

Online Teaching and Learning during Covid-19 in Nigeria: Prospects, Challenges and Revelations

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ABSTRACT

Globally, the education industry hurriedly introduced innovations which it did not consciously plan for, one of which is online teaching and learning. Using the philosophical methodology, the paper discusses online teaching and learning occasioned by the outbreak of coronavirus especially in developing and under developed states. The paper identified prospects and challenges of online teaching and learning but systematically noted that developments in the education industry within the period were epically and phenomenally revealing, notably that the pandemic has potentials to lay foundations for inclusive new beginnings in general policy formulations and behavioural dispositions. Deriving from this, the paper makes a case where social justice can become a priority with a strong indication that the security and well-being of the wealthiest man and state anywhere in the world cannot be guaranteed except the conditions of the poorest man and state anywhere in the world is improved. The paper among other things strongly recommends new thinking along lines where global social justice and global moral consciousness can become norms for guiding educational practices.

Keywords: online teaching and learning, Covid-19, Prospects, challenges, revelations.

INTRODUCTION

Across developed, developing and undeveloped states, people are favourably disposed to education and what justifies this assertion is the level of investments in education by individuals, institutions and

states. The level of investments in education by the individual, institution and the state determine the level of responsibility, degree of responsiveness and commitment of the individual, institution and the state to the general development of humanity. This accounts for why Shively (2005) writes that any individual, institution or state that is desirous of development in the real sense of development must make the provision of education a topmost priority among social services that the state provides for the citizens. States that make the right investments in education reap the dividends from such investments as they are those states that make strong and high profile waves in economic, political, environmental, moral, social, agricultural, scientific and technological breakthroughs, progress and advancements. This high regard for education makes the provision and acquisition of education a cardinal value by both the state and her citizens, so much that the provision of education takes a reasonable percentage of the budget of some reasonable and responsible states and in the same regard for education, most reasonable and responsible parents are ready to morally and honestly commit themselves or go the extra miles just to ensure that they provide sound and quality education for their sons, daughters and wards and correspondingly consider themselves phenomenal, monumental, epical and colossal failures if their dreams of providing sound and quality education for their sons, daughters and

wards are dashed or frustrated.

One moral principle that is at the heart or centre of the behaviours and attitudes of states and individuals towards education is that the provision and acquisition of education is a fundamental human right, and as a fundamental human right, no one should deny it from the other under any guise. According to Nwaokugha (2015:70) “education as a human right connotes an aura of sacredness which confers the provision of education to citizens as a fundamental natural right in which no one ought to be denied of”. Regard for education as a human right by both the state and the citizens captures an idea that projects the provision of education as a kind of empowerment and springboard for the survival of the individual, which, if not provided can turn out to be a terrible deficit and a source of virus that can consume or impair the life of an individual and the sound and normal functioning of the society. Following the above, providing the right education that creates the right consciousness in the citizens is synonymous with or is in tandem with a state providing her citizens and parents providing their sons, daughters and wards with the right mindset that can turn out to be the route or roadmap for social progress, a gateway to modernization, the ladder for economic and social mobility, political and moral development of the individual and the state. In all of these, what seems to justify the high regard for education by individuals, institutions and states is the conviction that providing education makes the individual and the state and not providing education mars the individual and the state.

These multifaceted functions and responsibilities which education renders to the society make education an articles of faith for the rich, the poor and the postmodern man or the postmodern society or world. The rich see education as the only formidable platform through which they can sustain the status quo, the poor see education as an institution and platform through which they can challenge the status

quo and correspondingly change their predicaments or influence change in their favour while the postmodern man or society sees education as institutions for radically and revolutionally generating ideas for addressing the challenges of a postmodern world. Revelations that emanate from the above are that there is hardly any neutral education (Eboh, 1996), as education can be for the liberation of a people, where education serves as a game changer and a platform for developing in a people a sense of autonomy and critical consciousness where he or she who has received education can explore it as a platform for his or her liberation and freedom through driving or deploying it into directions where education triggers in him or her a curiosity for robust abstract and logical thinking, where the educated person is challenged to take his destiny in his or her own hand through initiating actions that can change his or her conditions for the better. Education can also be an instrument and institution for social re-engineering where the primary focus is the use of education for forming, reforming, transforming, conscientizing, introducing innovations, sensitizing and addressing the multifaceted and ever-present challenges of man and the society.

Education serves as institution and instrument of domestication when education serves as a means of mere socialization or means of conditioning a people into serving the aim and objectives of the people who exploit and cheat them. In fact, the target of education here is the production of a band wagon of yes-member who can hardly and existentially challenge those who exploit and enslave them or initiate any responsible action that can lead to their empowerment and emancipation.

To be expected of a concept whose functions and responsibilities are so enigmatic as we have seen in education is its attraction to individuals, institutions and states and more inherently a subject matter at the centre of local, regional, national and global politics and correspondingly one concept that is prone to policy summersault

on one hand and one that is ever-ready to be driven to directions for providing succor, relief and addressing the ever-present challenges of the society. In the spirit of addressing the ever-present challenges of man and the society, many practices and values are initiated in education and these practices and values when appropriately appealed to can lead to changes in desirable directions, can lead to the positive transformation of man and the society. Values and practices that are at the heart or centre of education through which the humane, moralizing and humanizing features of education manifest can be achieved through teaching and learning and Nwaokugha (2014:14) says it all when he writes that “teaching leads to learning and is generally a means through which people acquire and internalize the values associated with education”. Teaching and learning as social activities involves high levels of interaction between teachers and learners, teachers and teachers, learners and learners, workers in educational institutions and teachers or learners and the environment where these major stakeholders find themselves, and because of this, events and activities in the environment are without exception easily shaped and influenced by the activities and events in the environment, suggesting that calm and peaceful activities in the environment have potentials to trigger, support and replicate developments that can be supportive and conducive for teaching and learning while hostile and disruptive activities in the environment equally have potentials to replicate developments that can be hostile and disruptive to teaching and learning.

