

## IMPACT OF COVID 19 ON PRIMARY EDUCATION IN UZO UWANI LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF ENUGU STATE

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### **Abstract**

*This study sought to ascertain the impact COVID-19 on primary education in Uzo Uwani Local Government Area of Enugu State. The specific objectives were to: examine the extent of academic negligence suffered by primary school pupils during the COVID-19 lockdown, examine the extent to which primary school pupils were abused and neglected during the COVID-19 lockdown and the extent to which the lockdown affected the digital literacy of primary school pupils. The study used the survey approach. The study covered the sixty (60) primary schools in the local government area. The primary source was the administration of questionnaire to teachers, pupils, and parents drawn from the selected schools. Out of a population of six thousand three hundred and eighty-three (6383), 688 teachers, pupils and parents were sampled. The sample size was chosen after applying the Freund and William's formula for determining sample size. Out of 688 respondents, 510 returned the questionnaire accurately filled. The hypotheses were tested using a z-test. The criterion mean is 2.50. Any grand mean of 2.50 and above on the 4-point scale was considered as a high level of competence, while the same below 2.50 was considered a low level of competence. The empirical results show that COVID19 impacted primary education in Uzo Uwani badly. It kept the children out of school and posed a serious threat to their health and safety. Based on the findings, recommendations were made regarding how to continue the education and protection of the little ones during the COVID-19 era.*

**Keywords:** COVID-19, Lockdown, Primary Education, Academic Negligence, Child Abuse, Digital Literacy.

### **Introduction**

COVID-19 took the world by storm in the first quarter of the year 2020. No sooner than it reared its head in China than it recorded new hot spots in the United States of America, Spain, Italy, France, and Germany (Worldometers, 2020). The risk posed by the soaring numbers of cases in Italy, Iran, South Korea, and Japan prompted the declaration of the disease as a pandemic by WHO on 11 March 2020 (McKibbin& Fernando, 2020). In order to halt the spread and reduce the risk of

infection, Nigeria like other nations across the world, implemented a nationwide lockdown. Offices, factories, businesses, churches, mosques and schools were shut down with religious people live streaming worship and offering services digitally, workers working from home and students learning through various e-platforms.

So far the pandemic has spread to 210 countries and 2 international conveyances around the world (Worldometers, 2020) and has continued to rise and ravage the world, defying complete understanding and solutions, including the authorized use of Hydroxychloroquine and other remedies that have not been clinically tested (Addi, R. A., Benksim, A., Amine, M., & Cherkaoui, M. 2020). As at today, 15<sup>th</sup> Oct, 2020, the confirmed cases have exceeded 38.5 million while the no of deaths has now passed 1 million.

In addition to staggering infections and deaths, the pandemic has created a lot of social and economic issues, including student debt, digital learning, food insecurity, and homelessness, as well as access to childcare, health care, housing, internet, and disability services (Ngumbi, 2020). What is more, the spread has also caused fear and raised a lot of concerns among citizens around the world (NCIRD 2020). The virus has really cost the world dear and it is difficult to calculate how much harm humanity has suffered from this deadly disease.

The impact has been devastating for primary school children. It literally cut the ground from under their feet. As in other countries, the lockdown in Nigeria has meant the absence of face-to-face instructions, absence of traditional classrooms and absence of guidance counsellors. Even examinations were indefinitely shifted by examination bodies (Lindzon, 2020). More than 1 billion and 575 million students in approximately 188 countries around the world have reportedly been affected by the closure of schools (UNESCO, 2020).

Before the outbreak of COVID-19, academic life was going on as normal in the primary sector. There was normal face-to-face learning. The teachers were delivering instructions in the classrooms with the prescribed syllabuses according to set timetables. But when this deadly enemy entered the equation, things took a sharp turn for the worse. The children were now compelled to learn online with all the attendant problems such as the unpreparedness many teachers and parents to assist their children in remote/online learning, lack of access to the necessary technology and the internet, the inadequacy of the technological formats for children with special educational needs and economic difficulties (UNESCO 2020).

