

ONLINE PLATFORMS AS TEACHING STRATEGIES BEYOND CLASSROOM WALLS DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC LOCKDOWN: A CASE OF LENS POLYTECHNIC, OFFA, KWARA STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

Coronavirus (COVID-19) as a deadly virus is caused through droplets of saliva or discharge from the nose of a person that is infected. The advent of this world deadly virus has hampered teaching and learning processes in all institutions across the globe. Since education is the bedrock of development for every nation, a way out must be found to the issue of inability to attend classes for lectures due to lockdown. As such, online platforms as teaching strategies are inevitable. Eight hundred and sixty respondents were used for outline platform teaching strategies to maneuver academic activities among the students of Lens Polytechnic, Offa. The instruments used for the study were based on convenience and importance of online platforms as teaching strategies questionnaire. Percentage formula was used to analyse the data. The findings reveal that highest percentage of the respondents found it convenient to use online platforms. It also reveals that highest percentage of learners from 55% to 99.30% valued online platforms as teaching strategies especially in a situation where learners are shut out of school, while as low as 0.23% to 45% respondents were against the use of online platforms. Based on these, it was concluded that very high percentage of respondents favoured the use of online platforms in order to cater for their academic needs in the period of global academic lockdown. It was therefore, recommended that governments at all levels should start to introduce ICTs in Nigerian schools right from the junior secondary schools to curb future exigencies.

Keywords: COVID-19, teaching strategies, lockdown, Pandemic and online platforms

INTRODUCTION

Coronavirus otherwise known as COVID-19 is an infectious disease which is said to be a family of virus that can cause illness such as the common cold, severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) and Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS). In 2019, it, (COVID-19) was identified as the cause of a disease outbreak that originated from China which later spread through other parts of the continent like Europe (Italy, United Kingdom, and Spain), Asia (Indian, Iran,) with more than ten countries each in other continents (World Health Organisation, 2020).

The COVID-19 virus spreads primarily through droplets of saliva or discharge from the nose when an infected person coughs or sneezes, so it is important for one to practise respiratory etiquette such as coughing into a flexed elbow and this is why it is important to stay at least two meters away from a person who is coughing or sneezing. Usually people infected with the COVID-19 virus will experience mild to moderate respiratory discomfort and recover without requiring special treatment. Aged people and those with underlying medical problems like

cardiovascular disease, diabetes, chronic respiratory disease, and cancer are more likely to develop serious illness (Nigeria Centre for Disease Control, 2020 and World Health Organisation, 2020).

After the discovery of this deadly disease in Wuhan, China, the first case to be reported in Nigeria was confirmed on the 27th of February 2020 Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC, 2020). The case is an Italian citizen who works in Nigeria and returned from Milan, Italy to Lagos, Nigeria on the 25th of February 2020. He was confirmed by the Virology Laboratory of the Lagos University Teaching Hospital, part of the Laboratory Network of the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control. However, the patient is clinically stable, with no serious symptoms, and is being managed at the Infectious Disease Hospital in Yaba, Lagos. This confirmation led to total shut down of all Ministries and companies including educational institutions as a means of curtailing the epidemic as directed by Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC, 2020). According to (NCDC, 2020), social distancing from people is another way to prevent people from being infected by the disease, so it is advisable for students (learners) and teachers alike to stay away from one another hence the need for online teaching modes. Many advanced countries have switched to technological way of passing knowledge to their learners using series of platforms.

The Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has created unprecedented global emergency that has now infected more than 10 million people worldwide. It has also affected the global economy led to total shut down of almost all activities in Nigeria in particular especially education, the foundation that could not be set aside for any young teenagers. Education has been described by many authors, researchers, educationalists and philosophers as the most significant activity in human life (Bello & Lawal, 2012). Education is a combination of growth and human development with social legacy (Kohnstamm & Gunning, 1995). Similarly, Bello (2011) asserts that importance of quality education for citizens of a particular country cannot be over emphasized, as it is seen as not preparation for life, education is life itself (Bello & Lawal 2012). However, owing largely to the importance of education as life wire of every country, governments at all levels need to strategise and find alternatives at where knowledge can be passed to learners using technological advancement to aid educational system especially during this COVID-19 pandemic lockdown to rekindle the hearts of learners. The outbreak of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) has been affecting millions of people as well as threatening their life across the world (Raheem and Khan, 2020). Big Indonesian Dictionary (1991) and Bello (2015) opine that “education is a learning process for the individual to attain knowledge and understanding of the higher specific objects. The knowledge gained formally from education makes individual to have a pattern of thought and behaviour in accordance with the education they have gained.