The harm or otherwise that the environment causes education, precisely to teaching and learning can be appreciated when one recalls the recent coronavirus (Covid-19) experiences that ravaged the whole world. The outbreak of coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic is one development in the history of the world that has left terrible footprints on the global education landscape, in which the consequences and implications have

been one that has attracted the attention of scholars and institutions globally. According to Huber and Helm (2020:237), “the crisis caused by the Covid-19 virus has far-reaching effects in the field of education”. Writing from the angle of measures for mitigating its spread and its implications for education, Teras Suoranta, Teras and Curcher (2020:863) write that “the Covid-19 pandemic and the social distancing that followed have affected all walks of society including education. The magnitude of the crisis that coronavirus (Covid-19) caused the education industry globally can be sensed and appreciated in the remark made by Stefania Giannini, Assistant Director-General for Education, UNESCO, Robert Jenkins, Global Director, Education UNICEF and Jaime Saavedra, Director-General, Education Global Practice, the World Bank, when they write that “the global disruption to education caused by Covid-19 pandemic constitutes the worst education crisis on record because it led to the closure of educational institutions from pre-primary to tertiary levels with a staggering number of learners, which some scholars and institutions claim to be in the range of 1.5 billion (Vegas and Winthrop, 2020:4) and 1.6 billion (UNESCO, UNICEF and the World Bank, 2021:5) respectively not to have access to any form of education across the globe during the period.

Again, the situation may have been so described as the worst education crisis in history because features that are commonly associated with coronavirus (Covid-19) such as fear, worry, anxiety frustration, irritation, hopelessness, helplessness, insecurity, poverty and other social disarticulations may not and cannot support education or be good bedfellow or co-travellers with education. In the same way, measures that were put up by state and the international community to contain and mitigate the spread of the virus, such as lockdown, social distancing, isolation, quarantine and restriction of movement adversely produced negative results that negatively impacted on

education. Writing specifically on the damaging effects of lockdown on education, students' concentration and productivity, Teras et al (2020:864) write that lockdowns affect students in multiple ways; reinforcing inequality and putting them under social and psychological stress. Supporting the position of the above scholars on the effect of lockdown on education, Di Pietro, Biagi, Costa, Karpinski and Mazza (2020:4) write that lockdown as a measure for containing the spread of Covid-19 is inherently associated with learning loss. Evidence in support of the above claim derives justifications from the fact that quarantine causes learners to devote less time on learning but increases the amount of stress and anxiety that learners suffer and above all negatively affects the level of motivation and preparedness of learners to learn. Learning loss on one side, the education industry experienced strange and unethical development during this period, the most obvious was the introduction of measures where learners who studied remotely or online were not to repeat the school year regardless of their performance on the orders of the state. Any objective assessor who views the above especially the role of assessment in motivation and challenging learners in formal education to learn may quickly reach a conclusion that online teaching and learning during the Covid-19 negatively impacted on education. In fact, Teras et al (2020) were equally clever to notice that parents and custodians were equally affected by the outbreak of the coronavirus (Covid-19), a development that can further impede the education of learners whose participation in education will be sponsored by parents, guardians and custodians.

Equally, one observation that leaves one with hope in the face of the ravaging coronavirus (Covid-19) that has devastated humanity globally is the open acknowledgement that the outbreak of coronavirus, despite its many negative consequences and implications has inherent rays of hope for education in particular and

humanity in general, which when appropriately explored can translate into humanity turning the challenges posed by Covid-19 into opportunities. Specifically, Vegas and Winthrop (2020:1) admitted that "The Covid-19 pandemic has resulted in at least one positive thing: a much greater appreciation for the importance of public schools". They detailed and expanded their argument in these words:

It is hard to imagine there will be another moment in history when the central role of education in the economic, social and political prosperity and stability of nations is so obvious and well understood by the general population. Now is the time to chart a vision for how education can emerge stronger from this global crisis than ever before and propose a path for capitalizing on education's newfound support in virtually every community across the globe. (p.1)

Giving support to the above, Teras et al (2020:864) write that during this coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic, many parents and guardians "come to realize perhaps for the first time the social purpose of the education system and its power to structure everyday life".

The remark above is context specific and may be a tip of the iceberg on some positive developments that were brought about by the outbreak of the dreaded coronavirus (Covid-19). In fact, one can say with all amount of conviction that the outbreak of coronavirus "created a critical moment of making a discontinuity or break from normal or linear life" (Neuhauser, 2018), and this can rightly be described as a development from where a journey towards 'a new normal may be beginning' (Dey, Akhter and Fariha, 2021:63), a move away from old ways of doing things, (Nwaokugha, 2020:168), especially one that can challenge leaders and institutions to engineer policies with human face that can trigger the empowerment and emancipation of citizens for their individual survival and the collective development of the states. It is still fresh in the memory of people globally

that part of the good thing about coronavirus (Covid-19) is that its outbreak vanished gender role divisions between men and women, increased people's sense of creativity and promoted critical consciousness (UNESCO, UNICEF and the World Bank, 2021), sensitized citizens for the acquisition of new life skills, community care and reminder of values (Amahazion, 2021:3), caused and triggered the biggest changes in education since public education emerged in the 19th century (UNESCO, 2020), and the development of new lens, new visions and new perspectives for viewing life that is tilted towards a greater sense of autonomy and greater sense of self-realization (Dey et al 2021:75). These mean that some positive changes brought by the out-break of coronavirus (Covid-19) can be said to be comprehensive and inclusive.

It is an obvious fact that the situation humanity finds itself in the ravaging and rampaging onslaught of coronavirus is heavily loaded with new and complex challenges (Ali and Khalid, 2021:98), including opportunities that call for new behaviour or changes in behaviours, policy and institutional reforms and above all a greater sensitization, conscientization and involvement of people globally in the form of providing the people with information on coping and survival strategies and no institution and process can fill this gap better than education via teaching and learning. The attractiveness of education to general manipulations and policy summersaults has consistently, epically, and phenomenally positioned education as a beacon of hope for humanity and on the basis of this, education has so robustly and receptively been open to innovations. Because education has been open to innovations, it has been so central and critical for the survival and continuous flourishing of man and his institutions. What testifies to this is the fact that humanity has always persevered to provide education no matter the situation. In fact, just as human instinct and intuition has always responded to complex and difficult

situations in the form of such complex and difficult situations triggering curiosity, critical thinking, creativity, innovation and inventiveness as a response mechanism to whatever situation on ground, stakeholders in the education industry lived up to this human instinct and intuition by smartly developing and transitioning to online teaching and learning as an innovation for the continuous provision of education and learning that humanity most needed at this point in time.

