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Paper presented at Caleb International Conference Committee (C I C C) October 26th -27th, 2021Post Pandemic and Tertiary Education in Southwest, Nigeria

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Abstract:- Education is the process of transmitting, enlightening, imparting, and acquiring systematic instruction/knowledge on a profession/topic. United Nations Goal 4 of the Sustainable Development Goal (SDGs) talks about "Inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all". Learning could be formal, informal and non-formal. Higher institution system of education is formal with majority done through physical traditional style. The sudden advent of COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 distorted academic calendar all over the world and over a year down the line, most institutions in Nigeria especially government-owned are still struggling to maintain balance. The need to switch from traditional style of learning to virtual or combination of both as the need arises brought about different challenges and the pace of migration differs. Most private institutions were recorded to have migrated almost immediately thus exhibiting levels of ICT readiness. This research investigated into 15 selected institutions in the Southwest, Nigeria comprising of 10 public and 5 private institutions with a view to determine the pace of migration and effectiveness of the new style. Mixed methods of qualitative (interviews) and quantitative (questionnaires) were adopted to extract, verify and analyze the data generated from the study. Findings revealed 65% of students were of the opinion that virtual classes was mildly effective as knowledge were not well communicated while 19% believed that it was effective with only 15% disagreeing totally. However, given the revolution that have occurred in the educational sector, institutions and government need to arise and chart the new path forward to remove the country from the primitive system and place into a global classroom in which information is available and accessible to all from anywhere.

Keywords:- *Education, Institutions, Learning, New-normal, Virtual.*

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the study

In March 2020, the World Health Organization declared SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) corona virus outbreak as a worldwide pandemic bringing uncertainty to all aspects of human life. The environment created by the advent of the pandemic had broken the boundaries of the classroom alongside the challenge of how to adapt to a system of education different from that built around physical school. UNESCO (2020) recorded that at the peak of COVID-19 pandemic, more than 188 countries, encompassing around 91% of enrolled learners worldwide, closed their schools while trying to contain the spread of the virus. Arundhati (2020)opined that pandemics have a historical reputation for teaching us to break with the past and reimagine our 'world anew. This in-turn introduces a new-normal to every facet of human's existence. Soo Hoo (2020) in her write-up titled "When Things Change, What stays the same?" nothing. This understanding is the driver behind the need to restructure every aspect of human lives especially education to be able to fit in as nothing is constant in life except change.

The unplanned swift in the world system due to the advent of the pandemic in 2019/2020 has given a clue of how unrealistic all plans and policies could be if room for the unexpected is not factored in. Since March 2020, the education sector had been forced to teach online as students are required to take classes from different locations instead of their classrooms (Fórmula, 2020). A new normal in the educational sector has stirred up the need for restructuring of the curriculum to accommodate virtual classes. Many government institutions are gradually losing new students while others are gaining as a result of the gap created in their calendar due to the pandemic. This is the litmus test to differentiate those that are able to adjust fast to the only constant "C", change. It is however clear that all policies and styles as regards education and learning have to be looked into for the sector to catch up with the global trend.

II. FORMAL LEARNING REVOLUTION

The transition to different online platforms like Microsoft team, Google Workspace, Zoom, Skype, Blackboard collaborate, Ayotree, ProProfs, Edulastic, Osmo among others didn't come seamless to both students and instructors due to the sudden needed transition. The need to learn the usage of these platforms was at different degrees of challenges to some instructors as transmission and imparting of knowledge was more tedious in some courses than others. Fawns, Aitken and Jones (2019) expressed that learning that was designed to be experienced face to face takes time, skills and academic experience to translate to platforms where a teacher is not physically present before it will be understood by students. Mukherjee (2020) related it to students in programs such as arts and architecture, journalism and communications which generally work in studios and labs.

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Consideration on how to deliver a practical, studio-focused learning experience through digital platforms with minimal or no access to materials or workshops for the production of any further art works posed several challenge to the instructors. Experimental courses like chemistry related became a nightmare as students are likely not able to set up laboratory within the confined of their home to discover new products. Jandrić, et al (2020) went further by asking different questions like how does one reconsider a degree show, an art public experience in digital and virtual space away from the gallery? Wanting to know how it will look like, smell like, and feel like? He concluded that if not well transmitted, will just end up being a PDF or will be something more.

