

# **T**HE EFFECTS OF TRANSFORMATION IN EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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## **ABSTRACT**

*Most regions of the world face one, two, or even more on-going threats ranging from weather/climate related storms, active assailant and bandits, gas explosion an dangerous chemical leakages, flooding plane and vehicle crashes to terrorism and covid-19 pandemic. Cognizant of the irrefutable fact that disasters and all form of threats and emergencies strike to retard human progress, there is urgent need to interrogate especially at this time how and what we should educate our young ones and a reasonable others in the 21<sup>st</sup> century so that, they are adequately*

*U.S.A, China, Japan, Russia, France, Britain, Spain, Italy, Brazil, Mexico, Israel too mention but few were al caught pants down and devastated by the*

## **Introduction:**

According to Prof. Augustine U.O. (2021) a lead paper presented in an academic seminar for Schools of General Education of Federal College of Education Yola, view experiences and event of the late 2019 to the present of 2021 all over the world associated with covid-19 pandemic, have manifestly shown that no level of technology attainment and sophistication of the societies and nations can insulate humanity anywhere on the planet earth from vulnerabilities and emergencies. Develop nations and regions of the world such as Germany,

menace of covid-19 as much third world nations were not spared by the ravaging pandemic. The impacts of this catastrophe on both world and national economics are still unfolding as both educational, political, social, cultural, scientific and technology landscapes were negatively affected. He also reveals that, large scale man-made or natural disasters are no strangers to nation. Most region of the world face one, two or even more on-going threats ranging from weather/climate related storms, active assaultant and bandits, gas explosion and dangerous chemical leakages, flooding, plane and vehicle crashes to terrorism. At this juncture, it is not appropriate to ask question as to whether an emergency critical incident will occur, but rather when and where it will strike. It is a truism that disasters (natural or man made) which give rise to emergencies are renowned for their unpredictability. This implies that disasters can occur when least expected. Therefore man must be prepared always for such emergencies. The next emergency implied lesson of the global pandemic occasioned by a “single” virus, the covid-19 is the question of what should be done and going forward.

### **What is Pandemic?**

A pandemic is a disease outbreak across the countries and continents. It affects more people and takes more people and takes more lives than an epidemic. The World Health Organization (WHO) declared covid-19 to be a pandemic when it was spreading quickly open wide area.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO) 2020 in Hassan (2020) revealed that coronavirus spread. The coronavirus first infections were potentially result of an animals to – human – transmission, was obtained in late January (2020). As the virus spread, to local transmission was seen across the world.

(WHO, 2020) also mention that, the virus can move from one person via:

- Respiratory droplets, when person sneezes or cough.
- Direct contact with infected individual
- Contact with contaminated surface of objects.

The WHO (2020) report that, the following symptoms are observe from the infected person's:

- Fever, elevated body temperature
- Dry cough
- Fatigue or muscle pain
- Difficulties in breathing

Less common symptoms includes these:

- Coughing up mucus or blood
- Headaches
- Kidney failure

When the disease spreads patients also develop pneumonia, which in flames the lungs and causes them to with fluid (WHO) 2020 in Hassan (2020).

According to Hassan (2020) covid-19 pandemic has brought to the world to a grinding half. Citizen's became worried of their means of livelihood, it affected individual economic, business, health, education, worshipping places, international relationship, politics and it has left a trail of tears and uncertainty, it has left us to prevent through social distance, wearing face mask, washing hands with clean water and soap or hand sanitizer. On the other hand most of the families lost their loves ones.

### Causes of Pandemic

- Pandemics can cause significant, wide spread increases in morbidity and have disproportionately higher mortality impact on L M I Cs.
- Pandemic can cause economic damage through multiple channels, including short term fiscals shocks and longer term negatives shocks to economic growth.
- Individual behavioural changes such as fear-induced a version to work places, are primary cause of negative shocks of economic growth during pandemic.

- Some pandemic mitigations measures can cause significant social and economic disruption.
- In countries with weak institutions and legacies of political instability, pandemic can increase political stresses and tensions. In these contexts, outbreak response measures such as quarantine have sparked violence and tensions between states and citizens.

### **Covid-19: Education Transformed through remote Learning**

A new collaboration between UNICEF and HITCH will provide a much needed boost to children's education during the Covid-19 pandemic through a dynamic online through a dynamic online/offline educational programmes.

According to UNICEF (2020) 5<sup>th</sup> August (2020). The closure of Nigerian Schools and the Covid-19 pandemic has led to more than 50 million children remaining at home. With an education system already burdened with low participation and the learning achievements, the closure increases the challenge for children's education and has the potential to set back recent gains in bringing children back to school if adequate action is not taken.

In the response to Covid-19, the Federal Ministry of Education sought to mitigate the immediate impact of the pandemic by using online and offline platforms, television, radio and take-home materials to keep children learning. UNICEF Nigeria has supported the Ministry throughout this process.

