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Editorial Brief

We have in the second volume of IJMGS articles that were peer reviewed by scholars in the field. All, but one, were presented at various times on virtual weekly webinar organized by the Centre. They were then revised and independently reviewed as part of intellectual rigour the Journal editorial is noted for. The coverage is multidisciplinary in contents, and trans-global in analyses. The current world discourse is predicated on three main issues: health and development in the midst of ravaging COVID-19 pandemic; climate change; and food security. The commonality with the three challenges, and scholar's interrogation, is the phenomenal transdisciplinary Migration and its global context. The articles in this volume are rich in contents, informative in analyses; and refreshing in evidence. They are useful in all parameters and will add value to finding solutions to some of the issues raised on all topics.

Hakeem I. Tijani
Editor

Virtual Migration: Policy Consideration for Quality Teaching and Learning in Nigerian Higher Educational Institutions

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Abstract

Technological advancement before the advent of the pandemic introduced different applications for online meetings which have also been found very useful for virtual teaching and learning. In Nigeria, virtual learning is not a new phenomenon in the education system because there are higher educational institutions such as National Open University which offer Open, Distance, and e-Learning (OD&eL) mode of educational delivery. As a result of the lockdown occasioned by COVID-19 pandemic, schools were completely shut and academic activities ceased, at least, for some period of time. The need to ensure continuous learning thus made several institutions of learning to migrate online. The main thrust of this paper therefore is to discuss areas that require the strengthening of policies in the quest for quality teaching and

learning in Nigeria's higher educational institutions en route virtual migration. The genesis of Corona virus globally and in Nigeria was discussed. Discussions on some relevant concepts such as quality teaching and learning, virtual migration, and so on were also brought to the fore. Factors that are necessary for implementing effective virtual migration in higher institutions like vision and plans, students and staff support, copyright and intellectual property law were also highlighted. The paper underscored some areas where policies are to be strengthened in an attempt at transiting to a virtual institution. Finally, the paper recommended among others that higher educational institutions need the full support of the government in terms of making concrete policies and funding appropriately, this would help augment quality teaching and learning in the school.

Keywords: Quality teaching, Quality learning, Virtual migration, Virtual pedagogy, Virtual literacy

Introduction

The pandemic, 'Coronavirus' is no longer new to the academic world or the global entity. It is a virus which has succeeded in disrupting the economy, health, and the education sectors. Coronavirus, simply known as COVID-19 originated from Wuhan, China in the year 2019. It is an infectious disease ranging from common cold to more severe diseases, which in some cases has led to death. The hit of the virus was impromptu, and it was never envisaged that a virus could attack a country, transmit to other countries and cause a total lockdown for months all over the world.

Researches done after the advent of the pandemic brought to knowledge that in history, a similar situation had happened in the 19th Century but fortunately

did not end up being a global pandemic. It was known as the first influenza pandemic in 1918 and was called the Spanish influenza, it however, unavoidably claimed many lives (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2018). The inception of coronavirus transformed the family, the society, the community, the nation, and the entire world in relation to hygiene, businesses, health, and education.

According to United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation, UNESCO (2019), research has brought to limelight the positive and negative impacts of COVID-19 to the world, especially to the education system. Besides, the downturn of the economy at large, deaths and total lockdown experience, COVID-19 birthed digital transformation in all sectors stretching from the developed nations to the underdeveloped ones. Digitization in the developed countries is not new because they embrace and create room for innovations, creativity, and advancement. On the other hand, developing and under-developed nations find it hard to finance innovations and embrace changes brought about by technological advancement.

Technological advancement before the advent of the pandemic introduced different applications for online meetings which have also been found very useful for virtual teaching and learning, common examples are Zoom, Google Meet, Microsoft Teams, Skype, et cetera. These applications help to foster communication even while at different places at the same time. Virtual learning is not also a new phenomenon in the education system here in Nigeria because there are higher educational institutions which offer open-

distance and e-learning, such as the National Open University of Nigeria (henceforth, NOUN). Nevertheless, with the COVID-19 crisis, it became a new dimension of learning for basic and senior secondary education.

