

Chapter 7

A Comparative Evaluation of E-Learning Adoption in Private and Public Higher Education Institutions: A Tanzania Survey

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines e-learning adoption in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). The paper examines whether there is a difference between the Private and public HEIs e-learning adoption. The rationale for the examination stands from the fact that scholars are of opinion that there is a difference between private and public HEIs e-learning adoption. From an empirical survey conducted in Tanzania, this paper evaluates both staffs and students on the current situations, factors affecting, similarities and differences of e-learning adoption between private and public HEIs. The research reveals that, despite of the government efforts to support e-learning initiative by introducing national ICT policies to boost the level of adoption; very few private HEIs have adopted e-learning compared to public HEIs. The limited initial investment, lack of expertise, lack of guaranteed electrical power, poor strategic change management plans, and lack of innovative ideas are the barriers to e-learning adoption.

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INTRODUCTION

The use of ICT in teaching and Learning is popular known as e-learning (Khan, 2005; Twaakyondo, 2008; Wentling, et al. 2000; Galagan, 2000). The adoption of e-learning in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) has enacted opportunities for education sector (Papalewis, 2003; Woodward & Pilling, 1993). While Mafu (2004) argues that the use of e-learning offers students and teachers learning and teaching opportunities in HEIs, Cruthers (2008) and Watson et al, (2004) claims that e-learning allows remote training participation and support collaborative learning process, it reduce geographical barriers and minimize the tuition cost to affordable level.

The difficulties to share the training materials, higher operation cost, delivery time limitations, impossible to launch new training sessions without physical construction of new buildings, and limitations on the number of students enrolled are the factors promote e-learning adoption in HEIs (Noe, 2005; CIRT Network, 2012; OPPAPERS, 2012; BLR-Employee Training Centre 2012; Chiemelie, 2012; Scribd, 2005). While Twaakyondo (2008) argues that the colleges and universities in developing countries are scarcely available to customers due to the geographical locations and expensive training cost, Mgendi (2010) and Twaakyondo (2008) argues that there is difference in adoption between public HEIs and private HEIs. In order to examine the e-learning adoption difference, the paper first examines the status of Tanzanian education. Second, the paper examines through an empirical survey, the current situation and factors affecting e-learning adoption. Third, the similarities and differences of e-learning adoption between private and public HEIs are discussed. The paper finally attempts to propose possible solutions that will allow fair play ground for the adoption of e-learning as well as fasten the e-learning adoption.

E-LEARNING

Wentling et al. (2000:5) define e-learning as:

The acquisition and use of knowledge distributed and facilitated primarily by electronic means. This form of learning currently depends on networks and computers but will likely evolve into systems consisting of a variety of channels (e.g. Wireless, satellite), and technologies (e.g. Cellular phones, etc.) as they are developed and adopted. E-learning can take the form of courses as well as modules and smaller learning objects. E-learning may incorporate synchronous or asynchronous access and may be distributed geographically with varied limits of time. (Wentling et al., 2000:5)

E-learning captures a wide range of terms (Albert & Mori, 2001) referred to as 'labels' which have been used to describe the concept of e-learning. These labels include, but are not limited to *Web Based Learning (WBL)*, *Web Based Instruction (WBI)*, *Web Based Training (WBT)*, *Internet Based Training (IBT)*, *Online Resource Based Learning (ORBL)*, *Advanced Distributed Learning (ADL)*, *Tele-Learning (T-L)*, *Computer-Supported Collaborative Learning (CSCL)*, *Mobile Learning (M-learning or ML)*, *Nomadic Learning*, *Off-Site Learning* (Collis, 1996; Khana, 2005; Yieke, 2005; Bates, 2001; Dam, 2004; Goodear et al., 2001; Pegler & Littlejohn, 2007; Dabbagh et al., 2000; Barbara, 2002, 2004; Cramer et al., 2000; Salzbert & Polyson, 1995; Schreiber, et al., 1998; Schank, 2001; Howard, 2003; and Singh, 2003). The e-learning term is used interchangeably with other related terms such as online learning, virtual learning, and web-based learning (Twaakyondo, 2004).

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