

New Normal Potentials as Recourse to Covid-19 Overbearance on Effective Teaching-Learning Process Among Ibadan Megacity Social Studies Teachers

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Abstract

It is no gain say the fact that education constitute the fulcrum of change in the society, the more reason why education and its associated activities cannot but experience change. In some cases, such changes might be as a result of unforeseen contingencies which may be man-made or natural hazard. A case in point is the Covid-19 pandemic and its associated devastations on virtually all aspects of the economy, education as a key player in this regard also have its fair share in the said saga. Thus, for the sector to be in the forefront and to be globally compliant, it has to inject ideals of the 'new normal' in the teaching-learning process where the bulk of the activities are being executed which is the crux of this study. Quasi-experimental research design was employed for the study while samples were drawn across the 11 local governments constituting Ibadan Megacity of Oyo State Nigeria with 15 Social Studies teachers (male and female) selected from each of the local government totaling 165 participants in all who were exposed to In-depth Interviews (IDIs) on the crux of the study. Data were analyzed through tables, frequency counts, simple percentages and Rank order statistical test. Findings from the study revealed that Covid-19 negatively impacted on teaching learning delivery [hardship witnessed in the nation's education and schooling ranked first (143/95.33); panicky crisis approach and unwelcome students' engagements (135/90.00) ranked 2nd; paralyzed education activities during the pandemic era (131/87.30) ranked 3rd]; New normal impetus for effective teaching-learning include: introduction of variants of e-learning, the use of social media apps and blend of online and physical instructional delivery ranked 1st (134/89.33), 2nd (131/87.33) and 3rd (125/83.33) respectively. It is thus imperative that the nation's education embrace technologically-driven teaching-learning and global best practices of the current 'new normal' vogue in all spheres of human endeavours, education sector and educational programmes inclusive.

Keywords: Covid-19 overbearance; Effective teaching-learning process; Ibadan megacity; New normal potentials; Social Studies teachers.

Introduction

The Biblical injunction, there is nothing new under the sun is an affirmation of the fact that change is as old as existence itself occasioned by human beings in turning around God's initial plans in the beginning. As such, a number of advancements in technology arises from knowledge explosion and the associated rapid development of information communication technology, ICT culminating in globalization and the attendant posture of the global world as a global village is not without associated change. Since to be relevant especially in the comity of others, nations inclusive, there is every need to be change compliant, corollary of the current vogue; 'new normal' occasioned by the

outbreak of the coronavirus in the late year 2019 and pronounced pandemic by the World Health Organization, WHO as far back as March 2020.

It is instructive however to note that the foregoing also have education undertone. This might not be unconnected with the state of education especially in Nigeria during the Covid-19 saga and the attendant effects on school programmes and attendance. Reason for this according to Oduolowu (2020) is largely due to the nature of face-to-face classroom practice that largely characterized Nigerian schools hence, learning within the four walls of the classroom happened to be the order of the day. The effect of such practice in the pandemic era is better imagined than real.

For instance, it was reported that quite a number of schools were closed down across the nations of the world in the wake of Covid-19 pandemic (Salawu, 2021). However, most of the developed nations with advanced technology, within limited period demonstrated their ingenuity by embarking on a number of educational activities that is devoid of being subjected to the effect of Covid-19. Thus, academic exercise at different levels were reported such as online matriculation of new students, online lectures as well as convocation which thus put them at vantage position of making the best out of the said calamity bedeviling the whole world in the event of Covid-19.

Recounting the impact of the pandemic especially on the education as a sector of the economy, Oyewo (2021) was of the view that education seemingly constitutes the most aspect of human life that was drastically affected by the pandemic to the fact that while other sector almost regained life, education sector remained paralyzed with concomitant hardship to the sector. Such hardship according to him reflected among others, disorderliness of pedagogical activities, deferral of evaluative process, declined transactional schooling, dropping and postponement of academic conferences, disengagement from job and decline in work force, deaths, delayed infrastructural repair, among others

Similar view has been aired by Salawu (2021) who averred that the pandemic has deeply negatively impacted on educational sector with schools at all levels seriously affected through the various phases of lockdown occasioned by the pandemic in terms of total, partial, short and long term lockdowns. The resultant effect among others, include forceful closed down of schools, postponement of public terminal and semester examination, rescheduled resumption date, changing pattern of schools system across the states of the federation. All these resulted in the adoption of panicky crisis approach to finding solution to both knowledge and engagement gaps manifesting in unwelcome pupils and students engagements such as being loose; uncoordinated; playful; none-engagement in profitable ventures, thereby leading to blurred future prospects.

