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Integration and Utilization of E-Learning: An Approach to Curriculum Implementation in Schools amidst Covid-19 Pandemic

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Abstract
The aim of this study is to see in to the need for integrating and utilizing the E-learning platforms as an alternative means of curriculum implementation at the classroom level amidst COVID-19 pandemic and to a likely situation of similar effects henceforth. In spite of the numerous challenges hindering the implementation of the curriculum in our schools, it was therefore found that, the outbreak of Corona Virus Disease in 2019 has posed a great setback to effective curriculum implementation at the school level since the containment of community transmissions of the pandemic is achieved by a total closure of educational institutions among others. It is undoubtedly true that the Covid-19 pandemic has negatively impacted on the country's educational system hence the forceful banned on social gathering which is very common and unavoidable to our traditional system of education in Nigeria and the country is lagging behind in terms of its capacity to switch to E-learning. Schooling system was suspended for a period of time which is against the claim that learning is a continuous process and should not be interrupted. It is therefore concluded that in spite of its disadvantages and some challenges as barriers to effective integration and utilization, E-learning remains the only alternative option to curriculum implementation amidst this kind of pandemic, which may lead to school closure similar to that of Covid-19 era.
Keywords: Learning, E-learning, Curriculum Implementation, Covid-19 Pandemic

Introduction
It is the curriculum that determines educational direction including the decision of the type of society people want to live and serve in, thereby determining the principles and procedures which help educators in selecting and arranging instructional programmes. Despite the wide recognition and acceptance accorded to curriculum in Nigerian educational system, there seems to be problems in the implementation of this important educational blue-print. Many laudable goals of the curriculum have failed to pass the planning stage of the curriculum due to faulty implementation.

In spite of the numerous challenges hindering the implementation of the curriculum in our schools, the outbreak of Corona Virus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) has been posed as a great setback to effective curriculum implementation at the school level since the containment of community transmissions of the pandemic is achieved by a total closure of educational institutions, businesses, airspace, and sports events among others.

Review methodology
This study is basically a Critical review oriented. Critical reviews attempt to examine and assess current literature objectively in a given field of emphasis to report achievements, shortcomings, discrepancies, conflicts, anomalies, and/or other relevant problems related to ideas, assumptions, processes, or findings of the study (Paré et al., 2015). Critical evaluations, seek to take the study conducted in a given field of interest into consideration and to determine its credibility using critical evaluation methods or techniques. Critical reviews also aim to educate other researchers productively about the shortcomings of prior studies and to enhance knowledge creation by concentrating and directing research to boost it much better (Templier and Paré, 2015).

Concepts Clarifications
In other to provide a background knowledge to the thrust of the study, the concepts of; of curriculum, curriculum implementation, COVID-19 and E-learning were clarified.

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Concept of Curriculum

Curriculum has been defined in many ways by different authors, what makes the concept extends beyond its dictionary meanings. Curriculum as viewed by Nwiyi (2009) is an instrument that dictates the affairs of every educational system and a vehicle through which knowledge and other learning activities are disseminated. In the opinion of Orubite (2010), it is a course of study to embrace the total spectrums of content, resources, materials and method of teaching through which the purposes of education are achieved. Donovan, Green and Mason (2014) defined curriculum as the planned and guided learning experiences and intended learning outcomes, formulated through the systematic reconstruction of knowledge and experience under the auspices of the school for the learner's continues and willful growth and personal social competence. To this end, a curriculum can be considered as the heart of any learning institution which means that schools cannot exist without a curriculum. Therefore, in its broadest sense, curriculum refers to the total learning experiences of individuals not only in school but society as well.

Concept of Curriculum Implementation

According to Ozano (2013), the term implementation is conceptualized as process of putting an agreed plan, decision, proposal, ideas or policy into effect more actively by a teacher. Implementation is the act of putting the prescribed curriculum into practice in the school. It is the ultimate objective of curriculum development process because only after implementation has been done will learners have the opportunity to experience the curriculum and benefit from it.

