

Examining the Adjustment of the Use of Modern Technology by Theological Education by Extension in Administering Programs in Africa Gospel Church in Kericho County, Kenya

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Abstract: *the purpose of this study was to examine how Theological Education by Extension (TEE) has adjusted to the use of modern technology in administering programs in Africa Gospel Church (AGC) in Kericho County, Kenya. The study adopted cross-sectional survey research design. The study targeted approximately 40,000 people in Kericho County. The targeted population included TEE Instructors, local pastors and former TEE students and current TEE students. In this study, both purposive sampling and simple random sampling techniques were used to arrive at a study sample size of 250 respondents. Questionnaires were used by the study in data collection. Data was analyzed as per the research questions and objectives. Data was summarized in tables, frequencies and percentages. The statistical package of social sciences (SPSS) was used to aid in the analysis. The study findings revealed that Theological Education by Extension has failed to adjust to the use of Modern Technology in administering Programs in Africa Gospel Church in Kericho County. This could be attributed to the fact that the TEE trainees rarely use a computer for their teaching, learning or accessing materials. There are no materials in soft copy format or digital content whatsoever. Most TEE students are computer inefficient. This is because most of the current TEE students are from the rural areas as well as their level of education may not have allowed or exposed them to the opportunity to receive computer training. Most of the learners represent the older generation – over 40 years of age and thus most of them may have begun their programs before the technological revolution. The study therefore recommended that more resources need to be put towards making TEE more viable and a model that ministers effectively to the 21st century context*

Keywords: *computer training, theological education by extension, theological education, theological education adjustment, theological education programs, administering theological programs, use of modern technology in education*

INTRODUCTION

Theological Education by Extension was started in 1963 by the Evangelical Presbyterian Seminary of Guatemala in South America. The seminary was trying to find a solution to train many ministers on different aspects of ministry. They therefore piloted a program in which the school would go to the student and not the student going to the school as had been the case. This model allowed the students to study within their locality and therefore serve their people effectively. Theological education by extension programme is taking the educational programme

out to where the people live, instead of the students leaving home and becoming boarding students at one of our educational facilities (Stanton, 2012)

Information Technology has brought about global appreciation and a rethink of old skills, tools and values. Appropriate technology informed by the entire needs of the students and the objective of theological education are being ascertained and adopted. With IT, theological educators and students can improve their research skills. In theological education, IT helps in several ways. It enhances student achievement, distance theological education, learning productivity, integrated learning systems, use of communication technologies and computer based management information systems (Oladejo, 2005).

The whole world has been undergoing a technological revolution that does not only affect the business world but also informs the direction the church has to adopt if it is to remain relevant and effective in its programs. According to Stanton, (2012), Nothing has a more profound impact on the patterns of education globally then the rapid transformation processes going on with regard to new information and communication technologies (ICT) which are both opening up new potentials in theological learning (e-learning, research exchange groups via internet, distant master courses using digital formats; digital libraries) as well as creating new problems and discrepancies. Further, Stanton states that, projections of educational goals into the future involve a great deal of risk. We can plan, but cannot always dictate the shape that education will assume. We do not yet know how technology will change educational delivery systems, what learners will expect of their educational experience, and what they will be willing to pay for an education in a private religious college. Will students be satisfied with technical training, or will they demand a rich Christian liberal arts education? Technology has indeed changed the delivery systems in the educational sector.

These new technologies increasingly continue to challenge the traditional processes of teaching and learning as well as the way education is managed. Although IT is an important area of study in its own right, it exerts major impacts on virtually all curriculum areas. It provides instant access to immense collection of data, challenging assimilation and appraisal skills. Rapid communication, plus increased access to IT could translate learning into a really enduring activity in which the pace of technological change forces constant evaluation of the learning process itself. Learners can study what they want, when they want, where they want and at whatever age they may wish to do so. ODL systems typically use technology to mediate learning; for example, printed study materials, audio, computers, TV, mobile and wire telephones and the web. ODL can give learners' access to education that they would not otherwise have had for various reasons (Ministry of education 2012).