The situation is complicated by the issue of child abuse and other risks which many children have been exposed in the circumstances. Millions of children are living in very confined spaces places with abjectly poor parents and caretakers often feel pressured to help in providing for their families who are burdened by costs associated with online education during the COVID-19 era (COVID-19 and Children, 2020).

What we have on our hands is a situation where the little ones are cut off from the environments of care they are used to and left to the mercy of abusers and molesters. This has caused devastating effects on their emotional, psychological, physical, and mental health. As observed by the researcher, there have been increased cases of child labour, early marriage, teenage pregnancies, sexually transmitted diseases, and unwanted pregnancies for girls and abuse of sorts due to the COVID 19 lockdown. The deadly virus has been decimating the world and people are understandably nervous and worried about what the future holds for them.

It is against this background that this research on the effects of COVID-19 on primary education in Uzo Uwani Local Government Area of Enugu State was conducted. Uzo Uwani is a Local Government Area of Enugu State, Nigeria bordering Kogi State and Anambra State. Located within the tropical rainforest and savannah belt with its headquarters in the town of Umulokpa, Uzo-Uwani is made of the following communities: Adaba, Abii, Nrobo, Ugbene Ajima, Nkpologu, Akpugo-Ezedike, Ogurugu, Asaba, Nkume, Ukpata, Umulokpa, Ojor, Igga, Adani, Uvuru, and Nimbo.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Primary education plays a foundational role and serves as the gateway to secondary education and other levels of education. What a child turns out to be educationally largely depends on it. Unfortunately primary education in the time of COVID 19 is under threat as the lockdowns and shutdowns prompted by COVID-19 have kept so many children out of school, posing a serious threat to their health and safety. The radio and television programmes and the online learning which many parents resorted to have not helped matters. Many students especially those in the rural and remote areas have no access to radios and television and teachers and parents with the specialized skills to mediate distance and online lessons are in short supply. Besides, with the spiralling rate of infection,

there is a danger that COVID-19 could destabilise primary education in Nigeria if adequate care is not taken. It is in the light of these problems that the current study sought to examine the impact of COVID-19 on primary education in Uzo Uwani Local Government Area of Enugu State.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The broad objective of the study was to examine the impact of COVID-19 on primary education in Uzo Uwani Local Government Area of Enugu State. The specific objectives were to:

- i. Examine the extent of academic negligence of primary school pupils during the COVID-19 lockdown.
- ii. Ascertain the extent to which primary school pupils have been neglected and abused during the COVID-19 lockdown.
- iii. Find out the extent to which the COVID-19 lockdown has affected the digital literacy of primary school pupils.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study:

- i. What is the extent of academic negligence of primary school pupils during the COVID-19 lockdown?
- ii. To what extent have primary school pupils been neglected and abused during the COVID-19 lockdown?
- iii. How has COVID-19 lockdown impacted the digital literacy of primary school pupils?

### **Research Hypotheses**

The following null hypotheses guided the study:

- i. To a low extent, there is academic negligence on primary education pupils during the COVID-19 lockdown.
- ii. To a low extent, there is abuse on primary education pupils during the COVID-19 lockdown.
- iii. To a low extent, there is digital literacy on primary education pupils during the COVID-19 lockdown.

### **Significance of the Study**

This study will benefit all and sundry. The study will expose to parents, school administrators, the government and the general public the various challenges faced by children in the period of COVID-19 and assist humanity in the search for solutions. The study will shed more light on the importance of digital literacy and online education and inspire all to embrace e-learning and other distance learning strategies as ways to overcome the barriers imposed by COVID-19 and survive the crisis. It will add to the existing literature on COVID-19 and it could pave the way for future research.

