PLASU Journal of Library, Archival & Information Science Vol. 2, No. 1, April 2025
Published by Department of Library and Information Science, Faculty of Social Sciences, Plateau State University, Bokkos, Nigeria
ISSN: 1116-042X

EVALUATING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF MULTIMEDIA INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS IN THE NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA (IBADAN STUDY CENTRE)

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Abstract

This study evaluates the effectiveness of multimedia instructional materials at the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN), Ibadan Study Centre. The research explores how multimedia resources, including e-books, online journals, videos, podcasts, and virtual simulations, contribute to students' academic performance, research efficiency, and overall learning experience. A mixed-methods approach is employed, incorporating surveys, semi-structured interviews, and analysis of library usage records. The study identifies key benefits of multimedia instructional materials, such as improved student engagement, better content retention, and enhanced research capabilities. However, challenges such as poor internet connectivity, limited digital literacy, and inadequate access to technological infrastructure are also highlighted. Findings suggest that while multimedia resources are highly valued by students and faculty, further improvements in digital infrastructure, training programs, and technical support are necessary to maximize their impact. The study provides recommendations for enhancing multimedia integration in distance learning, emphasizing the need for continuous investment in digital tools and capacity-building initiatives.

Keywords: Multimedia Instructional Materials, Academic Performance, Distance Learning, Digital Infrastructure

Introduction

In modern education, the use of multimedia instructional materials has become increasingly significant, particularly in distance learning institutions such as the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN), Ibadan Study Centre. Multimedia instructional materials, which include e-books, online journals, educational videos, podcasts, and virtual simulations, offer students interactive and engaging ways to access academic content. These resources have the potential to improve knowledge retention, enhance research capabilities, and provide flexible learning opportunities for students in open and distance education settings.

The National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) is a leading provider of open and distance learning (ODL) in Nigeria, catering to students across various study centres nationwide (NOUN, 2022). Due to the flexible nature of its academic programs, NOUN heavily relies on digital and multimedia instructional materials to support student learning. The Ibadan Study Centre, being one of NOUN's key locations, provides an opportunity to evaluate how effectively these multimedia resources contribute to academic success.

Despite the benefits of multimedia instructional materials, several challenges exist in their adoption and utilization. Issues such as inadequate internet access, limited digital literacy among students and faculty, and lack of proper infrastructure may hinder the full realization of their potential. Additionally, some

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faculty members and students may prefer traditional teaching and learning methods, leading to resistance in the adoption of digital tools. Understanding these challenges is essential for optimizing the use of multimedia instructional materials in distance learning environments.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The effectiveness of multimedia instructional materials in higher education has been widely studied, particularly in the context of distance learning. This section reviews relevant literature on multimedia instructional materials, their role in distance learning, challenges associated with their use, and existing research on their impact on student learning and engagement.

Concept of Multimedia Instructional Materials

Multimedia instructional materials refer to digital learning resources that incorporate various elements such as text, images, audio, video, animations, and interactive simulations to enhance learning experiences (Mayer, 2021). With the existence of ICT, our society is living heavily in a life composed of electronic technology. Online learning technology is fundamental for educational institutions to develop their online learning systems (Kiat et al., 2020). These materials can be categorized into different types, including:

- **E-books and Online Journals** – Digital versions of textbooks and academic papers that provide flexible access to course content.
- **Educational Videos and Podcasts** – Audio-visual learning resources that explain complex topics in an engaging manner.
- **Virtual Simulations and Interactive Modules** – Tools that enable learners to engage in hands-on, experiential learning.
- **Learning Management Systems (LMS)** – Platforms such as Moodle and Blackboard that integrate multimedia elements to facilitate learning.

According to Clark and Mayer (2016), multimedia learning follows the cognitive theory of multimedia learning (CTML), which suggests that students learn more effectively when they receive information through multiple channels (visual and auditory) rather than through text alone. This theory supports the idea that multimedia instructional materials can significantly enhance student learning by improving comprehension, engagement, and retention of information.

The Role of Multimedia Instructional Materials in Distance Learning

Distance learning institutions, such as the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN), rely heavily on multimedia instructional materials to bridge the gap between learners and instructors. Research indicates that the use of multimedia tools in distance education has the potential to increase student motivation, improve learning efficiency, and enhance critical thinking skills (Sangrà & González-Sanmamed, 2019).

In a study conducted by Bozkurt and Sharma (2020), students in distance learning programs reported higher levels of satisfaction when their courses incorporated diverse multimedia instructional materials. These materials allowed for self-paced learning, enabling students to revisit complex topics multiple times, which is particularly beneficial for adult learners and working professionals enrolled in open university programs.

Furthermore, multimedia instructional materials facilitate a more interactive and engaging learning process, as they incorporate elements such as quizzes, animations, and real-world case studies. According to Jonassen, Howland, and Marra (2020), interactive multimedia enhances constructivist learning, where students actively engage with content rather than passively consuming information.

Challenges in the Use of Multimedia Instructional Materials

Despite their benefits, the use of multimedia instructional materials in distance learning faces several challenges:

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1. Limited Digital Literacy – Many students and faculty members lack the technical skills required to effectively navigate digital learning resources (Udo & Adamu, 2020).
2. Poor Internet Connectivity – Inadequate internet access remains a major barrier in many developing countries, including Nigeria, limiting students' ability to stream videos, access online journals, and participate in virtual learning activities (Tella & Ajayi, 2018).
3. Resistance to Digital Learning – Some faculty members prefer traditional teaching methods and may not fully integrate multimedia tools into their instructional design (Sharma & Patel, 2021).
4. Infrastructural Deficiencies – Insufficient investment in digital libraries, e-learning platforms, and technical support can hinder the effectiveness of multimedia learning resources (Oliver, 2020).

