

Open, Distance and e-Learning (ODEL): A Panacea for the Administration of Education in Emergencies in Nigeria

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Abstract

The level of trauma associated with national emergencies oftentimes is dependent on the response of the government and the people. When an emergency strikes a country, a responsible government usually adopts innovative measures to mitigate and adapt to the negative effects of the phenomenon. Access to quality and decent learning opportunities and a more conducive teaching-learning environment during emergencies is crucial not only to equip learners with adequate knowledge and competencies but also to prevent vulnerabilities to; school dropout, child marriage, exploitation, child labour, violence, human trafficking, poverty, ignorance and diseases. This conceptual paper looks at issues historically and holistically by sourcing secondary data from both print and online resources to address issues using descriptive case study to position Open, Distance and e-Learning (ODEL) as an innovative method for effective delivery of quality education in emergencies (EiE). The study concludes that integration of ODEL into the existing national policy on education for conflict, insecure and emergency regions could play a cost-effective and transformative role in improving accessibility, continuity, flexibility and quality education-in-emergency. It was suggested that more studies need to be carried out to better understand the roles of emerging technological advancements and their proper management and application in the teaching and learning cycle in both emergency and stable situations.

Keywords: Distance, Education, Emergency, Insecurity, Covid-19

Quote: 'I Truly Believe That Education is the Antidote for Ignorance, Poverty and War'
- M. Jimenez. Arizona State University Lodestar Centre for Philanthropy and
Nonprofit Innovation, 2018.

Introduction

Education as a weapon to boost competencies, skills, and socio-economic growth and as a weapon to eradicate poverty, ignorance and inequality has no substitute. Despite the numerous benefits of education to the individual and the societies, it is often the first service to be suspended and the last to be restored during insecurity and emergencies.

The Nigerian educational system has come under continuous attacks resulting in learning loss, loss of lives and properties. The concern, however, is to embrace innovations in educational delivery in line with the digital transformations in improving the accessibility to flexible and standard education for sustainable development and preparing the education sector for the challenges of emergencies.

During emergency and insecure situations, staff and resource shortages prevent education systems from meeting the needs of the learners. Decision-making to assess the turbulent level and efficient humanitarian services is hindered due to data gaps and coordination challenges. Education is affected by both natural and artificial (man-made) crisis¹. Emergencies can lead to migration, relocation and displacement which often time affects the educational pursuits of school-aged children.

Adequate focus must be given to education as opined by Olugbeko², that education apart from being a public good is also the right of the citizens to access standard education because it is a panacea to the global security challenges and global sustainable development goals. Without any doubt, the more the people are educated, the more secure the nation. Insecurity is simply defined as "an emerging or existing threat to one's physical, psychological or emotional comfort.

¹Report of the Committee on the Rights of the Child on Its General Discussion on the Rights of the Child to Education in Emergencies Situation." *Right to Education Initiative*, (2008) www.right-to-education.org/resource/report-committee-rights-child-its-general-discussion-right-child-education-emergencies.

²Olugbeko, S.O. and Asagba E.N. Quality Education as a panacea to Global Security Challenges: A Case Study of Nigeria. Paper presented at *the International Conference on Arts, Economics and Management, 2014*.

According to Ayoko³, the fallout of any form of emergency is usually overwhelming on the students, the school, the community, and the government, this may increase the rate of school dropout by susceptible students, destruction of school infrastructures, and loss of lives and property.

The ongoing war between Russia and Ukraine has led to the total closure of various levels of educational institutions and several foreign students have had to abandon their educational pursuits by fleeing for safety⁴.

According to PBSO News⁵, although, Gaza's education system was experiencing critical challenges before the war outbreak between Israel and Palestine, about 17 higher institutions of learning and over 800 lower schools were destroyed by bomb blasts.

Man-made disasters like bomb explosions, urban fires, chemical spills, civic insurrection, bandit attacks, war, bandit attack, trafficking, and ethnic conflict or natural disasters like tsunamis, typhoons, drought, volcanic eruption, cyclones, land erosion, floods, earthquakes, typhoons, climate change, tornadoes, the landslide can result in emergencies that can discourage the potential for academic excellence due to the associated trauma and the socio-economic effects such as loss of livelihood, malnutrition, loss of properties and extreme poverty. Some students may not be able to cope with the socioeconomic impacts.

The unplanned movement of people during turbulent situations harms the educational progression of school children because when they are swept along with their parents in forced movement, they leave behind their educational activities and usually settle in places where there are no adequate provisions for physical schools. This situation may lead to school dropout, child marriage, child commercialisation or child soldiers.