Curriculum implementation therefore refers to how teachers deliver instruction and assessment through the use of specified resources provided in a curriculum. Curriculum designs generally provide instructional suggestions, scripts, lesson plans, and assessment options related to a set of objectives. Such designs focus on consistency to help teachers successfully implement and maintain the curricular structure in order to meet various objectives (Akindayo, 2014). Additionally, Bantwini (2010) opined that, no matter how well formulated a curriculum may be, its effective implementation is a sine qua non toward achieving the desired goals of education. Curriculum implementation involves the daily classroom activities that the teacher is involved in, that monitor students' progress and evaluate the performance of the students. In the view of Alade (2011), the process of curriculum implementation involves the dissemination of the structured set of learning experiences, the provision of resources to effectively execute the plan, and the actual execution of the plan in the classroom setting where teacher-learner interactions take place. Ugwulashi (2012) is of the opinion that the teacher is one who translates the curriculum document into operating curriculum through a joint effort of learners and other interest groups. This implies that the task of implementing the curriculum lies on the teachers. From the foregoing, it can be concluded that teachers are determinant factors in the process of curriculum implementation and the effectiveness of any curriculum depends on the effectiveness of its implementation.

Concept of COVID-19?

COVID-19 is a disease caused by a new strain of coronavirus. 'CO' stands for corona, 'VI' for virus, and 'D' for disease. Formerly, this disease was referred to as '2019 novel coronavirus' or '2019-nCoV.' The COVID-19 virus is a new virus linked to the same family of viruses as Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and some types of common cold. COVID-19Virus is an epidemic that began to spread in a Chinese city Wuhan, in the Hubei province of China in early December 2019 to New York (USA) through Africa, South America, Asia, Europe and to many countries and territories infecting millions of people and causing hundreds of thousands people deaths (McKibbin and Fernando, 2020).

The outbreak of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) has been declared a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC) (Al-Jazira, 2020). The virus is transmitted through direct contact with respiratory droplets of an infected person (generated through coughing and sneezing).

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Individuals can also be infected from and touching surfaces contaminated with the virus and touching their face (e.g., eyes, nose, and mouth (Kaur, 2020). Symptoms can include fever, cough and shortness of breath. In more severe cases, infection can cause pneumonia or breathing difficulties (Boseley, Devlin & Belam 2020). More rarely, the disease can be fatal. From the foregoing, it is therefore without mincing of words the fact that a sound health condition is one of the basic prerequisite condition granting a conducive and enabling environment for effective teaching and learning to take place. But in a contrary, students staying at home for a long period of time may adversely affect their academic performance.

Nigeria's COVID-19 Outbreak, Responses and Impact

The first confirmed case of COVID-19 in Nigeria was detected in a traveler who arrived in Lagos from Europe on February 27, 2020 (NCDC, 2020a). In response, the government invested in preparedness measures, including a US$27 million increase in funding for the Nigeria Center for Disease Control (NCDC) to strengthen laboratory testing and isolation capacity (Adnan, 2020). The government also launched public education campaigns emphasizing hand washing, maintaining physical distance from people, and avoiding large gatherings.

More importantly, Nigeria's government was among the first on the subcontinent to enforce social distancing. All schools in the country were closed in mid-March, and several states and local authorities instituted bans on public and social gatherings (Obiezu, 2020). On 29 March, President Buhari announced specific restrictions for Lagos, FCT, and Ogun States, which together contain 14% of Nigeria's population which was On 13 April, been extended for another 2-week and expanded to include Kano state. Although it was the federal government that directed lockdown measures in four states but numerous other states implemented their own lockdown policies.

The advent of the COVID pandemic has not only revealed the poor state of infrastructure and facilities in the health sector of Nigeria but also revealed the reality of the dilapidation and poor funding of the education sector (Kazeem, 2020). Aside from the health sector, no other area has suffered the impact of COVID-19 like education. At the peak of the pandemic, Nigeria closed its schools affecting million students. Given the abruptness of the situation, teachers and administrations were unprepared for this transition and lacked the capacity to build emergency remote learning systems almost immediately. School closures due to COVID-19 have brought significant disruptions to education across the country (Obiezu, 2020). While many countries have easily adapted and switched to virtual classes, in Nigeria, it is not only difficult but also impossible to open our schools virtually due to lack of the necessary needed facilities to operate virtual classes such as; poor provision of the internet network, unstable and low power supply, high cost of mobile data hence majority of Nigerians are living below the poverty line and other challenges (Adnan, 2020).