Online teaching and learning is one hundred percent dependent on digital technologies and their accessories, a development which any insightful observer can notice has potentials to bring about monumental progress and phenomenal retrogression especially in developing and underdeveloped states because access to educational opportunity may not be equitable among the various classes of people in the society. All the two possibilities (gains/prospects) and complaints (challenges) are possible but an important gap is that the unfolding development are capable of challenging stakeholders in education to rejig, reposition, restructure and reshape the education industry and its delivery to the members of the society. It is in recognition of these emerging new developments in education which phenomenally have triggered new trends, new rhythms, new expectations and new challenges, some of which have not yet been appropriately explored and when explored can take education to the next level that Yunusa, Sanusi, Dada, Oyelere, Agbo, obaida and Aruleba (2021:44) observed that "The pandemic offers a window of opportunities for new experiences, reimagining the educational process and extending the frontiers of knowledge through empirical research and experimentation of different learning pedagogies and use of technology." The window of opportunities may be inclusive and comprehensive as there is need for new curriculum, new orientation, new instructional paradigms, new

expectations and widening of the frontiers in teacher education that can pragmatically and existentially address the realities of the time. It is also possible the frontiers of knowledge which the new development in education have stimulated can trigger a wave where education can be deep-rooted in new directions that can be supportive of social justice, good governance and corporate social responsibility from states and corporate institutions in matters of education for the common good of humanity. These new outlooks for education are premised on the fact that nothing can remain the same after the ravaging and rampaging onslaught of coronavirus and humanity needs new knowledge and new experiences to cope with the new situation or new normal from education.

This means knowledge and experience that owe their root to online teaching and learning during the outbreak of coronavirus (Covid-19) can be turned into assets for the transformation of the education industry and the advancement of humanity. Therefore, the focus of this paper is to discuss online teaching and learning in Nigeria especially its prospects and challenges and by way of predictions highlight developments, which when explored can strengthen the education industry by making it emerge stronger so as to serve the society better.

The theoretical framework upon which this study is based is social constructivism. Social constructivism is also called social constructionism and according to Ageeva (2016:1), can be seen as a source of the post-modern movement. As a source of post-modern movement, social constructivism can be said to identify with those features that are common with postmodernism such as multi-disciplinary, inter-disciplinary and cross-disciplinary features (Nwaokugha, 2022). It might be on the basis of the above observation that Ageeva (2016:1) writes that “The development of constructivist theories occurred in the field of sciences as psychology, pedagogy, sociology,

anthropology, linguistics”. According to Akpan, Igwe, Mpamah and Okoro (2020:50), Lev Vygotsky is the founding father or proponent of social constructivism and this was in the year 1968.

Social constructivism has come a long way and what attests to this is the robust and scholarly attention it receives across disciplines. Scholars and commentators are unambiguous in maintaining that social constructivism invokes meanings which revolves around the fact that teaching and learning or more technically ideas and knowledge are social phenomenon and are socially constructed through interactions between the teacher, the learners and the environment. What this means is that contrary to popular claim or view that teachers are the sole custodian of knowledge and learners are passive recipients of such knowledge, the truth, following the position of social constructivism is that the process that leads to the production of knowledge is one in which the teacher and the learners work cooperatively and collaboratively to produce and generate something new, which add to the body of existing knowledge in the discipline in question. In other words, the right interpretation, following social constructivists is one where the teacher is taken as a facilitator of knowledge because the process involved in knowledge production or generation is one of collaboration between the teacher and the learners. This is highlighted by Akpan et al (2020:49) when they write that “Social constructivism is collaborative form of learning based on interaction, discussion and knowledge sharing among students”. At the heart of social constructivism is the focal flashpoint that knowledge is not a property that the individual possesses alone, rather it is a shared experience that develops and circulates through social interactions. The appropriateness of this theory for this study lies in the fact that everyone experienced coronavirus and correspondingly can express his or her views or experiences about the virus that can give clues to providing cure to it. It is

possible this can best be actualized through providing individuals in the society problem-solving, awareness raising and critical thinking skills that can trigger opportunities for interactions and construction of ideas by the different segments of the society. Mbato (nd:147) says it all when she writes that “The social constructivist paradigm is associated with creative thinking and problem solving through collaborative learning”.

The methodology for this paper is purely philosophical and an academic endeavour according to Nwaokugha and Danladi (2016) is said to be philosophical when it uses speculation, analysis and prescription. The importance of speculation in the world of knowledge generally and as a philosophical research methodology in particular has made discussions of it a focal flashpoint and a centre of attraction to many scholars and disciplines. To this end, speculation is robust with ideas from many scholars and disciplines. To speculate according to Odour (2010:97) is to ‘wonder, conjecture, guess or to hypothesize’, just in the same way as Aminigo (1999:4) writes that speculation as a philosophical research method is an attempt to find logical coherence in an entire realm of thought. According to Nwaokugha and Danladi (2016:421), the foundation of this method of enquiry is that the soundness or reasonableness of any proposition can be established through its rootedness in the science of logic or the various orderly sequences that lead to a conclusion. The above was re-echoed by Nwaokugha and Ihuoma (2019:276), when they write that the whole idea of speculation as a philosophical research method revolves around the thesis that the reasonableness or reasonability and authenticity of a proposition depends on the orderly, logical consistency of the claims that constitute the proposition’. In simple translation, speculation systematically, critically and coherently builds up ideas on a subject matter or topic in an orderly and consistent manner so much that one idea logically and

orderly leads to the other or maintains an order where conclusions of a claim or proposition derive from their premise.

In knowledge production and generation, scholars resort, embrace and appeal to the speculative method in topics or subject matters that are highly metaphysical in nature especially where there are no definite answers to issues or problems that are the focus and subject matter of the philosophical discussion. It is equally important one point out that the branch of philosophy known as axiology (theory of values) is another area where the use of speculation is very common. In all of these, one thing is sure, how orderly and logically connected what had been speculated or presented is becomes the basis upon which it can be accepted and the tool the scholar uses in his speculative mission or enterprise is language and logic.

