

LEARNING ENVIRONMENT AND THE ROLE PERFORMANCE OF SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS IN THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC ERA IN LAGOS STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the effect of learning environment on the role performance of secondary school teachers in the COVID-19 pandemics era in Lagos state, Nigeria. The study adopted survey, historical, ex-post facto and correlation research design involving 1800 students and 600 teachers chosen through purposive, stratified and disproportionate sampling techniques from 60 private and public senior secondary schools in the six education district of Lagos state. Two questionnaires tagged Teachers' Technology Usage Questionnaire (TTUQ) and Students' Covid-19 Pandemic Education Assessment Questionnaire (SCPEAQ) were used to gather data from the respondents . Data collected were analysed using independent T-test and Pearson's Product- Moment Correlation Analyses. The result showed that there is a weak, positive and non-significant relationship between learning environment and role performance in the COVID-19 pandemic era in Lagos state, Nigeria ($r = 0.023$, $p = 0.455 > 0.05$). The study therefore recommended that government should massively train and retrain Nigerian teachers on the use of remote technology with special focus on teaching subjects at all educational levels, provision of range of remote learning technology tools and internet at lowcost to Nigerian teachers, schools and students.

Key words: Learning Environment, Technology usage, COVID-19 pandemic era, Educational technology tools

Introduction

A "learning environment" is any place where one is trying to take in new information, connect concepts, apply information, complete an assignment, or practise a new skill. That is, a learning environment is any environment in which one is trying to learn. The physical classroom, the virtual classroom (if taking an online or blended course), the space where one does one's homework and other academic "time-on-task" are all learning environments. A learning environment is more than just a classroom, it is a space in which students feel safe and supported in their pursuit of knowledge, as well as inspired by their surroundings (Murgatrottd, 2020).

As students continue to grow and evolve as learners, so, too, do the environments in which they learn. Learning environments have changed over time and can continue to expand to meet student and educational needs, allowing teachers to continually optimize their learning environment to help students meet their educational goals (Adedamola, 2022).

The pandemic affected educational systems worldwide and caused universities and schools to close down (Sylvain, 2021). With the closing of schools, policymakers had to make innovations,prepared learning and staff resources, set systems and infrastructure, established new teaching protocols, and adjusted their curricula. However, the transition was smooth for some schools but rough for others, particularly those from developing countries with limited infrastructure (Pham & Nguyen, 2020; Simbulan, 2020).

Inevitably, the learning environment during the COVID-19 pandemic became the homes of students and teachers through the use of technological gadgets, software and applications. The schools and other learning spaces were forced to migrate to full online learning as the world continues the battle to control the vicious spread of the virus. However, the migration to a new learning space faced several major concerns relating to policy, pedagogy, logistics, socioeconomic factors, technology, and psychosocial factors (sylvain, 2021).

Teachers, who were used to conventional teaching delivery, were also obliged to embrace technology despite their lack of or inadequate technological literacy. To address this problem, online learning webinars and peer support systems were launched. On the part of the students, dropout rates increased due to economic, psychological, and academic reasons. Academically, although it is virtually possible for students to learn anything online, learning may perhaps be less than optimal, especially in courses that require face-to-face contact and direct interactions (Franchi, 2020).

Tang, Abuhmaid, Olaimat, Qudat, Aldhaeebi, and Bamanger, (2020) revealed that students were dissatisfied with online learning in general, particularly in the aspect of communication and question-and-answer modes. Suryaman, Cahyono, Muliansyah, Bustani, Suyarani, Fahlevi and Munthe, (2020) looked into how learning occurred at home during the pandemic. Their findings showed that students faced many obstacles in a home learning environment, such as lack of mastery of technology, high Internet cost, poor internet service, unfavourable home learning environment, lack of access to laboratories, lack of field work and limited interaction/socialization between and among students. Singh (2020), indicated that students appreciated the use of online learning during the pandemic, however, half of them believed that the traditional classroom setting was more effective than the online learning platform. The changes of the learning environment from physical face to face classroom to digital online space brought about technology use at an untested and unprecedented scale in the world's history; which in turn presented numerous challenges, uncertainties, and worries, favourable and unfavourable to all stakeholders of education even for the developed countries. Teachers had to adapt to a new form of lesson delivery, play more the role of a facilitator than the primary informant, encourage student self-learning and up skill their technology use and knowledge to meet the pandemic remote learning situation at hand. It is to this end that this research work hopes to find out learning environment contribute to the role performance of senior secondary school teachers in the COVID-19 pandemic era in Lagos state, Nigeria.

Research question

Does a relationship exist between learning environment and the role performance of senior secondary teachers during the COVID-19 pandemic era in Lagos State, Nigeria.

