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## Online Teaching and Learning in Nigeria during Covid-19: Musical Evaluation in Consideration

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### **Abstract:**

*The world, in general, has been affected greatly due to the outbreak of Covid-19 in the Wuhan of China in December 2019. Ever since the outbreak, every sector has accepted a new way and approach to the whole situation; otherwise known as 'A New Normal'. A new normal in the sense that most situations are now making use of a new approach known as 'ONLINE' to executive businesses, communication, worship, transactions, conferences, workshop to mention but few, as against the initial approaches which are normally is in-person (physically). Education in Nigeria and the whole world in general also had their share in the era of 'a new normal' towards teaching and learning, bringing both Music lecturers and students to believe and work towards the new normal for effective teaching and learning. Online teaching as the only solution for continuing education during the pandemic and even after, remains the best option but leaving most countries, particularly in Africa unprepared for its effectiveness. Thereby raising both positive and negative beliefs for both the lecturers and students in Nigeria's educational system. This paper, therefore, examines what a 'New Normal' is, the positive beliefs on the 'new normal – Online teaching in Nigeria, the present state of online teaching in Nigeria, and the influence of covid19 among the Nigeria Music Students.*

**Keywords:** New normal, pandemic – covid-19, musical evaluation and, influence of Covid19

### **1. Introduction**

One major thing that bothers the whole globe presently is how to come out of the pandemic and in another way round to live with it. Some developed countries have been able to produce some Vaccines, believing that it would cure the spread of the pandemic to allow human physical relationships again. Unarguable, Covid 19 has dealt with the whole world negatively, causing damages in the various sector ranging from economic, political, agriculture, transportation, health, education, etc. In the education sector, the damages were so severe that all levels of education were shut down; from nurseries, primary, secondary, colleges, polytechnics, and universities. The highly contagious disease was first reported in Wuhan China in December 2019, from where it began its spread to other nations. According to Mahona & Mkulu, 2020, noted that by the end of March 2020, at least 769 confirmed cases of coronavirus in 37 countries across Africa were recorded. At this point, Nigeria and most countries began to shut their borders in an effort to curtail the spread of the virus, among which are France, Germany, China, South Africa, Ghana, the USA, UK, to mention but a few.

In Nigeria and like various countries, at the announcement of borders and various levels of schools, most students were sent home and various Institutions of learning had to devise other ways of learning, particularly through an online facility.

While most countries push their academic activities online, most African countries were unable to implement this medium effectively due to the poor or inadequacy of the various institution's ICT. The transition of a physical classroom to the incorporation of ICT in online educator gave rise to a myriad of challenges and issues affecting both the teachers/lecturers and the students. Schools were not adequately prepared with all the necessary infrastructure, skills, and resources for online learning and as well the students were incapacitated with necessary gadgets and internet access which most of them could not afford.

Until now, the pandemic has not been totally defeated, so, most countries still live with it. Therefore, bringing the whole world to the idea of living in a 'NEW NORMAL', a situation whereby everyone lives in another normalcy.

### **2. Pandemic – COVID 19: The Channel to a New Normal**

In coping with the challenges currently facing the world, economically, politically, technologically and even musically, each individual needed to face and adapt to a new normal. In the current situation, the pandemic has made it a necessity for every sector to consider the new normal to enable humanity and the continuation of life. In curtailing the spread of covid19, most developed countries have agreed to issue a 'Health pass' to all her citizen before having access in

and out of the countries and as well, in gathering / crowded places like cinema, bars, clubhouses, etc. Among the countries are; France, the United Kingdom, Italy, Spain, etc.

In the educational sector, new learning has become 'a new normal' approach towards learning and research. In the heat of the virus, in the year 2020, many institutions in Nigeria and abroad suspended academic programmes to enable them to plan and strategize on how best to approach the situation that is ravaging the whole world, which the education sector is also suffering from. In making sure the system is going despite the pandemic, most institutions quickly moved all their activities online; both administrative and academic. Most practical courses were taken in an alternative way and most time the teacher observed the students only as he or she performs the practical. The practice is what most institutions all over the world adopted including Nigeria.