According to World Health Organisation (WHO, 2020), and by way of checkmating the spread of the virus postulates that practising physical distancing, by avoiding unnecessary travel and staying away from larger group of people are some of the ways to avoid contacting the virus. With this, all schools in the whole world have been shut down thus shading learners away from schooling system. Based on this problem, a way out must be found to keep the life wire of formal acquisition of knowledge in motion, as such, online teaching and learning (e-learning) needs to be considered as the best bet for proper, crowd free and distinctive process of giving instruction to learners. Dewey (1897) espouses that, “To prepare a child for the future life means to give

such a child command of himself, this implies to train a child so that he or she will have the full and ready use of his capacities”. As such, the better way to assist the students to have command of themselves is by giving a non-stop quality education as a way out of the lockdown caused by coronavirus, which means that a technological means of learning and teaching needs to be introduced apart from the usual “classroom talk and chalk” business they are used to. As warned by NCDC (2020), there are no known vaccines for the treatments COVID-19. And as such, staying away from possible usual academic environment worldwide is inevitable, even though there are many ongoing clinical trials evaluating potential treatment for this world deadly virus. World Health Organisation (WHO) affirms that it will continue to provide update information as soon as clinical findings become available.

This study intends to assess the efficacy of online platforms as a solution to teaching and learning in Lens Polytechnic, Offa, Kwara State of Nigeria during COVID-19 pandemic lockdown. In the light of this development, choices of online platforms remain the only way for getting across to students if academic exercise is to be upheld despite the lockdown.

BACKGROUND LITERATURE OF ONLINE PLATFORM

Over the time, “online platform” has been used to describe a range of services available on the Internet including marketplaces, search engines, social media, creative content outlets, application stores, communication services, payment systems, services which have developed many businesses from small scale to medium scale, and much more according to Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, (OECD,2019). Almost all the businesses in the world have gone online (e-business) either to advertise or to deliver bought items to the customers in their various homes through a means called courier. Online platforms have some important things in common, including the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) to facilitate interactions between users, the collection and use of data about those interactions, and network effects. They drive innovation and play vital roles in digital economies and societies as posited by Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2019). Technologically, a “Platform” is a group of technologies that are used as a base upon which other applications processes or technologies are developed and it is a set of standards that enables software developers to develop a software application for the platform (Praymond, 2018).

Why Online Platform?

Almost two decades ago, the World Wide Web (www) and the Internet accompanied by a host of network digital technologies ventured into the educational arena. Since that time e-learning has become a part of our common vernacular forever changing our constructs of the ‘classroom’ (Buzetto, 2007). Buzetto further posits that early adopters of e-learning espouse its benefits and predict that it would cause a paradigm shift in academia. Although that shift has not fully occurred, numerous projects, programmes, and a plethora of research studies have justified the validity and advantages of e-learning as a powerful means of delivering quality education and enhancing classroom-based instruction.

Online learning is education that takes place over the Internet between two or more people in far or near places (Stern, 2016). Stern also submits that online distance learning meets the needs of an ever-growing population of students who cannot or prefer not to participate in traditional classroom setting. These learners include those who are unable to attend traditional classes, who cannot find a particular class at their chosen institution, who live in remote locations, who work full-time and can only study at or after work, and those who simply prefer to learn independently.

As e-learning continues to grow, its growth is hindered by misunderstanding, misinformation, and misuse of the online platform such as dissemination of bad news, mismanagement of time by chatting without gaining any educative experience, watching of unethical videos, among other vices (Buzzetto, 2007).

