

DEVELOPING ALTERNATIVE TEACHING CONTINUITY PLANS TO MOVE CLASSROOMS ONLINE AT COVID-19 ERA IN NIGERIA

CHAPTER SIX

THE CONFLICT OF UNEQUAL LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES IN THE COVID-19 NIGERIA

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Abstract

Development of e-learning is connected to development, technical improvement and also better affordability of computers. New programmes were created not only to teach, but also to allow the communication between the teacher and the student. E-learning is the use of network technologies to create, foster, deliver and facilitate learning, anytime and anywhere. It is a computer-enhanced learning based that facilitate a person to learn by using internet. Recent development in the telecommunication industry in Nigeria has brought about an unprecedented upsurge in the use of information technology for teaching and learning in tertiary institutions. However, the adoption and implementation of web-based course management and learning tool (model) is still in the infancy. This paper shows a conflict of disparity in the learning opportunities of Nigerian students especially, those in the higher institutions. Qualitative method was used represented in descriptive data analysis. It was discovered that e-learning is unequally distributed as majority of Nigerian students are indispone to the new model. The paper suggested government intervention policies for even access to internet which is the major driver of e-learning, a steady flow of power supply and fairly distribution of educational technological resources to bridge the inequity gap especially, in the Covid-19 Nigeria.

Keywords: E-learning, technological development, unequal distribution, conflict, Covid-19.

Introduction

Crucial in any type of society for the preservation of the lives of its members and the maintenance of the social structure is education. Under certain circumstances, education also promotes social change. The greater portion of that education is informal, being acquired by the young from the example of and behaviour of elders in the society. Under normal circumstances, education grows out of the environment; the learning process being directly related to the pattern of work in the society. Education is a very vital aspect of social engineering. It involves the dissemination of knowledge and could empower the

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students and adults as well to have a comprehensive understanding of issues of or phenomenon. Education eliminates ignorance, promotes development and enhances human capability to overcome its problems and meet its needs. The need for qualitative education for all is as important because, it is it that human civilisation thrives. However, the quality of the acquired knowledge would play a greater role in shaping the students and the society. Education serves as ultimate tool for change and this tool helps equip a child to change himself as well as equip him to contribute to his or her society (Ayodele, 2010).

At the centre of education survivability in the Covid-19 Nigeria lies the role of electronic learning, not just as guarantor of absolute measure but to ensure educational values continues without fear of extinction. The vision and goal of the measure is based on the reconstruction of society and continuity of learning with the help of electronic education to the detriment of the less privilege. The chapter traces the development of e-learning through history; the drivers that shape this type of learning especially in Nigeria; the conflict of unequal distribution and the essence of electronic learning in the Covid-19 Nigeria. The chapter concludes with a review of the kinds of new global educational issues in Nigeria raised by the globalisation of e-learning potentials and the demand for governance in this arena especially, in the higher levels.

e-Learning: A Balance Learning Strategy at COVID-19

While the term “e-learning” has been thrown around quite a lot in recent years, many are still unaware of what it actually means and how it can help them achieve success in both their professional and personal lives. The development of computer technology has significantly influenced many aspects of life including education. When it comes to education, the model has been pretty straight forward up until the early 2000s, education was in a classroom of students with a teacher who led the process. Physical presence was a no-brainer, and any other type of learning was questionable at best. Then the computer evolution happened and it radically changed the learning landscape (Epignosis, 2014).

In essence, e-learning is a computer based educational tool or system that enables you to learn anywhere, at any time, wherever and whenever the person is to be able to learn, more fun, easier and cheaper by using internet. In other word, e-learning is the use of network technologies to create, foster, deliver and facilitate learning, anytime and anywhere. Today e-learning is mostly delivered through the internet, although in the past it was delivered using a blend of computer-based methods like CD-ROM. According to Rusman (2016) technology has advanced so much that the geographical gap is bridged with the use of tools that make you feel as if you are inside the classroom. E-learning offers the ability to share material in all kinds of formats such as videos, slideshows, word documents and PDFs.