Invariably, the impact of IT is now being felt on theological education. It possesses the prospect of altering the way in which theological communication is done, employed and deployed. The conventional image of theological education as a self-enclosed community is speedily becoming impracticable as knowledge becomes extensively accessible on the Internet, and teaching-learning is no longer bound by space restrictions (Oladejo, 2005). According to Wanzala (2014), the government of Kenya acknowledges that:

ICT is a major vehicle for teaching and learning from the earliest years. It is at a very young age that learners begin to acquire digital skills which they increasingly use to explore and exploit the world of information and to craft that into knowledge. ICT facilitates the opportunity for more student centered teaching, more self-learning and more peer teaching. It also provides greater opportunity for teacher-to-teacher, and student-to-student communication and collaboration and access to the worldwide web and the learning resources contained thereon.

A considerable proportion of institutions have focused on encouraging, applying, synchronizing and smoothing the progress of the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) to enhance teaching, training and student learning capabilities, particularly in satellite campuses and colleges (Soliman et al, 2015).

There is tremendous growth and diversity in Open and Distance Education—in the number and types of individuals' learning outside traditional classrooms, in the variety of providers, and in the range and effectiveness of new technologies serving as delivery tools for learning. The traditional delivery and administration of theological education must take up the challenge and respond effectively to the accompanying changes concomitant with the Information Technological age or it might have to confront the crisis of redundancy (Oladejo & Akanbi, 2012). Historically, its predominant medium of instruction has been printed materials, however, it may incorporate or make use of many other instructional materials such as, videotapes, CD or DVD ROM's, audio recordings, facsimiles, telephone communications, e-mail, and Web-based delivery systems through the Internet (Stanton, 2012). Therefore, this paper intended to examine how theological education by extension has adjusted to the use of modern technology in administering programs in Africa gospel church in Kericho County, Kenya.

The adjustment of the use of modern technology by Theological Education by Extension in administering programs in Africa Gospel Church in Kericho County, Kenya

METHODOLOGY

Cross-sectional survey was used in this research because it was concerned with describing, recording, analyzing, and reporting conditions that exist or existed (Kothari, 2004). The survey described the status of TEE and examined the impact of this type of education. This method is suitable because it helped in gathering information about people's attitudes, opinions and habits. The design allowed the researcher to gather information, summarize, present and interpret for the purpose of clarification (Orodho, 2005).

AGC, K has close to 400 churches in Kericho Region. The target population for this study was 40,000 church members, lay leaders, pastors, TEE students and Instructors. The estimated population was arrived at by averaging 100 members for each of the 400 congregations. The

corresponding area TEE Instructors, local pastors and former TEE students and current TEE students were contacted by the researcher as co-researchers and committee members for the purpose of helping with the discussion and implementation of the research results. They were selected because they are co-ordinating, directing, and/or are currently involved in the TEE Program in their respective Areas.

Both purposive sampling and simple random sampling techniques were used in this study. The purposive sampling technique was used in this research because the researcher critically thought about the parameters of the population to be considered and the simple random sampling of the respondents would be crucial to the success of the research, in that the selection was representative. The sample size for the study was calculated using the formula by Slovin, 2015:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + Ne^2}$$

Where n = is the size of Sample

N is the population of the sample

e² is probability of error

Therefore the Sample size will be: n = 5000

$$1 + 5000(0.05)^2$$

$$n = 250 \text{ respondents}$$

The sample size comprised of 50 TEE instructors, 50 pastors, 100 TEE students and 50 church leaders. The total number of the sample size was 250 respondents.

Questionnaires were the major data collection instruments used by the study. The research employed open-ended questionnaires that were prepared and administered to the respondents. Questionnaires were relevant to this study because they are less expensive, they are free from bias, and the results generated are more reliable and dependable (Kothari, 2004).

