

**INFLUENCE OF CORONAVIRUS ON STUDENTS' ACADEMICS IN THE  
UNIVERSITY OF BENIN, BENIN CITY**

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**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATIONS  
FACULTY OF EDUCATION  
UNIVERSITY OF BENIN  
BENIN CITY**

**JANUARY, 2023**

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**A PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL  
FOUNDATIONS, FACULTY OF EDUCATION, UNIVERSITY OF BENIN,  
BENIN CITY. IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS  
FOR THE AWARD OF B.A. (Ed.) IN HISTORY**

**JANUARY, 2023**

## CERTIFICATION

We, the undersigned, certify that this work was carried out by **Praise Efewengbe IGBINEDION** with matriculation number **EDU1703038** of the Department of Educational Foundations, Faculty of Education, University of Benin, Benin City, Nigeria, In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of B. A. (Ed.) in History.

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## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this project to God Almighty for the successful completion of this project work.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The researcher wants to express her unending gratitude to God Almighty for his mercies and grace which sustained her throughout her stay in the University of Benin, and his unending love.

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## **ABSTRACT**

The study investigated the influence of coronavirus on students' academics in the University of Benin, Benin City.

The descriptive survey research design was used for the research work. To guide this study, four research questions were raised. A questionnaire was designed and used for data collection. The population of the study comprised of all students in the University of Benin, Benin City. A sample size of one hundred (100) students was drawn using the simple random sampling technique from five (5) different faculties in the University. The data retrieved from respondents were analyzed by the use of a computer software statistical tool (SPSS). Results after analysis were presented on tables using Percentages, Frequency, Mean and Standard Deviation.

The study revealed that the government never made any conscious effort to assist undergraduates during the pandemic. Also, findings from analysis showed that some students self-sponsored themselves from vocational jobs they got during the pandemic. The researcher therefore recommended that the government should try as much as possible to render support to undergraduate students during national threats and pandemics. Also, it was recommended that distance learning channels should be created and utilized in all tertiary institutions.

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### **Background to the Study**

One of the national pandemics that took control of nationalities and destroyed many was the Plague of Justinian. It was caused by a contagious disease called the Yersinia Pestis. According to secular records, the Plague of Justinian is regarded as the first pandemic which occurred during the 541 – 549 AD, which left close to a 100 million people dead. This particular disease affected the entire Mediterranean Basin, Europe, some parts of the Eastern world and other parts of West Asia. It severely affected the Sasanian Empire and the Roman Empire and especially its capital, Constantinople (Wikipedia, 2021). A characteristic feature of the Yersinia Pestis infection is the necrosis of the hand. It caused the living tissues of its carrier dead and therefore, such hands begin to rot till its cut off.

The second largest pandemic that took the life of myriads is the Black death which occurred during the years 1346-1353. This disease consumed over 150 million people which consisted of which constituted 30-60% of the European population. Another pandemic that was popularized in its nomenclature is the

Spanish flu (1918-1920). This in particular occurred globally which left over 500 million people of the whole world's population infected and over 100 million deaths. It is also known as the 1918 Influenza Pandemic caused by the H1N1 Influenza A Virus. Other pandemics that caught the global space are the HIV/AIDS Pandemic – Worldwide (1981-date), Third Plague Pandemic – Worldwide (1855-1960), the Cocoliztli Epidemic of Mexico (1545-1548), The Antonine Plague of the Roman Empire (165-180 BC), The Asian Flu – Worldwide (1957-1958), The Hong Kong Flu – Worldwide (1968-1969), The COVID-19 Pandemic – Worldwide (2019-date) amongst others too numerous to mention. As a result of these, there has been great worry amongst the citizenry.

Education has been the bedrock of development of every nation; hence its sustainability is paramount to growth and development of all nations for a very long time. Education over centuries has been hit with several challenges ranging from changes in school curriculum to closing down of Educational Institutions due to either a demonstration by students or staff, for example, industrial action/protest, outbreak of a disease and/or instability in governance of a nation of which the education system in Nigeria is not left out.

The Coronavirus pandemic which is still haunting innocent citizens till this present day of this research, has affected educational systems worldwide, leading to the widespread closure of schools in the affected countries. According to global statistics on Coronavirus updates, it was first reported to the World Health Organization (WHO) on the 31<sup>st</sup> of December 2019 in Wuhan, China. The disease spread very fast like wildfire that on the 27<sup>th</sup> of February, 2020, the first case was reported in Lagos which was the first in Nigeria. As of March, 2020, over 1.5 billion learners worldwide were out of school due to schools not in session due to the pandemic outbreak. According to United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) monitoring, over 100 countries have implemented nationwide closure, impacting nearly 90% of the world's student population. (UNESCO, COVID-19 Educational Disruption and Response, 2020).

In the midst of the coronavirus pandemic, a lot of students were found online chatting with friends, looking for possible alternative ways to circumvent the situation, scouting for means to bridge the learning gap. Unfortunately for them, the teaching staffers of Universities were observing a strike (industrial action) during the period owing to allowances the government refused to remit. So therefore, a lot of students nationwide were left to fate. Some who tried to contact

lecturers whom they were close to all got a negative response. Their academic progress was now left in their hands. Most students took to personal study, while others sought for learning contents on YouTube and other networking media following their syllabuses and scheme of work as a guide.

While medical experts justified the continued closure of Nigerian schools in the face of the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic, some critics, analysts and scholars amongst others argued that the continued closure of schools despite the fact that markets, churches, mosques, businesses and public offices have been long reopened for businesses, has negative effects on Nigerian students who are already exposed to a declined standard of education. Some have also argued that the continued closure of schools across the federation would amount to unnecessary abuse or violation of the rights of Nigerian students to education, as well as obstructing the annual school academic calendar and truncating the expected year of entry; and delaying the promotion of students to the next level of studies and graduation from schools, colleges and universities.

