

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background to the Study

In this era of global digitalization, it is hard to talk about education without mentioning the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT). ICT intervenes in every single part of human life activity including Humanities, Social Science, Law, Natural Science, Technology and Medicine. In education, ICT plays a key role in terms of conducting research, collecting information, teaching and learning as well. While using ICT, with just a click of a mouse, we can access mountains of information around the world (Akhtar, 2016:75).

Additionally, about the field of education, the use of ICT makes teachers able to exchange their experiences, points of views, ideas, and feelings with learners easier than ever. Many of them can see their teaching training programmes getting improved on-site or remotely at a very low cost. Since education being one of the foundations of economic and social developments factors, also ICT facilitates a growing number of people to get access to schools for having a better education that matches their interests.

There are lots of ICT tools available for teachers: i.e., computers, internet, projectors, smartphones, e-mailing facilities, online classes, video conferencing. These tools are made for both teaching and learning English to be more attractive and convenient. Also, ICT enables teachers to save

much time, prevents them from travelling home, gives them energy for working and helps them paying little money when working at schools. For students, they can learn whatever they want by using ICT tools at any time and in every place (Ammanu, 2016:1). Therefore, we can assume that ICT is playing an incredible role in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (Akhtar, 2016:75).

Besides, ICT emerges gradually in the educational sector dealing with the pedagogical philosophy based on the theory of constructivism that is supported by the Learning Management System (LMS) such as Moodle. Henceforth, Moodle platform is known as among the most popular open-source e-learning platforms for teachers to have the possibilities to create online courses with access cleared to only registered students. This platform allows teachers and students living in different geographical areas to exchange information through synchronous and asynchronous communications (Costa, 2012:335).

Moodle facilitates educational communities to share information, it develops a student-centred approach by giving the students chance to exchange on a various topics, and finally, it strengthens social interaction (Jeong, 2017:4846). Moreover, the flexibility of the Moodle platform allows learners to access the materials that teachers uploaded on the webserver at any time and from every place they might be. It allows both teachers and students to have various interactions. Students have enough time to discuss

and share ideas thoroughly about the topics presented by their respective teachers before the class starts.

Furthermore, teachers who use Moodle have full control over students' track records. The activities are checked throughout the use of the internet. Teachers can see what students did in a timeframe for assignments, quizzes, forums, chats etc (Suppasetserree & Dennis, 2016:30). For example, (Suppasetserree & Dennis, 2016:30) argued that one teacher claimed: "I use Moodle for uploading and sharing documents. I use Moodle for uploading listening activities because it's easy for students to be online and then they can attend to the listening text. Mostly, I use it for listening exercises, not for reading." This shows how important using Moodle in teaching listening skill is for teachers.

Although Moodle has been combined with other ICT devices such as computers, smartphones, tablets, to teach English effectively, there are still EFL teachers with very low awareness of the importance of using Moodle for teaching purposes. Also, barriers of ICT integration in education did exist in many Malian institutions due to its high level of costs, the lack of mastery for its functionality, and teachers' acceptance of use it. Besides, old methods of instruction are still applied in some universities and teachers carelessly do not pay much attention that using Moodle can help the teaching process succeed (Ghazizadeh & Fatemipour, 2017:608).

It is in this perspective that the researcher found despite the recent investigations done regarding the use of Moodle, there is no study surveyed

on how well pre-service teachers in the Ecole Normale Supérieure de Bamako (Institute for High School Teachers Training) perceive the use of Moodle, how do they believe in using it, how they are confident and how are their attitudes in using it for teaching purposes. Because perception drives to belief. And belief leads to confidence which develops their attitudes towards using Moodle.

In West Africa specifically in Mali, the ICT tools and computers equipment are highly expensive (Traore, 2015:12). Also, teachers and students lack the training of ICT use, they are lowly qualified to use ICT tools at school. Also, there is a lack of ICT programmes in the national curriculum, and also the low awareness about ICT in the documents of the ten-year programme of education (Traore, 2019:32).

It is in this regard that the topic entitled “English Pre-service Teachers Perceptions, Beliefs, Confidence and Attitudes in Using Moodle at ENSUP of Bamako” is elaborated by the researcher. Preservice teachers stand for students enrolled at the Institute for High School Teachers Training for having a teaching training for 2 years. After completion of the study programme, they are hired in the Malian high schools. The first year is based on studies of teaching theories. And the second year is based on practising what they have learned in the previous year. An exam is organized by the administration in each final year of programme for the learners.

