NEEDED CHANGE IN THE MANAGEMENT OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS BEYOND COVID-19 IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

This paper titled, Needed Change in the Management of Secondary Schools beyond Covid-19 in Nigeria looked at the impact of COVID-19 globally and narrow it to Nigeria situation. Specifically, attempt was made to review the impact of COVID-19 on the closure of secondary schools in Nigeria. The objectives of secondary schools as stated in the national policy on education (2013) were highlighted in order to have a deeper reflection on whether those objectives could be achieved based on the impact of this pandemic. The paper critically looked at the resonating impact of covid-19 on the management of secondary schools beyond school resumption; Inequalities, Inadequate ICT Facilities, Discontinuity in Learning, Inequity in Access to ICT-Based Learning, Depressing Education Demand and Supply and Increase in Dropout Risk were identified as areas where the pandemic has impacted on the management of secondary schools in Nigeria. Moving forward therefore, Educating Citizens in an Interconnected World, redefining the role of the educator, adopting Learning Recovery, teaching life skills needed for the future, change in Perceptions of Education Stakeholders and unlocking technology to deliver education among others were further identified as the needed change in the Management of Secondary Schools beyond COVID-19 in Nigeria. It was concluded that the impact of the pandemic has caused physical, psychological, emotional and mental trauma to all and sundry, to succeed therefore, the articulated needed change in the management of secondary schools as contained in this paper will do the magic if taken seriously. It was recommended that there should increase in education budget at all level of government to provide for all the needed resource and facilities for e-learning and ICT support services, there should be aggressive campaign on learning recovery strategies

and intensive capacity building programme for school administrators and teachers on the use of technologies in teaching and learning beyond the pandemic in order to survive going forward.

Introduction

Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, the world was in a learning crisis**.** Most countries were seriously off-track in achieving Sustainable Development Goal 4.8 That goal commits the world to ensure "inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning" for all by 2030, but so far even universal high-quality schooling at the primary level let alone secondary, tertiary, or lifelong learning has proven unachievable for many countries. The crisis is not equally distributed: the most disadvantaged have the worst access to schooling, highest dropout rates, and lowest quality schooling. By implication, the world was already far off track for meeting Sustainable Development Goal 4, which commits all nations to ensure that, among other ambitious targets, "all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education (Global Education Practice, 2020)

The eruption of the COVID-19 pandemic has affected every sphere of life and may forever change how we have always lived and conducted our businesses, and no one can resist the wind of change that is blowing. Of all the sectors of governance, the educational sector, appears to have been most greatly affected and therefore requires a more pragmatic approach to resolution. As the COVID-19 Pandemic ravages the world, it is essential to attend to the educational needs of children and youth during the crisis.

Presently, a lot of state owed educational institutions are opened for academic activities, however, students of federal tertiary institutions are still at home due to the lingering ASSU strike. The virulent disease has revealed that we cannot persist to fuss things the same way as we used to and things have to adjust in the short, medium to long period. This describes the need for synchronized effort for all stakeholders surrounded by the educational segment to investigate alternatives for the solutions, Olaitan, Abdullahi, Tolorunju, Akinjo and Ogunjemilua (2020).

The closures of schools and universities is said to have impacted over 70% of the world's Inhabitants Olaitan, Abdullahi, Tolorunju, Akinjo and Ogunjemilua (2020). It is indicative that the Coronavirus deadly disease has uncovered the lack of preparation of a lot of our educational institutions in Nigeria to roam online. UNESCO (2020) reported that 89% of students in sub-Saharan Africa, Nigeria inclusive do not have right to use home computers and 82% do not have internet access; this means that these online classes cannot accommodate all students. In spite of these, the challenges with this access have seen some innovation in circumventing the bandwidth challenges; these include pre-recorded lectures on these zero-rated e-learning platforms, among others.