Analysis as a method of philosophical research is interested in mapping out or delineating the semantic boundaries of concepts, terms, words and propositions. In other words, it is interested in establishing the meanings of concepts, terms, words and propositions on one hand and beaming searchlight and resolving issues of vagueness, clumsiness, absurdities and ambiguities that may be associated with such concepts, terms, words, and propositions on the other, noting and bearing in mind the context in which a particular meaning of concept, term, word and proposition can apply. The interest of analysis in meaning is to help resolve conflicts that are ever-present in the day to day affairs of man and his institutions, just as it is important one point out that the various crises that undermine human, social and general development of owe their roots to faulty use of language, faulty presentation of concepts, words, terms and propositions. The preoccupation and heightened focus of analysis on issues of meaning and conflict resolution is for the sole purpose of enhancing effective communication which naturally can lead to peace and peace building in the society. One must point out

that in this regime of analysis, there has been intensified efforts at deploying analysis into what Nwaokugha (2021:102) calls key to clarifying and decoding the inconsistencies and ambiguities that are ever-present in man's daily social, political, religious, scientific, economic, technological and environmental activities and the result or objective of analysis is the promotion of precision, more understanding, robust peace and promotion of harmonious living by members of the society. Consequently, it is not an exaggeration and cannot be that analysis has become a focal flashpoint in contemporary practice in philosophy in particular and across all disciplines in the pursuit of knowledge. Language and logic are also fundamental tools in analysis.

Prescription is also called normative approach to philosophical research and stimulates or invokes a meaning that revolves around the establishment of principles, guidelines and criteria for judging values or making prescriptive or normative value judgments. Odour (2010:97) says it all when he writes that "to prescribe is to recommend or to set down as a rule or guide". Every scholarly work that is worth the name must show and demonstrate elements of prescription and this is in the form of making suggestions and recommendations on how a problem or problems that are the subject matter of a philosophical exercise can be resolved. Specifically, Nwaokugha (2021:102) draws attention on how prescription works when he writes that:

This is achieved in a research in the form of a researcher making autonomous value statements on how an issue that has been the focus or subject matter of a philosophical discussion can be resolved so that all the wrong noticed in the course of the discussion can be harmoniously addressed. In a way, suggestions and recommendations in researches and other forms of writing fall within the frame of reference of prescription.

Prescription is fundamental in philosophical research in particular and research generally as scholars whose areas of interests are axiology particularly social philosophy, ethics, aesthetics, political philosophy etc may be handicapped in their practice if they do not resort to prescription. Part of what has made prescription a necessary condition in philosophical research is that values change every day and such changes require corresponding current and state of the art approach that can correspond or take into consideration the events of the time.

Recent developments in the world of knowledge globally have ignited a paradigm shift where many scholars currently embrace the philosophical research methodology. It has been noted by Nwaokugha (2021) that the breaking of new frontiers of knowledge across disciplines globally is a credit which scholars and by extension humanity owe to the receptive embrace of philosophical research methodology. The credits to the philosophical research methodology are possible on many fronts. Philosophical research methodology enriches the knowledge industry across disciplines, sharpens researchers, scholars' and learners' investigative skills and curiosity. Nwaokugha and Ihuoma (2019:277) add to this list when they write that it boosts:

The confidence levels of researchers as researchers see every challenge in any academic discipline as solvable and resolvable. In fact, philosophical method of enquiry stimulates in scholars the desire to critically and continuously try out new academic options that can result in phenomenal improvement of scholars and breaking of new frontiers of knowledge.

One can say that an inclusive and all-embracing benefit of the philosophical research method is provided by Nwaokugha and Danladi (2016:127) in these words:

Indulgence or embrace of philosophical research method affords freedom and opportunity that invites, motivates and challenges researchers to venture into various problems areas across disciplines.

By this feature, researchers are availed platforms, which in addition to tackling diversified subject matters also promote progress in the form of extending and breaking new frontiers of knowledge. The issue of diversified subject matter and the dividends thereof are possible because philosophical research methods produce and rely more on theories than any other research method. What is implicated here is that philosophical research method is not restrictive and consequently does not in any way impoverish researchers and disciplines that are favourably disposed to using it. It rather contributes in ground breaking breakthroughs in the knowledge industry. All these by implication mean that the knowledge industry and mankind can be better off in terms of opportunities and dividends associated with research, its contributions to improving human conditions and acquisition of knowledge.

A practice in researches that employ the philosophical research method is to focus on key concepts or issues under investigation and to this we turn.

Online Teaching and Learning

Teaching and learning are two concepts that always go hand in hand in the formal process of educating learners and the validity of their relationship becomes more glaring when viewed against the background that one triggers the other, although learning as a cognitive experience or process can occur independently without the learner being taught in a formal teaching learning situation. In their uniqueness, criticality and centrality to knowledge production or development and the robust flourishing of human beings, teaching and learning are key to achieving the civilizing, moralizing, emancipating and empowering ideals that education is globally known for. In recent times, online teaching and learning has become a household name in the education industry as an alternative for the continuation of teaching and learning in the rampaging and ravaging spree of coronavirus (Covid-19) and despite online

teaching and learning becoming a household name in the education industry in recent times especially in developing and under-developed countries, there is hardly a consensus or universal definition of online teaching and learning as any insightful observer can also observe that online teaching and learning also goes by such names as e-learning and virtual learning. That there is more than one name for online teaching and learning may be pointing in the direction that online teaching and learning may not have a one size fits all definition or a consensus definition. What this expose is that the various scholars and institutions who show interest in online teaching and learning provide a plethora of definitions of online teaching and learning, so much that one scholar and institution can provide more than one definition of online teaching and learning. Basar, Mansor, Jamaludin and Alias (2021:121) write that online learning (e-learning) describes any form of pedagogy delivered using digital technology. In what may be described as an elaborate description, the above scholars write that:

Online learning is defined as a teaching and learning process between teachers and pupils that involves various digital media such as WhatsApp, zoom and google classroom. In addition, online learning does not refer to direct learning alone. Any assignment or activity, provided by the teacher online are considered part of online learning. (p. 121)

What any insightful observer can observe in all effort at defining online teaching and learning is that all such attempts invoke meanings that revolve around teaching and learning through the use of devices that are technology driven and connected to the internet and this connection to the internet makes teaching and learning available to learners anywhere, anytime irrespective of distance, location or environment. Put slightly different, online teaching and learning revolves around the use of electronic and telecommunication gadget and digital facilities, hardware and software

and technology in teaching and learning processes where the traditional face to face social interaction or in-person instruction between the teacher and learners in a structured classroom setting or environment may not apply, rather teaching and learning takes place irrespective of distance and location of the teacher and his or her learners. It is an innovation in teaching and learning that has been made popular especially in developing and underdeveloped countries by the outbreak of coronavirus and whose success is heavily dependent on the availability of technology, standby and ready source of power, technologically educated personnel and availability of technological accessories and gadgets. In most developing and underdeveloped states, the transition to online teaching and learning was not consciously and systematically planned as there was no foundations or preparation before education institutions were directed to switch over to it. Because the transition to online teaching and learning was not consciously and systematically planned, it created a situation which Maheshwari (2021:6630) describes was not easy for teachers and students and correspondingly one in which Ferri, Grofoni and Guzzo (2020:8) write may produce results that can never be sustainable. The modus operandi in online teaching and learning is either the synchronous or asynchronous modes. According to Almahasees, Mohsen and Amin (2021:2), the synchronous mode "is where faculty and their students meet in a pre-scheduled time as a part of interactive learning classes while the asynchronous method refers to the faculty given the course without interaction with the students".

