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Research Article

Global Coronavirus Pandemic and the Improvised Online Lectures Perspectives in Select Universities in South-South, Nigeria

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Abstract: In ensuring that the Nigerian educational system, especially tertiary education, was not completely shut-down due to the coronavirus pandemic, the Federal Government of Nigeria on April 10, 2020 directed the authorities of the nation's universities to commence online lectures. This study investigated the implementation of the online learning directive by universities in South-South, Nigeria. The aim of the study was to investigate perspectives in the implementation of the directive. Among others, the study asked the following questions: how did Nigerian university students perceive the directive on online lectures due to coronavirus restrictions in Nigeria? What were the dominant online teaching platforms adopted by Nigerian universities in the implementation of the online lectures directive? The study was anchored on the Technological Determinism and Diffusion of Innovations theories. The survey research design was used to study a population of 152, 595 from which a sample size of 384 respondents was drawn. Findings of the study showed that although Nigerian university students appreciated the online lectures initiative, the arrangement was challenged by lack of requisite technological gadgets by both lecturers and students and poor power supply in the country. The study recommended, among other things, that the Nigerian government and authorities of private tertiary institutions in the country should provide state-of-the-art facilities that support online learning in the digital economy. It was also recommended that the age-long problem of poor electricity supply in Nigeria should be aggressively approached and addressed by the Nigerian government.
Keywords: Coronavirus Pandemic, Coronavirus Restrictions, Implementation of Directive on Online Lectures, Nigerian Universities, Online Education.

INTRODUCTION

The first case of coronavirus disease, otherwise referred to as Covid-19, in Nigeria was confirmed by the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) and the Federal Ministry of Health on February 27, 2020. The index case involved an Italian who came into Nigeria on February 24, 2020 through a Turkish airline [1, 2]. The Italian was confirmed to have tested positive to coronavirus at the virology laboratory of the Lagos State University Teaching Hospital. Since the index case was confirmed in Lagos, the coronavirus disease has spread to many States in Nigeria.

Like governments of many countries of the global community hit by the coronavirus, the Nigerian government, through the Federal Ministry of Education, ordered the closure of schools across the country on March 19, 2020 [3, 4]. The closure of schools nationwide was among several measures adopted by the Federal and State Governments in Nigeria to curtail the spread of the coronavirus disease in the country. The Federal Government directed that schools would remain closed until the spread of coronavirus was contained in Nigeria.

As a way of ensuring that the Nigerian educational system, especially tertiary education, was not totally shut-down and that Nigerian students were not left for too long to idle away, the Federal Government, through the Federal Ministry of Education, on April 10, 2020 directed the authorities of Nigerian universities to commence online lectures. The online lectures were supposed to engage students of Nigerian universities while the lockdown and restrictions across cities in Nigeria lapse. In a meeting with Vice-Chancellors of Nigerian universities, the Minister of Education, Mallam Adamu Adamu directed authorities of universities (public and private) in Nigeria to immediately arrange and commence online lectures to ensure that students were not allowed to idle away at home for too long. The Minister of Education also stated that online contacts with students during the coronavirus-induced restrictions and closure of schools will prevent Nigerian students from indulging in acts that could be inimical not only to their academic career but also to the well-being of the nation. Each university was to work out the online learning platforms and schedules for the online contacts with students.

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STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Naturally, the commencement of online lectures by Nigerian universities will involve not only the acquisition of requisite online learning facilities by the institutions but also the acquisition of knowledge of online engagements by the academic and even some non-academic staff of the institutions. This is fundamental especially for the institutions that did not have the facilities and technical knowledge of online learning before the outbreak of coronavirus pandemic in Nigeria. Undertaking online lectures by Nigerian universities also implies the availability of power supply to enable facilities to operate, especially during lecture periods. Issues of broadband coverage and the provision of gadgets and data for lecturers must also be certified for efficient operation.

Apart from the institutions, undertaking online lectures also holds certain implications for students (the target group). Among the implications of online lectures for students is the possession of requisite gadgets to connect and receive lectures. Students also require constant electricity supply, availability of internet services in their different localities and data to hook up with lecturers. The willingness of the students to participate in online learning cannot be overlooked. This is more worrisome with students who were not versed in internet technology before the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic. It is doubtless that the possession of requisite technology and materials by Nigerian universities, lecturers and students will determine the nature and extent of engagements, the quality of lecture delivery and the results of the entire online learning phenomenon.

