

**VIRTUAL EDUCATION IN NIGERIA DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC:  
CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS**

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**ABSTRACT**

The Covid-19 pandemic grounded the world to a halt in the early months of 2020, and exposed the weaknesses of the traditional face-to-face teaching method. This study investigates into the challenges and the prospects of virtual education in Nigeria as they applied to the lecturers of Nnamdi Azikiwe University when they embraced it to conclude lectures before the 2018/2019 second session examinations. The main contributions of this research is to assess the experiences of the lecturers in virtual education, and to evaluate the feasibility of implementing it in Nigeria's public universities especially as the Covid-19 pandemic continues to ravage the world, and as the education industry is facing disruptions caused by security challenges in some parts of Nigeria. The data for this study was got from questionnaires distributed to thirty lecturers of the Department of English Language and Literature. The analysis is done using qualitative and quantitative methods. It is observed that the majority of the lecturers were dissatisfied with the online teaching experience and so kick against adopting it in Nigeria's public universities. The research concludes that since the world is a global village, and virtual education is being harnessed effectively in the education sector globally, government should make the necessary provisions that will facilitate its adoption and use in Nigerian public universities so as to equip them to interact and compete with universities in other parts of the world. The universities should adopt strategies and policies that will convince the lecturers of the indispensability of online education in our modern world.

**Key Words:** Covid-19 pandemic, virtual education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Department of English, Nigeria.

**1. INTRODUCTION**

Virtual education did not start with the SARS-CoV-2 virus (Covid-19) pandemic. It only strengthened and popularized it. There has not been a time when its usefulness was harnessed globally as at the peak of the pandemic lockdown in the early months of 2020. During that time, educational institutions in most parts of the globe were locked up and students were made to leave school premises.

According to Chen and Yu Covid-19 was first detected in Wuhan, in the Hubei Province of China, with the first case reported on December 8 2019 (2020). The disease spreads rapidly, transmitting "from human to human", with many hospitalizations and rising mortality rate (Shereen, Khan, Kazmi, Bashir, and Siddique 2020). Consequent upon this the Chinese Government declared Covid-19 an outbreak on January 20 2020 (Chen and Yu 2020). Despite efforts to contain its spread in Wuhan, it spread through China, and, soon rising cases of Covid-19 infections and many deaths began to be reported in different countries within a short interval. This led the Director-General of WHO, Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, to declare it a pandemic, noting that "the number of cases outside China had increased 13-

fold in two weeks....” (bbc.com). Many nations of the world declared lockdown to contain its spread, and some safety measures were adopted to keep safe. People were made to work from home for months.

Thus Covid-19 rewrote the history of the world and altered the affairs of humanity for a long time to come. Ghebreyesus hints that “the world will not go back to the way things were. There must be a “new normal” - a world that is healthier, safer and better prepared” (World Health Organization, 22 April 2020). Truly, the world was hardly prepared for the challenges posed by this pandemic as economies, businesses, religious gatherings and activities, social gatherings, entertainment and aviation industries, sports and indeed most areas of human endeavour, including education were grounded to a halt. It was observed that “the Covid-19 pandemic has created the largest disruption of education systems in history, affecting nearly 1.6 billion learners in more than 190 countries and all continents. Closure of schools and other learning spaces have impacted 94 per cent of the world’s student population, up to 99 in low and lower middle income countries”. (Executive Summary, United Nations, August 2020)

Online learning became the only option available to continue learning globally. It is the realization that at that point in world history, education could only be accessed remotely via different online modes that prompted this research which sets to conduct a study into the adoption and use of the online mode in Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka to conclude lectures for the second semester of the 2018/2019 session with the view to :

- assessing the level of preparedness of the lecturers for the online mode
- discovering the experiences of the lecturers in the two week virtual education
- finding out the feasibility of adopting virtual education in Nigerian public universities.