Validity is the degree to which a test measures what it is supposed to measure. The validity of a research instrument concerns the extent to which the instrument yields the same results on repeated trials. Before the actual study, pretesting of the instruments was carried out in one of the TEE centers. This helped to determine the reliability, which is a measure of the degree to which a research instrument yields consistent results or is influenced by random error, which is the deviation from a true measurement. The researcher undertook pre-tests data collection before the actual study schedules. This ensured that discussion procedures would obtain the data required to meet the objectives of the study thus enhancing reliability and validity of the data collected. Data collected during pre-testing is essential in adjusting the research instrument A. Mugenda and O. Mugenda (2003)

After data had been collected the researcher documented the findings as explicitly as possible. The data from questionnaires were all listed. A table with rows and columns was developed to take responses for all the questioned asked in the questionnaires in line with the summated scales. After the transcript of the data was prepared, the researcher wrote comments on the statements being the first interpretation of the data. If certain issues seemed to be still unclear or controversial, the researcher formulated additional questions and included them in the next questionnaires conducted in this research. Data was analyzed as per the research questions and objectives. Data was summarized in tables, frequencies and percentages. The statistical package of social sciences (SPSS) was used to aid in the analysis.

RESULTS

Background Characteristics of the Respondents

The demographic characteristics included are; gender, age, level of education, occupation and duration of membership.

Slightly more than a half (56%) of the respondents was men while 44% were females.

Regarding the age bracket, the results shows that the respondents aged between 18-39 years represented 20% of all respondents while those aged over 40 were 80%.

With reference to the educational level, 8% of the total respondents had no formal education, 24% had primary education, 40% had secondary education, 20% had tertiary education, 15% had university education and 2% had either Masters or PhD. This means that 32% of the respondents had not attained education beyond primary school level, while only 68% of the respondents had gone beyond secondary school education.

About their occupation, 20% were TEE instructors, 20% were Pastors, 40% were TEE students and 20% were church leaders in different Churches.

With reference to the duration in which the respondents had attended AGC membership, less than 1 years were 2%, between 1-5 years were 8%, those who had attended the church between 5-10 years were 32% and those who had attended the church for over 10 years were 58%.

Examining the Adjustment of the Use of Modern Technology by Theological Education by Extension in Administering Programs in Africa Gospel Church

The study sought to examine the Adjustment of the Use of Modern Technology by Theological Education by Extension in Administering Programs in Africa Gospel Church. Table 1 shows the distribution of the respondents

Table 1

Adjustment of the Use of Modern Technology by Theological Education by Extension in Administering Programs in Africa Gospel Church

Statement	SA		A		U		D		SD	
	F	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	F	%
TEE in AGC, K Has Used Modern Technology in administering its Programs	20	8	30	12	20	8	100	40	80	32
One Can Easily Access TEE Materials through the Use of Computers	16	6	6	5	5	2	120	48	87	35
TEE Utilizes the Use of CDs/DVDs/Tapes/and Other Audio Visual Aid	10	4	10	4	3	12	115	46	11	44.8
TEE students should be taught how to use computers	11	44	93	37.2	8	3.2	25	10	16	6.4
TEE Should Embrace Online/Digital Learning in Order to Train Church Workers	12	50	10	40	5	2	10	4	10	4
TEE Training Centres Are Equipped with Modern Technology (Projectors, Computers, etc.)	16	6.4	10	4	5	2	120	48	10	40

Table 1 reveals that according to this study majority of the respondents (62%) disagreed with the idea that most of TEE trained pastors know how to use a computer, only 20% of them agreed with the statement.

An overwhelming majority (83%) of the respondents disagreed with the fact that one can easily access TEE materials through the use of Computers, 11% of the respondents supported this idea while 2% remained undecided on this idea.

The respondents were asked whether TEE utilizes the Use of CDs/DVDs/Tapes/ and other audio visual aids and 91 % of the respondents disagreed while 8% of the respondents agreed with the fact under study.

On whether the students should be taught how to use computers, an overwhelming majority (83%) of the respondents agreed with the statement, only 16% of them disagreed with the statement.

On whether TEE should embrace Online/Digital Learning in order to train church workers, 90% of the respondents supported the idea. Only 9% of the respondents were not for this idea while 1% was neutral on this idea.

Regarding the statement, TEE training centres are equipped with modern technology (Projectors, Computers, etc.), 88 % of the respondents did not agree while 10% of the respondents indicated that they are.

