

DOI:10.36758/ijpamr/v6n2.2021/10

DOI: [URL:https://doi.org/10.36758/ijpamr/v6n2.2021/010](https://doi.org/10.36758/ijpamr/v6n2.2021/010)

The Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on University Administrative System: Nigerian Perspective

Ajaero Theodora Ginikanwa

Catholic Institute of West Africa, Port-Harcourt, Nigeria

E-MAIL: revsistertheo@yahoo.com

Abstract

Experiences of COVID-19 Pandemic have proven that technology remains the key factor in the development of university teaching and learning system. However, the recent pandemic that struck the world shook the university academic system to its foundation and left Nigerian university system in a state of confusion. Meanwhile, COVID-19 pandemic is a blessing in disguised because some Nigerian universities have gone digitalized in matters of online teaching and learning and it has revealed that the unthinkable online teaching and learning could be possible in Nigeria university system of education. Although many universities are lacking behind in this issue due to some factors such as lack of fund, lack of power, lack of internet connection and others. The paper examines the impact and challenges of COVID-19 pandemic on Nigerian university administrative system. The paper argues that there are advantages that come with COVID-19 pandemic on university system as well as its disadvantage. It further suggests strategies that facilitate online teaching and learning. Finally, the paper suggests some appropriate recommendations that will be helpful in actualizing online teaching and learning in Nigerian university system.

Keywords: COVID-19 Pandemic, University Administrative System, Online Teaching and Learning

Introduction

The recent pandemic that ravaged the entire globe has proven that technology must be at the centre of world's university system. The whole world went into recession, panic, fear, anxiety and fear of the unknown during the pandemic. This led to the closure of all governmental parastatals, schools, churches, mosques, markets, in fact, any form of social gathering was shut down as a result of COVID-19 pandemic. There was total lock down in the whole world. That is why DePietro A. (2020) said that every aspect of normal life has been affected by Covid-19. The impact was felt by all, both rich and the poor alike. All the countries of the world without exception were affected by the pandemic that ravaged the world and crippled its economy and devalue all currencies. Many lives lost in different parts of the world.

However, Nigerian educational system was affected that led to the closure of schools including, primary, secondary and tertiary institutions, this was to limit the spread of coronavirus. This also led to the cancellation of popularly known May/June West African examination council (WAEC) examination. The whole world was put into confusion and there was chaos in educational system in which Nigeria was not exempted. COVID-19 has posed numerous challenges across different universities around the world, although the contexts differ.

However, COVID-19 pandemic should be seen as an opportunity for a positive change to the need and importance of e-teaching and e-learning in Nigerian universities. This has thrown most university administrators into confusion on what to do and on how to convert their analogue teaching and learning into digital teaching and learning. In the light of this, DePietro (2020) argued that universities have been thrown into very uncertain condition to be forced to convert to online studies.

The universities in the developed world have learnt a lot from the COVID-19 pandemic and have restructured their university system of education in order to guard against future occurrence of this sort. Meanwhile, the Nigerian universities have not done much or anything in case of future occurrence of pandemic, so that it will not be devastating as it was this year 2020. The experiences universities have gone through during the COVID-19 pandemic should have given them a new name as “The New Branded Global Universities”. Take for instance, my prestigious and renowned University should by now bear a new name as: “The New Branded University of Calabar”.

COVID-19 broke open the long-term goal for universities achievement of online platform for teaching and learning. However, Mateboho G. (2020) observed that Nigerian universities are notoriously slow to make change to move with trend of technological changes due to some factors as: lack of funds, lack of structure, lack of equipment, lack of electricity and many others. Therefore, an injection of resources is required to swing universities into drastic action of moving with the trend of technology that leads to online teaching and learning.

Before now, Nigerian university system of education has been entertaining fear and anxiety in online teaching and learning due to some circumstances, namely: lack of computer, lack of constant power, lack of untrained staff etc. However, COVID-19 lockdown has proven that it is possible to have online teaching and learning done in Nigeria as some universities were hooked online and engaged their students in online lectures and examinations, although not to be compared with the universities in America or other developed countries. However, a step begins a journey. Since COVID-19 has opened the eyes of the universities in Nigeria to know that it is possible for lecturers to deliver lectures online and the students to receive lectures online, this is a clear evidence that in the near future, it will be perfected that lecturers can be in the comfort of their rooms lecture and the students’ in the comfort of theirs receive lectures and do exam. Although not all universities in Nigeria enjoy this benefit. Some universities were not able to conduct online teaching and learning during the lock down due to aforementioned points.