In the year 2021, after most countries have just survived third waves of lock-down and doing all things possible to avoid any other forms of lock down that could hinder the educational system, therefore, chose not to let loose or go of taking as many activities concurrently online with the in-person activities.

### 3. New Normal in Nigeria: The Challenges

Nigeria like every other country is battling with Covid-19 and its variants at the moment, whereby caused various challenges in almost every sector, among which are education, economic, political, and even religious sectors.

Political: there were various levels of instructions to Nigerian people on a new strategy towards their administrative work.

Most lower grade levels were asked to work from home, while those senior admin cadres were encouraged to come to work every day or when necessary. This development brought about low productivity in almost every sector as everyone tries to cope with the new development. It was also noted that most of the activities in government sectors, including the presidential villa, are encouraged to be carried out online. During this time, some political actors in Nigeria were noted to be tested positive of covid 19, among which are; Governor Nasir El-Rufai of Kaduna State, Governor Bala Mohammed of Bauchi State, Governor Rotimi Akeredolu of Ondo State, Governor Seyi Makinde of Oyo State, and Governor David Umahi of Ebonyi State among others Maikomo, J. M, Tagema, T. S., & Obun-Andy, M. K (2021).

Economically, all attention moved to online business and transactions. Before the outbreak of the pandemic, the government have already been making effort on the cashless policy which was more adapted during the pandemic as many transactions were done online. Activities such as hotel reservation, train ticket buying, flight tickets, etc are booked online, which most Nigerians are not exposed to. During this period, most advertisements were done via Facebook, and WhatsApp and WhatsApp users increased tremendously in this period.

The education sector faces various degrees of challenges and it was noted that virtual interactions were immediately embraced as an alternative during the hit of the pandemic. Some teachers and instructors who are not ICT-oriented were quickly asked to go for training on others to fit in the new normal. This and, any more were challenging to many. Also, most students could not follow classes organized online effectively due to various reasons such as; internet data, computer or android phones, laptops, iPad, etc. needed for effective connection. Also, ASUU – Academic Staff union of the Universities went on strike this period and one of the reasons for embarking on the strike was the revitalization of Nigerian universities, which some funds were to be released for effective infrastructural development which would be needed in the hit of the pandemic and even afterward.

In the religious sector, most State governments discourage crowded activities inside the Church or Mosque. At this period, most religious activities were having to be sectionalized to accommodate social distancing and all other safety protocols. Some churches at this time in Nigeria have their Sunday services grouped into four to five sections which run systematically one after the other.

### 4. The Influence of Covid-19 Pandemic on Nigeria Music Students

The covid-19 pandemic has become a long-lasting threat to the growth and development of the world, the reason for the adoption of a new normal to carry on in every area of specialization including African music. In Nigeria, this threat, which forecasted a severe economic decadence, has not only extended its roots to the political and social sectors but also to the media and entertainment sector for which music is the focus here.

According to Areba (2020), says 'In Sub-Saharan Africa online learning lags behind due to poverty, poor communication infrastructure and a high cost of internet for end users. The majority of the less privileged citizens cannot afford online learning as compared to their counterparts from rich families' The pandemic left no stone unturned in respect to the academic sector and without a sign of sympathy, placed an indefinite 'pause', with occasionally 'plays' on all academic activities. Its effect on the academic sector was so excruciating that Nigerian students took to the streets and violence at the slightest provocation that was evident in the End-SARS protest in the country. With the undoubted effect of the pandemic on Nigerian music students.

The covid-19 pandemic has affected music students in ways inimical to the future of African music education and vice versa.

Negatively, it caused a pause in Education-the hope of moving forward with respect to time, the exposure to knowledge relevant for skill acquisition and development, the awareness of the necessities in rehearsals, and more especially, the love for music as an academic activity. This pause helped in driving home the notion that 'Music as a course doesn't pay'. It became a premise so gripping that some decided to drop the pen and go for the cash. Survival became the course content to personal decisions.

