COVID-19 LOCKDOWN AND STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF ONLINE LEARNING INITIATIVE IN AL-HIKMAH UNIVERSITY, NIGERIA: IMPLICATIONS FOR MANAGEMENT

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Abstract

The global covid-19 pandemic forced higher institutions in Nigeria to migrate from traditional mode of teaching to online platform. It is on this premise that this study examined covid-19 lockdown and students' perception of online learning Initiative in Al-Hikmah University, Nigeria. Research design of descriptive type was adopted for the study. Four research questions were formulated for the study. The population consists of all 9,426 students in Al-Hikmah University. Stratified and random sampling techniques were used to select 375 respondents across all 7 faculties in the university. An instrument titled 'Students' Perception of Online Learning Initiative Questionnaire (SPOLIQ)'' was adapted to elicit relevant data via google form. The data collected were analysed using descriptive method. Findings revealed that online learning initiative was very helpful to students amidst lockdown. Specifically, students enjoyed the use of whatsapp, zoom and telegram as platforms for receiving lectures. Findings indicate that some challenges were associated with the use of online leaning. They include inadequate data subscription and network problem among others. Lastly, adequate data subscription and good internet service were suggested as measures that can be used to improve online learning in the university.

Keywords: Covid-19, Lockdown, Students' Perception, Online Initiative

1. INTRODUCTION

The spread of covid-19 has led to profound changes in social interaction and organization, and the education sector has not been immune. While the primary student population appears to be at a lower mortality risk category compared to older adults, pandemic precautions called "social distancing" or "physical distancing" have attempted to reduce interpersonal contact and thereby minimize the kind of community transmission that could develop quickly in dense social networks like the university campus (Weeden & Cornwell, 2020; Yusuf & Mustapha 2020; Yusuf, Akinnubi & Mustapha, 2020). Following the logic of the exception that extraordinary times call for extraordinary measures, one common trend in education systems

around the world has been to respond to the pandemic with "emergency eLearning" protocols, marking the rapid transition of face-to-face classes to online learning systems. (Audrey-Azoulay, 2020; Bao, 2020; UNESCO, 2020).

Most academic heads are now promoting online education as a solution to this crisis (WHO, 2020). It is necessary to acknowledge the fact that online education is not an ad hoc solution to face-to-face delivery. Bigger universities over the past decade are gradually moving their programs online and doing away with face to face delivery (Bao, 2020). Top universities in the world such as Tsinghua, Peking University, Harvard, MIT, Yale, Oxford, Cambridge, among others are moving in this direction (Bao, 2020; Picciano, 2017). Bao & Filius (2020) argue that going entirely online requires significant planning and investments from all sectors. So, if the university has not hitherto taken the students and instructors through an online teaching training, and may not have enough resources including recording platforms both on campus and at home to get the instructor to record and present the work in a manner that can be accessed by students, then the online plan ends right here (Aragon & Johnson, 2018; Bao & Filius, 2020; Yang & Li, 2018).

Online learning refers to an electronic learning environment where, unlike traditional learning, there are no physical peer learners, and there is freedom of time and space. However, e-learning makes learning flexible and provides an alternative for those who cannot attend traditional classrooms for any reason. With the growth of technology and the Internet, e-learning has secured a good position in an academic world. At times, e-learning is included in the category of distance education (Bates, 2015). According to Bernard, Borokhovski, Schmid, Tamim and Abrami (2014), Lockman and Schirmer (2020), in online learning, students do much better than at traditional learning, and this can be seen through the increasing rates of course completion, student's satisfaction, and their motivation levels in order to acquire more knowledge from online learning. Delivering the scope of online learning, Aparicio, Bacao and Oliveira (2016), divides online learning into two main areas, learning, and technology where learning is the cognitive process for achieving knowledge, and technology is the tool to support the process of achieving it. As a result of COVID-19 lockdown introduced by the Federal Government in the year 2020, which made public and private universities to close schools, Al-Hikmah University was one of the few private universities in the country that initiated online learning as a way of ensuring uninterrupted academic calendar. It is on this premises that this study examines students' perception of online learning initiative in Al-Hikmah University, Nigeria.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Several studies have addressed the challenges associated with the introduction of e-learning. There has been evidence that the introduction of electronic learning initiatives has failed because institutions and their constituents were not prepared for the experience (Bao, 2020; Bates, 2015; Carr, 2018; Rakhmat, 2015). Martin and Bolliger (2018) found that icebreaker / introduction and working with online communication tools were the most important engagement among learners while sending reminders and providing rubrics for assignments constituted the most important benefit in learner-instructor interactions. Similarly, Zaheer, Gondal and Qadri (2015) identified that many students were satisfied with the education received online which further revealed that e-learning can support higher education in countries where higher education institutions are limited. Factors found to contribute to student