In order to combat the spread of the infectious disease, the governments of various countries had to announce a compulsory and complete lockdown for some months which was to be strictly adhered to by the citizens of the country. This lockdown affected schools and offices, including markets and businesses. Developed countries were however able to continue teaching and learning virtually, meetings were also organised virtually, every activity became digitized in order not to stop the flow of communication and networking necessary for the day-to-day existence of man. The reverse seemed to be the case in most of the developing and under-developed nations.

As a result of the lockdown caused by COVID-19, schools were completely locked and academic activities ceased, these had a negative influence on students' attitudes and behaviours at home and in the community (UNESCO, 2019). In the quest to continue learning even during the pandemic, schools decided to transit virtually with the use of such means as WhatsApp, radio and television for the less-advantaged living in remote areas of the country. Unfortunately, for higher institutions (specifically for universities) in Nigeria, the Academic Staff Union of Universities(ASUU) had some unresolved issues with the government that led to a comprehensive and total strike action for a period of nine months which made it impossible for learning to take place

within that period either conventionally or virtually, at the NOUN, which is the only Open, Distance, and e-Learning-dedicated Institution in the country.

The management of private universities in Nigeria tried to prevent continuous loss of academic session and so, decided to continue teaching and learning virtually for their students. In the same vein, the management of some public universities, like the University of Lagos, were undergoing reformation to create learning Moodle that would help to accelerate teaching and learning immediately ASUU suspended her nine-months old strike action.

It should be noted that the quality of a school depends on many factors, which include the school management. There are two forces that control the management of higher educational institutions, namely the external and the internal control. The external control body involves the government through different bodies in charge of policy making for higher institutions, that is, National Universities Commission (NUC) the control body for Universities; National Board for Technical Education (NBTE), the control body for Polytechnics and Monotechnics; and National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE), the body in control of Colleges of Education in Nigeria. On the other hand, the internal control system is made up of the principal officers and the Senate which serve as the decision-making entities for the growth and progress of the school. The quality of a school management can be portrayed through the mechanism in which solutions can be proffered in difficult situations, example is the COVID-19 pandemic which has caused unrest in the

educational sector. The ingenuity of a school management made it possible for learning to continue even while students were in different homes.

Broadly speaking, quality management of higher educational institution would help to deliver robust quality teaching-learning services to its loyal customers (Ali & Shastri, 2010; Farouq, Akhtar, Ullah, & Memon, 2007), boost workers' self-esteem, ensure constant institutional growth, good quality from the perspective of the customers, fill the lacuna amongst faculties' functions and promote team-work. Digitization of the educational sector must be totally embraced by the school management in order to make teaching-learning not only continuous, interactive, and problem solving, but also of good quality.

COVID-19 Pandemic in Nigeria

In Nigeria, the first index case of COVID-19 was first reported by the Federal Ministry of Health (FMH) on February 27, 2020. The case was made possible by an already-infected Italian citizen who works in Nigeria and returned from Milan, Italy to Lagos on the 25th of February 2020. Later, the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control, NCDC (2020) reported over 50 confirmed cases throughout the country within two months.

The second wave of the pandemic in the country started early December 2020 as in most parts of the world. Specifically, on the 23rd of December 2020, 1,133 new confirmed cases and 5 deaths were recorded in Nigeria. These 1,133 new cases were reported from 18 States namely – Lagos (397), FCT (357), Kaduna (81), Plateau (63), Katsina (46), Sokoto (32), Oyo (28), Ogun (21), Kano (19), Rivers (18), Osun (13), Edo (12), Niger (12), Bayelsa (11), Borno (11), Bauchi (8), Jigawa (2), and Ondo (2).

New confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Nigeria reported on March 30, 2021 were 121, spread across the following States: Lagos-40, FCT-15, Katsina-12, Kaduna-11, Imo-8, Kebbi-8, Nasarawa-8, Delta-7, Edo-3, Osun-3, Rivers-3, Ekiti-1, Jigawa-1, Kano-1, The statistics released from the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control showed that167, 762 cases had been confirmed, 151, 532 cases had been discharged while 2, 056 deaths had been recorded in 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory by March 31, 2021. Table 1 shows detailed statistics of COVID-19 pandemic by States in Nigeria.

Table 1:

Statistics of COVID-19 Pandemic by States in Nigeria

SN	States	No. of Laboratory Confirmed Cases	No. of Cases on Admission	No. Discharged	No of Deaths
1	Lagos	57,634	205	56,990	439
2	FCT	19,632	1,428	18,041	163
3	Plateau	9,024	36	8,931	57
4	Kaduna	8,932	59	8,808	65
5	Rivers	6,912	26	6,786	100
6	Oyo	6,838	491	6,224	123
7	Edo	4,878	11	4,682	185
8	Ogun	4,617	105	4,463	49
9	Kano	3,909	26	3,773	110
10	Ondo	3,172	1,029	2,080	63
11	Kwara	3,083	214	2,814	55
12	Delta	2,606	791	1,744	71
13	Osun	2,530	29	2,449	52
14	Nasarawa	2,333	1,947	373	13
15	Enugu	2,237	285	1,923	29
16	Katsina	2,095	31	2,030	34
17	Gombe	2,030	3	1,983	44

18	Ebonyi	2,007	24	1,951	32
19	Anambra	1,909	64	1,826	19
20	Akwa Ibom	1,765	290	1,461	14
21	Abia	1,665	1	1,643	21
22	Imo	1,650	21	1,592	37
23	Bauchi	1,521	3	1,501	17
24	Borno	1,327	89	1,200	38
25	Benue	1,188	575	591	22
26	Adamawa	1,051	745	274	32
27	Niger	930	496	417	17
28	Taraba	910	24	864	22
29	Ekiti	866	19	836	11
30	Bayelsa	852	22	804	26
31	Sokoto	774	1	745	28
32	Jigawa	519	18	485	16
33	Kebbi	450	42	392	16
34	Cross River	366	1	348	17
35	Yobe	313	20	284	9
36	Zamfara	232	3	221	8
37	Kogi	5	0	3	2

Source: Nigeria Centre for Disease Control, [NCDC], March 31, 2021

The States were arranged in order of magnitude.

Conceptual Clarifications

There are some key concepts which must be clarified for broader understanding of this paper. Some of these concepts include quality management, virtual pedagogy, virtual literacy, and virtual skills

Quality Teaching and Learning

Probably there is no other topic in education which generates so much discussion and controversy as 'quality'. A substantial discussion around the meaning of quality took place around 20 years ago within the field of higher education, and views still differ about what quality is and how it should be obtained (Stensaker, 2007). Quality teaching and learning is linked to the structural and process characteristics of educational systems. Importantly, the role of education policies, of schools and of teachers in promoting high student performance is increasingly recognised (IEA, 2016; Hanushek & Woessmann, 2014).

Although the word "quality" is a broad concept which could mean different things to different people, according to Anastasia and Maria (2017), it is not only connected to the concept of superiority and excellence, but also a state of perfection. The Concise Oxford Dictionary simply put quality as a degree of excellence, Defoe and Juran (2010) further referred to it as fitness for purpose while Goetsc and Davis (2010) defined it as a constantly changing state which has to do with products, services, people, processes and environment that meets or exceeds expectations and helps generate superior value. Quality teaching and learning within the context of this paper means teaching and learning methods that successfully help learners develop the knowledge and skills they will require in a digital age.

