

Assessing the Effects of School Closures Owing To Covid-19 Pandemic towards Graduating Students at Some Selected Institutions in Yobe State, Nigeria.

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Abstract

The emerged outbreak of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) which originated from the city of Wuhan, China, has become a major global public health challenges for not only China, but the countries all over the world. To prevent and protect human lives from COVID-19, many countries have announced total lockdown for almost all activities, in particular, school closures for which students have been advised to stay at home and concentrate their academic activities online. In Nigeria, the nationwide lockdown has created a serious matter of concern in all sectors, more especially that of businesses and religious matters and most worrisome is that of school closures, because using online studies as an alternative is a major challenge in Nigeria due to poor technology to offer online studies, because Nigeria is yet to adopt an emerging advanced learning technologies that support online studies.

In fact, this worrisome pandemic has led to the complete lockdown of almost all the human activities in various parts of the world, in particular, schools shutdown. The World Health Organization (WHO) announced that the outbreaks of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) have constituted a global public health emergency of international concern. This outbreak poses serious concerns to global education systems. Concerted efforts to control and prevent the widespread of COVID-19 prompted unscheduled closure of schools in more than 100 countries worldwide, including Nigeria.

School closures owing to COVID-19 has left over one billion learners out of school and other million learners opted to E-learning across the globe. There is no doubt, that the interference of the coronavirus pandemic has caused so many challenges on the Nigerian education system, because many students do not have necessary access for supportive technologies to study online which makes it harder to maximize the potentials of learning technology during school closures.

The purpose of this research work is to assess the effects of school closures owing to COVID-19 pandemic towards graduating students at some selected institutions in Yobe state, Nigeria.

A survey research design was adopted for this study. This research work was carried out in some selected institutions of Yobe state. There are a total number of six (6) selected institutions, which consists of three higher institutions (Mai Idriss Aloomo Polytechnic Geidam, College of Education & Technology Gashua, College of Health Sciences and Technology Nguru) and three secondary schools (Government Secondary School Geidam, Government Science and Technical College Geidam and Geidam Academy) in Yobe state, Nigeria. Because of movement restrictions which necessitated to administer our questionnaires online coupled with financial constraint a total number of 50 graduating students (respondents) were randomly selected from each 6 selected institutions, totaling 300 students (respondents) using structured questionnaire on research titled “**Assessing the Effects of School Closures Owing to Covid-19 Pandemic Towards Graduating Students at Some Selected Institutions in Yobe State**” to assessed the effects of school closures owing to COVID-19. The questionnaires were administered using online medium via emails of each selected students (respondents) and responses (answers) were obtained. The Simple random techniques were used to select the sample size and the reliability of the instrument was determined through the test re-test method, whereas data collected were analyzed using simple frequency and percentage (%). The result collected reveals that over 90% of the respondents strongly agreed that COVID-19 pandemic owing to schools closure has grossly disrupted academic programmes-ranging from extending of graduation date, learning disruption which causes poor academic performance, shattered academic dreams and career planned, lack of access to face-o-face learning facilities such as practical aspects from laboratories and field experiences, loss of learning interests among graduating students which might increases the numbers of spillover and dropout, affected parents resources which might reason for some learners to discontinue study, loss of quality of face-to-face interactions and guidance from teachers which is the backbone of teaching/learning process, lack of access to online studies in some rural remote areas and

poor access to internet connectively coupled with poor electricity in under-developed and developing countries, inadequate digitals/electronic facilities and poor digital skills of the educators and learners in most African countries and other developing nations of the world which greatly hindered learning outcomes and final year results of graduating students.

KEYWORDS: *Assessing, the Effects of School Closures, Owing to COVID-19 Pandemic, Towards Graduating Students, at Some Selected Institutions, Yobe State, Nigeria.*

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I. Introduction

World is suffering from global crisis of public health emergency of international concern due to widespread of an infectious virus causing acute respiratory disease known as corona virus (COVID-19) disease. This outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic increased the gaps in the education sector globally. Though, the Coronavirus pandemic is novel, but it already has noxious effects on humanity.⁽¹⁾

COVID-19 outbreak has created educational disruptions, and global health concerns that proved very difficult to manage by global health systems. Presently, no nation or race across the world is immune from the coronavirus pandemic, and the entire world seems overwhelmed by the speed of the spread and the devastating effects of COVID-19. The coronavirus pandemic has no boundaries, and its effect is vast and fast. Just within few months of the outbreak of the disease, it has drastically changed the lifestyles of the entire world with billions of people being forced to 'stay at home', 'observe self-isolations', and work and learn from home. It has limited the freedom of people to move, trade or associate. Not only has COVID-19 caused a total lockdowns in many countries across the world, but it also caused the death of thousands of people and more especially immunosuppressed persons. It was more worrisome to know that reports from various continents, including, America, Africa, Asia, and Europe indicated a daily increase in the number of new cases, and high rate of mortality due to COVID-19.⁽²⁻⁴⁾

Chinese health authorities are still trying to determine the origin of the virus, which they say likely, came from a seafood market in Wuhan, China where wildlife was also traded illegally. On February 7, Chinese researchers said the virus could have spread from an infected animal species to humans through illegally-trafficked pangolins, which are prized in Asia for food and medicine. Scientists have pointed to either bats or snakes as possible sources of the virus. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), signs of infection include fever, cough, and shortness of breath and breathing difficulties. In more severe cases, it can lead to pneumonia, multiple organ failure and even death. Current estimates of the incubation period - the time between infection and the onset of symptoms - range from 1 to 14 days. Most infected people show symptoms within 5 to 6 days. However, infected patients can also be asymptomatic, meaning they do not display any symptoms, despite having the virus in their systems.⁽⁴⁾

The COVID-19 pandemic in Nigeria is part of the worldwide pandemic of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2). The milestone of 100,000 confirmed cases was reached on 10 January. There were 43,732 new cases in January, raising the total number of confirmed cases to 131,242. The death toll rose to 1,586. The number of recovered patients increased to 104,989, leaving 26,667 active cases at the end of the month. There were 24,415 new cases in February, taking the total number of confirmed cases to 155,657. The death toll rose to 1,907. The number of recovered patients increased to 133,768, leaving 19,982 active cases at the end of the month. There were 7,234 new cases in March, raising the total number of confirmed cases to 162,891. The death toll rose to 2,057. The number of recovered patients increased to 151,648, leaving 9,186 active cases at the end of the month. There were 2,219 new cases in April, raising the total number of confirmed cases to 165,110. The death toll rose to 2,063. The number of recovered patients increased to 155,101, leaving 7,946 active cases at the end of the month.