It was a lot easier for countries like the Americas, India, China, South Korea, United Kingdom, Australia, Malaysia, South Africa and many other countries where online education has been in place to switch over to it. Citing Allen and Seaman and the United States Department of Education, for instance, Kentnor 2015 observed that “as of Fall 2012, of 20.6 million higher education student, 6.7 million (32.5 %) enrolled in online courses (P. 22). Most of these countries could also provide their schools, the lecturers and students with the technical, material and other support they needed to adapt easily to virtual education.

But the situation is entirely different in many developing countries, including Nigeria where education is generally underfunded and educational institutions are in a pitiable state of infrastructural decay (Olufemi 2021). This excerpt by Kehinde captures the scenario aptly:

Behind the shabby school building, gathered with my peers during leisure period, we ransacked tangled heaps of broken chairs and desks like scavengers. In a school of over 1800 students, each student is responsible for his/her chair and table as the available ones are insufficient to occupy (sic) the huge number of students. Like cavemen, we apply stone to rotten nails on damage school furniture, crafting chairs and tables on which to sit. The unlucky ones would have to place placards and cartons on the floor when there are no more vacant seats in the classroom where we sit jam-packed like sardines... At the ring of the dismissal bell, we burst out of our various classes like prison break, excited that another day’s sentence is over (2019)

The Nigerian government's budgetary allocations to the education sector has been all time low in recent years. In fact, "since 1999 when democratic government returned ... (it) has been between 4 per cent and 10 per cent" (Adamu in Adedigba 2017). The under-funding of education in Nigeria has led to agitations by the various unions of teachers of public tertiary institutions, and these agitations have always ended in strike actions before any positive reaction could come from the government. The Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) had embarked on such a strike on March 7 2020, and students had been asked to return home. This strike coincided with the global scare of contracting Covid-19. It was eventually recorded in Nigeria on March 23. About three weeks later, the Federal Government was compelled by the rate of its spread to declare lockdown in Abuja, Lagos, and Ogun states, and soon afterwards the country was on lockdown, and all educational institutions were locked up, and students were sent back home. Private universities in Nigeria quickly switched to online education, while primary and secondary schools students were taught using the state media of radio and television, take home assignments, (Onuora in Joshi 2020). When most public universities in Nigeria eventually reopened in December 2020 /January 2021, the lecturers were left with the option of online teaching only.

But the questions are "Are Nigerian Public Universities adequately equipped for online education? Are the lecturers prepared for online teaching at that point? In addition to the problem of under-funding, there seems the reluctance of some lecturers to embrace the technological advancements in ICT. There have been instances of lecturers pulling away from teaching some courses where PowerPoint presentation of lectures is prioritized. To them, teaching is nothing but the traditional face-to-face teacher-student interactions in a conventional classroom.

But Covid-19 has posed a threat to this age-long institutionalized teaching mode, enforcing a compulsory paradigm shift to online mode. Dhawan enthuses that "the Corona Virus has made institutions to go from offline mode to online mode of pedagogy. This crisis will make the institutions, which were earlier reluctant to change, to accept modern technology. This catastrophe will show us the lucrative side of online teaching and learning" (2020, p.7).

Previous researches on Covid-19 and online education in Nigeria include: Covid-19 and Digitalized Education: An Analysis of Online Learning in Nigerian Higher Education by Egielewa, Idogho, Iyalombe and Cirella 2021. They used a sample size of 1134 students drawn from universities, polytechnics, and colleges of education and found out that students are not satisfied with online education; Problems and Prospects of Corona virus (Covid-19) in Teaching of Business Education Students in Nigerian Universities by Ohiwerei and Okosun 2021. They highlighted the benefits of using Zoom to teach students and made recommendations; E-learning and Covid-19: the challenges of teaching technical Courses in tertiary institutions by Ugochukwu-Ibe and Ibeke. They discussed the difficulties involved in handling practical and technical processes online. Also, Iseolorukanmi, Adebola, Adebola, Rotimi, Nweke-Love, Adebisi, and Lawal / Gyamfi 2021 investigated into the response of Nigerian university lecturers in public and private universities to virtual education and discovered that lecturers in private universities responded more to virtual teaching than those in public universities. As far as this researcher knows, no study has investigated into the experiences of the lecturers of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka using lecturers of the Department of English Language and Literature, regarding the virtual teaching by which they concluded the 2018/2019 session so as to discover the challenges they

experienced and their thought on adopting virtual education in Nigerian public universities which this study sets to do.