The problem of this study is thus hinged on perspectives in the implementation of the directive on online lectures by Nigerian universities due to restrictions arising from the spread of the coronavirus pandemic. The problem of the study is categorically stated in the following question: what are the perspectives in the implementation of coronavirus-induced online lectures in Nigerian universities?

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study was guided by the following questions:
1. How did Nigerian university students perceive the directive to undertake online lectures due to the coronavirus restrictions in Nigeria?
2. What were the dominant online learning platforms adopted by Nigerian universities in the implementation of the directive on online lectures due to coronavirus restrictions in Nigeria?
3. To what extent did authorities of Nigerian universities provide relevant materials for efficient online engagements between lecturers and students?

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The study was delineated to universities (public and private) in South-South, Nigeria. The delineation of the study to universities in South-South, Nigeria was due to the total lockdown in several cities, especially in the South-Western and Northern zones of the country due to the coronavirus pandemic. Two universities (one private and the other public) were selected from each State of South-South, Nigeria through random sampling, except for Cross River State that did not have a private university. To this end, nine universities – University of Port Harcourt, UNIPORT, Pamo University of Medical Sciences, PAMO (Rivers State); University of Benin, UNIBEN, Wellspring University, WELLSPRING (Edo State); University of Uyo, UNIUYO, Obong University, OBONG (Akwa Ibom State); Delta State University, DELSU, Edwin Clark University, ED. CLARK (Delta State) and University of Calabar, UNICAL (Cross River State) formed the scope of the study. The study involved academic staff and students of the institutions.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The study was anchored on Technological Determinism and Diffusion of Innovations theories. Some related concepts were also reviewed to highlight the direction of the study.

Technological Determinism Theory

The postulation of Technological Determinism theory is credited to Marshall McLuhan in 1962 [5-7]. The theory offers insights into the consequences of the rise in communication technological resources on societies and people. The theory states that the nature of societies, organisations and communication is often shaped by technological revolutions [8]. This assertion gives expression to the rapid development of technologically-advanced countries and regions of the world over and above the less technologically-developed climes. Chandler [9] argues that particular technological developments, communication technologies and the media are the sole drivers of social change.

Gouldner [10], underlining the critical changes that were orchestrated by the rise in communication technologies around the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, argues that technologies such as printing press and the newspaper stimulated a constant supply of interpretation and ideas (ideology) and the consequent rise in awareness challenged the bureaucratic monopoly of powers and encouraged the quest for freedom and nationalism [6]. Thus, Griffin [11], quoting McLuhan [12], argues that "the phonetic alphabet, the printing press, and the telegraph were turning points in human history because they changed the way people thought about themselves and their world" (p. 316). What this means is that technologies can actually shape the way individuals and groups explore the world. It also means that individuals and groups must possess requisite

knowledge and materials to maximally exploit technologies to advance the society and its people.

The Technological Determinism theory stipulates that the introduction of technologies will actually result in the corresponding rise in social, political and economic changes across human and industrial societies. McQuail [6], summarising the Technological Determinism theory, states that:

i. communication technology is fundamental to society;
ii. each technology has a bias to particular communication, forms, contents and use;
iii. the sequence of invention and application of communication technology influences the direction and pace of societal change; and
iv. communication revolutions lead to social revolutions (p.103).

This can simply be interpreted to mean that the exponential rise in technologies, especially the information and communication technologies can be exploited to endear knowledge. It also means that individuals and groups must be equipped with ability to manipulate new technologies to be relevant in the changing knowledge economy.

Diffusion of Innovations Theory
The Diffusion of Innovations theory was postulated by Everett Rogers in 1962 [13]. The theory is concerned with how an idea (innovation) gains acceptance, diffuses and spreads through a target population over time. According to George [14], different kinds of people embrace and adopt new ideas in different ways and at different times. This condition presents a task before a development or change facilitator who must determine the disposition of a target population towards an innovation. Okorie and Ekwamu [15] argue that to possibly communicate and realise the objectives of an innovation, the perception and attitude of the target group to such innovation must be certified. The scholars also identify the possession of the skills and requisite technology to exploit the gains of an innovation as conditions that can affect the acceptance and adoption of an innovation by a target population.

