Article

# The Role of E-Learning Policy in Academics' Professional Development in African ODeL Institutions

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## Abstract

E-learning has undoubtedly become one of the major solutions to address the many challenges that higher education institutions face. Some of these challenges have led to the demand for distance education and the development of e-learning as a complementary and alternative teaching and learning system. This study explored the ways in which the e-learning policy in two African open distance e-learning (ODeL) higher education institutions drives academic professional development. Qualitative semi-structured interviews were conducted with 20 participants, and the policy documents from the selected institutions were thematically analysed. The unified theory of acceptance and use of technology guided this study. The study's findings revealed that comprehensive and robust e-learning policies may contribute to improving the adoption of online teaching in higher education. The findings also indicate that the e-learning policy should contribute to the capacity-building activities of the lecturers to prepare them for the new online systems. The study consequently recommends that ODeL higher education institutions in developing countries develop and continuously update an e-learning policy.

**Keywords:** e-learning policy; e-learning readiness; online teaching; ODeL; professional development; technology adoption

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## Introduction

To address educational imperatives such as improving the capacity of the education and training systems to meet the pressing needs in Africa, countries such as South Africa, Nigeria, Botswana, Kenya, Namibia and Tanzania have embarked on a journey to implement digital transformation policies and educational innovations such as e-learning (Baijnath 2014; Economic Confidential 2016; Mhache 2013; Tarimo 2013). The demand for higher education (HE) has proliferated, which led to the demand for distance education (DE) and the development of e-learning as complementary and alternative teaching and learning systems (Aljaber 2018). As a result, strategies for blended learning online learning have been embraced by higher education institutions (HEIs) all over the world (Aljaber 2018; Mpungose 2020). However, despite the exponential growth of e-learning, alarming reports and criticism are directed at the failure of e-learning initiatives, especially among HEIs in developing countries.

According to Mtebe and Raphael (2014), some of these e-learning implementations fail to create sought-after improvements in education. The lack of adequate academic skill sets and knowledge is reported to contribute to a high failure rate of e-learning programmes in these settings (Modise and Van den Berg 2021). Some of the constraints in e-learning, as reported in research, are infrastructure, learner management, content creation and delivery, administration and management systems (Quah 2005), faculty readiness (Modise and Van den Berg 2021) and the lack of a robust e-learning policy (Janssen et al. 2013). The presence or absence of such a framework determines whether e-learning initiatives may fail or succeed. Academics from HEIs face the challenge of facilitating and supporting learning using emerging educational technologies without proper preparation and training. They therefore struggle to adopt the new e-learning innovations owing to a lack of relevant skills and/or the perceived difficulty in attaining the necessary skills. The COVID-19 pandemic also forced many HEIs to continue offering education in online spaces, consequently affirming the need for DE and e-learning in the education sector while at the same time revealing the skill gaps required for e-learning. However, COVID-19 is also reported to be the accelerator for training and technology adoption (Modise and Van den Berg 2021; Zawacki-Richter 2021).

According to research, an e-learning policy framework and implementation increasingly affect the ways in which HEIs operate, are structured, and are organised (De Freitas and Oliver 2005; Kibuku et al. 2020; Nyerere 2016). In addition, De Freitas and Oliver (2005) state that e-learning is increasingly used as part of organisations' change management strategy. However, research also indicates that policy is lacking in promoting e-learning (Bhuasiri et al. 2012; Farid et al. 2015). The COVID-19 pandemic also changed the ways in which educational institutions do business, and the need to urgently revisit relevant policies has become increasingly evident. This has proven difficult for those without proper or comprehensive DE and e-learning policies, as they must adjust to the new way of doing things (Modise and Van den Berg 2021).

This research explored the role of an e-learning policy in e-learning initiatives in African HEIs. This article, therefore, reports on the lessons learnt from the e-learning journeys of two of Africa's largest open universities. The article specifically focuses on the role of e-learning policy in preparing academics (hereafter interchangeably referred to as lecturers) through training and development and how it has affected their e-learning projects. The research is based on the premise that well-trained and supported lecturers will properly support their students. The research question that drove this study was: "What is the role of an e-learning policy in addressing academics' professional development in ODeL institutions?"