Rating the Use of Modern Technology in Administering TEE

The study sought to rate the use of technology in administering TEE. Figure 1 shows the distribution of the respondents by Rating the Use of Modern Technology in Administering TEE

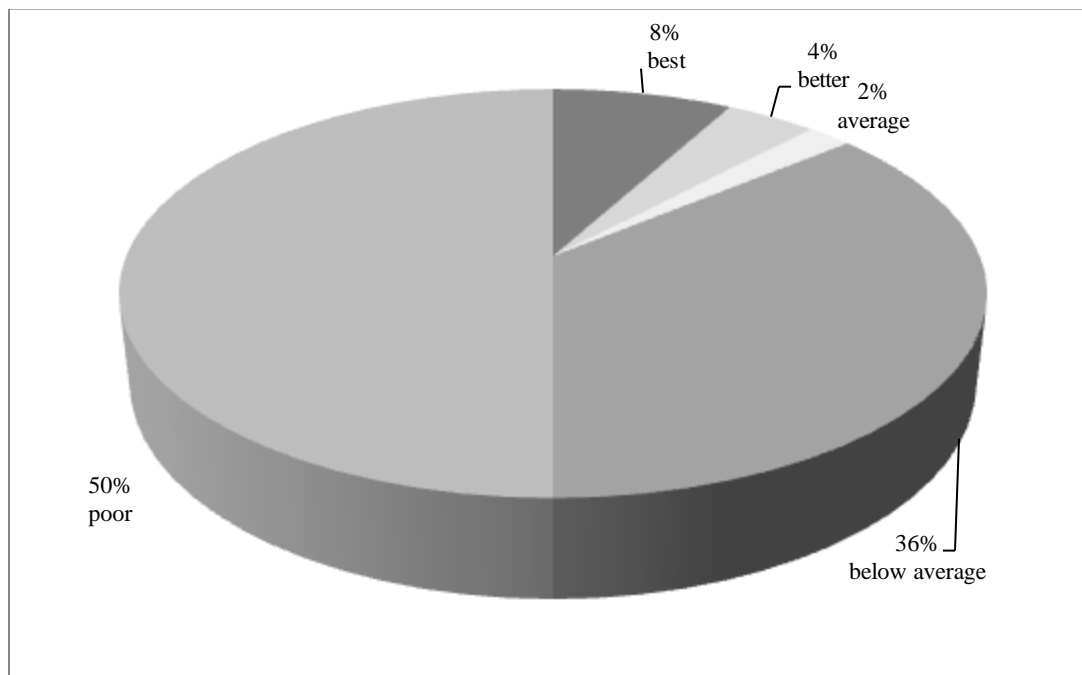


Figure 1 Rating the Use of Modern Technology in Administering TEE

The respondents were asked to rate the use of modern technology in administering TEE and their response were as follows: Those who rated it best were 8%, those who rated it better were 4%, those who rated it average were 2%, those who rated it below average were 36% and those who rated it poor were 50%. This can be attributed to the fact that TEE does not utilize modern technology in its teachings.

DISCUSSION

This study was interested in establishing how TEE in AGC, K has adjusted to the use of modern technology in administering their programs. The respondents were asked whether most of TEE trained pastors know how to use a computer and 72% of the respondents disagreed with this fact under study while 20% disagreed. This is contrary to the study by World Conference (2009) which noted that nothing has a more profound impact on the patterns of education globally than the rapid transformation processes going on with regard to new information and communication technologies (ICT) which are both opening up new potentials in theological learning (e-learning, research exchange groups via internet, distant master courses using digital formats; digital libraries) as well as creating new problems and discrepancies. This is attributed to the fact that majority of the trainees are from rural areas where they feel that there is no need of knowing how to use a computer. Also, the level of education and the age of TEE students is a contributing factor.

