

IMPACT OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON FRENCH LEARNING IN COLLEGES OF EDUCATION IN SOUTHWEST NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The national lockdown of educational institutions as a result of COVID-19 pandemic in Nigeria and across the World has caused major interruption in students' learning; disruptions in academic programme, suspension of examination, cancellation of internal and international conferences, creating gap in teaching and learning and manpower shortage in the institutions as a result of death caused by COVID-19. This paper examined the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on the general education of Nigerian Students as it relates to French Learning in Colleges of Education in Southwestern States of Nigeria. The study recommends among others that government should increase the funding of higher institutions in next year budget to allow them manage all the damages caused by the COVID-19 school close down. Also, there is need for government to immediately embark on the integration of all higher institutions into online education, the paper also recommends that the focus should be on directing all the higher institutions to extend physical teaching and research activities to the online network, conduct teaching seminars online, jointly solve new problems that may arise in the teaching process.

Keywords: impact, COVID-19, pandemic, education.

Introduction

In an attempt to contain the spread of COVID-19, majority of countries around the world educational institutions have decided to temporarily suspend in-person instruction and move to a remote learning model of delivery. According to UNESCO, at the end of April 2020, educational institutions shut down in 186 countries, affecting approximately 74% of total enrolled learners on the planet.

In many countries, schools have been closed since the beginning of March 2020, while in others (e.g. most of China and South Korea) in-person classes had been already cancelled since January 2020. Several countries (e.g. Malta, Portugal, Ireland) have announced that (parts of) the formal education system will not re-open this academic year, whereas in others (e.g. Denmark, Germany, France, Greece, Poland) (parts of) the formal education system have progressively re-opened in April/May to facilitate assessment and

certification, depending on medical advice for de-confinement (Di Pietro, 2020)

While the current situation is unprecedented and this makes it difficult to predict the effect that it will have on student achievement, in the absence of relevant data, a useful exercise is to look at the economics and sociology literature in an attempt to gain a better understanding of how the virus and physical school closure may impact education and learning. The past few months have ushered in a range of government sanctioned and structure-shifting risk-control directives across Nigeria and the Globe, in an attempt to curtail the spread of the novel coronavirus disease COVID-19. From international airport closures, to a nationwide closure of all schools, and now, a two-week lockdown of three major states - Lagos, Abuja and Ogun, the ramifications from the slowdown/shutdown of economic activity are poised to be severe for Nigeria. It is especially critical, because in the backdrop of COVID-19, the global economic crisis and the recent slump in oil prices are further expected to intensify the impending economic crises, and create sharp shocks that will reshape the economy in the near term. For some sectors, the immediate ramifications are evident.

According to UNESCO, almost 40 million learners have been affected by the nationwide school closures in Nigeria, of which over 91 percent are primary and secondary school learners. In a short time, COVID-19 has disrupted the landscape of learning in Nigeria by limiting how students can access learning across the country.

For an already fragile education system, the COVID-19 pandemic poses unprecedented challenges on the government, students, and parents which highlight and could amplify some of the cracks in the system. As the nation begins to grapple with these challenges, a key question arises: *Is the Nigerian education system designed to adapt rapidly to the changing world?* Given the state of affairs in the world

today, the nation's ability to ensure continuation of learning will depend largely on their ability to swiftly harness available technology, provide adequate infrastructure, and mobilize stakeholders to prepare alternative learning programs.

Generally, Nigeria's education sector is not adapting, and is expected to struggle on that front for the foreseeable future. However, the consequential socio-economic burden will be borne disproportionately by students in public schools, as compared to those in private schools. While several private schools have begun to initiate distance learning programs, and taking advantage of the myriad of ICT-learning opportunities provided by the international community, while the government institutions, limited by funds and persistent deficiencies in planning. The implication being that these students in public schools currently have no formal learning plans and could be missing learning altogether. This paper addresses the immediate and long-term impacts of the COVID-19 on learning of French in Colleges of Education in Southwest geo-political zone of Nigeria and proffering suggestions as to how the government can mitigate these consequences. Additionally, this paper sought to look towards the future, and making prescriptions for how the disruptive crisis can be turned into an opportunity to address several of the pre-pandemic educational problems.

What is Coronavirus (COVID-19)?

On January 30, 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) announced that this outbreak had constituted a public health emergency of international concern (Mahase, 2020). The novel coronavirus was initially named 2019-nCoV and officially as severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARSCoV-2). As of February 26, COVID-19 has been recognized in 34 countries, with a total of 80,239 laboratory-confirmed cases and

2,700 deaths (WHO 2020).

Viral Etiology

According to recent research, similar to SARS-CoV and Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus (MERS-CoV), SARSCoV-2 is zootoxic, with Chinese horseshoe bats (*Rhinolophus sinicus*) being the most probable origin. Also The Chinese Preventive Medicine Association (2020) accounted pangolins as the most likely intermediate host of the virus.

