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THE NEW NORMAL CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT CRISIS TECHNIQUES IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT
This paper examined classroom crisis management techniques in Nigerian secondary schools brought about by the novel COVID-19 pandemic globally. Secondary data were primarily used to backed points raised in the paper. All data used in the study were mainly obtained from print media which are mostly from online publications. The paper identified issues associated with classroom management crisis posed by the new normal. These challenges amongst other includes lack of investment in the right technology, lack of teachers training in the use of ICT, difficulty in monitoring and maintenance from cloud, obtaining a conducive learning environment from home, internet safety and problem of distraction, isolation and inadequate power supply among others. The paper also identified different techniques that can be used to enhance the effective management of classroom crisis in Nigerian secondary schools during COVID-19 era and beyond. Among these strategies includes blended learning approach, creating enabling learning environment at homes, and master the techniques of resolving technical issues where the need arises. However, based on the highlighted issues raised in the paper conclusion was drawn and recommendation was made.

Keywords: Classroom Management Crisis, Secondary Education, New Normal, COVID 19, Nigeria

Introduction
Globally, the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic has affected the lives of many individuals and also resulted to the death of many people. Originally, the virus which started in Wuhan, China was reported in nearly all countries of the world affecting both human and economic activities leading to the shutdown of nearly all sectors. Nigeria is one of the over 210 countries affected

globally with its first case reported in Lagos State on 27th February 2020 (Chinyelu & Ugwude, 2020).

The education sector was among the most hit by the novel COVID-19 pandemic in Nigeria. The Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) through the Federal Ministry of Education (FME) directed the closure of all schools on March 23rd, 2020, in the to curtail the further spread of the coronavirus. However, schools remained closed in the country for months with only few who were able to deliver instructional contents through remote learning. According to Burgess and Sievertsen (2020), the closure of schools, colleges and universities not only interrupted the teaching for students around the world, the closure coincided with a key assessment period and many exams were postponed or cancelled.

The FGN and state governments have variously made efforts towards delivering instructional content to students at various levels of education in the country. Notably among these interventions are television and radio programs aired on national stations to facilitate learning, free online resources to different categories of learners, among others. These interventions have helped tremendously to categories of learners in many urban settlements, however, many students in some remote areas could not tap into and access most of these interventions. In addition, there exist other problems that could not allow the successful running of these programs, among which includes inadequate electricity supply, poverty, inaccessibility to these channels from remote areas, to mention but a few.

Classroom Management

Classroom management refers to teachers' ability to lead learners in a way that maximizes the instructional time devoted to meaningful learning. To ensure a high share of learning time, teachers may use instructional strategies that prevent student misbehaviour caused by boredom, overload, disorientation, difficulties in understanding, negative emotions and so on (Huber & Helm, 2020). Thus, classroom management entails planning, supervising, controlling and coordinating the activities of learners in the teaching –learning process.

Moreover, since the reopening of schools and resumption of academic activities in Nigeria and across the globe, teachers now have a greater role to play in ensuring that learners abide to laid down protocols within and outside the classroom as a precautionary measure against the novel pandemic. United Nations Children Education Fund UNICEF (2021) proposed some tips for teachers to protect themselves and their students in the classroom during and post pandemic era.

1. Physical distancing at school
2. Practicing health and hand hygiene
3. Cleaning and disinfecting tips for the classroom
4. Actions to be taken if a student appears sick

Physical Distancing at School

According to UNICEF (2021), teachers and school authorities should devise different means to avoid students coming into contact with one another as this will increase and escalate the likelihood of the spread of the virus in schools and the society at large. This can be achieved through maintaining

physical distancing of at least 1-meter distance in queues and sitting/gathering places, making use of outdoor spaces and by allowing adequate ventilation into the classroom where necessary, hiring of more teachers to teach fewer students, to name a few.

Practicing Health and Hand Hygiene

Teachers have a critical role to play in ensuring students understand the precautions they should take to protect themselves and others from COVID-19, and it is important you lead by example in the classroom (UNICEF, 2020). Handwashing is one of easiest, more cost efficient and effective way of combating the spread of germs and keeping students and staff healthy. School authorities should provide hand washing points at the entrance of every classroom while teachers should ensure that students comply. Also, the use of face mask should be used throughout school hour.