The foregoing argument presents a likelihood of the fact that the availability of a new technology may not after all translate into its adoption and use by members of the target population. It is possible that certain intervening variables could whittle the perceived changes derivable from a new technology. What this means is that a development or change facilitator must certify the attitude of a target population towards an innovation being advocated. This is following the fact that the incorporation of such a new idea may not simply translate into adoption or acceptance by the target group. It goes to say that people's perception and disposition towards an innovation are key considerations in the implementation of a new idea.

Perception and the Adoption of Innovations
Perception can be defined as the different ways different individuals and groups think about or view a particular phenomenon. It involves the various ways different people perceive, interpret and associate with a given phenomenon [16]. What this means is that different individuals or groups can perceive a particular person, phenomenon, situation or idea in different ways and the perspectives of their perception determine how they associate with the phenomenon. McCombs and Shaw [17], cited in Ndimele and Innocent [18], define perception as the different ways people perceive and interpret a particular idea. The scholars add that differences in the perception or interpretation of a given idea by different people derives from differences in variables, such as, psychological makeup, ideological constructs, worldview and exposure. Following McCombs and Shaw [17], it goes to say that people who have a similar exposure or experience may likely perceive a given phenomenon in a similar way.

Some social scientists do not share the notion that individuals with similar experience or exposure perceive a given phenomenon in a similar way. The argument is that different individuals have different psychological makeups which serve as defence mechanisms that affect their thoughts and the way they perceive the world. Ndimele and Innocent [18] argue that even though we have a similar experience as individuals, we may not share consensus or sameness of view of a particular phenomenon. Baran and Davis [13] describe perception as a selective process that underlies the interpretations people accord phenomena.

Perception serves as a sensory stimulus that underlies people's idiosyncrasies. This is why the perception of an innovation by a target population is a crucial condition that requires consideration in the articulation and implementation of an innovation. Perception can result in the success or failure of a programme. People's perception or disposition towards an idea could be antithetical to the realisation of goals [19]. The determination of the perception and disposition of a target population is a necessary condition if the goals of an innovation must be realised.

Online Learning Technology: Application and Implications
Online learning goes with other terms such as online education, virtual learning, distance education, online teaching and online lectures. It is the education that takes place over the internet or through internet-aided devices. It is one of the by-products of the advancements in information and communication technologies (ICTs). It is the opposite of traditional classroom face-to-face tuition. Online learning complements and in other cases replaces the traditional

classroom learning format. Where it complements the traditional learning format, it is supplemental and where it replaces the traditional mode of learning, it becomes a pure electronic learning system (e-learning). Dening, Lovenheim and Patterson [20] state that online education increases competitiveness for traditional education and provides additional format for electronic learning, also referred to as distance education.

As a supplemental or alternative learning platform, online education is value-laden. It is purposeful and makes education flexible for traditional learners and accessible to folks whose conditions or vocations deny access to the traditional learning format. Sun and Chen [21], quoting Parsad, Lewis and Tice [22], identify four basic functions of online learning,; including:

 a. meeting students demands for flexible schedules;
 b. providing access to college for students who would otherwise not have access;
 c. making more courses available; and
 d. seeking to increase student enrollments (p. 158).

What this means is that online learning can actually bridge the gap between students and tutors created by distance or an emergency, such as the coronavirus pandemic that has resulted in different forms lockdowns and restrictions in many countries of the world. Palvia, Aeron, Gupta, Mahapatra, Pavida, Rosner and Sindhi [23] observe that the ubiquity created by information technology has revolutionised teaching and learning. The scholars add that "changes in education delivery models have been rapid and transformational" (p. 233).