Like coronavirus (Covid-19) that has been described as a mix bag, that is, a phenomenon that presents challenges as well as opportunities (Nwaokugha, 2020:167), online teaching and learning as an offshoot of coronavirus is equally a mix bag, as it generates mix feeling and reactions among scholars and institutions where some speak in favour of it while

others speak against it. It is claimed in some quarters that online teaching and learning promotes, guarantees and ensures the continuity of education during crisis and emergencies. In fact, on the positive side of online teaching and learning, Basar et al (2021:121) write that:

Online learning is important because it can enable more effective self-learning. Students can choose the time they spend, the content they learn, and the direction of their learning. Students also have the opportunity to revisit challenging topics until they feel confident in their understanding. Furthermore, online learning allows students to study in a 'safe' environment without experiencing embarrassment about asking questions.

On the other hand, Almahasees et al (2021:1) write from a negative angle where they noted that "Online learning challenges lie in adapting to online education, especially for the deaf and hard of hearing students, lack of interaction and motivation, technical and internet issues, data privacy and security". In what seems to be a more detailed negative attack on online teaching and learning, the above scholars write that:

It makes the process of learning for students' comfort due to time flexibility in attending classes. However, online learning acts as a barrier to the engagement of students in real class activities. Moreover, students lack the influence of peer learning. These challenges also leave an impact on students' personalities and prevent them from taking their turns. (p.2)

In what follows, we shall present in details prospects and challenges of online teaching and learning in Nigeria

Prospects of Online Teaching and Learning during the Covid-19 Period in Nigeria

Common sense shows that there is hardly any human experience, no matter how rosy or dreaded it may be that does not possess positive and negative sides and man as a rational being and his institutions are to look insightfully to locate and exploit such dual

property of human experiences. Not many people know this but the right attitude is that we as national human beings should know this. The description that every experience has positive and negative side applies to online teaching and learning.

Online teaching and learning promote in learners the curiosity to develop multi-level skills and insightfulness that are supportive of robust and meaningful academic pursuit. According to Basar et al (2021:121) interactive online learning allows students to uncover new information by exploring digital libraries and websites. By enabling learners uncover new information through exploring digital libraries and websites, such learners imbibe and cultivate the spirit of independence and autonomous formation of ideas on their academic pursuits and this is very healthy for the knowledge industry in particular and humanity generally. What is implicated here is that online learning offers learners opportunities to take responsibility for what they learn, take responsibility in determining what they need to learn, determine the pace to learn as well as take responsibility in predicting what actions to take to guarantee successful actions. In fact, predicting what actions to take for success offers opportunities for new perspectives from the lens of learners or more technically, invocation and exploration of different voices on issues in teaching and learning in particular and education generally from the lens, perspectives and viewpoints of learners.

Online teaching and learning are monumentally flexible and this flexibility plays down learning place barriers. This means online learning is innovative and has potentials to change the narratives in teaching and learning in particular and human capacity building in general for the better. This is what Maheshwari (2021:6644) highlights when he writes that: During the post-graduation studies, many students might wish to work along with studying and the online learning gives them better flexibility in multitasking as this eliminates the learning place barrier. With

online learning, the students also have the opportunity to re-watch the lecture recordings later to review the content. If universities see the advantages after doing cost-benefit analysis, then this Covid-19 outbreak should be the good starting point for reshaping learning and teaching.

According to Di Pietro et al (2020:9), online learning platforms offer socialization opportunities to learners. This is so because online learning provides learners opportunities to participate in extra-curricular activities such as online clubs, which ordinarily may not be available in learners' conventional learning environments. That online teaching and learning is as described above means that it is a student-friendly and student-centered innovation, which correspondingly empowers students in knowledge production and generation.

Online teaching and learning have triggered revolutions which when sustained can take human capacity building and educational development to the next level. Any insightful observer can notice that there has been a progressive and steady increase in the number of companies and personnel that specialize in the production of systems, gadget and accessories used in online teaching and learning. That there are companies and personnel that specialize in producing such systems, gadget and accessories means that there will be workers who will acquire knowledge on the production of such systems as well as earn their living from working in such companies and correspondingly there will be taxes to be charged by the state. The simple fact that these exist via online teaching and learning means that online teaching and learning is beneficial and supportive of engineering revolutions capable of benefiting persons. This, in all honesty means that online teaching and learning can epistemologically and economically empower individuals and their states. The above is highlighted by Teltscher (2021:1) when he writes that:

The pandemic created a boom in the supply and use of digital tools, platforms, products,

and services (and companies providing such technologies and services emerged as major beneficiaries of the crisis). That in turn required workers and citizens to develop their skills in the use of digital technologies. The truth is that online teaching and learning as a fallout of the outbreak of Covid-19 has consciously skyrocketed research by triggering unprecedented interests in the acquisition of digital skills and competence among citizens across the globe. No doubt, interest in acquiring digital skills, knowledge and competence has potentials to improve the quality of life of the people in the form of economically empowering the people. Online teaching and learning promises forging a common front for the formation of global organizations, partnerships and coalitions for ensuring the continuity of education across the globe. In short, it is a common knowledge that during online teaching and learning occasioned by Covid-19, individuals across the world collaborated and cooperated more than ever before in an effort to find a common solution to a common problem. Online teaching and learning shows promise in education which when sustained can take teaching and learning to the next level and correspondingly make education to emerge stronger than before Covid-19 (Vegas and Winthrop, 2020). Online teaching and learning support and promote the teaching and learning activities of teachers and learners who are shy and are easily intimidated. It is also good and helpful for slow learners and learners who find it difficult to express their feelings in the conventional face to face mode of lesson delivery in the classrooms.

