# SUSTAINING ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING AND LEARNING IN AN UNSECURED EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

BY

**DR. EZEWUZIE JIDEOFOR. J.**
*Department of Educational Foundations*
*Federal College of Education (T) umunze*
*E-mail: jideoforezewuzie@gmail.com Tel: 08039395956*

&

**NJOKU CHINWE A.**
*Department of Educational Foundations*
*Federal College of Education (T) Umunze*
*Tel: 07032032320*

AND

**ANAZODO OGOCHUKWU G.**
*Department of Early Childhood Education*
*Federal College of Education (T) Umunze*
*Anambra State, Nigeria.*
*Tel: 08164554988*

***Abstract***
Academic excellence is the expected outcome of educational practices such as teaching and learning. In the past, insecurity in education was quite unexpected. According to Isah (2016) religious places and educational institutions were not included in the terror war as they were seen as sacred places. In recent times, terror attacks have focused on the vulnerable society such as women and educational institutions. Recently, the Nigerian mass media reported the attack and abduction of 6 secondary school students in Epe, Lagos. In 2014, over 200 Chibok School Girls were abducted and detained for many months. Despite these attacks and abduction, academic excellence must be sustained in teaching and learning in this unsecured educational environment. Information and communication technology usually abbreviated as ICT is needed to sustain academic excellence in this unsecured educational environment. Information and Communication Technology (ICT) closes the problematic gap in teaching and learning which the insecurity creates. Hence, this situation emphasizes the need to examine how to sustain academic excellence in teaching and learning in unsecured educational environment. It is recommended among other things that government at all levels should incorporate clear strategies to ensure that both teachers and students are equipped with necessary skills, knowledge and competencies to engage in teaching and learning in unsecured educational environment.

**Keywords:** Sustaining Academic Excellence, Unsecured Educational Environment

## INTRODUCTION

Education is vehicle for national development through the building and development of human resources. It is also a means by which an individual acquire physical and spiritual capabilities demanded by his or her environment. Hence, Nigerian Federal Government through National Policy on Education (2013) states that Education shall continue to be highly rated as important instrument of change. This change is the expected outcome of every teaching and learning process. Sadly, enabling

environment is not guaranteed for this teaching and learning process. Terror attacks are taken to schools. Students are attacked and abducted at will. Some incidents of the terror attacks in schools are listed below;

**Table 1: A Chronology of Some Terror attacks in Schools**

| S/N | Incident | Year | Remark |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Abduction Of Nigeria -Turkish Chibok School Girls. | 2014 | Boko Haram abducted over 200 Female students. |
| 2 | School Students in Lagos | 2016 | Students released after ransom was collected |
| 3 | Abduction Of 4 Junior Secondary School Students in Ikorodu Lagos | 2016 | Released after ransom payment |
| 4 | Abduction of 4 Secondary School Students from Government School Lagos | 2016 | Released after ransom payment |
| 5 | Abduction of 6 secondary school students from Government model school Igbonda, Epe, Lagos | 2017 | Negotiation was done after ransom payment. |

**Source:** Nwosu (2021) Terrorism and Counter Insurgency in Nigeria.

Academic excellence in teaching and learning must be sustained in an unsecured Educational environment through the introduction of Information and Communication Technology (ICT). In educational context, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) refers to those set of technologies for collecting, storing, processing, communicating and transmitting of information (Adebayo and Nafisat, 2016). Information and Communication Technology involves handling and processing all kinds of information using all kinds of electronic devices (FGN, 2013). According to Akudolu (2002), information and communication technology centered teaching and learning involves the use of computers, online self-learning packages, CDs, satellites, optical fiber technologies, telepresence system and different types of hardware and software. The World Wide Web (www) is used for sourcing information whereas the
E-mail (Electronic Mail) is used for exchanging instant mails between a teacher and his students (Adebayo and Nafisat, 2016). Adu, Emunenu and Oshati (2014) reported that the use of ICT in teaching and learning help in information retention, greater motivation and increases understanding. The use of ICT enables learning to take place 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Thus, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) becomes imperative for sustaining academic excellence in teaching and learning in an unsecured educational environment.

**Meaning of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in Reference to Sustaining Academic Excellence in Teaching and Learning in an Unsecured Educational Environment**

A clear understanding of the meaning of ICT is a very important one in this discourse. The meaning is not new to us, but the usage appears imperative and fundamental here. As no single definition of the meaning exist, the ones given here serve the purpose of this work.