The on-going and increasing demand of customers online have confirmed that the reality of social media is not one of trends, but one that has come to stay permanently. Social media do not only entail a place where people socialise, but has also become one of the preferred places to search for products and services and for easy business transactions (Shada, 2017). All the platforms have tools for effective communication that contain digitalised pictorial graphics, video, audio and texts since many businesses and companies have adopted this means to make their various transactions between management of various financial institutions reach their clients. Although majority of companies and business owners have taken up online platforms before the pandemic to orientate their various customers based on the changes of their products or sales fee. To avoid students from being exposed to so many social vices that can impede their future, the only escape route is to adopt e-learning system. Osborne, Davis & Kriese (2013) submit that education can, and will foster skills in young people that best position them to interact successfully with others in the broader social world – a world that is becoming increasingly multicultural and multidimensional.

Online mode of learning has been a means most of lecturers adopt even before the advent of COVID-19 in order to level up most of the cumbersome course outlines in schools using one of the social media as a means of communication, as well, online class is a course conducted over the Internet (tophat.com/glossary/o/online-class). They are generally conducted through a learning management system in which students can view their course syllabus and academic progress, as well as communicate with fellow students and their course instructors.

Types of Online Platform

There are over 50 types of online platform but this study will discuss on only ten (10) types. The following are some of the types and functions of online platform:

- i. **Google Class:** is a free web service developed by Google for schools that aim to simplify, creating, distributing, and grading assignments. The primary purpose of Google Classroom is to streamline the process of sharing files between teachers and students.
- ii. **Docebo:** learning Platform automates learning management, facilitates informal learning applied in the flow-of-work and personalises the learner experience to produce deeper learning outcomes tied to business objectives. Docebo is a highly secure online-only e-learning solution, which is also rich in features.

- iii. **WhatsApp:** this is another platform that was introduced in 2014. It was launched after a decade of existence of facebook but it has gone viral and more useful than facebook today, it does not consume cost like facebook and it is very fast to connect with people and to organise school activities. The WhatsApp call feature is just the icing on the cake
- iv. **Wechat:** this is an all-in-one communication application (app) for messaging and calling (similar to WhatsApp) that enables you to connect with the people of your choice.
- v. **Zoom:** it is a web-based video conferencing tool with a local, desktop client and a mobile application (app) that allows users to meet online, with or without video. **Zoom** users can choose to record sessions, collaborate on projects, and share or annotate on one another's screens, all with one easy-to-use platform.
- vi. **Loom:** network calls itself a next-generation block chain-based platform designed for large-scale social apps and online games.
- vii. **Email:** is a digital message sent electronically from one computer to one or more other computers. Emails are flexible and can be used for giving instructions, serving as documentation, providing confirmation, communicating rules and procedures, making recommendations, providing a status update, making an inquiry.
- viii. **Telegram:** is a messaging application (app) with a focus on speed and security; it is super-fast, simple and free. You can use telegram on all your devices at the same time.
- ix. **Twitter:** is a 'microblogging' system that allows you to send and receive short posts called tweets. Tweets can be up to 140 characters long and can include links to relevant websites and resources.
- x. **Skype:** allows registered users to communicate through both instant messaging and voice chat. Voice chat allows telephone calls between pairs of users and conference calling and uses proprietary audio codec.

Importance of Online Platform

Being present on social media platforms is an indispensable form of transacting and learning and not even one to be ignored. It is essential to have social media strategy for everyone's daily activities (Shada 2017). The importance is as listed below:

- i. It helps students who cannot afford a regular college degree to accomplish their academic dreams without spending a fortune on college education, since you study at your own time and pace; it helps to save time as well.
- ii. It helps professionals with the flexibility to improve and update their skill set while working simultaneously. But for the purpose of this study, it helps curtail the spread of this world deadly virus. This helps students to stay away from virus prone areas/people, and still updated about the existing advancements about their academic pursuit since educational trend should be dynamic in nature.
- iii. It makes new customers to patronise you: nowadays, many customers have chosen online platform to knowing about new products of a company or company's background without visiting them physically.
- iv. Easier to market your institution: online platform has been a great platform where advertisement has been so easy to do. Some requires no human intervention but an