### **Review of Related Literature: Conceptual Framework**

#### **COVID-19**

COVID-19 is the name given to the disease caused by a virus known as severe acute respiratory syndrome corona virus 2 (SARS-CoV-2. Based on its genetic structure, it was previously named 2019-nCoV by the International Committee on Taxonomy of Viruses (ICTV). The virus, which first appeared in a wholesale market in Wuhan, China, in December 2019 (McKibbin & Fernando, 2020) is believed to have an animal origin although the intermediate source that caused the transmission of the virus to humans remains unknown. It is not clear how the highly infectious disease is transmitted although most medical researchers and centres for disease control have noted that it is transmitted via fluid contact with an infected person (Kim, 2020, Bai, Yao, Wei, Tian, Jin, Chen & Wang, 2020, NCDC, 2020). Among the known symptoms are sore throat, dry cough, fever, shortness of breath, and (in the worse stage) acute pneumonia and death. According to NCDC (2020), the incubation period for COVID-19 is between 2-14 days.

Although for most people, COVID-19 causes only mild illness, it can actually make some people very ill and even cause death as can be seen in the US, Russia, Brazil, Italy, Germany and other countries with high fatality rates. Those especially at risk from the virus include the aged and people with underlying health problems (such as high blood pressure, heart problems or diabetes). Bai et al (2020) has attributed the high level of the spread to the asymptomatic nature of some of the cases. Failure to identify and properly manage the COVID-19 cases places more people at risk (Addi et al, 2020). Given that there are as yet no proven remedies against the disease and since the numbers of infections and fatalities have continued to rise, people are advised not to let their guard down. Prevention remains the best protection.

## **Primary Education**

Primary education, otherwise known as elementary education is a critical stage in the education process. It is the education given to children in primary schools. It lays the foundation that ensures the success of other levels of education (Okwori and Amenger, 2014). Its importance in the educational process can never be overstated. Children who are deprived of it are at a decided disadvantage. That accounts for why it is compulsory for children in most countries of the world, including Nigeria. In most countries, it takes up where the pre primary education left off. However in Nigeria, where the pre primary is virtually left in the hands of private schools, it marks the official beginning of early childhood education. It usually begins around the ages of 5–7 as part of the Universal Basic Education scheme introduced by the government of Obasanjo in 1999 (David and Olabanji, 2008). The pupils spend six years and graduate with first school-leaving certificate before entering the Junior Secondary to complete the programme.

## **Academic Negligence**

Negligence simply means failure to give needed care or attention. Academic negligence thus is failure to fill needed educational needs. It could be caused by ignorance as in the case of one who unwittingly breaches a duty of care and injures someone. Schools have a duty to protect students from reasonably foresee-able risks of harm (Russo, 2014). Many primary school pupils have been neglected as they cannot easily cope with virtual learning and to suppose that they would stay devoid of structured learning, with no impact on their development, can only be considered naïve at best (Carlsson, Dahl, BÖckert & Rooth, 2015). the pandemic has deprived pupils of academic support.

## **Child Abuse**

Child abuse is any behaviour that harms a child who is under 18. Note that the abuse can take many forms. It can be physical, spiritual, sexual or emotional. Note that it is immaterial whether it is intentional or not. Once the treatment is unfair, cruel or violent, it is an abuse. Note that abuse also includes neglect-what one fails to do. In fact, as this writer wrote in one of his books, abuse and neglect go hand-in-hand such that what abuse achieves by commission, neglect achieves by omission (Ogara, P. I., 2011). Putting children in unsupervised, dangerous situations, exposing them to sexual situations, or making them feel worthless or stupid are all forms of child abuse that can leave deep and lasting scars on kids

(Burlew, 2013) just as ignoring children's needs and leaving them hungry, unattended to and abandoned can result in dysfunctional behaviour and abuse (Shumba & Abosi, 2011).

### **Digital Literacy**

Literacy is defined as the ability to read and write. It also means competence or knowledge in a particular field. Digital literacy therefore is competence in the use of technical tools. It is the ability to understand and use technology (Heidi, 2015; Hagel, 2012). Spires and Bartlett (2012) have divided the various intellectual processes associated with digital literacy into three categories: (a) locating and consuming digital content, (b) creating digital content, and (c) communicating digital content. Digital literacy is the set of skills, knowledge and attitudes required to access digital information effectively, efficiently, and ethically.