## Review of Related Literature

With the constantly emerging technologies that directly affect how teaching and learning unfold in HE and DE environments, various inevitable changes have occurred, which include the development and implementation of e-learning policy and other teaching and learning policies. Keaster (2005) mentions that several changes in policies and processes, such as institutional processes, are needed to adapt to the new reality, as Shearer et al. (2016) identified. E-learning is still in the early adoption and implementation stages in developing countries such as South Africa and Nigeria (Ameen et al. 2019; Modise and Van den Berg 2021).

E-learning is defined by Loxley and Lee (2004, 8) as the "delivery of a learning, training or education program by electronic means, and covers a wide set of applications and processes, such as web-based learning, computer-based learning, virtual classrooms, and digital collaboration". Loxley and Lee (2004, 9) further argue that e-learning technology has the potential to bring improved learning opportunities to a larger audience than has previously been possible. However, e-learning implementation projects seem to come short of realising the sought-after promises of e-learning. One of the significant factors affecting the success of technology integration in HEIs and ODE is the lack of clear goals and plans (Bates and Sangra 2011).

Patel and McCarthy (2000) warn that e-business does not just happen – a vision is a vehicle that transports the e-business to its destination. Patel and McCarthy (2000) also warn that a practical e-business vision cannot exist without a clear scope definition (size, shape or function). This is the role of policy in implementing a new business model, such as e-learning. In education, this scope will inevitably include the policy that guides and drives the implementation of an e-learning function and the strategy to equip the workforce with the necessary skill sets to embark on the new e-learning strategy successfully.

Policy frameworks are crucial to guiding the implementation and provision of e-learning (Nyerere 2016). However, research reveals inadequacy in policies for e-learning implementations in developing countries. For example, Kibuku et al. (2020) reported that the National ICT Policy of 2006 that had guided ICT implementation in Kenya for

10 years was inadequate to address the e-learning practice since it lacked a strategy for e-learning. Research also suggests that the lack of government's proper and active involvement in e-learning implementation projects in HE may be the culprit behind the reported failures of e-learning strategies (Kibuku et al. 2020; Tarus et al. 2015). Nyerere (2016) noted that 11 of the 12 universities surveyed in Kenya had e-learning policies; however, the absence of a national policy framework for e-learning negatively affected the operationalisation of these organisational policies. An explicit link was shown between educational ICT innovation and national ICT policy in 174 case studies in 28 countries (Farrell and Wachholz 2003), which makes a strong case for policies for ICT innovation strategies as necessary.

Brown et al. (2007) identify a discernible pattern in developing e-learning policy, with governments as e-learning enablers at the first stage, effectively integrating e-learning into the education system. A transformative role for e-learning is seen in the third stage with "changes to learning views and the nature and operation of the tertiary institutions and the tertiary system" (Brown et al. 2007, 78). This research identified essential building blocks of successful e-learning and viable e-learning policymaking. Farrell and Wachholz (2003) warn governments to improve or introduce e-learning technology and innovation in a country. Governments must build the capacities of stakeholders such as policymakers, administrators, principals, teachers, learners, evaluators, instructional designers and technicians. Farrell and Wachholz (2003) argue that different shareholders' capacities contribute to implementing e-learning. Moore and Kearsley (2005) identified training, policy and development, and policy rules as critical components of an e-learning strategy. Professional development and support for tertiary teachers and support, information and guidance for learners were also highlighted by Brown et al. (2007, 77) as primary building blocks in ensuring quality in e-learning.

Quah (2005) explains that e-learning empowers educators and learners to express their ideas easily, interact with others, explore and discover the world, manage the learning process, and assess its quality and quantity. Brown et al. (2007, 78) argue that e-learning supplies by building infrastructure rather than focusing on why there would be demand, assuming that, if the proper infrastructure is constructed, people will follow. In contrast to African countries, HEIs mostly implement e-learning without proper infrastructure (Modise 2022). This practice creates a burden on both educators and learners. E-learning policies must adequately address DE learners' and disadvantaged groups' educational aspirations and needs and promote better access to tertiary education.

Embedded in teacher practice is the need and ability to continuously sharpen the teaching craft using the available technologies. E-learning research should address integrating HE and DE technologies with relevant policy guidance. Conole (2010, 13) states a gap exists "between the promises inherent in the policy rhetoric and actual use in practice" and argues that teaching and learning activities can inform further policy directions.

Government policies in South Africa and other developing countries charge HEIs with a mandate to make ICTs part of their architecture by engaging in online teaching and learning. Students must possess relevant knowledge and skills to meet the demands of the digitally globalised world. HEIs, including DE institutions in developing countries, must therefore leverage the affordances of ICTs meaningfully to engage in online learning (Gani 2018, 60), backed by strong governmental and institutional leadership with an effective, equitable e-learning policy.