The justifications for this study abound: advancements in ICT are being harnessed in the education space globally and it is necessary that Nigerian public schools key into this paradigm shift. Covid-19 has been mutating into deadlier and easily transmissible variants. This puts students, faculty and community at a high risk of contracting Covid-19 in the Nigerian public universities where overcrowded classrooms cannot permit the practice of social distancing. Again, security challenges have been disrupting and destabilizing academic activities in the Northern and South Eastern parts of Nigeria. In the North, the regular and daring invasions of schools by terrorists and bandits to cart away students, hold them captive for months and years while demanding for ransom is not a good sign. Some of these students, especially the girls have long had the course of their lives redirected permanently in the dens of those who kept them captive. In the South-East, the incessant 'sit-at-home' orders issued by the Indigenous People of Biafra which at times takes two, three, four days off a week is stifling education and making a mess of the traditional classroom mode of teaching. The realization that people who defied the orders were unfortunately killed, or maimed, or had their cars or other properties burnt down or damaged, or publicly insulted, strike more fear in the hearts of the people and force them to comply. School activities now take place only on the days people are permitted to go out. All these affronts on the traditional classroom teaching method call for an urgent change to a mode that can address our present prevailing circumstances, the new normal.

To fully understand the subject matter, this study would provide answers to the following research questions:

- i. What was the level of preparedness of lecturers of Nnamdi Azikiwe University to embark on virtual education before January 3 2021?
- ii. What were the experiences of the lecturers in the virtual mode of education? Were there any challenges?
- iii. If the challenges are addressed are there any prospects of adopting virtual education in Nigerian public universities?

## Definition of Terms

**Outbreak** : It corresponds to an unpredictable increase in the number of people presenting a health condition or in the occurrence of cases in a new area.(Piret and Boivin 2021) It is similar to an epidemic but affects a more limited geographic area.

**Epidemic**: It is an outbreak that spreads to larger geographic areas (than an outbreak). An epidemic condition occurs at a predictable rate among a population (Piret and Boivin 2021)

**Pandemic**: According to Merriam Webster, pandemic occurs over a wide geographical area (such as multiple countries or continents) and typically affecting a significant proportion of the population. (www.webster.com). It can occur in many parts of the world or cross many international boundaries, and affecting so many people.

**Communication and Information Technology (ICT)**: Computers with internet connections used in communicating information in education and other sectors.

**Online /E-Learning:** learning with gadgets like , laptops, computers, Android phones connected to the internet.

## 2. BACKGROUND OF LITERATURE

### **Virtual Education:**

Virtual learning, online learning, e-learning are used interchangeably in this paper to refer to the kind of learning accessed via computers connected to the internet. Dhawan defines online learning as “learning experiences in synchronous or asynchronous environments using different devices (eg. Mobile phones, laptops, etc.) with internet access (2020). Citing Shelton and Saltsman 2005; Allen and Seaman 2008 , Kentnor notes that it “is a form of distance education that uses computers and the internet as the delivery mechanism with at least 80% of the course content delivered online (2015). Online learning is the type of learning in which classroom space is on the internet and physical distance exists between teachers and learners on one part and among learners on the other part as they teach and learn. It is a product of ICT in the education sector.

ICT has permeated virtually all fields of life bringing about changes and reforms aimed at providing easier and more efficient ways of doing things . In the education industry, it has enabled the optimization of information and knowledge delivery. It includes such things as “computers, the internet, projectors, televisions, radios,” , and they are widely used in education to improve the quality of its delivery (Fu 2013). In fact, ICT has had an overwhelming impact on education generally. Suryani observes that “face to face classroom interaction is getting replaced by online communication, traditional white or blackboard is getting replaced by interactive whiteboard, and books or printed resources are getting replaced by online resources “(2010). In line with this, Fu points out that it “is being successfully adopted in instructing, learning and assessment”.

