Remote teaching and learning in Nigerian private universities

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Abstract
Education systems around the world faced an unprecedented challenge in the wake of massive school closures mandated by the spread of COVID-19. Nigeria as a country, has her own fair share of the ravaging COVID-19 when the incident case of the corona virus was reported, and since left the country with plethora of myths and realities about what the virus is. Part of the realities brought by this public health emergency is the use of remote teaching and learning to facilitate learning process beyond COVID-19 era. The use of video streaming platforms such as Zoom, Google Classroom, Google Meet, YouTube, Microsoft Team and others are explored to give tasks and assignments to students without necessarily meeting face-to-face. Some believe that the unplanned and rapid move to remote teaching and learning with no proper training, insufficient bandwidth, and little preparation could result in poor user experience with attendant un-conduciveness to sustained growth. Although, there have been some criticisms about remote teaching and learning especially when it is delivered incorrectly and inefficiently, however, with the adoption of an excellent learning management system, many benefits may likely be derived. Others believe that a new hybrid model of education will emerge with significant benefits. Therefore, this study explored the various remote teaching and learning tools adopted and the scope of their application in postgraduate training in Nigerian private universities. It also addressed the benefits, lessons learnt and challenges faced in the adoption of remote teaching and learning. The possible ways of addressing the identified challenges by the management of Nigerian private universities especially in the post-Covid19 era was also examined.

Keywords: Post-COVID19, hybrid model, learning management system, private universities, remote teaching and learning

Introduction
Remote teaching and learning have been adopted globally as a means of ensuring that learning process is continuous beyond COVID-19 era. As part of efforts to remain relevant in this teaching and learning paradigm, educators and educational institutions such as private universities in Nigeria have adopted a variety of strategies to enhance teaching and learning. The use of videos, television clips, apps and other practical sources of multimedia have been explored to aid the remote teaching and learning experience. In this case, the educators in private universities could give tasks and assignments to students without necessarily meeting face-to-face. Teaching and learning are also made possible through the adoption of various video streaming platforms such as Zoom, Google Classroom, Google Meet, YouTube, Microsoft Team and others. Some believe that the unplanned and rapid move to remote teaching and learning with no proper training, insufficient bandwidth, and little preparation could result in poor user experience with attendant un-conduciveness to sustained growth. Although, there have been some criticisms about remote teaching and learning especially when it is delivered incorrectly and inefficiently, however, with the adoption of an excellent learning management system, many benefits may likely be derived. Others believe that a new
hybrid model of education will emerge with significant benefits. Therefore, this chapter focuses on the conceptual definition of remote teaching and learning, the types of tools adopted and the scope of their application in postgraduate training in Nigerian private universities. It also addresses the benefits, lessons learnt and challenges faced in the adoption of remote teaching and learning. The possible ways of addressing the identified challenges by the management of Nigerian private universities especially in the post-Covid19 era finalized the chapter.

Education systems around the world faced an unprecedented challenge in the wake of massive school closures mandated by the spread of COVID-19. Nigeria as a country, has her own fair share of the ravaging COVID-19 when the incident case of the corona virus was reported on 27 February, 2020, and since left the country with plethora of myths and realities about what the virus is. Part of the realities brought by this public health emergency is the need to bridge the learning gap created by the pandemic through deployment of remote teaching and learning mechanism. Moreover, the United Nations Scientific Education and Cultural Organisation [UNESCO] (2020) declared online learning as a useful tool to stop the spread of the virus by avoiding direct interactions between and among the teachers and learners. Accordingly, remote teaching and learning is described as the process of teaching and learning performed at a distance rather than having students and teachers coming together in a physical location. This implies that learners are distant from their teachers and peers, and information is being relayed through technology (discussion boards, video conferencing and online assessments).

The concept of remote teaching and learning is originally construed to serve as an intervention in bridging the gap created by the lockdown that served as a measure of controlling spread of coronal virus (Ferri, Grifoni & Guzzo, 2020). However, remote teaching and learning has since become a dependable teaching and learning measure that outlived the pandemic. Remote teaching and learning may be synchronous or asynchronous. The synchronous indicates that students/learners watch instructors deliver their lectures in real time, or asynchronous, where students playback lecture recordings at their convenience. It is a kind of learning method that promotes the use of two-way communication technologies for feedback, clearer assignment guidelines and effective use of online resources. Remote teaching and learning is distinct from e-learning based on location. With e-learning, students can be together in a classroom while going through their digital lessons and assessments while remote teaching and learning can be done online and from the student’s comfort zone (home, school and other locations). The method is also different from virtual learning programmes that must have typically undergone an official process of establishing a school, adopting an online curriculum and creating a dedicated structure for student enrollment.