With no pinch of doubt, survival became the most wanted asset by music students. Due to the effects of the pandemic economically, students had to search for other ways to make ends meet, thereby adjourning studies. Some even

became less proficient in their musical proficiency. Owing to lockdown measures, which disfavoured large gatherings or socially entertaining gatherings that favoured music students financially, the battle for survival became more convincing of defeat than hope for victory. The state of things greatly caused a preference for financial stability to some alphabets typed into a sheet of paper and named 'textbook' or 'note' as the case may be.

Even with the lifting of the lockdown measures, music students still found it hard to return to school due to inflation in the cost of food items, rent, and transportation; not to mention raised tuition fees and other educational fees, which had no mercy but steered angrily at them, causing some students to contemplate dropping out of school for any means of survival, on the quite convincing proposition that even some graduates have nothing to show for their first-class honours. Moreso, the lengthy period of the lockdown to an extent, locked down the desire for education in some music students who on resumption, found it difficult to harmonize with the new system of rush.

It's quite a shame though that the educational sector did not feel an atom of pity to students but with an intent to recover lost grounds, laid more burdens on them by increasing fees. Why wouldn't students drop out of school? Why wouldn't they take to social vices on the streets, why wouldn't they seek refuge in petty jobs since survival comes first before education? Why wouldn't the cases of insanity exacerbate, in a system of decayed educational structure which expects a recovery from the venom of the pandemic to happen in a jiffy?

With these few analyses to the negative influence of the covid-19 pandemic on Nigerian Music Students, a little eye view into the positive side would greatly help affected students see a light in the turning that was a pointer to wisdom in a world of increased folly.

Positively, the pandemic served as an eye-opener to music students in the sense that it presented rhetorical questions as: 'Without Music what else?', 'After Music, what next?' and 'Besides Music, what else'?

According to Myles Munroe, 'in every crisis is an opportunity'. The pandemic threw its enchanting cowries to the ground, waiting for great musical dības to discern the opportunities the gods were presented in a time as such. Well, the traditional ones decoded the handwriting on the wall while the modern ones took to reason, all toeing towards making good of the reality presented by the pandemic.

Music students began to think in the lines of music entrepreneurship than sole dependence on an academic certification that may or may not guarantee a sustainable source of livelihood in the future-which gives room for more thought-provoking uncertainties. This is a green light towards music entrepreneurship and it was only possible by the unfortunate crisis of the 'Covid-19 pandemic'.

Other relevant skills that aid in musicianship became the craving to erode idleness. Skills as photography, videography, music production and the use of other musical software became the order of the day, in relation to online jobs that kept minds busy. In other words, students' exposure to the lockdown, with a need for survival enabled the acquisition of knowledge or skills in desired areas and the sale of those skills online. Ways to make ends meet became glaring as the internet became the only 'sector' not locked down or suffering from the pandemic. It is thus obvious that the pandemic, though a thorn in the flesh, was an eye-opener to creativity. A new normal'

## 5. Online Classes – The Solution?

The idea behind the online lessons or classes is as a result of continuing education in the period of the pandemic. At the moment every region all over the world is doing everything humanly possible to live with the pandemic as the specialist in the field of the pandemic are working tirelessly to see how the pandemic can be totally eradicated to enable the human race again experience human physical relationships which resulted to the idea behind an online educational programme in Nigeria and the entire globe. Many scholars around the world have been able to explain the various challenges of the pandemic in various ways. Mathew & Ebeleloanya (2016) as well as Musingafi et al (2015) made a presentation of challenges faced by open and distance learning students in higher education as inadequate facilities, such as access to ICT, digital literacy, and lack of learning resources. In defining what online classes are, Malan, (2020) defined is as the use of the internet to give instructions to learners. This particular form of learning is often delivered through the use of smartphones, computers, and tablets. All these are a result of advancements in technology and the ability to cope with the available gadget purchased or provided for. Also, with the adaptation of online technology platforms for transferring knowledge, it has become very reliable, and flexible for learners to access their education without the fear and stress of traveling a mile to access education. It is, however, worthy to note that before the advent of Covid-19 in December 2019 in Wuhan that online classes gained much recognition by the most institution over the world, few institutions, mostly private are practically active in virtual classes using a different platform to execute and involvement of ICT expert for its maintenance.