Some of the benefits of virtual learning include:

- A. It make education accessible to all. Learning can occur any time and anywhere. People who are unable to enrol in school programmes as a result of distance from educational institutions , or other social engagements like work, family, business, now have direct access to quality education from their homes.
- B. It is less cumbersome. Educational material like books, course materials, audio and video clips are accessed in soft copies and can be compressed in tiny storage systems.
- C. It is flexible: Learning occurs at the learner’s convenience. Learners manage their time in a way that suits them and are not under any obligation to be in the classroom at an appointed time.
- D. It saves time, energy and cost: The energy, time and resources that would have been expended going to and fro the educational institution is saved. Once the learner’s computer or android phone is powered, s/he simply logs on to the internet and accesses the course.
- E. It bridges the gap in education during emergency: When the traditional in-person education failed as it did during the Covid-19 lockdown, virtual education came in handy as a viable alternative to physical classroom.
- F. It enables teachers and learners to adapt teaching and learning to their individual needs. All that needs be done is to avail oneself of the rich resources on the internet and assemble those which responds to the immediate needs of the user.

### **Origins and Development of Virtual Education.**

Though virtual education is a recent development in knowledge delivery, it has a long history in the long established, much utilized distance education. Distance education is “a method of teaching where the student and teacher are physically separated”. (Kentnor 2015). According to him, Distance education has been in existence since the 18<sup>th</sup> century as “correspondence programme” “correspondence education” “correspondence course”, terms which points to the mode in which it was conducted, and which included correspondence and parcel post at that time.

As innovations in communications technology continue to evolve, distance education continued to evolve with it. Soon, radio, and then televisions were utilized as tools for educational broadcasting to aid in distance education. Then came the era of computers. The University of Phoenix began online education in 1989 using what it termed ‘CompuServe’ (Kentnor 2015). He goes on to state that “with the unveiling of the Web in 1991, the University of Phoenix was the first to offer educational programmes online”. Soon afterwards other universities, colleges, began to experiment on and offer online programmes. Today, online programme is an established mode of education globally, with many institutions offering most of their courses online. This explains why it has attracted a great deal of literature in its few decades. It, therefore, behooves institutions and teachers in educational institutions to avail themselves of the many innovations in ICT to make education experience worthwhile and to compete favourably in this modern era of ICTs. Online programmes had some teething problems at its early days, but, it scaled through them and continued to evolve, adding new features by the day and improving on the old ones.

### **Types of Online Learning:**

Different types/models of online learning are practiced by institutions offering online courses. They include:

- Synchronous Online learning: This involves simultaneous online class interactions between the teacher and the students whereby they join from wherever they are connected to the internet. It can take the form of webinars during which the participating learners interact using video and audio chats, and texts in real time.
- Asynchronous Online learning: Here there is no real-time interaction. The teacher uploads the contents to be learnt, assignments, audio and video clips, and even exams, and students are given a time frame within which to complete them.
- Hybrid online learning: It is also called blended online learning. It involves learning via both in-person interaction in traditional face-to-face classroom as well as online sessions. The online interaction comes in between in-person classroom activities, thereby affording the learners the opportunity of maximizing their learning experiences in both modes.

Meanwhile, Mason (1998) conveniently grouped online courses into “fully online” and “partially online” (Dhull and Sakshi 2017). According to them, in fully online courses teaching and learning activities are carried out online, while partially online courses resource materials that are printed or not printed are integrated with some kind of online teaching.

### **Traditional Face -to- Face Learning and Virtual Learning**

Traditional face-face learning is the mode synonymous with learning the world over. That is what comes to mind whenever education is mentioned. It is teacher-centred and takes place in a physical classroom with teacher and learners present at a designated time and place. The teacher is fully in charge

of classroom dynamics, while the learner remains passive; listening, taking notes, asking questions and answering to teacher's questions. S/he speaks only at the teacher's elicitation. The teacher decides what is learnt, how it is learnt, and how progress is made on the curriculum. In fact, in this mode, learning is seen as "transmission of knowledge to students" (Mikre 2011).