Clinical Symptoms

Most of patients with COVID-19 represent relatively serene cases. According to recent studies and relevant data from the National Health Commission of China (2020), the proportion of severe cases among all patients with COVID-19 in China was around 15% to 25%. Majority of patients experienced fever and dry cough, while some also had shortness of breath, fatigue, and other atypical symptoms, such as muscle pain, confusion, headache, sore throat, diarrhea, and vomiting. Among patients who underwent chest computed tomography (CT), most showed bilateral pneumonia, with ground-glass opacity and bilateral patchy shadows being the most common patterns. Among hospitalized patients in Wuhan, around one-fourth to one-third developed serious complications, such as acute respiratory distress syndrome, arrhythmia, and shock, and were therefore transferred to the intensive care unit. In general, older age and the existence of underlying co-morbidities (e.g., diabetes, hypertension, and cardiovascular disease) were associated with poorer prognosis.

COVID-19 Diagnosis and Treatment

The diagnosis of COVID-19 can be based on a combination of epidemiologic information (e.g., a history of travel to or residence in affected region 14 d prior to symptom onset), clinical symptoms, CT imaging findings, and laboratory tests (e.g.,

reverse transcriptase polymerase chain reaction [RT-PCR] tests on respiratory tract specimens) according to standards of either the WHO (2020) or the National Health Commission of China (2020). It should be mentioned that a single negative RT-PCR test result from suspected patients does not exclude infection. Clinically, we should be alert of patients with an epidemiologic history, COVID-19-related symptoms, and/or positive CT imaging results. So far, there has been no evidence from randomized controlled trials to recommend any specific anti-nCoV treatment, so the management of COVID-19 has been largely supportive (WHO 2020). Currently, the approach to COVID-19 is to control the source of infection; use infection prevention and control measures to lower the risk of transmission; and provide early diagnosis, isolation, and supportive care for affected patients.

A series of clinical trials are being carried out to investigate interventions that are potentially more effective (e.g., lopinavir, remdesivir; Del Rio and Malani 2020). On January 8, 2020, a novel coronavirus was officially announced as the causative pathogen of COVID-19 by the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention. The epidemics of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) started from Wuhan, China, last December and have become a major challenging public health problem for not only China but also countries around the world.

Impacts of COVID-19 on French Learning

In Nigeria, the outbreaks of Lassa fever, bird flu, monkey pox, Ebola disease and others didn't weigh down the socio-economic and educational system as of the case of coronavirus, this has been raising dust in the country, educational system and heartfelt burden to the concern personnel, knowing well the possible effects of the prolong holidays as a result of the pandemic.

❖ **Disruption of Academic Calendar of Higher Institutions:** The Federal Ministry of Education has directed all tertiary institutions in Nigeria to shut down and allow students to go home. The Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Education, Sonny Echono, told reporters on 19 March that the directive was part of the country's overall strategy to curtail the spread of the virus. Nigeria joins the growing list of countries in Africa which have closed schools and universities. Before the official announcement by the permanent secretary, most universities had already sent their students home. The Academic calendar of higher institutions in Nigeria have been disrupted due to COVID-19. Ogunode (2020) observed that the closure of all educational institutions from primary schools to the higher institutions would affect the students' academic plans and programme because many of the higher institutions have started their first semester exams.

According to Dinesh, Shadi and Shuriah (2020) countries across South and Southeast Asia have in quick succession announced the closure of their schools and universities for a minimum of two weeks in order to contain the spread of the COVID-19 virus which has been declared a global pandemic by the World Health Organization. But authorities in many of the countries acknowledge that closures could last much longer. The closures came thick and fast this week after the number of cases began to rise several weeks after countries in North East Asia including Japan, South Korea, Singapore and China – where the virus originated – closed their universities in February and

March. Universities have yet to reopen in any of the countries in the region, which includes Hong Kong and Taiwan. Simon & Hans (2020) submitted that the global lockdown of education institutions is going to cause major (and likely unequal) interruption in students' learning; disruptions in internal assessments; and the cancellation of public assessments for qualifications or their replacement by an inferior alternative.

❖ **Cancellation of Local and International Conferences:** Many conferences on difference programme that are planned for the first and second quarter of 2020 have been cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. New discovery and new findings in the educational sectors for this period have been reduced because many higher institutions in Nigeria have not fully integrate ICT into teaching and learning programme across the country. Subhasis Chaudhuri, director of IIT Bombay, in Maharashtra state, which is the Indian state worst affected by the virus, with dozens of confirmed cases, said in an official statement this week: “All academic activities including research will remain suspended and only international students and students having medical and other emergencies will be allowed to remain in the hostel with special permission from the dean and limited messing [catering] facilitates would be provided to them.”