Studies have shown that learning has got various advantages and disadvantages, but the major advantage is that it enables students to learn from the comfort of their homes. This obviously helps to maintain social distancing as encouraged by the most government of the world. And one of the most noticeable disadvantages is that online learning discourages physical contact. According to Young (1997), in support of discouragement of physical contact, he says that adoption of e-learning has its own limitations, for instance, lack of physical interaction not only between learners and teachers but also among learners.

## 6. Online Classes and Musical Evaluation Challenges

One of the prominent challenges that needed a scholarly approach in the period of new normal is the 'Evaluation challenge'. This is as a result of the necessity of evaluating music courses that has more than 100 students which mostly could be practical base course. Husain & Khan, 2016 explained evaluation as 'the process that seeks to find approval or

disapproval of a certain programme or process. The process envisions the collection and analysis of feedback of a certain activity to make a judgment of the entire process'. In the process of evaluating Nigerian music students, like every other student in the globe, continuous assessment known as CA is conducted with various class work and assignments before the final examination evaluation. This evaluation helps the teacher to know the ability of each student and proffer better solutions to help such students improve. In the period of the new normal that most classes have been moved online, it has proved difficult for teachers to have total control of their classes because all students are connected to the lecture online from their various houses, which the teacher has no assessed to control their responses or concentration. Most students are recorded attending to babies as the classes are going, also, some were making another discussion with friends, relatives, and family. It is necessary to also note that the learning environment is a major contributor to the successful delivery of content. When the environment is not set or prepared for the classes, learning, assimilation, and evaluation become difficult. Swan 2017, says that 'since learners attended lessons at the comfort of their homes; the lessons are often subject to home interruption. This obviously has been one of the hindrances of proper evaluation of the new normal era. Other factors include; child marriage, child labour, early pregnancy, and home violence which have a negative impact on the students and most times hinder them from connecting to the classes. These results in the poor evaluation of the student and most cases caused some to drop out of school

On the other way round, most students in Nigeria could not afford to purchase needed gadgets needed for effective online classes, such as android phones, computers, and data to access the internet in their respective homes. This has brought in a big gap between the rich and the poor, simply because the children of the poor cannot afford to purchase the enlisted gadget needed for effective learning in a time of new normal. Most states resolved in television and radio classes, yet most families in the rural or farm settlement could not have an asset to the television set to benefit from such classes and also unavailability of electricity is a challenge for those who could also not afford generator set to generate light.

## 7. Conclusion

It is obvious to everyone on the planet earth that the world has come to accept the new normal in almost every sphere; including education, economic, agriculture, political, et al. This is as a result of the pandemic. The covid19 pandemic does not only affected the listed sphere above but forced the globe to accept the new way of life, by learning to live and work with the virus. Face masked, washing of hands, sensitization among all is part of rules to guide against the contact or transfer of the virus. Also, almost every part of the world has accepted to enforce their citizen to take the WHO-approved vaccine, while few citizens have decided not to get vaccinated.

In the education sector, African and Nigeria precisely are among the countries that have been worst hit by this pandemic, perhaps because they were unprepared and as a result, many institutions miss almost a session to lockdown in 2020. Those institutions in Nigeria that we're able to cope with during the lockdown were mostly private institutions that immediately swamp all their academic program online, but to most public institutions, almost a session was lost to the pandemic in Nigeria.

Like every other cause, music students and staff shared their part of the new normal in both positive and negative ways respectively. However, it is very necessary to accept the fact that new normal has come to stay and in other not to allow some of the course that seems not to be taken online to be scrapped, it is very necessary to work towards accepting the global current approach. This will make most music teachers and students learn and upgrade their knowledge of ICT to enable each one to function effectively on online courses. Also, institutions in Nigeria are encouraged to periodically organize training/workshops to enable easy staff and students to fit into the new normal.

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