However, the accelerated nature of online learning places additional demands on both instructors and students, not only in terms of the possession of requisite technological apparatuses for efficient connection but also in terms of measuring feedback and comprehension [24, 25]. The quality of internet coverage that supports efficient online tuition and the affordability of appropriate receiving devices and data by students are factors that must not be neglected. These considerations are more awesome for students from countries without adequate internet coverage and whose sponsors may have low income power, especially during periods of serious economic hardship such as the one created by the coronavirus pandemic. Thus, Palvia *et al.* [23] identify that lack of resources and infrastructure in some parts of the world could limit the intended benefits of online education. It goes to say that the implementation of the directive on online lectures in Nigeria could witness evidential perspectives across campuses in the country.

METHODOLOGY

The nature of this study necessitated the use of survey research design. Survey involves a study of the characteristics of a sample which can be attributed to a larger population [26]. The population of the study was 152, 595 comprising the population of academic staff and students of the institutions that formed the scope of the study. Following the population, a sample size of 384 respondents was used for the study based on the sampling system of Keyton [27]. The study adopted the multi-stage sampling procedure. The first stage introduced the stratified proportionate sampling technique which was used to allocate samples to the institutions that formed the scope of the study based on their percentage representation in the overall population. Thus, the institutions received samples in the following order: University of Calabar 75 samples; University of Benin 73 samples; University of Port Harcourt 71 samples; University of Uyo 69 samples; Delta State University 69 samples; Edwin Clark University 8 samples; Wellspring University 7 samples; Obong University 6 samples; and Pamo University of Medical Sciences 6 samples. The next stage involved the stratification of the population of each institution into Academic staff and Students. The population of the different strata determined the allocation of samples to each stratum. The actual administration of copies of questionnaire to each stratum (last stage) involved the Convenience and Snowball sampling techniques. Data were analysed in tables using simple percentages and weighted mean score based a four-points Likert Scale.

Decisions (for weighted mean sore): When the calculated value from the Likert scale is equal to or greater than the mean, the proposition was held in the affirmative. When the calculated value is less than the mean, the proposition was considered to be negative. The mean is 2.5. The formula for the calculation is:

$$\frac{AR \times W}{R \times NO}$$

Where:
AR = Aggregate Response
W = Weighting
R = Total number of Response
NO = Number of options in the scale (4)

Using the four points Likert scale, responses to the items in the questionnaire were weighted as follows:
Strongly Agreed (SA) = 4
Agreed (A) = 3
Strongly Disagreed (SD) = 2
Disagreed (D) = 1

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

To obtain data for the study, 384 copies of the questionnaire were administered on the sample. Data obtained with the questionnaire formed the basis for analysis. Data were presented in statistical tables.

Table-1: Students' perception of Online lectures due to coronavirus restrictions in Nigeria

S/N	Questionnaire Items	Institutions	Responses				Total	WMS	Remarks
			SA	A	SD	D			
1.	Online lectures were imperative to ensure unbroken interactions between lecturers and students during the coronavirus restrictions in Nigeria.	UNICAL	164	48	6	9	227	3.2	Accepted
		UNIBEN	192	30	10	4	236	3.5	Accepted
		UNIPORT	148	54	6	7	215	3.3	Accepted
		UNIUYO	124	57	10	9	200	3.1	Accepted
		DELSU	172	45	10	2	229	3.5	Accepted
		ED. CLARK	16	6	0	0	22	3.6	Accepted
		WELLSPRING	12	3	0	1	16	3.2	Accepted
		OBONG	12	3	0	0	15	3.7	Accepted
		PAMO	16	0	0	0	16	4	Accepted
2.	Government's directive on online lectures during the coronavirus-induced closures was appropriate especially since I had the gadgets to participate in the online sessions.	UNICAL	68	36	28	26	158	2.2	Rejected
		UNIBEN	56	30	20	23	129	1.9	Rejected
		UNIPORT	76	24	32	22	154	2.3	Rejected
		UNIUYO	20	33	38	29	120	1.8	Rejected
		DELSU	40	24	40	26	130	2	Rejected
		ED. CLARK	16	6	0	0	22	3.6	Accepted
		WELLSPRING	6	2	0	2	10	2	Rejected
		OBONG	0	0	4	0	8	2	Rejected
		PAMO	12	0	2	0	14	3.5	Accepted
3.	The stable power supply in my area was another factor that helped me to maximise the online arrangements.	UNICAL	0	6	28	35	109	1.5	Rejected
		UNIBEN	3	2	30	32	120	1.7	Rejected
		UNIPORT	6	2	19	38	106	1.6	Rejected
		UNIUYO	0	5	14	45	88	1.3	Rejected
		DELSU	6	3	18	37	106	1.6	Rejected
		ED. CLARK	0	0	6	0	12	2	Rejected
		WELLSPRING	1	0	0	4	8	1.6	Rejected
		OBONG	0	0	4	0	8	2	Rejected
		PAMO	1	0	0	3	7	1.7	Rejected
4.	The online sessions afforded me the opportunities to ask questions and make contributions like the regular face-t-face class settings.	UNICAL	68	36	28	26	158	2.2	Rejected
		UNIBEN	56	30	20	23	129	1.9	Rejected
		UNIPORT	76	24	32	22	154	2.3	Rejected
		UNIUYO	20	33	38	29	120	1.8	Rejected
		DELSU	40	24	40	26	130	2	Rejected
		ED. CLARK	1	0	0	5	9	1.8	Rejected
		WELLSPRING	0	0	5	0	10	2	Rejected
		OBONG	0	0	0	4	4	1	Rejected
		PAMO	1	0	0	3	7	1.7	Rejected