On May 22, there were 166,019 cases have been confirmed, 156,476 cases have been discharged and 2,067 deaths have been recorded in 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory. On the 23rd of May 2022, the 40 new cases were all reported from 7 states- Lagos (29), Abia (3), Ogun (3), Kano (2), Kaduna (1), Plateau (1), and Rivers (1). A multi-sectoral national emergency operations centre (EOC), activated at Level 2, and continues to coordinate the national response activities. The Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) was established in the year of 2011 in response to the challenges of public health emergencies and to enhance Nigeria's preparedness and response to epidemics through prevention, detection and control of communicable diseases. Several measures have been instituted by the Federal Government of Nigeria through the PTF-COVID-19 together with the Federal Ministry of Health to curtail the spread of the disease and protect the health of Nigerians. This includes an initial lockdown of non-essential activities; closure of schools; a ban on international flights etc. Nigeria is one of many countries that have commenced the gradual easing of lockdown measures initially

instituted at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. This is to ensure a balance between preserving lives and livelihoods while addressing the socio-economic disruptions caused by the outbreak.

Further to reviewing the response nationwide, and in light of the rising trend in several countries and the high risk of a surge in cases in Africa, the PTF-COVID-19 now Presidential Steering Committee on COVID-19 (PSC-COVID-19) re-instituted the enforcement of the COVID-19 Health Protection Regulations and announced the Phase 4 of the Eased Lockdown, effective from 11th of May 2021. This is to mitigate the risk of a spike in new cases, while the nationwide vaccine rollout continues. This is in line with amendments to address economic, socio-political and health considerations, and are as follows; maintaining the current nationwide curfew from 12am to 4am; opening of NYSC orientation camps; the gradual re-opening of all educational institutions in a phased manner; maintaining the restrictions on mass gatherings outside the workplace to no more than 50 persons; limitation on civil servants allowed to come to work with alternate day arrangements; closure of recreational venues, gyms and indoor sports facilities are to close until 11th June, 2021; closure of all bars, night clubs, pubs and event centres while restaurants are to adhere to 50% eat-in capacity, except those providing services to hotel residents, takeaways, home deliveries and drive-ins are allowed; and mandatory use of non-medical facemasks in public spaces. 'No mask, no entry. No mask, no service; maintaining 'No Mask, No Voting' policy with enforcement of guidance on conducting safe elections during the COVID-19 pandemic. The NCDC continues to expand laboratories for the testing of COVID-19 and has commenced the use of GeneXpert across the country to scale-up testing.

Globally, in the past week, the number of new cases and deaths continued to decrease, although overall counts for both remained high with just over 4.8 million new cases and nearly 86 000 new deaths reported in the past week. All regions reported a decline in new cases this week with the exception of the Western Pacific where the number of new cases were similar to the previous week. Till may, there global record of Corona-virus are 167,671,546 total cases plus new cases of 153,921 and 3,481,226 plus new deaths of 2,971 mostly from Asia and India in particular, as well as 148,818,072 world total recovered.

Lastly on a day before submitting this report, a global cases of COVID-19, as of 2:50pm CEST, 24 May 2021, there have been 166,860,081 confirmed cases of COVID-19, including 3,459,996 deaths, reported to WHO. As of 24 May 2021, a total of 1,489,727,128 vaccine doses have been administered. The Weekly Epidemiological Update provides an overview of the global, regional and country-level COVID-19 cases and deaths, highlighting key data and trends; as well as other pertinent epidemiological information concerning the COVID-19 pandemic.^(5,7)

II. Literature Review

According recent report of World Health Organization (WHO) on Corona virus (COVID-19), that the corona viruses are belong to a family of viruses that cause illnesses ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases such as Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and the Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS). These viruses were originally transmitted from animals to humans. Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS), for instance, was transmitted from civet cats to humans, while Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) moved to humans from a type of camel. Several known corona viruses are circulating in animals that have not yet infected humans. The name corona virus comes from the Latin word corona, meaning crown or halo. Under an electron microscope, the looks like it is surrounded by a solar corona. The novel corona virus, identified by Chinese authorities on January 7 and since named SARS-COV-2, is a new strain that had not been previously identified in humans. Little is known about it, although human-to-human transmission has been confirmed.⁽⁵⁾

As at April, 2020, the number of global COVID-19 cases has surpassed over one million cases and more than 220 thousand deaths were recorded and still the mortality and morbidity rate are increasing in daily basis. It was also frightening that the USA recorded more than 2000 COVID-19 deaths in a single day despite the country's strong commitment to fight against the contagion. The number of Coronavirus deaths was soaring with no immediate solutions in sight. The disease showed no sign of slowing down across the globe. The COVID-19 outbreak triggered the then President of the United States, President Trump to invoke the "Defense Production Act". The government also issued a national emergency as a result of the growing number of new cases of Coronavirus in the country. The outbreak of COVID-19 affected all aspects of human activities globally ranging from education, research, sports, entertainment, tourism, transportation, worship, social gathering/interactions, economy, businesses, and politics. Indeed, the entire world was in distress as a result of COVID-19 threats, the reality of the situation was challenging to bear, and the education sector remains one of the worst-hit by Coronavirus outbreak.⁽⁴⁾

On 27 February, Nigeria confirmed its first case in Lagos state, an Italian citizen who works in Nigeria had returned on 25 February from Milan, Italy through the Murtala Muhammad International Airport, fell ill on 26 February and was transferred to Lagos state biosecurity facilities for isolation and testing after thorough investigations he was confirmed positive from coronavirus. Initially Nigeria then having only 5000 covid-19

cases, two death and twenty recovered. In order to contain the spread of the virus in Nigeria, the federal ministry of education has directed all educational institutions in Nigeria to shut down and allow students to go home as cases of reported COVID-19 increases more widespread.⁽⁶⁾ From February 27 till May 10, the virus have infected over 434 people, spread to 34 out of 36 states of federation. Over 600 have recovered from the covid-19 and the fatalities rate is 95. Submits that eighty-three thousand to 190 000 people in Africa could die of covid-19 and 29 million to 44 million could get infected in the first year of the pandemic if containment measures fail, a new study by the world health organization (who) regional office for Africa finds⁽⁷⁾