- animation to talk about a particular business and negotiation between the customers, and the company will go smoothly without seeing each other.
- v. It encourages you to listen to your spectators effectively: knowing your spectators are keys for any business industry to grow more effectively. Not only do social media achieve this, but also have the tools to specifically target demographic variables of your intended audience; using customers' personal information (e.g. gender, age, relationship status, language). Understanding your target audience can help you shift your marketing strategy efficiently, and also discover new uncharted opportunities including analysing your audience's movements, interactions, action and behaviours.
 - vi. Expanding your target spectators to develop your business: a good social media strategy which defines the platforms to use allows users to like, comment and share your page thereby creating free advertising to expand your business outreach and bring in potential customers. It is ideal for lead generation, especially when used to educate or inspire your audiences.
 - vii. Allows instant feedback from students: social media platforms allow immediate feedback from students; whether they are negative or positive. This provides valuable insight into learners' perspectives; it allows you to either enhance your services to better suit your learners' needs and learn whether they are satisfied with your instruction or otherwise.
 - viii. Develops teacher-learners' relations and loyalty: the direct interaction between you and your learners is a key feature of social media platforms. It allows you to develop a direct bond with your learners and create a supportive network. The instant back and forth communication you get with social media helps establish trust and builds a loyal fan base. As a private institution, it advocates your institution and can drive instant traffic to your business through social media.

Based on the above, Thomas (2020) concludes that to build a healthy, prosperous, and secured future, we need to ensure that school systems are adequately financed, make smart use of technology, then protect the lives of your students and that of the teachers as much as possible against COVID-19 that kills without bound. This will surely enhance the lives of both the teachers and the learners.

However, the total functioning of educational system throughout the world which has made both the learners and teachers to be out of reach of schools, Thomas further submits that online courses in higher institutions do not happen overnight. The 2008 study by the National Centre for Education Statistics (NCES) found that the main factors influencing higher institutions to offer online courses included meeting students' demands for flexible schedules (68%), providing access to college for students who would otherwise not have access (67%), making more courses available (47%) and seeking to increase students' enrollment (45%) (Parsad, Lewis & Tice 2008). Similarly, Arthur and Gamson (1987) postulate seven principles for good practice for undergraduate education as enumerated below:

- i. Students and faculty contact encouragement: this is done by reaching students who are not positively concentrating on the course which can be discussed in a parallel discussion forum;
- ii. It encourages students' cooperation: creating avenue where students will be able to have a joint work such as assignment and further discuss on how they can all succeed in their various courses;

- iii. It encourages easy studying environment: this is done in a way that the technology to be adopted to teach the students will be so interacting and friendly;
- iv. It gives timely feedback: using video or audio means of communication to assess performances of students. Also, adopting software simulations that provide instantaneous feedback;
- v. It communicates high expectations: gives a detailed syllabus with assignments, due dates, and a grading mode, call attention to excellent work in bulletin board postings or class list server;
- vi. It respects diverse talents and ways of learning: explaining the theory from a practical approach first and then add the structural approach and encourage students to express diverse points of view in discussion; and
- vii. It emphasizes time on task: identify key concepts and how the students will be taught given the amount of time, decide what level of topics will be covered.

The above seven principles will eventually aid and promote education in this present pandemic time if adopted as stated. Consequently, the social distancing and, or stay at home measure to curtail coronavirus really call for a change of thoughts on how studying can be taken beyond the four walls of a building (school). Similarly, (Pete, 2020) says every student is used to studying outside the classroom or lecture theatre but probably not to ‘distance learning’ as the only option. Working from home can take quite a lot of adjustment it is therefore, useful to have some practical tips that will make the transition to a different style of study as straightforward as possible. Pete further outlines some tips to back her claims as discussed below:

