

A SURVEY OF PARENTS' PARTICIPATION IN ONLINE TEACHING AND LEARNING OF THEIR CHILDREN DURING COVID 19 PANDEMIC PERIOD IN IMO STATE

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Abstract

Purpose: The study examined parents' participation in online teaching and learning of their children during COVID 19 pandemic period in Imo State. The study aimed at ascertaining the facilities provided for online teaching and learning of their children during this period, the sources of online teaching and learning, the extent of their participation in online teaching and learning, their perception of online teaching and learning and the challenges faced during this period.

Design/Methodology/Approach: The descriptive survey method was adopted for the study. The population of study consisted 110, 453, and 234 adult Nigerians who are within the ages of 15-64 according to Nigerian Demographic Profile (2019). A sample of 399 was drawn from the population using Taro Yamane's statistical formular for sample size. Google form designed by the researchers was used to collect data from parents using random sampling method. Frequencies and Percentages were used to analyse data collected for research questions 1, 2, 4 and 5 while mean scores were used to analyse data collected for research question 3 that is the extent of parents' participation in online teaching and learning of their children.

Findings: It was discovered that the facilities provided by the parents were laptops, android phones, desktop computers and modems; the sources of online teaching and learning were schools' online teaching; parents participated to a high extent in online teaching and learning, parents' perception of online teaching and learning is that it is a way of keeping the children busy as well as an alternative teaching method; some of the challenges faced included: data cost, erratic power supply, fear of the children watching pornographic sites and other under aged phone distractions.

Implications: Based on the findings of the study, it is recommended that varieties of facilities should be provided for online teaching and learning, sources other than the children's school online teaching and learning should be explored, parents should engage in practical teaching of their children and all stakeholders- federal government, National Communications Commission (NCC), power holding companies, parents and teachers, etc should play their roles effectively.

Originality /Value: This work has not been published before. This study discovered that online teaching and learning is a way of keeping the children busy as well as an alternative teaching method but it cannot be compared to classroom teaching, in terms of students' comprehension, assimilation and overall academic performance, hence parents prefer classroom teaching and learning for their children.

Keywords: COVID-19, Online Teaching and Learning, School Children, Parents' Participation, Classroom Teaching.

Introduction

Nigeria unlike many other African countries was not affected by the spread of the Corona virus (COVID 19) at the initial stage of the pandemic. However, by the 28th of February, 2020, the first case was recorded in Nigeria through a Nigerian UK returnee. The increase of the confirmed cases to 343 in barely 2 months brought a great concern to the Nigerian government. To curtail the spread of this virus, the Federal Ministry of Education announced the temporary close-

down of all schools in Nigeria, effective March 23rd, 2020.

This scenario was properly described by UNESCO (2020) stating that the period of COVID-19 pandemic is a typical example of times when conventional teaching paradigm could not work in schools. During this period, as a measure of social distancing, students and teachers are not allowed to interact physically. Schools were closed down for many weeks and teaching and learning were disrupted.

Bearing in mind that students staying away from schools for a long period will adversely affect their academic performances, the choice of online teaching and learning became imperative in developing countries like Nigeria. Online learning is defined as "learning experiences in synchronous or asynchronous environments using different devices (e.g., mobile phones, laptops, etc.) with internet access. In these environments, students can be anywhere (independent) to learn and interact with instructors and other students" (Singh & Thurman, 2019).

Online teaching and learning was made possible because many of the students already have developed love for the mobile technologies such as mobile phones and tablets. This could be an advantage for learning at this age. Aina and Olanipekun (2018) identified that learning through the WhatsApp, Facebook, and YouTube could be the best M-learning Apps in Nigeria today. These Apps are straightforward to install on most smartphones, and their internet connectivity are simple with low cost.

Online teaching and learning are not to be left only in the hands of schools. Many stakeholders are involved in it. Some television and radio stations keyed in to online teaching and learning by airing online lessons for children to participate while at home. Parents are equally concerned as the onus lies on them to provide most if not all the facilities needed for effective online teaching and learning during the COVID 19 pandemic period. Those with younger children even have greater responsibilities of helping them in measuring up to expectations.