**Technology:** In teaching and learning, technology is most simply and comfortably defined as an array of tools that might prove helpful in advancing students learning and may be measured on how and why individuals behave the way they do (Adebayo and Nafisat, 2016). Educational Technology relies on broad meaning of the word "technology". Thus, technology can refer to material objects of use to humanity such as machines or hardware, but it can also encompass broader themes, including systems, methods of organization and techniques. Some modern technologies in teaching and learning are not limited to overhead projectors/laptop computers and calculators. Newer tools such as smart phones and games both online or offline are beginning to draw serious attention for their learning potentials in an unsecured environment (Collins, 2012).

**Information Technology:** This is a term used to describe the items of equipment (hardware) and computer programs (software) that allows us to access, receive, retrieve, store, organize, manipulate and present information by electronic means. Personal computers, scanners and digital cameras fit

into the hardware category, database, programme and multi-media programme fit into software category in teaching and learning (Collins, 2009).

**Communication Technology:** This is a term used to describe telecommunications equipment through which information can be sought, sent and accessed, for example Phones, faxes and computers. Communication Technology therefore facilitates easy transmission of data and information from a given source to a giving destination. Often communication technology provides a two-way transmission process, thus giving way for reception and for feed-back as well in teaching and learning (Collins, 2012).

**Information and Communication Technology:** This represents the convergence of information technology and communication technology. ICTs are the combination of networks, hardware and software as well as the means of communication, collaboration and engagement that enables the processing, management and exchange of data, information and knowledge. Information and communication technology therefore describes those electronic gadgets including the softwares that facilitate the reception, processing, transmission, transfer, retrieval of information or data as and when needed (Fuchs, 2004).

Federal Republic of Nigeria, (2013) explains that Information and Communication Technology (ICT) involves handling and processing of information using all kinds of electronic devices. These electronic devices can be used for broadcasting, telecommunications and all forms of computer assisted communications. ICT-centered teaching and learning in an unsecured educational environment covers the use of computers, online self-learning packages, interactive CDs, satellites, radio, optical fiber technologies, telepresence systems and all forms of ICT hardware and software to sustain academic excellence. Information and communication technologies are electronic technologies used for information storage and retrieval. Olasupo (2011) states that ICT in a wider educational setting includes all media of mass communication but that with the recommendation of National Policy on Education (2013) on the use of ICT to sustain academic excellence in teaching and learning in an unsecured educational environment, the focus should be on use of computer internet through its browsing facilities.

The term "ICT" is used to refer to the convergence of audio-visual and telephone networks with computer networks through a single cabling or link system. Wikipedia states that ICT in broad sense covers product that will store, retrieve, manipulate, transmit or receive information electronically in a digital form through personal computers, digital televisions and e-mail.

**Information and Communication Technology Components in Reference to Sustaining Academic Excellence Teaching and Learning in an Unsecured Educational Environment**

Olasupo (2011) outlines the under listed as the materials needed for successful use of ICT in teaching and learning in an unsecured educational environment

i. Browsing Environment consisting of ICT Centre connected to Internet Service Provider (ISP).
ii. Personal Computers (PC) such as Desktop, Laptop or Palmtop.
iii. WEB application software such as Microsoft Internet Explorer, Goggle Chrome, Opera and YouTube.

Adebayo and Nafisat (2016) note that the New Partnership for African Development, (NEPAD) launched the e-school initiative intended to equip all African schools with ICT facilities such as computers, radio and television, phone and fax machines, communication equipment, scanners and digital cameras. Akudolu (2002) lists the components of ICT as: computers, desktops, laptops, networks, internet, hard disc drives, tablets, routers, slates, digital cameras, camcorders, memory cards, interactive, data projectors, DVDs, sensors, CDs, television, radio, flash drives, voice over internet protocol, camera phones, instant messaging, mobile phones and e-mail.

**Relevance of ICT to Sustaining Academic Excellence in Teaching and Learning in an Unsecured Educational Environment**

Yusuf (2015) outlines the following as the relevance of ICT in teaching and learning in an unsecured educational environment.