Research Hypothesis

Ho: There is no significant relationship between learning environment and the role performance of senior secondary teachers during the COVID-19 pandemic era in Lagos State, Nigeria

Role Performance of Teachers in Education

Education is a vital instrument for the development of any given society. It is the process of developing sound moral character for the benefit of the society. Gabriel (2013) defines education as the process by which society through schools, colleges, and other educational institutions deliberately transmit knowledge, values and skills from one person to another.

Teachers are responsible for the role of educating students, society and country at large. The general role of teachers in education is to help students learn by imparting knowledge to them and by setting up situations in which students can and will learn effectively (TRCN, 2013).

Teachers have to perform a complex set of others roles which vary from one educational level to another and from country to country in order to achieve educational goals and objectives.

Teachers are regarded as the most influential factor in education innovation (Fishman & Davis, 2016). Teachers are nation builders. Teachers are one of the most important elements of the social structure; school (Erden, 2017). Teachers are the sacred heroes of school management, the real possessors of the product of education and the key to the academic success of students (Oktay&Unutkan, 2018). The success of any nation cannot be considered beyond the success of its educational system and teachers.

Role teachers perform in education has many dimensions as follow;

- I. Mediator of learning/ the lecturer: Facts, concepts and principles are the most important that teachers must teach students. The traditional responsibility of the teacher is to pass

on to students the information, knowledge and ensure understanding of topics at different stages of their studies.

- II. Disciplinarian of student behaviours
- III. Parent substitute: Teachers act as the parents to students all through the period the student is in their care.
- IV. Confidant to students: Teachers are mentors and confidant of students.
- V. Judge of achievement:
- VI. Organizer of curriculum; Teachers organize the curriculum in such a manner that elucidate all-round development of students, giving firm foundations for physical, social, mental, intellectual and moral development.
- VII. Nation developer: Teachers are the custodian of the future (Tinuade, 2017). No nation success can surpass the quality of their teachers. Teachers remove the darkness of ignorance and light with wisdom. Teachers build leadership traits, sense of dignity in students
- VIII. Labour and patriotism within students who become leaders in the nation. Teachers develop human resource for the nation.
- IX. The role model: what a teachersays, does or demonstrates in class servers as a model for students to follow and learn from.
- X. The learning facilitator: teachers are required to help students make judgments about the quality and validity of new sources of knowledge, be open-minded and critical independent professionals, be active cooperators, collaborators and mediators between learners and what they need to know while providing scaffolding understanding. Teachers guide students to learn new things based on what they already know and facilitate the learning processes for students (Tinuade, 2017).

Teachers directly influence the learning process, learners' quality, and competitive output patterns. The quality of the education workforce determines the quality of learners. Teachers with competence certifications should teach appropriate subjects for their qualifications to perform successfully. However, some teachers might continue to teach inconsistent with their competence credentials. This can lead to poor learning quality if teachers do not effectively prepare, implement, and evaluate their lessons, this demonstrates the teachers' poor performance.

This study was, therefore carried out to examine the relationship between learning environments and the role performance of senior secondary school teachers during the COVID-19 pandemic era in Lagos State , Nigeria.

Research method

This study adopted correlational research design. The study is also of an ex- post facto design since the data already existed and could not be manipulated. The population of this study consisted of all students and teachers in the 322 public and 1501 approved private senior secondary schools in the Lagos state, Nigeria. A total of 2400 participants consisted of 1800 students and 600 teachers chosen from 60schools participated in this study. Five public senior secondary school and five private secondary school were chosen through purposive, stratified and disproportionate sampling techniques in each of the six education districts of Lagos state; making a total of 60schools. The sampling technique is disproportionate because the ratio of the sample schools is not proportionate to the number of public and private senior secondary schools in Lagos state.

Two questionnaires adapted from Form plus online research technology questionnaires for teachers and students during the COVID-19 pandemic era were used in this study. The first questionnaire is tagged Teachers' Technology Usage Questionnaire (TTUQ) and the second, Students' COVID-19 Pandemic Education Assessment Questionnaire (SCPEAQ). The TTUQ questionnaire contains a mixture of structured and unstructured items eliciting information from teachers on technology usage and their role performance during the COVID-19 pandemic era in Lagos, Nigeria while the SCPEAQ questionnaire was further subdivided into two sections namely; personal data item and role performance of teachers evaluation items respectively which was responded to by the students. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive the Pearson Product Movement Correlation statistic was used to answer the research question and test the

hypotheses formulated. Computer analysis was applied using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), version 22.

Presentation of result

Research Question one what is the relationship between learning environment and the role performance of senior secondary teachers during the COVID-19 pandemic era in Lagos State, Nigeria.