Furthermore, it can be deduced that online teaching and learning within this period came with its own challenges. Etang (2020) stated that Nigerian educators, like Bala Babangida, the principal of the Unique Schools in Jos, says that while some Nigerians have been able to switch to online and social media learning, there are challenges such as cost of data, devices to use for effective learning, fees set by various schools which the parents are kicking against becomes a bit problematic to Nigerians.

Statement of the Problem

The outbreak of COVID 19 pandemic is a worldwide problem that has affected every facet including the educational system and as it stands, it is not certain when the problem will be over hence the educational system will suffer greatly if no alternative teaching and learning system comes to play. The need for online teaching and learning becomes imperative and parents' participation in this digital technology for their children are inevitable. More so, parents depend so much on classroom teachers for overall academic development of their children under normal situation but this time, there is a paradigm shift to alternative method of teaching and learning due to the pandemic hence the carrying out of this study to ascertain the level of participation of parents in their children/wards' online teaching and learning during this pandemic period.

Purpose of the Study

The main aim of the study is to examine parents' participation in online teaching and learning of their children during COVID 19 pandemic period in Imo State. Specifically, it aimed at:

1. ascertaining the facilities provided by parents for online teaching and learning of their children during this period
2. investigating the sources of online teaching and learning.
3. examining the extent of parents' participation in online teaching and learning of their children.
4. determine parents' perceptions of online teaching and learning vis a vis classroom method.
5. establish the challenges faced in online teaching and learning during this period.

Literature Review

Online teaching and learning though not new to the developed nations of the world became prominent in Nigeria with the outbreak of the Corona virus popularly known as COVID 19. This

led to the closure of schools to avoid close contact of students and to curtail the spread of the virus. Schools therefore resorted to alternative method via online teaching and learning. Most of the terms (online learning, open learning, web-based learning, computer-mediated learning, blended learning, m-learning) have in common the ability to use a computer connected to a network, that offers the possibility to learn from anywhere, anytime, in any rhythm, with any means (Cojocariu, Lazar, Nedeff, & Lazar 2014). According to Nwana (2012), e-learning in education is the wholesome integration of modern telecommunication equipment, particularly the internet into the educational system.

The importance and/or advantages of e-learning in promoting quality education are not in doubt. Dhawan (2020) identified flexibility as an interesting aspect of online learning whereby learners can schedule or plan their time for completion of courses available online. He further stated that combining face-to-face lectures with technology give rise to blended learning and flipped classrooms; this type of learning environment can increase the learning potentials of the students. Students can learn anytime and anywhere, thereby developing new skills in the process leading to life-long learning. Ezeugbo and Asiegbo (2011) maintained that functional and qualitative education, which is viewed as a necessary condition for national development cannot be achieved without sound knowledge and application of e-learning. Thus, all educational systems all over the world today are under increasing pressure to use e-learning to teach students the knowledge and skills they need to acquire in the 21st century.

To ensure the effectiveness on online teaching and learning, a lot of facilities are required. Obodoegbulam and Ogbonnaya in Ezeugbo and Asiegbo (2011) enumerated e-learning facilities needed for effective teaching to include computer, internet, e-mail, satellite, multimedia, network, telephone, wireless technology, mobile phone and CD-ROM. Similarly, Nwana (2012) also listed ICT resources as computer, scanner, printer, intranet, internet, e-mail, videophone systems, teleconferencing devices, Wireless Application Protocols (WAP), radio and microwaves,

television and satellites, multimedia computer and multimedia projector. Some devices used for this distance learning programme are TV, CD-ROM, and Radio (Kyari, Adiuku- Brown, Abechi & Adelokun, 2018) and recently the mobile phones (Aina & Olanipekun, 2018).

To harness these benefits, it is the opinion of Hollow and ICWE (2009) that the resources and facilities for e-learning must be on ground and properly utilized. These facilities are necessary to meet the challenges of the contemporary world education competitiveness in scientific and technological advancements.