### **About the HITCH's e-Learning**

HITCH's e-learning tool has been customized for the Nigerian curriculum and has the potential to transform teaching and learning, and make classroom learning dynamic experience at home. This collaboration is an excellent opportunity to ensure and beyond the pandemic. The learning package ensure children can access online fit, for the purpose of resources, organized by their level and grades, it also equips teachers to be

collaborators and facilitators of learning-rather than just remote instructors.

As Covid-19 has clearly shown to move Nigerian education forward we need to be flexible and open to new ways of both learning and teaching. Sometimes, necessity is the mother of invention, and we hope that this learning tool will not only ensure Nigerian students do not miss out on their education now, but also create a system for life long, and quality learning for years to come.

Unicef highlights various ways in which Covid-19 is challenging decades of progress on key childhood challenges such as poverty, health, access to education, nutrition, child protection and mental well-being. It warns that almost two years into the pandemic, the widespread impact of Covid-19 continues to deepen, increasing poverty, entrenching inequality and threatening the rights of children at previous by unseen levels.

Throughout our history, UNICEF has helped to shape healthier and safer environments for children cross the globe with great results for millions”, said UNICEF Executive Director Henrietta Fore. “These gains are now at risk. The Covid-19 pandemic has been the biggest threat to progress for children in our 75 year history. While the number of children who are hungry, out of school, abused, living in poverty or forced into marriage is going up, the number of children with access to health care, sufficient food and essential services is going down. In a year in which we should be looking forward we are going backward “

### **Concepts of Early Childhood Education**

Early childhood care and education is the first step in the educational ladder and it supports the development of children until the age of eight (8) early childhood is important because it's influence on development, it is a stage in human development. The human brain grown a particularly rapidly during the first three years of life (Shatu .A. 2018). According to Oduoluwo (2011), was the opines that, early childhood education consists of activities and or experiences that are intended to effect development or

experiences that are interested to effect developmental changes in children prior to their entry into the primary school.

According to Esther (2013) define early childhood or pre-primary education it is education given in an educational institutions to children age three to five before entering any primary school for their choice. Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) is used in a holistic way to refer to services and programme that support children's survival, growth, development and learning – including health, nutrition and hygiene and cognitive, social, emotional and physical development from birth to entry into primary school.

The basic mandate of early childhood education, centres on the teaching of the rudiments of numbers, letters, colours, shape, form e.t.c. through play. The teaching of good habits and provision of cognitive stimulation that would give room for optional development of the child were also include child care centre are meant to provide basic needs of the child such as nutrition, health care, stimulation, affection, early learning, social protection inculcation of cultural practices (Gray,2019).

Early Childhood Education regards education in early childhood as one of the most vulnerable stages in life. It spans the human life from birth to age eight (8) (National Association for Education of Young Children. NAEYC 1998).

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### **Pandemic was Disastrous for Early Childhood**

The long-running pandemic has disrupted every facet of education. But the early childhood sector has been particularly devastated. Over the past 2 years, young children have experienced learning setbacks and few social experiences, while their caregivers have endured degraded working conditions, stress from job and mental health declines. Emily (2021).

Much has been reported, written, observed and said about these impacts – particularly by researchers. But families, educators and early childhood leaders, that information can be convoluted, complex and overwhelming. In the crisis of the pandemic situation that has been fluid and demanding, costly and time consuming, few of those who stand to benefit most from the studies and surveys conducted on the impact of the pandemic on the child care centre actually have the capacity of scour them, search solutions and reflect on the reading (Emily,2021).

In that spirit, a team of early childhood experts at the university of Michigan and Urban Institute decided to do the sifting and sorting for others in their field. They synthesized the findings from 76 high quality studies of early childhood education during the pandemic. Its clear that youngt children suffered, perhaps with long-lasting effects, and that those who work with them find themselves facing unprecedented mental health and financial hardships. Yet, to aggregate these funding and make use of sense of them, all in one place, provides a service to not only early childhood educators and families of young learners, but to policy makers, leaders and other people in positions of power, the authors argue.

### **The Impact of Pandemic on Children**

According to Christiana Weil and, associate professor and the facility co-director of the education policy initiative at the university of Michigan, who co-authored the report, titled “Historic Crisis, Historic opportunity (2021) evaluated, in many cases, lower enrollment likely translated to missed learning opportunities for children, lost income for child care Programme operators and less work for educators. Some families were fearful about virus. Others, suddenly working remote or laid off, decided to keep their child with them at home. And others didn’t see the value in remote learning for such a young child. On the top of that, many programs were strapped with group size restrictions and social distancing measures that forced smaller class sizes and lower enrolment.

With the enrollment, as with so many other elements of the pandemic, the impact was not borne equally. Child care centers experienced greater

losses in enrollment than family – or home – based care providers, and those who un-enrolled were more likely from families who did not speak English at home, who reported lower incomes.