According to Wikipedia (2020) the 2019–20 coronavirus pandemic has affected educational systems worldwide, leading to the widespread closures of schools and universities. As of 3 April 2020, over 421

million learners were out of school due to school closures in response to COVID-19.

❖ **Teaching and Learning Gap:**

Teaching and learning in all Nigerian higher institutions and across the world have been put to hold because of the COVID-19 virus. Teaching and learning have been put to hold in all the Universities, Poly-techniques and colleges of education in the country as a result of COVID-19 pandemic. The implication of this is that many Nigerian students will not be in the schools for a period of one month or even more implying that they will be idle.

Simon & Hans (2020) cited Carlsson et al. (2015) who considered a situation in which young men in Sweden have differing number of days to prepare for important tests. These differences are conditionally random allowing the authors to estimate a causal effect of schooling on skills. The authors show that even just ten days of extra schooling significantly raises scores on tests of the use of knowledge ('crystallized intelligence') by 1% of a standard deviation. As an extremely rough measure of the impact of the current school closures, if we were to simply extrapolate those numbers, twelve weeks less schooling (i.e. 60 school days) implies a loss of 6% of a standard deviation, which is non-trivial. They do not find a significant impact on problem-solving skills (an example of 'fluid intelligence'). A different way into this question comes from Simon & Hans (2020) cited Lavy (2015), who estimates the impact on learning of differences in instructional time across countries. Perhaps surprisingly, there are very substantial differences between countries in hours of teaching. For example, Lavy showed that total weekly hours of instruction in mathematics, language and science is 55% higher in Denmark than in

Austria. These differences matter, causing significant differences in test score outcomes: one more hour per week over the school year in the main subjects increases test scores by around 6% of a standard deviation. In our case, the loss of perhaps 3-4 hours per week teaching in Maths for 12 weeks may be similar in magnitude to the loss of an hour per week for 30 weeks. So, rather bizarrely and surely coincidentally, we end up with an estimated loss of around 6% of a standard deviation again. Leaving the close similarity aside, these studies possibly suggest a likely effect no greater than 10% of a standard deviation but **d e f i n i t e l y a b o v e z e r o .**

❖ **Loss of Workforce in the Educational institutions:**

Longtime University of Washington faculty member Stephen Schwartz died on Tuesday (March 17) from COVID-19, the disease caused by the novel coronavirus, the Seattle Times reports. "We are deeply saddened that faculty member Professor Stephen Schwartz passed away due to a COVID-19 infection," the University of Washington Department of Pathology tweeted yesterday (March 18) afternoon. Tributes were also being paid to world-renowned South African scientist Gita Ramjee, who has died from COVID-19-related complications. MEMPHIS, Tenn. (WMC) - A University of Memphis professor has died from the coronavirus. NBC affiliate WTMJ says criminal justice instructor Lenard Wells died Saturday from complications of COVID-19, according to the Milwaukee County Medical Examiner's Office. Worldometers.info (2020) also

reported that COVID-19 is responsible for the death of over 74,431 persons across the world. This people are from different professions including the teaching profession.

According to the Department of Education and the South African priority basis to help overcome challenges like COVID-19 – and many other human-made problems and natural disasters.

Suspension of Examination: Many higher institution in Nigeria had started their first semester examination before the incident of the COVID-19 pandemic that led to the national shut down of all the educational institutions in Nigeria. Simon & Hans (2020) observed that the closure of schools, colleges and universities not only interrupts the teaching for students around the world; the closure also coincides with a key assessment period and many exams have been postponed or cancelled. Internal assessments are perhaps thought to be less important and many have been simply cancelled. But their point is to give information about the child's progress for families and teachers. The loss of this information delays the recognition of both high potential learning difficulties and can have harmful long-term consequences for the child.

Simon & Hans (2020) cited Andersen and Nielsen (2019) who looked at the consequence of a major IT crash in the testing system in Denmark. As a result of this, some children could not take the test. The authors find that participating in the test increased the score in a reading test two years later by 9% of a standard deviation, with similar effects in mathematics. These effects are largest for children from disadvantaged backgrounds. Importantly, the lockdown of institutions not only affects internal assessments. In the UK, for example, all exams for the main public qualifications – GCSEs and A levels – have

been cancelled for the entire cohort. Depending on the duration of the lockdown, we will likely observe similar actions around the world.

❖ **Impacts on Education: Schools:**

Going to school is the best public policy tool available to develop skills and potentials, school time can be fun, and from an economic point of view the primary point of being in school is that it increases a child's ability to become a useful and acceptable member of the society. Even a relatively short time in school has a longer impact in the life of a child; a short period of missed school may have consequences for skill growth in future. This is why we cannot estimate how much the COVID-19 interruption will affect learning; it is only the visible effect we can see, the gradual decay of inbuilt abilities may not be easily noticed very precisely. We are now in a new world far different from the things we use to know.