satisfaction were embodied in the tutorials, student contribution, the type of instructor, mode of assessment, the content, learning environment, and the resources used (Armstrong, 2011; Michotte, 2017; Zaheer et al., 2015). The issue at hand is not associated with limitation in higher educational institutions but a situation demanding for an emergency remote teaching because social gatherings including educational institutions are seen as a threat to promote COVID-19 pandemic and has been locked down.

A comparative study conducted by Adams, Randall and Traustadóttir (2015) shows that online learners were less successful when compared with face-to-face learners which was inferred through student's motivation, satisfaction, and attendance. Powers, Brooks, Galazyn, & Donnelly (2016) concluded that, in addition to the prior observation, these hybrid learners received lower grades in examinations when compared with face-to-face learners, because face-to-face learners had the immediate, physical help of the educator to clarify any tough concepts, and to direct their queries to, but this was not the case with online learners. Lee (2014) opined that course design in both types of learning also plays an important role in getting good results and eventually influences student satisfaction. The interaction for online courses can take place through the use of both synchronous tools (video-conferencing, audio channels, online chat rooms) and asynchronous tools (e-mail, discussion boards) (Alamri & Tyler-Wood, 2017; Mc Isaac et al, 2017). Ku, Tseng and Akarasriworn (2013) suggested in online courses specifically, interaction is an important factor for perceived student learning and motivation. Moore (2016) found instructor-learner interaction to be the most significant factor in "student satisfaction" as well as in "student learning outcomes. Muirhead (2014) suggested that instructors need the proficiency to design course structures that encourage social interaction and uphold demanding academic principles, while nurturing self-governing learning skills. Knapp (2018) stated that online classes have been using the Learning Management System (LMS) for many years, but that the system often lacks the valuable collaborative spaces for students to do real-time, collective discussion and learning. Alqurashi (2019) found that learner-content and learner-instructor interactions are very important for student perceived learning and satisfaction, however, learner-learner interaction is not such an important predictor.

Bao (2020) found that online is an important factor that be used to stimulate students' interest in learning. Bulić and Blažević (2020) suggested a reverse relation of student motivation with online teaching. The modern teaching methods and online environment increase student motivation to learn in that environment. The learning environment also influences human motivation. A case study of adult students of distance education by Chyung, Winiecki and Fenner (2012) stated that the reason for dropouts from online courses is the dissatisfaction with the learning environment. They further stated that graduate students are often more self-motivated, therefore online learning doesn't affect their learning outcome and need for interaction with peers online. The role of an instructor in an online environment is to encourage, guide, and invoke critical thinking in students with autonomy and accountability, rather than using traditional teaching (Cappel, 2016; Knapp, 2018; Moore, 2016). In online environments, to be a good instructor and have steadfast technological equipment is crucial. Armstrong (2017) stated that the instructor should facilitate the discussion in an online class not only between learner and instructor, but also between learners. The importance of facilitation and social presence, driven by the instructor, is an important determinant of online

learning quality (Carr, 2018). Students' perceived learning and student satisfaction together can represent a better understanding of online learning success (Zaheer et al; 2016). Adams et al. (2015) found that there is high correlation between students' overall perceived learning with students' satisfaction in online learning. In the same vein, Marks, Sibley and Arbaugh (2015) concluded that an immediate result of a successful learning experience is a satisfied student, and that the perceived student learning outcome is a good predictor of student satisfaction in online learning. Ikhsan, Saraswati, Muchardie and Susilo (2019) found that perceived learning outcomes contributed to student satisfaction and positively influence it in the online environment.