As a result of the continued dilemma and global scare the COVID-19 Pandemic (also called the Coronavirus) has posed on the economy of many nations of the world including that of Nigeria, thereby affecting other vital organs;

Education, Agriculture, Finance, etc., it is very important to examine factors responsible for the spread of this disease and as well investigate critically how it has affected various nations of the world, current trends with regards to safety guidelines enforced by different government of the world. In this study also, efforts would also be made to highlight some of these safety procedures made to cure everyone from this deadly virus.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The coronavirus outbreak which lasted for over 7 months of barrenness in the economy ushered many nations to a special kind of recession where people have money and cannot spend, whilst others in their population don't even have at all. In a bid to reduce the effect of the crippling economy, many nations started to create stimulus packages for its citizens, while others shared food materials. This was made possible by some internal bodies and NGOs, long before the government came in fully to open a palliative system for materials' distribution. But the question here is that this special kind of palliative system, did it make provision for education? Did they share school materials for students at home to cater for online education? Did they provide internet services for school students to cater for their academic needs? Did they even have an online learning platform

for students to learn during the heat of the pandemic that domesticated the populace?

Truly, the palliative system played the role of satisfying the needs of the people in financial terms and materially as well, but to what extent did it played the role in satisfying education needs of students nationwide? Did it avail them the opportunity to write examinations and school-based tests to move them to the next academic level? It is worthy of note to mention the great efforts by the government of many nations after several months of persuasion to bring education closer to the people by opening online interfaces where students can interact and get materials for learning. According to the Oyo State Task Force, the Oyo State Government has been running a School-On-Air Programme to ensure the continuity of learning during the school closure period. Airtel, a network provider, also provided students under this platform free data to to access learning materials and also to attend online classes. But was this not just meant to provide learning for nursery, primary and secondary school students? But how did this profited university undergraduates since lecturers were on strike? Did they devote any money to appoint lecturers to teach undergraduates online since social distance

and other measures were placed to restrict public gathering, since the lecturers were observing a strike action too?

It is noteworthy to mention the effort by undergraduates to further their studies during the pandemic. A majority of them purchased data and went online to receive recorded classes on YouTube and got PDF materials from websites to assist their learning and bridge the wide gap already created by the pandemic. But did poor indigent university students benefit from this procedure since money wasn't circulating and businesses remained closed?

Another thing that became a problem at home was that a majority of student were not able to concentrate since everyone was home and they were assigned one work or another. Majority of students joined their parents in looking for food in order for them to survive. How then did they now have time to focus on their academics from home? Did their parents even have the time to ensure their children are reading/studying or they cared less about that? Did parents provide money for students to buy data for continued online/distance learning during the pandemic?

It is also worthy of note to mention that during the heat of the coronavirus pandemic of which was ushered in a total lockdown, schools were not able to

conduct promotional examinations, therefore, all students remained on the same spot they were since the coronavirus started. Those in 100 level remained on the same spot while those at final year didn't see any exam to write for them to graduate from the system and continue with their lives.

Having experienced all these, there are bothering questions that calls for answer; What is the status of education in the country? Is the government responsible at all in providing for the academic needs of students? If the coronavirus' total lockdown lingered, would there be any hope for education in the country again? Are students motivated to learn online at all?

All these and more are trending issues this study seek to address, hence the need for this research on the effects of the coronavirus pandemic and other associated emergencies on students' academic programmes in the University of Benin.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions were raised to guide the study:

1. What are the challenges students faced during the total lockdown period ushered in by the coronavirus?

2. What ways did the government assist undergraduates to learn during the total lockdown period?
3. What ways did educational institutions assist students in their eagerness to learn during the total lockdown period?
4. What ways did students provide for themselves to facilitate their learning during the total lockdown period?

### **Purpose of the Study**

This study is designed to investigate the effects of the coronavirus pandemic and other associated emergencies on students' academic programmes in the University of Benin, Benin City. The specific objectives of this research work were to:

1. Find out the challenges students faced during the total lockdown period ushered in by the coronavirus.
2. Investigate if the government assisted undergraduates to learn during the total lockdown period.
3. Find out if educational institutions assisted students learning during the total lockdown period.

4. Discover ways by which students provided for their academic needs during the total lockdown period.

### **Significance of the Study**

This study would significantly be of importance to undergraduate students, lecturers, parents, government and the society at large.

Undergraduate students would benefit from this study such that it would be a means of amplifying their grievances to the government and other agencies of the challenges they went through during the pandemic.

The study would also inspire lecturers and the government in tertiary institutions and inspire them on how to assist students to learn effectively in the emergence of global catastrophes as that of the coronavirus pandemic and materials that they can provide students with, in order for a smooth running of the education system.

The study would be of significance to parents as well, such that it would inspire in them how they can support students in-house learning capacities during global emergencies and holidays when students are home. This research work would also strive to discuss the role of parents in the education of the undergraduate child.

## **Scope and Delimitation of the Study**

This study would major on the effects of coronavirus and other associated emergencies on students' academic programmes in the University of Benin, Benin City, Nigeria. Due to the wide scope and timeliness in project submission, this study would revolve around the students, parents and the government and the roles they played in education during the period of the lockdown. It would make significant strides to underscore efforts made by these agents to improve upon learning amongst students during the period of the total lockdown and trends it has followed till today.

Also, the geographical scope of this study would be limited to Faculty of Education students and students' population from two other Faculties in the University of Benin, which would constitute the population of this study.

## **Definition of Terms**

**Academics:** Matters relating to education and scholarship.

**Virus:** A submicroscopic infectious agent that replicates only inside the living cells of an organism, having the ability of affecting significantly all type of life forms, from animals and plants to microorganisms, including bacteria and archaea.

## CHAPTER TWO

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The purpose of this chapter is to review relevant literature on the effects of the coronavirus pandemic and other associated emergencies on students' academic programmes. It shall be reviewed under the following subheadings:

1. Features of a Pandemic
2. The Novel Coronavirus Pandemic and its Global Impacts on Education
3. Online/E-Learning: A Tech-Tool for Continued Education Amidst Global Dilemmas
4. Other Alternative Learning Media Adopted During the Coronavirus Pandemic
5. Summary of Literature Reviewed

#### **Features of a Pandemic**

Although the term “pandemic” has not been defined by many medical texts, there are some key features of a pandemic, which fosters the understanding of the concept better. They include:

***Wide geographic extension:*** The term “pandemic” usually refers to diseases that extend over large geographic areas—for example, the 14<sup>th</sup> century plague (the Black Death), cholera, influenza, and human immunodeficiency virus HIV/AIDS.