Remote teaching and learning provides students and teachers with opportunity to remain connected and engaged with the contents from their homes or any preferred location. Some of the tools that are being used to facilitate remote teaching and learning include: Google Classroom, Google Meet, Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Ted Talks, Edmodo, Visme among others. These tools have been reported to help in broader networking opportunities, facilitate flexible learning, promote international teams and location independent, enhance access to cutting edge digital contents and reduce cost. It is
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essential to note that for every remote teaching and learning platform to perform effectively, a well-defined structure needs to be in place (Ganz, 2008). Meriem-Webster Dictionary (2022) defined structure as the arrangement between the parts or elements of something complex. The elements of the structure include the time, communication, technology and lesson design.

i. \textit{Time:} Time constitutes the first element of the required structure universities need to consider when deploying remote teaching and learning mechanism. This is important as it sets expectations and boundaries for both students and teachers, particularly as it emphasizes the opening hour and closing hour of a school day. It clearly states the duration of lesson and other expectation that is time-bound.

ii. \textit{Communication:} Another aspect of the structure needed to be considered is communication. The communication is usually two-way, between the originator and recipients of information and knowledge which often generates a feedback. In this case, learners are to be acquainted with exactly how and when they are expected to communicate with the educator in remote teaching and learning platforms. It states the preferred mode of communication, be it email, online chat or the use of designated technological tool. Communication also stresses the backup plan and emphasises alternative means of communication in case a particular tool fails to work. The standard communication procedure between students and teachers is also set in the case of

assignment preparation and submission.

iii. \textit{Technology:} The workability of remote teaching and learning is a subject of available technology. Not many private universities have learning enabled technologies in place and where they exist, there is always a challenge of usability. The remote teaching and learning has sparked up the challenge in the line of preparation and operation.

iv. \textit{Lesson design:} Experience has shown that preparing lessons for remote delivery is a little more detailed than creating a lesson for face-to-face delivery. In face-to-face lesson delivery, it is always convenient for teacher to psyche the class and determine the understanding and assimilation level, and possibly make adjustment where necessary. In a remote environment, a tutor must assume that there will be a lack of understanding and provision must be made for extensions and remedial classes in the lesson design.

Therefore, this chapter focuses on the conceptual definition of remote teaching and learning, the types of tools adopted and the scope of their application in postgraduate training in Nigerian private universities. It also addresses the benefits, lessons learnt and challenges faced in the adoption of remote teaching and learning. The possible ways of addressing the identified challenges by the management of Nigerian private universities especially in the post-Covid19 era finalized the chapter.
Postgraduate training in Nigerian private universities

In Nigeria, the involvement of the private sector in the provision of higher education came with the inauguration of a democratic system of government under President Olusegun Obasanjo in the year 1999. At this time, the National Universities Commission (NUC) [the regulatory body of universities in the country] was empowered to receive applications, examine and validate the facilities of serious applicants for private universities establishment across the country (Iruonagbe, Imhonopi & Egharevba, 2015). With this, three private universities emerged namely: Igbinedion University, Okada, Edo State; Babcock University, Ilishan Remo, Ogun State and Madonna University, Okija, Anambra State. By 2001 and 2002 respectively, Bowen University, Iwo, and Covenant University, Ota, Ogun State joined the trend. The liberalization of this sector brought about a continuous growth in the education sector and by September, 2022 the number of approved private universities in Nigeria has risen to 111 of which 37 are accredited by the NUC to offer postgraduate training.

Postgraduate education involves learning and studying for academic or professional degrees, certificates or diplomas for which a first or bachelor’s degree is required. The organisation and structure of postgraduate education varies from country to country and in different institutions within countries. In Nigeria, government, individual and religious bodies are involved in the provision of university education and training. The private universities depend largely on students school fees and funds from the proprietors which made it difficult to close down teaching and learning activities in the period of pandemic such as COVID-19. The private institutions however resorted to a change in their teaching delivery and learning modes to cope with the challenges posed by the COVID-19. At this time, face-to-face mode of teaching was replaced with a variety of teaching methods (Yakubu & Dasuki, 2021).

