaboration for distance learning with agro-business owners	3.5	2.12	**HL**	3.3	1.45	**HL**	80

7	Educational collaboration for distance learning with private/public primary schools	3.3	2.02	**HL**	3.5	1.58	**HL**	80
8	Educational collaboration for distance learning with private/public secondary schools	3.2	2.37	**HL**	3.4	1.55	**HL**	80
9	Educational collaboration for distance learning with journal article publishers	3.4	1.55	**HL**	1.7	1.45	**LL**	80
10.	Educational collaboration for distance learning with raw materials processing companies	3.2	2.37	**HL**	1.8	1.9	**LL**	80
11	Educational collaboration for distance learning with artisans	3.2	1.9	**HL**	1.7	1.45	**LL**	80
	Grand Mean and Standard Deviation	**3.27**	**1.94**		**2.63**	**2.39**		

Source: Field Survey, 2024

The result on table 1 above showed the responses of the respondent on the level of educational collaboration in university teacher education process in Nigeria. The result indicated that while all the items on the questionnaire were said to be at high level for distance learning in the North, those in the South had low level for educational collaboration with banks, traders, journal article publishers, raw materials processing companies and educational collaboration with artisans based on the mean (2.1, 1.9, 1.7, 1.8 and 1.7). In the North, the highest mean was obtained with educational collaboration with book publishers, agro-business owners and article journal publishers for distance learning in university teacher education in Nigeria with mean (3.5, 3.5 and 3.4). In the South, the advantage of mean was for ICT facilities, private/public primary schools and for private/public secondary schools Thus, the South needs to improve on other areas of educational collaboration in order to boost the outcome of the collaboration and to make the products of the university much more reliant in the future for employment

Research Question 2: *What are the levels in areas of educational collaboration in the North and in the South for distance learning in university teacher education in Nigeria?*

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation on the Levels in Areas of Educational Collaboration in the North and in the South for Distance Learning in University Teacher Education in Nigeria

		North			South			
S/N	**Items**	**Mean**	**SD**	**Remark**	**Mean**	**SD**	**Remark**	**N**
1.	There is educational collaboration for distance learning in SIWES	2.8	1.9	**HL**	2.9	2.21	**HL**	80
2	There is educational collaboration for distance learning in teaching practice	2.6	1.51	**HL**	3.1	1.7	**HL**	80
3	There is educational collaboration for distance learning for resource persons	2.6	2.1	**HL**	3.1	2.21	**HL**	80
4	There is educational collaboration for distance learning for award share holding	3.1	1.92	**HL**	2.7	2.92	**HL**	80
5	There is educational collaboration for distance learning for consultancy business partnership	2.5	2.12	**HL**	2.5	2.12	**HL**	80
6	There is educational collaboration for distance learning for knowledge sharing purpose	2.6	1.55	**HL**	2.3	2.03	**LL**	80
7	There is educational collaboration for distance learning for commodity production purpose	2.0	2.45	**LL**	2.7	2.02	**HL**	80
	Grand Mean and Standard Deviation	**2.6**	**1.93**		**2.75**	**2.17**		

Source: Field data, 2024

The results on table 2 indicated that the response of the respondents on the level of areas educational collaboration were on the affirmative except for two items. The results showed that the educational collaboration for award share-holding (collaboration for giving awards of excellence) had the highest mean (3.1) in the North while for the South, it was in the areas of teaching practice and utilization of resource persons to boost teaching and learning process with mean (3.1). The least came for educational collaboration for commodity production purpose (2.0) for north while in the south, it was on educational collaboration for knowledge sharing (2.3). However, the grand mean and standard deviation (2.6, 2.75

and 1.93, 2.17) for both regions indicated high level of areas of educational collaboration for distance learning in university teacher education in Nigeria.