### **Online Education**

Online education is a general concept for teaching and learning online with the help of technological tools and platforms. Online education has been traced to distance education and the emergence of digital technologies that facilitate the efficient and reliable delivery of lectures, virtual classroom sessions, and other instructional materials and activities via the internet (Onlineeducation.com, 2020). The use of appropriate educational technologies increases accessibility to learning resources such as Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs), and multiple learning approaches to meet the need of diverse learners (Onyema & Deborah, 2019). It has improved traditional teaching, making teachers facilitators, mentors and motivators, inspiring students to participate and learn (Onyema et al., 2019).

### **Theoretical Framework**

#### **Constructivism**

Constructivism learning theory is defined as the active construction of new knowledge based on a learner's prior experience. Research confirms that constructivism learning theory, which focuses on knowledge construction based on learner's previous experience, is a good bet for e-learning because it ensures learning among learners (Modritscher, 2006). Constructivism places emphasis on situated learning, which sees learning as contextual. Learning activities that allow learners to contextualize the information should be used in online instruction. In most pedagogies based on constructivism, the teacher's role is not only to observe

and assess but to also engage with the students while they are completing activities, wondering aloud, and posing questions to the students for promotion of reasoning. Constructivists see learners as being active rather than passive with the instructor playing advisory and facilitating roles, encouraging them to arrive at their versions of the truth, influenced by their backgrounds, cultures and worldviews (Hung, 2001). Learning should be an active process, keeping learners active with high-level activities such as asking learners to apply information in practical situations, facilitating the personal interpretation of learning content, discussing topics within a group, assessment, and so forth. This theory of learning is important in this study as it underlines the importance of e-learning, which has been the kiss of life for many during the COVID-19 lockdown.

### **Behaviourism**

The behaviourist school sees learning as a change in observable behaviour caused by external stimuli in the environment. It claims that it is the observable behaviour that indicates whether or not the learner has learned something, and not what is going on in the learner's head (Modritscher, 2006). For the behaviourists, the mind is like a "black box" that observes a response to a stimulus in a purely quantitative fashion- without taking into account the thought processes occurring in the mind. Skinner (1974) argued that since it is not possible to prove the inner processes with any available scientific procedures, researchers should rather concentrate on 'cause-and-effect relationships' that could be established by observation. The behaviourist theory explains that individuals learn based on what they see in their environment. The theory could also explain the difference that could be present in the learning abilities of primary school pupils whether in the classroom and at home.

### **Empirical Review**

Iwu and Iwu (2013) carried out a study on factors inhibiting the effective management of primary schools in Nigeria. The study aimed at identifying some of the problems militating against effective management of primary schools in Afikpo South local government area in Ebonyi State of Nigeria. A self-administered questionnaire containing eight research questions with twenty-four (24) questionnaire items was used for the study. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data. The study found, among others, that high numbers of enrolment put pressure on meagre school facilities, while heads of schools,

teachers, and pupils were affected by a general lack of facilities. This is exemplified by some schools where classes took place outside the normal classrooms and in some cases, outside the school compound. The authors insist that provision of adequate and qualified teachers must be a conscious programme of both government and heads of schools because the successful administration of primary schools is possible with qualified and dedicated teachers, well equipped primary schools, expansion of schools to accommodate the increasing enrolment of pupils and a co-operative community incorporating parents of pupils.

Aitokhuehi and Ojogho (2014) examined the impact of computer literacy on students' academic performance in Esan West Local Government Area of Edo State, Nigeria. To determine the impact of computer literacy in the academic performance of students in the senior secondary schools in Esan West Local Government Area of Edo State, four (4) questions were raised and answered. Data were obtained via the use of an instrument titled: Questionnaire on Students' Computer Literacy Level and Computer Usage (QSCLLCU). One hundred and twenty (120) out of 1,200 final year students, representing 10% were used from the fourteen (14) existing secondary schools in Esan West local government area of Edo State, Nigeria. The data for the study were analysed using correlation analysis. The findings revealed that: computer literate students perform better than non-computer literate; computer literate female students perform better than male students who are also computer literate; computer literate students who are not addicted to the use of computer facilities perform better than those who are addicted; computer literate students in co-educational secondary schools perform slightly better than those in single-sex schools. Based on the findings, it was recommended among other things that all the students in Esan West Local Government Area of Edo State should be taught how to use computer facilities to search for valid information related to their academic activities.