Research Hypothesis1 :There is no significant relationship between learning environment and the role performance of senior secondary teachers during the COVID-19 pandemic era in Lagos State, Nigeria

Table 2: Relationship between learning environment and the role performance of senior secondary school teachers during the COVID-19 pandemic era in Lagos state, Nigeria.

Variables	N	Mean	SD	r	Sig	Remark
Role Performance	1800	1.9694	0.54719	0.023	0.455	Not Significant
Learning Envrioment	1800	2.1774	0.60412			

The Pearson Correlation statistic was used. The data collected on role performance and on the learning environment in the COVID-19 pandemic era in Lagos state, Nigeria were subjected to the analysis. The results were presented in Table 2, which showed that there is a weak, positive and non-significant relationship between role performance and learning environment in the COVID-19 pandemic era in Lagos state, Nigeria ($r = 0.023$, $p = 0.455 > 0.05$). This implies that role performance has no significant relationship with learning environment during COVID-19 in Nigeria. Therefore, the hypothesis which stated that there is no significant learning environment and the role performance of senior secondary teachers during the COVID-19 pandemic era in Lagos State, Nigeria, was not rejected.

Discussion of Findings

The research examined if there is any significant relationship between learning environment and the role performance of senior secondary teachers during the COVID-19 pandemic era in Lagos State, Nigeria. The results as presented in Table 2 showed that there is a weak, positive and non-significant relationship between role performance and learning environment in the COVID-19 pandemic era in Lagos state, Nigeria ($r = 0.023$, $p = 0.455 > 0.05$). This was also the view of Watermeyer, Crick, Knight, and Goodall, (2020) who analysed the process of online teaching transition during the pandemic from the perspective of academics working in UK universities. The analysis of the survey carried out shows that most of the academics did not feel prepared to deliver online teaching. However, most of them had confident in their abilities to facilitate online learning. . This research was also in line with finding of Andrew *et al.* (2020) on a complete analysis of children's learning experiences at home in England during the lockdown. The study found that children from low-income backgrounds spent significantly fewer hours learning than their peers from more affluent households do to access learning environment. Beyond the hours dedicated to learning, there were also significant differences in the learning activities carried out during the lockdown. In this regard, socially advantaged students had higher access to individualized activities such as private tutoring and chat with their teachers than their peers from disadvantaged backgrounds. Suryaman et al. (2020) looked into how learning occurred at home during the pandemic. Their findings showed that students faced many obstacles in a home learning environment, such as lack of mastery of technology, high Internet cost, poor internet service, unfavourable home learning environment, lack of access to laboratories, lack of field work and limited interaction/socialization between and among students.

Conclusion

This study gathered information regarding learning environment and the role performance of secondary school teachers in the COVID-19 pandemic era in Lagos State, Nigeria. Although the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted student education in Nigeria, similar to many other countries, the government was able to respond in a way that reduced the decreased learning among Nigerian students by changing the learning environment into a virtual one. Many of the teachers agreed that they used technology for teaching during the COVID-19

pandemic, and this made learning accessible to students and thus teachers were able to perform their role. Ojo & Onwuegbuzie (2020) revealed that some universities' decision to open their schools for online learning in April 2020 created mixed reactions among their students. Most of the students and teachers complained about several inconveniences they encountered by studying from home. The study revealed issues such as noise and disturbances from the home environment, limited Internet connection, lack of consistent electricity and inadequate educational technology tools as challenges faced during the pandemic. If government could provide adequate educational technology tools and support resources or made them easily accessible in terms of low cost and other differentials it will aid virtual teaching and learning.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendation are made;

1. In order to build back stronger education systems, government will need to apply those teaching initiatives that have proved to be effective during the remote learning phase and integrate them into the regular education system. It is critical to empower teachers, investing in the necessary skills development and capacity building to exploit the full student learning environment and role performance by teachers during a pandemic or any of such or crisis.
2. Massive training and retraining of Nigerian teachers on the use of remote technologies with a special focus on teaching practically oriented subjects at all educational levels is not an option but a necessity in this new normal. It is therefore imperative that the government creates holistic policy initiatives that identify ways to ensure continuous learning and provide necessary support for both students and teachers during times of crises.
3. The government should establish provisions for teachers to use a range of learning technologies or remote learning tools while generating evidence on which it is more appropriate and suitable in particular contexts such as the nature of the subject or topic and the age range of learners.
4. Technology interventions should enhance teacher engagement with students, through improved access to content, data and networks, helping teachers to better support student learning, where effective use of technology is one of the key principles to ensure cadres of effective teachers.

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