In a recent review of the history of pandemic influenza, pandemics were categorized as trans-regional and global (Taubenberger & Morens, 2009). There were 178 countries involved during the H1N1 outbreak in 2009 (Rewar et al., 2015).

***Disease movement:*** In addition to geographic extension, most uses of the term pandemic imply unexpected disease movement or spread via transmission that can be traced from place to place (e.g. the Black Death).

Examples of disease movement include widespread person-to-person spread of diseases caused by respiratory viruses, such as influenza and SARS, or enteric organisms, such as *Vibrio cholera*, or by vectors, such as dengue. In the case of pandemic influenza A (H1N1), there was widespread transmission in both hemispheres between April and September 2009, that is early in the influenza season in the temperate southern hemisphere but out of season in the northern hemisphere (Barrelet, Bourrier, Burton-Jeangros, & Schindler, 2013). This out-of-season transmission is what characterizes an influenza pandemic.

***Novelty:*** The term pandemic has been used most commonly to describe diseases that are new or at least associated with novel variants of existing organisms—for example, antigenic shifts occurring in influenza viruses, the emergence of

HIV/AIDS when it was recognized in the early 1980s, and historical epidemics of diseases, such as plague. Novelty is a relative concept, however. “There have been 7 cholera pandemics during the past 200 years, presumably all caused by variants of the same organism” (Morens et al., 2009). In the 21st century, SARS and avian influenza are two newly emerged infections with pandemic potential that have arisen from Asia.

**Severity:** The term pandemic has been applied to severe or fatal diseases (eg, the Black Death, HIV/AIDS and SARS) much more commonly than it has been applied to mild diseases. “Global pandemics with high mortality and morbidity occur when a virulent new viral strain emerges, against which the human population has no immunity” (Rewar et al., 2015). Severity is estimated by the case fatality ratio (Donaldson et al., 2009). “In contrast with Ebola, most cases die within 10 days of their initial infection, with the disease having a mortality rate of 50–90%” (WHO 2003). The outbreak of H7N9 has caused more than 600 human infections, with nearly 30% mortality (Su & He, 2015).

**High attack rates and explosiveness:** Pandemics are characterised by high rates of attack and explosive spread. Examples are influenza H1N1 or the Ebola Virus. However, if the transmission is non-explosive, even if it is widespread, it is not

classified as a pandemic. For example, the West Nile virus spread entirely to the Middle East and Russia, and the Western Hemisphere in 1999, but the transmission was slow and the attack rate was low, so it is not classified as a pandemic. Diseases with low rates of transmission or low rates of symptomatic disease are rarely classified as pandemics, even when they spread widely. However, diseases of low or moderate severity, such as Acute Hemorrhagic Conjunctivitis (AHC) in 1981, and cyclic global recurrences of scabies also have been called pandemic when they exhibit explosive (AHC) or widespread and recurrent geographic spread (Donaldson et al., 2009).

***Minimal population immunity:*** Although pandemics often have been described in partly immune populations, it is clear that in limiting microbial infection and transmission, population immunity can be a powerful anti-pandemic force (Taubenberger & Morens, 2009). Pandemics are characterized by almost no population immunity (Fangriya, 2015; WHO, 2013). So it is easy for a large part of a population to be infected. For example, since H7N9 was a new variant of the influenza virus, the population had no immunity, so there were many cases worldwide in a short time (Wildoner, 2016).

***Infectiousness and contagiousness:*** The term pandemic has less commonly been used to describe presumably non-infectious diseases, such as obesity, or risk behaviours, such as cigarette smoking, that are geographically extensive and may be rising in global incidence but are not transmissible. Pandemic diseases are infectious, so they are transmitted from one person to another person. This transmission can be direct (person to person) or indirect (person to vector to person) (Morens et al., 2009). For example, the SARS virus was transmitted from person to person by persons in close quarters, while H7N9 was often spread through contact with living poultry (Su & He, 2015). The significance to human health of this avian-influenza strain lies in its potential to mutate into a form capable of sustained person-to-person transmission.

### **The Novel Coronavirus Pandemic and its Global Impacts on Education**

A proactive response is critical to the containment of any disease outbreak, but the coronavirus took the world by surprise and most countries were not prepared initially for the pandemic, including the world powers. Shortly after the outbreak of COVID-19, the World Health Organization (WHO) issued guidelines and updates on how to mitigate the spread of the pandemic, and thereafter, many countries adopted different measures in addition to the W.H.O guidelines to contain the spread of the disease. There were lockdowns in most parts of the

world, and people were asked to work from home. Some countries even deployed their military to enforce coronavirus restrictions, and to reduce the number of “covidiot”. There were increased demands for health equipment including, protective gowns, sanitizers, face masks and hand gloves. Countries like the United States and the U.K also opened their visitation doors for medical professionals such as doctors and nurses who were working or willing to treat the effects of COVID-19. Also, large gatherings and sporting activities were suspended at both local and international levels. Big sporting events like the prestigious European Champions League games were played behind closed doors before they were suspended. Global responses to Coronavirus pandemic were varied from country to country, but most countries endorsed the closure of schools strategy as a means to contain the spread of COVID-19. Some selected COVID-19 responses across the world particularly as it relates to the closure of schools due to Coronavirus are highlighted below:

In the United States, many schools were closed down, and scheduled tests and examinations were also cancelled. The report shows that some of the schools closed down for Coronavirus in the U.S might not resume for the rest of the academic year (Madeline, 2020). New York and the California States were among

the worst-hit states in the U.S and the number of cases increased steadily despite strong measures put in place by both the federal and state governments to contain the pandemic. At a point, the country surpassed China in the number of cases of Coronavirus, but the country is determined to defeat the pandemic. School closures in the U.S affected over 60 million students in the country. In Spain, about 11 million students were affected by school closures for mitigation of the spread of Coronavirus. Regional governments in the country closed down schools in response to the increased cases of Coronavirus in the country. The closure of schools in Spain particularly in Madrid led to the suspension of job contracts for people who work at school cafeterias and in special education departments (El Pais, 2020). The closure of schools in Spain was very necessary considering that the country lost 849 people in a one-day attack of the coronavirus. In Saudi Arabia, Middle East Monitor (2020) reported that schools and universities across the kingdom were ordered to close down for Coronavirus by the Ministry of Education. The government however, directed that “Virtual schools and distance education be activated to ensure that the educational process continues in an effective and quality manner”.