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Conducting webinars (live online classes) and community with lecturers via chat and message forums is also an option available to users.

Based on Koran (2002) e-learning is the learning activities that use electronic devices such as Local Area Network (LAN), Wide Area Network (WAN), or internet to give lectures, to interact, or to guide and monitor the students. Some experts say that e-learning is naturally suited to distance learning and flexible learning. Meanwhile, Deng (Kamarga, 2002) defines e-learning as asynchronous learning activity by using electronic devices that facilitate the students to get any source of learning and reading material needed to help them to study better. E-learning is asynchronous or self-directed; self-paced activity that is used in order for the students obtain learning materials by using electronic computer devices that are designed to help the students to get learning materials needed. Asynchronous consists of learning that is stand-alone. Asynchronous e-learning can be delivered through the web, via an intranet or by way of an extranet.

Soekartawi (2003) define e-learning as a generic term for technologically supported learning using an array of teaching and learning tools as phone bridging audio and videotapes, teleconferencing, satellite transmissions, and the more recognised web-based training or computer aided instruction also commonly referred to as online courses. The main difference between traditional learning and e-learning lies on the main actor or the main focus in the process of teaching and learning activity. In a common or regular class; the main actor is a teacher or a lecturer meanwhile in e-learning process of e-learning is asynchronous learning activity that forces the students to stand-alone in self-directed or self-placed activities.

Historical Development of E-Learning

Distance learning or distance education is the education of students who may not always be physically present at a school. Traditionally, this usually involved correspondence course wherein the student corresponded with the school via post. Today, it involves online education. A distance learning programme can be completely distance learning, or a combination of distance learning and traditional classroom instruction called hybrid or blended. Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs), offering large-scale interactive participation and open access through the World Wide Web (www) or other network technologies, are recent educational modes in distance learning. A number of others terms like distributed learning; e-learning, m-learning, online learning, virtual classroom etc. are used synonymously with distance education.

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The Precursors' Era (1728-1965)

One of the earliest attempts at distance education or distance learning was advertised in 1728. This was in the Boston Gazette for “Caleb Philips, teacher of the new method of short Hand”, who sought students who wanted to learn through weekly mailed lessons. The first distance learning/education course in the modern sense was provided by Sir Isaac Pitman in the 1940s, who taught a system of shorthand by mailing texts transcribed into shorthand on Postcard (Holmberg, 2005) and receiving transcription from his students in return for correction. The element of student feedback was a crucial innovation of Pitman’s system (Moore, 2005). This scheme was made possible by the introduction of uniform postage extremely successful, and the phonographic correspondence society (PCS) was founded three years later to establish these courses on a more formal basis. The University of London later known as University College London was the first university to offer distance learning degrees, establishing its external programme in 1858. The background to this innovation lay in the fact that the institution was non-denominational and, given intense religious rivalries at the time, there was an outcry against the ‘godless’ university. The issue soon boiled down to which institutions had degree granting powers and which institutions did (Rothblatt, 2009).

The Foundation Era (1965-1980s)

In 1924, the first testing machine was invented. This device allowed students to tests themselves. Then, in 1954, B.F, Skinner, a Harvard Professor, invented the “teaching machine”, which enabled schools to administer programmed instruction to their students (Epignosis, 2014). It wasn’t until 1960 however that the first computer-based training programme was introduced to the world. This computer-based training programme (or CBT programme) was known as PLATO-Programmed Logic for Automated teaching operations. It was originally designed for students attending the University of Illinois, but ended up being used in schools throughout the area (Epignosis, 2014). By 1965, the United Kingdom founded Open University led by Prime Minister, Harold Wilson, based on the vision of Michael Young with a hope of widening access to the highest standards of scholarship in higher education. The Open University revolutionised the scope of the correspondence programme and helped to create a respectable learning alternative to the traditional form of education. Electronic learning has been at the forefront of developing new technologies to improve the distance learning service (Byrne, 2013) as well as undertaking research in other disciplines. In the past, course materials were delivered by post and correspondence with tutors was via mail.