According to Christiana in Emily (2021) revealed that the amount of time spent on the learning activities each week declined as in – person teaching became either unsafe, undesirable or unavailable. This trend hold even for the programs that offered remote learning during closures; in one study, families reported two hours of learning per day, down from about six in pre-pandemic schooling. In another, based on Louisiana, in Emily (2021) reported that early childhood educators reported that, they spend a median of five hours per week interacting with remote learners. She went on reporting that, there is a significant setbacks among early learners, with children of color as well as those from low-income backgrounds, who are learning English or who have a disabilities experiencing more pronouncing setbacks.

This affects not only academic outcomes, but social skills, emotional intelligence, interaction with peers and more. Many young children who have special needs may not have been identified as such, and as a result missed out on critical services the otherwise might have received.

Christiana in Emily (2021) reported that, most importantly families spent more time with their children. Many played a direct role in the child's learning for the first time. According to the analysis, 80 percent of the parents of pre-school-age children read to their children during the pandemic, 62 percent sang songs with them and 61 percent worked with them on numbers and letters at least three times per week. Those patterns is not isolated by race, religion, ability or language, according to the analysis, all families reported particularly in such activities with their children.

### **The Negative Impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic on ECCE**

According to Simon (2020) reported that school closures in response to the Covid-19 pandemic have shed a light on numerous issues affecting access to education as well as a broader socio-economic issues.



As a result of 12<sup>th</sup> March, more than 370 Million children and youth are not attending schools because of the temporary on the indefinite country wide school closures mandated by the government in an attempt to slow the spread of the pandemic Goldberg (2020).

According to the United Nations International Children Fund (UNICEF,2020). The covid-19 affected more than 91% of pupil's worldwide, with approximately 1.6 Million children and youngsters unable to attend physical schools due to the temporary closures lock down. (UNICEF,2020).

When schools were close temporary, it carries high social and economic costs. The disruptions they cause affect people across the communities, but their impact is more severe for disadvantaged children and their families including in interrupted learning, compromised of nutrition, childcare, problems and consequent economic costs of the families who cannot work UNESCO (2020).

According to Studi economic Dell'ocse (OECD) reported that, studies shows that school performance hinges critically on maintaining close relationship with 192 teachers. This is particularly true for students from advantage backgrounds, who may not have the parental support needed to learn on their own (OECD,2020) working parents are more likely to miss work when schools close in order to take care of their children. Unequal access to technology or fast, reliable internet access can prevent students in rural areas and also the disadvantaged families UNESCO 2020.

However, in region where online learning is not feasible, due to access to distance learning tools such as smart phones and internet connectivity, some of the parents have resorted to child as mean's to cope with the financial stress placed on them by the pandemic Masi (2020). When schools are close, parents are often asked to facilitate the learning with limited education and resources, children dropout rates tend to increase as an effect of school closure due to the challenge of ensuring all pupils return to school once the school closure ends. This is especially true protracted closure UNESCO (2020). The disadvantaged are at risk, or homeless children are more likely not to return to school after the closures are

ended, and the effect will often be a long life to the disadvantaged children from lost opportunities Baker (2020).

### **The Effect on the Early Childhood Educators**

According to Emily (2021) reported that, child care centres and home-based providers, on the whole, were harder hit by the pandemic than programs embedded in public schools and those funded by the Federal Government's Head start.

Many reported that, the experiencing financial his ability, income loss and an increase in the cost of care, due to restrictions on the class sizes, price increases on food stuff and cleaning supplies, the need for personal protective equipment and greater demand for labour. The financial stress and un-certainty, on top of the public health emergency, created challenging working conditions that made it difficult for young children and educators to thrive.

Those challenging of the working conditions includes abrupt schedule changes, new instructional formats and decline in mental health and well-being.

### **Conclusion**

Covid-19 pandemic affects everyone and everywhere. It has been exacerbating, pre-existing inequalities, exposing vulnerability in social, political and economic system. Pre-primary teachers are affected by Covid-19. However, it is expected to be most damaging for children in the poorest communities.

The paper concludes that, the pandemic compounded the challenges of an already – difficult job. Many Early Childhood Educators lack employer-sponsored health insurance and the health and risks of Covid-19 left many people have fearful of their options. The frequent and prolonged closures, declines in enrollment and new guide lines around social distancing caused financial stress among providers and educators. For many, the ability to justify what they gain by working in early childhood education against the risks they assume each day became every more tenuous.

## Recommendations

- Caregivers should be given a training on the remote learning.
- Government should encourage the medicals professionals by providing necessary equipment's and the materials on ground to enable them work for fighting covid-19 in the country.
- The school should provide the social-distancing in their classes in order to maintain safely and prevent the effects of covid-19 pandemics.
- Adopting teacher education program (Curriculum) that will prepare teachers in all subject/discipline at all levels of education to be able to teach emergency related topics to our younger generation.

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