

The Impact of Covid-19 on Academic Activities A Case Study of College of Education, Agbor Delta State

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Abstract: The Coronavirus epidemic which started in the city of Wuhan, China later named COVID-19 pandemic had significant impact on the world education all over. The COVID-19 heralded the lockdown and closure of all educational institution in Nigeria. This study investigated the impact of COVID-19 on the academic activities of College of Education, Agbor, Delta state of Nigeria. The population of the study comprised of all students of the college. A sample of one hundred and twenty students, were used for the study with twenty-four students selected from each of the five schools in the college. Four research questions guided the study. Simple percentage was used for data analysis. The findings revealed that COVID-19 affected the academic activities of the college which led to the closure of physical face-face teaching and learning. There were changes in the methods of teaching and learning. The academic school calendar was altered in the 2020/2021 academic session. Therefore, it is recommended that there should be proper virtual learning environment in the college through adopting accessibility to internet and availability of appropriate ICT tools. Adequate training should be given to both teacher and learner on the use of ICT teaching and learning devices.

Keywords: COVID-19, Academic Activities, College of Education Agbor, Pandemic.

Introduction

Education, no doubt has and remains an important vessel and tools for individuals and national development and sustainability. Every society look up to education as a source of help for the achievement of their aspirations, dreams, livelihood and for self-reliance. The place occupied by education for economic, social political and all round development of any nation cannot be over-emphasized. But the emergence of COVID-19 virus disease towards the end of 2019 threatened all the structures of all nations of the world. Irfan M. (2020) observed that the outbreak of COVID-19 affected the world disturbing political, economic, social education, financial and religious structures.

The COVID-19 virus disease started in the city of Wuhan in China towards the end of 2019, derived its name from the word 'Corona' (Weiss and Navas-Martin 2020). The World Health Organization (WHO) declared COVID-19 outbreak as epidemic on 11th March, 2020. (WHO 2020). The Director-General declared that 'spiral spread of COVID-19 within two weeks outside China has increased in 13 told and the affected countries has tripled'. Within a very short period the COVID-19 pandemic had spread to all continents including Africa. In Africa continent, the first case was reported in Egypt in February 2020 . Over 2.6 million affected cases were reported with over 16,000 deaths (4) (Guan X, Wu P, et al 2020) with the speed of the spread of COVID-19 which WHO (WHO 2020) reported that was contacted through droplets from affected person had affected almost every country of the world. Many countries now starting putting measures in place in order to control the spread, such means was the physical and social distancing measures (Berasut et 2020). Soon Nigeria came on the attack of COVID-19 as one of the 210 countries affected in the world (Ajisegiri W.S. & Odusanya O.O. 2020).

The first COVID-19 case in Nigeria was reported by (on 27th February, 2020 following the confirmed case in Lagos state. (News/Press release 2020) The case was an Italian who returned to Nigeria, from Milan, fell ill and on 26th February tasted positive to COVID-19. Within a short period of time between February and May 2020, the virus had affected 434 persons in the country (Wikipedia 2020). To control the sporadic spread of COVID-19 most countries took to the measures of social and physical distancing and to avoid the morbidity and mortality rate due to COVID-19 (Barasa et al 2020). This led to closures of borders, educational institutions and academic activities and social isolation (UNESCO 2020)

COVID-19 has influenced global education affecting all level of education from pre-school to universities. According to Lindzon (2020) this had both educational and economic implications. As stated by UNESCO (2020) at the end of April 2020, about 186 countries has shut down educational institutions. Beginning from China, South Korea, Malta, Portugal, Ireland and others had stopped face to face learning. (crawford et al 2020)

In Nigeria, the Federal University of Education directed all educational institutions to shut down while students vacated the campuses and schools were closed at all levels in the country this took effect from 27th March, 2020 being approved on 19th March 2020. The closure of schools had implications on Nigeria and Nigerians in various ways, educationally socio-economic and financially and welfare of the learners. On the 19th March 2020, the federal government of Nigeria approved the closure of schools and tertiary institutions (Nlebem 2020).