On perception of the online lectures directive by the Federal Government of Nigeria due to the coronavirus restrictions, data presented in Table 1 indicate the appreciation of the initiative by Nigerian students. This is based on the positive weighted mean scores obtained by item 1 of the questionnaire (Table 1). Responses to the items in the same table, however, indicate that the online lecture arrangements were challenged by lack of requisite gadgets by some students and the absence of stable power supply in many areas in Nigeria. Data presented in Table 1 also show that many students did not have opportunities to ask questions and make contributions during the online sessions due to the online learning format adopted by some lecturers.

Table-2: Dominant online platforms adopted by Nigerian Universities in the implementation of Government directive on online lectures due to coronavirus restrictions in Nigeria

Online Platforms adopted by Nigerian Universities	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Video Conference Calls	9	3%
WhatsApp Group Lectures	319	92%
Teleconferencing	0	0
Skype	11	3%
Zoom	4	1%
Google Hangouts	0	0
JoinMe	0	0
WindStream	0	0
Fuze Meeting	0	0
BlueJeans	0	0
Other Platforms	5	1%
Total	348	100%

On the dominant online platforms adopted by Nigerian Universities in the implementation of online lectures due to coronavirus restrictions in Nigeria, data presented in Table 2 indicate that the dominant platform adopted by many lecturers was the WhatsApp Group chats. Other platforms that were scarcely used were Video Conference Calls, Skype and Zoom.

Table-3: Interactions during Online sessions

S/N	Questionnaire Items	Institutions	Responses				Total	WMS	Remarks
			SA	A	SD	D			
6	The dominant online platform adopted by many of my lecturers made the online lectures interactive.	UNICAL	15	17	17	20	165	2.3	Rejected
		UNIBEN	12	6	23	26	138	2	Rejected
		UNIPORT	16	4	16	29	137	2.1	Rejected
		UNIUYO	9	11	19	25	232	2	Rejected
		DELSU	6	0	21	37	103	1.6	Rejected
		ED. CLARK	4	1	1	0	21	3.5	Accepted
		WELLSPRING	0	2	0	2	8	1.6	Rejected
		OBONG	0	3	0	1	10	2.5	Accepted
		PAMO	2	0	2	0	12	3	Accepted

Data presented in Table 3 indicate that the WhatsApp Group platform essentially adopted for online lectures during the coronavirus restrictions in Nigeria did not enable sufficient interactions during the online sessions. It appears that the students who indicated that the online sessions were interactive were those whose lecturers adopted machine-assisted face-to-face online interactions, such as video conference calls, Skype, Zoom, etc. (Tables 2 and 3).