Theoretically, this study is based on the theory Technology Acceptance Model (TAM,) which deals more specifically with the prediction of the acceptability of an information system. The purposes of these models are to predict the acceptability of a tool and to identify the modifications which must be brought to the system in order to make it acceptable to users. This model suggests that the acceptability of an information system is determined by two main factors: which are; Perceived usefulness and Perceived ease of use. Perceived usefulness is seen as the degree to which a person believes that the use of a system will improve his performance. Perceived ease of use refers to the degree to which a person believes that the use of a system will be effortless. Several factorial analyses demonstrated that perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use can be considered as two different dimensions (Sagnier, Loup-Escande, Lourdeaux, Thouvenin & Valléry, 2020). As demonstrated in the theory, the Technology Acceptance Model postulates that the use of an information system is determined by the behavioral intention, but on the other hand, that the behavioral intention is determined by the person's attitude towards the use of the system and also by his perception of its utility. According to Davis, the attitude of an individual is not the only factor that determines his use of a system, but is also based on the impact which it may have on his performance. Therefore, even if an employee does not welcome an information system, the probability that he will use it is high if he perceives that the system will improve his performance at work. Besides, the Technology Acceptance Model hypothesizes a direct link between perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use. With two systems offering the same features, a user will find more useful the one that he finds easier to use (Alfadda & Mahdi, 2021; Estriegana, Medina-Merodio & Barchino, 2019; Chang, Hajiyev & Su, 2017).

According to Zarafshani, Solaymani, D'Itri, Helms and Sanjabi (2020), perceived ease of use also influences in a significant way the attitude of an individual through two main mechanisms: self-efficacy and instrumentality. Self-efficacy is a concept developed by Bandura (1982) which explains that the more a system is easy to use, the greater should be the user's sense of efficacy. Moreover, a tool that is easy to use will make the user feel that he has a control over what he is doing (Scherer, Siddiq & Tondeur, 2019; Walker, Kho, Tan & Lim, 2020). Efficacy is one of the main factors underlying intrinsic motivation (Fun, 2020; Pittalis, 2020) and it is what illustrates here the direct link between perceived ease of use and attitude. Perceived ease of use can also contribute in an instrumental way in improving a person's performance. Due to the fact that the user will have to deploy fewer efforts with a tool that is easy to use, he will be able to spare efforts to accomplish other tasks (Assaker, 2020; Zheng & Li, 2020). It is however interesting to note that the research presented by Davis (1989) to validate his model, demonstrates that the link between the intention to use an information system and perceived usefulness is stronger than perceived ease of use. According to this model, we can therefore expect that the factor which influences the most a user is the perceived usefulness of a tool.

Although the initial TAM model was empirically validated, it explained only a fraction of the variance of the outcome variable, IT usage. Therefore, many authors have refined the initial model, trying to find the latent factors underlying perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness (Al-Emran, Mezhuyev, & Kamaludin, 2018; Binyamin, Rutter & Smith, 2019; McFarland & Hamilton, 2006; Pal & Vanijja, 2020).

In TAM, Venkatesh and Davis (2000) showed that social influence processes (subjective norm, voluntarily, image) and cognitive instrumental processes (job relevance, output quality, result demonstrability) affected perceived usefulness and intention to use. A notable refinement of the TAM model is proposed by Mc Farland and Hamilton (2006). Their model assumes that 6 contextual variables (prior experience, other's use, computer anxiety, system quality, task structure, and organizational support) affect the dependant variable system usage through 3 mediating variables (computer efficacy, perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness). The model also postulates direct relations between the external variables and system usage and not only mediation through perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness. Adding contextual specificity to the Technology Acceptance Model from McFarland and Hamilton (2006), the results comforted the research model, showing that "system usage was directly and significantly affected by task structure, prior experience, other's use, organizational support, anxiety, and system quality." Mediation effect is also shown as predicted. However, for some relations, the effect went in the opposite direction from expected, like other's use lowering computer efficacy or high quality systems linked to low frequency of use. In some, the initial model or its extension does not completely accounts for the observed variance in system usage. However, the models all agree that computer efficacy affects perceived ease of use, which in turns is strongly related to perceived usefulness. It is on this premise that this study examines students' perception of online learning initiative in Al-Hikmah University and its implications for management.

2.1 Research Questions

1. What is students' perception on use of online learning initiative in Al-Hikmah University?
2. What are the benefits of online learning initiative in Al-Hikmah University?
3. What are the challenges associated with online learning initiative in Al-Hikmah University?
4. What are the measures that can be used to improve online learning initiatives?