³Ayoko Victor Olugbenga. "Understanding the 'Falling-Out' Factors that Contribute to School Dropout and the Ways Forward: Analysis of Government Failures, Cultural Beliefs, Disasters, Pandemic and Forced Migration". A paper presented at the *International Conference on Modern Education Studies, 25th-26th June 2022*: Konya, Turkey

⁴Kurapov, A., Pavlenko, V., Drozdov, A. Y., Bezliudna, V., Reznik, A., and Isralowitz, R. *Toward an understanding of the Russian-Ukrainian war impact on university students and personnel*. *Journal of Loss and Trauma*, 28(7), June 2022, 1-8.

⁵PBSO NEWS Weekend. *The devastating effect of the Israel-Hamas war on education in Gaza*, Mar 24, 2024.

The COVID-19 experience was an eye-opener to the flaws in the global education space and taught a lesson that with the ICT advancements in the twenty-first century, most countries are not prepared for new approaches for the delivery of innovative pedagogies needed for the management of educational crises. Gaps exist in innovations to mitigate and adapt to accessible education in conflict areas. The delivery of education in emergencies requires solid evidence and solutions-driven academic research. This position paper attempts to contribute to filling the gap

Objectives

This study aims to look into a series of emergency and insecurity occurrences that have militated against the smooth administration of education globally and locally and to justify the use of ODeL approaches in the smooth delivery and continuation of education during emergencies. Specifically, the historical experience of management of education in emergencies and the impeding challenges to stimulate research contributions, advance the acceptance of the ODeL approach and ideas in the administration of schools in emergencies.

Materials and Methods

This conceptual paper sourced secondary data from both print and online resources on the impacts of emergency crises on the administration of schools and positioned Open, Distance and e-Learning (ODeL) as a potential approach to the effective administration of sustainable education in emergencies in Nigeria.

The Concept of Open Distance and e-Learning (ODeL)

According to Naidu,⁶ ODeL consists of three domains known as Open learning, Distance learning and e-Learning.

⁶Naidu, S. E-Learning a Guidebook of Principles, Procedures and Practices (2nd Revised Ed.). *New Delhi Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia (CEMCA)*. Scientific Research Publishing, 2006.

Open learning is an educational philosophy that promotes quality, flexible and accessible education to every individual with minimal restrictions by eradicating the barriers caused by age, geography, and time constraints. Distance Education (DE) is a form of a teaching-learning process where the learners and the teachers are dispersed in different geographical locations using ICT to bridge this physical and instructional gap. E-learning is simply the use of the Internet of Things (IoT), Information and Communication Technology (ICT), Artificial Intelligence of Things (AIoT) and digital devices in teaching, learning and instructional delivery.

ODeL originates from the features of accessibility, affordability and openness provided by open learning, DE, and e-learning. It involves the interactive teaching and learning process without the necessity for face-to-face contact. ODeL involves the use of the Internet of Things (IoT), digital devices Artificial Intelligence of Things (AIoT) and information and communication technology (ICT) to develop educational materials for instructional delivery and management of the educational programmes, this makes it possible to reach a large sum of learners in their different and safe locations. ODeL delivery can be asynchronous, synchronous or blended.

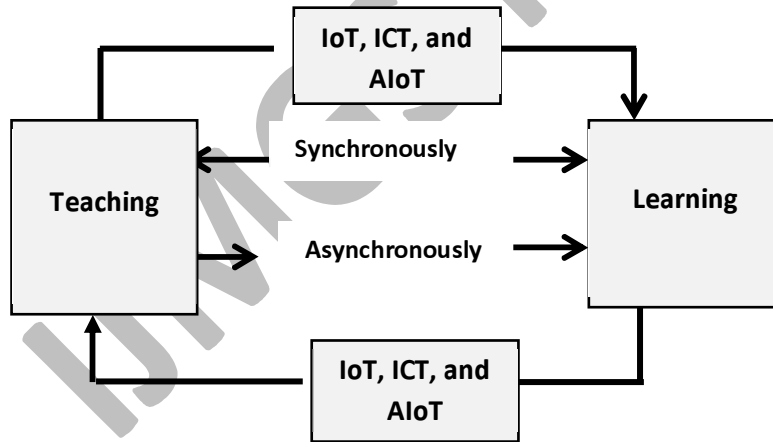


Figure 1: Teaching-Learning Model in ODeL
Source: Ayoko & Ayoko (2023)

The Concept of Education-in-Emergency (EiE)

Emergency has become a regular reoccurrence globally and when it happens, proactive measures are usually adopted by the government to arrest the devastating effects of the phenomenon.