But virtual learning uses virtual classroom which can be in the learner's study, or room, under the shade of a tree, in a moving auto-mobile, and more as long as s/he is connected to the internet using his android phone or laptop or computer. This is made possible by innovations in ICT through which learning has become learner-centred. The internet hosts many courses designed by educators which learners can adapt to suit their learning needs. It also hosts millions upon millions of books and other resource materials, teaching and learning aids, video and audio clips, games, and many more aimed at improving students' learning outcome. Learners utilize the huge benefits of ICT in education to actively construct knowledge. They are at the centre of activity and are responsible for their learning in terms of what is learnt, the timing and how it is learnt. ICT - facilitated learning is interactive and engaging, and promotes collaboration among learners and between them and their teachers. (Mikre 2011). In fact, in addition to its successes in teaching, learning, and evaluation, virtual learning is equipped with the tools to undertake most of the things done in the traditional classroom environment including monitoring student's attendance to classes. Online learning is usually accessed using many platforms such as Google classroom, Google Meet, Zoom, Microsoft Team, and many others.

### **Theoretical Framework:**

The theory guiding this research is the normalization process theory (NPT) and it is chosen to account for the "new normal" being propagated and embraced by different sectors, including education since Covid-19. The theory was developed by May et al 2009 to account for how new technologies, discoveries, practices, ways of behaving and carrying out activities become "routinely embedded in every day practice" and way of life, "and have applications in the study of implementation process", that is the society or social institution "bringing the practices into action". The proponents see it as a theory of action, emphasizing human agency over and above the actor- networks of sociological theories. It holds that to understand how a practice is embedded, we have to study and understand what members of society or organization do as well as how they work. In other words practices are embedded in social contexts when people enact them by their collective actions, participation as they work together over time and space towards achieving a goal.

The theory was necessitated by the perceived gap in theories that address the "implementation and integrating" of "new treatment modalities and ways of organizing care in the health service settings". Since, the Covid-19 virus has imposed a new normal, new ways of practice on the world, a situation that seems not to be currently abetting with the mutations of the virus into deadlier variants, and the declarations of lock downs after lock downs in some major cities of the world, planning and implementation of different kinds of online learning seem the only way to navigate through this pandemic in the education sector. The situation does not give room to options.

### **3. MATERIALS AND METHODS:**

The research design adopted for this study is descriptive survey aimed at enabling the researcher gain an in depth understanding of the experiences of the lecturers who partook in the two-week online lectures

to the second semester of the 2018/2019 session. Certain factors militated against collecting data for this research and these included the directive of the University that lecturers should upload their lecture materials online so that students can access them, and teach them virtually for two weeks before the exams, and the subsequent counter directive of ASUU that lecturers should not upload course materials and should not teach students until the Government paid off all the arrears of salaries owed its members. The second one is that some lecturers had actually concluded their lectures since the exams were to start just two weeks before the strike and the Covid-19 lockdown. The third is that some lecturers are not ready to teach virtually even if they had topics left to be taught. The researcher chose to conduct the research with lecturers of the Department of English because she was aware that some of them had started teaching before the ASUU counter directive to stop came.

So, using deliberate selection, thirty lecturers of the Department of English were sent eleven item questionnaires containing both structured and unstructured questions via their private Whats-app pages. The thirty that were selected for the research were those who taught courses in the 2018/2019 session. Only twenty of them responded to the questionnaires after six week of waiting, in spite of reminders. The filled-in questionnaires were, collated, downloaded and analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively. Quantitative data were analyzed using simple percentages, while qualitative data were handled descriptively.

**4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

**Research Question 1: What was the level of preparedness of lecturers of Nnamdi Azikiwe University to embark on virtual education before January 3 2021?**

Question 1: Were you familiar with online education before January 2021?

**Table 1 Table showing the familiarity of the lecturers with virtual education before January 2021.**

Response	Number	percentage
Yes	5	25
No	15	75
Total	20	100

Only 5 of the respondents which is 25% of the respondents were familiar with online education before they used it to teach students in January 2021. 15 comprising 75% indicated that they were not familiar with it prior to the time they used it.