3. METHODOLOGY

The research design adopted for this study was descriptive survey type. The population consists of all students in Al-Hikmah University. Specifically, it consists of 9426 students (undergraduate and postgraduate) based on the data obtained from the ICT Unit of Al-Hikmah University. Based on the population of 9426 students in the school, the sample size of 375 was determined via the use of Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sampling table. Two sampling techniques were used to determine respondents. Firstly, stratified sampling technique was used to group the faculties in the university (Agriculture, Education, Health Sciences, Humanities and Social Sciences, Law, Management Sciences and Natural and Applied Sciences). Secondly, simple random sampling technique was used to select 375 respondents from the faculties.

The instrument used in this study was adapted from the study conducted by Yusuf and Mustapha (2020) to elicit relevant data. The instrument is tagged "Students' Perception Of Online LeaRning Initiative Questionnaire (SPOLIQ)". The instrument consists of 2 sections A and B. Section A contains profiles of respondents which include; Sex, Age, Department, Programme, Faculty and preferred online learning method. Section B consists of items on students' perception of online learning initiative which include; the use of online learning platform, impact of online learning on students, challenges associated with online learning and measures to improve online learning. The instruments was subjected to face, construct and content validity in order to ensure that items contained in the instrument measure the objectives of the study. To achieve the foregoing thus, the instrument was given to lecturers in the Department of Educational Management and Counselling, Faculty of Education, Al-Hikmah University and experts in Measurement and Evaluation for their inputs to ascertain face, construct and content of the instrument. Furthermore, the reliability of the instruments was achieved to ensure that the instrument is reliable and can be used for data collection. To achieve this, pilot study was conducted with 50 students that were selected from Nana Aishat Memorial College of Education, Ilorin. The data collected were analyzed which yielded cronbach alpha of 0.86, 0.81 and 0.86 for use of online learning, challenges and measures respectively. The questionnaires were personally administered by the researcher to the students in their various hostels and lecture rooms. The instruments were collected immediately after the respondents duly filled in their responses. The data collected was analyzed using Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS) Software.

4. ANALYSIS

4.1. Demographic Information

Based on the data collected from the respondents, descriptive analysis was performed to for the presentation of demographic information of the respondents. The demographic information consists of sex, age, programme, faculty, and preferred online learning method. The information is presented in the table below:

Table 1:
Demographic Information

Variables	***Frequency***	**Percentage%**
Sex		
Male	183	49.7
Female	185	50.3
Total	**368**	**100**
Age		
Less Than 15 Years	78	21.2
16-25 Years	178	48.4
26 Years And Above	112	30.4
Total	**368**	**100**
Programme		
Degree	330	89.7
Top-Up	5	1.4
PGDE	4	1.1
M.Sc./M.Ed./M.A	27	7.3

Ph.D	2	0.5
Total	**368**	**100**
Faculty		
Agriculture	30	8.2
Education	60	16.3
Health Sciences	37	10.1
Humanities And Social Sciences	44	12.0
Law	36	9.8
Management Sciences	99	26.9
Natural And Applied Sciences	62	16.8
Total	**368**	**100**
Students' Preferred Online Learning Method		
Zoom	59	16.8
Whatsapp	285	77.4
Telegram	24	6.5
Total	**368**	**100**

Researchers' Field Work (2021)

Table 2 shows the profile of the respondents that participated in the study. The profile includes sex (male 183(49.7%); and female 185 (50.3%), age (less than 15 years 78 (21.2%); 16 to 25years 178 (48.4%); 26 years and above (112 (30.4%), programme (degree 330 (89.7%); Top-Up 5(1.4%); PGDE 4(1.1%); M.Sc./M.Ed./M.A(27 (7.3%); Ph.D. 2(0.2%), Faculty (Agriculture 30(8.2%); Education 60 (16.3%); Health Science 37(10.1%); Humanities and Social Sciences 44(12.0%); Law 36 (9.8%); Management Sciences 62 (16.8%), preferred online learning method(Zoom 159 (16.8%); WhatsApp 285(77.4%); telegram 24 (6.5%).

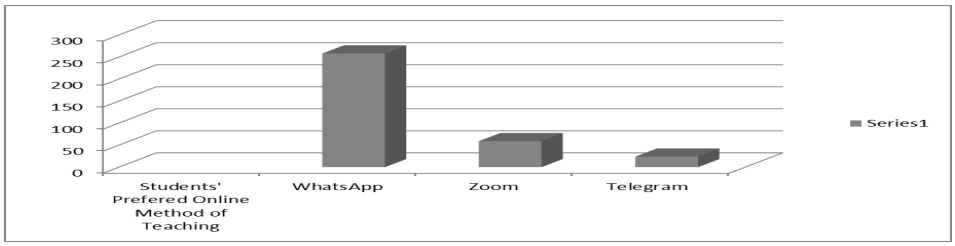

Figure 1: Graphical Representation of Students' Preferred Online Learning Method in Al-Hikmah University