Adnan, et al (2020)raised challenges from the instructor's angle on changing policies including lesson content, percentage of synchronous interaction, intensity of teaching, homework load, preferred communication channels and tracing student procedure among others. All of which poses challenge to the instructor as a new style of effective delivery has to be mastered. Jandrić, et al (2020) argued that the abrupt transition from on-campus teaching to online teaching resembles an extreme educational breaching experiment. He further reiterated on the disruption of these rhythms and the struggle over academic temporalities taking place. Expressing that, this has led to different challenges being faced by students ranging from response time, absence of traditional classroom socialization and lack of face-to-face interaction with the instructor.

Mallya(2020)looked at the hallmarks of education from basic to tertiary and opined that the critical engagement with students brings great joy to teacher. He expressed the need to encourage them to read literature beyond the textbook and allow expressing of their understanding from different viewpoints. Howbeit, all these were totally erased from the virtual classroom. Philip (2020)opined that logistical and technological issue aside, it can be strenuous to communicate with so many students when you cannot see them and gauge their reactions. He believed the opportunity for joint debates and discussions is reduced and also difficult to engage in critical in-depth thinking. He opined that the principal factors of successful learning are student motivation, self-efficacy, attention, and engagement. With online learning, all these aspects are at risk.

III. TECHNOLOGY AND LEARNING

Technology costs money both on the institution and the student part.For a university to implement learning technology on a massive scale will take the council to provide the needed resources for the platform and keep it running. After provision of the platform, students are required to connect for learning to be transmitted. However, this is difficult for students who cannot afford personal computer and have always relied on systems within their school and library. This is common in public institutions as most students are barely surviving. However, not all students have the same access to information and communication technologies (ICTs), which also varies greatly across countries (OECD, 2020).

While the most vulnerable students might not have access to digital learning resources, some governments and civil society organizations are expected to provide them with computers or tablets as well as internet access, or organize teaching through television, phones or radio. This was practiced in Lagos State, Nigeria through the Ministry of Education for their basic and secondary school students to continue academic curriculum during the lockdown on both radio and television. Although, was not available to higher institutions of learning owned by the State government because of their unique nature.

IV. ICT AND INSTITUTIONAL READINESS

Leaders of nations are committed to achieving "inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all", which is Goal 4 of the Sustainable Development Goal [Beeston, 2017], as advances in technology in recent years have changed the learning behaviors and reshaped teaching methods [Kinshuk et. al, 2016].Though, technology has advanced, so many institutions are yet to catch up with it. Jones et al. [2009]maintained that some academic staff is not up-to-date in the use of technology with learning and teaching. For most teachers and researchers is has been challenging to 'reinvent' their practices within new digital tools and formats[Ulla Konnerup, 2020].

Karsenti et al. [2012]upheld that ICTs have enhanced positive changes like broadening access to higher education at a time when a great number of Higher Learning Institutions in Africa are still struggling under the burden of congested classrooms and laboratories. Karsenti et al. [2012] and Tino [2002] noticed that the computers and the internet utilizations are not yet at their fullest in the Third World Nations, if these technologies are used at all, due to inadequate infrastructure alongside related costs. Irrespective of what is happening, most institutions are yet to make any provision either in short or long term basis on how to migrate to a better tech environment as they are satisfied and refused to be enticed with the possibilities that can emerge alongside. A carefree altitude of the education sector and slow style of operation had placed so many students as recipient backwards as the sudden hit of the pandemic automatically lengthen their program.

Learning has gone beyond physical appearance in the classroom and requires every institution to embrace this fact. Apart from the pandemic that stirs up the need for virtual teaching, the style is long overdue for implementation as many advanced country has gone far with it. Mohamed Ally and Avgoustos Tsinakos [2014] addressed the issue of existing policies as a barrier to improving education in most environments, as they are primarily geared towards old educational paradigms. The mobile platform has taken access to resources at the time of need to a new level, and has enabled new environments where learning can be accomplished and where learning experiences can be injected.