By the end of April, when considering the declined national economy, the President announced that lockdowns would be eased in Lagos, FCT and Ogun states but that the lockdown in Kano was extended until early June. During June, the government lifted restrictions on domestic airlines and interstate travel and allowed schools to reopen for graduating students. With the decline in the number of new cases between July and August, on 3th September, the government lifted all remaining restrictions on local markets.

Besides, the original virus may have moved out of focus, yet it has left behind more virulent variants. Now, the most dangerous Delta variant is present in about 100 countries, World Health Organization (WHO) cited in (Adnan, 2020). After ravaging India, this variant is now resulting in fresh waves in countries like Indonesia, UK, Russia, Iran, Colombia and South Africa. Although, USA, India and Brazil continue to top the world in the total number of cases (Aaron, 2020). But should the wave extend to Nigeria; a similar restriction to the previous one is inevitable. As such, it will have a negative effect on the Country's educational sector hence the traditional system of teaching and learning may not be

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obtainable. Therefore, this study deems it fit to see in to the need for integrating and utilizing the E-learning platforms as an alternative means of curriculum implementation at the classroom level amidst COVID-19 pandemic and to a likely situation of similar effects henceforth.

Concept of E-Learning

Educators have long been appropriating technologies into the classroom, from radio and television, records and record players, video reels and projectors, to today's computers, CDs, DVDs, podcasts, and more. What the digital revolution has done is free the information and its carriers from the classroom, making the information available in ever increasing mobile ways. Therefore, a learning system based on formalized teaching but with the help of electronic resources is known as E-learning. The European Commission (2001) describes, e-Learning as the use of new multimedia technologies and the Internet to increase learning quality by easing access to facilities and services as well as distant exchanges and collaboration. E-learning can also be termed as a network enabled transfer of skills and knowledge, and the delivery of education is made to a large number of recipients at the same or different times (Tezci, 2011a). E-learning, according to Yusuf, et al. (2014) is defined as the use of information and communication technologies in diverse processes of education to support and enhance learning in institutions of higher education, and includes the usage of information and communication technology as a complement to traditional classrooms, online learning or mixing the two modes. Therefore, E-learning is nothing but the use of technology to connect teachers and students who are physically miles apart. E-Learning involves the use of multi-media to enhance learning.

E-Learning is instruction that occurs when the instructor and the students are separated by time, distance, or both and can be divided into two major delivery methods (Koontz and Weihrich as cited in Asadu, 2010): The Direct E-Learning (Synchronous learning). The indirect E-Learning (Asynchronous learning).

The Direct E-Learning (The Synchronous E-Learning): The Learning methods and Techniques are based on the global information networks to communicate and exchange lessons and research topics between the learner and the teacher at the same time as real-time teaching material such as (Real-time chat) or receive lessons through the so-called virtual classes. One of the positives of this type is that the student can get direct feedback from the teacher to study it.

The indirect E-Learning (Asynchronous E-Learning): In which the learner gets courses or lessons according to a study program in which he chooses the times and places appropriate to its circumstances by employing some methods of E-Learning such as e-mail and video. This education depends on the time spent by the learner to reach the skills that the lesson aims at. The advantages of this type is that the learner gets his study according to the appropriate times and the effort he wishes to give, as well as he can re-study the material and refer to it electronically whenever needed, the most important disadvantages is that the student cannot get feedback from the teacher or teachers but only at the time upon completion of the course or program, the learner also needs to motivate himself to study, because most of the study is unilateral, which makes him feel isolated.

Benefits of E-learning

1. E-Learning has substantial benefits and offers unique opportunities for people who might otherwise have limited access to education and training. It incorporates innovative and creative approaches to instruction and provides unprecedented access to resources and information. According to Tezci (2011a), some of the advantages that the adoption of e-learning in education as obtained from review of literature include the following:

2. It is flexible when issues of time and place are taken into consideration. According to Tezci (2011b), the adoption of e-learning provides the institutions as well as their students or learners the much flexibility of time and

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place of delivery or receipt of according to learning information.