4.2 Research Question 1: What is students' perception on use of online learning initiative in Al-Hikmah University?

Table 2:
Students' Perception of Online Learning Initiative

S/N	Items	N (%)	SA (%)	A(%)	D (%)	SD (%)	Remark

1	I take classes via zoom, WhatsApp and telegram	368(100)	95 (25.8)	208 (56.8)	31 (8.4)	34 (9.2)	Agreed
2	I interact with my lecturer online on any challenge regard my course work	368(100)	54 (14.7)	163 (44.3)	95 (25.8)	56 (15.2)	Agreed
3	I submit my assignment through online platforms	368(100)	121(32.9)	205 (55.7)	25 (6.8)	17 (4.6)	Agreed
4	Online learning platforms are improvement over traditional learning methods	368(100)	49 (13.3)	123 (33.4)	105 (28.5)	91 (24.7)	Agreed
5	I have access to digital libraries, in which case, I have a lot of eBooks on my laptop	368(100)	27 (7.3)	85 (23.1)	140 (38.0)	116(31.5)	disagreed

Results presented in table 2 shows that 208(56.8%) of the respondents agreed that they took classes via zoom, WhatsApp and telegram, 163(44.3%) of the respondents agreed that they interact with their lecturers online on any challenge regarding their course work, also 205(55.7%) respondents agreed that they submit their assignment through online learning platforms, likewise 123(33.4%) agreed learning platforms are improvement over traditional learning method, finally 140(38.0%) of the respondents agreed that they have access to digital libraries in which case, they do not have eBooks on their laptops.

4.3 Research Question 2: What are the benefits of online learning initiative in Al-Hikmah University?

Table 3:
Students' Perceived Benefits of Online Learning Initiative

SN	***Items***	***N (%)***	***SA (%)***	***A (%)***	***D(%)***	***SD (%)***	***Remark***
1	I can study at my own pace and work with course that is adapted to	368	45 (25.8)	169(45.9)	81 (22.0)	73 (19.8)	Agreed

	my needs and learning abilities.						
2	Online learning provides me greater degree of flexibility where I can manage my stress alongside other commitments.	368	41 (11.1)	136 (37.0)	107(29.1)	84 (22.8)	Agreed
3	Device, apps and multimedia tools help to make learning more interactive and enjoyable.	368	44 (12.0)	153 (41.6)	107 (29.1)	64 (17.4)	Agreed
4	Online learning improves my digital literacy as it provides an insight on how to be effective online and communicate with content, peers and lectures.	368	63 (17.1)	166 (45.1)	91 (24.7)	48 (13.0)	Agreed
5	Online learning provides me with the potential for increase comfort where I can study in an environment conducive to learning and free from distractions	368	38 (10.3)	135 (36.7)	117 (31.8)	78 (21.2)	Agreed

Results in table 3 indicate that online learning have impact on the students. 169(45.9%) agreed that they can study at their own pace and work with course that are adapted to their needs and learning abilities, also 136(37.0%) of the respondents agreed that online learning provides them greater degree of flexibility where they can manage their stress alongside other commitments, furthermore 153(41.6%) of the respondents agreed that Device, Apps and multimedia tools help to make learning how more interactive and enjoyable prospect. More so online learning improves the students' digital literacy as it provides an insight on how to be effective online and communicate with content, peers and lectures with 166(45.1%) agreed of the respondents. Finally, online learning provides them with the potential for increase comfort where they can study in an environment conducive to learning and free from distractions with 135(36.7%) agreed respondents.

4.4 Research Question 3: What are the challenges associated with online learning initiative in Al-Hikmah University?

Table 4:
Students' Perceived Challenges Associated with Online Learning

S/N	***Items***	***N (%)***	***SA(%)***	***A(%)***	***D(%)***	***SD(%)***	***Remark***
1	Slow internet connections make	368	239 (64.9)	101 (27.4)	20 (5.4)	8(2.2)	Agreed

	accessing course platforms and material frustrating to me.						
2	The temptation to procrastinate is usually stronger when there is no in-person interaction with the lecturer or with fellow student.	368	160 (43.5)	163(44.3)	35 (9.5)	10 (2.7)	Agreed
3	I am reluctant to change from traditional mode of learning	368	85 (23.1)	156 (42.4)	93 (25.3)	34 (9.2)	Agreed
4	The cost of daily/weekly/monthly data subscription is on the high side	368	281 (76.4)	67 (18.2)	14 (3.8)	6 (1.6)	Agreed
5	Support and guidance needed for me to easily make it through the course is usually skimpy in an online learning platform.	368(100)	159 (43.2)	161 (43.8)	39 (10.6)	9 (2.4)	Agreed