Challenges of Online Teaching and Learning

Online teaching and learning are not inclusive and a meaning which this invokes is that online teaching and learning is selective and may not accommodate every learner and discipline. This simply means that access to education may become an

elitist social good that only the rich and other privileged members of the society can afford. It is a fact that learners who are not advanced in age may not be motivated and organized to exploit the opportunities offered by online teaching and learning and where they are forced online teaching and learning may become a source of distraction. Again learners who experience unusual difficulties in adjusting to new learning environments can be epically disadvantaged in the new normal of online teaching and learning. The reality of the above can be appreciated when viewed against the observation made by Vegas and Winthrop (2020:5) that:

...according to the US Census Bureau, during the covid-19 school closures, 1 in 10 of the poorest children in the world's largest economy had little or no access to technology for learning. And UNICEF estimates that 463 million children at least one-third of the world total had no chance of remote learning via radio, television or online content.

Part of why online teaching and learning may not be inclusive can be deep rooted in the fact that it is technology driven and correspondingly requires every learner to arm himself or herself with the requisite accessories and gadget for meaningful participation in the teaching and learning exercise. Any learner who does not have the requisite digital accessory due to poverty or other challenges cannot participate in online teaching and learning and this is where scholars who associate online teaching and learning with promoting inequality can be said to be one hundred percent correct. The fact that online teaching and learning is technology driven throws up education to the economic and market space where the provision and pursuit of education goes through paradigms and structures that are dictated by market and business forces. This, by implication means that education may no longer be provided as a human right, a social service or a social good and may no longer be an instrument and

institution for human capacity building for the development of the state.

True, the transition from face to face or in-person mode of instruction to online mode of instruction is detrimental to learners who experience challenges in adapting to new learning strategies and where this is not quickly checked, it potentially widens the already existing inequalities in access to education within and between states or regions. Again learners who come from lower socio-economic backgrounds are likely to suffer double barrel tragedy of not having decent learning environment because it is technology driven and requires constant seating in front of screen, consequently learners are prone to develop fatigue and other health challenges ranging from depression, development of sight issues, waist and back pains.

The fact that online teaching and learning is one hundred percent dependent on digital and technological gadget and their accessories is a pointer that events and happenings in education may soon be determined and dictated by powerful syndicates and conglomerates with inclinations to run the education industry as business and profit oriented outfits rather than outfits and institutions for social services. It is possible where the zeal and motivation for business becomes the norm, the philosophy and conventional orientation for education, including the control of the education industry may fall into the hands of a few individuals and economic and political concepts such as capitalism, domination and hegemony with their associated greed and immoral tendencies can be deep rooted in the education industry. Where all these prevail, it can be ominous and detrimental to humanity as education can automatically cease to be a social good or a social service for transforming the society and humanity into desirable directions that a state and her people may deem fit and appropriate, in which it is the responsibility of the state and not individuals or conglomerates to regulate and provide for the people. The present

development triggered by the outbreak of coronavirus (Covid-19) where syndicates, conglomerates and a few individuals superintend over what happens in education may likely introduce in education elements of market forces where the dominant philosophy will be language of commerce, commercial exchange, domination, language of demand and supply, profit and language of privatization. Where the above prevails due to the imposition and introduction of market forces and other capitalist practices into education, the education industry may be negatively transformed so much that there may be massive redundancy and its associated lay-off of teachers and other class of workers who earn their daily bread through rendering one service or the other in the education industry.

In every meaningful teaching and learning, interaction between the teacher and learners, between learners and learners and other stakeholders in the education industry is essential for success. This, in all honesty and sincerity does not exist and has no space in online teaching and learning. That this is the case limits motivation of learners and the extent of what the teacher and the learners can achieve. It is a common experience that interaction among learners is a robust source of motivation in teaching and learning, in addition to being a mechanism that triggers competition among learners. One can say it with all amount of assurance that receptivity of a learner towards teaching and learning in a classroom produces epic and phenomenal motivational effects in the attitudes and dispositions of fellow learners towards teaching and learning. This point is graphically highlighted by Di Pietro et al (2020:9) when they write that:

It is well known that the school environment influences achievement through peer effects. Being in a classroom and hence having the opportunity to interact with classmates may produce important positive externalities. Peer effects may operate through many different channels, students

may teach each other and get improvements together. Classmates' high achievement may motivate the students (through competition or social influence) to work harder.

Online teaching and learning has no space where the receptive disposition of a fellow learner can be a source of motivation for a fellow learner due to the different environments the different learners find themselves. It is equally true that classroom activities and interactions between teachers and learners and learners and learners have potentials to stimulate positive developments in the forms of self-esteem, sense of identity, self-confidence and personality development of the learner. In fact, eye contact between a teacher and his or her learners performs wonders in teaching and learning situations and this all important resource is completely missing in online teaching and learning.

The transition to online teaching and learning occasioned by the outbreak of coronavirus relegated teaching to an all comer's profession and correspondingly the autonomy and professional territory of the teacher suffered phenomenal and epical devaluation so much that it was invaded by quacks. Because teaching and learning was no longer in schools, the exclusive control which teachers used to have over teaching and learning, vocational, moral and motivational abilities that used to be within the jurisdiction and professional constituency of teachers according to Huber and Helm (2020) shifted base to parents and other non-professionals in the society. The detrimental consequences of this development on the quality of the products of the education industry are visible on the global education landscape across states and scholars are not oblivious of it. According to Vegas and Winthrop (2020:4);

There was a global consensus that education system in too many countries was not delivering the quality education needed to ensure that all have the skill necessary to survive. It is the poorest children across the globe that carry the heaviest burden, with

pre-pandemic analysis estimating that 90 percent of children in low income countries, 50 percent of children in middle income countries and 30 percent of children in high income countries fail to master the basic secondary level skills needed to thrive in work and life.