Table-4: Provision of Online learning facilities and data for lecturers by the authorities of Nigerian Universities

S/N	Questionnaire Items	Institutions	Responses				Total	WMS	Remarks
			SA	A	SD	D			
7.	The Management of my institution provided sufficient data to enable online interactions with students.	UNICAL	1	2	0	3	19	2.1	Rejected
		UNIBEN	1	0	2	3	11	1.8	Rejected
		UNIPORT	1	0	5	0	14	2.3	Rejected
		UNIUYO	3	1	1	0	17	3.4	Accepted
		DELSU	4	0	0	1	17	3.4	Accepted
		ED. CLARK	2	0	0	0	8	4	Accepted
		WELLSPRING	2	0	0	0	8	4	Accepted
		OBONG	0	2	0	0	6	3	Accepted
		PAMO	1	1	0	0	7	3.5	Accepted
.	Management also provided lecturers with online learning facilities for efficient engagements with students.	UNICAL	0	0	0	6	6	1	Rejected
		UNIBEN	0	1	0	5	8	1.3	Rejected
		UNIPORT	0	0	6	0	12	2	Rejected
		UNIUYO	0	1	4	0	11	2.2	Rejected
		DELSU	0	0	3	2	8	1.6	Rejected
		ED. CLARK	2	0	0	0	8	4	Accepted
		WELLSPRING	0	0	0	2	2	1	Rejected
		OBONG	0	1	1	0	5	2.5	Accepted
		PAMO	1	1	0	0	7	3.5	Accepted
9.	The unavailability of requisite online learning facilities restricted me to using WhatsApp Group chats for most online sessions with students.	UNICAL	0	0	2	4	10	1.6	Rejected
		UNIBEN	0	0	0	6	6	1	Rejected
		UNIPORT	0	0	6	0	12	2	Rejected
		UNIUYO	1	3	1	0	15	3	Accepted
		DELSU	2	2	1	0	16	3.2	Accepted
		ED. CLARK	0	0	2	0	4	2	Rejected
		WELLSPRING	2	0	0	0	8	4	Accepted
		OBONG	0	0	2	0	4	2	Rejected
		PAMO	0	0	0	2	2	1	Rejected

On the provision of data and online facilities for effective online engagements between lecturers and students during the coronavirus restrictions in Nigeria, data presented in Table 4 indicate that many

Universities that actually implemented the arrangement provided data for their lecturers. Data in the table also show that either some Universities did not implement the arrangement or did not provide data for lecturers for effective online engagement with students. The table also shows that many Universities did not provide online learning facilities for staff for effective implementation of the online arrangement, except for lecturers of Edwin Clark University, Obong University and Pamo University of Medical Sciences who indicated otherwise (Table 4).

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The discussion was based on the research questions. The discussion was done in the order the research questions were presented.

Research Question 1: How did Nigerian University students perceive the directive to undertake online lectures due to coronavirus restrictions in Nigeria?

People's perception of a public policy is a critical condition that can affect the success or otherwise of such a policy. Thus, research question one investigated the perception of online lectures occasioned by coronavirus restrictions by Nigerian University students. Responses to the question indicated that many Nigerian students appreciated the idea. This is based on the positive weighted mean scores obtained by item 1 of the questionnaire (Table 1). However, the implementation of the online lectures arrangement encountered challenges, such as, lack of requisite technological gadgets by students, poor electricity supply in Nigeria and the inability of the sessions to provide quality opportunities for effective interactions like the traditional face-to-face class settings.

The challenges of many Nigerian students in exploiting the online lecture sessions due to coronavirus restrictions in the country give expression to the observation of Okorie and Ekwamu [15] in their articulation of the Diffusion of Innovations theory. According to Okorie and Ekwamu [15], the lack of skills and appropriate technological devices to exploit an innovation are conditions that can thwart the supposed benefits of an innovation. Rogers [28], cited in Baran and Davis [13], identifies compatibility and simplicity of use as some of the conditions that enable an innovation to thrive. Alvarez *et al*. [24] and Roddy *et al*. [25] identify that online learning places additional demands on both instructors and students, particularly as it concerns the possession of requisite technology for effective engagements.

It goes to say that the Nigerian government must accompany the initiation of online lectures during national emergencies that warrant restrictions and lockdowns with the provision of conditions that make the arrangement effective. Undertaking online lectures without ensuring adequate power supply will hinder the effective implementation of the programme. Ensuring

that students have the requisite technology to engage in the online lecture arrangement, especially in the face of economic hardships occasioned by the coronavirus, is also a matter of essence if the expected gains of the arrangement must be realised.