The pandemic has pushed Professors and administrators, counsellors, university consultants and many other experts in the field of university education on emergency plan on how to make online studies achievable, which in practical terms are difficult for most universities in Nigeria to achieve. Even in the midst of this emergency, many universities in Nigeria are still not able to cope with this situation. Mateboho G. (2020) suggested that universities ought to accelerate in the direction of the anticipated new normal to ensure that they speed with correct expectations to meet up the challenges left by COVID-19 in the university system. The effects left by COVID-19 in the future of the universities are yet to unfold because it has left a deep challenge for the Nigerian university authorities, the Nigerian government and the students on how to cope with this trend of our time.

Challenges of COVID -19 Pandemic on University system

Inequality in online educational system: Inequality in university system became obvious as some were able to meet the challenges by connecting to online learning while some universities were not able (Karen M., 2020). While moving lectures online Mateboho G. (2020) said may appear to offer the “perk” of greater accessibility, that “only applied to the people who can connect online and COVID-19 has highlighted the depth of the digital divide and how complex and multi-layered that is”. 75 percent of the universities were not able to connect to the internet especially the federal owned universities, at least some state universities managed to hook to the net while most of the private universities were receiving lectures online, some even did exam and defence online. The challenges of connectivity issues, the cost of data and students’ access to teaching and learning resources, access to open resource material and more, made distinctive impact on online teaching and learning during COVID-19.

Changes in online educational system: Mateboho G. (2020) encouraged that wide-ranging webinar on COVID-19 and higher education revealed that leaders of universities should see the challenges of the shift of greater reliance on digital education as an opportunity for positive change. Universities should align themselves to what Jamal E. B. (2020) Called the new global university. This involves rethinking an idea of higher education probably not only in Nigeria but worldwide.

Technological Influence: Technology is only one sure way of transforming the university into a more open, globally accessible, democratic and vibrant establishment No wonder, Jamal E. B. (2020) said...Until the beginning of the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been an instructional sophistication and excellence in distance learning and online delivery of academic services but never as core and substantial strategies in any of the university's missions of formulating, preserving and spreading knowledge as it is now. This shows that technology has reached new levels of sophistication and has touched many different aspects of university daily lives. It will be unfair not to see the power of technology play a central role in the act of education and the world of academy. The spread and popularity of technology will help global world see the need to redefine the mission of the university.

Comparative Online educational system: The uniformity of online teaching and learning in Nigerian universities and that of other countries should be the same.

Curriculum design: Mateboho G. (2020) said that many universities did not realise that going online did not mean replicating what was happening face-to-face, and that under these circumstances, they had to readjust both the delivery and method, therefore, there is need to redesign the curriculum to meet the present technological changes of our time.

Loss of students: if studying online has taken precedence, Mateboho (2020) said "We need to use this opportunity to ensure that our students do not pack up and go study overseas; students need to begin to see the real value of attending African institutions to find solutions to problems on this continent – solutions that will shape their future."

The quality of online degree might be questionable by the employers. This was argued by Columbaro, N. L., and Monaghan, C. H. (2009). when they said that many academic and professional organizations do not consider online degrees to compare with campus-based degrees. Another challenge is the problem of doing courses that require practical online. Courses like nursing, medicine, engineering and many others.

Advantages of COVID-19 on university system

- 1 Rapid switch to online platform, this is enabling global universities to move from analogue method of teaching and learning to digitised method of teaching and learning
- 2 This has enabled lecturers and students to learn new skills, adopt new technologies and explore new platforms, for instance, some never knew what ZOOM was not until they were forced into using it and many others like that.
- 3 COVID-19 pandemic has helped students and academics to aspire to fluency in digital learning and teaching.
- 4 It has helped teachers and students' to move from traditional classrooms to virtual classroom
- 5 It leads to greater flexibility in shaping the curriculum.

Disadvantages of COVID-19 on university system

- 1) There is no face-to-face teaching and learning in online teaching and learning and this leads to a drop in delivery method and in the quality of teaching and learning

- 2) There is danger of digital learning in an unequal society
- 3) Lack of power in rural areas and unsteady power supply in urban areas make online teaching and learning difficult
- 4) Lack of finance by the universities owing to the inability of students to pay fees.
- 5) The cost of having access to teaching and learning such as data and internet connection on both the students' and universities respectfully will be high

Strategies to online teaching and learning:

Based on the effect of COVID-19 pandemic and to avoid future occurrence on university system the following strategies are necessary:

The development of new method strategy: In developing the new method of electronic teaching, certain things should be considered. They are the logistics of content delivery. Instructional strategies for online courses. Assessing and evaluating the effectiveness of online instruction and eaching support for online teachers.