The development of computer technology has significantly influenced many aspects of life including education. These are many learning models that use computer such as Computer-

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Assisted Instruction (CAI), Computer Based Instruction (CBI), e-learning (electronic learning) and e-teaching (electronic teaching). These models of learning enable both the teachers and the students to comprehend teaching materials directly from educational websites offered by the institution as one of learning sources. The development of internet technology has made a distance and flexible learning possible to exist. With the internet the Open University began to offer wider range of interactive educational experiences as well as faster correspondence with students via email etc. (Epignosis, 2014). With the introduction of the computer and internet in the late 20th century, e-learning tools and delivery methods expanded. The first Media Access Control (MAC) address is a hardware identification number that uniquely identifies each device on a network. This discovery in the 1980's enabled individuals to have computers in their homes, making it easier for them to learn about particular subjects and develop certain skill sets. Then, in the following decade, virtual learning environments began to truly thrive, with people gaining access to a wealth of online information and e-learning opportunities.

The Consolidated Era (1990-2010)

The development of e-learning is connected to development, technical improvement and also better affordability of computers. Already in the late eighties and the nineties of the last century, the first form of electronic education - Computer-Based Training (CBT) was born. This is considered as the cornerstone of today's e-learning (Eger, 2005). The CBT system requires connection of personal computer to some other multimedia, for example CD-ROM. The system itself meant a tremendous progress, although its content was not that thoroughly elaborated and it was still missing some later features of e-learning like no limitation by time or place. In parallel with the development of CBT was the technology developed that at the end lead into the rise of internet and creation of the web system. Also, this time the roots or origin and its technical base were in the United States. Technology had its progress, at the very beginning the information could be delivered only in text format, but in the early nineties there were created browsers, which enabled users to enrich the text by graphics. Internet spread quickly, its price declined and so it was more affordable also for the middle class.

The Web System was improved into the now well-known and widespread www (World Wide Web). Introduction to e-learning by Kveton (2003) explains the forming and connect the web adjustment to the resource of information, which is stored here and is offered to all users via internet connection. The new Web-Based Training (WBT) was formed with new programmes created not only to teach, but also to allow the communication between the teacher and the student. This era is well described by Baresova (2003) as corresponding already with the today's one, but it got its name just in 1999. In November 1999, Elliot

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Massie coined the word ‘e-learning’ at his TechLearn Conference at Disney-world. It was the first time that the term was used in a professional context (Kopecky, 2006). The WBT System spread quickly improving and connecting programmes. According to Eger (2005), “together with the pedagogical approach which started in 2002 to be more and more enforced, with professional management, blended learning and with clearly positive results of some university and companies, it shows that, e-learning has its advantages and can be effectively used not only for the distance but also for the face to face education”. These words are valid also for the initial phase of development. Its main goal being to spread knowledge about new forms of teaching and learning, especially, improvement of educational system (Hubackova, 2015).

The development of e-learning model based on Haughey (in Rusman, 2016) highlights at least three possibilities educational development:

- (i) Web Course: Using internet to support distant education need, for example, the availability of learning material, discussion, consulting, giving tasks and assignment, tests, and any other.
- (ii) Web Centric Course: Naturally suited to distance learning and flexible learning, but can also be used in conjunction with face to face conventional teaching; and
- (iii) Web enhanced course: using internet to support the improvement of teaching and learning activity in the conventional classes. This offers online advising and registration, e-counselling, and any other services to increase the students’ proficiency.