Education in emergencies entails the provision of physical, cognitive and psychosocial quality learning opportunities that can sustain lives for all ages and at all levels of education during turbulent situations such as pandemics, natural and artificial disasters, conflicts, wars, terrorism, situations of violence, and forced displacement INEE⁷ clarified that “Education in emergencies is a wider concept than 'emergency education response' which is an essential part of it”.

The instrumentality of EiE ensures equitable and inclusive rights of children and young people to quality education in line with the focus of SDG4, Quality EiE encourages cognitive development, psychosocial support, well-being and hope in students during a crisis.⁸

Theoretical Framework

The theory of disaster and risk management by an American expert in emergency administration by the name of David McEntire in 2004 was formulated to provide a proactive all-in-one paradigm for the management of turbulent and hazardous phenomena that followed the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon that occurred on 11th of September 2001 in the United States of America.

⁷INEE 2018. “Annual Report | INEE.” *Inee.org*, inee.org/resources/inee-2018-annual-report2018.”

www.educacionyfp.gob.es/inee/indicadores/indicadores-internacionales/ocde/2018.html.

⁸United Nations. “United Nations Sustainable Development Summit 2015: Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform.” *Un.org*, 2015, sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/summit.

According to McEntire,⁹ the strategies to be employed should be based on the nature of the emergency, disaster or insecurity and must include: Strategies taken in readiness for any disastrous occurrences; strategies taken to eliminate or reduce the effects of an already occurred disaster; strategies taken to rescue the victims of the disaster as at the time of disaster occurrence; and strategies taken to normalise the disaster affected area and victims. This theory explains that emergencies are inevitable and may result in unrecoverable impacts unless proactive and urgent decisions and steps are taken concerning preventing, responding, recovering and mitigating issues in the emergency. Emergency management policies and strategies for executing them must be put in place so that society is not submerged in an unrecoverable critical situation that will threaten its existence.

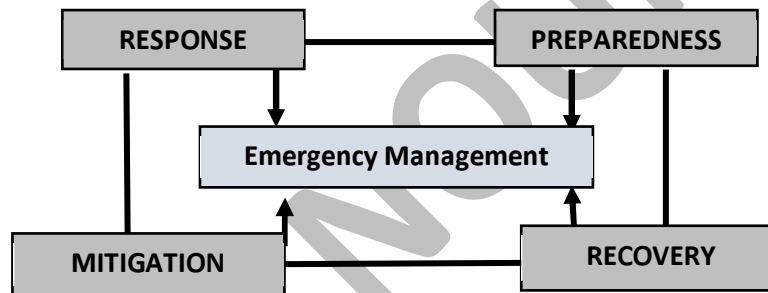


Fig. 2: Model of Emergency Planning and Management
Source: Ayoko & Ayoko (2023)

The fact remains that we cannot stop crises, insecurities, disasters and emergencies but we can formulate policies and innovations that will control the adverse effects on life and property.

We need to take advantage of the waving digital transformation and build the capacity to be able to distribute knowledge through effective teaching and learning via ICT to the ever-growing population. To achieve this, there is a need to sustain educational development through the ODeL approach during all the phases of disaster, insecurity, emergency and turbulent situations. Innovative actions can be taken by government and policymakers to prevent insecurities, disasters or emergencies through the implementation

⁹McEntire, D. "Emergency Management in the United States: Disasters Experienced, Lessons Learned, and Recommendations for the Future". In: McEntire, A., Ed., "*Comparative Emergency Management: Understanding Disaster Policies, Organisations, and Initiatives from Around the World*", FEMA, Washington DC, (2012).
<https://training.fema.gov/hiedu/aemrc/booksdownload/compemmgmtbookproject/>

of the ODeL approach at all levels of education especially in crisis-prone locations to prevent loss of life and properties.

The principle of education mitigation through the ODeL approach agrees with the fact that some man-made or natural events may happen but the impacts must be absorbable with minimal damage to educational sustainability.

The lessons from COVID-19 have shown that ODeL can be a viable preparedness approach to sustainable education. Preparedness involves critical policies to prevent and recover from turbulent situations. It is a continuous action that should entail all levels of government and the private sector to determine vulnerability and identify needed resources, policies, technology and innovations. In the preparedness phase, plans for sustainability are put in place as a shock absorber before a turbulent situation. Immediately after the occurrence of emergencies, comes the response phase. ODeL approach can be used to deliver mass education to reduce the likelihood of prolonged school closure and school dropout associated with forced migration from compromised or insecure locations. ODeL was used as a response strategy during the lockdown that follows the recent COVID-19 pandemic at all levels of education across countries. ODeL can also be indicated in the recovery phase of disaster, insecurity and emergency planning and management. It plays an active role in the stabilisation of the process of sustainable development in education. Without any doubt, ODeL as a teaching-learning approach is viable for the planning administration and management of Education in Emergencies.