- Foster students' interest and motivation.
- Promote students' commitment to learning.
- Make the learning more exciting and interesting for both teachers and students.
- Introduce the concept of new learning, (online packages which give students greater control over what they learn and how they learn).
- Bring students and teachers together for lessons and tutorials across geographical locations.
- Promote distance learning.

Olasupo (2011) states that the information accessed through internet browsing include data, notes, diagrams, images, videos, quizzes, puzzles and games which could be used to:

- Present a given lesson in an interesting way to the students.
- Remove abstractions from some concepts.
- Summarize the lesson with diagrams.
- Test the students' mastery of the concepts in the topic taught.

Adu, Emunemu, Oshat (2014) describes some relevance of using ICT to sustain academic excellence in teaching and learning in an unsecured educational environment to include:

i. Students easily obtain resources or information with click of the button; type their inquiries and get relevant results within matter of seconds; learn to become effective and independent learners; get them ready for their future.
ii. Students enjoy using computers or tablets to learn: thus teachers can upload their quizzes, notes or even feedback forms in such platforms as ASKnLearn.
iii. Using ICT to sustain academic excellence in teaching and learning in an unsecured education environment gives the students head start for their future by staying relevant: using computers to do effective research puts them a step up in the heavily competitive job sector.
iv. By using computers, assignments are posted and submitted online; this conserves and protects the environment by reducing the cutting down of trees for use in making papers.
v. ICT places all students on equal footing with the right hardware, software and curriculum.

Mikre (2011) outlines the relevance of ICT to sustaining academic excellence in learning and teaching in an unsecured educational environment to include:

- Give greater exposure to vocational and workforce skills for students.
- Provide opportunities for multiple technologies delivered by teachers.
- Create greater enthusiasm for learning among students.
- Provide teachers with new sources of information and knowledge.
- Prepare the students for the real world.
- Provide students country-wide with online educational materials.
- Provide students with additional resources to assist resource-based learning.

The use of ICT in teaching and learning in an unsecured educational environment provides the possibility of bridging the knowledge gap and sustaining academic excellence. The use of ICT increases the quality of education and multiples the quantity of excellent educational prospects. ICT make accruing much knowledge possible by providing means to resources and greater reach to people thereby fulfilling their right to education.

**Challenges Confronting the Use of ICT to Sustain Academic Excellence in Teaching and Learning in an Unsecured Educational Environment**

The use of ICT faces challenges in terms of capacity, capabilities and resources (human and financial) to sustain academic excellence in teaching and learning in an unsecured educational environment. Although generalizing challenges across multiple countries is necessarily over-simplistic, there are

some challenges worth highlighting as discussed below:

i. **Policy Environment:** Lack of strong government support to ICT availability and usage in education seriously affects its application in teaching and learning in an unsecured educational environment to sustain academic excellence. Creation of a strong enabling policy environment is required for the use of ICT in teaching and learning in an unsecured educational environment to sustain academic excellence. Hence, accessible telecommunication backbone and stable electricity supply is needed to sustain academic excellence in teaching and learning in an unsecured educational environment (Yusuf, 2015).
ii. **Infrastructure:** Many African countries including Nigeria face the problem of unreliable power supply, uncompleted networks for data and telecommunications, coupled with the high cost of energy and telecommunications. For example, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) notes that its countries face the serious challenge of affordable and accessible telecommunication backbone and stable electricity supply. This lack of affordable and accessible telecommunication backbone and a stable electricity supply impacts on the rollout of ICT in teaching and learning in an unsecured educational environment to sustain academic excellence (Adu, Emunemu, Oshat, 2014).
iii. **Funding/Budget Allocation:** ICT does not feature high on the list of education institutions' investment or priorities when compared to important items like paying staff salaries or maintaining utilities. There is lack of government funding of e-learning and these initiatives rely mostly on donor funding. Hence, the use of ICT in teaching and learning in an unsecured educational environment is adversely affected. Higher funding is needed to sustain academic excellence in teaching and learning in unsecured educational environment.
iv. **Shortage of Trained Professionals and Educators:** Harnessing technologies for teaching and learning in an unsecured educational environment requires continued investment in supporting educators to create these new learning environments. Educators play a pivotal role in the use of ICT in teaching and learning in an unsecured educational environment to sustain academic excellence. The Ministry of Education has limited skilled human resources capable of using ICT in teaching and learning in an unsecured educational environment. Schools in Nigeria face a critical shortage of skilled workers who understand basic and advanced programming to plan, design and implement distributed information systems and handle teaching and learning in unsecured educational environment (Adu, Emunemu, Oshat, 2014).
v. **Materials Development:** Short supply of appropriate and improvised content ranging from learning materials to learning support tools hampers the effective utilization of ICT in teaching and learning in an unsecured educational environment to sustain academic excellence. These materials such as radio, audiotape and multimedia packages are in short supply in education system in the continent. The dearth of these materials are evident when one compares African education system to the developed world. Hence, the use of ICT to sustain academic excellence in teaching and learning in an unsecured educational environment is adversely affected (Yusuf, 2015).