Hypothesis

1. There is no significant difference between levels of areas of educational collaboration in the North and in the South for distance learning in university teacher education in Nigeria

Table 3: Z-test on Level of Areas of Educational Collaboration in the North and in the South for Distance Learning in University Teacher Education in Nigeria

Group	Mean	SD	N	df	$Z_{calculated}$	$Z_{critical}$	Decision
North	**2.6**	**1.93**	**50**	**78**	**0.33**	**1.98**	**Rejected**
South	**2.75**	**2.17**	**50**				

Source: Field data, 2024.

The result of table 3 showed that Z-calculated value 0.33 was lesser than the Z-critical value 1.98 at 0.05 level of significance at 78 degree of freedom that showed that there is significant difference in the level of areas of educational collaboration in the North and in the South. Therefore, the null hypothesis of no significant difference is rejected.

DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

The results on table 1 revealed that educational collaboration is a key component for distance learning especially in university teacher education process. The result indicated that in the North the university enjoys adequate level of educational collaboration in all areas while in the South, it showed high level for collaboration with ICT firms, primary and secondary school both private, and public, book publishers, agro-business owners and entrepreneurs but low level for educational collaboration with banks, traders, journal article publishers, raw materials processing companies and educational collaboration with artisans. Though, based on this result it would be expected that the North perform better in full employment of their school leavers but it does not seem to be so on ground as it could be observed that the school leavers in the North grapple with unemployment challenges like their counterparts in the South. However, it could be deduced that the educational collaboration of the university in the south seem strategic with regards to the partnership level and the results obtained as such that is capable of producing self-reliant persons upon graduation from the university. Nonetheless, the results obtained are confirmed by (Loranzo-Iglesias, Fernandez-Morante, Cebreiro-Lopez & Abeal-Pereira, 2023; Defis, 2021; Shongfield, 2021) who found that there is need to improve the educational collaboration and teamwork processes for distance learning by the mentors and to reinforce the technological solutions for adequate implementation process, educational collaboration for distance learning brings reduction in cost of education and travel difficulties, reinforcing the place of ICT and but (Huong, Tung, Hong & Hung, 2020) found that educational collaboration for distance learning limits the potency for planning, mentoring, practicum program, communication between university-school and thus, limiting what the students should gain. Hence, the level of educational collaboration here should gain practical relevance in the society for it to affect the lives of the people in the wider society.

Again, the results on table 2 revealed that the levels of educational collaboration in areas of university teacher education which as affirmed that educational collaboration for award share-holding has more position in the North while for the South it was teaching practice and utilization of resource persons to boost teaching and learning process. Also, for the north the challenge of commodity production collaboration persists, thus, this may be the reason for the effect of the great unemployment being witnessed throughout the region while in the south it was on difficulty in educational collaboration aimed towards knowledge sharing. This means that in the North the university must ensure they are able to convert theoretical teaching to practical living in the society while in the South, the university must widen its scope of knowledge sharing process. This result is confirmed by (Rodrigues,Affonso, Quinelato Montel (2013) who found that the relevance for democratization of educational collaboration for distance learning such that would allow students enjoy autonomy in learning, thus, strengthening school-industry

collaboration. While (Jakhelin & Postholm (2022) found that educational collaboration for distance learning lead to community building as a result of cooperation**.**

CONCLUSION

The conclusion that can be drawn following the findings of this study would be that distance learning effectiveness depends greatly on educational collaboration, that while the result obtained with regards to the North performing well in educational collaboration being positive, there is need for such output to begin to gain practical relevance and leading to self reliance among graduates in the region. Though, the Southern region need to improve in certain areas of educational collaboration but it would be necessary for it to maintain the strategic approach adopted in the educational collaboration process for distance learning. However, on a general note, the Nigerian masses yearns to see the practical effect of the educational collaboration for distance learning in university teacher education in Nigeria with vivid results to show, so the universities should apply means for converting theories to practical.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following are the recommendations supporting this study based on the findings:

3. Strategic educational collaboration for distance learning in university teacher education should begin in the North but the South should maintain their current approach.
4. The university management in Nigeria should hold regular workshops and conferences to train lecturers on how to convert theoretical learning to practical application in life
5. Universities in the South should build up educational collaboration with artisans to boost skills acquisition and usage, and to reduce unemployment.
6. The Northern universities must learn to persuade their students that the utilization of artisanal knowledge also commands relevance in the society and life apart from certification.
7. Award share-holders should be encouraged by the universities to make provision for employment opportunities for the teeming graduates of distance learning in Nigeria.