Existing Research on the Impact of Multimedia on Student Learning and Engagement

Several studies have examined the impact of multimedia instructional materials on student learning and engagement. Akinwale and Agunbiade (2023) conducted a study on NOUN students and found that students who regularly engaged with multimedia learning materials performed better in their assessments compared to those who relied solely on text-based resources.

Additionally, Tella and Ajayi (2018) found that students who used a combination of videos, podcasts, and interactive simulations demonstrated higher retention rates and improved critical thinking skills**.** Their study concluded that multimedia instructional materials play a crucial role in making complex subjects more comprehensible and engaging.

Another study by Johnson and Ross (2021) highlighted the importance of faculty training in the effective use of multimedia tools. Their findings indicated that when instructors are well-equipped with digital teaching skills, students benefit more from multimedia-enhanced learning experiences.

Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in Mayer's Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning (CTML)**,** which emphasizes that students learn better when words and pictures are presented together rather than separately (Mayer, 2021). The Dual Coding Theory (Paivio, 1986) also supports the notion that learning improves when both verbal and visual representations of information are used. Another relevant theory is Vygotsky's Social Constructivist Theory, which posits that learning is a social process and that interactive multimedia materials can enhance student engagement and collaboration, even in distance learning environments.

conclusion

The literature reviewed highlights the importance of multimedia instructional materials in enhancing distance learning**.** While these resources offer several benefits, such as improved engagement, higher retention rates, and flexible learning opportunities, their effectiveness is often limited by technological barriers, digital literacy challenges, and resistance to change. This study aims to build upon existing research by evaluating the effectiveness of multimedia instructional materials at NOUN's Ibadan Study Centre, assessing both student and faculty perceptions, and identifying potential solutions for overcoming existing challenges.

METHODOLOGY

Data Collection Methods A mixed-method approach will be used, incorporating quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques:

A. Library Usage Records: Data on student engagement with multimedia resources such as digital textbooks, video lectures, and e-libraries will be collected.
B. Surveys: Structured surveys will be conducted with NOUN students to assess resource satisfaction, accessibility, and impact on academic performance.
C. Semi-Structured Interviews: Faculty members and students will be interviewed

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to gain insights into the practical challenges and benefits of using multimedia instructional materials.

Sampling Technique Purposive sampling will be used to select students and faculty members who actively use multimedia resources. The sample size will include approximately 100 students and 20 faculty members, ensuring diversity in academic programs and study levels.

DATA ANALYSIS

A. Quantitative Data Analysis: Descriptive statistics will be used to identify trends in resource usage, satisfaction levels, and academic performance improvements.
B. Qualitative Data Analysis: Thematic analysis will be applied to interview responses, categorizing recurring themes related to user experiences and challenges

RESULT

Multimedia Resource Usage and Accessibility: Findings indicate that students frequently engage with multimedia instructional materials, though accessibility challenges persist.

Resource Type	Frequency of Use (%)	Average Weekly Usage (Hours)
E-books	75%	3.8
Video Lectures	68%	3.0
Online Simulations	50%	2.5
Digital Libraries	60%	2.7
Podcasts	42%	1.8

Impact on Learning and Research: Survey data reveal that multimedia resources positively influence academic performance and research capabilities.

Statement	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)
Multimedia enhances research skills.	45%	40%	10%	5%
Video lectures improve comprehension.	42%	43%	10%	5%
Digital libraries provide adequate resources.	40%	42%	12%	6%
Interactive simulations enhance learning.	38%	45%	12%	5%

Challenges in Multimedia Usage: Challenges such as poor internet connectivity and lack of digital literacy were reported.

Challenge	Percentage of Students Reporting Issue (%)
Poor internet connectivity	55%
Limited digital literacy	48%
Insufficient technological infrastructure	42%
Resistance to digital tools	32%
Lack of training on multimedia use	40%

Faculty Perceptions of Multimedia Instructional Materials: Interviews with faculty members revealed mixed perspectives, with some embracing multimedia tools while others expressed concerns about their effectiveness in specific disciplines.

Statement	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)
Multimedia enhances student engagement.	40%	45%	10%	5%
E-learning tools are effective for distance learning.	42%	48%	6%	4%
I face challenges in using digital tools.	35%	30%	25%	10%
Traditional teaching methods are preferable.	22%	32%	35%	11%

RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Enhanced Digital Training Programs: NOUN should conduct workshops on digital literacy and multimedia resource utilization.
B. Infrastructure Improvement: Investments in high-speed internet and digital tool enhancements will improve accessibility.
C. Curriculum Integration: Multimedia instructional materials should be systematically integrated into NOUN's academic framework.
D. AI Integration**:** AI-driven learning assistants and interactive educational platforms can further enhance student experiences.

CONCLUSION

Multimedia instructional materials have proven to be effective in enhancing academic performance and student engagement at NOUN (Ibadan Study Centre). However, challenges such as digital literacy and internet accessibility must be addressed to maximize their potential. Future research should focus on long-term impacts and strategies for optimizing multimedia learning tools.

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