The research, which is based on prediction modelling, looks at 47 countries in the WHO African region with a total population of one billion. The new estimates are based on modifying the risk of transmission and disease severity by variables specific to each country in order to adjust for the unique nature of the region. The model predicts the observed slower rate of transmission, lower age of people with severe disease and lower mortality rates compared to what is seen in the most affected countries in the rest of the world. This is largely driven by social and environmental factors slowing the transmission, and a younger population that has benefitted from the control of communicable diseases such as HIV and tuberculosis (TB) to reduce possible vulnerabilities. The lower rate of transmission, however, suggests a more prolonged outbreak over a few years, according to the study which also revealed that smaller African countries alongside Algeria, South Africa and Cameroon were at a high risk if containment measures are not prioritized. Observes that the outbreak of pandemic COVID-19 all over the world has disturbed the political, social, economic, religious and financial structures of the whole world. World's topmost economies such as the US, China, UK, Germany, France, Italy, Japan and many others are at the verge of collapse.⁽⁸⁾

Besides, stock markets around the world have been pounded and oil prices have fallen off a cliff. In just a week 3.3 million Americans applied for unemployment and a week later another 6.6 million people started searching for jobs. Also, many experts on economic and financial matters have warned about the worsening condition of global economic and financial structure. Such as Kristalina Georgieva, managing director of International Monetary Fund (IMF), explained that "a recession at least as bad as during the global financial crisis or worse". Moreover, COVID-19 is harming the global economy because the world has been experiencing the most difficult economic situation since world war-II. When it comes to the human cost of the coronavirus pandemic it is immeasurable therefore all countries need to work together with cooperation and coordination to protect the human beings as well as limit the economic damages. For instance, the lockdown has restricted various businesses such as travelling to contain the virus consequently this business is coming to an abrupt halt globally. Submits that the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic that has swept across the globe in the last few weeks and months has not only had a significant impact on Public Health, society, and the economy as a whole, it has also wreaked havoc to the sporting calendar.⁽⁹⁾

In a bid to stem the spread of the virus, many professional and amateur leagues across all continents and sports took the unprecedented step to postpone or suspend their seasons on the advice of the Centre of Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to avoid gatherings of large amounts of people. Observes that the COVID-19 pandemic and the measures put in place to contain its diffusion are taking a heavy toll on the tourism sector.⁽¹⁰⁾

According to the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), the COVID-19 pandemic will result in a contraction of the tourism sector by 20% to 30% in 2020. Observes that "No matter where in the world or in which sector, the crisis is having a dramatic impact on the world's workforce", ILO said in its latest report. "Policy responses need to focus on providing immediate relief to workers and enterprises in order to protect livelihoods and economically viable businesses, particularly in hard-hit sectors and developing countries."⁽¹¹⁾ "An additional concern is the fact that in low and middle-income countries, the worst-hit industries and services have a high proportion of low-wage workers in informal employment, with limited access to health services and State welfare safety nets. "Without appropriate policy measures, workers face a high risk of falling into poverty and will experience greater challenges in regaining their livelihoods during the recovery period", ILO said in its latest report on the situation. It underscored that around two billion people work informally, most of them in emerging and developing countries, and that "tens of millions" of informal workers have already been affected by COVID-19. In urban areas, moreover, these workers also tend to work in economic sectors that "not only carry a high risk of virus infection but are also directly impacted by lockdown measures": waste recyclers, street vendors and food servers, construction workers, transport workers and domestic workers. Highlighting the impacts already being felt in India, ILO pointed out that with its share of almost 90 per cent of people working in the informal economy, about 400 million workers in the vulnerable sector now face falling greater impoverishment. Current lockdown measures there have impacted these workers significantly, forcing many of them to return to rural areas, ILO explained, adding that Brazil and Nigeria had a similar level of informal employment as India, and faced the same risks.⁽¹²⁾

2.1: Global Responses to Coronavirus Pandemic

The U.S government also negotiated with the parliament to approve more than 2 trillion US dollars stimulus package to combat the Coronavirus pandemic, and to provide some reliefs to citizens and businesses affected by the Coronavirus outbreak. Similar actions were also replicated in many other countries including Germany, where 810 billion US dollars were also set aside to contain the effects of the pandemic, yet the virus rapidly spread to the many parts of the world, more especially Africa. On 23 March 2020, Cambridge International Examinations (CIE) released a statement announcing the cancellation of Cambridge IGCSE, Cambridge O Level, Cambridge International AS & A Level, Cambridge AICE Diploma, and Cambridge Pre-U examinations for the May/June 2020 series across all countries. International Baccalaureate exams were also cancelled. Efforts to curtail the spread of COVID-19 through non-medical interventions and preventive measures such as social-distancing and self-isolation have prompted the widespread closure of primary, secondary, and tertiary schooling in over 100 countries. In Ghana, schools were shutdown to contain the spread of coronavirus disease. The government also released 100 million US dollars to enhance the fight against the pandemic. The country reacted proactively to contain the spread of the Virus. In Madagascar, the country has recorded zero COVID-19 death so far, and the country has claimed a breakthrough in Herbal medicine for COVID-19 treatment. However, the WHO issued warned that such claim has not been scientifically approved and cannot be recommended by the organization as cure for COVID-19. In fact, many unified examinations have to be suspended. Most of Africa's 54 countries are now with confirmed cases and death tolls due to COVID-19, some have closed their borders and banned international flights, local and international trade are declining at a drastic rate. The Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, South Africa, Tunisia, Nigeria and most of the African countries have declared complete lockdowns.^(1,2,3)