In Australia, Michael (2020) reported that dozens of independent schools were shutdown at New South Wales while some moved to online classes. Students learn from home, while some schools were opened but implemented strong measures to ensure social distancing strategy. The opening of schools amidst the coronavirus pandemic was backed by the Australian government. The Prime Minister openly announced that schools remained open because the government believes that “children are at very low risk from coronavirus, and the closing of schools could have crippling effects on their health sector and the economy”. The government cited solid health case for keeping schools open, but teachers and parents were worried (ABC News, 2020). The country also banned outdoor gathering of more than 2 people, while 18 billion dollars was also approved to mitigate the spread and effects of the Coronavirus. In Italy, schools were shutdown indefinitely, and the military were deployed to help enforce restrictions. However, despite the measures put in place by the government towards curbing the spread of the Coronavirus, the country became an epicenter for the outbreak and recorded 969 coronavirus deaths in a single day.

In India, all schools and educational institutions were closed down and the government imposed “Janata” Curfew which restricted all citizens to stay at home

to contain the spread of Coronavirus. The police also went round some cities to create public awareness about the pandemic.

In France, the government ordered the closure of all schools in a televised broadcast by President Macron. The measure was in response to the increased health crisis in the country due to the hit of the novel virus in 2020. The country was badly affected just like their counterparts in many parts of the world. It was reported to have originated from Wuhan, China and it was the epicenter at the beginning of the outbreak. Schools and other public institutions were shutdown to mitigate the spread of the virus. The closure of schools and other measures put in place by the government proved effective and the pandemic was contained to a large extent. The country also closed its borders with some neighbouring countries.

In Iran, the government closed all schools as part of the preventive measures to halt the spread of virus. Although, the country was among the epicenter of the coronavirus outbreak, and the death tolls in the country were high. The coronavirus increased Iran's economic problems, having been faced with economic sanctions from the West earlier. Also, in Senegal, schools were shutdown to limit the spread of COVID-19. The country was the first sub-Saharan

African country to close down schools due to coronavirus. In South Africa, the government directed all schools to close down in response to the coronavirus pandemic. This is in addition to the prohibition of social gatherings of more than 100 people. New cases were reported in the country and campaigns for behavioral changes were carried out to reduce the spread of the disease.

In Germany, schools were shutdown in response to the spread of the coronavirus. The death rate was reported to be low compared to their neighbours. The country also earmarked more than 800 billion dollars to fight the pandemic. In Russia, Schools were shutdown, and several other measures were taken to halt the pandemic. The death toll in Russia was reported to be low, but measures were put in place to contain the pandemic.

In Ghana, schools were shutdown to contain the spread of coronavirus disease. The government also released 100 million US dollars to enhance the fight against the pandemic. The country reacted proactively to contain the spread of the Virus. In Madagascar, the country has recorded zero COVID-19 death so far, and the country has claimed a breakthrough in Herbal medicine for COVID-19 treatment. However, the WHO warned that such claim has not been scientifically approved and cannot be recommended by the organization as cure for COVID-19.

It is important to note that while many countries were shutting down schools, some others like Singapore, Sweden, Brazil, and Australia kept their schools open as a kind of strategy to contain the contagion. The untimely closure of schools was a good supportive measure to contain the spread of the disease, but it also had some adverse consequences on millions of students globally who were faced with multiple challenges in their education.

In Nigeria, the federal government ordered a total close down of all schools. The decision was largely applauded, and the National Universities Commission (NUC), a regulatory body for all universities in Nigeria also gave a follow-up directive to all universities in the country to shutdown. The government also suspended social gatherings, and workers were asked to work from home. An Italian who was reported to be the first case of coronavirus in Nigeria was successfully treated and discharged according to the government, but new cases emerged thereafter. The closure of schools to secure students and guard their health was a very wise decision, but the country was unable to meet the students stay-at-home online schooling as was the practice in most countries like the United States, Germany, United Kingdom, etc. Thus, the country needs to do more in terms of disaster preparedness and response.

According to the UNESCO (2020), some of the harmful effects of school closures for coronavirus are as follows:

1. Interrupted learning: School provides essential learning and when they are closed, students are deprived of opportunities for growth and development.
2. Nutrition: Many youngsters rely on free or discounted meals provided at schools for food and healthy nutrition. This was compromised as a result of school closures for coronavirus.
3. Unequal Access to digital learning portals: lack of access to technology or good internet connectivity for continued learning during school closures.
4. Increased pressure on schools and school system that remain open; Localized school closures place burdens on schools as parents tend to redirect their children to open schools.
5. Social Isolation: Considering the fact that educational institutions are hubs for social activity and human interactions, school closures can deprive students of some social communications and socializations that are essential to learning, development and creativity.

## **Online/E-Learning: A Tech-Tool for Continued Education Amidst Global Dilemmas**

The implementation of online learning is not limited to crisis situations such as the current pandemic, online learning has been suggested as a substitute for face-to-face learning (Stacey et al., 2004). As part of online learning, the video-based distance learning allows two-way interaction between spaces and can be adopted for teaching and learning purposes. Different classes using remote imaging systems have been widely used since the 1990s (Jeong, 2010). In addition, video-based distance education, which is recognized as an online education method, is suitable for the 21<sup>st</sup> century educational environment to facilitate two-way interaction, participation in learning, class achievement, and levels of satisfaction similar to that of face-to-face classes (Jeong , 2010). It can be argued that this form of distance education contains the most similarities to face-to-face classes of all existing forms of online learning. Emergency distance teaching is an alternative, teaching method while in response to crisis situations (Wang et al., 2020). Effective online learning must consider various factors such as speed, student-teacher ratio, pedagogy, online teacher role, online student role, online communication synchronization, online assessment role, and feedback

sources. However, due to the current classroom design it is only a temporary solution for emergency distance teaching.