Though COVID-19 is a recent and ongoing pandemic some studies have been carried out by some researchers on the effects on its education in Nigeria. On a study carried out by Aiyedun T.G and Ogunode N.J. (2020) on the effect of COVID-19 pandemic on academic programme of universities in Nigeria. It was a descriptive survey study with a population of undergraduate students in Nigeria universities, the result showed that COVID-19 pandemic affected the academic progress leading to major disruptions in academic activities.

In another study by Uchenna N.E, Maximus M.S. Charity N. Onyishi and Chiedu .E. (2021) titled Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on Education in Nigeria: Implications for policy and practice of e-learning reported that the pandemic negatively impacted education, leading to poor achievement and giving rise to e-learning with its attendant problems.

There was an earlier study in Ghana, by Owusu Firdjour et al (2019) on the assessment of the impact of Covid-19 on Ghana's teaching and learning. Using descriptive survey design employing the likert scale and with a respondents of 214 mainly in the second cycle and tertiary institutions of Ghana. It concluded that the Covid-19 pandemic had negative impact on the learning as many could not effectively learn by themselves at home. Many of the parents were not capable to supervise and assist the learners. Added to this was the challenge pose by the limited access to the internet and lack of technical know-how of the technological devices by most Ghanaian students. This require introducing the students to e-learning platforms to supplement classroom teaching and learning.

Also Iprojectmaster (2020) study on the impact of Covid-19 on education in Nigeria. This examined the impact on Covid-19 virus on Nigerian education system, awareness among students and aftermath of covid-19 on the Nigeria education system. Using a descriptive and explanatory design of both questionnaire and library research. The respondents of the study were 100 residents in Lagos state of Nigeria. The study result revealed that covid-19 had impact on education in Nigeria while recommending the need for resources to rebuild the loss in learning during the covid-19 pandemic.

With the recognition of Covid-19 by World Health Organization as pandemic, Nigerian Government in order to control the spread of the virus took some decisive decisions which affected all level of schools in Nigeria education system. The Federal Government ordered the closure of schools, Colleges and Universities. The College of Education Agbor, Delta State of Nigeria following a secular issued by the College Management closed the college to all academic and extra-curricular activities in the college. This study therefore is to examine the impact of Covid-19 pandemic on academic activities using the College of Education, Agbor Delta State as a case study.

Research Questions

1. What are the impact of COVID-19 on the academic activities at College of Education, Agbor?
2. What changes did COVID-19 have on the methods of teaching and learning in College of Education Agbor?
3. How did Covid-19 affect the academic calendar of College of Education, Agbor?
4. What are the measures put in place to aid recovery from impact of covid-19 on academic activities of the College of Education, Agbor.

Method

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design to examine the effect of COVID-19 on academic activities at the College of Education, Agbor, Delta State of Nigeria. The descriptive survey is adopted for this study in which the characteristics of the population is described without changing the environment. The population of the study is all students in the College of Education, Agbor, Delta State, made up of the five (5) schools namely School of Science, School of Arts and Social Sciences, School of Languages, School of Vocational and Technical Education and School of Early Childhood Care and Primary Education.

A non-probability (purposive) sampling technique was used to select one hundred and twenty (120) students; twenty-four students from each of the schools. This was based on the availability and the willingness of the students to participate in the study and inclusion of students from all the departments in the schools.

Instrumentation

Twenty item questionnaire using simple yes/no termed COVID-19 and College of Education, Agbor academic activities (C19COEAA) was used for the collection of data. Colleagues in the department of Measurement and Evaluation determined the validity whose useful comments were used to modify some of the items.

The split-half reliability co-efficient using cronbad alpha was used to determine the suitability of the items. This was administered on (50) fifty students were not part of the sampled students on campus. The responses were collected and yielded index of 0.72 which is high value for the instrument to be used. The instrument was administered to the sample of the study who responded to the items. Their responses was analysed using the simple percentage.