**Recommendations**

i. Government at all levels should provide reliable electronic technology facilities to enable teachers and students participate in teaching and learning in an unsecured educational environment to sustain academic excellence.
ii. Government at all levels should legislate and provide enabling environment that will make teaching and learning strive in an unsecured educational environment to sustain academic excellence.
iii. Government at all levels should incorporate clear strategies to ensure that both teachers and students are equipped with necessary skills, knowledge and competencies to engage in teaching and learning in an unsecured educational environment to sustain academic excellence.
iv. Government at all levels should make adequate annual budgetary allocations for teaching and learning through the use of ICT in an unsecured educational environment to sustain academic excellence.
v. Government at all levels should make adequate power supply available for teaching and learning through the use of ICT in an unsecured educational environment to sustain academic excellence.

**Conclusion**

Teaching and learning as the hallmark of educational practice deserves continuity in an unsecured educational environment to sustain academic excellence. Sustaining academic excellence in teaching and learning is made possible through Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to bridge the gap which unsecured educational environment creates. Information and communication technology is analyzed in providing teaching and learning in an unsecured educational environment. Relevance of ICT to sustain academic excellence in teaching and learning in an unsecured educational environment is established. Challenges confronting the use of ICT in providing teaching and learning in an unsecured educational environment are exposed. Academic excellence is sustained through tackling of the challenges confronting the use of ICT in providing teaching and learning in an unsecured educational environment. It is recommended among other things that government at all levels should provide electronic technology facilities to enable teachers and students participate in teaching and learning in an unsecured educational environment to sustain academic excellence.

**REFERENCES**

Adebayo, T. E., & Nafisat, A. S. (2016). Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in Teacher Education: A tool for sustainable National Development in Nigeria. Annual International Conference of Educational media and Technology Association of Nigeria (ESTAN) on ICT Ile-Ife.

Adu, E. O., Emunemu, B. O. & Oshati, T. (2014). The Role of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and Higher Education in Sustainable Development Kamla-Raj. Educational Media and Technology Association of Nigeria (ESTAN).

Akudolu, L. R. (2002). Information and Communication Technology centered teaching and learning: A Necessity for National Development. Nigerian Journal of Computer Literacy 3(1) 10-18.

Collins, A. (2012). Design Issues for Learning Environments in Vosntadau, S. (ed) International Journal on the design of technology supported learning environment 2(3) 312-326.

Collins, B. (2009). Using Information Technology to create new educational situation. Proceedings of UNESCO International Congress in Education and informatics 16-29.

Federal Republic of Nigeria (2013). National Policy on Education. Abuja: National Research and Development Council.

Fuchs, W. I. (2004). Computers and student learning: Bivariate and multivariate evidence on availability and use of computers at homes and at schools. CESIFO working paper 6-16

Isah, E. A. (2016) Tackling Insecurity in Nigerian Schools using multimedia internet solution paper delivered at the 5th International Conference of the Global Education Network (GEN) held at the University of Cape Coast, Ghana from 26th-30th September 2016. Theme "Education, Leadership and Security Management".

Mikre, F. (2011). The role of ICT in teaching and learning. Proceedings of the 14th National Conference of Curriculum Organization of Nigeria, 86-99.

Nwosu, O. H. (2021). Terrorism and Counter Insurgency in Nigeria in Unizik Journal of Educational Research and policy studies. 7, 2021. 546 – 551.

Olasupo, A. T. (2011). Integrating ICT in teaching and learning agricultural concepts: A practical to education policy implementation. Proceeding of the 52nd Conference of Science Teachers Association of Nigeria 140 -144

Yusuf, M. O. (2015). Information and Communication Education: Analyzing in Nigeria National Policy for Information Technology. International Education Journal 6(3) 16-32.