According to Wondwosen Tamrat and Damtew Teferra (2020), research on the April 2020 Africa economic forecasts revealed that Africa could experience economy loss of between US\$90 billion and US\$200 billion in 2020, with the GDP shrinking by three to eight points. In South Africa, growth is expected to contract by 1.5% in the first two months of the outbreak, due to its effect on key economic sectors, such as mining and tourism. Ethiopia's recent request for assistance, on behalf of the African nations to the G20 forum, for US\$150 billion emergency financing, the freezing of interest rates on loans and the cancellation of debts is a clear indication of the massive threat to the continent's economies and sustainable development. Mathematical modelling has shown that transmission of an outbreak may be stepped down by closing of schools which are the major atmosphere for social gathering. However, effectiveness of this move depends on the contacts and social distancing principles, children maintain outside their schools. School closure helps a lot when it is introduced at the early stage, but if it occurs late to an outbreak, it may be less effective and may not have any impact at all because by then the disease could have gone out of hands in the school system. This is why over the years educational sector have remain a sensitive part of the sustainable development of any country; because the tune in the development of any country is majorly dictated by the educational sector. Again in some cases where necessities are not properly managed, the reopening of schools after a period of pandemic closure may result in increased infection rates, in fact doubled the initial figures. The closures as a result of the pandemic does not only affect the educational sector, it has also led to the suspension of all public gathering; closure of major markets, religious organizations were restricted from worshipping together and many other gatherings' activities were on hold during the trying period. Even with all these, it is difficult to measure the specific impact of school closures, because it varies from place to place, persons to persons; the impact may be positive or effective on individuals as the case may be.⁽¹³⁾

Because of that, this research was assessed the effects of schools closure owing to covid-19 pandemic towards graduating students at some selected institutions in Yobe state, Nigeria.

2.2: Nigeria Responses to Coronavirus Pandemic

The federal government of Nigeria has ordered a total close down of all schools. The decision was largely applauded, and the National University Commission (NUC), a regulatory body for all universities in Nigeria also gave a follow-up directive to all universities in the country to shut down the academic activities and all students stay at home. The government also suspended social gatherings, and workers below the Grade level 12 were asked to work at home. An Italian who was reported to be the first case of coronavirus in Nigeria was successfully treated and discharged according to the government, but new cases emerged thereafter. Thus, the country needs to do more in terms of disaster preparedness and response. Nigeria as a country have a well ensured all schools and personnel experience a compulsory stay at home order so as to prevent further spread of this deadly virus from spreading among students and school personnel since it can easily be contacted through direct contact with the carrier of the virus.

2.3: Impact of Coronavirus Pandemic on Education

The outbreak of Coronavirus negatively affected educational activities worldwide. The coronavirus pandemic affected educational systems worldwide, leading to the widespread closures of schools.⁽¹⁴⁾ It created

serious disruptions in academic activities, as well as in career plans. As part of the global efforts to combat COVID-19, many countries across the world closed down schools in an attempt to contain the coronavirus pandemic. According to the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) monitoring, over 100 countries implemented nationwide closures, impacting over half of the world's student population.⁽¹⁵⁾ Even Britain, where Prime Minister Boris Johnson - one of those who earlier opposed the move, later admitted that "closing down schools could place further downward pressure on the upward curve of the Coronavirus outbreak". Some of the countries that closed down schools due to COVID-19 include, Nigeria, Ghana, Senegal, South Africa, China, Kazakhstan, Ethiopia, Honduras, India, Japan, Iran, USA, France, Spain, Italy, North and South Korea, Lebanon, Vietnam, Thailand, Germany, and South Korea just to mention but a few. School closures carry high social, educational and economic costs, and the disruptions they cause touch people across communities, but their impact is particularly severe for disadvantaged persons and their families.⁽¹⁶⁾ The disruption caused by COVID-19 in the educational sector may last longer than expected if a more reliable solution for coronavirus is not found on time, and the spread of the disease continues. UNESCO Director-General, Audrey Azoulay cited by VOA News (2020), warned that "the global scale and speed of the educational disruption due to coronavirus is unparalleled and, if prolonged, could threaten the right to education". No doubts, unplanned school closures can cause severe problems for students, educators, parents and the society at large. It could negatively affect the academic interest and performance of students. If the students are not engaged productively, it could lead to idleness which might result in youth involvement in crimes, loss of interest in learning, and poor academic performance.⁽¹⁷⁾ The US Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (CDC) also expressed concerns about the implications of school closures. According to the CDC, "longer closures may result in more students congregating outside of schools.

Quentin (2014), states that school closing is very controversial, and it can have spillover effects on a large number of students in receiving schools. It can affect the quality of teaching and learning and academic achievement particularly for those students with special needs or those with learning difficulties that often requires more physical attention and guidance from the teachers. Though, technology can be used to remedy some of the fallouts from school closures, but it cannot replace the important effect of face-to-face interactions by students and teachers. Besides, many students do not have the necessary access to supportive technologies which makes it harder to maximize the potentials of learning technology during school closures. However, against all odds, mathematical model and empirical analysis of reactive closures of schools in past pandemics indicates that it reduces the total number of cases in the community by 25 percent and postpones the peak of the pandemic by a week or two, while proactive closures of school during pandemics remains one of the most beneficial interventions that can be employed to mitigate the impact of epidemic disease.^(16,17)

2.4: Effects of Coronavirus School Closures

School closure means the closing down of schools as a result of the pandemic, emergencies, labour strikes, disasters or deliberate efforts to reposition a school or curb crimes in a given campus or environment. This means that school closures are not only for emergencies or pandemics, but also a deliberate way of addressing some identified gaps in a given school. For instance, in Nigeria, the government or school authorities often shutdown schools to address security issues such as cultism, terrorism or violent protests on the campus. Gewertz (2009) cited in Ben, Mathew, and Kristen (2010) reported that "Obama's administration endorsed closure as part of an array of strategies to turn around 5,000 failing schools in the United States during his regime. Even though, school closures sometimes may be for good reasons, but the recent school closures for Coronavirus is detrimental to many educational systems across the world. As of 23 March, 2020, over 1.3 billion learners were left out of school due to school closures in response to COVID-19.⁽¹⁸⁾ According to Erika and Nicholas (2020), school closures can either be reactive or proactive. Erika and Nicholas further stated that reactive closing schools occur upon the discovery of coronavirus case among the students, staff or parents. While proactive school closure occurs before the disease even reaches the doors of the school. Madeline (2020) opined that school closures due to coronavirus has posed new problems like how to make the transition to online and at-home learning, and how to cater for those who rely on school for food and housing security. School closures for coronavirus tends to increase pressures on students, teachers and parents especially those with limited digital skills, education and resources for continued education. It increases the burden on parents to not only struggle to provide for the home, but also to perform the supervision task of ensuring that their children learn from home. Unparalleled school closures increases the pressure on hospitals because they have to cater for as many health situations as possible that ordinarily could have been attended to by school health centers. Coronavirus school closures could increase student debt, extend the graduation time of students, and shatter the academic dreams of students, as well as programme schedules of educational institutions. Protracted school closures may result to increase rate of dropouts due to loss of interest and lack of resources to continue. If not well managed, school closures can also increase the rate of crimes, because prolonged school closures can lead to idleness which contributes to negative peer influences and youth involvement in crimes. Education jobs were

also affected; many workers risks pay cuts or even disengagement from work during unscheduled school closures^(18,19)