Results presented in table 4 revealed that 239(64.9%) strongly agreed that Slow internet connections make accessing course platforms and material frustrating to them, 163(44.3%) of the respondents agreed that the temptation to procrastinate is usually stronger when there is no in-person interaction with the lecturer or with fellow student. Furthermore, 156(42.4%) of the respondents agreed that they were reluctant to change from traditional mode of learning. More so, 281(76.4%) of the respondents strongly agreed that the cost of daily/weekly/monthly data subscription is on the high side. Finally, 161(43.8%) of the respondents agreed that support and guidance needed for them to easily make it through the course is usually skimpy in an online learning platform.

4.5 Research question 4: What are the measures that can be use to improve online learning initiatives in Al-Hikmah University?

Table 5:
Students' Perceived Measures for Improving Online Learning

S/N	***Items***	***N (%)***	***SA(%)***	***A(%)***	***D(%)***	***SD(%)***	***Remark***
1	Provision of basic courses in computer hardware and other ICT facilities	368	118 (32.1)	187(50.8)	41 (11.1)	22 (6.0)	Agreed
2	Effective time management in terms of scheduling learning.	368	97 (26.4)	201(54.6)	45 (12.2)	25 (6.8)	Agreed

3	Evaluation of effectiveness through test, quiz etc.	368	73 (19.8)	200(54.3)	59 (16.0)	36 (9.8)	Agreed
4	Adequate data subscription	368	145 (39.4)	133(36.1)	54 (14.7)	36 (9.8)	Agreed
5	Stimulate learners curiosity in other online platforms such as schoology, Skype, google meet etc.	368	68 (18.5)	175(47.6)	80 (21.7)	45(12.2)	Agreed

The results presented in table 5 shows the measures to improve online learning in Al-Hikmah University. 187(50.8%) of the respondents agreed that provision of basic courses in computer hardware and other ICT facilities, more so 201(54.6%) of the respondents agreed that Effective time management in terms of scheduling learning can be used to improve online learning. Furthermore, Evaluation of effectiveness through test, quiz etc. With 200(54.3%) of the respondents agreed, also 145(39.4%) of the respondents strongly agreed that adequate data subscription and 175(47.6%) of the respondents agreed that stimulate learners curiosity in other online platforms such as schoology, Skype, googlemeet etc. can also be used to improve online learning.

5. DISCUSSION

Based on the first research question on students' perception on use of online learning initiative in Al-Hikmah University, findings reveal that most of the students took classes via zoom, whatsapp and telegram. They also interact with their lecturers online on any challenges regarding their course work. The students submit their assignment through online learning platforms. According to the students, online learning platforms are improvement to traditional learning methods but the students do not have access to digital library, in which case, thy do not have enough eBooks via their laptops. The findings is in sync with the work of Ku, Tseng and Akarasriworn (2013) who found that online interaction is an important factor student learning and motivation. Moore (2016) found instructor-learner interaction to be the most significant factor in "student satisfaction" as well as in student learning outcomes. Muirhead (2014) suggested that instructors need the proficiency to design course structures that encourage social interaction and uphold demanding academic principles, while nurturing self-governing learning skills. Knapp (2018) found that online classes have been using the Learning Management System (LMS) for many years, but the system often lacks the valuable collaborative spaces for students to do real-time, collective discussion and learning. Alqurashi (2019) found that learner-content and learner-instructor interactions are very important for student perceived learning and satisfaction, however, learner-learner interaction is not such an important predictor. The findings coincide with the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), which postulates that the use of an information system is determined by the behavioral intention, but on the other hand, that the behavioral intention is influenced by the person's attitude towards the use of the system and also by his perception of its utility and that attitude of an individual is not the only factor that determines his use of a system, but is also centered on the effect which it may have on his performance. Thus, even if an employee does not

welcome an information system, the probability that he will use it is high if he perceives that the system will improve his performance at work (Alfadda & Mahdi, 2021; Estriegana, Medina-Merodio & Barchino, 2019; Chang, Hajiyev & Su, 2017).