Results

Overview of Global Emergency issues and their Effects on Educational Planning and Administration

Emergencies have forcibly displaced (internally and externally) an estimated 35 million children globally and caused half of the school-going-age children of refugees to fall out of the school system. Girls in crisis-affected countries are nearly 2.5 times more likely to fall out of school compared to girls in other peaceful countries.

- * Between 2015 and 2019, over 22,000 teachers and students were harmed by 11,000 attacks on schools across 93 countries.¹⁰
- * A total of 79.5 million people were forcibly displaced globally in 2019: 4.2 million asylum-seekers, 26 million refugees and 45.7 million internally displaced.¹¹ (UNHCR, 2020)
- * Before the COVID-19 pandemic in 2019, about 50% of the global out-of-school population made up of 127 million (31% for girls and 27% for boys) primary and secondary school-age children and young people living in crisis-affected countries were already out of school.¹² (INEE, 2020)
- * The crisis-affected countries are home to 49% of the world's out-of-school primary and secondary school-age children and young people.¹² (INEE, 2020)
- * Only 2.4% of total humanitarian aid was given to education in the year 2020.¹² (INEE, 2020)
- * Less than 1/3 of refugees are enrolled for secondary education: 36% are male and 27% female refugees.¹³ (Save the Children, 2020)
- * It was estimated that 235 million people will need humanitarian assistance and protection in 2021. This implies that 1 in every 33 people needs help globally. This is a sharp increase from the 1 in every 45 people estimated for 2020, which was already the highest figure in decades¹⁴ (UNOCHA, 2020).

¹⁰GCPEA, "Education under Attack 2020." *Education under Attack 2020*, eua2020.protectingeducation.org/.

¹¹UNHCR. *Coming together for refugee education*. Education Report 2020. <https://www.unhcr.org/uk/publications/education/5f4f9a2b4/coming-together-refugee-education-education-report-2020.html>

¹²INEE 2020. "Annual Report | INEE." *Inee.org*, inee.org/resources/inee-2020-annual-report

¹³Save the Children. *The future is now*. London: Save the Children Alliance, (2020)

<http://www.savethechildren.net/alliance/media/newsdesk/2010-05-11.html>

¹⁴UNOCHA. *Cox's Bazar 5W Data - Education Sector*. January-June 2020.

<https://data.humdata.org/dataset/cox-s-bazar-5w-data-education-sector>.

Overview of Nigerian Insecurity and Emergency Issues and their Effects on Educational Administration and planning

The insecurities, Socio-economic issues, and emergencies across Nigeria have limited school children's access to quality education. For over 15 years, the northeastern part of Nigeria has been under continuous attacks by the book-haram insurgents. Similarly, the bandits' menace also affects some rural communities in some parts of North-central and northwest Nigeria, including large-scale ransom kidnaps in schools. In the southeast, the irregular school closure due to the sit-at-home order will ultimately compromise the standard of education in the region. The rate of occurrences of insecurity in Nigeria has become an alarming social issue because of its direct consequences on the administration of schools, the economy, society and sustainability in general.

According to Ogunode,¹⁵ the incidents of security threats and emergency occurrences in the recent past in Higher Education in Nigeria include the followings:

(1) In 2011, the increase in tuition fees led the students of the University of Calabar on a rampage that resulted in the loss of academic months due to the destruction of buildings, cars, facilities and staff properties worth millions of Naira that ensued. (2) In 2012, the Boko Haram terrorist group massacred about 40 students of Federal Polytechnics Mubi. (3) In 2013, failed accreditation due to inadequate laboratory facilities for engineering and medical students led to a demonstration by students of the University of Abuja. (4) In 2013, school properties were vandalised and a student lost his life during a riot by students of the University of Uyo against the school authorities due to inadequate lecture halls and an increase in intra-campus transport fares. (5) On August 16th 2013, at Abia State University, persons suspected to be cultists were held hostage and gang-raped by a female student. (6) On 18th December 2013, a senior lecturer of Olabisi Onabanjo University (OOU), Ogun State Department of Sociology was killed by suspected cultists.