What the above may be revealing is that quality in educational provision has been compromised and correspondingly expectations in terms of levels of productivity and performance may not measure up to what used to be the case prior to the outbreak of Covid-19. In a way, this development may be alerting humanity that it may amount to a phenomenal and monumental contradiction and an unfair assessment for the society to expect a superlative performance from learners who suddenly transitioned from a face to face method of teaching and learning to an unplanned and unprepared online teaching and learning. In fact, online teaching and learning compromises quality as both teachers and learners lacked the skills, competence, zeal, curiosity and motivation for online teaching and learning especially in developing and underdeveloped states. Almahasees et al (2021:2) say it all when they write that Covid-19 forced the shift to online learning but some universities in underdeveloped countries are not adequately equipped to teach online efficiently. Moreover, the faculty training is different globally between high-income, middle and lower income countries.

Revelations

It can be said with all amount of certainty that the outbreak of coronavirus (Covid-19) is epically and phenomenally associated with many revelations. The world over, the outbreak of Covid-19 revealed personnel and infrastructural deficits (Nwaokugha, 2020). It also revealed greed and global lack of political will occasioned by terrible mis-governance especially in the formulation of humane policies for the common good of all humanity. Correspondingly, the pandemic has potentials to lay foundations for

inclusive new beginning in policies and behavioural dispositions where awareness is seriously needed in the direction that the security and wellbeing of the wealthiest man and state anywhere in the world cannot be guaranteed except conditions of the poorest man and the poorest state anywhere in the world is improved. This means that the outbreak of covid-19 is a trigger for global moral consciousness or renaissance where individuals and states will leave their comfort zone and Olympian heights to think for the down trodden in the ghettos of the world, for the continuous abandonment of the down trodden in his predicaments can continuously be the genesis of the misery and sorrow of the rich. This is a revelation that no one is safe and secure until all humanity is safe and secure.

Nobody prepared, planned or prayed for the outbreak of Covid-19 and never in the history of man had anyone prepared, planned and prayed for the other pandemic before this present one. However, the outbreak of pandemics may have potentials to become lessons, provide or lay foundations and trigger opportunities for man to reposition and re-examine himself in directions where he can turn challenges into opportunities and the present rampaging and ravaging Covid-19 cannot be an exemption. Many developments happened during this period that when sustained can become good lessons for a better tomorrow and teaching and learning (education) can be there and has been there to translate them into reality. In this section of the paper, focus is on possible expositions or revelations that the outbreak of Covid-19 has laid bare across most sectors of the society. What the outbreak of Covid-19 has made so visible that the blind man can see it is that Covid-19 has reshaped the world so much that the world cannot be the same again and in the lens of the world not being the same again, there has evolved new values systems, new beliefs and correspondingly new visions of life, which in themselves portend optimistic views and

outlooks especially for those who understand and key-in.

In fact, no time in human history has man's curiosity to explore his God-given extraordinary resourcefulness and potential (UNESCO, 2020:5) to change his conditions for the better received strong boost than during the ravaging and rampaging spree of Covid-19. Among the many areas that received and will continue to receive positive transformation is education and human capacity building. It is a known fact that the education industry over the years has been associated with excess stagnation and conservatism but the turn of events occasioned by the outbreak of covid-19 has kick-started a revolution where the drive for change and innovation is fast becoming part and parcel of the education industry. This change which is a positive direction is highlighted by Vegas and Winthrop (2020:6) when they write that "Covid-19 pandemic has forced education innovation into the heart of almost every education system around the globe". Forcing innovation into the heart of education occasioned by the outbreak of coronavirus are indications that the future of mankind is brighter in terms of improved and enhanced access to education, superlative and enhanced improvements in the quality of instructions that teachers can deliver to learners, learners becoming more productive and a corresponding human capacity building that can translate to sustainable national development.

Covid-19 with its associated online teaching and learning has reinvented and skyrocketed education and the teaching profession to the next level of importance where their invaluable contributions to the moral development of the child and the nation can no longer be underestimated. The difficulties and experiences parents encountered while attending to the education and other needs of their children and wards during the compulsory school closure led to parents' open acknowledgements of the essential and invaluable roles the schools and the teachers

play in the moral, social, psychological, axiological, metaphysical and general development of learners and by extension humanity. An attitude this fosters on the members of the society is one that triggers an unparalleled support for education and a genuine commitment and show of concern for the improvement of the conditions of service for teachers and improvement of infrastructure in the education industry generally. What this reveal is that the outbreak of coronavirus (Covid-19) has raised the educational bar that is capable of helping humanity develop genes and dispositions that can make education to emerge stronger than what it was prior to the outbreak of coronavirus (Covid-19). In fact, Vegas and Winthrop (2020:1) say it all when they write that:

The Covid-19 pandemic has resulted in at least one positive thing: a much greater appreciation for the importance of public schools. As parents struggle to work with their children at home due to school closures, public recognition of the essential caretaking role schools play in the society has skyrocketed. As young people struggle to learn from home, parents' gratitude for teachers, their skills and their invaluable role in student wellbeing has risen.

Any insightful observer especially in the education industry can notice that the experiences of the members of the global community since the outbreak of coronavirus is one in which developments in education from now on portray signs of improvements, commitment, rebuilding and repositioning of the education industry especially in states that are genuinely desirous and committed to transitioning their education to the next level. By this development, such states that embrace education as a platform and institution for taking society and humanity to the next level are relentlessly and systematically charting new roadmaps on how education can become stronger and correspondingly become the fulcrum for the sustainable development and capacity building of humanity, which realistically education

ought to be. It is not an exaggeration and cannot be that most parents now show unparalleled genuine interests and commitments in the education of their children now than before and completely jettison and repudiate any actions and developments that can bring back home schooling. On the part of the teachers, events especially experiences of parents and other members of the society during the coronavirus (Covid-19) period skyrocketed their value, thereby establishing their sense of belonging and authority in a jurisdiction and constituency that is naturally their own. There is a new revelation online teaching and learning occasioned by the outbreak of coronavirus has brought to the fore and this revelation revolves around a robust, receptive and new appreciable outlook the education industry wears namely, a harmonious relationship between schools and their host communities. Correspondingly teachers globally showed genuine commitment to their duties with epical and monumental dedication that resulted in high quality instruction for learners and this high quality and robust commitment to duties by teachers in the forms of quality instruction to learners has the capacity to translate into higher achievements by the learners. It is correct to say that this circle of progress that is currently becoming a norm in the education industry derives its roots from a new found culture of collaboration among critical stakeholders in education namely teachers, parents and learners and this post-covid positive development has prompted observers of events in education to assert that at no period and time in the history of man and education globally has there been space and opportunity for collaboration among all the critical stakeholders in education that targets exploring and putting up opportunities where teachers, schools and communities work together to support and promote children's learning than this period of coronavirus (covid-19) pandemic. Recalling such relationships and collaborations occasioned by the outbreak

of coronavirus (covid-19), Vegas and Winthrop (2020:8) write that:

As school buildings closed, teachers began to partner with parents in way never done before, schools formed new relationships with communities, health and social welfare organizations, media companies work with education leaders, technology companies partnered with nonprofit and government and local nonprofits and business contributed to supporting children's learning in new ways. One of the opportunities emerging out of the Covid-19 pandemic may just be the chance to harness the new energies and mindsets between schools and communities to work together to support children's learning.