It is very important to have the preservice teachers teaching programmes training because the government wants more trained teachers in all public schools around the country. The knowledge background that they receive during the training time in ENSUP would increase the teaching skills and therefore help to produce excellent students.

B. Identification of the Problems

About the information given along with the background of the research, the preliminary research allowed the researcher to identify the problems that exist in the department of English. First of all, there is no survey study conducted on pre-service teachers in ENSUP of Bamako. It is extremely difficult for teachers to deliver courses effectively without any research.

Also, in developing countries like Mali, the ICT tools and computers equipment are extremely expensive for pre-service teachers to buy. Many of them cannot have full access to the internet due to lack of technological facilities. The cost of equipment is almost expensive for the majority of these people that makes them unable to afford it. Because we need to be well equipped so that we can work effectively and efficiently.

Additionally, the ICT course is not incorporated into the national curriculum. In Mali where 35 % of the young learners can access to the internet, the number of students is really limited. The government, by missing to do so, students may be found in the most unsuccessful situations during the learning process.

Despite Moodle is widely used for teaching purposes, there is a very low level of awareness for preservice teachers to use Moodle in their work. Nearly all of them do not exactly understand how Moodle does function. They do not have technical assistance that would enable them when they want to use it during teaching processes.

There is a lack of training for using ICT tools by preservice teachers for their daily activities in teaching particularly using the Moodle platform. Due to the lack of training programmes, it became very difficult for them to benefit the advantages and functionalities of Moodle.

C. Delimitation of the Problems

About the problems mentioned in the background of this study including those in the problem's identification section, the researcher decided to limit them in this research to perceptions, beliefs, confidence, and attitudes of the English pre-service teachers. Other parts of this research related other than that of Moodle will not be considered in this research.

D. Formulation of the Problems

There are three research questions in this study formulated by the researcher:

1. How do preservice teachers' perceptions, beliefs, confidence and attitudes differ by their demographic background?
2. What are the dimensions of preservice teachers' perceptions, beliefs, confidence and attitudes in using Moodle?

3. What is the correlation between preservice teachers' perceptions, beliefs, confidence and attitudes in using Moodle?

E. Objectives of the Research

Throughout the problems stated above, these research objectives are elaborated by the researcher because the gaps related to the current study can be filled. Finally, the researcher defined the objectives as follow:

1. To explore how preservice teachers' perception, beliefs, confidence and attitudes differ by their demographic background,
2. To investigate the dimensions of preservice teachers' perception, beliefs, confidence and attitudes in using Moodle,
3. To investigate the correlation between preservice teachers' perception, beliefs, confidence and attitudes in using Moodle.

F. Significance of the Research

Here the researcher is going to demonstrate how important the research study is for all the parties involved in the survey. The first part deals with the theoretical significance and the second one is the practical part that concerns about the benefits for preservice teachers, the researcher including the Malian Ministry of Education within the research study.

a. Theoretical Significance

Theoretically, participants in this research such as teachers, students, and other researchers will explore how well e-learning can help teaching and learning process to be successful. Also, they will know about

the paramount importance of using Moodle in colleges, universities, and learning centres to facilitate knowledge acquisition.

Furthermore, knowing about Moodle will persuade these categories of people to emphasize e-learning and ICT tools in the educational domain particularly for English as a Foreign Language.

b. Practical Significance

The practical significance concerns the preservice teachers, the researcher and the Malian Ministry of Education. It is discussed below:

1) Pre-service Teachers

The pre-service teachers of English as a Foreign Language are the first beneficiaries of this research, they become able to upload their courses on the Moodle web server. They become able to share and interact constantly with their students for 24/7. Besides, they get a lot of opportunities to develop their professionalism in teaching by using the Moodle which allow them to meet and share with millions of English teachers worldwide. The more experienced they are, the richer, the powerful, and knowledgeable they become.

2) Researcher

The researcher discovers a more advanced teaching tool that is already available on the Internet without restriction. He allows thousands of English teachers to use Moodle application during their teaching careers. Also, he helps students with difficulties to

stay in touch constantly with their respective teachers and colleagues to escape this barrier.

3) The Malian Ministry of Education

It is useful for the Ministry Education and the Scientific Research for the findings after the study is completed. After the data are gathered, the institutions can use them for developing the national curriculum with a new model of teaching (e-learning) incorporated. Also, it facilitates them to have partnerships and donors across the four corners of the globe that support education and ICT tools implementation in many schools.