The Reconstruction Era (2010-2020)

Technology has advanced so much that the geographical gap is bridged with the use of tools that makes one feel as if he/she is actually inside the classroom. These days’ learners are well versed in the use of Smartphone, text messaging and using the internet; so participating in and running an online course has become a simple affair. Message boards, social media and various other means of online communication allow learners to keep in touch and discuss course-related matters, whilst providing for a sense of community. This era witnesses web-based learning accessed via web browsers or the corporate intranet webinars and virtual classrooms; video-based learning; collaborative learning; custom e-learning; mobile learning and micro-learning. It uses tools like blogs, wikis, e-portfolios, animation, video links and specialised software (Bhatia, 2011). The best online learning platforms of 2020 for education as claimed by Palton and Turner, (2020) are the learning management system (LMS) and virtual learning environment (VLE) zapped by zoom. Ring central office integrated video conferencing, screen sharing and messaging for teams by and small. Other online learning platforms at a glance include google classroom, Docebo, WizIQ, Adobe Captivate, Elucidat, articulate 360, Shift, Lectora Inspire and Blackboard Learn. Taking Lectora Inspire platform for example, it offers a

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variety of inspire learning templates which let a learner/lecturer share resources, collaborate on courses development which enables seamless updates to all devices, and streamline the workflow touring the interface. The video tutorial provides a visual introduction to the features and highlights the programme while the learner/tutor specifies how the window performs. That is, once a course is design it adjust automatically to device just as models of tablets or Smartphone change, lectorsa inspire incur no effort to rebuild. The tool enables the learner/lecturer to make further custom adjustments to see a perfectly adjusted view on target device. These have provided users' inclusive language, self-reflection opportunities, allows user-friendly, easy navigation, including relevant, relatable, real-life scenarios and enables personalisation. Help responds to individual needs connects through multi-sensory interaction and create less impact on environment (Researchgate.net, 2017).

e-Learning Drivers

With the advent of e-learning, especially online learning, new paradigms for teaching and learning about complex issues are emerging. Wide range of opportunity is being developed and implemented in the vocational, academic, and continuing education and training arena to support life-long learning. Formal education has been slower to embrace the concept of on-demand, on-time learning for students. As new crops of dynamic teachers enter the profession, e-learning becomes an accepted and effective form of professional development. The success with regards to the adoption of e-learning is dependent on stakeholders' support as well as students' adoption of the e-learning services.

While the drivers that shape globalisation is presented in a dynamic model of telecommunications and information technologies; firms employ different strategic tools to win at each level. The interdisciplinary nature of these tools is one reason that the role of communications in determining the structure of global networks is not well understood. Aronson (2006) illustrate how firms try to advantage themselves through six separate strategies that depend on different professional expertise.

- a. Engineers create the technical standards for equipment and the mechanisms for physically linking team.
- b. Computer programmers write the software that instructs the hardware how to operate and allow content to flow through networks. Those that design and own the software determine how networks operate.
- c. Firms hire lobbyist to try to create advantage for them by persuading politicians and regulators to adopt laws and public policies that benefit them. Such as obtaining trade protection, subsidies, or tax breaks for national firms-versus foreign ones from their own governments.

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- d. Economists worry about money and its distribution. They try to devise systems to increase the revenue and profits of their clients, firms or governments.
- e. Intellectual property lawyers maximise the power of firms to make the ownership of content into a key issue of control.
- f. Business executives seek competitive strategies to create advantages and profits for their firms relative to their competitors.

In Nigeria, what constitutes the drivers to e-learning as observed by Olatuboson et al. (2015), include the demographic variable such as technology access and the foreseen reason for willingness not to use e-learning tools. These factors are considered a key driver on technology adoption and therefore may improve the predictive ability of unified theory of acceptance and use of technology (UTAUT) models. This model has the basic explanatory variables of performance expectancy, effort expectancy, social influence, facilitating conditions, behavioural intention and use behaviour, as well as the direct and moderating influences for willingness not to use e-learning tools on intention formation (Olatuboson et al, 2015). Folonenso et al., (2006), found that mass unawareness, low computer literacy level and cost were identified as critical drivers affecting the acceptability of e-learning by some students and some lecturers of Nigerian Universities. Sharma et al., (2009) points out that e-learning places high demand on learners who have to be proactive and disciplined than in traditional face-to-face education. There is also, non-availability of internet access in some tertiary institutions because of the recurrent cost of bandwidth: Internet connectivity; energy related problems and limited expertise. The internet is a major driver of ICT in education.

