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## ONLINE TEACHING AND LEARNING IN IMO STATE PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC ERA

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### ABSTRACT

*In this study, the researchers investigated online teaching and learning in Imo State public secondary schools in a covid-19 pandemic era. The study adopted a descriptive research design and three research questions guided the study. The population of the study consisted of 5,216 teachers while the sample which was obtained through simple random sampling was 568 teachers. The instrument used for data collection was a 23-item questionnaire titled, "Online teaching and learning in Imo State public secondary schools in a covid-19 pandemic Era Questionnaire – (OTLISPSSCPE)". The instrument was validated by three experts two from the Department of Educational management and Policy and one from the Department of Educational Foundation. The reliability of the instrument was established through Cronbach Alpha with a weighted average of 0.82, 0.86 and 0.84 which were considered high enough for the study. This finding of the study among others was that the network failure affected online teaching and learning in Imo State public secondary schools. It was therefore recommended among others that government should enhance provisions of internet connectivity to improve network functionality.*

**Keywords.** Online teaching and learning, Public Secondary Schools, Covid-19, Pandemic era.

### Introduction

Online teaching and learning is a generic term for all forms of learning that takes place without physical contact. In other words, it is any form of learning that does not take place in a traditional classroom setting (IUJESC, 2020). Its alternative names are E-learning, virtual learning and distant learning. It involves teachers teaching their students through electronic system or using the apparatus of the World Wide Web (www). Basilica and Krarade (2020) stated that teaching and learning which has moved from the traditional classroom of physical contact of teachers and students to internet classroom is a designation of the nascent knowledge economy. Internet based education also known as electronic learning affords both the teachers and the students the comfort of using the browser to produce and access knowledge without meeting each other. This type of learning

becomes one of the benefits of the advancement of science which has resulted from information and communication Technology with its inherent exponential growth.

The pandemic era was a difficult period all over the world. Economies of nations were halted and movement of people across nations and borders was restricted and education especially in developing countries like Nigeria suffered a lot of setback (Harasim, 2020). In Nigeria as in other parts of the world, schools and colleges were shut down as teaching and learning was suspended. The fear all over the world was the safety of lives and not education. So, life was regimented and the centre for disease control in different nations rolled out protocols or guidelines to make life work (Stern, J. 2018).

Schools were eventually reopened but education was basically online. In Nigeria, various



electronic devices were deployed to transmit teaching and learning. They included, the radio, television and all forms of social media variants. These forms of teaching and learning devices had specific time or period of usage or connectivity due to network challenges or restrictions. The radio therefore proved to be most workable and used since it is not easily restricted by network unavailability.

A pandemic period is a time of a worldwide or national epidemic. It is a time when a novel illness with vast transmission through air engulfs the whole world or nation. The covid-19 pandemic was not the first of its kind. The world had witnessed a myriad of it before now. There was the Spanish flu of 1918, the Asian flu of 1957, the Hong Kong flue of 1968, and the pandemic flu of 2009 with each named after the city where it first erupted. Each of them however had its devastating effect with death tolls in terms of millions (Johnson and Muller, 2020). Wahan in China, Italy, and Britain the United States of America had their losses both in human and economic forms in millions and they are still counting their losses. African countries and in fact Nigeria were not exempted even as schools remained closed.

Public secondary schools in Imo State, Nigeria are school established and funded by government. They could be federal or state but their operations are regulated and supervised by government. Government posts students to such school after they have passed an admission test or screening. They also recruit teachers and post them to the schools and their salaries are paid by the government through the supervising ministry. Public secondary schools are many and they constitute the strength of post-primary education in Nigeria and in Imo State in particular.

### Statement of the Problem

Pandemics like covid-19 whether invented, manufactured or natural always throw the world into panic any time they occur. Both leaders of government, captains of industries, the academia

and the entire human race are swept off their feet with fear stimulated with the ignorance of not knowing what to do. The origin of such “messenger of death”, the anatomy of its operation and the damage control mechanism are always beyond human intellectual apprehension. By the time the world would come out with the idea of what to do, the damages have gone to a global dimension. Life was literarily brought to a halt as commerce, education, sports and movement was restricted. It is in view of the above situation that this study investigated online teaching and learning in public secondary schools in Imo State in a covid-19 pandemic era.

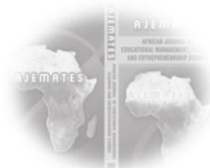
### Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions

- i. How was online teaching and learning conducted in Imo State public secondary schools during the covid-19 pandemic era?
- ii. To what extent did online teaching and learning in Imo State public secondary schools impact on the students during the covid-19 pandemic era?
- iii. What were the challenges that affected online teaching and learning in Imo State public secondary schools during the covid-19 pandemic era?

### Research Method

In this study, the researcher investigated online teaching and learning in Imo State public secondary schools in a covid-19 pandemic era. The study adopted a descriptive research design and three research questions guided the study. The population of the study consisted of 5216 teachers while the sample which was attained through simple random sampling was 568 teachers. The instrument used for data collection was a 23-item questionnaire titled, “Online teaching and learning in Imo State public secondary schools in a covid-19 pandemic Era Questionnaire – (OTLISPSSCPE)”. The instrument was validated by three experts two



from the Department of Educational management and Policy and one from the Department of Educational Foundation. The reliability of the instrument was established through Cronbach Alpha with a weighted average of 0.82, 0.86 and 0.84 which were considered high enough for the study. This finding of the study among others was that the network failure affected online teaching and learning in Imo State public secondary schools.

It was therefore recommended among others that government should enhance provisions of internet connectivity to improve network functionality.