According to this study still 83% of the respondents disagreed with the idea that one can easily access TEE materials through the use of Computers while 11% of the respondents were not for this idea. These results might have been due to the fact that the trainers have not mind utilizing computers because they believe in training their students face to face. Also the trainers are and the trainees meet more often and thus they have not thought much about putting the materials in a computer. This is contrary to what Oladejo (2005) noted that Appropriate technology informed by the entire needs of the students and the objective of theological education are being ascertained and adopted. With IT, theological educators and students can improve their research skills.

Majority of the respondents (91%) further refuted the fact that the idea TEE utilizes the Use of CDs/DVDs/Tapes/and other audio visual aids while 8% of the respondents supported this idea. This response might be as a result of the fact that TEE has not adapted to technology and thus not using computer related technology. These results mean that the church has not adopted technology in teaching its students.

The respondents were asked whether TEE students should be taught on how to use computers and 83% of the respondents agreed with this fact while 14% of the respondents disagreed. This can be attributed to the fact that things are changing and the respondents feel that there is a need for TEE to adapt to the use of modern technology by having the students and instructors being trained on how to use a computer. This also can be attributed to the fact that as the TEE students interact with others theological students then they feel that they need to be at par with their fellow learners and thus then need to learn how to use computer. This corresponds with observations by the World Council of Churches which noted that, "Nothing has a more profound impact on the patterns of education globally then the rapid transformation processes going on with regard to new information and communication technologies (ICT) which are both opening up new potentials in theological learning (e-learning, research exchange groups via internet, distant master courses using digital formats; digital libraries) (Werner, 2014). As had been highlighted in this research, as the Kenyan population providing labor force increases in

size, structure, diversity and complexity, its educational provision to improve skills, competences and proficiency demands that knowledge delivery must extend beyond the habit of continuous contact with the instructor from enrolment time of anyone given course up to the time a candidate sits for a final examination.

It is evident from this study that the respondents were of the idea that TEE students should embrace online/digital learning to train church workers. This is because majority 90% of the respondents attested to this fact while 8% refuted this fact. This conclusion might be as a result of the fact that currently the use of information technology is inevitable and that is why the TEE students need to adapt to the emerging trends of learning and technology. This is an indication that the TEE students are recognizing the need to embrace technology because majority of those they are serving are utilizing it. This notion is in line with what Oladejo (2012) who noted elsewhere in this study that, it may be difficult to avoid probable criticisms of distance education in regards to its effectiveness or otherwise in theological education. Yet, its current reality and possible usefulness cannot be denied or overlooked.

The findings of this study generally reveal that TEE training centres are not equipped with modern technology (Projectors, Computers, etc.). To refute this fact 88% of all the respondents were negative about the issue under study while a handful of 10% supported it. This supports the observations by Oladejo (2012), which noted that, theological education is viewed as ministry-centered with the aim of developing leadership skills. They are invariably built on the idea that ministerial learning is more effective when based at the very place of use.

The respondents were asked to rate the use of modern technology in administering TEE and 86% of the respondents rated it below average while 14% of the respondents rated it above average. This can be attributed to the fact that the TEE trainings rarely utilize technology in their training. This also can be attributed to the fact that still majority of the TEE students are mainly in rural areas where they cannot access internet services. Further majority of TEE students don't seem to matter in adapting to the use of modern technology.

CONCLUSION

The study concluded that Theological Education by Extension has failed to adjust to the use of Modern Technology in administering Programs in Africa Gospel Church in Kericho County. This can be attributed to the fact that the TEE trainees rarely use a computer for their teaching, learning or accessing materials. There are no materials in soft copy format or digital content whatsoever. Most TEE students are computer inefficient. This is because most of the current TEE students are from the rural areas as well as their level of education may not have allowed or exposed them to the opportunity to receive computer training. Most of the learners represent the older generation – over 40 years of age and thus most of them may have begun their programs before the technological revolution. The study therefore provided the following recommendations: more resources need to be put towards making TEE more viable and a model that ministers effectively to the 21st century context; distance learning must be recommended as a necessary delivery system for education for many institutions and individuals in Kenya and all

over the world. AGC, K needs to put lots of effort in strengthening TEE as a very important institution for training its workers; the church may also need to sponsor more young people to study through TEE to help change their perspective towards TEE

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