Results and Findings

This section shows the presentation of demographic data:

Table 1: Distribution and percentage of the respondents

S/N	Name of the School	No of Respondents	% of Respondent	Total
1	School of Science	24	20%	
2	School of Arts and Social Sciences	24	20%	
3	School of Languages	24	20%	
4	School of Vocational and Technical Education	24	20%	
5	School of Early Childhood Care and Primary Education	24	20%	
		120	100%	

Demographic Information of the Respondents

Table 2: Gender of the Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage	Total
Male	51	42.5	42.5
Female	69	57.5	57.5
Total	120	100%	100

Result revealed there are 51 male respondents representing 42.5% of the sample while female were (69, 57.5%) of the respondents.

Table 3: Marital status of the respondents

Marital Status	Frequency	Percentage %	Total
Single	96	80	20
Married	24	20	20
Total	120	100%	100

Result from table 3 revealed 24 (20%) of the respondents were married while 96.(80%) were single.

Table 4: Level of Respondents

Level of Respondents	Frequency	Percentage	Total
NCE Year 1	23	19.2	19.2
NCE Year II	37	30.8	30.8.00
NCE Year III	60	50.0	50.00
Total	120	100%	100

Table 4 result revealed that 23 (19.2%) of the respondents were in NCE year 1; 37 (30.8%) of the respondents were in NCE year II while the remaining 60 (60.%) were in NCE Year III.

Results and Findings

Research question 1: What are the effects of COVID-19 on the academic activities at College of Education, Agbor?

Table 5: Responses on the effect of COVID-19 on academic activities at College of Education, Agbor

S/N	Items	Yes	No	Total
1	There was closure of physical academic activities in the College.	115 73.8%	5 14.2%	120 100%
2	Remote schooling and learning replaced the normal physical interaction	88 73.3%	32 26.7%	120 100%
3	Lack of learning motivation as students works were not checked.	103 85.8%	17 14.2%	120 100%
4	COVID-19 led to students shifting their attention away from schooling due to lack of interaction	93 77.5%	27 22.5%	120 100%
5	COVID-19 led to less time spent on learning by students.	98 81.7%	22 18.3%	120 100%
	Total	473 78.8%	127 21.2%	600 100%

From the result on table 6, 115 (98.8%) of the respondents agreed that the COVID-19 led to closure of physical academic activities in the College while 5 (4.2%) disagreed. 88 (73.3%) respondents agreed that remote schooling and learning replaced the normal physical interaction. But 32 (26.7%) answered No to the item. To statement three 103 (85.8%) agreed that COVID-19 caused lack of motivation to learning as students work-assignments were not checked while 17(14.2%) of the respondents disagreed. To statement four 93 (77.5%) agreed that students shifted their attention from schooling due to COVID-19 while 27 (22.5%) disagreed. To statement five 98 (81.7%) agreed while 22 (18.3%) disagreed. This means that less time was spent on learning because of COVID-19.

Research Question 2: What are the changes did COVID-19 have the methods of teaching and learning at the College of Education, Agbor.

Table 6: Responses on the effects of COVID-19 on method of teaching and learning in College of Education Agbor

S/N	Items	Yes	No	Total
6	COVID-19 has greatly displaced face-to-face teaching/learning with on-line learning	102 85%	18 15%	120 100%
7	COVID-19 forced the use of laptops, android phones television cables and other means of ICT in teaching and learning.	98 81.7%	22 18.3%	120 100%
8	Learning contents are now in electronic texts and graphics	104 86.7%	16 13.3%	120 100%
9	COVID-19 has led lecturers to adopt less time consuming but complex methods of teaching	89 74.2%	31 13.3%	120 100%
10	Self - discovery method of learning is now adopted for teaching/learning.	95 72.2%	25 20.8%	120 100%
	Total	488 81.3%	112 18.7%	600 100%

Result in table 6, revealed that 102.(85%) of the respondents agreed that COVID-19 greatly displaced face to face teaching and learning with on-line learning while 18 (15%) disagreed. on the second item; 98 (81.7%) agreed that COVID-19 introduced the use of laptops, phones, android phones, television cable and other means of ICT in teaching and learning while 22 (18.3%) disagreed that learning contents were delivered in electronic texts and graphics while 16 (13.3%) disagreed. 89 (74.2%) agreed that COVID-19 led teachers to adopt less time consuming but complex methods of teaching and instruction while 31 (13.3%) disagreed 95 (79.2%) of the respondents agreed that COVID-19 led to this adoption of self-discovery method of learning in teaching and teaching in the College while 25 (20.8%) disagreed.