- i. **Avoid distractions:** procrastination is always the enemy of effective study and it is an even bigger danger when working at home with the temptations of social media, Netflix, among others. For a start, move your phone some distance away so it is not instantly available. Use it as a treat when you have achieved a particular task rather than as a constant companion;
- ii. **Organise your study space:** everyone has a different home environment so it is difficult to make hard and fast rules. However, there are certain basic guidelines about study spaces that should apply to most students. Try to keep whatever study space you have neat and tidy. This will help you stay calm and feel well organised and make it less likely that you will lose things;
- iii. **Stay in touch:** pretty much everyone will be staying in touch with friends and family using Skype, Zoom or some other video tools. But do not forget you can also maintain contact with other students in your class or doing the same course as you are using social media, video link, email or voice call. You can share ideas, discuss assignments, text each other or just share experiences;
- iv. **Make a daily timetable:** it is easy to slip into a situation at home where work and leisure become blurred. Because there is no change of environment, school bell, bus, home or any of the other things that signify a change of activity, work can spill into leisure time and leisure can leak into times when you should be studying; and
- v. **Think about how you learn best:** different students prefer different methods of learning as such; it is worth thinking about what works best for you. For some, the simple question/answer format of flashcards enables easy self-testing while for others the more

visual form of the mind map is great at showing how the various aspects of a topic are linked.

Equally, adopting online teaching and learning for the students of Lens Polytechnic, Offa will be convenient for the teachers because apart from what they have planned to deliver, access to Internet to give more examples to the learners will improve the teaching-learning process. Also, students will have more time to surf more recent textbooks online to aid their learning process which will surely reduce the level of bulky hardcopy textbooks.

The aim of this research is to study online platforms as teaching strategies beyond classroom walls at Lens Polytechnic Offa, Kwara State, Nigeria.

Many scholars such as Buzzetto (2007) and Shada (2017) have carried out studies on the use of social media and e-learning, but as far as these researchers are concerned, none has carried out studies on the use, importance and convenience of online platforms in a pedagogical situation like a period of this nature when social distancing has become order of the day through out of the world. This gap in research is what this study intends to fill.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to suggest online platforms as teaching strategies beyond classroom walls during covid-19 pandemic lockdown.

The specific purpose of this study is:

- i. to examine the importance of online platforms among students of Lens Polytechnic, Offa.
- ii. to determine the convenience of online platforms to students of Lens Polytechnic, Offa.

Research Questions

The following research questions are asked to give this study a focus:

- i. How convenient is the use of online platforms to the students of Lens Polytechnic Offa during COVID-19 pandemic lockdown?
- ii. How important are the online platforms to the students of Lens Polytechnic Offa during COVID-19 pandemic lockdown?

METHODOLOGY

This research work is generally designed to examine online platforms as teaching strategies beyond classroom walls at Lens Polytechnic, Offa Kwara State during this lockdown using an online questionnaire to get across the students of the institution. The questionnaires were divided into two (2) sections (1 and 2) that is 4 Likert scale type of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagreed (SD) and scale of Good (G) and Bad (B) for sections 1 and 2 respectively. One thousand (1000) online questionnaire copies were sent out through Google form to all students of Lens Polytechnic, Offa, Kwara State, Nigeria. Out of the 1000 questionnaire copies sent out to all the departments in the school, eight hundred and sixty (860) responses were retrieved within two weeks and same were used for the analysis.

FINDINGS

Data analysis on the use of online platforms as teaching strategies beyond classroom walls at Lens Polytechnic, Offa, Kwara State, Nigeria during COVID-19 pandemic lockdown are shown in the tables below:

Research Question 1: How convenient is the online platform to students of Lens Polytechnic, Offa, Kwara State of Nigeria?