Tools such as Google Classroom, Google Meet, Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Ted Talks, Edmodo, Visme, blackboard, among others were deployed to facilitate remote teaching and learning at the postgraduate level in Nigerian private universities. These tools are still in use to complement physical teaching and learning under the term blended/ hybrid learning system. The use of these tools require the familiarity and comfortability of students in navigating with remote teaching and learning platform that a particular university subscribes to. In doing so, the best practices in terms of displaying information online, social presence of instructor/educator, communication, student engagement, self-monitoring and accessibility became the order of the day. Displaying information online involves showcasing the instructor’s contents and notes on widely circulated mode for community of learners. Social presence of instructor/educator explains the relationship between a medium of communication between the educator teaching or chatting online and the degree to which he or she remains cognizant of learner’s presence (Amuda & Ajani, 2021).

Social presence was originally defined as the sense that another person is “real” and “there” when using a communication medium and this set a climate for learning to take place (Caspi & Blau, 2008; Dunlap et al., 2016). It lies on a continuum where a focus on the interpersonal emotional connection between communicators is on one end and a focus on presence of another person perceived to be ‘real’ and ‘there’ at the other end. Student engagement occurs when student makes psychological investment in learning. Glossary of Education Reforms (2018)
described student engagement as the degree of attention, curiosity, interest, optimism and passion student exhibit when learning or being taught. This may extend to the level of motivation they possess when learning and progressing in their education. Student engagement rests on three pillars of academic, intellectual and social-emotional organically supported during in-person learning which must be explicitly pursued during times of remote or blended learning. Student engagement could involve setting ground rules, journaling, letting students lead, icebreakers, social and emotional learning curriculum, external relationship and performance of class service project (Dunlap et al., 2016).

Self-monitoring is a psychological construct emphasising the personality trait that involves the ability to monitor and regulate self-presentation, emotions and behaviours in response to social environments and situations. It involves being aware of one’s behaviour and the impact it has on immediate environment. Self-monitoring incorporates academic and social skills such as counting, reading, classifying and cooperating which could increase the student awareness of his or her behaviours (Ganz, 2008). Examples include ability to stay focused on given assignments/tasks and accommodation of others in social situations. Accessibility explains the ability to access and benefit from a system such as remote teaching and learning. It focuses on enabling access through the use of assistive technologies with intent of bringing benefits to every learner.

Adopted tools and scope of their application in Nigerian private universities

At the wake of the COVID-19, private universities in Nigeria embarked on several measures to facilitate teaching and learning. The measures adopted included the deployment and subsequent use of applications such as Zoom, Google Classroom, Google Meet, Microsoft Teams, Ted Talks, Edmodo, Visme, blackboard among others to facilitate postgraduate training. Specifically, most private universities subscribed to the use of Zoom, Google Classroom, Google Team and Microsoft Teams for teaching, learning and project/research defense. The scope of application of these tools is specifically discussed as follows:

i. **Zoom application**: Zoom video conferencing platform was founded in the year 2011 by Eric Yuan, a former Corporate Vice President of Engineering Cisco Systems and collaboration business unit. The Zoom application was originally designed to accommodate 15 video participants for conferences at a stretch and this was later increased to 25 by January in the year 2013. The Zoom version 2.5 could host 100 participants by October, 2013. From June 2014 Zoom could boast of 10 million users and by 2015, the application has over 40 million users with 65,000 organisations. In May 2017, Zoom announced a partnership with Polycom, an Information Technology firm that integrated Zoom’s video meetings into its conferencing systems. With the collaboration, features such as multiple screen and device meetings, HD and wireless screen sharing, and calendar integration with Microsoft Outlook, Google Calendar was made possible (Amuda & Ajani, 2021).

The COVID-19 pandemic facilitated a major increase in the use of Zoom application for remote
activities (remote work, distance education and online social relations). Thousands of online educational institutions migrated to remote teaching and learning via zoom application. Zoom has been found to help in engaging students, faculty and staff for teaching, learning, collaboration and administration. The application allows instructors/educators to connect synchronously with learners over video, audio, screen sharing, poll and text chat so far the bandwidth permit (Amuda & Ajani, 2021). It promotes collaborations in postgraduate training among learners in Nigerian private universities especially when working in groups either in breakout room or personal meeting rooms with peers. It makes virtual learning possible and increasingly more engaging. In Nigeria, Adeleke University, Ede, Babcock University Ilishan-Remo, Redeemers’ University and Afe-Babalola University, Ado-Ekiti are among the leading universities that subscribed to the use of this application for teaching and learning.