National policy on education stated that secondary education is the education children receive after primary education and before the tertiary stage. It is that level of education that serves as a bridge between primary education and post-secondary education in Nigeria. It further stated that the broad goals of secondary education shall be to prepare the individual for the following:

(a) Useful living within the society

(b) Higher education (NPE, 2013)

Objectives of Secondary Schools Education

The objectives of secondary education as stipulated in Nigeria National Policy on Education (NPE) (2013) and sited in Usman and Nwosu (2019) stated that; secondary education shall:

1. Provide an increasing number of primary school pupils with an opportunity for education of a higher quality irrespective of sex or social, religious and ethnic background

2. Diversify its curriculum to cater for the differences in talents, opportunities and roles possessed by or open to students after their secondary course

3. Equip students to live effectively in our modern age of science and technology

4. Develop and project Nigerian culture, arts and languages as well as the world's cultural heritage

5. Raise a generation of people which can think for themselves, respect the view and feelings of others, respect the dignity of labor and appreciate

those values specified under our broad national aim and live as good citizens

6.   Foster Nigerian unity with an emphasis on the common ties that unite her in diversity

7.   Inspire students with a desire for achievement and self-improvement both at school and later in life (NPE, 2013).

The challenges of Covid-19 pandemic have resulted to the closure of all schools and institutions of learning in Nigeria. Therefore, the effect of the Covid-19 pandemic on the Nigerian Education and how it affects the secondary school calendar for 2020 in particular is a concern to the researchers. Students' academic interest, the position of e-learning and the classroom conventional learning which is seriously affected due to the pandemic also agitates the mind of the researchers. It is therefore doubtful if the above stated objectives of secondary school can be wholly achieved in the face of this pandemic. The effort of the researchers is therefore geared toward identifying needed change in management of secondary schools in Nigeria beyond covid-19. The key is don't replicate the failures of the pre-COVID-19 systems, but instead build toward improved systems and accelerated learning for all students.

Management involves getting work accomplished through the coordinated efforts of other people. School managers are therefore; most likely to be judged not just on their own performances, but also on the results achieved by subordinates Usman and Usman (2018). Management is necessary in school to co-ordinate the various activities of the units for goal achievement. Management in school entails working with and through teachers, non teaching staff and pupils or students to get things done effectively Usman and Nwosu (2019). In school management, the primary aim has to do with the improvement of teaching and learning, and all the activities of the school. The functions of management in school are performed by the schools heads (i.e. head teacher/principal) known as the school manager (Amanchukwu, 2014).

This paper is therefore based on the researchers' experiences, review of relevant literature and other scholarly article on the subject matter.

Impact of COVID-19 on the Management of Secondary Schools in Nigeria
The COVID-19 pandemic poses an enormous risk to the health and safety of learners, teachers, parents, school administrators, education practitioners, and

the wider community. More than 1.5 billion children and young people globally have been affected by school and university closures. The index case of COVID-19 was confirmed in February, 2020. Subsequent development led to indefinite closure of all schools and learning facilities in Nigeria in March 2020. It will be recalled that at the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in Nigeria, schools and all learning facilities were closed in order to safeguard the health and general wellbeing of our children, youths, teachers, and educational personnel (Federal Ministry of Education, 2020)

Coronavirus Disease (Covid-19) deadly disease has resulted to total shutting of schools in about 215 countries all over the world with 91.4% of the total number of enrolled learners in these countries momentarily mandatory out of school UNESCO (2020).This development has negatively impacted on the rights of learners, and poses a very big challenge to the realization of Sustainable Development Goal 4 on inclusive and quality education. The economic pressures and negative impact of school closures on girls, children living with disabilities, those in lower-income families are not quantifiable. Those living in rural or remote areas or in conflict-affected states, and those without access to family support networks or online or other distance learning platforms limit their access to their fundamental right to a safe and inclusive education. The resultant unscheduled, sweeping school closures also pose an unprecedented challenge to Nigeria's education sec-tor. An estimated 80 million children, youth, and adult learners in the system are deprived access to schools and have very limited alternative learning opportunities for an expected three-month period at the minimum (Federal Ministry of Education, 2020).