Different countries worldwide have introduced various alternatives during the pandemic to continue the educational activities. Online libraries, TV broadcasts, guidelines, resources, video lectures, online channels were introduced (Basilaia & Kvavadze, 2020). Kuwonu (2020) opined that countries are increasingly promoting remote learning through traditional mass communication tools such as radio, and sometimes television in addition to online platforms and social media. Amidst this deadly virus spread, Basilaia, Dgebuadze, Kantaria and Chokhoniidze (2020) listed the online platforms needed as; (a) video conferencing with at least 40 to 50 students, (b) discussions with students done to keep classes organic, (c) good internet connections (d) lectures accessible in mobile phones and not just laptops, (e) possibility of watching already recorded lectures, and (f) instant feedback from students and assignments. In Bangladesh, UNICEF (2020) is working with the government to offer effective remote learning programmes using TV, radio, mobile phone and Internet platforms to reach the maximum number of students. UNICEF has also helped produce guides to assist teachers that are giving remote classes. Considering this technological divide, most countries around the world are also using television and/or radio-based programmes to implement online teaching and learning. Burns (2020) identified that four (4) options for distance education to continue teaching during COVID-19 are radio, television, mobile phones and online learning.

Online teaching and learning cannot be complete without parents' involvement

especially during this COVID 19 pandemic period where children are participating at home. Parental involvement according to Clinton and Hattie (2013:324) refers to:

a situation where parents are directly involved in the education of their children, they involve themselves and are involved by the school and teachers in the learning process of their children, and they fulfil their duties as parents in making sure that the learner is assisted in the process of learning as much as they possibly can. It does not just refer to parents enquiring about the performance of a learner in schools, but also in them taking a role in communicating with their children with the aim of having a healthy relationship with them, so that the process of encouraging, mentoring, leading and inspiring may be genuine.

The study of Cashman, Bhattacharjea, and Sabates (2020) discovered that 85% of the parents indicated that they felt they can support their children's studies at home. Many of these parents (77%) indicated that they have time to engage with their children's learning at home (and this is before the current crisis). Their study demonstrated the willingness of parents to support their children's learning. They also discovered that 56% of parents reported that there is someone in the house who is able to help children at home with their studies. Little over two-third of parents (68%) reported that they are able to help their children. The study of Abdallah (2018) showed that parents are less satisfied with the quality of e-learning in terms of content and teaching procedure. The study of Siu-Cheung (2015) discovered that there was a high correlation between parental understanding and support for e-learning although parents demonstrated only a basic level of understanding.

Previous studies had proved that e-learning has challenges that could make it not suitable at this period of COVID-19. Ezeugbo and Asiegbo (2012) identified major e-learning challenges as inadequate funding, lack of technical

background and inadequate facilities. Dhawan (2020) stated that difficulties and problems associated with online teaching and learning using modern technology ranged from downloading errors, issues with installation, login problems, problems with audio and video, and so on. Sometimes students find online teaching to be boring and unengaging. Parkes, Stein and Reading (2014) identified a low-level preparedness among the students concerning the usage of e-learning Management Systems. The inadequacy of Nigeria's weak and underdeveloped broadband infrastructure is a significant shortcoming (Trucano, 2014)). Azhar and Iqbal (2018) stated that due to low internet connection, expensive data and an urban-rural digital divide, online classes alone are unable to cater for all students. This creates the risk of leaving millions of students in Africa behind. In sub-Saharan Africa, UNESCO says 89 per cent of learners do not have access to household computers and 82 per cent lacked internet access.

Research Methodology

The descriptive survey method was adopted for the study. The population of the study consisted one hundred and ten million, four hundred and fifty-three thousand, two hundred and thirty-four (110, 453, 234) adult Nigerians who are within the ages of 15-64 according to Nigerian Demographics Profile (2019). A sample of 399 was drawn from the population using Taro Yamane's statistical formular for sample size. Parents with children and wards in nursery, primary and secondary schools were selected for the study. Google form designed by the researchers was used to collect data from parents using random sampling method. Frequencies and Percentages were used to analyse data collected for research questions 1, 2,4 and 5 while mean scores were used to analyse data collected for research question 3 that is extent of parents' participation in online teaching and learning where: VHE – Very High Extent, HE – High Extent, LE – Low Extent and VLE – Very Low Extent. Items with 50% and 2.50 mean scores and above were accepted as positive.