Designing and developing of a curriculum strategy: Designing and developing a curriculum that best addresses current and future challenges is very important in university online teaching and learning. Mohanasundaram K. (2018) said that every time there are changes or developments happening around the world, the university curricula are affected. The integration of technology into curriculum development is important to meet the needs of university to help learners of this present 21st century, thus enhancing traditional lessons to digitalized lessons to meet the trend of time especially this present time that COVID-19 pandemic has distorted the academic activities of the university. Mohanasundaram K. (2018) suggested on the development of technological skills that focus on visualization and realization of ideas and information, with a focus on drawing, digital design. However, the evaluation system should have a variety of assessment strategies by the application of technology.

International engagement of student strategy: There is need for universities in Nigeria to partnerships with foreign universities who are well advanced in online teaching and learning to ensure increase in access to open resources education and collaborative opportunities for academics, as well as the development of networks of institutions to share teaching and learning resources, curriculum design. This will minimize the quest of students leaving Nigeria to another country in search of education.

Broadcasting Strategy: Radio and television classroom teaching and learning strategies are important to incorporate the poor: Around the globe, there was continuity of education during COVID-19. Universities were urged to embark on online plans of teaching and learning such as: digital and distance learning plan. Involving, radio and television stations for online teaching and learning in Nigeria will give opportunities for those who cannot have access to internet the opportunity for education. Although, this strategy carries with it a lot of challenges but still preferable than not having opportunity at all.

The COVID-19 precautionary anthem include:

- If you are sick, stay home from school.
- Avoid close contact with those who are already sick.
- Cover your nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing with a tissue or the crook of your arm.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water.
- Avoid touching eyes, nose, or mouth.

Recommendations

We recommend that:

- Radio and television stations should be used as part of online means of learning to provide education across nuke and cranny of Nigeria especially, to those who will not be able to have internet services due to the nature of their environment.
- Universities should build academics' expertise in using technology in teaching, so that future occurrence of any pandemic would not set universities aback in areas of using technology in teaching
- There should be online computer training in all the universities in Nigeria for students regardless of their level but preferably, this should start from year one level
- Universities in Nigeria should have a long term plan on e-teaching and e-learning in case of any future pandemic or its kind in the future
- Universities should find creative and innovative solutions to online teaching and learning
- Government of Nigeria should help universities to finance broadband, internet access and data for staff and students.

Conclusion

It is true that Nigeria is not yet developed like America, Europe and other developed countries and will find it difficult to adapt to online learning and teaching as other developed countries but government should help universities to work hard to make online teaching and learning workable for Nigerian universities since pandemic is not a planned issue and does not give signal when it is coming for them to get prepared and put things in order to prevent such occurrence. Therefore, universities in Nigeria having experienced the economic crisis created by COVID-19 and the challenges this imposed on university educational system should take precautionary measures like involving in online teaching and learning so that any future pandemic will not obstruct university academic planning .

References

- Columbaro, N. L., and Monaghan, C. H. (2009). Employer perceptions of online degrees: a literature review. *Online J. Dist. Learn. Administr.* 12.
- Jamal E. B. (2020). The New Global University in the Post-Covid-19 World. Retrieved from <https://www.universityworldnews.com/post.php?story=20200704092348232>
- Karen M. (2020). Universities face common problems – They need to share information Retrieved from <https://www.universityworldnews.com/post.php?story=20200603143258303>
- Kelly M. (2020). The global impact of coronavirus on education. Retrieved from <https://abcnews.go.com/International/global-impact-coronavirus-education/story?id=69411738>
- Mateboho G. (2020). Making the Most of an 'Equal Opportunity Pandemic. Retrieved from <https://www.universityworldnews.com/post.php?story=20200603074007154>
- DePietro A. (2020). The Impact of Coronavirus (COVID-19) on Colleges and Universities In the U.S. Retrieved from <https://www.forbes.com/sites/andrewdepietro/2020/04/30/impact-coronavirus-covid-19-colleges-universities/#15c1daea61a6>
- Mohanasundaram K. (2018). Curriculum Design and Development. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/325088451_Curriculum_Design_and_Development
- Wikipedia (2020). Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on education. Retrieved from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Impact_of_the_COVID-19_pandemic_on_education