V. METHODOLOGY

The research adopted mixed methods of qualitative (interviews) and quantitative (questionnaires) approach as questionnaire was sent to both students and staff online. 15 higher institutions comprising of 5 private and 10 public were selected randomly within southwest, Nigeria and interview conducted physically alongside. 107 responses of which 88.8% were from public institutions and 11.2% private were analyzed. 65.1% of the respondent was undergraduates at different levels, 21.7% postgraduate students and 13.2% were academic staff of the various institutions

A. Data presentation and analysis

The data were presented using charts and graphs for clarification and better interpretation.

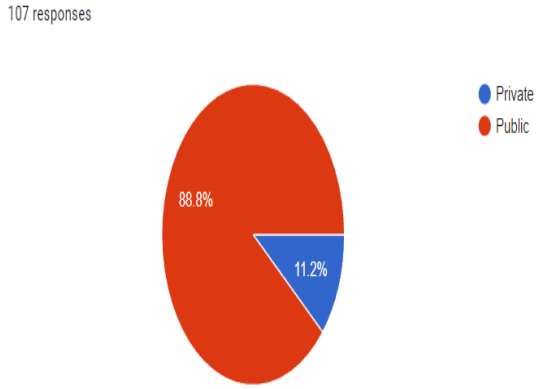

Fig. 1: - Respondents and Institutions (Author's field survey, 2021)

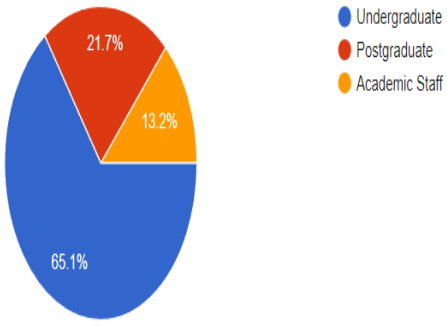

Fig. 2 : Level of Respondents (Author's field survey, 2021)

The timing of migration of different institutions were captured below indicating private institutions in different states in Southwest, Nigeria migrating almost immediately which is less than one quarter of the total institutions under survey.

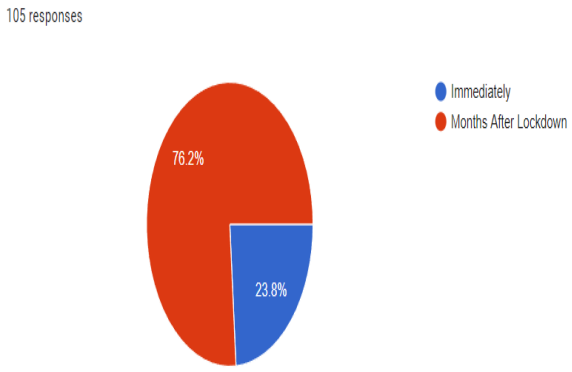

Fig. 3 : Pace of Migration (Author's field survey, 2021)

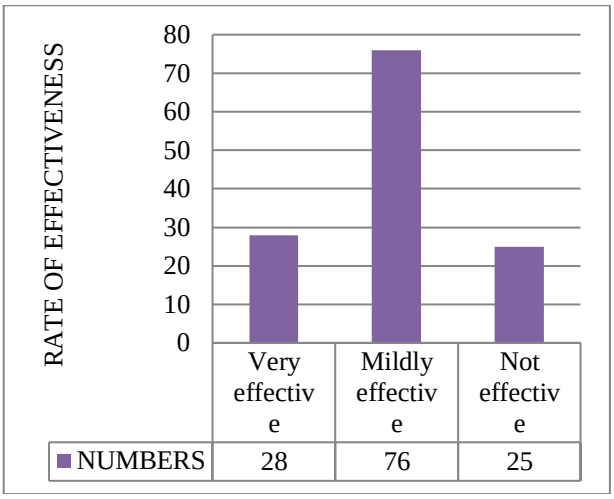

Fig. 4: Rate of effectiveness (Author's field survey, 2021)