REFERENCES

Akor, V.O. & Agbo, L.O (2021). Issues, changes and prospects of teacher education in Nigeria. In A. Ekong, U.G. Nwiyi & V.C. Davidson (eds), *Issues, challenges and prospects of teacher education in Nigeria*. Onitsha: West and Solomon Publishing Coy Ltd

Akor, V.O., Musa, H.A., Enefu, S,M., Ogwuche, M.D. Atuzie, C., Ameh, J.O. & Ojonugwa, D.S. (2024). Soft skills for curriculum development towards classroom management in teacher education practice in universities in Nigeria. *Innovations 77: 502-514*

Akor, V.O., Offor, M., Omachonu, C.G., Ugboja, A. Ochijenu, M. A., Emah, S.S & Obera, J. (2024). Lecturers' perspective of microteaching as a quality assurance tool in university teacher education for sustainable development in Nigeria. *Innovations 76: 888-903*

Almaguer, I. (2021). Fostering successful communities of collaboration through educational partnerships: Strengthening bilingual learners language and literacy achievement along the Texas- Mexican border. www.igi-global.com

Defis, N. (2021). Distance learning and initial teacher education: Making connections in a virtual world. www.bera.ac.uk

Federal Republic of Nigeria (2016). National policy on education. Yaba: NERDC Press.

Haq, F. (2022). Review of opportunities in collaboration between Australia and Pakistan for the education of marketing students post covid. www.igi-global.com

Hosseini, M. (n.d.)What are some historical examples of successful collaborative learning environments? Retrieved 6th July, 2024.

Huong, V.T.M., Tung, N.T.T., Hong, T.T.M. & Hung, D.H. (2020). Partnership between teacher education universitites and schools in practicumu to train pre-service teachers of Vietnam. *International Journal of Higher Education 9(5):134-152.*

Jakhelin, R. & Postholm, M.B. (2022). University collaboration as an arena for community-building in teacher education. *Educational Research 64(4):457-472*

Knott, R. (2022). What is distance learning? The complete guide. www.techsmith.com

Loranzo- Iglesias, M.M., Fernandez-Morante, C. & Cebreiro-Lopez, B. & Abeal-Pereira, C (2023). Study on the collaboration between university and educational centers mentors I: the development of in-school education placement in official university degrees for the teaching profession: The case of the university of Santiago de Compostela. *MPDI Journal of Education Science 13(2):104*

Nwafor, O.M (2007). Educational innovation: Process and product. Enugu. Magnet Business Enterprise (Publishers)

Okonny, U.A. & Akor, V.O. (2022). Meeting the challenges of nation building in Nigeria through a viable and functional distance learning education curriculum. *British International Journal of Education and Social Science 9(11):8-16*

Osuji, C.U., Deekor, H.L. & Uriri, C. (2022). Perceived roles of institutional partnership in the development of open and distance learning in higher education in Rivers State. *International Research Journal of Education and Technology 4(3):78-97*

Raauna, K (2022) . Distance learning: What it is and why it is important. www.learnworld.com

Rodrigues, S.J., Affonso, S.A.B., Quinelato, E. & Montal, J.M. (2013). Distance learning in undergraduate education: The challenge of building a collaboration environment. *Procedia Social and Behavioural Science 116:3499-3501*

Shongfield, M. (2021). Factors affecting students –teacher satisfaction with multi-college online collaboration course. *Australian Journal of Educational Technology 37(6):193-205*

University of Sunderland (USL,2023). What is distance learning and what are the benefits? Retrieved 6th July, 2024