ii. Google Meet: The Google Meet is one of the applications designed to run on Google. It makes frictionless meetings possible; facilitate joining meetings on the go, and make remote connection possible. The application has been adopted over time to facilitate teaching and learning at postgraduate level in Nigerian private universities. The application is simple to deploy at scale, as all units can be set up in minutes and managed online. The deployment of application helps in promoting collaborations where learners can meet with the instructors/faculty for presentation and research work defense (Setyawan et al. 2020). Adeleke University, Ede, Babcock University Ilishan-Remo, Redeemers’ University and Afe-Babalola University, Ado-Ekiti and other universities made use of this application for project defence.

iii. Google Classroom: Google Classroom is a free-blended learning platforms developed by Google for educational institutions that aim at simplifying teaching, creating, distributing and grading assignments. Primary purpose of Google Classroom is to streamline the process of teaching and learning, boost collaboration and foster communication. With Google Classroom, classroom is already available on the web or by mobile app with many tools users must possessed. The tools include Gmail, Google Docs and Google Calendar. Google classroom helps instructors to streamline summative and formative assessments at postgraduate level. In Nigerian private universities, this application has been adopted to facilitate postgraduate teaching and learning. The instructors/educators can quickly create, distribute and collect digital exit tickets or auto-graded assessment and instructors can pose discussion questions for insights into what learners are thinking (Amuda & Ajani, 2021). Lead University, Ibadan, Adeleke University, Ede, Babcock University Ilishan-Remo, Redeemers’ University, Madonna University, Okija and Afe-Babalola, Ado-Ekiti and other universities that subscribed to the use of this application
application for teaching and learning, even at the post-COVID era.

iv. **Edmodo**: Edmodo is a global education network that helps connect all learners with the colleagues and resources needed to reach their full potential (Edmodo, 2022). The application is widely used due to its effectiveness in making the learning process more interesting. It promotes individual learning, group collaboration and encourages the non-digital native educators in creating a web-based learning environment (Warawudhi, 2017). Edmodo is secured, easy and intuitive, flexible and allows for customization of classroom based on the learner’s needs. The account can be created by navigating the Edmodo homepage, create teacher account, select location, enter email and password for continuous usage. After the successful creation of an account, users’ profile, pictures, courses, codes and notifications can be set. It is essential for group queue approval where the class owner can be notified to approval or deny joining request. This tool is yet to be put into practice in Nigerian private universities.

v. **Visme**: Visme is an all-in-one visual content platform that allows everyone including non-designer to create a perfect presentations, infographics, reports and social images in minutes. Visme is suitable for rich analytics, and contains customization tools for fonts, icons, images, backgrounds and templates. The platform helps both instructors and learners to visualize ideas and tell better stories in the form of presentations and infographics. It empowers the educators with access to free premium content to create engaging, visual communications for interactive remote learning. Users only need to start with a clear headline, provide snapshot, introduce the client, state the problem, consequences and hesitation, describe the solution, share the results and benefits, conclude with words of advice (Hibbins, 2017).

vi. **Microsoft Teams**: Microsoft Teams is a collaboration app built for hybrid work to keep the team informed, organizes and connected in one location. It is being used for messaging, chatting, research progress and project defence. It can be created via windows by clicking the start, go to Applications for folder and signing with Microsoft 365 username and password. It can caption live video, real-time transcription of meetings and support for sign-language interpreters. Microsoft Teams can be used in the classroom together with OneNote Class Notebooks and new assignment and quiz experiences for an unlimited number of students. In Microsoft Teams, both the instructors/educators can collaborate and work with the learners on documents at the same time creating a sense of close contact between the instructor and the learner (Stearns, 2017). Adeleke University, Ede, Bells University, Ota, Babcock University Ilishan-Remo, Redeemers’ University, Madonna University, Afe-Babaloa, Ado-Ekiti and other universities made use of this application for project defence.
vii. **Blackboard:** Blackboard is a learning management system (LMS) that allows schools, business and government agencies to give all learners the opportunity to realize their potentials. It is a low-maintenance modern simple LMS used not only as a repository of information (course materials and course information) but also used as a tool for communication through emails, announcements, discussion boards and podcasts. It is a free platform created to help instructors communicate with learners. The platform helps in flexible assessment and customizes feedback in an inclusive learning environment. Blackboard helps in centralizing the learning experience from course development to assessment with intuitive natural workflows for educators and learners (Alokluk, 2018).