Data Presentation, Analyses and Discussion**Table 1: Facilities Provided by Parents for Online Teaching and Learning of their Children during COVID 19 Period.**

S/N	Facilities	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1.	Laptops,	255	64
2.	Desktop computers	201	50
3.	Android phones	263	66
4.	Modems	221	55
5.	Printers	120	30
6.	Radio	20	5
7.	Television	50	13
8.	CD-ROMs	40	10

Analyses in Table 1 show that Android phones ranked highest among the facilities provided by parents for online teaching and learning with 66%. This is followed by laptops (64%), modems (55%), desktop computers (50%), printers (30%), television (13%), CD-ROMs (10%) and radio (5%). This implies that the main facilities provided by parents for their children's online teaching and learning are Android phones,

laptops, modems and desktop computers. This finding is in line with some of the e-learning facilities enumerated by Obodoegbulam and Ogbonnaya in Ezeugbo and Asiegbu (2011) which included computer, network, mobile phone, internet. However, it negates the statement of Kyari, Adiuku-Brown, Abechi and Adetakun (2018) that the devices used for online learning are TV, CD-ROM and radio.

Table 2: Sources of Online Teaching and Learning

S/N	Sources	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1.	Schools' Online Teaching	290	73
2.	Television Channels	153	38
3.	Radio Programmes	30	8
4.	YouTube	132	33
5.	Facebook	20	5
6.	WhatsApp	100	25
7.	Online Libraries	70	18
8.	Video lessons	160	40
9.	Zoom	180	45

In Table 2, the results clearly show that the main source of online teaching and learning for the children is their schools' online teaching with 73% which is above the 50% acceptable score. Other sources have scores below 50%. These include Zoom (45%), video lessons (40%), television channels (38%), YouTube (33%), WhatsApp (25%), Online libraries (18%), radio programmes (8%) and Facebook (5%). This result is in tandem with the assertion of Ezeugbo and Asiegbu (2011) who maintained

that functional and qualitative education cannot be achieved without sound knowledge and application of e-learning and thus, all educational systems all over the world today are under increasing pressure to use e-learning to teach students the knowledge and skills they need to acquire in the 21st century. It does not support Aina and Olanipekun (2018) who identified that learning through the WhatsApp, Facebook, and YouTube could be the best M-learning Apps in Nigeria today.

Table 3: Extent of Parents' Participation in Online Teaching and Learning of their Children during this Period.

S/N	Items	VHE	HE	LE	VLE	Mean	Rem.
1.	Downloading online lessons	102 (408)	95 (285)	159 (318)	43 (43)	2.64	HE
2.	Printing out notes	70 (280)	84 (252)	185 (370)	60 (60)	2.41	LE
3.	Watching television online teaching with your children/wards	67 (268)	84 (252)	198 (396)	50 (50)	2.42	LE
4.	Providing alternative power supply for online teaching and learning.	60 (240)	135 (405)	170 (340)	34 (34)	2.55	HE
5.	Constant subscription to TV channels.	70 (280)	195 (585)	101 (202)	33 (33)	2.76	HE
6.	Buying of data regularly.	168 (672)	139 (417)	83 (166)	9 (9)	3.17	HE
7.	Regular payment of fees charged by schools for online teaching and learning.	81 (324)	133 (399)	160 (320)	25 (25)	2.68	HE
8.	Aiding children/ward in doing assignments.	55 (220)	112 (336)	176 (352)	56 (56)	2.42	LE
Grand Mean						2.63	HE

Data analyses in Table 3 reveal that parents participated in downloading online lessons, providing alternative power supply for online teaching and learning, constant subscription to tv channels, buying of data regularly, and regular payment of fees charged by schools for online teaching and learning to High Extent (HE) while they participate in printing out notes, watching television online teaching with your children/wards and aiding children/ward in doing assignments to a Low Extent (LE). The average mean of their extent of participation in their children's online teaching and learning is 2.63 showing High Extent. This finding is in line

with that of Cashman, Bhattacharjea, and Sabates (2020) who discovered that 85% of the parents indicated that they felt they can support their children's studies at home and of the parents (77%) indicated that they have time to engage with their children's learning at home. The finding that parents aid children/ward in doing assignments to a low extent maybe as a result of the finding of Cashman, Bhattacharjea, and Sabates (2020) that 56% of parents reported that there is someone in the house who is able to help children at home with their studies.

Table 4: Perception of Parents in Online Teaching and Learning of Their Children during COVID 19 Period.