Edeh, Nwafor, Obafemi, Sen, Atonye, Sharma, and Alsayed (2020) investigated the impact of COVID-19 on education. Data were collected through structured questionnaires administered to 200 respondents that consisted of teachers, students, parents, and policymakers selected from different countries. The collected data were analyzed using STATA/Regression. The results show that COVID-19 has adverse effects on education, including learning disruptions and decreased access to education and research facilities, Job losses and increased student debts. The findings also show that many educators and students relied on

technology to ensure continued learning during the Coronavirus pandemic. However, online education was hindered by poor infrastructures including, network, power, inaccessibility and unavailability issues, and poor digital skills. The study underscores the detrimental effects of COVID-19 on the education sector and the need for all educational institutions, educators, and learners to adopt technology and improve their digital skills in line with the emerging global trends and realities in education.

Duraku and Hoxha (2020) explored and described the concerns of students, parents, and teachers in relation to the present circumstances caused by social isolation and the perspectives of teachers and parents about remote or online learning. This study adopted the qualitative approach. In the framework of the study, the case study research strategy was used. For data collection, semi-structured interviews were used, which were conducted with (N = 13) parents, and (N = 11) teachers. Study participants are an active part of pre-university public institutions within (n = 14) municipalities from (n = 7) regions of Kosovo. The study shows that the new circumstances created by the spread of COVID-19, including changes in education, have caused some concerns among students, parents, and teachers in Kosovo. The findings confirm the common concerns of the two reporting groups in the study about student assessment, worries, and overload, as well as evaluations of the incompatibility of the learning conducted so far and the readiness and motivation of teachers to advance their knowledge and skills, as well as to contribute to advance the quality of education. Opportunities to advance the quality of online learning, the support of teachers, parents, and families, coupled with practical suggestions for parties involved in the field of education, are also included.

Mhlanga and Moloi (2020) assessed the influence of the COVID-19 pandemic in motivating digital transformation in the education sector in South Africa. The study was premised on the fact that learning in South Africa and the rest of the world came to a standstill due to the lockdown necessitated by COVID-19. To assess the impact, the study tracked the rate at which the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) tools were used by various institutions during the COVID-19 lockdown. Data were obtained from secondary sources. The findings are that, in South Africa, during the lockdown, a variety of 4IR tools were unleashed from primary education to higher and tertiary education where educational activities switched to remote (online) learning. These observations reflect that South Africa

generally has some pockets of excellence to drive the education sector into the 4IR, which has the potential to increase access. Access to education, particularly at a higher education level, has always been a challenge due to a limited number of spaces available. Much as this pandemic has brought with it massive human suffering across the globe, it has presented an opportunity to assess successes and failures of deployed technologies, costs associated with them, and scaling these technologies to improve access.

### **Summary of Review of Related Literature**

The study examined the impact of COVID-19 on primary education in Uzo Uwani Local Government Area of Enugu State. Throughout the study, various theories and empirical studies were analysed. The theories analysed were Behaviourism and Constructivism. Both theories try to explain how the primary school pupils could keep track of their learning using e-learning during the lockdown. The study also reviewed several empirical studies related to the study. Edeh et al. (2020), Vallejo and Maron (2020), and Duraku and Hohxa (2020) all noted that the pandemic has had undesirable effects on the education levels of people. However, Mhlanga and Moloi (2020) believe that the pandemic has boosted digital learning.

### **Gaps in Knowledge**

The current study has identified a few gaps in the existing literature. The gap could be found in both the content and the geographical scope of the study. Previous studies did not specifically investigate how the new coronavirus impacted primary education. Also the geographical location of the current study provides an interesting gap to fill.