The second research question was based on students' perceived benefits of online learning initiative in Al-Hikmah University. The outcome of the study indicated that students can study at their own pace and work with courses that are adapted to their needs and learning abilities. It is also revealed that online learning provides them greater degree of flexibility where they can manage their stress alongside other commitments. Device, Apps and multimedia tools help to make learning more interactive and enjoyable prospect, online learning also improves their digital literacy as it provides an insight into how to be effective online and communicate with content, peers and lectures. Finally, online learning provides them with the potential for increase in an environment conducive to learning and free from distractions. The findings tandem with Martin and Bolliger (2018) found that icebreaker / introduction and working with online communication tools were the most important engagement among learners while sending reminders and providing rubrics for assignments constituted the most important benefit in learner-instructor interactions. Similarly, Zaheer, Gondal and Qadri (2015) identified that many students were satisfied with the education received online which further revealed that e-learning can support higher education in countries where higher education institutions are limited.

The third research question was based on the challenges associated with online learning. Findings show that there are several challenges associated with online learning. They include slow internet connection, reluctant to change from traditional mode of learning, cost of data subscription etc. The findings is in support of a comparative study conducted by Adams, Randall and Traustadóttir (2015) which revealed that online learners were less successful when compared with face-to-face learners which was inferred through student's motivation, satisfaction, and attendance. Powers, Brooks, Galazyn and Donnelly (2016) concluded that, in addition to the prior observation, these hybrid learners received lower grades in examinations when compared with face-to-face learners, because face-to-face learners had the immediate, physical help of the educator to clarify any tough concepts, and to direct their queries to, but this was not the case with online learners. Likewise, the finding is in consonance with the work of Bao (2020). He suggest that people are attached to already existing pedagogies and practices making it difficult for them to adjust to innovations and upgrade existing ones. Carr (2018) was of the view that student perception about on-line learning has been negative due to past experiences resulting in high dropouts and low motivation of learner. Other factors were found to be low students' satisfaction associated with online learning experience (Yang & Li, 2018). McIsaac and Gunawardena (2017) found that there are numerous pros of online learning, especially in modern times, but conversely, there are some concerns that lead to the attrition of online learners and that eventually impede the progress of online courses, this include inadequate access to technology and lack of competence. González-Gómez, Jeong and Rodríguez (2016) established that lack of interest or motivation is one of the main things which hinder the growth of online learning, and this way it also increases the scale of dropouts from the online courses. Aragon and Johnson (2018) found that inadequate provision of ICT gadgets usually hampers effective online teaching.

The fourth research question was based on the measures that can be used to improve online learning initiative in Al-Hikmah University. Findings of the study show that several measures were suggested. They include; provision of basic courses in computer hardware and other ICT facilities, effective time management in terms of scheduling learning, evaluation of learning effectiveness through test, quiz etc. Also adequate data subscription and stimulate learners curiosity in the use of online learning platforms such as Schoology, Skype etc. can also be used to improve learning. The study is in line with the work of Armstrong (2017) who concluded that the instructor should facilitate the discussion in an online class not only between learner and instructor, but also between learners. The importance of facilitation and social presence, driven by the instructor, is an important determinant of online learning quality (Carr, 2018).

5.1 IMPLICATIONS FOR MANAGEMENT

Based on the findings of the study, it has several implications for the Management of Al-Hikmah University among others:

1. Management of Al-Hikmah University should build on the success recorded through the online learning introduced during the lockdown by increasing the use of technology for teaching and learning.

2. Since zoom, telegram and whatsapp were mainly used for online teaching; other applications such as googlemeet and skype should be incorporated into the school curriculum for effective teaching of students.

3. Adequate time must be given for online lecture, this will enable students to have comprehensive information about the course that they are teaching them.

4. Workshop should be organized for students on how to make use of technology for online learning.

5. There is need for training and re-training of lecturers on how to update their knowledge on online teaching.

6. Students should be provided adequate data subscription for online teaching and learning.

5.2 CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, it can be concluded that the importance of online learning during Covid-19 cannot be underestimated; hence the online learning adopted in Al-Hikmah University is needed to ensure uninterrupted teaching and learning activities. Therefore, students' perception of online learning reveals that it is good in the midst of COVID-19 pandemic. Specifically, online learning affords the university to continue lectures without any hindrance.

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