Research Question 2: What were the dominant online learning platforms adopted by Nigerian Universities in the implementation of the Federal Government directive on online teaching due to coronavirus restrictions in Nigeria?

Responses to this research question indicated that WhatsApp Group platforms were the dominant online teaching platforms adopted by many Universities in Nigeria. This report is evident from a 92% response rate obtained by item 5 of the questionnaire (Table 2). Responses to the research question also indicated that the absence of online learning platforms that enable face-to-face machine-assisted interpersonal communication during the online sessions did not enable efficient interactions between students and lecturers as well as fellow students.

The absence of online learning facilities that enable face-to-face engagements between instructors and students rather render such sessions uninteresting. Standard lecture forums should provide opportunities for effective expressions. Alvarez *et al*. [24] and Roddy *et al*. [25] observe that online teaching can only be efficient when comprehension and feedback can be measured. When lectures are reduced to the delivery of texts, it is evident that many participants may simply be passive and the instructor may not notice such passive participants due to the cumbersome and hurried nature of text typing and delivery. This is one gap that can render online teaching ineffective.

Research Question 3: To what extent did authorities of Nigerian Universities provide relevant materials for efficient online engagements between staff and students?

Research question three investigated the provision of requisite materials for online teaching to lecturers by the Management of their institutions towards efficient online engagements with students. Responses to the questions indicated that apart from data, authorities of many Universities in Nigeria did not provide online technological equipment for online interactions between lecturers and students. Responses to the question indicated that the burden of choosing and providing online facilities for online lectures was left for individual lecturers that participated in the arrangement. This report is evident from the negative weighted main scores obtained by item 8 of the questionnaire, except in Edwin Clark University, Obong University and Pamo University of Medical Sciences. The table also showed that many of the lecturers who participated in the online arrangements resorted to WhatsApp Group chats and that some institutions did

not participate in the online lecture arrangements seemingly due to the absence of the facilities to do so.

Perspectives in the implementation of online lectures in Nigeria due to coronavirus restrictions indicate that the implementation of online learning in many Nigerian Universities is still a far-cry from what is obtainable in many developed economies. Palvia *et al.* [23] identity that lack of online learning resources and infrastructure in some parts of the world could limit citizens of such countries from the benefits of online education. Until this challenge is overcome, the implementation of online education in Nigeria will remain defective. It is not enough to copy and parrot global best practices. The Nigerian government and authorities of private institutions in the country must ensure that citizens derive the benefits of globally-recognised innovations by matching policies with the actions they deserve.

CONCLUSION

The implementation of the directive of the Federal Government of Nigerian on online lectures for Nigerian students during the coronavirus restrictions is faced with several challenges. The poor power supply in the country only represents the insincerity of the government in implementing online education. The failure to equip tertiary institutions, especially government-owned institutions in the country with state-of-the-art online learning facilities, also represents that the initiative is one of those policies parroted by the government without the will for actual implementation. Several private institutions in Nigeria also appear unprepared for online education. Until these challenges are overcome, the dream of maximising online education by students of tertiary institutions in Nigeria may remain deferred.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were considered useful:

1. The Federal Government of Nigeria should match the online education policy with the action it deserves. Government-owned institutions should be equipped with state-of-the-art online learning facilities that support the initiative. This is a global practice in the evolving digital economy.

2. The age-long problem of poor power supply in Nigeria should be aggressively approached and addressed. Nigerian tertiary institutions and students cannot participate in online learning without adequate power supply.

3. Authorities of private tertiary institutions in Nigeria should ensure adequate provision of requisite online learning equipment. This is due to the shortcomings associated with the adoption of mere WhatsApp Group chats in the execution of online lectures.

4. Lecturers in both public and private tertiary institutions in Nigeria should be provided with and

encouraged to acquire online learning skills for efficient lecture delivery. The provision of laptop computers and other smart gadgets in addition to constant update of knowledge of the changing internet world will enable lecturers in Nigerian tertiary institutions to go with the pace of changes in the digital economy.

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