In Nigeria, the emergency distance teaching was operated for a time without a planned classroom design unlike existing online learning, therefore it didn't and is still not being nurtured because both the students and teachers had several difficulties adapting to it. Institutions operating distance teaching should consider support that can be easily used, effective, and addresses various factors of distance learning such as interactions with students and their parents or guardians, the infrastructure required, the ability of personnel to operate distance learning, meeting the need for learning, difficulties experienced by students, school personnel, and outcomes, performance, and feedback from students and staff (Hodges et al., 2020). As emergency distance teaching methods differ from school to school that are already equipped with online learning systems while others are not, the learning process and effectiveness are recognized differently by students, who are end consumers of education. Additionally, the response to emergency distance teaching may differ depending on student preparation or motivation.

Although face-to-face classes have been recognized as a form of learning today, it is necessary to prepare for education using a distance system due to

unexpected changes in the environment that may occur in the future. Issues such as infectious diseases, war, regional conflicts, and other forms of natural disasters can hinder face-to-face instruction, and remote teaching must be carried out in collaboration with other entities to resolve the problem (Bozkurt & Sharma, 2020).

### **Other Alternative Learning Media Adopted During the Coronavirus Pandemic**

The Novel Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, which has already infected almost 3 million people in 148 countries has resulted in more than two hundred thousand deaths worldwide and has wrecked chaos around the globe. The crisis has already transformed into an economic and labour market shock. Everyone is only beginning to understand the economic impacts of COVID-19, but many other issues have emerged and need to be urgently addressed, like the closure of schools and its impact on learning and the burden of education on students, parents and teachers.

Most governments around the world have temporarily closed educational institutions in an endeavour to contain the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic as earlier discussed. Schools are hubs of social activity and human interaction. When schools close, many children and youth miss out on social contact that is essential

to learning and development (Union, 2020). This has an immediate as well as a long-lasting effect, particularly for the more vulnerable and disadvantaged communities. Online communication apps (Whatsapp, radio, television, cell phones, computer and network hardware, satellite systems, as well as various services available with them such as video conferencing and distance learning) are being used to ensure communication between teachers and students as well as among students in many countries. Interactive online classes are also providing opportunities for social interaction and facilitating the continuity of education for all via remote learning. But in essence, these communication apps could constitute a huge distraction to students trying to use them to study and simulate a class group discussion over the internet, and may lead to what is called “internet addiction”. Internet addiction can be broadly described as the desire to be permanently on the internet and the time spent on the internet with no control. The amount of time spent on the internet is both the symptom and the reason of the addiction (Kirik, 2013). The use of virtual worlds like the social media and online networking and communication sites/apps brings with it many advantages, but also causes a number of drawbacks, especially to those who have previously been addicted to it. Since individuals spend uncontrolled time on the virtual world, they face social and psychological problems (Ceyhan, 2008). Most of them may even

be studying, but before one knows what's next, they are switching from Facebook to Twitter, to Instagram, to Whatsapp to check updates and reply messages. This could tend to be a huge distraction, even though it has a lot of benefits in its use.

From the time of the outbreak of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID 19), people have been impacted in one way or the other. Countrywide lockdowns have strongly impacted the lives of people of all occupations and all ages. The flare-up has also affected the education system across the world and has altered the lives of 1,576,021,818 learners in 188 countries (UNESCO, 2020). The lockdowns have put an unprecedented challenge on the governments to ensure that there should be continuity of learning (Chang & Yano, 2020). Several countries have adopted different measures to deal with the educational crisis.

To combat the problems of the outbreak such as that of the education system, the educational ministries and other stakeholders have taken a stand at national levels. Countries like Egypt, France, Italy, United States and United Arab Emirates (UAE) are pursuing distance education modalities via internet and online platforms for continuous education. China, Korea, Mexico, Rwanda, Iran, Peru and Thailand are using massive open online course (MOOC) styled lessons. The lessons are either delivered through apps, television or other media. Teachers have

access to training through these avenues as well (Chang & Yano, 2020). In order to ensure that students' learning continues, a collaboration between the telecom industry, school networks at different levels and the education ministry is needed (UNESCO, 2020). Governments have been launching (e.g. Saudi Arabia and UAE) awareness campaigns on distance learning for parents, teachers, administrators and students (Chang & Yano, 2020).

In Nigeria, little was recorded on the use of internet/communication apps as a source for alternative education during the coronavirus pandemic. Not as if nothing was done about it at all, but it wasn't accorded strong support from the strongholds in government. The government of Nigeria were busy with other activities they believed was necessary. Education wasn't given premium before the pandemic, how will it then rise above bars to compete with other nations of the world in their strides to educating their students using technology and other sophisticated devices for learning during the pandemic.

It would totally be wrong to just state blandly that nothing was done. Some state governments, for example the Lagos State Government, sponsored a TV programme for children in primary schools and students in secondary schools, and taught major subjects (e.g. Mathematics, English Language) and some other

subjects. This was due to the inability of many students at public schools and less expensive private institutions of learning that struggled to access these new tools in online learning through the use of computers and smart phones. Even as the government at state levels in conjunction with some NGOs worked to provide educational programs on TV, radio and online for learners; irregular power supply and limited access to smartphones and other internet-connected devices among poorer households limited the effectiveness of these initiatives. Even those families with smartphones often could not afford data for online connections. These problems highlighted in Lagos State became replicated in other states like Ekiti, Edo, Osun, Oyo states amongst numerous others who made attempts to adopt this technology. But surprisingly, all these strides for learning was designed and crafted for primary and secondary school students alone. Virtually nothing was done for undergraduate students in tertiary institutions. Rather, they were left to fate. Therefore, the undergraduate students whose parent were well to do, confided in them for provision of internet data and resources for learning, while those whose parents weren't capable of providing for their online learning needs were left to languish.