In a short time, COVID-19 disrupted the landscape of learning in Nigeria by limiting how students access learning across the country. The closure of schools and learning facilities during the pandemic has resulted to further deterioration in facilities and capacities for the delivery of quality education Olaitan, Abdullahi, Tolorunju, Akinjo and Ogunjemilua (2020). Without an effective response, the impact of COVID-19 will further aggravate the already weakened Nigerian education sector, which lacks required resilience. Consequently, the management of secondary education is therefore challenged. The other part of the equation is, of course, how well educational institutions are equipped and accustomed to online learning, and how well teachers are prepared and engaged in online learning.

Considering the impact of COVID-19 on the education system, Ngogi and Mahaye (2020) asserted that long periods of learning would be lost for as long as the closures lasted. This is evident as different cases are recorded daily. Corroborating Ngogi and Mahaye, Kekić *et al.* (2016) reported that schools losing long periods of learning because of disease outbreak can upshot to both chronological and stable smash up on educational system. they further opined that The temporal damage include disruption of curriculum which could take a long time to be recovered, while the undeviating spoil which include the actuality that some students may never come again to school even when the infection outbreak ended.

According to Digital Global Overview Report (2020) about 60 percent of people from Nigeria are not associated to the internet. The data for mobile phones, which could also be used as a learning intermediate, are more hopeful. According to the report, around 169.2 million people, 83 percent of Nigerians have right of entry to mobile phone connections; however, of these, 50 percent, around 84.5 million people, live in municipal areas. The report also revealed that the populace with access to internet, the quantity would be twisted towards elevated socio-economic households and urban households; an awe-inspiring preponderance of whom are private school students who already have a learning benefit over their community school peers. For children from poorer backgrounds who tend to have less access to internet connectivity, computers, and other devices, and reside in rural areas where local languages take dominance over English, ICT-learning uptake will be limited

Specific Impact of COVID-19 on the Management of Secondary Schools in Nigeria

1. **Inequalities**

   Covid-19 crisis has laid bare the digital divide within the country between those schools that have better ICT infrastructure than others; between higher education institutions within the same country, with some being far better equipped and experienced than others; and between students within the same school, the rich who live in urban areas and the poor in rural areas who can barely afford to access the internet, when and if it is available. It is imperative to seriously seek alternative means and approaches in order not to leave behind students with little or no access

to electronic communication. The painful reality of the digital divide on the continent has to be strategically and systematically managed; reaching out to millions of 'marginalized' students must become a national priority in this time of crisis (Olaitan, Abdullahi, Tolorunju, Akinjo and Ogunjemilua, 2020).

2. **Inadequate ICT Facilities:**

Governments are taking action to support learners to continue their education remotely. Some attempted using technology, but they face a number of challenges such as inadequate internet access and facilities in secondary schools, inadequate skills or knowledge on the use of available on-line learning access by both students and teachers, unstable electricity supply among others. It is a known fact that in Nigeria, school opportunity is correlated to income level, while private schools serve learners from higher socio-economic backgrounds who are willing and able to pay more to access the better resources offered by private schools, public schools which are usually free, comprise students from lower socio-economic households and low-income areas. As a result of poor infrastructure in public secondary schools, such as lack of electricity, or poor/no internet connectivity, among others, the opportunities to learn within or from the homes are also limited. This actually created serious management issues during the Covid-19 pandemic

3. **Discontinuity in Learning**

One obvious reality in Nigeria that while the school closures are necessary to curtail the spread of the COVID19 virus, until the ban on movement was lifted and schools reopened, majority of students did not learn. A longer-term impact of these school closures would be deepened educational inequality. According to Oboh and Oboh (2020) parent's ability to provide education support to their children particularly during Covid-19 will be shaped by their own level of educational attainment, general literacy level, and other commitments. Given the significant relationship between educational attainment and income level, and the correlation between parental income level and school choice, we can infer that the literacy level of parents in public schools in Nigeria might be lower than their private school counterparts. In instances where the parents are educated, investing the time to train their children during this

time might be a luxury. The imbalance created in students learning during the pandemic will surely pose challenge in the management of students as schools resumes