The standardized definition of quality has to do with all the indices of a product/service that the customer deprived satisfaction from and as well in

accordance with any regulations associated with such products or services (Tzvetelin, 2006). Quality management is one of the several stages of quality, the rest being quality control, quality assurance, and total quality management (TQM). Quality management connotes ~~is~~ the totality of activities that the higher institution managers execute to drive home the organisational excellent policy, such activities may include quality higher educational planning, quality educational control, quality assurance and quality educational improvement. According to Loughran (2018), quality in teaching and learning requires an ability to:

i. Create a need to know ~~in~~ the students so that they can be genuinely engaged in learning. In other words, knowing how to create an invitation to students to learn so they develop curiosity and interest in a subject is crucial.

ii. Develop ways to engage a diversity of learners at the same time. This, despite the inevitable variety of entry points to engagement in a subject, range of levels of interest, motivation and attitudes to the content, and perceived ability and style of learning. This is demanding work.

iii. Draw out and use students' prior knowledge. Students don't enter the classroom as a blank slate. They come with pre-existing ideas, views, opinions, experiences and 'alternate facts!' that a teacher must be able to draw out and work with in order to build meaningful learning.

iv. Conceptual understanding of content. A strong indication of a deep knowledge of a subject is evident in a person's conceptual understanding, and that goes well beyond simply 'knowing the facts'. Working at the big-picture level means a teacher must know how to conceptualise the central ideas that shape deeper understandings of a subject.

v. Building trusting relationships and safe learning environments. Just as quality can be seen in the way a teacher creates a dynamic relationship between teaching and learning, the same exists in the trusting relationships that must be fostered and developed between teacher and student(s), as well as student to student.

Virtual Migration

The concept of Virtual Migration is credited to Aneesh (2006) who described it as transforming "body shopping" – physical – to virtual machines eliminating human contacts. It is an expanding transnational space where globalization married programming code. According to Tijani (Tijani, et al., 2020) virtual migration is an uncommon concept among stakeholders within Nigeria and Sub Saharan Africa; and it gains steam in Digitisation of African universities. It is an exciting and innovative decolonization of migration emphasizing how software flows replace people flows." Tijani then defined virtual migration as the non-physical movement of operations through automation and technology using applications and code to guide against vulnerability to cyber-attacks or compromise.

Virtual migration within the context of this paper however refers to the transition of academic activities, either in part or wholly, from physical to online, especially during pandemic so as to prevent learning disruption, using modern technologies. It is the mobilisation of information and communication technologies from physical environment, where meaningful teaching-learning activities are being threatened to online environment in order to prevent learning disruption due to the pandemic. It is the same as virtual transition.

Virtual Pedagogy

Virtual pedagogy simply means the method and practice of teaching that is carried out non-physically and course content accessed or stored by means of a computer through a network or Internet. It is a type of learning that strictly has to do with online courses or online environment. In this type of learning, the students and lecturers are physically separated. Students may access the course materials in real time or at a later hour. It reduces or abolishes the need for the lecturer and the student to have physical contact in an enclosed centre or classroom. This type of learning could come in several ways which include computer-based, internet-based, remote teacher online, blended learning, and facilitated virtual learning.

The computer-based virtual pedagogy is that in which instruction is supplied not by the lecturer but by installed software, this software can often personalise the contents to fit the personal needs of individual learner. Another form of virtual pedagogy that is closer to the computer-based is the internet-based; the major difference is that the software supplies instruction to learners via a web and it is stored on a remote server. In the remote teacher online pedagogy, instruction is supplied through the teacher in absentia; interaction between the learner and the lecturer is through the Internet in form of an online video, online groups, e-mail or real-time messages.

The virtual pedagogy that mixed both traditional physical interaction with the computer or internet-based or remote virtual pedagogy is the blended learning. Instruction in the blended learning may spring from two sources which is the face-to-face classroom teacher and any of the virtual forms of

learning. The facilitated virtual pedagogy is facilitated by a person; the facilitator does not control the learners' instruction but only assist them in the learning process through supervision. This type of pedagogy could be computer-based, internet-based or remote lecturer internet instruction.