The position of the above scholars is supported by UNESCO (2020:7) which acknowledges some positive developments occasioned by the outbreak of coronavirus in these words:

We are seeing solidarity and strong resilient response to challenges in many societies. We are seeing increased attention to public good. And we are seeing resourcefulness, dedication and creativity from many teachers, families and students who are collaboratively building remarkable learning experiences.

It is as clear as day and night that online teaching and learning that is an offshoot of the outbreak of coronavirus has introduced new values systems, new beliefs, new visions, new radical, revolutionary and transformative thinking that are deep rooted in collaboration and these have come to stay in the education system of states. These developments that have basically emerged are revealing that the future of education is brighter, especially when words and actions are corresponded with the right political will, implying that education can never be allowed to relapse to its pitiable state prior to the outbreak of the global coronavirus, rather lessons learnt during the Covid-19 period will continuously trigger positive developments and attitudes in the education industry from states and the global community.

There is also an awareness that with closure of borders and restriction of movements across regions or states, states and economies that survive on cross border transactions terribly suffered. This serious fact did not escape the attention of scholars. According to Hatuel-Radoshitzky and Heistein (2020:10) "Covid-19 has thus far led to a heightened risk awareness regarding participation in interconnected world system". What is revealed or exposed here is that the outbreak of Covid-19 has potentials to blight and diminish globalization or has serious implications for globalization. No wonder Yurgens and Kulak (2020:22) call Covid-19 a globalization killer. On the other hand, there is a heightened awareness on how interconnectivity can produce favourable results for online teaching and learning and this is in the form of exploiting the global reach of interconnectivity to transmit instructions from a particular location to the rest of the world. However, what is as sure as day and night is the ability of this development to bring about redundancy through the sack of teachers.

Lastly, online teaching and learning has revealed that many digital technologies and their accessories must be available and ready to guarantee effective and hitch-free online teaching and learning. Correspondingly, there is an awareness that a teaching and learning process through the online mode must require data, laptop, android phone, electricity etc. What this translates into is that in the same way Covid-19 has "made people more aware that their lives are tied to those of others around the world, from economic wellbeing to health and hygiene" (Yenel, 2020:26), effective and sustainable online teaching and learning is also tied to the availability of digital technologies and their accessories.

Prospects, challenges and revelations above about online teaching and learning require pragmatic suggestions or recommendations that can take the education industry in particular and humanity generally to the next level. The education industry can be

guided by the generally acknowledged position that the “new normal” mankind finds himself has all what it takes to radically and revolutionally reshape the world and on the basis of this, initiate new curricular and pedagogical directions, hinged or anchored on humanistic visions that can enhance man’s ability to explore curiosity, critical insights and creativity developed during the period of Covid-19 pandemic that online teaching and learning owe its roots in most developing and under-developed states to. States should strive to develop state of the art curriculum and correspond same with pedagogical skills where stakeholders can ensure a paradigm shift in the knowledge industry and across disciplines. The focus in the new direction can be on skyrocketing the growth of knowledge across disciplines in line with critical, insightful and creative breakthroughs during online teaching and learning with a target not to return humanity to levels of knowledge prior to online teaching and learning. This means that stakeholders in the education industry must strive to sustain positive developments made in curriculum and pedagogy across disciplines during the online teaching and learning period. In fact, let lessons learnt during the online teaching and learning become the foundation and trigger that can lead to sustainable reforms in education globally where solidarity, strong resilient response to challenges, increased attention to public good, resourcefulness and creativity can become norms

Governments across states should develop the political will to create the enabling environment that can be conducive and supportive of online teaching and learning. This means the right investment in digital technologies should be made a priority and sufficient awareness should be created that any attempt to undermine this will make online teaching and learning a mere illusion. In the same way, teacher education should be given a boost so that teachers can be abreast of the new pedagogies in education as well as master how to manage the

collaborative relationships among all the critical stakeholders in education. More importantly, teacher education can be repositioned to inculcate or promote values where teachers teach learners or conscientize the global community on issues of global security especially the fact that the security, safety and the flourishing of an individual or a region should be a thing of great concern to the other person, region or state. The point here is that teacher education can be reinvented where among other things, it focuses on global justice where the care and welfare of one person irrespective of nationality, religion, language, political affiliation or ideology can be a matter of concern to all in the global community. This line of thinking which teacher education must prioritize is hinged on the fact that no one is free or safe until all are free and safe. Modelling and repositioning teacher education along this line can be of immense benefit to humanity because it promises creating awareness on the importance of international cooperation and values of information sharing among state. Stakeholders in teacher education can consider making the knowledge of postmodernism a core area in teacher education and in this consideration think more particularly on international politics especially issues of interferences and non-interference in the affairs of states whose consequences have international and global implications or pose great threats to the peace, well-being and security of the global community.

CONCLUSION

A fact that cannot be disputed is that man across cultures is born with the innate ability to response to any situation, no matter how hard or complex with an intent to addressing or resolving such hard and complex situation. Covid-19 as a health, social, economic and educational challenge has disrupted activities across the world and man has started on the right note by holding tight on online teaching and learning as an innovation for the continuity of education. It

should be emphasized that measures aimed at improving online teaching and learning must be inclusive, comprehensive, interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary and cross disciplinary. This is because issues involved in online teaching and learning are multidimensional. There must be the requisite infrastructure, there must be the right expertise, there must be the political will and there must be the willingness on the part of all stakeholders to graduate out of the status quo to something better. The messianic status which online teaching and learning is associated with may end up becoming an illusion or mirage where the above is neglected. Creating room or leaving any space for any form of disadvantages will multiply and make the environment fertile for many terrible and disastrous disadvantages.

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