3. E-learning enhances the efficacy of knowledge and qualifications via ease of access to a huge amount of information.
4. E-learning eases communication and also improves the relationships that sustain learning. Okojie (2011), note that e-Learning makes available extra prospects for interactivity between students and teachers during content delivery.
5. E-learning is cost effective in the sense that there is no need for the students or learners to travel. It is also cost effective in the sense that it offers opportunities for learning for maximum number of learners with no need for many buildings.
6. The use of e-Learning allows self-pacing. For instance, the asynchronous way permits each student to study at his or her own pace and speed whether slow or quick.

Limitations of E-learning

In spite of the numerous advantages attached to the use of E-learning in education for staff, students and organizations at large, E-learning equally has some disadvantages. For example, the most noticeable condemnation of e-Learning is the complete absence of vital personal interactions, not only between learners and instructors, but also among colleague learners (University of Arkansas, 2013). Others include the following:

1. E-learning as a method of education makes the learners undergo contemplation, remoteness, as well as lack of interaction or relation. It therefore requires a very strong inspiration and skills.
2. With respect to clarifications, offer of explanations, as well as interpretations, the e-learning method might be less effective than the traditional method of learning.
3. When it comes to improvement in communication skills of learners, e-learning as a method might have a negative effect. The learners. Though might have an excellent knowledge in academics, they may not possess the needed skills to deliver their acquired knowledge to others.

4. Since tests for assessments in e-learning are possibly done with the use of proxy, it will be difficult, if not impossible to control or regulate bad activities like cheating.
5. E-learning may also probably be misled to piracy and plagiarism, predisposed by inadequate selection skills, as well as the ease of copy and paste. Etc.

Integration and Utilization of E-Learning in Schools Amidst Pandemic

The success of e-learning as an online platform for teaching and learning depends on factors including; good internet connections, learning software, digital skills, availability and accessibility to technology. With the high penetration of the internet and mobile technologies across the globe, online education platforms can be integrated and properly utilized to bridge the gaps in education thereby reducing the rate of global illiteracy. There are broad ranges of e-learning tools/platforms that could be used to facilitate learning particularly on a trial period of outbreaks like the Corona Virus pandemic such as; Youtube.com, Skype.com, GoToMeeting.com, Google Classroom, Easyclass.com, zoom.us, whatsapp.com, lessonpaths.com etc. Therefore, it is expected that the government will endeavor to among others: develop a specific policy for ICT education, assemble an online guide with links to open learning applications, and reducing the cost of accessing online education, provide training for teachers on how to integrate e-learning and provide an enabling environment and all the gadgets needed for e-learning to mitigate the closure of schools during pandemic outbreak.

Barriers to Effective Integration and Utilization of E-Learning in Schools

Most of the educational policies fail at the implementation stage either as a result of human or material error which most often serves as barriers. According to Jo (2013), barriers to effective integration of E-learning in schools include the following:

1. Low teacher expectations and a lack of clear goals for E-learning in schools

2. A lack of teacher collaboration and pedagogical support, as well as a lack of experience among cooperating teachers
3. Insufficient time to master new software or integrate ICT facilities during a class period
4. Low software competence and habitual ways of conceptualizing what and how students should learn
5. A lack of specific knowledge about technology and how to combine it with the existing pedagogical content knowledge to support student learning
6. A lack of recognition and encouragement of the timely and effective use of ICT facilities
7. Technical problems in the classroom, lack of motivation, technical and financial support by the stakeholders towards the use of ICT facilities in education amongst others.

Conclusion

It is undoubtedly true that the Covid-19 pandemic has negatively impacted on the socioeconomic well-being of Nigerians, which apart from the medical sector, all other sectors including education were shut down. Hence the pandemic has forced the banned on social gathering which is very common and unavoidable to our traditional system of education in Nigeria and the country is lagging behind in terms of its capacity to switch to E-learning. Schooling system was suspended for a period of time which is against the claim that learning is a continuous process and should not be interrupted. It is therefore concluded that in spite of its disadvantages and some challenges as barriers to effective integration and utilization, E-learning remains the only alternative option to curriculum implementation amidst this kind of pandemic, which may lead to school closure similar to that of Covid-19 era.

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