The Conflict of Unequal Learning Distribution

Conflict: Conflict is a term used to mean a variety of things, in an assortment of context. Under the mantle of conflict are words such as fight, argue, contest, debate, combat, war, and other equally evocative terms. One of the key problems in studying conflict is to know which descriptions of behaviour fit under the title of conflict. From an objectivist perspective, conflict may be defined as a phenomenon that occurs when one or more parties perceive incompatible goals and then equally perceive interference from the other in their desire to obtain their goal (Tidwell, 2004). In assessing the level of inequality in education, especially the e-learning, one will not fail to see the ongoing conflict within the sector somehow comparable to students benefits. The question of unequal distribution has considerable bearing on what kind of evidence can be brought to bear in understanding human interaction through electronic learning possibilities.

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The globalisation of internet and the world wide web has generally improve the quality of learning by facilitating access to resources and services as well as remote exchanges and collaboration. E-learning is facilitated by different types of communication technologies where, especially, the use of online access of the internet, provide unique possibilities to deliver e-learning across space and support interaction-based learning types. Therefore, to successfully integrate e-learning for all, it is important to understand the socio-economic background of academic resource which have also subsequently resulted in inadequate performance ability. Inequality leads to major differences in the educational success or efficiency of these students and ultimately suppresses social and economic mobility (Williams, 2003). Measuring educational efficiency especially, the e-learning among the higher institutions students is determining academic performance, attainment of learning objectives, acquisition of desired skills and competencies, satisfaction, persistence, and post-college performance: these accounted for educational success of individuals. To accurately measure educational efficiency through e-learning; it is imperative to separate academic achievement from educational efficacy, because it captures only a students' performance ability and not necessarily their learning or ability to effectively use what they have learned (York et al., 2015).

Much of educational inequality is attributed to economic and social disparities. Unequal education in the e-learning era is the outcomes attributed to several variables, including family of origin, gender, and social class. Achievement, earnings, health status, and political participation also contribute to unequal distribution of access to e-learning within Nigeria.

Gender: Socialised gender roles affect access to education as men are preferred and are encouraged to engage in computer and scientific learning while the women learn domestic skills. These gender roles are deep rooted within the state; however, with the increase of e-learning within Nigeria, there has been a recent increase in women having the ability to receive an equal learning. Though, there is still much to be changed, Nigeria still needs policies that encourage online educational attainment for men and women based on merit, rather than gender. The gap separating men and women in the job market still remains wide (Okonkwo, 2013).

Spatial Inequalities: The commonest factors that affect spatial inequalities include demographics, community atmosphere, school and family resources, dropout rates, spending per student, and family traits such as parental education. Currently, these, and other dimensions, are broadly grouped into two categories "available resources and

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investment decisions”. They each have their own effects, but also may cause and reinforce each other’s existence (Rosigno et al., 2006).

Family Resources: It has been shown that the socio-economic status of the family has a large correlation with both the academic achievement and attainment of the student. More well-off families can afford to spend money on their children’s education in forms such as private school, private tutoring, home lessons, and increased access to educational materials such as computers, internet connection, books, Ipad, Smartphone/Android, and enrolling them in extra-curriculars (Peng et al., 2009).

The Issue of Gifted and Talented Students: There are a disproportionate percentage of the rich and poor students labeled as gifted and talented. Students from the poor background which are gifted and talented are often underrepresented in scholarship scheme. Rather, the less talented and gifted students from well-off families have always been over-represented. In regards to screening and identifying gifted and talented students, parents or relatives lobby the opportunity for their own. The unbalanced scale of appropriate representation reduced the standards of e-learning, isolated conditions or even dampened dreams. Amongst the students with special need to cope with their talents, we can individually begin the process of equality within our educational institutions. Provision of resources to an individual concern can better educate and resolve the current issues and services of marginalisation and prejudices.