According to UNESCO (2020b), some of the harmful effects of school closures for coronavirus are as follows:

1. **Interrupted learning:** School provides essential learning and when they are closed, students are deprived of opportunities for growth and development.
2. **Nutrition:** Many youngsters rely on free or discounted meals provided at schools for food and healthy nutrition. This is compromised as a result of school closures for coronavirus.
3. **Unequal Access to digital learning portals:** lack of access to technology or good internet connectivity for continued learning during school closures.
4. **Increased pressure on schools and school system that remain open:** Localized school closures place burdens on schools as parents tend redirect their children to open schools.
5. **Social Isolation:** Considering the fact that educational institutions are hubs for social activity and human interactions, school closures can deprive youth and children of some social communications and socializations that are essential to learning, development and creativity.

Research activities were negatively affected because of school closures and lockdowns limit researchers' ability to conduct researches particularly in situations whereby face-to-face interactions with students and teachers are required or access to school facilities or research laboratories were denied. School driven innovations and research are also affected during school closures. Erika and Nicholas (2020) suggested that closing schools are not the only option to mitigate coronavirus. They advocated for authorities to give parents some flexibility to choose what is best for their families, while implementing stronger mitigation measures. However, in contrast to Erika and Nicholas's position, the president of the New South Wales Teachers Federation opposed the opening of schools during the outbreak of coronavirus. He believed that "the design of their schools and the size of the classrooms makes it impossible" to implement social distancing in schools. To mitigate the effects that accompanied the closures of schools, educators and learners had to rely on use of technological tools and platforms to ensure continued education. Consequently, it is important to admit in the present study that despite the perceived challenges imposed by school closures for coronavirus, the option remains one of the most effective measures to halt the spread of the pandemics.^(15,17)

2.5: Brief Accounts of Pandemic and Closure of Schools

The trying period of 1918-1919 influenza pandemic in the United States, school closures and public gathering bans were introduced with which helps in the reduction of mortality rates. It was recorded that cities that implemented such interventions earlier had greater delays in reaching peak mortality rates. Schools were closed for 4 weeks according to a study of 43 US cities' response to the Spanish Flu. School closures were shown to reduce morbidity from the Asian flu by 90% during the 1957- 58 outbreak, and up to 50% in controlling influenza in the US, 2004-2008. Multiple countries successfully slowed the spread of infection through school closures during the 2009 H1N1 Flu pandemic. The closures of schools in the city of Oita in Japan helped in the successful decrease in the number of infected students even at the peak of infection. Mandatory school closures and other social distancing measures were associated with a 29% to 37% reduction in influenza transmission rates. Early closures of schools in the United States delayed the peak of the 2009 H1N1 Flu pandemic. Despite the overall success of closing schools, but some studies conducted on school closures have shown that it is not the best measure in the control of pandemic and that the process is ineffective. For example a study conducted in Michigan found that "district level reactive school closures were ineffective." In the year 2009 when there was an outbreak of swine flu in the United Kingdom, in an article titled "Closure of Schools during an Influenza Pandemic" published in the *Lancet Infectious Diseases*, a group of epidemiologists endorsed the closure of schools in order to reduce the further spread of the infection, and buy time to research and produce an effective vaccine. They studied previous influenza pandemics including the 1918 flu pandemic, the influenza pandemic of 1957 and the 1968 flu pandemic, they reported the effect of school closure would have, particularly with a large percentage of doctors and nurses being women, of whom half had children under the school going age of 16. They as well looked at the past trends of the spread of influenza in France during French school holidays and noted that cases of flu reduced when there was closure of schools. Looking at when teachers in Israel went on strike during the flu season of 1999-2000, visits to doctors and the number of respiratory infections dropped in seldom. Many countries have (rightly) decided to close schools, colleges and universities. The crisis crystallizes the dilemma policymakers are facing between closing schools (reducing contact and saving lives) and keeping them open (allowing workers to work and maintaining the economy). The severe short-term disruption is felt by many families around the world: home schooling is not only a massive shock to parents' productivity, but also to children's social life and learning. Teaching is moving online, on an untested and unprecedented scale. Student assessments are also moving online, with a lot of trial and error and uncertainty for everyone. Many assessments have simply been cancelled. Importantly, these interruptions will not just be a short-term issue, but can also have long-term consequences for the affected cohorts and are likely to increase inequality. Unlike western countries, the Federal Ministry of Education's school-closure directive

did not produce policy measures on how to ease learning disruptions for children and how to address the digital mean of learning which may be alternative method to physical teaching and learning process in the dynamic society. In an account of Taibat Hussain, the Coordinated Education response to COVID-19 pandemic on the landing page of the Ministry website is vague and does little to address the learning needs of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged. The single well-documented response is the Nigeria Education in Emergency Working Group (NWiWwg) Strategy, published on 7 April 2020 which aims to mitigate the negative impact of the school closure on learners and teachers in North-East Nigeria. While the efforts of the Federal and State governments in the health sector and in providing financial stimulus packages and emergency palliatives must be commended, ignoring the education sector would be disastrous. As emphasised by UNESCO, temporary school closure comes with high social and economic costs, with severe impact on children from disadvantaged background.⁽²⁰⁾

III. Methodology

This Section will presents the area of research study, research design, population and sample, as well as, research instrument, the procedure for data collection, instruments for data collection and method of data analysis.