The school time tables and schedules have changes, and in fact at the resumption of the school after the lockdown, so many grounds needs to be covered in order for the educational system of Nigeria to be able to compete with the world's educational system. Facilities in schools are been underutilized during lockdown, some might have damaged as a result of not been used for a long period of time. In detail account of UNESCO, about 35.9 million primary and secondary school learners are currently out-of-school as a result of the school closures. For primary schools, this number totals approximately 25.6 million students, of which about 87 percent (23.5 million) are students enrolled in public schools. The numbers are just as stark for secondary

school learners. Of the roughly 10.3 million secondary school students who are out of school as a result of the closures, approximately 81 percent (8.4 million) of them are public school students. There is no assurance that all the learners who left the school will be back in school the pandemic lockdown; some may have change their lives' view seeing going to school as a waste of time, some may have died, some will change school, some may have join bad groups shifting their attention away from school. Etc. this is where the work of parents and guidance should come in to ensure the proper welfare of learners even while they stayed back home. Unfortunately learning within the homes are as well limited looking at the literacy level of some parents in Nigeria; not every parent could handle well the pedagogy aspect of parenthood and besides other commitments of parents are to be considered. The effect of this may not be easily noticed now; the future of a child in this category is naturally exposed to a serious academic crash if there are no proper interventions, because until the ban on movement is lifted and schools are reopened, majority of students will not be learning.

❖ **Impacts on Education: Educational Finance:** The sudden interruption of the education system in Nigeria as a result of the pandemic has led the government, parents, individuals, ministries of education at various levels and other concerned personnel to have shift in the plans and strategies to finance the education of their children and the education system at large. There is no doubt the school calendar is going to be extended, and while this is on, there is going to extra payments at various levels of the educational system. During the lockdown some parents were forced to procure laptops, android phones,

television cables and other means of ICT, this is to ensure their wards move with the new innovative of the online classes at various levels designed for teachers to reach out to their students. Most of the developing private schools in Nigeria could not afford the payment of their staffs during the period of lockdown because students are not in school, some have not paid the school levies before the emergence of the pandemic leading to school proprietors not having access to inflow of income to welfare their staffs working in their respective schools, in fact there is fear of whether private some schools in Nigeria will be able to survive and keep existing after the pandemic lockdown. Even when there is a standing order that says no work no pay in Nigeria, during the lockdown the governments at some levels still ensured continuous payments of staff in schools, ministries of education knowing well that they are not working for their earnings during the lockdown. There is no doubt that the expenses run as workers payment during the period of lockdown are mere gifts and not payment for work done, this will surely have effect on the future educational finance because the working time does not tallies with the staffs payment. Actually this developmental move is nobody's fault because no one could have predict the world will be faced with this great challenge, government tried to ensure the welfare of workers during the pandemic lockdown with the belief that they are the oil keeping the engine

of the national economy running. The sad truth about this development is if it persists, it may have serious impacts on the commitment of governments towards the education system in the face of competing demands from the healthcare, business and other sectors serving vulnerable segments of the society at large.

❖ **Impact on Education: Graduates and School Leavers:** There is no doubt that students in terminal classes in lower and higher levels of education system of Nigeria has been held on a spot; they were unable to graduate or even move to the next level in their academic pursuit this has led to the set a great back of the smooth running of educational sector of Nigeria and the world at large.

What makes education beautiful and fulfilling is the progress in terms of moving to the next level, graduating and becoming a useful and acceptable member of the society after being exposed to the teaching-learning processes in the school. The careers of this year's university graduates may be severely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. They have experienced majorly teaching interruptions in the final part of their studies, interruptions in their assessments, and finally they are likely to graduate at the beginning of a major global recession, because there is no doubt there will be global recession in the economy of the world at large at the end of the pandemic lockdown. While there was boom in the economy of Nigeria in the past, some graduates still find it difficult to get their desired jobs in the labor market, now that there is every tendencies that the economy of the country could experience a drastic meltdown after the COVID-19 pandemic, how will graduate get menial jobs talk less of their desired jobs.

Unfortunately if this persists for a longer period of time, there might be a great hit on the smooth running of the economy, educational and other sectors of the country at large. Evidence suggests that poor market conditions at labour market entry cause workers to accept lower paid jobs for survival first, and that this has permanent effects on the careers of some graduate because they have been doing the jobs far related to their area of specializations for so many years which on the long run has made them not been fulfilled in their choice careers.