State Conflict: Within fragile states, students may be subject to inadequate e-learning opportunities. The poor educational quality within these states is believed to be a result of four main challenges. These challenges include: co-ordination gaps between the governmental actors, the policy maker’s low priority on educational policy, limited financing, and lack of educational quality (Winthrop, 2014).

Social Mobility: E-learning educational system have forced low-income families to place their children into less-than-ideal school systems, those students are typically not presented with the same opportunities and educational motivation as are students from well-off families, resulting in patterns of repeated intergenerational as decreased or stagnant social mobility (Leonhardt & Scott, 2005). As there is a growing shift away from traditional higher education institutions to massive Open Online Courses (MOOCS) measures should be put in place to balance the imbalances as the new technology classes are run through content sharing, videos, online forums and examinations (ibid.).

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e-Learning in the Covid-19 Nigeria

The spread of the Corona virus through the globe from China initially spared Nigeria, like many other Africa countries, with zero recorded case as at January 2020. By 28 February, however, Nigeria reported their first case, a Nigerian UK returnee. Nearly two months later there were 373 confirmed cases, 99 recoveries and 11 deaths (see knowcovid19.ngfor-realttime-updates). Consequently, on 19 March, the Federal Ministry of Education announced the temporary shut-down of all schools in Nigeria, effective 23 March, in a bid to contain the spread of the coronavirus. This prompted a set of question: Do schools in Nigeria have the technology to cater for the estimated 46 million students affected. Do households have the facilities to engage their children in remote learning? Do teachers have the skills and facilities to deliver live lesson or record Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) styled lessons? The school-closure measure means learners previously in school are no longer going to school. The drastic escalation of coronavirus not only affects learning but also compound the pre-existing education inequalities in Nigeria, with vulnerable and disadvantaged students at the receiving end. To curb the widening of the existing education inequalities, there is an onus on the Nigeria government to put in place measures to ensure continuity, inclusion and equity for all learners during this pandemic.

The Covid-19 pandemic resulted in the closure of the vast majority of schools worldwide. Many schools moved to online distance learning via platforms including zoom, google classroom, and edgenuity (Dalton & Turner, 2020). Concerns arose over the impact of this transition on students without access to an internet-enabled device or a stable internet connection. Internet technology has enabled many forms of distance learning through open educational resources and facilities such as e-learning and MOOCs. Although the expansion of the internet blurs boundaries, distance education technologies are divided into two modes of delivery: Synchronous learning and asynchronous learning. In Synchronous learning, all participants are present at the same time. In this regard, it resembles traditional classroom teaching methods despite the participants being located remotely. It requires a timetable to be organised. Web conferencing, video conferencing, educational television, instructional television are examples of synchronous technology, as are direct-broadcast satellite (DBS), internet radio, live streaming, telephone, and web-based VoIP (Lever-Duffy & Mcdonald, 2007). Web conferencing software helps to facilitate meetings in distance learning courses and usually contain additional interaction tools such as text chat, polls, hand raising emotions etc. These tools also support asynchronous participation by students being able to listen to recordings of synchronous sessions.

In asynchronous learning, participants access course materials flexibly on their own schedules. Students are not required to be together at the same time. Mail correspondence,

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which is the oldest form of distance education, is an asynchronous delivery technology, as are message board forums, e-mail, video and audio recordings, print materials, voicemail and fax (Lever-Duff & McDonald, 2007). The two methods can be combined to come to be called blended learning or less often hybrid learning. Unlike her western predecessors, the Nigeria Federal Ministry of Education's School-Closure directive did not produce clear-cut policy measures on how to mitigate learning disruptions for students and how to address the digital divide. The Coordinated Education response to Covid-19 pandemic on the landing page of the Ministry Website is vague and does little to address the learning needs of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged. While the efforts of the Federal and State government in health sector and in providing financial stimulus packages and emergency palliatives must be commended, ignoring the education sector would be disastrous (Hussain, 2020).