This research study was conducted in Yobe state, Nigeria. A survey research design was adopted for the purpose of this study using self-structured questionnaire. There are a total number of six (6) selected institutions, which consists of three higher institutions (Mai Idriss Aloomo Polytechnic Geidam, College of Education & Technology Gashua, College of Health Sciences and Technology Nguru) and three secondary schools (Government Secondary School Geidam, Government Science and Technical College Geidam and Geidam academy) in the area of study. A total of 50 graduating students both male and female respondents were randomly selected from each selected institutions, totaling 300 students (respondents). A self-structured questionnaire was used on research titled 'Assessing the Effects of COVID-19 Owing to School Closures towards Graduating Students in Some Selected Institution of Yobe State, Nigeria to obtain data for the purpose of this research study. It is an open items questionnaire and is made up of three sections A, B, and C. Section 'A' was demographic information about the respondents, Section 'B' explained the rating scale and instructions to the respondents on how to fill the questionnaire, while section 'C' was the responses tabulated in clusters based on the 8 research questions of the study. It contains 8 questionnaire items, and the response options with values assigned to them are as follows:-

1. Strongly Agree = (SA)
2. Agree = (A)
3. Disagree = (D)
4. Strongly Disagree = (SD)

The Copies of the questionnaire were administered by the researchers through online medium, the researchers sent a hard copy of the questionnaire plus letter for seeking consent to the respective Heads of each selected institutions in order to administer E-questionnaire via email addresses of the students and requested for the email addresses of at least 60 students, although the needed sample was only meant for 50 students from each selected institutions, but some students might be offline at the appropriate time and for avoidance of that doubt, 60 emails addresses were obtained. A soft copy of E-questionnaire copies were sent to the intended students through their email addresses and they replied the email back to the researcher's email and very fortunately out of the 60 emails sent, the desired 50 students responded positively. The data collected were analysed and presented in the table using simple frequency and percentage (%).

3.1: Justification of the Study

Based on the available literatures that we reviewed on similar research topics on COVID-19, there were no other researchers that conducted a research study on this topic 'Assessing the effects of schools closure owing to COVID-19 pandemic towards graduating students.

In view of research gap, this research work was sought to assess the effects of schools closure owing to COVID-19 pandemic towards graduating students in some selected institution of Yobe state, Nigeria.

3.2: Research Questions

Eight (8) research questions were formulated for the purpose of this research work, as follows:-

1. Does Covid-19 pandemic owing to school closure have impact on academic performance of graduating students?
2. Does Covid-19 pandemic owing to school closure extend the graduation date of graduating students?
3. Does Covid-19 pandemic owing to school closure have spillover effects on graduating students?
4. Does Covid-19 pandemic owing to school closure shatters an academic dreams and career plans of graduating students?

5. Does Covid-19 pandemic owing to school closure increases the rate of dropouts due to loss of learning interest and lack of resources to continue?
6. Does E-learning owing to covid-19 protocol have negative impact on graduating for not having quality of face-face interactions and guidance from teachers which is backbone of teaching and learning in academic achievement?
7. Does lack of internet in rural remote areas and poor internet connectively have negative effects on graduating students?
8. Does online learning has negative effects for graduating students for not having face-to-face practical aspects from teachers?

3.3: Significance of the Study:

This research work provided an insight into the effects of schools closure owing to COVID-19 pandemic towards graduating students and the result of this study will definitely helps an educators to ascertain the level of problems that the schools closure has caused on graduating students and to proper positive solution in tackling the problems after pandemic COVID-19 have successfully contained and schools reopened. Furthermore, the study will equally be helpful for researchers and students for understanding the impact of covid-19 pandemic owing to school closure, as well as policy makers and schools administrators will benefit from outcomes of this study.

3.4: Limitations

This research study was aimed to assess the effects of schools closure owing to COVID-19 pandemic towards graduating students at some selected institutions in Yobe state, Nigeria.

The research study was limited to some selected institutions of Yobe state. There were a total numbers of six (6) selected institutions, which consists of three higher institutions (Mai Idriss Aloomo Polytechnic Geidam, College of Education & Technology Gashua, College of Health Sciences and Technology Nguru) and three secondary schools (Government Secondary School Geidam, Government Science and Technical College Geidam and Geidam academy) in Yobe state Nigeria.

A total numbers of 50 graduating students both male and female respondents were randomly selected from each selected institutions, totaling 300 students (respondents) due to movement restrictions and online medium was used.

IV. Data Analysis And Discussion

4.1: Demographic Information's about the Respondents

Table1: Demographic Information

1: DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY GENDER		
(A) Gender	(B) Frequency	(C) Percentage (%)
Male	186	62
Female	114	38
Total	300	100%
Description: above result is the distribution of respondents by gender, of which 62% of the respondents were males whereas 38% were females. This indicates that the majority of the respondents were males.		
2: DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY AGE		
(A) Age	(B) Frequency	(C) Percentage (%)
16- 20 years	120	40
21-25 years	96	32
26-30 years	48	16
31 and above	36	12
Total	300	100%
Description: above result is the distribution of respondents by age, of which 40% were respondents between the ages of 16-20, whereas 32% between the ages of 21-25 respondents, as well as 16% of the respondents were between the age of 26-30, while the remaining 12% of the respondents were between the ages of 31 and above respectively. This indicates that the majority of the respondents were at appropriate educational seeking ages.		
3: DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY QUALIFICATION IN VIEW		
(A) Qualification in view	(B) Frequency	(C) Percentage (%)
B.Edu	6	2
PGD	18	6
HND	15	5
ND	48	16
NCE	24	8
SCHEW	15	5
JCHEW	24	8
SSCE	150	50
Total	300	100%

Description: above results shown the distribution of respondents by their qualifications in-views, of which 2% were respondents that pursuing B.Edu, whereas 6% pursuing PDG, as well as 5% of the respondents pursuing HND, and 16% pursuing ND, at the same time 8% pursuing their NCE, and 5% pursuing SCHEW, as well as another 8% of the respondents pursuing JCHEW, while the majority of the respondents 50% pursuing their final years secondary school classes. This implies as a result of three higher institutions and three secondary schools were selected for the research study, upon which 50 students were selected at each institutions of the study area.