Table 1: Convenience of students of Lens Polytechnic, Offa, Kwara State using online platform

S/N	Convenience of each on online platforms	Strongly Agree (SA)	Agree (A)	Disagree (D)	Strongly Disagree (SD)
1.	Google class is convenient for streamlining the process of getting assignments from lecturers	800 (93.02%)	40 (4.65%)	11 (1.28%)	09 (1.05%)
2.	Receiving instruction from instructors via email online platform is convenient	610 (70.93%)	200 (23.26%)	31 (3.60%)	19 (2.21%)
3.	Zoom online platform for creating interactive environment for class activities is more advisable	542 (63.02%)	301 (35%)	17 (1.98%)	0 (0%)
4.	I use Docebo online platform to share class activities easily	720 (83.72%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	140 (16.28%)
5.	I enjoy using Loom online platform to watch my lecturer solve academic questions	690 (80.23%)	116 (13.49%)	33 (3.84%)	21 (2.44%)
6.	Voice note is relatively okay on WhatsApp online platform	857 (99.65%)	03 (0.35%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
7.	I connect my fellow students using Wechat online platform	631 (73.37%)	229 (26.63%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
8.	Post class activities such as tutorial using video means is convenient using Skype online platform	631 (73.37%)	229 (26.63%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
9.	Twitter online platform is a mature platform to share information with mates	587 (68.26%)	271 (31.51%)	2 (0.23%)	0 (0%)
10.	Telegram online platform creates conducive teaching-learning environment for me	631 (73.37%)	229 (26.63%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

Table 1 reveals the views of the respondents on the convenience of the use of online platforms by students of Lens Polytechnic, Offa, Kwara State, Nigeria during COVID-19 pandemic lockdown in Nigeria. 93.02% of the respondents choose strongly agree (SA) for Google Class online platform, only 4.65% agree (A), 1.28% disagree (D) while 1.05% strongly disagree (SD). On Email online platform, 70.93% respondents choose strongly agree (SA), 23.26% choose agree (A), 3.60% respondents disagree (D) while 2.21% strongly disagree (SD). 63.02% accept strongly agree (SA) for Zoom online platform, 35% choose agree (A), while 1.98% disagree (D). 83.72% of the respondents favour strongly agree (SA), while 16.28% choose strongly disagree (SD) on the convenience of Docebo online platform. On Loom online platform, 80.23% of the respondents choose strongly agree (SA), 13.49% agree (A), 3.84% disagree (D) to the 2.44% of respondents that choose strongly disagree (SD). 99.65% of the respondents choose strongly agree (SA), while 0.35% favour agree (A) for WhatsApp online

platform. Wechat online platform and Skype online platform have 73.37% of the respondents for strongly agree (SA) while 26.63% agree (A) respectively. 68.26% choose strongly agree (SA), 31.51% choose agree (A) while 0.23% disagree (D) with Twitter online platform; and in Telegram online platform, 73.37% choose strongly agree (SA) while 26.63% choose agree (A)

Research Question 2: How important is the online platform to the students of Lens Polytechnic Offa during COVID-19 pandemic lockdown?

Table 2: Importance of online platforms to the students of Lens Polytechnic, Offa during COVID-19 pandemic lockdown

S/N	Type of online platform	Good (G)	Bad (B)
1.	Google class	800 (93.02%)	60 (6.98%)
2.	Email	651 (75.70%)	209 (24.30%)
3.	Zoom	554 (64.42%)	306 (35.58%)
4.	Docebo	500 (58.14%)	360 (41.86%)
5.	Loom	521 (60.58%)	339 (39.42%)
6.	WhatsApp	858 (99.77%)	02 (0.23%)
7.	Wechat	623 (72.44%)	237 (27.56%)
8.	Skype	602 (70%)	258 (30%)
9.	Twitter	473 (55%)	387 (45%)
10.	Telegram	854 (99.30%)	06 (0.70%)

Table 2 shows the views of the respondents on the importance of online platforms to the students of Lens Polytechnic Offa, Kwara State during COVID-19 pandemic. 93.02% confirm the Google Class online platform to be good while 6.98% say it is bad. On Email online platform, 75.70% say it is good while 24.30% say it is bad. Zoom online platform, 64.42% respondents say it is good while 35.58% say it is bad. 58.14% favour Docebo online platform as being good while 41.86% regard it as bad. 60.58% confirm Loom online platform to be good while 39.42% see it as bad. High percentage of 99.77% approve WhatsApp online platform to be good while 0.23% tagged it to be bad. On Wechat online platform, 72.44% say it is good while 27.56% do not welcome its significance. 70% of the students applaud Skype online platform while 30% confirm it to be bad. Twitter online platform share almost the same percentage of 55% saying it is good while 45% no positive side of it. 99.30% support telegram as a good online platform by commending it while 0.70% give it condemnation.