### **Methodology**

The study covered the sixty (60) primary schools in Uzo-Uwani, using a systematic sampling. Sixteen primary schools were selected, each from Adaba, Abii, Nrobo, Ugbene, Nkpologu, Akpugu-Ezedike, Ogurugu, Asaba, Nkume, Ukpata, Umulokpa, Ojor, Igga, Adani, Uvuru, and Nimbo communities in Uzo-Uwani Local Government Area of Enugu State. The study used the survey approach. The primary source was the administration of questionnaire to the teachers, pupils, and parents of the selected schools. Out of a population of six thousand three hundred and eighty-three (6383), 688 respondents were sampled. The sample size was chosen after applying the Freund and William's formula for the determination

of adequate sample size. Out of the population sampled, 510 returned the questionnaire, accurately filled. The criterion mean is 2.50. Any grand mean of 2.50 or above on the 4-point scale was considered as a high level of competence, while the one below 2.50 was considered low. The hypotheses were tested using z-test.

### Data Presentation and Analyses

**Research question One: What is the extent of academic negligence of primary school pupils during the COVID-19 lockdown?**

**Table 4.2: Responses to research question One: on the extent of academic negligence of primary education pupils during the COVID-19 lockdown.**

#### Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation
The desire to study at home has reduced	510	1	4	1618	3.17	.749
Children Spent more time watching TV, playing video/computer games.	510	1	4	1632	3.20	.874
While learning from home, the environment was not always conducive for academic work given that the entire family is home	510	1	4	1551	3.04	.959
COVID-19 schools close down led to the suspension of all extra-curriculum activities	510	1	4	1507	2.95	1.001

Pupils could not easily provide feedback through questions, activities, quizzes, tasks, and	510	1	4	1601	3.14	.841
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*Source: Field Survey, 2020*

From table 4.1, the mean for the items in table shows that the mean score is above 2.5 on a 4-point calibrated scale. With the mean score of 3.17 and the deviation of .749 showing that the desire to study at home has reduced. Children Spent more time watching TV, playing video/computer games with a mean score of 3.20 and standard deviation of .874, While learning from home, the environment was not always conducive for academic work given that the entire family is home with a mean score of 3.04 and standard deviation of .959 as shown by the data, the high mean score of 2.95, it is evident that the respondents agreed that COVID-19 schools closure led to the suspension of all extra-curriculum activities. Pupils could not easily provide feedback through questions, tasks, activities, and quizzes with mean score of 3.14 and standard deviation of .841.

**Research question Two: To what extent have primary school pupils been neglected and abused during the COVID-19 lockdown?**

**Table 4.2: Responses to research question two: on the extent to which primary school pupils have been neglected and abused during the COVID-19 lockdown.**

**Descriptive Statistics**

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Child maltreatment increased.	510	1	4	1687	3.31	.775

Pupils faced corporal punishment, present with more aggressive and antisocial behaviours from their elders at home	510	1	4	1637	3.21	.697
Sexual exploitation of children increased	510	1	4	1620	3.18	.860
Children's rights were violated	510	1	4	1645	3.23	.703
Domestic violence increased	510	1	4	1614	3.16	.523
<b>Grand Mean and Standard Deviation</b>						

*Source: Field Survey, 2020*

From table 4.2, the mean for the items in table shows that the mean score is above 2.5 on a 4-point calibrated scale. With the mean score of 3.31 and the deviation of .775 showing that Child maltreatment increased. Pupils faced corporal punishment, present with more aggressive and antisocial behaviours from their elders at home with a mean score of 3.21 and standard deviation of .697, Sexual exploitation of children increased with a mean score of 3.18 and standard deviation of .860 as shown by the data, the high mean score of 3.23, Children's rights were violated. The respondents agreed that domestic violence increased with mean score of 3.16 and a standard deviation of .523.

**Research question Three: How has the COVID-19 lockdown impacted the digital literacy of primary school pupils?**

**Table 4.2: Responses to research question three: on the extent to which the COVID-19 lockdown impacted the digital literacy of primary school pupils**  
**Descriptive Statistics**

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Lack of access to internet facilities made e-learning difficult	510	1	4	1470	2.88	1.013
Teachers and parents did not quickly adapt to the digital teaching and learning	510	1	4	1445	2.83	.992
The child's school offered online learning while closed	510	1	4	1650	3.24	.714
There was no high-speed broadband internet access at home	510	1	4	1655	3.25	.809
There was no sufficient training on ICT usage.	510	1	4	1702	3.34	.717
<b>Grand Mean and Standard Deviation</b>						