¹⁵Ogunode, Niyi Jacob, Conrad Ugochukwu Ukozor and Victor Olugbenga Ayoko. "Insecurity Challenges and Higher Education in Nigeria". *Best Journal of Innovation in Science, Research and Development*, vol. 2, no. 5, 1 May 2023:387-404.

(7) On 3rd April 2015, a lecturer by the name of Mrs. Awala George, was kidnapped at the University of Port Harcourt but was later freed eight days later by police. (8) In July 2015, A university of Lagos lecturer raped an 18-year-old admission seeker. (9) On August 29, 2015, A lecturer of Calabar sexually assaulted a year four law student. (10) On May 23rd 2016, the academic staff of the University of Calabar withdrew their services for one week because of the attack on lecturers and the kidnap of three persons from the Staff Quarters. (11) In July 2016, a female undergraduate kidnapped her friend for ransom at Babcock University, Ogun State. (12) In 2017, amidst intense gun shootings, a Professor at the University of Calabar, Department of Zoology was kidnapped by gunmen and whisked away to a waiting boat at the Big Qua River that borders the university. (13) On 16th January 2017, three people including a professor were killed by two suicide bombers at the University of Maiduguri. (14) In May 2019, persons suspected to be rival cultist groups butchered a final-year male student at Cross River State University of Technology in the classroom. (15) On February 17, 2020, kidnappers abducted an Associate Professor at the University of Calabar, Institute of Public Administration, and a ransom of N50 million was demanded by the kidnappers. (16) In April 2020, three students were killed after their abduction. They were buried in a shallow grave at the University of Port-Harcourt. (17) On 27th May 2020, a policeman on duty in Calabar staff quarters was killed and his gun was stolen by assassins. (18) In March 2021, thirty-nine students were abducted when gunmen attacked the Federal College of Forestry Mechanisation in Afaka.

They were released a month later, after ransom had been paid. (19) In May 2021, Greenfield University, Kaduna was attacked and 16 students were kidnapped. Five of them died while others were released two months after payment of millions of Naira as ransoms. (20) In 2021, lecturers and children of the University of Abuja were kidnapped by bandits that invaded the higher institution. (21) On January 10, 2022, the Nigerian Army University was attacked by suspected members of the terrorist group Boko Haram. (22) On April 2, 2023, two female students were abducted by armed bandits at the Federal University Gusau (FUGUS) in Zamfara State.

In the same vein, Adedeji¹⁶ documented the insecurity occurrences in the recent past in primary and secondary schools across Nigeria as follows;

(1) On July 29, 2009: Boko Haram members attacked Success International Private School, Maiduguri and set four buildings on fire. (2) On September 14, 2010: Boko Haram insurgents attacked Yerwa Primary School, Maiduguri and set ablaze 36 classrooms and offices. (3) On April 2, 2012: in Daura, Yobe: Boko Haram members set ablaze the principal's office, 2 blocks of 6 classrooms and certificates and books in Government Senior Secondary School, Daura, Yobe state before taking away power generators, computers and the school bus. (4) On February School, Maiduguri. In addition, Kulagumna Primary School along the Ali Kotoko area of Maiduguri metropolis was set on fire and Abba Ganaram Primary School was also burnt by Boko Haram insurgents. (5) On February 28, 2012: a bomb detonated by insurgents destroyed three schools and Gomari Costain Primary School in Maiduguri Borno state. (6). On March 1, 2012: Boko Haram insurgents attacked and razed down two buildings at Success International School, old Maiduguri. (7). On March 7, 2012: A school near the border with Yobe state was burned by the Boko Haram insurgents. (8).

On April 14, 2012: Gamboru II Primary and Junior Secondary School and Kulagumna Primary School in Maiduguri metropolis were set ablaze overnight by Boko Haram insurgents. (9) On June 18, 2012: A battle between government forces and Boko Haram insurgents led to the destruction of five primary schools, six churches, a police station and a police outpost in Damaturu Yobe state (10) On July 22, 2012: Thirty classrooms were burnt and teachers working late in the school were killed at Yobe Children's Academy, Damaturu, Yobe state. (11) On August 19, 2012: targeted explosions burnt down a part of the Central Primary School in Damagum Local Government, Yobe State. (12) On August 30, 2012: Two residents were killed, classrooms, a police station and the Lower Sharia court were all burnt to ashes by suspected Boko Haram in Goniri, Gujba Local Government Area, Yobe (13) On September 4-5, 2012: Boko Haram burnt to ashes a fire station, two primary schools, two religious affairs buildings and an electoral office in the northeastern city of Damaturu.