DISCUSSION

Findings of the study in Table 1 reveal that highest percentage of learners ranging from 63.02% to 99.65% favoured the use of online platforms as means of instruction. This is in line with the findings of Stern (2016) who affirms that online learning is education that takes place over the Internet between two or more people in far or near places and also that online distance learning meets the needs of an ever-growing population of students who cannot or prefer not to participate in traditional classroom setting. These learners include those who are unable to attend traditional classes, who cannot find a particular class at their chosen institution, who live in remote locations, who work full-time and can only study at or after work, and those who simply prefer to learn independently. Similarly, Shada also posits that social media do not only entail a place where people socialise, but has also become one of the preferred places to search for products and services and for easy business transactions. However, there is no rose without thorn, we also recorded as low as 0% to 35% respondents who did not favour the use of online platforms as dynamic strategies of disseminating instruction to learners. This is in accordance with the study of Buzzetto (2007) who establishes that as e-learning continues to grow, its growth is hindered by misunderstanding, misinformation, and misuse of the online platform such as dissemination of bad news, mismanagement of time by chatting without gaining any educative experience, watching of unethical videos, among other vices.

Also, the findings of the study in Table 2 indicate that highest percentage of learners from 55% to 99.77% favour the use online platforms as teaching strategies especially in a situation where learners are shut out of school. This finding is in agreement with the submission of Buzzetto (2007) who posits that since that time e-learning has become a part of our common vernacular forever changing our constructs of the classroom. He further opines that early adopters of e-learning espouse its benefits and predict that it would cost a paradigm shift in academia. Similarly, Stern (2016) affirms that online learning is education that takes place over the internet between two or more people in far or near places and that online distance learning meets the needs of an ever growing population of students who cannot or prefer not to participate in traditional classroom settings.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study which indicated very high percentage of respondents favoured the use of online platforms in order to cater for their academic needs in spite of the global academic lockdown. It is seen that as e-learning continues to grow, its growth is hindered by misunderstanding, misinformation, and misuse of the online platform such as dissemination of bad news, mismanagement of time by chatting without gaining any educative experience, watching of unethical videos, among other vices. However, despite these vices, it is therefore, concluded that online platforms serve successfully as alternative to the usual traditional “classroom talk and chalk” system of learning. It was also concluded that to build a healthy, prosperous, and secured future, we need to ensure that school system is adequately financed, make smart use of technology to protect the lives of your students and that of the teachers as much as possible against COVID-19 that kills without bound. This will surely enhance the lives of both the teachers and the learners.

CONTRIBUTION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Obviously, this study contributes significantly by introducing a SMART GOALS ONLINE BASED (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-based) to Nigerian schools. Not only that, this SMART GOAL would be useful in teaching students through online based instead of using classroom activities. Nevertheless, the SMART GOAL would also help teachers to actualise the stated objectives of education during a difficult time and trying period like this pandemic that destabilises all educational sectors in Nigeria particularly and world at large.

More so, Governments at all levels should start to introduce ICTs to Nigerian schools right from the junior secondary schools. It is also recommended that governments at all levels should make ICT as a major course to be offered in higher institutions by students throughout their course of study in the universities, polytechnics and colleges of education to get them prepared against unforeseen circumstances and eventualities. (If not because Lens Polytechnic, Offa, made the use of ITC gadgets compulsory for all the students, the possibility of successful application of the online platforms teaching strategies would have been marred). It is also recommended that instructors should be encouraged to go for ICT refresher courses to make them ICT compliant in the face of this jet age so that both the teachers and students will be able to move abreast with teachers and students of advanced countries of the world.

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