## Theoretical Framework

The unified theory of acceptance and use of technology (UTAUT) developed by Venkatesh, Moris, Davis and Davis (2003) was used to understand the role of e-learning policy in preparing academics for e-learning in ODeL institutions. The UTAUT determines the degree to which new technology is accepted and used (Luhamya et al. 2017). According to Venkatesh et al. (2003), user behaviour is affected by behavioural intention (BI) and certain facilitating conditions (FC). BI measures the strength of intention to perform an expected task. FC is the degree to which a lecturer believes adequate institutional and technical infrastructure support is required for the new technology.

The UTAUT combines a spectrum of theories that have been used and empirically tested in various diverse contexts to understand and predict behaviour regarding technology adoption and usage. This model has moderating factors (gender, age, experience and voluntariness of use) in a technology implementation environment. For example, the voluntariness of use is the perceived freedom of choice a user has to use the new technology, and it moderates the social influence, which is "the degree to which an individual perceives that important others believe he or she should use the new system" (Venkatesh et al. 2003, 451). While gender, age and experience moderate the effort expectancy, the "degree of ease [is] associated with the use of the system" (Venkatesh et al. 2003, 450).

## Research Methodology

This research followed a qualitative approach. Creswell and Creswell (2017, 4) define a qualitative approach as an "approach for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem". Qualitative research is planned around the interaction between the researcher and the participants and the content/text in documents to understand and analyse how the social phenomenon is experienced and lived. This approach is also appropriate for multiple case studies and data collection methods such as interviews and document analysis (Chilisa and Kawulich 2012). The objectives of this study were as follows:

- examining the role of e-learning policies in shaping and supporting academics' professional development in open, distance, and e-learning (ODeL) institutions;

- analysing the ways in which e-learning policies influence academics' skills development, pedagogical approaches, and technological competencies in ODeL environments;
- identifying challenges and opportunities associated with implementing e-learning policies to foster academic professional development; and
- exploring best practices and recommendations for optimising e-learning policies to support academics' continuous professional growth in ODeL settings effectively.

## Data Collection

*Interviews*

The selection was limited to academics and participants who implement e-learning at the two selected ODeL institutions. Purposive sampling with the snowball technique therefore ensured that only individuals directly linked to the research questions were invited to participate in this study (Tracy 2013, 4).

The selection was limited to academics and participants involved in the implementation of e-learning at both institutions and any person from both universities who has participated in e-learning and digital transformation implementation tasks, including individuals from management. A total of 20 participants were selected, 12 from University A and eight from University B, between 35 and 65 years of age and teaching experience ranging from 0 to 30 years. Of the 20 participants, only two had no doctoral degree, and 14 were professors (table 1).

**Table 1**: Participants

| Participant | Title | Age | Gender F/M | Years employed by the institution | Years teaching at the current University |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| P1 | Professor | 40–45 | F | 9 | 8 |
| P2 | Professor | 60–65 | M | 18 | 0 |
| P3 | Doctor | 46–50 | F | 5 | 5 |
| P4 | Doctor | 60–65 | F | 17 | 0 |
| P5 | Professor | 40–45 | F | 3 | 3 |
| P6 | Ms | 35–40 | F | 7 | 7 |
| P7 | Doctor | 56–60 | F | 16 | 16 |
| P8 | Professor | 56–60 | F | 25 | 25 |
| P9 | Professor | 60–65 | F | 25 | 16 |
| P10 | Professor | 50–55 | M | 3 | 2 |
| P11 | Mrs | 46–50 | F | 13 | 13 |
| P12 | Professor | 60–65 | M | 40 | 30 |
| P13 | Doctor | 46–50 | F | 10 | 6 |
| P14 | Professor | 60–65 | M | 12 | 12 |
| P15 | Professor | 40–45 | M | 15 | 15 |

| Participant | Title | Age | Gender F/M | Years employed by the institution | Years teaching at the current University |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| P16 | Professor | 50–55 | M | 12 | 12 |
| P17 | Professor | 55–60 | M | 6 | 6 |
| P18 | Professor | 55–60 | F | 9 | 9 |
| P19 | Professor | 50–55 | M | 10 | 10 |
| P20 | Professor | 50–55 | F | 20 | 10 |

*Note*. P = Participant, F = Female, M = Male

## Document Analysis

Document analysis is one of policy research's "most commonly used and powerful methods" (Dalglish et al. 2020). When working with educational institutions, analysing selected institutional policies is integral to the qualitative research, guided by the research questions. Bowen (2009) warns that when evaluating documents, it is important that researchers establish whether the documents are related to the research problem and the aim of the study. Only the institutional policies that guide the implementation of e-learning in the two case studies were selected, studied and analysed (table 2).