¹⁶Adedeji, M.S., Adams, O.T., Adebayo, A.S., Areo, Y.M., and Adams, TA. (2021). The Challenges of Insecurity within Nigerian Educational System: Role and Responsibility of the Government. In Ochigbo, Beetseh, and Abubakar (ed.), *Global Insecurities: Challenges and the ways forward*. 1st ed. Akure: Science and Education Development Inst., Nigeria:121-125.

(14) On September 30, 2012: Boko Haram Islamists bombed an area around an Islamic boarding school leaving three people wounded in Zaria, Kaduna state. (15) On October 1, 2012: Around 10 pm, gunmen suspected to be Boko Haram members opened fire on students of the Adamawa State University, the School of Health Technology, and the Federal Polytechnic, in Mubi, Adamawa State killing twenty-six of them. (16) On March 12, 2013: the Nigerian Police in Kano state confirmed that the headmaster and three teachers from Dan Maliki primary were wounded by Gunmen. (17) On March 13, 2013: Gwange I Primary School and Gwange III Primary School were consecutively set ablaze by unknown assailants. (18). On March 18, 2013: Yelwa Central School, Ali-Alaskiri Primary School, Shehu Sanda Kyari Secondary School and Mafoni Day Secondary School in Maiduguri, Borno fell victim to multiple attacks with four teachers as casualties.

(19) On March 24, 2013: members of the Boko Haram completely burnt down Lajada Private School; Godiya Primary School; and Standard Private School in Biu, Borno state. (20) On April 9, 2013: In Dikwa, Borno State, four staff of the Borno State Schools Feeding Committee and two teachers were killed at their residence. (21) On June 16, 2013: seven teachers and two students of Government Secondary School, Damaturu, Yobe State were killed by suspected Boko Haram members. (22) On January 9, 2014: A member representing Gwoza/Chibok/Dambo in the House of Representatives confirmed about eight gunmen burnt down many primary schools and other public buildings in his constituency and that 90,000 packets of chalk, exercise books and pens worth N38 million procured for distribution to schools were destroyed by these attackers. (23) On February 11, 2014: Abba Ashigar School of Business and Administrative Studies, Konduga close to Maiduguri was attacked by Gunmen with explosives with 20 female students abducted from the school including a medical doctor and five female street traders. Many drugs and medical equipment were also carted away (24) On February 24, 2014: Federal Government College Buni Yadi, Gujba Local Government Area of Yobe State was attacked by Boko Haram suspected of killing twenty-nine male students and burning down twenty-four structures that include the students' hostel, Administration block and staff quarters. (25) On February 26, 2014: Three catholic churches and a primary school were set ablaze in Shuwa, Adamawa state during an attack on several villages in Michika and Madagali Local Government Areas. (26). On April 14th 2014, there was global condemnation when about 276 girls were abducted from Government Secondary School, Chibok. Some of the girls are still in captivity even though some were later released. (27) On March 15, 2015: Insurgents escaped with at

least 400 out of the 200 women and 300 pupils detained at Zanna Mobarti Primary School, Damasak, Borno state since November 24, 2014, after expulsion by security forces from Chad and Niger. (28) On May 8, 2015: the College of Administrative and Business Studies (CABS) at Potiskum, Yobe state, was attacked by a suicide bomber armed with Improvised Explosive Devices (IED) and an AK47 rifle suspected to be a member of the Boko Haram sect by shooting sporadically at teachers and students. (29) On March 2, 2016: unknown gunmen abducted three students of a private secondary school, Babington Macaulay Junior Seminary, Ikorodu, Lagos state (30). On January 13, 2017: unknown gunmen abducted Ten students and staff of Nigerian Tulip International College in Isheri, (former Nigerian Turkish International College) Ogun State. (31) On January 16, 2017: three people including a professor were killed at the University of Maiduguri when a bomb was detonated by two teenage suicide bombers. (32) On May 25, 2017: six students of Lagos State Model College, Igbonla-Epe were abducted despite security presence in the school. (33). On 19th February 2018, Government Girls Science and Technical College students numbering 111 were abducted in Dapchi, Yobe. (34) In July 2021, Bethel Baptist High School students totalling 53 were abducted from their school premises in Kaduna, Kaduna and held for months. About N250 million was paid by the Nigerian Baptist Convention to secure the release of the students. (35) On August 14, 2023, at about 3:0pm, bandits invaded BECO Comprehensive School, kiwi, Plateau State killing two teachers.

According to Atabo,¹⁷ "In addition to the abductions, over 180 schoolchildren were killed and nearly 90 injured in 70 attacks between April 2014 and December 2022, with an estimated 60 school staff kidnapped and 14 killed.