### Presentation of Results

**Research Question I:** How was online teaching and learning conducted in Imo State public secondary schools during the covid-19 pandemic era.

**Table 1: Mean rating of how online teaching and learning was conducted in public secondary schools in Imo State during the Covid-19 era**

S/N	ITEMS	MEAN (X)	REMARKS
1.	Do you consider online teaching and learning useful?	3.11	Agreed
2.	Was it well conducted?	2.80	Agreed
3.	The radio was used to conduct it	3.02	Agreed
4.	Did you understand the lesson?	3.03	Agreed
5.	Was it better than teacher and student physical contact	3.10	Agreed
6.	Were you free to ask questions and receive answers	3.02	Agreed
7.	Did other students appreciate it?	4.49	Agreed
8.	Was network always available during lesson	2.98	Agreed
<b>Mean of means</b>		<b>3.11</b>	<b>Agreed</b>

Table 1 indicated how online teaching and learning was conducted during the covid-19 pandemic era in public secondary schools in Imo state. The radio was used to teach the students. This presupposes that lessons were scheduled according to time communicated to students. All that the learners needed to do was to set around their radio sets in the homes and listen to their teachers as they delivered

their lessons. Students would as well ask questions using their phones in line with their teachers' contact numbers.

**Research Question II:** To what extend did online teaching and learning impact on the students' academic performance during the covid-19 pandemic era?



**Table 2: Mean rating of the impact of online teaching and learning during covid-19 pandemic era in Imo state public secondary school on students' academic performance**

S/N	ITEMS	MEAN (X)	REMARK
9.	Schemes of work were covered	3.35	Agreed
10.	Students did and submitted assignments	3.55	Agreed
11.	Students learnt the use of ICT facilities	2.86	Agreed
12.	Students developed originality during learning	3.56	Agreed
13.	Students also worked independently	3.41	Agreed
14.	Students were able to do their exams online	3.14	Agreed
15.	The online lessons kept students busy	3.03	Agreed
16.	It was as if school sessions were uninterrupted	2.07	Agreed
17.	It enabled teachers to know the individual abilities of the students	2.25	Agreed
<b>Mean of means</b>		<b>3.09</b>	<b>Agreed</b>

Table 2 showed the impact of online teaching and learning on students' academic performance in Imo State public secondary schools in a covid-19 pandemic era. Normal academic activities went on unperturbed. Subject schemes of work were prosecuted even as students did their assignments, test and examinations virtually. It boosted students' independability and by extension their

resourcefulness. It kept students off the streets and teachers were able to identify or know the individual capacities of the students.

**Research Questions III:** What were the challenges that affected online teaching and learning in Imo State public secondary school during the covid-19 pandemic era?

**Table III: Mean rating of the challenges of online teaching and learning in Imo State public secondary schools during the covid-19 pandemic era.**

S/N	ITEMS	MEAN (X)	REMARK
18.	It was not easy communicating to students before the lessons started	3.50	Agreed
19.	It was difficult to convince parents of the workability	3.47	Agreed
20.	Some students could not ask questions using their phones	3.36	Agreed
21.	It was because they had no access to phones	3.29	Agreed
22.	Few of the students in the rural areas did not have access to radio	2.79	Agreed
23.	Few students were either in the farm or market during lessons	3.03	Agreed
<b>Mean of means</b>		<b>3.24</b>	<b>Agreed</b>

### Discussion of Results

One of the findings of the study showed that online teaching and learning in Imo state public secondary schools was well conducted during the covid-19 pandemic era. This means that it worked well. Though there hitches in getting the students into it and even convincing their parents that it

would work, students however adapted to it quickly. The radio was used and since there are little or network problems with the radio, teaching and learning went on uninterruptedly. Subject schemes were prosecuted and students were able to ask questions and receive answers. This is in line with the position of Sun and Cherr (2016).



Another finding of the study was that online teaching and learning impacted on the students significantly and positively. It made students to develop or increase their ability to work independently and by so doing, they were able to enhance their resourcefulness and capacities. Some of the students used the opportunity to improve their proficiency in the use of ICT facilities as they could ask questions, receive their answers and even did their tests and examinations online. This in agreement with Gudivada, Agrawal and Chu (2013).

Finally, it was also found out that though online teaching and learning in Imo State public secondary schools during the covid-19 pandemic era was successful, it was not without problems. Firstly, it was not easy to inform all the students of the online teaching. This was because, it was novel to them and therefore unimaginable. Contacting the parents of the students and securing their consent and cooperation was also challenging. The school principals embarked on serial calls and sometimes contacted the executives of School Based Management Committees to make parents participate in it.

## Conclusion

Online teaching and learning is very important and in fact, a necessity in this period of covid-19 and its seasonal variants. It opens students to a vast knowledge of virtual learning and at the same time expands teachers' versatility with the use of e-learning facilities. It also helps the schools in the study area to source for or provide online education infrastructures. With the success of the enterprise, the initial barriers or difficulties the school had in bringing students and their parents into participation had been resolved. Beyond the covid-19 pandemic security challenges all over the world especially in Nigeria can be taken care of using online infrastructures.

## Recommendations

In view of the findings of the study, it is therefore recommended that;

- Online teaching and learning should be intensified in public secondary schools in the study area and in Nigeria in general.
- Parents of students should be brought into continues partnership in this regard so much that, their meetings with the school authority could be online through zoom.
- Beyond the use of the radio and the television, other social media platforms could also be used to transmit teaching and learning to students.
- To sustain the success of the online teaching and learning, schools should update their online learning infrastructures.

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