**Table 2**: Characteristics and overview of the selected policies

| Policy | First draft | Amended version | Current version (2020-2022) | E-learning definition | Clear training guidelines |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| University A ODeL Policy | 2008 | 2018 | No | No | No |
| University B Draft eLearning Strategy and Policy | 2005 | None | No | Yes | Yes |

## Data Analysis

Thematic analysis was used to code and analyse the interviews and policy documents. The themes highlight essential elements in the data about the research questions (Braun and Clarke 2006). The interviews were transcribed and transferred to the ATLAS.ti software package for in-depth analysis. However, manual coding was used for the policies, as there were only a few policy documents. Saldaña (2021, 44) explains that manual coding depends on many factors. In this case, the data's size, flexibility and control of documents motivated the manual coding for the selected policies. The themes were derived from the interview transcripts and the policy documents.

### Ethical Measures

Ethical considerations such as confidentiality, anonymity and informed consent must be observed when conducting research. Burns (2000) warns that the researcher and the participants must clearly understand the confidentiality of the study results and findings. The participants were informed of the purpose of the study and their rights in this study. They were also assured that their responses and the information shared during the research would be kept private, with the results being presented anonymously to protect their identities. All the participants in this study were informed about the details of the study to enable them to decide whether to participate or continue to participate in the study once it had commenced. In addition to the ethical aspects discussed above, ethical clearance was obtained from the relevant committees at Universities A and B, from which the data were collected.

## Findings

This section presents the three themes derived from the analysis of the policies (table 2) and the interview with participants (table 1).

### Theme 1: E-Learning Policy and Professional Development of Lecturers in Higher Education and ODeL Environments

This theme examined the ways in which a comprehensive e-learning policy influences the professional development of academics and e-learning adoption. Janssen et al. (2013) argue that a robust policy is one of the primary building blocks for successful e-learning implementation and adoption. However, the participants attested to the lack of a policy guiding their training and development for adopting e-learning in their institutions. Compulsory training was identified as something that the e-learning policy should guide and enforce, as seen in the following comment:

> So, in terms of e-learning strategy, I would say the first thing for me would be mandatory training. (P11)

The suggestion for "mandatory training" emanated from the participants' concern about some lecturers who did not attend training and those who did not regularly use the universities' learning management system (LMS). Another concern highlighted by some participants was that the training workshops provided were not planned and that they took place haphazardly:

> One of the issues is the lecturers and the autonomy that they have in the institution . . . it is highly problematic because training is not mandated. They (lecturers) train when they choose to train. (P11)

> Part of our challenge is that there are lots of programmes, but they are all ad hoc and not structured. (P8)

Another participant highlighted the importance of institutional requirements and expectations for e-learning:

> The institution must be clear about rolling out e-learning technology. Also, if they say e-learning, what are the institution's minimal expectations from an academic? What are the minimum requirements? (P17)

**Theme 2: The Lack of a Comprehensive E-Learning Policy in Higher Education and Open and Distance E-Learning**

Rapley (2018) explains that one needs to consider what is and is omitted when analysing documents. Although this study aimed not to compare the two universities in the interest of reporting on the elements addressed in each policy, a comparison was almost inevitable and necessary to put some of the findings in context, as seen in table 2.

One observation of these policies is that they lacked persuasion. Rapley (2018) refers to the authority of the policies' understanding of e-learning and the general understanding of e-learning. Although somewhat outdated, University B's draft e-learning strategy and policy was found to be more comprehensive than University A's ODeL policy. University B's draft e-learning policy is the sole "authoritative source of guidance to faculty and administrative staff in e-learning as a component of the institution's activities."

University A's ODeL policy outlined its purpose as "to provide a shared understanding of ODeL and direct its implementation within a blended model of learning and teaching". However, no further information addresses this shared understanding of ODeL in the institution in the policy. It was also found that University B's draft e-learning policy identified the use of blended learning alongside e-learning. In contrast, University A's ODeL policy only provided the relationship between blended learning and e-learning and presented blended learning as possible support for e-learning. However, there is no clear statement on whether University A planned to take the blended learning or e-learning route in its policy.