It need be reiterated that the above scenario is not limited to African continent alone; it cut across many nations of the world. Confirming these, it was the contention of Jagun (2022) in a message during the 20th anniversary of Nigeria Computer Society (NCS) that during the Covid-19 pandemic, the total numbers of 1.2billion children were out of school. Writing in the same vein, Okebukola (2022) attributed the onslaught of effect of Covid-19 pandemic especially in the sub - Saharan Africa, Nigeria inclusive, to the nature of extant education system and the nature of instructional delivery which was largely teacher-based education and teacher-based learning.

Succinctly from the above, the nation's education has failed to withstand the effects unleashed on the sector arising from the breakdown of Covid-19 pandemic. This has also served as an eyes opener to the seemingly one-way traffic charactering the nation's education which is largely physical classroom interaction and mostly, jug and mug scenario (Oduolowu, 2020; Oladiti, 2020; Okebukola, 2022). As such, if the Chinese saying, 'anything that is bad, throw it to the school' is anything to go by, there is the need for the nation's education to key in to the technologically-driven teaching-

learning which is but global best practices especially among the developed nation. This has crystallized into the current vogue of 'new normal' in virtually all aspects of human endeavours and especially in educational sector and educational programmes at large.

Statement of the Problem

The outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic and its associated effects in virtually all aspects of human endeavours tend to expose the gap in the nation's educational programmes and the resultant abrupt stoppage of educational activities in schools which lasted for several months with its concomitant effects. The situation was put behind within limited time among developed nations and educational activities continued unabated as a result of deployment of adequate technologies hence, the use of different platforms such as e-learning, virtual learning, social media, to mention few. The success of the foregoing translated in undisturbed academic activities and consequent new normal vogue currently.

Actualizing such among some sub-Saharan African nations faces a number of teething problems occasioned by the extant practices in the teaching-learning such as availability of adequate infrastructural facilities and tools; learners' characteristics and readiness; teacher-related factors as well as manners of development of ICT in schools. All these are but clog in the wheel of the new normal actualization in teaching-learning process generally. Consequently, this paper examines new normal potentials as recourse to Covid-19 overbearance on effective teaching-learning process among Ibadan megacity Social Studies teachers. Thus, two research questions are put forward to give the study direction.

Research Questions

- (1) To what extent has Covid-19 Pandemic impacted on educational programmes in Nigeria?
- (2) What are the new normal potential capable of bringing about effective instructional delivery into Nigeria educational programmes?

Objectives of the Study

This study aims at finding out the place of new normal ideals in improving teaching-learning process especially in the pandemic and post pandemic era. Thus, the study is expected to showcase the extent of Covid-19 pandemic on educational programmes in the country; the various new normal potentials that can be adopted to douse the impact of the pandemic on teaching-learning process generally.

Literature Review

Education, Social Studies and New Normal Teaching-Learning Potentials

The place of education in virtually all aspect of human endeavours and the nation at large cannot be over-emphasized. As rightly observed in the nation's National Policy on Education, NPE 2014, education constitute the major fulcrum of the nation's breakthrough in all aspect hence, its description as the instrument par-excellence for achieving national objectives. In Apparent confirmation of this, Oladiti and Ogunjimi (2021) indicated that education remains the fulcrum of individual, society as well as national development; hence, education is always at the fore-front of change, transformation and attainment of societal aspirations.

Without mincing words, education is a force to be reckoned with as an instrument of change, growth and development. It is however instructive to state that realizing the various feats through education cannot be done in the absence of effective educational activities prominent among which is teaching-learning process and by extension, various school subjects and teacher education at large. This perhaps informed the submission of Nworgu (2013) that educational programmes that constitute and organized and sustained communication designed purposely for driving learning requires school subjects and indeed, Social Studies to achieve the national aims and goals. Similar view regarding Social Studies as a carrier school subject basic to teaching and learning and teacher education has been construed by Adaralegbe (2010) who sees Social Studies as the aggregate of experience expected of a student in the course of exposure to Social Studies that provide explanations on issues and problem confronting human being in the environment. Attesting to the foregoing, Meziobi (2012) described the subject as part of the responses to the problem of the societal culture and values.