S/N	Items	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1.	It is a waste of resources.	120	30
2.	It is a way of keeping children busy during COVID 19 period.	300	75
3.	It is alternative to classroom teaching.	241	60
4.	It is a means of making money by schools during the pandemic.	90	23
5.	I am highly satisfied with the video lessons.	100	25
6.	I am not satisfied with the coverage of the online teaching and learning.	93	23
7.	Nigeria is not well developed for online teaching and learning.	177	44
8.	I am 100% in support of online teaching and learning.	80	20
9.	It is better than classroom teaching and learning.	0	0

On the perception of parents in online teaching and learning of their children during COVID 19 period, it is discovered according to the

analyses in Table 4 that it is a way of keeping children busy during COVID 19 period and alternative to classroom teaching with 75% and

60% respectively. Other options were such as; It is a waste of resources (30%), It is a means of making money by schools during the pandemic (23%), I am highly satisfied with the video lessons (25%), I am not satisfied with the coverage of the online teaching and learning (23%), Nigeria is not well developed for online teaching and learning (44%), I am 100% in support of online teaching and learning (20%) and It is better than classroom teaching and learning (0%) were not accepted because their scores were below 50%. The acceptance of parents that online teaching and learning is an

alternative to classroom teaching supports the opinion of Basilaia and Kvavadze (2020) that different countries worldwide have introduced various alternatives during the pandemic to continue the educational process. These include online libraries, TV broadcasts, guidelines, resources, video lectures and online channels. The finding that parents are not satisfied with the coverage of the online teaching and learning corroborates that of Abdallah (2018) that parents are not satisfied with the coverage of the online teaching and learning

Table 5: Challenges Faced in Online Teaching and Learning during this COVID 19 Period

S/N	Challenges	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1.	Data cost	369	93
2.	Erratic power supply	330	83
3.	Distractions	170	43
4.	Inability to view and download lessons.	70	18
5.	Inadequate monitoring.	80	20
6.	Lack of time.	60	15
7.	Lack of interest on the part of the children.	170	43
8.	High fees charged by school management.	150	38
9.	Poor bandwidth	60	15
10.	Fear of children watching pornographic sites/other under age distractions.	210	53

In Table 5 on the challenges faced by parents in online teaching and learning of their children during this COVID 19 period, it was discovered that the major challenges are data cost (93%), erratic power supply (83%) and fear of children watching pornographic sites (53%). Others are; distractions (43%), inability to view and download lessons (18%), inadequate monitoring (20%), lack of time (15%), lack of interest on the part of the children (43%), high fees charged by school management (38%) and poor bandwidth (15%). This finding agrees with that of Etang (2020) cost of data as a challenge but not with fees set by the various schools. Also it agrees with that of Azhar and Iqbal (2018) on expensive data and not low internet connections. It does not agree with Dhawan (2020) who discovered that the difficulties and problems associated with online teaching and learning using modern technologies ranged from downloading errors, issues with installation, login problems, problems with audio and video, and so on

Conclusion

A cursory look at this study has revealed that online teaching and learning served as an alternative to classroom teaching during this COVID 19 pandemic period by keeping the children busy but not better than classroom teaching as opined by parents. Online teaching and learning should co-exist with classroom learning when schools re-open to obtain blended learning. It has been discovered that though the lessons are mostly taken at home, teachers and parents are not the only ones involved, hence all stakeholders must come together to see a way of making it work effectively until the pandemic is over and the children return to their schools.

Recommendations

Based on the finding of the study, the researchers recommend that:

1. Varieties of facilities should be provided by the parents so that when one is not functional, another can be used so that the children will not miss any of the

lesson and it will also give them opportunities of learning from different sources.

2. Sources other than the children's schools' online teaching and learning should be explored as it would give them opportunities of exploring what others are doing so as to expand the frontiers of knowledge.
3. The extent parents participated in online teaching and learning is commendable but they should improve on the areas that are inadequate.
4. Parents should also engage in practical teaching of their children or engage the services of a home teacher so as to have a blended learning.
5. The government and the National Communications Commission (NCC) should appeal to the communicate on firms to reduce the cost of data. Also there should be improvement in public power supply especially during the day when these lessons go on. Parents should endeavour to monitor their children when using the facilities so that they will not log into sites that will expose them to negative development.

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