4. **Inequity in Access to ICT-Based Learning**

   The inequity in access to ICT-based learning has the adverse effect of further intensifying the existing disparities in learning outcomes along socio-economic lines, and the urban-rural divide. Given that the schools were closed for long time; these students would continue to fall further behind. For students with learning disabilities, and those living in fragile and conflict-affected regions, the outlook is even more bleak. By implication, this raises a major challenge around managing students educational inequality posed by the pandemic - given the technological landscape and income driven digital-divide, how do we harness available technology to support already marginalized students during these closures and beyond (Oboh and Oboh 2020)

5. **Depressing Education Demand and Supply:**

   Due to economic pressures on households even for students who do not drop out, households will be less able to pay for educational inputs such as books at home or private lessons until the economy recovers. And parents may move their children from private to public schools, adding pressure and lowering quality in already over-stretched public-school systems

6. **Increase in Dropout Risk:**

   Dropout risk will rise, with many students leaving schooling forever, and the higher dropout will be concentrated in disadvantaged groups. As the lack of encouragement from teachers reduce the attachment to schooling for marginal students. Youth out of school may engage in more risky behavior, and adolescent fertility may increase, there may be increased child labor and child marriage for children and adolescents.

7. **Disruption of Education Budget:**

   However, the current crisis may affect education budgets more quickly as public revenues decline sharply and governments review the prioritization of education in national budgets IIEP-UNESCO (2020). Forecasts predict that the pandemic will lead to slower growth in government spending in the coming year, and that if the share of

government spending devoted to education were to remain unchanged, education spending would continue to grow but at significantly lower rates than before the pandemic (Al-Samarrai, Gangwar and Gala, 2020).

Needed Change in the Management of Secondary Schools beyond COVID-19 in Nigeria

The need to support education leaders at various levels of educational governance, in public and private educational organizations, in formulating adaptive, coherent, effective and equitable education responses to a crisis that has significantly disrupted educational opportunities globally becomes imperative, Fernando and Andreas (2020). The COVID-19 crisis has changed our world and our global outlook; it has also taught us about how education needs to be changed to be able to better prepare our young learners for what the future might hold. It is imperative, for this reason, that education leaders take immediate steps to develop and implement strategies which mitigate the educational impact of the Pandemic.

It is believed that cooperation can assist education leaders in devising effective education responses, and that the first and simplest form of cooperation is to exchange knowledge about what schools, communities and countries are currently doing to protect educational opportunities after the pandemic. In addition, with the right planning and policies by Nigeria government, they can use the crisis as an opportunity to build more inclusive, efficient, and resilient education systems. The following are considered as apt for the needed change in the management of secondary schools beyond Covid-19

1. **Redefining the Role of the Educator**

    The notion of an educator as the knowledge-holder who imparts wisdom to their pupils is no longer fit for the purpose of a 21st-century education. With students being able to gain access to knowledge, and even learn a technical skill, through a few clicks on their phones, tablets and computers, we will need to redefine the role of the educator in the classroom and lecture theatre. This may mean that the role of educators will need to move towards facilitating young people's development as contributing members of society.

2. **Adopting Learning Recovery:**

    This will require a raft of measures targeted at reversing learning losses, from improved classroom assessment to more focused pedagogies and

curriculum (to allow teaching at the right post-closures level) to blended use of teaching and technology. These efforts will need clear system-level guidance and materials, as well as focused, practical training for principals and teachers. It will also require substantial resources, meaning that education budgets must be protected, at a time when families will be less able to support education at home and the demands on public schools might increase (Global Education Practice, 2020).