But it is noteworthy to mention that when parents and children collaborate in learning activities, bonding between parents and children increases as they are able to spend much more time together. Such instances allow parents to become a source of comfort in easing pain and worry and engage in conversations with their children to help them in alleviating their anxiety. It has been recommended that parents should be taught interventions on how to provide emotional support to children at times of uncertainty (Wang, Zhang, Zhao, Zhang, & Jiang, 2020). Online schooling system with parental support guidelines could help in improving the bond between children and their parents.

In Pakistan, not much has been done on the national front to manage the educational crisis during the pandemic. The private educational system across Pakistan has opted for giving students assignments so that they may adhere to the curriculum that was planned for the year; however, they later announced summer vacations when the situation provoked unpredictability (Hasan, 2020). In spite of restricted access to internet, online classes are being held at the university level (Ali, 2020). Schools and colleges have been asked to promote children to the next grade (Saeed, 2020) and low-cost schools are at the brink of closure due to the

crisis (Yousafzai, 2020). As such, uncertain times have brought in confusion and poor access to adequate education in Pakistan.

The implementation of an education system at the national level in response of coronavirus outbreak and schools being closed can be supplemented with a curriculum that involves parental guidance and COVID-19 related awareness. This would help in improving the education systems at large and reassure learning attainment in home settings. Such programs can also yield benefits in students' autonomous learning development to get a sense of responsibility towards self growth and development. Very recently, the government has launched official tele-education via its national television broadcasting. However, the impact of the tele-education and the quality of curriculum delivery is yet to be researched. Until recently and even at current times, most parents are found to be facilitating learning at home and research around it is limited, especially in the context of COVID-19.

### **Summary of Literature Reviewed**

The novel coronavirus pandemic came in as a mighty wave that blew across all spheres of human endeavor, causing a complete rupture and abrupt closure of all educational enterprise all over the world.

Schools, in the surge of the virus were all forced naturally to look for alternative means to which students can learn even if a face-to-face learning situation may not be possible. Such palliative means to learning as discussed in this chapter is online/distance learning. Online learning involves learning without face-to-face interaction with course mates, it majorly involves learning with text materials, video tutorials, etc. Also, most students engaged themselves in study through various social platforms of which Facebook, WhatSapp, Tuteria, etc.

Whilst the majority believed the virus was a natural dilemma emanating from organisms, some others nurtured the belief that the coronavirus was a biological weapon by the government to destroy the Black nations, while others believed the virus was prepared in the laboratory and released into the atmosphere. This was copiously discussed in the subheading titled, “The COVID-19 Conspiracy Theories and Beliefs”.

In summary, the emergence of the coronavirus pandemic caused a massive stagger in the academic calendar of tertiary institutions. The attention of students were all diverted and everyone was on the streets sourcing for means of survival. In response to this wave of the coronavirus, it is necessary to assess its impact in education in the area of study and how students were affected.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This chapter attended to the methods and procedures for this study. It was discussed under the following subheadings; Research Design, Population of the Study, Sample and Sampling Techniques, Research Instrument, Validity of the Instrument, Reliability of the Instrument, Method of Data Collection and Method of Data Analysis.

#### **Research Design**

The research design used for this study is the descriptive survey research design which was used to obtain opinions from samples in the area of study.

#### **Population of the Study**

The population of the study for this research work consisted of all students in the University of Benin, Benin City, Nigeria.

#### **Sample and Sampling Technique**

The random sampling technique was adopted for this study. It was considered suitable for this research because each member of the population under this study had equal chance of being selected.

The sample size for this study comprised of one hundred (100) students in five (5) different faculties in the University of Benin.

### **Research Instrument**

In order to source for data on the effect of the coronavirus pandemic and other associated emergencies on students' academic programmes, the researcher made use of a structured questionnaire titled, "Questionnaire on the Influence of Coronavirus on Students' Academics" (QICSA)". The questionnaire was in two parts; Section A and Section B.

Section A was designed to elicit demographic information from respondents, while Section B was designed to elicit responses from respondents on items derived from the research questions. The questionnaire was constructed using a two point response format; Yes or No.

### **Validity of the Instrument**

The instrument was validated by the researcher's supervisor and two other experts in the Faculty of Education of the University of Benin, Benin City. They made necessary suggestions and corrections on the questionnaire before it was administered to students in their respective Faculties.

## **Reliability of the Instrument**

The reliability of the instrument was done using the test-retest method. After it has been tested, a reliability coefficient value of 0.89 was obtained which ascertained the stability and consistency of the instrument in measuring what it is to measure.

## **Method of Data Collection**

The questionnaire was administered to only selected respondents in each of the Faculties of the University of Benin. Before they fill it, the researcher explained to them what they needed to understand before filling the questionnaire. Immediately after distribution, it was retrieved immediately.

## **Method of Data Analysis**

The researcher analyzed data using percentages and frequency tables to show responses obtained from the respondents.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### PRESENTATION OF RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This chapter presents data and discussed findings on the influence of coronavirus on students' academics in the University of Benin, Benin City. The sample size used for this study is a total number of one hundred (100) students who answered the research questions appropriately. For the purpose of this study, items having a mean value  $>1.5$  is *Disagreed*, while items having a mean value of  $<1.5$  is *Agreed*. The data presented below is a tabular presentation of results gotten from the field solely carried out by the researcher.

#### SECTION A: PERSONAL DATA

**Table 1: Distribution of Respondents by Sex**

| <b>Sex</b>   | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percentage (%)</b> |
|--------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| Male         | 65               | <b>65%</b>            |
| Female       | 35               | <b>35%</b>            |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>100</b>       | <b>100%</b>           |

Table 1 shows that 65% of the respondents are male respondents, while 35% are female respondents.