Twenty-five school buildings were reportedly destroyed during that period. Save the Children stated that the majority of these attacks took place in North-West Nigeria (49 attacks), followed by North-Central Nigeria (11 attacks).

These attacks have long-lasting consequences for communities and children's access to education, often leading to the mass withdrawal of children from school and school closures.

In Katsina state in the North-Western part of the country, nearly 100 schools remain closed due to insecurity, affecting the education of over 30,000 children. In the aftermath of attacks, children and communities were left traumatised, and the majorities do not receive psychological support."

¹⁷Atabo Angela. 1683 children kidnapped in Nigerian schools in 8 years, PM News, 8th Aug. 2023.

Discussion

Importance of Education in Emergencies

- 1). EiE provides a sense of community to displaced or traumatised children by providing a safe location for play and learning which stabilizes them and prepares them for the new normal situation which can prepare them for a return to familiar routines. In the emergency period, education is a weapon for protection of Out-of-school children from associated risks such as rape, recruitment into criminal activities, violence, child marriage poverty and school dropout.¹⁸
- 2). The continuity provided by EiE Gets children back into learning activities. This places them better able to break the long-term cycle of poverty, diseases or conflict by developing the competencies and knowledge required to establish peace, build community relationships and economic development. Another Importance of education in an emergency is that it makes the sustainability of academic progress already achieved possible by the maintenance of earlier investments made by students, parents, communities and the government. Education in an emergency gives hope and the platform for recovery from the psychosocial effects of violence, crisis and displacement caused by emergencies. EiE encourages tolerance, peace-building, inclusion, human rights awareness, conflict resolution, empowerment of girls and protection for the poorest and the most vulnerable.¹⁹

The Roles of ODeL in Delivery of Education in Emergency and Insecure Situations: Lessons from the Covid-19 Pandemic

ODeL can also be applied in curbing educational discontinuity caused by displacement or forced migration in emergency and insecure contexts.

¹⁸NORRAG, The Year of Global Reports on TVET, Skills & Jobs Consensus or Diversity? Forthcoming Issue of NORRAG NEWS." *NORRAG* -, 2 Jan. 2013, www.norrag.org/2012-the-year-of-global-reports-on-tvet-skills-jobs-consensus-or-diversity-forthcoming-issue-of-norrag-news/. Accessed 16 Aug. 2023.

¹⁹NORRAG. Education and Development in the Post-2015 Landscapes. *Resources.norrag.org*, resources.norrag.org/resource/6/education-and-development-in-the-post-2015-landscapes. Communications and delivery of educational materials during the emergency period of the COVID-19 epidemic.

According to Kirk,²⁰ the facilitative mechanisms known as flexible learning initiatives could sustain the delivery of access and certification issues rapidly and widely during emergencies to out-of-school children and youth.

A study carried out by Shraim²¹ in Palestine indicated that teachers and educational decision-makers confirmed that mobile digital devices are useful tools for the effective delivery of education at a distance.

The COVID-19 pandemic has forced educational institutions to change their behaviours and mode of operations during lockdown to maintain social distancing which led to learning from home (distance) by using appropriate devices as a bridge. The advancement in technology has already led to the digital transformation of our daily activities and technology-based education delivery and learning by many education institutions worldwide.

The transition to emergency remote teaching and learning, (Education in Emergency) during the unprecedented time during the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in the paradigm shift that brought opportunities that led the education sector worldwide to change the ways of teaching and learning rapidly²².

Without any doubt, the Education sector was deeply affected by the emergency brought about by covid-19 pandemic²³ this informed the decision to shift to ODeL mode by educational institutions due to the social distancing and lockdown. According to Durak²⁴, primary, secondary and high schools in Turkey continue their teaching-learning process completely via distance education.

²⁰Kirk, J. (Ed.). *Certification counts: Recognising the learning attainments of displaced and refugee students*. Paris: IIEP, 2009.

²¹Shraim K., Crompton H. The use of technology to continue learning in Palestine was disrupted by COVID-19. *Asian Journal of Distance Education*. 2020, 15, 1–20.

²²Bozkurt, Aras, et al. “A Global Outlook to the Interruption of Education due to COVID-19 Pandemic: Navigating in a Time of Uncertainty and Crisis.” *Asian Journal of Distance Education*, vol. 15, no. 1, 5 June 2020:1–126, zenodo.org/record/3878572#.YQOa-Y4zbIV, <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.3878572>.