3. Teaching Life Skills Needed for the Future

In this ever changing global environment, young people require resilience and adaptability skills that are proving to be essential to navigate effectively through this pandemic. Looking into the future, some of the most important skills that employers will be looking for will be creativity, communication and collaboration, alongside empathy and emotional intelligence; and being able to work across demographic lines of differences to harness the power of the collective through effective teamwork.

4. Change in Perceptions of Education Stakeholders

After the pandemic, parents, teachers, mass media, the government, and others must have changed their views and perceptions about their role in the education process. For example, parents now have a better understanding of the need to work jointly with the schools to foster the education of their children. Equity gaps have been made more evident, along with the urgent need to narrow them. There is better understanding of the digital divide, the differences in access to hardware, connectivity, and the right software, but also the huge shortfall of teachers with the digital skills Global Education Practice (2020). It is important that each stakeholder rededicate themselves to their respective new roles occasioned by the pandemic in order to provide the learners with the needed and appropriate learning content and skills beyond COVID-19

5. Unlocking Technology to Deliver Education

The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in educational institutions across the world being compelled to suddenly harness and utilize the suite of available technological tools to create content for remote learning for students in all sectors. Educators across the world are experiencing new possibilities to do things differently and with greater flexibility resulting

in potential benefits in accessibility to education for students across the world. Nigeria cannot afford to look indifferent. These are new modes of instruction that have previously been largely untapped particularly in the primary and secondary arena. Below are some of the platforms for e-learning.

Online platforms:
1. Google, Google classroom, Google suite, Google
2. Hangout, Google Meet
3. Facebook
4. Microsoft one note
5. Microsoft, SEQTA, education Perfect
6. Google Drive/Microsoft Teams
7. Moodle
8. Zoom
9. Seesaw
10. ManageBac
11. Ed Dojo
12. EdModo
13. https://mediawijs.be/tools
14. Youtube
15. youtube, ebscohost, progrentis
16. PhET
17. Screencastify
18. RAZ Kids etc Fernando and Andreas (2020)

Web-sites
1. https://learning.careyinstitute.org/; https://
2. www.learninginpractice.org/moving-learningonline?
3. preview=true
4. https://eduthek.at/schulmaterialien
5. e-education.brac.net
6. www.techedu.gov.bd
7. https://www.klascement.net/thema/geen-les-opschool
8. Www.mon.bg

9. https://play.google.com/store/apps/
10. details?id=secondary.academy.miya&hl=en
11. educarcchile.cl
12. learnenglishbritishcouncil. Fernando and Andreas (2020)

8. **Recruitment of More Personnel**: Recruit additional teachers and education personnel to guarantee prescribed safe distancing teacher-learner ratio

9. **Provision of Health Facilities**:
Establish and adequately equip sick-bay, dispensaries and clinics as appropriate. Train teachers, administrators, and other education personnel on safety and hygiene measures disinfection, safe distancing, hand washing, use of masks, respiratory etiquette, waste management among others. This way, both the students and learners will be able to cope with challenges of COVID-19 in the management of secondary schools Nigeria.

10. **Staff Capacity Building**:
Conduct training and capacity development for teachers and administrators to enhance their competence in effectively delivering and facilitating safe online and remote teaching and learning and their ability to provide psychosocial support to the returning students who were traumatized emotionally, physically and psychologically due to Covid-19 pandemic.

11. **Ensure Establishment of a School COVID-19 Referral System**:
There is need for a well organized and vigorous re-education and re-orientation of returning students on the established safety guidelines by presidential task force on COVID-19 (PTF) and Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) (2020). This should include protocols and procedures to take if learners, teachers, administrators, and other education personnel become unwell while in school.