University B's draft e-learning policy also clearly addresses elements such as the development and online delivery of materials for some targeted programmes. However, this was not indicated in University A's ODeL policy. University B's draft e-learning policy went as far as identifying the need to establish an eLearning Unit and outlined the roles and responsibilities of this unit in ensuring that the university fully harvested the benefits of e-learning innovation. This policy also clearly outlined how e-learning adoption would be encouraged through incentivisation for participation by academics, as indicated in the following statement:

> . . . remunerated for the assistance and additional effort put into creating eLearning material and conversion to eLearning programmes where this is outside the normal

> responsibilities and workload of the individuals. This remuneration will align with the University's existing overtime and extra workload policies.

Technologies to be used in the delivery of e-learning and the roles of various stakeholders were also clearly outlined in University B's draft e-learning policy. Although not detailed, this policy mentioned the "training and change management" plans, communication strategies and the proposed broad implementation plan and time frames. One of the major problems relating to the implementation and adoption of e-learning identified in this study for these ODeL institutions is that there was no clear institutional definition of e-learning culminating from the non-existence of an e-learning policy, as indicated by some participants:

> There is no clear strategy. There is no clear policy. There are no clear plans. You start at the very highest level. The vision has to be clear. The direction has to be clear. It has to be formulated properly in terms of policies and plans. (P2)

> I think it has been developed, but I am not sure it has been adapted fully, but I know that they were working on the policy for e-learning and quality assurance policy. (P18)

Some participants believed that their current policy did not offer much guidance as far as e-learning was concerned.

> They adopted ODeL and changed all the policies, but I do not think they have changed the policy so much that it became practical . . . what happened is they changed the ODL policy into ODeL and added a little bit of this and that of e-learning in the policy. I think it is superficial, and they could go deeper and give more guidance. (P4)

### Theme 3: Outdated Policies and Their Impact on E-Learning Projects

Although University B's draft e-learning strategy and policy seemed somewhat comprehensive, it was outdated, as it had been drafted in 2005 but has not been updated or revised. It is also not an official document, as it was still in draft form. Some of the participants also raised this concern:

> A draft e-learning policy stipulated that University B should go toward e-learning . . . So, it has not been launched as an official document, but it is still what the University has and is working with it. So, in a sense, we do have an e-learning policy. (P15)

Another concern was that the Commonwealth of Learning developed University B's draft e-learning policy, as commented by one participant. This led some University B participants to question the policy's ownership and adoption.

> Commonwealth of Learning developed a country-wide e-learning policy. So, it is not just our own; anybody who decides to go into e-learning can use it. It is the Commonwealth of Learning, but it is not just for us. (P16)

University A also took 10 years to update its ODeL policy. The university developed the ODL policy in 2008, moved from correspondence to open distance education (ODL), then officially implemented the e-learning in 2013 (Ngubane-Mokiwa 2017) to ODeL, but only amended the ODL policy to include e-learning later in 2018. The document analysis found that the institutions in this study did not have authoritative and comprehensive e-learning policies that guided e-learning activities. These activities included the design of learning materials for online consumption, appropriate training, and development of specific sets of skills and knowledge for e-learning, and other forms of preparation of the academics and students for e-learning.

## Discussion

Successful training programmes do not simply happen; they are products of careful planning, resource allocation and evaluation (Andriotis 2017). The study clearly indicates that e-learning infrastructure is crucial to successfully implementing e-learning. E-learning projects depend on heavy financial investments, and with a scarcity of resources, HEI leadership must clearly and carefully map out the e-learning project and properly prepare academics for its success. However, to drive the process effectively, this study highlighted that developing an e-learning policy is critical to implementing e-learning in HE. The analysis of these policies found that the two policies lacked the authority that mandated training and clarity of a comprehensive definition of e-learning, which created confusion among the lecturers. The policies in place also failed to address the matter of training interventions that properly prepare lecturers for e-learning.