The coronavirus pandemic has exposed the huge socio-economic inequalities in the Nigeria education system. Many wealthy families in Nigeria send their children to private institutions given the poor resources and facilities in public institutions. These students might just experience little disruption to their learning because their private institutions are well equipped with ICT (information and communication technology) infrastructures and they can afford remote learning. While learners from vulnerable and disadvantaged communities, without access to computers and other devices outside school will, however, be left struggling. In many cases, these students live in communities with poor or non-existent to internet connectivity and epileptic power supply. Inevitably, this digital divide exacerbates learning disparities among these students especially, of the higher learning. This learning crisis is widening the social gaps instead of narrowing them. Students are now being disadvantaged by the pandemic.

To cushion the effects of the pandemic, according to Amorighoy (2020), the world is embracing technological innovations. Virtual interactions are increasingly adopted to replace face-to-face engagements and limit the total disruption to many sectors, but every student cannot afford this, as pleasant as this solution is. The students from under-served low-income families and communities will definitely be left out and unable to access learning during this period. Though most states in Nigeria have embarked on airing school lessons on radio and television, there are a lot of students who do not have access to either radio or television, coupled with the issue of erratic power supply. Such students also have no internet access nor educational technological resources, a situation that is creating a gap in their academic progress for as long as this pandemic persists. Considering radio fit to reach a wide audience, there is need to remember the learning styles of students, the time it takes to understand what is being transmitted and their different learning environment.

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Obviously, these measures are put in place for the examination classes, what about the students of higher institutions? Covid-19 is magnifying the educational inequity in Nigeria as only those with access to digital learning resources will keep learning in the comfort of their homes while those without access (the majority) are left behind.

Conclusion

Without a doubt, the Coronavirus pandemic has adversely affected all aspects of our lives. In Nigeria, the educational system has been devastated and children from poor families and bearing the brunt of it. Now is the time to bridge the gap of educational imbalance especially among the students of higher institutions by ensuring adequate funding of the education sector. The effect of the pandemic is just one out of many implications of educational inequity in Nigeria. We do not know what awaits us in the future, so it is highly important that we provide an equitable and inclusive learning environment for the students to ensure continuity in learning for all, irrespective of their socio-economic background.

Also, we should look at online learning as an additional, rather than as a replacement to traditional education as finding a solution to the complex problems of raising computer literacy is no easy task. It is becoming clearer that we cannot completely technicalise our way out of the current situation although, technology plays a huge role, we need to start addressing the fundamental issues in our society - one of which is the quality of lecturers/teachers in the system. Can the existing lecturers run a fully functional education technology system? What infrastructure can be put in place to cater to all students in the system irrespective of location? As an offshoot of the above, another reality still remains that the rate of internet penetration is not evenly spread across the country and the cost of data is still relatively high. Therefore, the reality of these will definitely propel us to keep ruminating on other solutions at bridging the gap of unequal learning opportunities during this period and we should not forget that education is the bedrock of every society as education is the solution to whatever problem we might have.

Suggestions

1. E-learning should be used to supplement and not supplant traditional forms of teaching – learning.
2. Some practical applications of different e-learning tools utilised by private higher education institutions for enhancing e-learning and for assessment purposes should be applied to public higher institutions.
3. e-learning has come to stay in today's educational environment, teachers and lecturers should be careful in its use in order to make teaching–learning becomes

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effective, interesting, and encompasses the diverse range of student's background and abilities.

4. The federal and state governments should assist and introduce free internet, steady power supply and educational technological resources for all and sundry to make e-learning in Nigeria a success.

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