Research question 3: What are the effects of COVID-19 on the academic calendar of College of Education Agbor?

Table 7: Responses on the effects of COVID-19 on the academic calendar of College of Education, Agbor

S/N	Items	Yes	No	Total
11	COVID-19 altered the academic calendar of the College of Education Agbor in 2020/2021 session	109 90.8%	11 9.2%	120 100%
12	The college teaching academic time-table and schedules were changed due to COVID-19	84.2% 101	15.8% 19	120 100%
13	Partial resumption of academic activities affected the college calendar	99 82.5%	21 17.5%	120 100%
14	College academic calendar was extended to cover for lost time due to COVID-19	97 80.8%	23 19.2%	120 100%
15	Conferences, seminars and workshops were not on hold or cancelled to direct full attention to teaching and learning	88 73.3%	32 26.7%	120 100%
	Total	494 82.3%	100 17.7%	600 100%

In table 7, 109 (90.8%) agreed that COVID-19 altered the academic calendar while 11 (9.2%) disagreed, on the effects of COVID-19 on college teaching time-table and schedules, 107 (84.2%) agreed that COVID-19 altered College time-table and schedules while 19 (15.8%) disagreed. On the item 13, 99 (82.5%) agreed and 21 (17.5%) disagreed that partial resumption of academic activities affected the College calendar. 97 (80.8%) agreed that college academic calendar was extended to cover for the lost of time due to COVID-19 and 23 (19.2%) disagreed. To statement 15, 88 (73.3%) agreed and 32 (26.7%) disagreed. This means that activities such as conferences, seminars and workshops were limited or cancelled to direct full attention to teaching and learning.

Research question 4: What are the measures put in place to aid recovery from the effects of COVID-19 on academic activities at College of Education, Agbor?

Table 8: Responses on the measures to aid the recovery from the effects COVID-19 on academic activities at College of Education, Agbor

S/N	Items	Yes	No	Total
16	Class meetings time should be staggered in arrangement o ensure a sense of alternating or continually overlapping intervals of time.	84 70%	36 30%	120 100%
17	College should make Wifi connection available for students to encourage on-line studies	89 74.2%	31 25.8%	120 100%
18	Take advantage of ICT to create platforms in reaching out to students even while in their respective house with their parents/guidance	95 79.2%	25 20.8%	120 100%
19	Conduct regular capacity building opportunities to improve information management within the college.	72 60%	48 40%	120 100%
20	Regular orientation for students to improve the use of ICT.	85 70.8%	35 29.2%	120 100%
	Total	425 70.8%	175 29.2%	600 100%

In table 8, 84 (70.0%) agreed that class meetings time should be staggered in arrangement to ensure a series of continually overlapping interval of time while (36.30%) disagreed on this view. 89 (74.2%) agreed that college providing WIFI connection available for students will encourage on-line studies as a measure of recovery while 31 (25.8%) disagreed. To item 18, 95 (79.2%) to reaching out to students in their respective house with their parents/guidance, 25 (20.8%) disagreed. The statement on item 19 was agreed/accepted by 72 (60%) while 48 (40%) disagreed on conducting regular capacity building opportunities to information management in the college. Lastly, 85 (70.8%) agreed that regular orientation for students to improve the use of ICT will aid recovery measures from the effects of COVID-19, 35 (29.2%) disagreed.