Cleaning and Disinfecting Tips for the Classroom

Information on how to maintain the cleanliness and sanitization of the classroom should be taught to the students. Daily cleaning and disinfecting of surfaces and objects that are touched often, such as desks, countertops, doorknobs, computer keyboards, hands-on learning items, taps, phones and toys should be maintained. Furthermore, students should be directed to immediately clean surfaces and objects that are visibly soiled. If surfaces or objects are soiled with body fluids or blood, they should use gloves and other standard precautions to avoid coming into contact with the fluid. They should remove the spill, and then clean and disinfect the surface.

Actions to Be Taken if a Student Appears Sick

Teachers should educate students on the symptoms of COVID-19 and should be asked to report anyone who displays such signs. The most common symptoms are fever, cough, and tiredness. Other symptoms can include shortness of breath, chest pain or pressure, muscle or body aches, headache, loss of taste or smell, confusion, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, diarrhea, nausea and vomiting, abdominal pain, and skin rashes

Crisis in Classroom Management

It is no longer gainsaying that Covid-19 pandemic has crippled many school systems and rendered teaching and learning inaccessible through the conventional face-to-face approach. This new normal status upon which the world found itself today has amplified the adoption and usage of virtual classrooms in many school settings. Panashe (2020) outlined some pressing crisis issues in classroom management that are associated with the adoption of new normal in teaching-learning.

1. Investing in the right technology
2. Teachers feel unsupported
3. The need for parent collaboration
4. A learning environment at home
5. Ensuring internet safety for students
6. Monitoring and maintenance from cloud
7. Dealing with distractions
8. Students struggling with isolation
9. Poor electricity supply

Investing in the Right Technology

With the right technology in place, schools in developed countries were able to switch to virtual classrooms in carrying out assessments and to deliver their instructional contents. During the onset of the virus, only countries like China, Italy, France, Germany and Saudi Arabia were fully providing virtual learning to students, whereas, mobile phones and televisions were used in Vietnam, Mongolia, amongst few others (Kaliope & Tigran, 2020). However, this is not the case in developing countries like Nigeria where little investment was made in this regard. Without the right infrastructure and equipment (ICT gadgets) in place, schools have remained shut for months leading to distortion in the academic calendar which negatively affected students at all levels in the country.

Teachers Feel Unsupported

Technology can be intimidating and at times overwhelming to educators who do not receive training to the point where it may even be rendered ineffective. However, only 5% of teachers in most developing countries were believed to have received training and support on educational technology in their schools (Panesha, 2020). Likewise students in many settings, teachers in Nigerian secondary schools are lacking the requisite ICT skills to engage with students in order to deliver their instructional content. Most teachers do not have access to ICT equipment in their various schools while little effort was made by authorities to train educators on the use of ICT for effective teaching-learning in this sector. Consequently, this has affected teacher's commitment and makes them feel unsupported by the system which has also affects students learning.

Need for Parent Collaboration and Enabling Learning Environment at Home

Learning from home is both resource demanding and time consuming, hence, parents must take a far more hands-on approach with their child's education. A bustling household can be very distracting. They may need to help print materials, ensure children have the tools they need as well as the time and a quiet place to learn. In a nutshell, parents need to provide the enabling environment that will trigger learning to take place at home.

Ensuring Internet Safety for Students

With increasing harmful content on the internet, it is important that parents and educators safeguard the activities of their students on the cloud. Mechanisms should be used to monitor and secure students from accessing sites not meant for the purpose of teaching-learning. Information Technology (IT) administrators should look for a quick, easy, and effective way to ensure students are unable to access inappropriate or harmful content online. It is also important to secure devices from online threats.

Monitoring and Maintenance from Cloud

After investing a large amount in mobile devices, IT administrators will greatly benefit from remotely managing and maintaining devices. It can be quite a process to manually maintain devices and ensure they are kept up-to-date, lesson-ready. Inevitably, teachers will encounter problematic devices during classes, and require the assistance of IT. The ability to

remotely assist a teacher is hugely important.

Dealing with Distractions

Computers and the internet are known to be good distracters of task at hand. This becomes more difficult when they are used for virtual learning as the teacher who also serves as tutor is from another ends. Students can easily engage in other tasks such as online or video games while teaching-learning is taking place. In such case, a classroom management tool will be helpful to serve as an extra pair of eyes for the teacher to monitor his/her students during the lesson.