Virtual Literacy

Virtual literacy is the ability of the lecturer and the learner to be able to use information and communication technology effectively. The American Library Association defined it as the competence in using information and communication technologies to locate, evaluate, create and communicate information requiring cognitive and technical skills. Virtual literacy goes beyond sending and receiving instant messages, a learner might be able to send instant messages and not be virtually literate, virtual literacy is all encompassing. A virtually literate learner must have some fundamental skills for online learning, some of these skills according to Bigne, Badenes, Ruiz and Andreu (2018) include web writing skills, persistence, effective time management skills, effective and appropriate communication skills, basic technical skills, motivation and independence and a good study environment.

Enabling Factors for Effective Implementation of Virtual Migration

The outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic has forced the world to migrate from in-person traditional way of learning to virtual teaching and learning. The teaching-learning activities of over 1.6 billion, which accounted for over 91% of the global student population have been disrupted, and this has surged the demand for virtual teaching and learning experiences. Devaney, et al., (2020) reported that there were over 10.3 million enrolments in online

courses from the same locality within the last 30 days. The inability to give in-person learning has made higher institutions of learning to make available continued uninterrupted academic activities through remote teaching. Migrating to virtual learning comes with its own demands. Maria (2020) highlighted the following six factors that serve as prerequisites for implementing virtual transition in higher institutions:

1. **Vision and Plans:** The first prerequisite for a successful transition to virtual learning is to have a clear vision and plans; this will enable the college faculty and other supporting staffs to have the knowledge of the change in organisational culture (Hache, 2000). The vision and plans should cover a wide range of areas such as administrative support framework, learners' services, ICT support, training of faculty and making available the required supports to make the migration smooth. According to Berge and Mrozowski (2001), the major important phase for transiting to a well-run and organised virtual learning is the planning phase, it is a phase that determines how judiciously money is going to be spent in purchasing a strong software package that will have a long life span than purchasing the same software yearly.

2. **Curriculum:** Virtual learning is a unique and logical area of education that goes beyond the known method of teaching. It dwells more on modern method of content delivery and pedagogical principles. The virtual learning curriculum requires the lecturer to move away from their traditional instructional design such as interactive lectures, small group projects, and closed laboratory work which is mostly seen by many as the only way that a course could be delivered. Anderson and

Middleton (2002) added that some lecturers have not yet adequately upgraded to the advances provided by the advent of technology through PowerPoint presentations and other multimedia.

3. **Staff Training and Support:** Another key prerequisite for virtual transition is the training and support needed by instructors so they can be motivated to adopt and embrace this new method of teaching. The instructors must be taken through a routine training on how the virtual platform can be accessed and how their course materials can be implemented in the new teaching and learning environment. The dynamic of knowledge calls for new advanced and original methods of curriculum development which faculties must be conversant with through on the job training.

4. **Student Services:** For effective virtual transition, focus should also be on the students and not on technology alone. Moore and Kearsley (1996) submitted that technology cannot be brought to teaching pedagogy without changing the ways other things are done in the teaching process.

5. **Student Training and Support:** Fink (2002) suggested that students who are not ready for the virtual transitioning can negatively influence other students who may be willing. Students are more likely to succeed and the overall purpose of virtual transition achieved when there is adequate provision for a support system such as online tutoring, online

counselling, and online study group. Those students who do not know how to do virtual/online classes or the use of the Internet to download a file should be trained and supported.

6. **Copyright and Intellectual Property:** The major aspect of law that is grossly connected with educational institutions especially during virtual transition is the copyright law. The Nigeria copyright law (Cap 28, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria) allows the holder of the copyrighted works to reproduce the work in any material form and publish the work. It is one of the two domains of intellectual property law. Downloading any work without permission is a copyright violation. Copyright permission must be duly sorted out when materials are being downloaded.