Social Studies according to National Council for the Social Studies, NCSS (2017) summed up the subject as an integrated study involving Social Sciences and Humanities in promoting civic competence. To this, Ajibade (2019) submitted that education's lofty objectives are a product of school subjects at different levels with Social Studies as one of the core subjects of the Nigerian 9 years basic education programme. Similarly, Farmson (2020) averred that the teaching of Social Studies is charged with the inculcation of the desired knowledge, skills, values and attitudes in learners. The above is an indication that for education to achieve its desired objectives especially in the face of pandemic, new normal impetus in the present dispensation is essential for effective teaching-learning.

Teaching-Learning and New Normal Potentials

Simply put, teaching-learning process involve the processes involved in instructional delivery, corollary of which has to do with all that goes into bringing about effective teaching and learning comprising factors such as teachers, learners, subject matter, place and time context, mode of evaluation (Oladiti, 2020). An explanation of the extant state of the teaching-learning process is characterized among others by teacher-centeredness; face-to-face interactions as well as learning in the four walls of the physical classroom setting (Oduolowu, 2020; Salawu, 2021; Okebukola, 2022). Thus, there exists lacuna in the current global best practices in education, corollary of which is the need to be new normal compliant in teaching-learning activities.

New normal is the slogan in vogue occasioned by the Covid-19 pandemic and various strategies and containing its saga, hence, the household slogan 'New Normal'. Prominent in such new normal ideal especially as it relate to educational activities include among others, e-learning, virtual-learning, online-transaction, e-communication, writing from home, e-book, virtual-workshop/conferences, to mention few (Alatise & Olajojo, 2021; Oyewo, 2021). All these and many others have been canvassed as new normal impetus for effective instructional delivery.

For instance, the issue of digital literacy by all and sundry and especially, teachers cannot be over-emphasized. Acquisition of such will serve as potentials for teachers to be able to compete favourably with their counterparts the world over. In realization of this all-important factor, the Teachers' Registration Council of Nigeria, TRCN under the leadership of Prof Segun Ajiboye, the Executive Director has put in place digital literacy programme for teachers to accomplish e-learning.

In like manner, among a number of innovative teaching strategies capable of driving effective instructional delivery canvassed as new normal global best practices by studies such as Yusuf (2014)

and Haruna (2018) include the use of multi-media resources and internet usage which constitutes new norm in terms of online classes which Atolagbe (2021) identified as some of the good lessons from Covid-19 such as e-learning. The foregoing has been captured by Jagun (2022) when he advocated for paradigm shift in classroom practices with regards to e-learning and other technological platforms/mediated activities.

Methods and Instruments

The study adopted a quasi-experimental research design in evaluating new normal potentials as recourse to Covid-19 overbearance on effective teaching-learning process among Ibadan Megacity Social Studies' teachers. Thus, a total number of 15 Social Studies teachers each were selected across 11 local governments constituting Ibadan Megacity, giving a total of 165 teachers in all as the study sample. However, only 150 valid participants involved in the In-depth Interviews (IDIs) conducted on the crux of the study were employed for data analysis, using tables, frequency counts, simple percentages and Rank order statistical test.

Result Presentation, Analysis and Discussion

Research Question 1: To what extent has Covid-19 Pandemic impacted on educational programmes in Nigeria?

Table 1

Mean Rating and Rank Order Analysis of the Impact of Covid-19 on Educational Activities in Nigeria.

Issues	*VIR	Rank Order
	Frequency/ Mean Rating	
Education sector was among the most aspect of the nation that was drastically affected by the Covid-19 pandemic as education sector remained paralyzed while other sectors gradually comes to life.	131/87.30	3rd
Hardship recorded as a result of Covid-19 pandemic in Nigerian schools include disorderliness of pedagogical activities, deferral of evaluative process, declined transactional schooling, dropping and postponement of academic conferences, deaths, among others.	143/95.33	1st
Covid-19 pandemic led to panicky crisis approach in finding solution to knowledge and engagement gaps leading to unwelcome pupils and students engagements e.g. loose; uncoordinated; playful; none-engagement in profitable ventures, blurred future prospects.	131/90.00	2nd
The onslaught of Covid-19 pandemic in most sub-Saharan African nation revealed the nature of instructional delivery	126/84.00	4th

that was largely teacher-based education and learning.

School closure occasioned by the Covid-19 pandemic in the most African countries exacerbated the lingering inequality gaps resulting in the school closure and learners inability to receive any form of education.