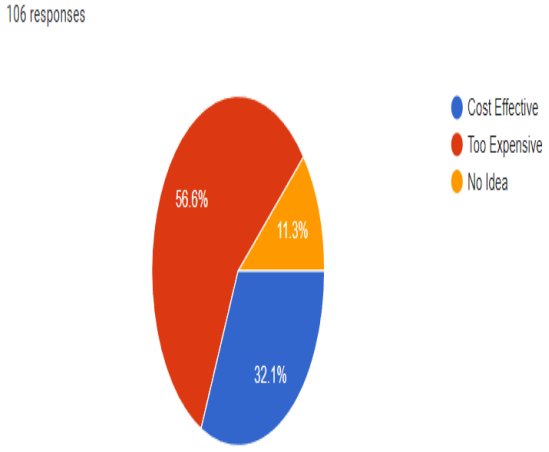

Fig. 5: Cost of Migration (Author's field survey, 2021)

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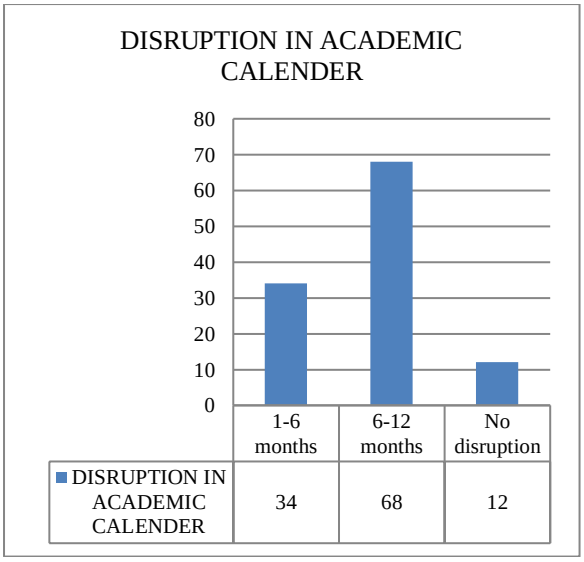

Fig. 6: Duration in Academic Calendar Disruption (Author's field survey, 2021)

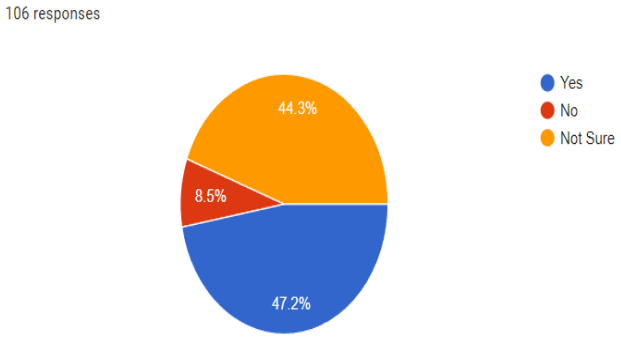

Fig. 7 : Will the world return fully to physical classroom soon? (Author's field survey, 2021)

VI. FINDINGS

The assessment of respondents to the effectiveness of the virtual classroom both in terms of impartation of knowledge to the students and cost wise revealed the fact that more work is needed for the country to be able to get it right in restructuring education. Contrary to the initial conceived believe that cost was the main determinant to the delay experienced by public institutions in migrating to the virtual classroom, other factors contributed to the pace of migration to virtual classroom. Policy formulation was ranked as one of them considering the bureaucracy involved before approval was given. It was also discovered that many of the public institution are lacking behind and are not even confident the program can be sustained. Most respondents believed that the country has come to live with virtual system of learning and this has dropped great fear into them as they are not convinced the country's academic system is ripe enough to sustain it.

VII. RECOMMENDATION AND CONCLUSION

Change in evitable and the academic system has to integrate the curriculum to capture this. Virtual system of learning has both good and bad part but the realization that it has come to stay demands an urgent restructuring to reflect the new normal in the world. However, resources have to be allocated at different levels to make things to work. Access to education by a higher percentage which in turn increases the number of graduate will be an advantage if the platform for acquiring certificate without physically-present is made available in most institutions of learning within the country. There will be improvement in delivery as practice makes perfection which in turn will increase the effectively of teaching. The Nation must chart the new path forward to remove the country from the primitive system and place it on a global classroom in which information is available and accessible to all from anywhere.

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