Question 2: Did you at any point participate in online education before January 2021

**Table 2 .Table showing previous participation in online education**



Response	Number	percentage
Yes	5	25
No	15	75
Total	20	100

5 respondents which represents 25% of the respondents indicated that they have participated in online education prior to January 2021, while the remaining 15 which makes up 75% of the respondents showed that they did not have any experience of online education before they embarked on using it to teach.

Question 3: Were you prepared for online education before the Covid-19 pandemic?

**Table 3. Table showing the preparedness of lecturers for online teaching.**

Response	Number	percentage
Yes	0	0
No	20	100
Total	20	100

All the 20 respondents which make up 100% indicated that they were not prepared for online teaching before the Covid-19 pandemic.

The analysis of research question 1, as represented by questions 1, 2, and 3, shows that the majority of the lecturers have not participated in online education either as a teacher or a student before they were directed to use it. In other words they had no experience of it before January 2021. They also were not prepared to teach online before they were directed to do so. Only 5 of them which is 25% of the population were familiar with it. Most of the courses taught at the Department involve direct contact between lecturers and students using whiteboard and marker as seen in traditional classrooms. Meanwhile, the lectures who teach English courses at the School of General Studies use power point to project their lectures. That is a directive of the School which must be obeyed or the lecturer is sanctioned. This kind of directive is not obtainable in the Department. As such those who are not very conversant with the computer and the internet, and who do not teach at the School of General Studies lack the push to get acquainted with the use of technology in education. This could be part of the reason for the low response to the questionnaires on this research seeking to find the feasibility of adopting virtual education.

**Research Question Two: What were the experiences of the lecturers in the virtual mode of education? Were there any challenges?**

Question 4: Did you participate in the two-week virtual learning arrangement to conclude 2018/2019 session?

**Table 4 Table showing the number of lecturers who participated in the online teaching.**

Response	Number	percentage
Yes	13	65
No	7	35
Total	20	100

13 of the respondents which make up 65% of the respondents indicated that they participated in the online teaching, while 7 comprising 35% indicated that they did not participate.

Question 5: If yes, how would you describe your experiences in the online education?

The experiences of the 13 lecturers which is 65% of the respondents were varied. 3 of them indicated that the counter instruction by ASUU that lecturers should not carry out the directive of the University on online education so as to compel the Federal Government to clear the arrears of salaries owed to its members actually disrupted the teaching. Consequent upon it the majority of the lecturer in the University either did not teach at all or taught a few times. Only those 3 saw the venture as exciting, noting that the students were responsive. The remaining 10 pointed out that the experience was not worthwhile. They observed that there were no adequate and free gadgets; that it was costly for both the lecturers and the students to handle alone ,and that there was no incentive.

Question 6: Do you think your students benefited from it?

All the 13 lecturers indicated that their students benefited from the online lectures.

Question 7: If yes, how would you rate the success of the online education experience?

All of the 13 lecturers rated the success of the online learning below average.

Question 8: If no, what do you think were the reasons for the lack of success?

The reasons they gave are among the challenges which they experienced teaching online and are analyzed in question 9 .

Question 9: What were the challenges you experienced teaching online?

The challenges enumerated include unstable network, the method being alien, inability of most of the students to buy data, high cost of data , lecturers inability to know the facial and body reactions of the students, inability of students to use the online app, epileptic power supply, the Zoom app and the Microsoft Team provided by the University are data consuming so some lecturers resorted to the use of Whats App media instead. Above all some students had no access to lectures because they are indigent to the extent that they have neither a laptop nor an android phone to access the internet with.

The analysis of questions Research Question 2 in numbers 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9 shows that a good number of the respondents participated in the online teaching, and and that their experiences were not good. The challenges they enumerated are overwhelming especially as they had to bear the brunt of the expenses involved in financing it in the face of the present harsh economic realities of the country. Neither the Nigerian government nor the Universities could come up with the incentive or palliative to make teaching from home possible. Meanwhile, students were left to made the necessary provisions for the e-learning themselves. Some of them are so indigent that they cannot own a laptop, an android phone or afford the high cost of data.