**Table 2: Age Distribution of Respondents**

| <b>Age Group</b> | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percentage (%)</b> |
|------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| 20 years & below | 36               | <b>36%</b>            |
| 21 – 25 years    | 48               | <b>48%</b>            |
| 26 years & above | 16               | <b>16%</b>            |

Table 2 shows the age group distribution of respondents. From the analysis, it was revealed that 36% of the respondents were 20 years old and below. Also, it was revealed that 48% of the respondents are between 21 – 25 years of age. Lastly, analysis on this table revealed that just 16% of the sampled population were 26 years and above.

**Table 3: Distribution of Respondents By Level**

| <b>Level</b> | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percentage (%)</b> |
|--------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| 200 Level    | 40               | <b>40%</b>            |
| 300 Level    | 34               | <b>34%</b>            |
| 400 Level    | 26               | <b>26%</b>            |

Table 3 shows the class distribution of respondents by their respective levels of study in the University. From the analysis, it was revealed that 40% of the respondents are in 200 Level, 34% in 300 Level, and 26% in 400 Level.

## SECTION B: RESPONSE TO THE RESEARCH ITEMS

**Research Question One:** *What are the challenges students faced during the total lockdown period ushered in by the coronavirus?*

**Table 4: Items on challenges faced by students during the coronavirus pandemic**

| S/N | ITEMS  | N   | Yes | No | Mean        | SD    | Remark        |
|-----|--|-----|-----|----|-------------|-------|---------------|
| 1.  | Undergraduate students never got access to education.                        | 100 | 90  | 10 | <b>1.10</b> | 0.302 | <b>Agreed</b> |
| 2.  | Students were short of funds to purchase data for online learning.           | 100 | 98  | 2  | <b>1.02</b> | 0.141 | <b>Agreed</b> |
| 3.  | The academic calendar of most schools was disrupted.                         | 100 | 100 | 0  | <b>1.00</b> | 0.000 | <b>Agreed</b> |
| 4.  | Students were not able to access their schools' website for online learning. | 100 | 92  | 8  | <b>1.08</b> | 0.273 | <b>Agreed</b> |

Table 4 collects data and responses from respondents on items 1 -4 answering research question 1. The items presented the challenges students faced during the pandemic. From the table, it was shown that during the coronavirus, undergraduates never got access to education, students were short of funds to purchase data for online learning, the academic calendar of most schools was

disrupted and students were not able to access their schools' website for online learning. All these were agreed at means values of 1.00 – 1.10.

**Research Question Two:** *What ways did the government assist undergraduates to learn during the total lockdown period?*

**Table 5: Items on ways government assisted undergraduates during the pandemic**

| S/N | ITEMS   | N   | Yes | No | Mean        | SD    | Remark           |
|-----|---|-----|-----|----|-------------|-------|------------------|
| 5.  | The government sponsored a website for online learning during the pandemic.                   | 100 | 6   | 94 | <b>1.94</b> | 0.239 | <b>Disagreed</b> |
| 6.  | The government sponsored a free Wi-Fi service to students for online learning in their homes. | 100 | 6   | 94 | <b>1.94</b> | 0.239 | <b>Disagreed</b> |
| 7.  | The government did nothing to support undergraduates.   | 100 | 68  | 32 | <b>1.32</b> | 0.469 | <b>Agreed</b>    |

Table 5 collects data and responses from respondents on items 5 – 7 answering research question 2. The items showed hypothetical statements in order to know ways by which government assisted undergraduates during the pandemic. From the table, it was revealed that the government never sponsored a website for online learning during the pandemic, the government never sponsored a free Wi-Fi service to students for online learning in their homes and the government did

nothing to support undergraduates. Since they all had negative responses, it answers that the government did nothing to assist undergraduates to learn during the pandemic.

**Research Question Three:** *What ways did educational institutions assist students in their eagerness to learn during the total lockdown period?*

**Table 6: Items on ways educational institutions assisted students in their eagerness to learn during the pandemic**

| S/N | ITEMS   | N   | Yes | No | Mean        | SD    | Remark           |
|-----|---|-----|-----|----|-------------|-------|------------------|
| 8.  | Some higher institutions supported their students with free data for online learning.                 | 100 | 18  | 82 | <b>1.82</b> | 0.386 | <b>Disagreed</b> |
| 9.  | Most tertiary institutions appointed teachers to teach students online through the school's website.  | 100 | 24  | 76 | <b>1.76</b> | 0.429 | <b>Disagreed</b> |
| 10. | Some higher institutions appointed lecturers to attend to students at their various homes physically. | 100 | 10  | 90 | <b>1.90</b> | 0.302 | <b>Disagreed</b> |
| 11. | The school did nothing to support students.   | 100 | 78  | 22 | <b>1.22</b> | 0.416 | <b>Agreed</b>    |

Table 6 collects data and responses from respondents on items 8 – 11 answering research question 3. The items presented ways educational institutions assisted students in their eagerness to learn during the pandemic. From the table, it can be concluded that educational institutions did nothing to support students in

their eagerness to learn during the pandemic. It can be said otherwise that some higher institutions never supported their students with free data for online learning, most tertiary institutions never appointed teachers to teach students online through the school’s website. In all, educational institutions did nothing to support students during the pandemic.

**Research Question Four:** *What ways did students provide for themselves to facilitate their learning during the total lockdown period?*

**Table 7: Items on ways students provided for themselves to facilitate their learning during the pandemic**

| S/N | ITEMS  | N   | Yes | No | Mean        | SD    | Remark           |
|-----|--|-----|-----|----|-------------|-------|------------------|
| 12. | Some students provided for themselves by engagement in online tutoring, freelancing services, etc. | 100 | 98  | 2  | <b>1.02</b> | 0.141 | <b>Disagreed</b> |
| 13. | Some students sponsored themselves though vocational jobs they did.                                | 100 | 98  | 2  | <b>1.02</b> | 0.141 | <b>Disagreed</b> |
| 14. | Some parents assisted their children and organized private home teachers for them.                 | 100 | 96  | 4  | <b>1.04</b> | 0.197 | <b>Disagreed</b> |
| 15. | Students didn’t get support from anywhere to facilitate their learning.                            | 100 | 71  | 29 | <b>1.28</b> | 0.453 | <b>Agreed</b>    |

Table 7 collects data and responses from respondents on items 12 – 15, answering research question 4. From the table, it is revealed that during the pandemic, no opportunity was opened to students to facilitate their learning.