4.2: Research Questions and Responses

Table 2: Research Questions 1

Does Covid-19 pandemic owing to school closure have impact on academic performance of graduating students?		
Responses	Frequency	Percentage%
Strongly agreed	210	70
Agreed	90	30
Strongly disagreed	0	0
Disagreed	0	0
Total	300	100%

Result description: To assess the effects of Covid-19 pandemic owing to schools closure whether have negative impact on academic performance of graduating students?, the result collected from this research question has shown that that 70% of the respondents were strongly agreed, whereas 30 agreed, while none of them neither strongly disagreed 0%, nor disagreed 0%. This indicate that 100% of the respondents (students) concurred that Covid-19 pandemic owing to school closure have negative impact on their academic performance.

Table 3: Research Questions 2

Does Covid-19 pandemic owing to school closure will extend the graduation date of graduating students?		
Responses	Frequency	Percentage%
Strongly agreed	270	90
Agreed	30	10
Strongly disagreed	0	0
Disagreed	0	0
Total	300	100%

Result description: To assess effects of Covid-19 pandemic owing to school closure will extend the graduation date of graduating students?, the result collected from this research question has shown that that 90% of the respondents were strongly agreed, whereas 10 agreed, while none of them neither strongly disagreed 0%, nor disagreed 0%. This clearly shown that 100% of the respondents (students) concurred that Covid-19 pandemic owing to school closure have extended the graduation time of graduating students.

Table 4: Research Questions 3

Does Covid-19 pandemic owing to school closure have spillover effects on graduating students?		
Responses	Frequency	Percentage%
Strongly agreed	156	52
Agreed	126	42
Strongly disagreed	6	2
Disagreed	12	4
Total	300	100%

Result description: To assess COVID-19 pandemic owing to school closure which might have spillover effects on graduating students?, the result collected from this research question has shown that that 52% of the respondents were strongly agreed, whereas 42 agreed, while 2% strongly disagreed, and remaining 4% disagreed. The result shown that 94% of the respondents (students) agreed with strong opinion, only 2% strongly disagreed as well as 4% disagreed. This means vast majority of the students (respondents) concurred that Covid-19 pandemic owing to school closure might have caused spillover effects on some final year graduating students.

Table 5: Research Questions 4

Does Covid-19 pandemic owing to school closure shatters an academic dreams and career plans of graduating students?		
Responses	Frequency	Percentage%
Strongly agreed	186	62
Agreed	75	25
Strongly disagreed	24	8
Disagreed	15	5
Total	300	100%

Result description: To assess the effects of COVID-19 pandemic owing to school closure which can shatters an academic dreams and career plans of graduating students?, the result collected from this research question has shown that that 62% of the respondents were strongly agreed, whereas 25 agreed, while 8% strongly disagreed 5%, disagreed. This result clearly shown that 87% of the respondents (students) concurred that Covid-19 pandemic owing school closure shattered an academic dreamed and career planned of graduating students.

Table 6: Research Questions 5

Does Covid-19 pandemic owing to school closure can increase the rate of dropouts due to loss of learning interest and lack of resources to continue?		
Responses	Frequency	Percentage%
Strongly agreed	189	63
Agreed	78	26

Strongly disagreed	24	8
Disagreed	9	3
Total	300	100%

Result description: To assess the effects of COVID-19 pandemic owing to school closure whether can increases the rate of dropouts due to loss of learning interest and lack of resources to continue?, the result collected from this research question has shown that 63% of the respondents were strongly agreed, whereas 26 agreed, while 8% strongly disagreed, and remaining 3% disagreed. The result shown that 89% of the respondents (students) agreed with strong opinion, only 8% strongly disagreed as well as 3% disagreed. This means vast majority of the students (respondents) concurred that Covid-19 pandemic owing to school closure have increased the rate of dropouts due to loss of learning interest and lack of resources to continue.

Table 7: Research Questions 6

Does E-learning owing to covid-19 protocol have negative impact on graduating for not having quality of face-face interactions and guidance from teachers which is backbone of teaching and learning academic achievement?		
Responses	Frequency	Percentage%
Strongly agreed	198	66
Agreed	102	34
Strongly disagreed	0	0
Disagreed	0	0
Total	300	100%

Result description: To assess negative impact of E-learning to graduating for not having quality of face-face interactions and guidance from teachers which is backbone of teaching and learning process for academic achievement?, that the result collected from this research question has shown that that 66% of the respondents were strongly agreed, whereas 34 agreed, while 0% strongly disagreed, and remaining 0% disagreed. This clearly indicates that 100% of the respondents (students) concurred that E-learning have negative impact on graduating for not having quality of face-face interactions and guidance from their teachers which is backbone of teaching and learning process for academic achievement.

Table 8: Research Questions 7

Does lack of internet in rural remote areas and poor internet connectively have negative effect on graduating students?		
Responses	Frequency	Percentage%
Strongly agreed	264	88
Agreed	24	8
Strongly disagreed	9	3
Disagreed	3	1
Total	300	100%

Result description: To assess the effects of lack of internet in rural remote areas and poor internet connectively whether have negative effect on graduating students? the result collected from this research question has shown that that 88% of the respondents were strongly agreed, whereas 8% agreed, while 3% strongly disagreed, and remaining 1% disagreed. This shown that vast majority 96% of the respondents (students) concurred that lack of internet in rural remote areas and poor internet connectively have caused negative effect on the online studies of graduating students.

Table 9: Research Questions 8

Does online learning has negative effects for graduating students for not having face-to-face practical aspects from teachers?		
Responses	Frequency	Percentage%
Strongly agreed	177	59
Agreed	108	36
Strongly disagreed	9	3
Disagreed	6	2
Total	300	100%

Result description: To assess the negative effect of online learning for graduating students for not having face-to-face practical aspects from teachers? The result collected from this research question has shown that that 59% of the respondents were strongly agreed, whereas 36% agreed, while 3% strongly disagreed, and remaining 2% disagreed. This shown that vast majority 95% of the respondents (students) agreed with strong opinion that online learning has negative effect for graduating students for not having face-to-face practical aspects from teachers.