**Research Question 3: If the challenges are addressed are there any prospects of adopting virtual education in Nigerian public universities?**

Question 10: If these challenges are addressed would you recommend the adoption of online education in Nigerian public universities?

**Table 5 Table showing recommendation for the adoption of online education**

Response	Number	percentage
Yes	3	15
No	17	85
Total	20	100

All the 20 respondents responded to this question. Only 3 which is 15% of the respondents are in support of adopting online education if the current challenges militating against its use in Nigerian public universities are addressed. But 17 of them which is 85 % is against it whether or not the challenges are addressed.

Question 11: What are the reasons for your response?

For the 15 % that favours online education, their reasons include necessity and convenience, efficiency and accessibility. Others are that it is less stressful and saves cost and time. Lecturers do not have to fuel their cars and drive for minutes or hours struggling to meet up with lectures at the University. The University is a non-residential one and the lecturers come to teach from different parts of the state and beyond. Meanwhile they recommended that adopting it has to go with staff training on how to use it and

provision of the gadgets needed to carry it out. Another one is that examinations have to be online too. Lecturers should not be made to teach online and conduct examinations in the traditional face-to-face manner.

But the 85% that is opposed to it insists that teaching is better done one-on-one and that there are topics that require hands-on activities which cannot be taught online. They see it as a product of emergency situation, and noted that even the Western World that adopted it has since pulled their students back to physical classroom. Others are that the experience of the online teaching shows it is not going to work here; most students are not serious with online lectures because they believe they are not being monitored; it restricts interactions and the relationship between lecturer and students; students will become so free and uncontrollable if there are no physical contacts.

The analysis of research question 3 in numbers 10 and 11 shows that even if the challenges facing online education in Nigerian public universities are addressed, the majority of the lecturers are opposed to adopting it as a mode of education in spite of the prevailing circumstances. This agrees with Iseolorukanmi, Adebola, Adebola, Rotimi, Nweke-Love, Adebisi, and Lawal / Gyamfi's 2021 observation that lecturers in Nigerian public universities have negative attitude towards online education. The implication of this is that a good number of the lecturers have become so used to in-person contacts with students, and traditional teacher-student classroom interactions that it is difficult to adapt to a change to virtual education. That is what constructs their experience of being teachers in the university. ICT has advanced to the extent that most English language courses including advanced writings and compositions can be taught effectively online by giving students detailed step-by-step instructions on how to carry out such tasks. Students participation in virtual classrooms can also be effectively monitored and controlled to ensure full participation in the learning process.

## 5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This paper has been able to address the experimentation of online education during the Covid-19 pandemic in a public university in Nigeria. Though virtual education was the only option open to the lecturers and students to conclude lectures in the 2018/2019 session, the majority of the respondent, the lecturers indicated that their online teaching experience was not worthwhile. Consequently, they do not support or accent to adopting it in Nigerian public universities in spite of the prevailing circumstances of the pandemic and security challenges in the county. They insisted that teaching is better done in the traditional face-to-face way that promotes lecturer-student interaction so that lecturers can monitor students' feedback.

But the world has gone beyond that. It is becoming more digitized by the day. Universities in different parts of the globe have adopted one form of online education or the other for their students at different levels of education, and are continuously adapting new technologies to improve teaching and learning so as to achieve holistic education development. Nigerian public universities should be re positioned to compete and interact with other universities.

To this end, it is recommended that government should rise up to the challenge of making the necessary provisions that will help facilitate online delivery of services in Nigerian Universities. Efforts should also be made to provide more free short-term ICT courses on a more regular basis to lecturers in public

universities. The universities should adopt strategies and policies that will continue to make lecturers see the indispensability of ICT in our modern world. Incentives in the form of data should also be made available for them so that they can also have access to data for research outside their offices. Wifi services should also be made available in strategic places especially lecture theaters so that students who have laptops and android phones can have access to free network services for their academic works. Necessary logistics should also be put in place to make university semester examinations an online affair.

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