Some Administrative Areas for Policy Consideration

In any learning environment, learners ought to have a good understanding of what the teacher anticipates from them, just as what they can anticipate from the teacher. This then calls for effective policy guidelines that will ensure a hitch-free virtual learning. Ideally, a course prospectus additionally presents general rules used to regulate the course, for example, an attendance policy, and a grading policy that clarifies how students' learning outcomes will be assessed.

1. Student Privacy Policies

Privacy policies and related procedures that protect a student's legal right to privacy and confidentiality. Most educational institutions in the United States

have a student privacy policy. This can be done by restricting access to a students' course sites so that gate-c rashers cannot see the resources that reside there, as well as students' discussion responses. In the United States, for instance, most institutions of higher learning have student privacy policy. This practice has to be observed in Nigeria.

2. Attendance Policy

A set of principles strategy should address participation prerequisites. Simultaneously, taking participation in an e-learning environment, particularly in an absolutely online course, is more hazardous than in a conventional learning environment. Participation required in e-learning activities can be construed as attendance in an e-learning course. Non-attendance like inability to answer to email or take part in a conversation, for instance – is absence of participation. Perhaps the best procedures to advance participation in e-learning exercises is to ensure that participation counts towards a learner's grades.

3. Discussion Policy

The term 'discussion' is used to denote both chats and forums. A discussion policy contains rules governing one's engagement with students in chats and forums including the degree to which one will also get involved in students' discussions. For instance, a few teachers partake in a conversation after all the students have gotten an opportunity to react. If one uses this approach, it has to be explicitly stated, so students will not anticipate more regular participation from their teacher.

4. Assignment Policy

Clear rules regarding written assignments are significant and need to be clearly stated, partially in light of the fact that they decrease students' frustration when preparing assignments. Furthermore, they are also important on the grounds that they can lessen the amount of emails students will send to you requesting explanation.

5. Submission Policy

Establish guidelines about how students should submit completed assignments. For instance, if an assignment is sent by e-mail, there should be a policy directing them to place their full names, course code, and a brief assignment identifier both in the subject line of the e-mail and in a prominent heading on any attachments. Students could also be asked to place assignments in a course site storage area where you have read and write privileges and students have only write privileges. Likewise, emphasize that you will acknowledge documents only if they are without infection and in a format that conforms to your software standards policy.

6. Cheating and Plagiarism Policy

A code of conduct policy should address cheating and literary theft. The teacher should post institutional approaches on cheating and copyright infringement and related punishments as a component of her/his online student implicit policy.

7. Intellectual Property Rights Policy

The Internet makes it extremely simple to acquire and utilize work created by others, thus easy to commit their rights to such work. An intellectual property rights policy enables teachers and students to understand and prevent illegal use of the intellectual property of others.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Virtual learning which is a learning experience that is mediated through the use of computers *and additionally the web both outside and inside the* facilities of the educational institutions has come to stay. It has been found to be highly indispensable, if learning disruptions have to be prevented. **Virtual learning** *is that type of learning that can functionally and effectively occur without conventional study environments (Simonson & Schlosser, 2006).*

The world has become a digital economy which implies that in order to move along the cycle, one must allow for personal development alongside the updated changes in the digital world. This makes it pertinent for the school management to ensure that all and sundry embraces digitization in the school. *Based on the main thrust and discussions of this paper, it is therefore recommended that:*

1. Government should fully support higher educational institutions in terms of making concrete policies and funding appropriately, which would help augment quality teaching and learning in the school.

2. Every stakeholder in the education industry should embrace virtual learning and thus, change their attitudinal dispositions towards it by doing away with "It cannot work" orientations. It has become the way to go in the new normal.

3. There should be effective synergy and collaboration between higher educational institutions and network providers to find a means of reducing data cost for educational purpose.

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