Discussion of Findings

The result of this study revealed that COVID-19 had impact on the academic activities of College of Education, Agbor Delta State. Most of the respondents agreed that the closure of the college academic activities deprived them of physical academic activities which was replaced with on-line learning. There was also no motivation as students assignments were left unchecked. The students attention was gradually shifting from schooling as less time was spent on teaching and learning. This agreed with the findings of Aiyedun T.G. and Ogunode, N.J (2020) who reported in the study that COVID-19 pandemic has affected academic programme of universities in Nigeria leading to major disruption in the academic activities. This is also supported by earlier study of Ogunode (2020) where he reported that 100% of respondents agreed that COVID-19 pandemic led to suspension of academic activities.

The study also revealed that the COVID-19 led to less motivation on students and reduced interest in academic work. This agreed with the findings of Uchenna N.E et al (2021) that student lost interest in school with longer stay at home because of the school closure due to COVID-19. The study revealed that COVID-19 introduced changes to the methods of teaching and learning. Face to face teaching and learning was displaced with on-line teaching/learning. This involved the use of laptops, android phones, television cable and other ICT devices in teaching. The respondent agreed that learning content were in electronic text and graphics. This findings is in agreement with Owusu-Ferdjour (2020) that COVID-19 leading to closure of schools making the on-line system of learning the method of teaching but added that students were unable to use online system of learning very ineffective. This was also buttressed by the reports of Adelalcun I.S. (2020) that during the lockdown some parents were forced to procure laptops, android phones, television cables and other means of ICT devices.

The result further revealed that COVID-19 had effect on the academic calendar of College of Education, Agbor. The respondents agreed that the academic calendar was altered in 2020/2021 academic session leading to extension to cover for the lost time during the lockdown. As a result time-tables and schedules were changed. Also, academic conferences, seminars and workshops were put on-hold to give full attention to teaching and learning. This study is in agreement with Ogunode (2020) who in his study reported that COVID-19 affected the academic calendar of senior secondary school in Nigeria and in another study Ogunode (2020) carried out on higher institutions in Abuja reported that COVID-19 affected the academic calendar of higher institution in FCT, Abuja.

From research question four, on the measures put in place to aid recovery from the impact of COVID-19 on academic activities of the college, respondents agreed that the provision of WIFI and the creation of ICT platforms will go a long way to cushion the impact of COVID-19 on their academic activities. This is in line with UNICEF (2020) which stated that school learners could be reached at home with radio education just like during the time of Ebola. But the problem of reaching students at home through on line teaching and learning imposes a problem especially with network and internet services in our rural areas. Also not every parent can afford the android phone. On other hand, greater use of online learning activities facilitates greater engagement of the learner as opined by Gupta V.K and Gupta V.B (2016) that the present generation of learners has grown up with technology. Ability to learn a one's own pace leads to better educational prospects.

Conclusion

The COVID-19 epidemic which started in Wuhan city in China soon became a major public health problem affecting all nations in the world. The pandemic soon affected the structures of every nation - political, socio-economic financial and education.

The COVID-19 pandemic caused a serious disruption to education system in Nigeria at all levels with the closure of schools at all levels as declared by the Federal Government on 19th March 2020. The College of Education, Agbor was affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. This has implication on the academic activities resulting in changes in methods of teaching and learning, academic calendar and resulting to measures being put in place to aid recovery from the impact of COVID-19.

There is the need to highlight that COVID-19 introduced on-line learning and e-learning for both the learners and teachers. This has widen and exposed people to the significant off ICT knowledge and use of electronic and technology devices in education.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made based on the changing nomenclature of COVID-19 pandemic on education.

- Students should be given access to educational resources. This could be through adopting proper virtual learning environment which will depend on the accessibility to internet and availability of appropriate ICT tools.

- To reduce potential learning losses which have long-lasting effects on the education system, college should put in place appropriate programme, and plans for delivery online teaching and learning.
- Provision of quality and quantity technology devices for teaching and learning by government.
- The college should acquire from the relevant sources and distribute computers, laptops or tablets to lecturers and financial allowances given for their operations to facilitate on line instruction.
- There should be training and re-training on the use of ICT facilities to update lecturers and students knowledge in a technological oriented world.

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