Some participants alluded to the trajectory of University A, and explained in detail the journey from correspondence education to ODL and then to ODeL. Some participants told similar stories from University B by describing the institution's birth, closure and resuscitation to what it is today as an ODeL university. However, what seemed to be lacking behind these developments was the coherent development of policy that speaks to the current and emerging trends in the HE sectors in Africa and possibly the world. For example, most participants did not know whether their institution had an e-learning policy, and where a policy existed, it was still in draft form, as in the case of University B, as reported in theme 1. With University A, however, some participants argued that the institution changed the name of the policy, but not much work was done to revise the content of the policy. The authority of the policies regarding the understanding of e-learning was also unclear in the policy documents reviewed in this study. The policies were not authoritative in bringing the understanding of e-learning and how academics must be prepared, trained and developed toward building capacity relevant to e-learning. This further affected the adoption of new technologies related to e-learning, such as the university LMS. This study therefore identified e-learning education and awareness as key to e-learning implementation.

This study also positions the e-learning policy as key for the e-learning implementation process in the HE and ODeL environment, by specifically identifying lecturers' professional development and e-learning readiness (ELR) as key elements for technology (e-learning in this case) adoption. Modise (2022, 28) defines ELR as the "mental or physical readiness of an organisation with the relevant and available technological and digital skills and knowledge for the meaningful e-learning experience". The e-learning policy facilitates the adoption of an online teaching system. However, this policy must be able to guide and influence how lecturers are prepared for the new technology. The literature indicates that faculty members' lack of preparation and proper support (Aboderin 2015) are among the factors that affect the success of e-learning innovation projects in HEIs and DE institutions.

The e-learning policy intervention should include clear guidelines on the training requirements for any newly implemented system. Such training requirements may be contained in another policy or a sub-policy. The e-learning policy that addresses academic and professional development for e-learning implementation and adoption is robust and effective because it places the skills for using technologies in perspective. This policy should balance the resource allocation and activities in the e-learning implementation project. Modise (2022) found that lecturers will utilise the available technology when well-prepared. The preparation of lecturers therefore influences their acceptance and use of technology. However, training and professional development should be made "mandatory" for lecturers and linked to the lecturers' needs.

Most importantly, the e-learning policy should visibly change lecturers' behaviours and attitudes and affect the actual use of the new technology; in this case, the new e-learning system should ultimately positively affect the learners' experience in distance HE. The e-learning policy should also bring awareness and understanding of e-learning components and guide the implementation process. The policy should highlight the necessary support and relevant structures in the university where each relevant stakeholder can find training and assistance with the new system.

Academic professional development has been proven to positively affect the ELR of lecturers (Modise 2022). ELR has also been demonstrated to drive the adoption and actual use of new technology (Ncube et al. 2014). It ultimately affects how the students experience the new system and progress through their studies. According to the UTAUT, effort expectancy and degree of ease associated with using the system (Venkatesh et al. 2003) will determine the ways in which lecturers use the new technology. Without appropriate training and development of skills and competencies to use the e-learning system, lecturers may find it difficult to accept and use the system, as it may affect their effort, especially in cases where implementation is haphazard and not adequately communicated. The policy is paramount to the health of an institution.

## Conclusion

What is already known about this topic is that, although e-learning is not new, it is still in the early stages in Africa and developing countries on other continents. The lack of coherent e-learning policy in ODeL and HEIs contributes to the confusion and misunderstanding of e-learning and, consequently, the much-reported failure of e-learning initiatives in African HEIs and other developing countries. The success of any e-learning system in a university setting greatly depends on the readiness and ability of academics and students to adopt and use the new technology tools to teach and support students. In the light of the limitations imposed on this study, one of which is a case study focusing only on two ODeL HEIs in Africa, the following suggestions for further research and practice are recommended:

- This study could help African ODeL HEIs work together to refine e-learning policies and related procedures to tackle e-learning implementation issues properly.
- The e-learning policy should include a clear and comprehensive statement of what constitutes e-learning as defined by the institution. More details must be outlined in giving direction and guidance to the e-learning activities and capacity building for proper instructional design, facilitation of learning, and effective student support for online education.
- E-learning policies and other policies about teaching and learning with technology must be updated regularly, in line with the current trends such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Policies must be responsive to lecturers' and students' current trends and needs.

The UTAUT was used to guide the study in identifying factors affecting technology adoption and the role of e-learning policy. The findings in the document analysis and interview data sets clearly indicated that e-learning policies have a role to play in changing the lecturers' understanding of e-learning and preparing them for adopting technology. If carefully crafted, e-learning policy has the potential to bring stability and balance to activities during the implementation phases. The success of any e-learning system in a university setting greatly depends on the readiness and ability of academics to adopt and use the new technology tools for teaching and learning. A policy that supports this basic faculty continuous professional development for required online training enhances teaching readiness, course design, and innovation and leverages and compliments faculty member's research agenda.

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