Grand Mean	660/ 87.99
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*Very Important Reason

Source: Authors' fieldwork 2022

Table 1 shows the extent to which Covid-19 impacted on the nation's education activities with a number of hardships witnessed in the nation's education and schooling ranked first (143/95.33) followed by introduction of all panicky crisis approach culminating in unwelcome students' engagements (135/90.00) and paralyzed education activities during the pandemic era (131/87.30). Teacher-based instructional delivery and its attendant effects during the pandemic hampered education programmes and school closure leading to inequality gaps and education stand still ranked fourth (126/84.00) and fifth (125/83.30) respectively. The finding from this study is in line with the views expressed in some previous studies indicating the extent to which Covid-19 pandemic affected instructional delivery and educational activities in Nigeria with plethora of situation analysis (Ajiboye, 2021; Farmson, 2020; Haruna, 2018; Oladiti, 2020; Oladiti & Ogunjimi, 2021).

Research Question 2: What is the new normal potential capable of bringing about effective instructional delivery into Nigeria educational programmes?

Table 2

Mean Rating and Rank Order Analysis of the New Normal Potentials for Effective Instructional Delivery in Nigeria Educational Programmes.

Issues	*VIR	Rank Order
	Frequency/ Mean Rating	
A blend of online and physical learning process will boost educational activities and teacher education in Nigeria.	125/83.33	3rd
Entrenching variants of e-learning activities in the instructional delivery is a step in the new normal compliance direction.	134/89.33	1st
Application of relevant ICT in instructional delivery will go a long way in promoting global best practices in instructional delivery.	100/66.67	5th
Virtual learning in groups and individualized instruction is a variant of new normal promotion in teaching-learning.	121/80.67	4th
The use of social media apps in instructional delivery		

will reduce problems associated with physical face-to-face. 131/87.33 2nd instructional delivery.

Grand Mean 611/81.47

*Very Important Reason

Source: *Authors' fieldwork 2022*

From Table 2, a number of new normal potentials were showcased. Of prominence in the potentials are the introduction of variants of e-learning, the use of social media apps and blend of online and physical instructional delivery which ranked 1st (134/89.33), 2nd (131/87.33) and 3rd (125/83.33) respectively. Application of ICT and virtual learning ranked 4th (121/80.67) and 5th (100/66.67) respectively. Findings here further buttressed previous studies that canvassed for different new normal potentials capable of boosting instructional delivery and Teacher Education generally (Alatise & Olajo, 2021; Atolagbe, 2021; Jagun, 2022; Oduolowu, 2020; Okebukola, 2022; Salawu, 2021).

Conclusion

A panoramic view of this study has revealed that education happened to be the most aspect of human life that was drastically affected by the Covid-19 pandemic since as other sectors were gradually returning to normalcy, education sector remained at the receiving end with a number of hardship like: disorderliness of pedagogical activities, deferral of evaluative process, declined transactional schooling, dropping and postponement of academic conferences, deaths as well as delayed infrastructural repair, among others. The foregoing is an express narration of the state of education in the nation before, during and beyond the pandemic era which tends to complicate the situation at the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic. Studies have identified features of Nigerian education to include person to person training; non-application of some teaching applications in teaching-learning process; obsolete teaching strategies; non-availability of modern teaching aids; rural/urban areas dichotomy which largely reflected a face-to-face classroom practice. These to a large extent did affected negatively the nation's educational sector through the various phases of lockdown leading to forceful schools closure, postponement of public terminal and semester examination, rescheduled resumption date, changing pattern of schools system and the adoption of panicky crisis approach to education activities resulting in untoward pupils and students attitudes.

Succinctly from the above, the nation's education has failed to withstand the effects unleashed on the sector arising from the breakdown of Covid-19 pandemic. Hence, based on the findings of this study, it is hereby recommended among others that to make instructional delivery in Nigerian schools new normal compliant and globally relevant, it behooves all stakeholders in education to embrace new normal teaching-learning process, hence,

*There is the need for the nation's education to embrace the technologically-driven teaching learning process generally;

*Global best practices of the current 'new normal' vogue in virtually all aspects of human endeavours and especially in educational sector and educational programmes are to be incorporated into instructional delivery in schools;

*ICT and its variants as identified in this study need be vigorously pursued with adequate preparation, execution as well as procurements of needed infrastructural facilities.

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