*Source: Field Survey, 2020*

From table 4.3, the mean for the items in the table shows that the mean score is above 2.5 on a 4-point calibrated scale. With the mean score of 2.88 and the deviation of 1.013 showing that lack of access to internet facilities made e-learning difficult. Teachers and parents did not quickly adapt to the digital teaching and learning with a mean score of 2.83 and standard deviation of .992, the child's

school offered online learning while closed with a mean score of 3.24 and standard deviation of .714 as shown by the data, the high mean score of 3.25, there was no high-speed broadband internet access at home. The respondents agreed that there was no sufficient training on ICT usage with a mean score of 3.34 and a standard deviation of .717.

## Test of Hypotheses

**4.2.1 Hypothesis One: To a low extent, there is academic negligence on primary education pupils during the COVID-19 lockdown.**

**Table 4.2.1.1: Z - test on the extent of academic negligence on primary education pupils during the COVID-19 lockdown**

N		510
Normal Parameters	Mean	3.1
	Std Deviation	0.8848
Most Extreme	Absolute	0.231
Most Extreme	Positive	0.161
Differences	Negative	-0.231
Kolmogorov-Smirnon Z		5.2204
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.000

- a. Test distribution is Normal
- b. Calculated from data

## Decision Rule

If the calculated Z-value is greater than the critical Z-value (i.e  $Z_{cal} > Z_{critical}$ ), reject the null hypothesis, and accept the alternative hypothesis accordingly.

## Result

With Kolmogorov-Smirnon Z - a value of 5.2204 and on Asymp. Significance of 0.000, the responses from the respondents as display in the table is normally distributed. This affirms the assertion of most of the respondents that to a great extent, there is academic negligence on primary education pupils during the COVID-19 lockdown. Furthermore, comparing the calculated Z- value of 5.2204

against the critical Z- value of 2.18 (2-tailed test at 97% level of confidence) the null hypothesis was rejected. Thus the alternative hypothesis was accepted which states that to a great extent, there is academic negligence on primary education pupils during the COVID-19 lockdown.

**4.2.1 Hypothesis Two: To a low extent, there is abuse on primary education pupils during the COVID-19 lockdown.**

**Table 4.2.1.1: Z - test on the extent of abuse on primary education pupils during the COVID19 lockdown.**

N		510
Normal Parameters	Mean	3.218
	Std Deviation	0.7116
Most Extreme	Absolute	0.1922
Most Extreme	Positive	0.14
Differences	Negative	-0.1922
Kolmogorov-Smirnon Z		4.3414
Asymp. Sig.(2-tailed)		.000

- a. Test distribution is Normal
- b. Calculated from data

**Decision Rule**

If the calculated Z-value is greater than the critical Z-value (i.e  $Z_{cal} > Z_{critical}$ ), reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis accordingly.

**Result**

With Kolmogorov-Smirnon Z - value of 4.3414 and on Asymp. Significance of 0.000, the responses from the respondents as display in the table is normally distributed. This affirms the assertion of most of the respondents that to a great extent, there is abuse on primary education pupils during the COVID-19 lockdown. Furthermore, comparing the calculated Z- value of 4.3414 against the critical Z- value of 2.18 (2-tailed test at 97% level of confidence) the null hypothesis was rejected. Thus the alternative hypothesis was accepted which states that to a

great extent, there is abuse on primary education pupils during the COVID-19 lockdown.

**Hypothesis Three: To a low extent, there is digital literacy on primary education pupils during the COVID-19 lockdown.**

**Table 4.2.1.1: Z - test on the extent of digital literacy on primary education pupils during the COVID-19 lockdown.**

N		510
Normal Parameters	Mean	3.108
	Std Deviation	0.849
Most Extreme	Absolute	0.2024
Most Extreme	Positive	0.1564
Differences	Negative	-0.2024
Kolmogorov-Smirnon Z		4.5752
Asymp. Sig.(2-tailed)		.000

- a. Test distribution is Normal
- b. Calculated from data

**Decision Rule**

If the calculated Z-value is greater than the critical Z-value (i.e  $Z_{cal} > Z_{critical}$ ), reject the null hypothesis, and accept the alternative hypothesis accordingly.