❖ **Impacts on Education: Families:** It is to be noted that students have not generally been sent home to play, eat and sleep as some parents and guidance might have been seeing it from the inception of the coronavirus lockdown which has forced the gates of all the schools to be locked till date. The idea is that they continue their education at home, in the hope of not missing out too much. Parents and concern family members are to be involved in the continuous education of their children while at home, but the question here is how many parents or guidance are educated or even have time to attend to their children academicsE

A case study of parents who didn't have opportunity to attend schools while growing up; they were not sent to school, they are into trades, farming, fishing and the likes. Such parents could do nothing than to provide financial and material needs for their children while the aspect to guide their children academic suffers. Though some illiterate Parents still have the basic knowledge of simple arithmetic and reading due to their daily businesses, such parents supplement a child's mathematics learning

by practicing counting or highlighting simple mathematics problems in everyday life; or they illuminate history lessons with trips to important monuments or museums. Being the prime driver of learning, even in conjunction with online materials which many do not have access to; but while many parents round the world do successfully school their children at home during the pandemic lockdown as a result of being educated a little, some are far lacking behind because they were not well informed and couldn't help their children in continuous education while staying back with them at home. For example a road side mechanic in Nigeria who has never being to school in his life, he has a wife who sells sea foods in the market square; she is as well not educated, a child in such parents care during the period of pandemic lockdown may end up losing interest in schooling and choose to become a road side mechanic or a fish seller all because that was what he was able to lay his hands on. This support the assertion that families are central to education and are widely agreed to provide major inputs into a child's learning, as described by Bjorklund and Salvanes (2011) While global home schooling will surely produce some inspirational moments, some angry moments, some fun moments and some frustrated moments, it seems very unlikely that it will on the average replace the learning lost as a result of school closure because the teaching-learning at homes varies while there is uniqueness in the teaching-learning activities in school though it may not be accurate as the school setting' learning; there will likely be significant disparities between families in the extent to which they can help their children learn, since parents have varying characters and also from different backgrounds and tribes.

According to **Oreopoulos et al.** the amount of time available to devote to teaching, the non cognitive skills of the parents, resources (for example, not everyone will have the kit to access the best

online material), and also the amount of knowledge – it's hard to help your child learn something that you may not understand yourself. Consequently, this episode will lead to an increase in the inequality of human capital growth for the affected cohorts.

Another surety impact of the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown on the educational system is the wastage of house rents on the part higher institution students; at least as at the time of this write-up, the lockdown have exceeded three months and still counting because nobody knows when will come to an end in Nigeria. Secured accommodations which have been paid for by the students in their various institutions continues lying empty while the lockdown is been persist, some parents may definitely be faced with the challenges of not being able to meet up with the next due payment of their children's accommodation when they resume back to continue their studies. A child who is supposed to pay for four years accommodation respectively may end up paying for five years if the school lockdown is continues; this will definitely result in extra cost on the parents because the finance incurred on such children will be counted as deficit at the expense of other developmental projects at home.

Managing Coronavirus Pandemic in Nigeria Education System

According to the coronavirus response monitoring plans by Unicef Nigeria (2020), Nigeria Education sector maintains a Response Monitoring Tool named 5W Matrix (Who is doing What, Where, When and for Whom) for monitoring Education Sector partners activities under the current COVID19 contingency response. While the pandemic is still on, partners are submitting their reports on a monthly basis to the Education Sector secretariat appointed team. Based on the submissions, the Education Sector Secretariat team on a regular basis developed maps and other tools to strengthen the coordination on the response;

they ensured proper documentation in identifying gaps and prevent duplication of activities/programmes during and after this pandemic period. The Monitoring System also aimed to minimize reporting requirements to partners while at the same time provide regular required information about the progress of programme implementation and ensure alignment with the (to be) amended Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP). Along the line there was regular partner participation in this monitoring is critical to maintaining strong coordination because it was observed that it is through joint efforts we all can end the continuous grips of coronavirus. This was view to continuously allow the Sector to visualize gaps and needs, build partnerships and collaborations, and advocate on behalf of the entire sector.

The sector has on a regular basis conducting monitoring meetings on COVID19 response at least twice a month since the inception of pandemic lockdown in Nigeria. These meetings has been holding online (via Skype, zoom etc) in line with the social distancing rules and all implementing partners and other stakeholders have been partaking in the meetings to come out with substantial plans in managing the educational sector in such the trying times of the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown.

Information on partner activities and reports from periodic meetings is been shared directly with the Federal Ministry of Education and SUBEB for considerations and implementations in which education data collection strives to use the official Education Management Information System (EMIS) school codes to allow for seamless integration with Federal Ministry of Education's data. Furthermore, Also Education in Emergencies working Group (EiEWG) Information Management Officers do conduct regular capacity building opportunities for both EiEWG members and SUBEB focal points in order to improve information management within

the Education Sector even at the critical time of the country. Also Unicef Nigeria response team to coronavirus, designed a framework according to a specific need resulting from COVID19 crisis. This framework is to give partners concrete information on the impact of the pandemic so far on the educational sector and further suggest ideas of how they can support in term prevention, how they can continue to support learners during the pandemic lockdown period that schools are on complete lockdown and more detailed guidance on how the education partners can support both the federal and states' Ministries of Education to re-start learning on a gallant note and the activities to prioritize once the shutdown of schools is lifted.