12. Develop appropriate mental health and psychosocial support services that address stigmatization and discrimination to assist learners, teachers, administrators, and other education personnel and their families to cope with the effects of COVID-19 and continued uncertainties of the pandemic

13. **Educating Citizens in an Interconnected World**

    COVID-19 is a pandemic that illustrates how globally interconnected we are, there is no longer such a thing as isolated issues and actions. Successful people in the coming decades need to be able to understand this interrelatedness and navigate across boundaries to leverage their differences and work in a globally collaborative way. It is true that the crisis has provided an opportunity to all educational institutions particularly secondary schools to quickly improve and maximize their ICT operations Olaitan, Abdullahi, Tolorunju, Akinjo and Ogunjemilua, 2020)

14. **Adoption of Alternative Learning Models:** As schools and learning facilities reopen, they must implement safe distancing measures that minimize and isolate risk. As such, they may offer some alternative learning models (as illustrated below) that focus on flexibility in scheduling and content delivery for returning learners. It is important to point out that all these models are premised on the belief that learners who require additional support or have disabilities are not disadvantaged. Some of the models are:

    I.   **Outdoor Learning:** This can limit transmission and also allows for safe distancing between learners and teachers. The use of shelter outdoors is necessary for the protection and safety of learners and teachers. In addition, safety in all weathers and security measures are required for each location.

    II. **Staggered Attendance:** Learners may arrive and depart at different times to avoid overcrowding; schools may reopen gradually (e.g., starting with particular grade levels).

    III. **Alternate Attendance:** Schools may alternate attendance days per week, with learners at the secondary level (or equivalent) and above having fewer in-person classes, since these learners can better manage independent learning (e.g., junior secondary school learners attend on Tuesdays and Thursdays while primary school learners attend classes on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays).

    IV. **Platooning:** Classes may be divided into morning and afternoon shifts. Taking Responsibility for Safe Schools and Quality Learning

V.   **Flexible Schedule:** Lessons may be structured in a way that reduces the need for learners and staff to move between the different areas of the premises.

VI.   **Creative Delivery:** Lessons may be delivered more holistically to take into account various learning environments for in-person learning (indoor, outdoor) and various media for distance learning (printed materials, online, TV, and radio). Learners may have allocated time learning in each of these environments to reduce the burden placed on indoor facilities (Federal Ministry of Health (FMoH), Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) and. Presidential Taskforce on COVID-19 (PTF), 2020)

VII.   **Involving Critical Stakeholders**: Critical stakeholders such as Parents, PTAs, SBMCs, teachers' unions, civil society organizations (including women's / mothers' groups), inter-national development partners, donors, old students, religious and traditional leaders Actions

VIII.   **Back-to-school Strategies**: This involves complying with social distancing; readjustment of academic year calendar and school opening hours; use of double shifts; provision of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), thermometers, and WASH facilities in schools; staggered use of school facilities to ensure compliance with NCDC guidelines

IX.   **Financing**: Conduct a rapid assessment and determine funding requirement for upgrading infrastructure and facilities (such as classrooms, furniture, WASH, and ICT facilities) to meet and sustain prescribed safe school reopening requirements

Conclusion

It is an open fact that schools after the pandemic never remained the same, the impact of the pandemic has caused physical, psychological, emotional and mental trauma to all and sundry but of particular concern are the educational managers, students, teachers, parents, SBMCs among others. However, that should not be enough reason why conscientious, deliberate, timely and aggressive efforts and collaboration should not be initiated and executed by the government of Nigeria in order to cope and move on after the pandemic. To

succeed therefore, the articulated needed change in the management of secondary schools as contained in this paper will do the magic if taken seriously.

Recommendations

Education in Nigeria has suffered setbacks over the years. Now is the time for stakeholders to craft meaningful initiatives as we prepare for an era where the impact of COVID-19 becomes a part of our society. It is therefore recommended that there should increase in education budget at all level of government in order to provide for all the needed resource and facilities for e-learning and ICT support services in all secondary schools, there should be aggressive campaign on learning recovery strategies and intensive capacity building programme for school administrators and teachers on the use of technologies in teaching and learning after the pandemic in order to survive going forward.

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