Students Struggling with Isolation

Children need social interaction with their peers and virtual learning means that many may feel isolated at home and cut off from their friends. An innovative New Zealand school has set up virtual meeting rooms during traditional breaktimes where students can join the call and chat to one another whilst eating lunch together. Small gestures like this can go a long way in helping students feel at ease, and not alone during these trying times. Panashe (2020) opines that "if adults are struggling with the effects of social distancing, lockdown and isolation, it comes as no surprise that students have been impacted by sudden shift to online-only learning".

Poor Electricity Supply

Poor electricity supply in developing countries like Nigeria has hindered the effective running of virtual learning during the pandemic. According to research by TEP centre (2020), most students were adopting learning through television programs as an alternative to online platforms which could substantially mitigate the issues around internet access and the costs of learning online. However, at the times when the learning programmes are being aired power cuts become a major obstacle to their learning, whereas, majority of the students in rural communities are still leaving in darkness.

Classroom Crisis Management Techniques

According to Romina (2021), classroom management technique refers to tactics adopted by teachers to ensure decorum in the classroom and thus create a healthy and conducive atmosphere for learning. Unfortunately, most countries were caught unprepared by the Covid-19 pandemic as it has affected nearly every sector of the society bringing most activities to a halt. However, these challenges posed by the pandemic have helped in identifying areas of weaknesses in classroom management that requires improvement from both the public and private institutions. Thus, some stakeholders in Nigeria have tapped into these opportunities and come up with techniques to manage the new normal.

1. Blended learning
2. Creating an Enabling Learning Environment at Home
3. Learn how to resolve technical issues quickly

Blended learning

Teachers should employ the use of different methods in teaching their classrooms. Schools should also create distance learning

platforms where students can remain in touch with their teachers even during long vocations. This will go a long way to enhance learning and mastery of the subject content been taught in the classroom.

Creating an Enabling Learning Environment at Home

Teachers should choose a convenient time and ask their students to stay in a quiet place that is away from all forms of distractions that may interfere during the teaching-learning process. Anna (2020) added that If they get distracted by social media or browsing the internet, they should use tools to block out this and other time-wasters when they need to focus on virtual classrooms. Also, creating a to-do list for the week or each day with what they need to get done can help them determine the best times of day to tackle each task. Teachers should assist them accomplish to master this skill.

Learn how to resolve technical issues quickly

Teachers should attend to students who experience technical issues during virtual classrooms. Unnecessary delay is not advised as this may result in the student missing out some important aspects of the lesson. Furthermore, teachers should also teach and guide students how to resolve technical issues within themselves and only call their attention when the problem persist.

Suggestions

Based on the highlighted challenges of crisis management in Nigerian secondary school classrooms, the following suggestions are made:

1. Government at all levels and the private owners of secondary schools in the country should provide ICT gadgets to their schools for use by all students and teachers.
2. Teachers and stakeholders in all secondary schools should be trained and retrained on the usage of ICT in teaching and learning.
3. Blended teaching-learning approach should be used in secondary schools in the country so as to improve teachers' skills on the use of ICT and obtain efficiency in delivering instructional content.
4. The government should partner with the private sector to provide solar powered ICT laboratories that can be used to teach ICT skills to both staff and students in secondary schools.
5. Teaching-learning facilitated through TV, radio, online resources and other mediums provided during COVID-19 should be sustained and improved upon.

Conclusion

In light of the fact that the world has adopted the new normal posed by COVID-19, this paper has identified some classroom management crisis in secondary schools in Nigeria that posed challenge to the effective adoption of remote learning in the country. Some of these challenges are lack of investment in the right technology, lack of teachers training in the use of ICT, difficulty in monitoring and maintenance from cloud, obtaining a conducive learning environment from home, internet safety and problem of distraction, isolation and inadequate power supply among others.

This paper also identified different techniques that can enhance the effective management of classrooms in Nigerian secondary schools during COVID-19 era and beyond. Among these strategies includes blended learning approach, creating enabling learning environment at homes, and master the techniques of resolving technical issues where the need arises.

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