According to Unicef Nigeria, there were three strategic selected objectives linked to the COVID19 main consequence on school system: School closure: Before, during and after (School reopening) the school closure.

- Prevent spread and transmission of coronavirus through and among learners, teachers, parents and School Based Management Committee (SBMC).
- Mitigate/Minimize the impact of school closure due to COVID19 on learning and wellbeing of learners, teachers, parents and SBMC through alternatives solution.
- Ensure effective, inclusive and safe return to quality learning for learners, teachers, and SBMC.

As at April, 2020 many states in Nigeria have switched to the radio-television means of communicating with learners whereby teachers go on air teaching their respective subjects and topics to learners listening and watch at home, some learning channels were lunched on various satellite networks even though not every home in Nigeria can afford the purchase and monthly subscriptions of satellite networks. At least with this

development some of learners are still being updated in their academics. Some private universities in Nigeria took this advantage to further develop their ICT section to create platforms in reaching out to their students' even while in their respective homes with their parents/guidance. A case study of Bowen University Iwo, Osun State immediately swift to action at the beginning of the lockdown; the university's ICT unit developed a software to reach out to their students in their various homes, they teach and even conducted examinations as at when due. This software was able to view learners in the comfort of their homes, to detect the students face, and ensure nobody is helping them write their exams. This was a commendable effort from Bowen University's management in ensuring there is continuous education even in the face of corona virus pandemic. Unfortunately the development was unable to get down to government universities because the period of the pandemic lockdown came after the academic staffs of universities union declared indefinite strike action as a result of unmet demands from the government. Along the line, on April 22nd 2020, President Muhamadu Buhari ordered the payment of all university staffs to further encourage them in carrying out relevant researches in finding a lasting solution and vaccines to prevent the spread of corona virus in Nigeria, but this move wasn't effective because there was still strike action in place. For how long will education system of Nigeria continue to suffer strike action as a result of mismanagement of staffs in the sector? Nobody knows, but we all hope that one day Nigeria will rise again and takes its place in the world developmental ranking.

The coronavirus pandemic has exposed the socio-economic inequalities of the Nigeria education system; many wealthy families in Nigeria send their children to private schools leaving the poor resources and facilities in public schools all because of the increase in mismanagement of resources

allocated to the education system. The children in private schools might experience little disruption in their learning, because the authorities of most standardized private schools do ensure their schools are well equipped with ICT infrastructures and they can afford remote learning. Learners from vulnerable and disadvantaged communities without access to computers and other devices outside school will however be left struggling. In many cases, these children live in communities with poor or non-existent internet connectivity and epileptic power supply. Inevitably, if this digital innovative is the only alternative to switch to during the lockdown it will make worse learning disparities among these children because not many parents can afford an android phone talk less of other sophisticated ICT tools used in aiding learning.

Turning COVID-19 Pandemic Challenges into Opportunities in the Nigerian Education Sector

The immediate consequences of the pandemic might be dire, but this crisis offers a unique turning point; an opportunity to learn, reshape, and build resilience into the educational system in Nigeria. Policymakers have a unique opportunity to explore how this emerging reality could usher in a new education architecture that tackles two of the nations most urgent pre-pandemic education crisis: access (as the country has the highest out-of-school children in the world); and quality (as majority of children in school are not learning). The crisis has pointed to a number of fundamental action steps, two of which are crucial now and beyond:

- The imperative need to embed appropriate technology into learning, and;
- The urgency to bridge educational divides that currently exist, and could further be exacerbated with a shift in education approaches.

One emerging evidence from the present crisis is the need to embed more technology into the classroom. Technological solutions, like adaptive learning technology, can ensure personalized learning with minimal teacher involvement, and have the potential to deliver better learning experiences at low-costs. Yet, the pace of adoption of these technologies has been slow and uneven in Nigeria. The post-crisis period is an opportunity to invest in technology in both the private and public-school systems. To achieve this systemwide, it will be important to encourage public-private educational partnerships. Various stakeholders, including the government, internet service providers, phone providers, educational professionals, among others, would need to collaborate to drive the required innovation. Conscious effort is also required to bridge the digital divide, by ensuring that the cost of technology adoption is low. Overall, introducing innovative technology into classrooms could help in improving learning outcomes across the board.