²³Alam, M et al. Paradigm shifting of education system during COVID-19 pandemic: A qualitative study on education components. *Heliyon*, 8(12), 20222. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2022.e11927>.

²⁴Durak, Gürhan, et al. “COVID-19 Pandemi Döneminde Türkiye’deki Üniversitelerin Uzaktan Eğitim Sistemlerinin İncelenmesi.” *Necatibey Eğitim Fakültesi Elektronik Fen ve Matematik Eğitimi Dergisi*, vol. 14, no. 14, 4 July 2020 :787–810, <https://doi.org/10.17522/balikesirnef.743080>.

The application of open and distance learning modes to sustain the continuity of education in emergencies is not a new concept. The Justifications for the use of ODeL in Emergency and insecure Situations are as experienced in France, Australia, Sri Lanka, South Africa, Angola, Namibia, and New Zealand.

In 1980, basic education for adults was provided through distance education in health and other areas of the Namibian Education Project (later called the Namibian Extension Unit)²⁵. This was set up in Zambia during the fight for independence for the benefit of political refugees from Namibia and Angola. The Namibian government established distance education from secondary to degree level with support from development donors after independence in the 1990s.

In South Africa, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) supported refugees and members of the African National Congress (ANC) who were in exile to provide distance education in collaboration with the Solomon Mahlangu Freedom College in Tanzania.²⁶

The measles epidemics of 1985, 1991 and 1997, made New Zealand shut down its whole school system and operated open schools for weeks through correspondence²⁷.

In Australia, the radio (School of the Air) was used to deliver education to residents of remote farms scattered across locations and in small towns where there were no qualified teachers to teach some specialised courses. These open schools also served in times of emergencies²⁸.

²⁵Namibian Extension Unit. A Brief Account of the Distance Education Programme for Namibians. Namibian Extension Unit, 1985.

²⁶UNDP. Assistance to the Solomon Mahlangu Freedom College (SOMAFCO): African National Congress of South Africa (ANC) - (mission). Project findings and recommendations. 1992

²⁷Donald Bewley & Palmerston North. Distance Education in New Zealand; An Historical Sketch. Journal of Distance Learning, 2(1), 1996

Outside the commonwealth, the largest open school system was operated by France known as France's Centre National d'Enseignement à Distance (CNED). The centre catered for thousands of vulnerable French children during the outbreak of World War II. The success of all of these open school systems captured the imagination of the world²⁸

In Sri Lanka, a German development partner (GTZ) funded Open School was inaugurated in 2005 to cater for marginalised groups of young people including children whose parents do not initially recognise formal education; people in correctional centres or prisons; children of indigenous groups of Sri-lanka known as Veddah communities; school going-age children of plantation workers and most especially, victims of armed conflicts in the eastern and northern parts of sri-lanka²⁸.

Citing the Director-General, Michael Imodu National Institute for Labour Studies (MINILS),²⁹ reported that social vices such as kidnapping and banditry can be curbed by quality education.

In addition, education is the only weapon that can retard all negative tendencies affecting national growth and development. Education is second to none because 'after education is education'

Looking at these historical initiatives in emergency management from countries like France, Australia, South Africa, Angola, Namibia, Sri Lanka and New Zealand, the global covid-19 experiences, the current trends in digital transformation, the Internet of Things (IoT) and Artificial Intelligence of Things (AIoT), integrating of ODeL into the existing national policy on education for conflict, insecure and emergency regions could play a cost-effective and transformative role in improving accessibility, continuity, flexibility and quality education-in-emergency.

²⁸Charlotte Creed and Roslyn Louise Morpeth. Continuity Education in Emergency and Conflict Situations: The Case for Using Open, Distance and Flexible Learning. *Journal of Learning and Development*, 1(3). <https://doi.org/10.56059/jl4d.v1i3.25>

²⁹Daily Trust reporter. *Sound Education, Solution to Insecurity*. Daily Trust, 7 Feb 2022

Conclusion and Recommendation

Implementing ODeL in an emergency or insecure situation is complex but possible. The recent transformation triggered by the rapid COVID-19 pandemic has led to many trial initiatives which have created a bunch of experiences and recommendations for the way forward on the ODeL approach as an initiative that might be applicable during any emergency.

The current trend in the applications of Artificial Intelligence of Things (AIoT) in ODeL technologies has boomed significantly in various higher institutions and it has increased the engagement, security, mental well-being and motivation of the students to learn remotely during crises. More studies need to be carried out to better understand the roles of emerging technological advancements and their proper management and applications in the teaching and learning cycle in both emergency and stable situations.

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