### **Discussion of Findings**

The study investigated the influence of coronavirus on students' academics in the University of Benin, Benin City. The discussions of the result are listed below;

Data provided in research items 1 – 4 answered research question 1, “What are the challenges students faced during the total lockdown period ushered in by the coronavirus?” From the results gathered under this research question, it was found that students never got access to education, also that students were not able to purchase data, nor able to access their school's website during the pandemic.

In addressing research question 2, items 5– 7 gave answers to the question asking what ways the government assisted undergraduates to learn during the pandemic. From the table, it is revealed that the government did nothing to support undergraduates during the pandemic.

Items 8 – 11 answered research question 3 on ways educational institutions assisted undergraduates in their eagerness to learn during the pandemic. From the

table, it was found that educational institutions where students attended never made any positive move to provide for their academic needs.

Lastly, items 12 – 15 answered research question 4 on ways students provided for themselves to facilitate their learning during the pandemic. From the table, it is clearly stated that some undergraduate students got support from their personal vocations, alongside assistance from family and friends to help them learn the more, but not everyone of them saw this opportunity,

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Summary

This study examined the influence of coronavirus on students' academics in the University of Benin, Benin City. The researcher made use of descriptive survey method in the study. Four research questions were raised to guide the study and are stated as follows:

1. What are the challenges students faced during the total lockdown period ushered in by the coronavirus?
2. What ways did the government assist undergraduates to learn during the total lockdown period?
3. What ways did educational institutions assist students in their eagerness to learn during the total lockdown period?
4. What ways did students provide for themselves to facilitate their learning during the total lockdown period?

Data gathered from the questionnaire administered to schools were analyzed, after which results was presented and discussed.

## **Conclusion**

From the results presented, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. The government never made any conscious effort to assist undergraduates towards learning during the pandemic.
2. Undergraduate students were confronted with a lot of challenges during the pandemic.
3. Educational institutions never provided students with assistance during the pandemic.
4. Some students were self-sponsored from vocational jobs they got through the duration of the pandemic.
5. Little or nothing was heard of government supporting undergraduates with grants or handouts during the pandemic.

## **Recommendations**

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, the following are recommended;

1. The government should try as much as possible to improve on more strategic ways of managing education in the reoccurrence of pandemics.
2. Distance learning channels should be created and utilized.
3. Educational institutions should try as much as possible to render support to undergraduate students.

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## **APPENDIX**

### **DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATIONS FACULTY OF EDUCATION UNIVERSITY OF BENIN, BENIN CITY**

#### **INFLUENCE OF CORONAVIRUS ON STUDENTS' ACADEMICS IN THE UNIVERSITY OF BENIN, BENIN CITY**

Dear Respondents,

I am an undergraduate student of the above named institution and I am presently carrying out a research study on **“the influence of coronavirus on students’ academics in the University of Benin, Benin City”**, which requires your response to some questions.

Kindly help to complete the questionnaire, as your sincere and honest response will be of immense assistance. The information obtained shall be kept absolutely confidential.

**IGBINEDION EFEWENGBE PRAISE**  
*Student Researcher*

## SECTION A: PERSONAL DATA

**INSTRUCTION:** *Please indicate your answers by ticking (✓) in the appropriate space or gap provided.*

**Sex:** Male [ ] Female [ ]

**Age:** 20 years & below [ ] 21-25 years [ ] 26 years and above [ ]

**Level:** 200L [ ] 300L [ ] 400L [ ]

## SECTION B:

**INSTRUCTION:** *Please indicate your answers by ticking (✓) in the appropriate space or gap provided.*

**Research Question 1:** *What are the challenges students faced during the total lockdown period ushered in by the coronavirus?*

| S/N | ITEMS   | YES | NO |
|-----|---|-----|----|
| 1.  | Undergraduate students never got access to education during the time of the pandemic.   |     |    |
| 2.  | Students were short of funds to purchase data for online learning.  |     |    |
| 3.  | The academic calendar of most schools was put to a standstill and students remained at the same academic level and were not promoted.   |     |    |
| 4.  | Students who had data for online learning were not able to access their school's website due to a total shutdown of school administrative services as a result of the pandemic. |     |    |

**Research Question 2:** *What ways did the government assist undergraduates to learn during the total lockdown period?*

| S/N | ITEMS  | YES | NO |
|-----|--|-----|----|
| 5.  | The government sponsored a website with educational contents where students can access materials for learning.     |     |    |
| 6.  | The government sponsored a free Wi-Fi distribution service to students for online learning in their various homes. |     |    |
| 7.  | The government did nothing to support undergraduates during the total lockdown period.                             |     |    |

**Research Question 3:** *What ways did educational institutions assist students in their eagerness to learn during the total lockdown period?*

| S/N | ITEMS  | YES | NO |
|-----|--|-----|----|
| 8.  | Some higher institutions supported their students with free data for online learning.  |     |    |
| 9.  | Most tertiary institutions in the area of study appointed teachers who would teach students online through their school's website. |     |    |
| 10. | Some higher institutions appointed lecturers to attend to students at their various homes physically during the pandemic.          |     |    |
| 11. | The school did nothing to support students, rather lecturers went on their own to organize online classes for financial gains.     |     |    |

**Research Question 4:** *What ways did students provide for themselves to facilitate their learning during the total lockdown period?*

| S/N | ITEMS  | YES | NO |
|-----|--|-----|----|
| 12. | Some students provided for themselves to facilitate their educational needs by doing some online jobs like online tutoring, freelance writing, freelance web designing, etc. |     |    |
| 13. | Some students have vocational jobs they do, so they sponsored themselves fully to learn during the pandemic.   |     |    |
| 14. | Some undergraduates by the help of their parents were able to get private home lecturers to teach them during the pandemic.  |     |    |
| 15. | Students were not encouraged and motivated to study because they didn't get support from anywhere to facilitate their learning.  |     |    |