The crisis is adding to the policy menu towards addressing the out-of-school children as the forced closure of schools has sprung up various modalities in reaching children when out of school. Yet, the prevailing policy response to the out-of-children problem in Nigeria has focused only on bringing children to school. Going forward, some of the learning delivery modalities adopted during the crisis should also be explored for the pre-pandemic out-of-school population. The approach will be similar to the School Meets Learner approach used to bring education to girls in the North-Eastern part of Nigeria: taking education to children in situations where cultural and economic circumstances prevent them from accessing school. While the end goal must remain to bring all school-age children to school, finding ways to reach children at home can be part of the process.

COVID-19 has highlighted a critical gap in school-based (learning) contingency planning and emergency preparedness within the education sector in Nigeria. Learning-based contingency planning is essential to ensure learning continuity during times of crisis, to protect students and educators, and to build resilience within the education sector. While the government released a COVID-19 contingency plan, the information contained within the document focused on keeping schools safe during the pandemic, and counseling and providing information to the students above preventative measures and actions to take to curb the spread. While this is beneficial information, a school-based contingency plan that doesn't ensure continuity of learning despite the challenge, is incomplete. Perhaps this COVID-19 driven school closure is the crisis we needed to identify some crucial sector-wide gaps. The COVID-19 pandemic is surely not the last crisis that will threaten school continuity in Nigeria, given the increase in the number of infectious diseases worldwide, or the conflict in the North East. It is therefore imperative that the government creates a holistic contingency plan that goes beyond addressing school-based safety measures, but also identify ways to ensure learning continuing and provide support for both students and teachers during times of crisis.

Inevitably, the COVID-19 pandemic will be resolved, either through a breakthrough in treatment options, the development of a vaccine or with the world population developing herd immunity; however, without intentional and concerted effort, its effects on education could have a lasting impact on the trajectory of education. The onus is now on us; do we allow this crisis to further deepen our education crisis, or do we seize the opportunity to affect change that could address both pandemic-driven and pre-pandemic challenges?

Discussion of Findings

S/N	ITEM	RESPONSE					
		A	%	D	%	N	%
Does COVID -19 have impact on French learning in Colleges of Education in Southwest, NigeriaQ							
1.	The risk factors of having a physical interaction with students greatly impacted the teaching and learning of French during COVID -19 pandemic	25	59.5	14	33.3	3	7.2
2.	School closure due to COVID -19 pandemic negatively impacted French learning in as students were made to vacate the school premises leading to the disruption of academic activities across all schools	33	78.6	8	19	1	2.4
3.	Paucity of funds as a result of COVID-19 greatly affected government's provision of grants and other financial supports to school for research purposes in French Studies in Colleges of Education	27	64.3	8	1.9	7	1.7
4.	Inadequate technological devices is a major setback for virtual learning of French during the lockdown	36	85.7	4	9.5	2	4.8
5.	Epileptic power supply, coupled with high cost of data made it impossible for effective virtual learning of French as many students could not afford the cost of running generators to attend online classes	36	85.7	6	14.3	-	-

The result above shows that majority of the respondents were of the opinion that COVID-19 have a great impact on the teaching and learning of French Language in Colleges of Education in Southwest Nigeria as more than 70% of the respondents agreed school closure due to COVID-19 pandemic negatively impacted French learning in as

students were made to vacate the school premises leading to the disruption of academic activities across all schools. The table further revealed over 80% of the respondents were of the opinion that epileptic power supply, coupled with high cost of data made it impossible for effective virtual learning of French as many students could not afford the cost of running generators to attend online classes.

S/N	ITEM	RESPONSE					
		A	%	D	%	N	%
What can be done to mitigate the negative effect of COVID -19 on learning of French in Colleges of Education in Southwestern NigeriaQ							
6.	Adequate provision of technological devices/gadgets to aid virtual learning of French	30	71.4	8	19	4	9.6
7.	Improvement in power generation, distribution and supply to encourage virtual learning of French	35	83.3	5	11.9	2	4.8
8.	Ensuring strict adherence to social distancing to curb the spread of the virus	35	83.3	3	7.1	4	9.
9.	Adequate provision of hand washing equipments in all Colleges of Education	34	81	8	19	-	-
10.	Ensuring adherence to wearing of face mask and other COVID -19 protocols in all our institutions	36	85.7	1	2.4	5	11.9

The table above shows that the respondents were of the opinion that the impact COVID-19 can be mitigated if the above-stated conditions can be met and strictly adhered to as over 80% of the respondents agreed that ensuring strict adherence to social distancing to curb the spread of the virus. Also, the responses received from the respondents as shown on the table above revealed that ensuring adherence to wearing of face mask and other COVID-19 protocols in all our institutions can further prevent or reduce the risk of COVID-19.