V. Discussion

This research work has established that the the effects of schools closure owing to COVI-19 pandemic towards graduating students and the results has shown that school closure have severely affected graduating students in various ways beyond expectations due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Some of the identified effects includes the following among many others:- (1) Extending graduation date (2) Learning disruption which lead to poor performance, (3) shatters academic dreams and career plan, (4) lack of access to face-o-face learning facilities such as practical aspects from laboratories and field experiences, (5) Loss of learning interests among graduating students which can increase numbers of spillover and dropout, (6) Affect parents resources which might lead leaners to discontinue study, (7) loss of quality of face-to-face interactions and guidance from teachers which is the backbone of teaching/learning process, (8) lack of access to online studies in rural remote areas and poor access to internet connectively coupled with poor electricity in most underdeveloped and developing nations of the world, inadequate digitals/electronic facilities and poor digital skills of the educators

and learners in most African countries and other developing nations of the world which can greatly hinder an online studies.

The finding of our research study is coincided with an earlier research studies findings conducted on similar research titled on COVID-19 by the following researchers: A research study conducted by **Oyunode Niyi Jacob (2020)**, on research titled “Impact Of COVID-19 Pandemic School Close Down On The Research Programme Of Higher Institutions”⁽²¹⁾, and a research study carried out by **Di Pietro, et al., (2020)** a JR technical report of European commission on “The Likely Impact Of COVID-19 On Education: Reflections Based On The Existing Literatures In Recent International Datasets”⁽²²⁾, as well as, a research study conducted by **Oluwatoyin Mary Oyinloye, (2020)** on research study titled “Possible Impact Of COVID-19 On Senior Secondary School Students Performance In Science Education In Nigeria”⁽²³⁾, and a research conducted by **Jennifer Gore, et al., (2021)** on research study “The Impact Of COVID-19 On Students Learning In New South Wales Schools: An Empirical Study”⁽²⁴⁾, and the research study conducted by **Heidi E. Jones et al., (2021)** on research titled “The Impact Of The Covid-19 Pandemic On College Students’ Health And Financial Stability In New York City: Finding From Population-Based Sample Of City University Of New York (CUNY) Students”⁽²⁵⁾, and the research study conducted by **Prof. Asoc, Dr. Zaira Hyseni Duraku, et al., (2020)** on research study titled “The Impact Of Covid-19 On Education And On The Wellbeing Of Teachers, Parents, And Students: Challenges Related To Remote (Online) Learning And Opportunity For Advancing The Quality Of Education”⁽²⁶⁾, and the report by **Amer Hasan, et al., World Bank on Education (2020)** on report titled “Stimulating The Potential Impacts Of Covid-19 School Closures On Schooling And Learning Outcomes: A Set Of Global Estimates”⁽²⁷⁾, and the another research study conducted by **Ogunode Niyi Jacob (2020)** on research titled “Effects Of COVID-19 Schools Close Down on Academic Programme of Senior Secondary Schools in Abaji Area Council of Federal Capital Territory Abuja, Nigeria”⁽²⁸⁾, and the research study conducted by **Edeh Michael Onyema et al., (2020)** on research titled “Impact Of Coronavirus Pandemic On Education”⁽²⁹⁾, and the research study conducted by **Pratibha Kumari, et al., (2020)** on research study titled “Covid-19: Impact On Mental Health Of Graduating And Post Graduating Students”⁽³⁰⁾, and as well as, research work conducted by **Aleksander Aristovnik (2020)** on research study titled “Impacts Of The Covid-19 Pandemic Of Life Higher Education Students: A Global Perspective”⁽³¹⁾, and a report by **Nigeria Education In Emergency Working Group, (2020)** on report titled “Nigeria Education Section Covid-19 Response Strategy In North East”⁽³²⁾, and also research study conducted by **Debora Jegede, (2020)** on research study titled “Perception Of Undergraduate Students On The Impacts Of Covid-19 Pandemic On Higher Institutions Development In Federal Capital Territory Abuja, Nigeria”⁽³³⁾, and the report by **Bob Athwal, et al., (2020)** report from “Partnership Between The Institute Of Student Employers (ISE) And The International Network Of Employers University Careers Services (INEUCS): A Report On COVID-19”⁽³⁴⁾, and as well as, a report by **Andreas Schleicher, (2020)** a report titled “The Impact Of Covid-19 On Education Insight From Education At A Glance: Global impacts on graduate recruitment”⁽³⁵⁾. All of the above mentioned researches studies, the researchers at least pointed out one or more similar effects of COVID-19 pandemic owing to school closures in the findings of their research studies, such as- ranging from extending graduation date, learning disruption which causes poor academic performance, shatters academic dreams and career plans, lack of access to face-o-face learning facilities such as practical aspects from laboratories and field experiences, loss of learning interests among graduating students which increases the numbers of spillover and dropout, affected parents resources which can caused some learners to discontinue study, loss of quality of face-to-face interactions and guidance from teachers which is the backbone of teaching/learning process, lack of access to online studies in some rural remote areas and poor access to internet connectively coupled with poor electricity in most under-developed and developing nations of the world, inadequate digitals/electronic facilities and poor digital skills of the educators and learners in most African countries and other developing nations of the world which greatly hindered learning outcomes and final year results of graduating students.

VI. Conclusion

The main justification of this research study is to assess the effects of school closures owing to COVID-19 pandemic towards graduating students. The findings of this research work has proved that the Covid-19 pandemic owing to schools closure has numerous adverse effects on graduating students. These effects not only felt by students but also their parents and educational institutions.

Obviously there were serious concerns and pernicious for School closures and it was very detrimental to the graduating students, but the study concedes with the decision of school closures as useful to contain the widespread of coronavirus across the globe. The unprecedented school closures for Coronavirus remains a lesson and a warning to the entire educational world, in particularly, Nigeria and entire African nations at large as well as most underdeveloped and developing countries of the world who are yet to pick up on emerging advanced learning technologies that support online studies.

VII. Recommendations

The researchers suggests that the governments of Nigeria and other African countries as well as other developing nations of the world with poor technology that can support online learning should emulate from Germany, UK, Japan, China, US, Italy and France, etc., of an emerging advanced learning technology strategies brought to their education sector that allowed students to continue with their studies at home (online) even during the era of pandemic or any emergency that might cause schools closures without any hindrance. No doubt, this will definitely help as a way to curb the effects of school closure for pandemic or any emergency.

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