**Result**

With Kolmogorov-Smirnon Z - value of 4.5752 and on Asymp. Significance of 0.000, the responses from the respondents as display in the table is normally distributed. This affirms the assertion of most of the respondents that to a great extent, there is digital literacy on primary education pupils during the COVID-19 lockdown. Furthermore, comparing the calculated Z- value of 4.5752 against the critical Z- value of 2.18 (2-tailed test at 97% level of confidence) the null hypothesis was rejected. Thus, the alternative hypothesis was accepted which states that to a great extent, there is digital literacy on primary education pupils during the COVID-19 lockdown.

### **Discussion of Findings**

From hypotheses one, the null hypothesis was dismissed by contrasting the measured Z- value of 5.2204 to the critical Z- value of 2.18 (2-tailed check at 97 percent confidence level). This acknowledged the alternative hypothesis that to a great extent, there is academic negligence on primary education pupils during the lockdown. While COVID-19 has forced schools in developed climes to switch to the online mode of learning, millions of children in developing countries like Nigeria, who have no access to remote-learning, have been left behind. In line with the study, Edeh, *et al* (2020) investigated the impact of COVID-19 on education, their results show that COVID-19 has adverse effects on education including, learning disruptions, and decreased access to education and research facilities, Job losses, and increased student debts.

The lockdown itself has caused child abuse and molestation. It has become a major challenge in the sense that the little ones have been constrained by the COVID-19 restrictions to stay in one place with their abusers. Children face increased risk of child labour and sexual exploitation as families struggle to feed their families. In hypothesis two, the measured Z- value of 4.3414 against the critical Z- value of 2.18 (2-tailed test at a confidence level of 97 percent), the null hypothesis was rejected. Thus it accepted the alternative hypothesis which states that to a great extent, there is abuse of primary education pupils during the COVID-19 lockdown.

From hypothesis three comparing the calculated Z- value of 4.5752 against the critical Z- value of 2.18 (2-tailed test at 97% level of confidence), the null hypothesis was rejected. Thus the alternative hypothesis was accepted which states that to a great extent, there is digital literacy of primary education pupils during the COVID-19 lockdown. In line with the study, pupils who currently cannot keep up with their peers because of inaccessibility to digital tools may never catch up and will continue to feel the effect of this gap long after the pandemic is over. This may result in a severely diminishing pool of young adults who have not garnered the necessary skills to stay ahead in the future. With Nigeria already behind in preparing its young people for the workplace of the future, the effects of the pandemic further exacerbate this issue.

## Conclusions

COVID-19 has dealt a deadly blow to the world and primary school children have been reeling from the effects. The lockdown that it triggered kept many of them in rural areas like Uzo Uwani out of school bringing to the fore the importance of digital literacy and online learning. In the period of COVID-19, it has come in handy, ensuring that children are not deprived of education. In the absence of schools and daycares, it is only natural that Nigerians should embrace it and maximize its benefits.

## Recommendations

1. It is a relief to see that quality education is still possible even in these difficult times thanks to online learning. The need for government, students, teacher and parents to prioritize digital literacy cannot therefore be over emphasized. This includes the need to seek ways to reach out to the rural and semi-urban areas without access to television, radio, or the internet. Indeed, in precarious times such as this, digital literacy is no more an option; it is a necessity.
2. There is an urgent need to protect and save the children. The Government at the various levels should adopt measures to mitigate the impacts of abuse and neglect. Posters and flyers with messages on what to do to protect children including the danger signs to look out for and the phone numbers to call in cases of abuse should be produced and made available to victims of abuse. All hands must be on deck to ensure the safety of our children as we battle the pandemic.
3. As humanity awaits solutions, people are warned not to let their guard down. All must try to not to get carried away. The government have the obligation to monitor and enforce peoples' compliance with the safety guidelines. It must be stated that NCDC occupies the driver's seat in this. The rest of us as passengers must rely on them to provide a sense of safety and security.

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