Conclusion

The outbreak of corona virus has shaken the educational sector of Nigeria off its strength. In fact, looking at the trend of the pandemic, it could be something we are going to live with for a long period of time. There is no doubt that there is going to be a serious set-back in the development of Nigeria education system if the coronavirus pandemic lockdown is not properly managed by the government and concern personnel. Schools calendar have been disrupted, there is reduction in the economic development of the country which has affected the education finance as well. Since the family income depends on the economic growth of any country, most of the families in Nigeria are experiencing economic hardship as a result of the pandemic lockdown; some of the vulnerable families having their children under the federal government free feeding scheme are being faced with the challenge of going in search of food for their children while they are with them at home. Unfortunately the illiteracy level of some parents in Nigeria is not helping the matter because not every parents or guidance could handle the black and white teaching of their children. This on a long run will cause children in these category to experience a great set-back in their academic endeavors, in fact many of them may from there drop out of school and take some other things.

The pandemic lockdown has led to the shortage of funds for the educational system, parents as well are been faced with the reality of having to pay extra cost on their children academics whenever they resume to school. This is certainly a trying time for the economy, a hit on the sustainable development of the country and it is not going to be an easy experience for some households who could barely afford daily balanced diet who have been sacrificing a lot for their children to get the best education for them to become a useful and acceptable member of the society. It won't be surprising if a larger percentage of students dropped out of schools after the pandemic lockdown in Nigeria as a result of inability to of parents to bear the cost of financing their children's education.

The outbreak of the corona virus coupled with the lockdown of schools at various levels of education in Nigeria has served as test for the education technology interventions for teaching-learning activities. Unfortunately the Nigeria education system arrived at this point not fully prepared. It was observed that even the E-Learning chosen as the alternatives to be used in reaching out to the learners in the period of lockdown has not successfully work because of non unemployment of expert to manage the IT section of the Nigeria Education system, huge tariff charges from various network providers in Nigeria. Also with the move to reopen schools to the learners in terminal classes, there will be adequate time to prepare them for their respective terminal examinations, but this can only be possible if the government and the schools authorities make available preventive measures and facilities to prevent the spread of coronavirus in our schools. The good question here is will this move be effective now that the government and the nation at large are experiencing economic meltdown? Nobody knows the answer to this until the move is been reevaluated after a period of

operation in that trend.

Recommendations

Since it was observed that there were no proper plans in place to curb and manage the influence of coronavirus on the educational system, it is highly recommended for the government and concerned educational personnel should ensure there are futuristic plans to in case of another similar experience. This is COVID-19, nobody knows what other occurrences will happen in future and will lead to interruption of the activities of the educational system of Nigeria, therefore plans are to be made in ensuring the future of the education system is secured and not been disrupted with emergence of disease. Having observed that even the E-Learning chosen as the alternatives to be used in reaching out to the learners in the period of lockdown has not successfully work because of non unemployment of expert to manage the ICT section of the Nigeria Education system, huge tariff charges from various network providers in Nigeria. Therefore it is advisable for the Nigeria ministry of education to employ experts in the area of ICT to further introduce programs that will enhance the productivity of the education sector in order to compete with the outside world even in the period of global pandemic lockdown. These experts should design the teaching learning activities through social media platforms such as Google Classroom which is a free web service that is developed by Google for schools that aims to simplify creating, distributing and grading assignments in a paperless way with the purpose of streamlining the process of sharing files between lecturers and students. WhatsApp which is freeware, cross-platform, messaging and voice over IP service, it is owned by Facebook, Inc. It allows users to send text messages and voice messages, make voice and video calls and

share images, documents, user location and other media. Zoom which is a video communication that provides video telephone and online chat services through a cloud-based peer-to-peer software platform that is used for distance education and social relations. Blog is an online journal or informational website use in displaying information in a reversed chronological order with the latest post appearing first. It is a platform where a writer shares his/her view on any concepts. All these will still maintain the social distancing rules, helps the teacher to teach, reach out to learners through voice, written words or even video conversations. Learners won't have to miss a lot as a result of not physically present in class. Also if after a period of time, the move to reopen schools for learners in terminal classes works perfectly, it can also be extended to other levels of education enforcing all related health rules and regulations are been followed to details in order to ensure much damage is not done to the development of the Nigerian educational sector.

Teachers and tertiary institutions staffs are to soft-pedal their actions with the government on the reopening of schools, they can as well volunteer to make provision for the preventive kits in schools and other related health facilities to curb the further spread of coronavirus in our schools, the Parent Teachers Association, Alumni, Schools Board of Governors.etc...are advised extend more supportive hands in upholding the education sector of Nigeria. The future of the country's educational system is in the hands of everyone of us and we can't afford to allow it to be soiled with the interference of the coronavirus, private sectors and concerned individuals should as well come in to rescue the it from the impending doom which may spring up after the lockdown caused by COVID-19 pandemic.

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