**Benefits of adoption of remote teaching and learning**
The adoption of remote teaching and learning in postgraduate training is to promote self-sufficiency in learning, revisit of difficult topics, promote flexible learning timetable, learning in new and creative ways, create more family time, and enhance learner’s technological expertise.

**Self-sufficiency in learning:** With the adoption of remote teaching and learning, students may learn better at their conveniences especially for introverted students. The idea of self-sufficiency allows participant to be considerate of classmates while adapting classroom behaviour to learning at a go. In this case, distractions surrounding leaning in brick and mortar are reduced to barest minimum since everyone will be considering learning through this platform as a task. The remote teaching and learning also permits learners to carry on with their personal, work or family-related commitments, while still attuning education they are after (Arkorful & Abaidoo, 2014).

**Revisit of difficult topics:** The adoption of remote teaching and learning allows learners to revisit topics that they might have found difficult at their own pace. In this instance, learners are not overwhelmed with huge quantities of information like they would be in the classroom and do not need to panic. In the event of slow understanding of the topics, learners can revisit the topics on the platforms as many times as they need to and this can have positive impact on learner’s anxiety levels.

**Flexible timetable:** Remote teaching and learning promotes flexible learning timetable in such a way that participants can learn seamlessly as possible, work better in less of rigid regime. Learner is at liberty to organize his/ her time for academic and other activities since learning can take place at any location so far there is facility. Various platforms such as Skype, Microsoft Teams can be explored to facilitate learning since they offer trainers and peers the face-to-face interaction needed from their comfort. The long hours needed for commuting and traveling to the campus environment can be saved.

**Learning in new and creative ways:** Some of the learners could exhibit lowest capability to retain information just from sight or sound alone. The provision of many learning alternatives and tools by the kind of remote teaching and learning adopted to suite every learning type can enhance learner’s creativity (Arkorful & Abaidoo, 2014).
More family time: Remote teaching and learning is essential as it permits learners to spend more time at home and still learn remotely. This means that learners participating in this mode can have ample time to spend with the family and yet learn. Students’ technological expertise: Remote teaching and learning makes learners understand the technology which will help them in life after school. Therefore, the understanding of technological platforms such as Zoom and Microsoft Teams is essential for immediate and future use. Through advanced technologies, remote students can easily build their professional network, expand career opportunities from any of their conveniences.

Lessons learnt in the adoption of remote teaching and learning

The management of private universities in Nigeria among others have had to learn transition from the live synchronous activities to asynchronous activities. The live synchronous activities are those that occur live during which learners participated in the real time, whereas asynchronous learning contains faculty-guided instructional materials with detailed learning objectives. As the trend continues, several lessons were derived for take away among which include:

Understanding learners in different time zones: The adoption of the remote teaching and learning creates means of understanding learners in their different zones and makes learning possible at the convenience of both educators and learners. The learners’ feedback showed that postgraduate students appreciated this change. Although, the development promotes asynchronous learning arrangement, however, some learners still value accountability, interaction with peers and accountability that characterize the synchronous/ live learning activities (Mercer, 2016).

Increase in faculty-to-student ratio for team-based synchronous sessions: The faculty-to-student ratio for team-based synchronous sessions is quite challenging in term of time management. It also connotes that the faculty-to-learner ratio needed for this type of learning arrangement must be larger. The advantage is that it enhances the breakout rooms by limiting number of students in a session.

Instructor availability for students’ questions: The increased adoption of remote teaching and learning give rise to the establishment of virtual office hours among the instructors. With this, postgraduate students could have opportunity of discussing most challenging contents and ask content-specific questions as well as seeking information on their research.

Longer period interaction: The remote teaching and learning environment is one that takes longer period due to technical issues, delays among others that may arise when sharing screen. In this environment, faculty is prepared to deal with the delays that may arise when working in this environment. Though some virtual platforms allow the presenter to end small group discussions and automatically bring participants back into the large group, but the most important factor is the preparedness for longer period of interaction which depends on the kind of challenges being experienced during the sessions.

Classroom flipping: Remote teaching and learning makes classroom discussion flipping possible. The classroom flipping embedded in remote teaching and learning provides a time and space for postgraduate students to join small groups to work
through application exercise, and helps greatly in alleviating some of the challenges that exist in larger group.

**Challenges faced in the adoption of remote teaching**

It is undeniable that despite the inherent benefits in the deployment of remote teaching and learning, both the educators and postgraduate students still face many challenges in the new norm of remote teaching and learning. Although many of the practices that are used in the face-to-face contact modes were adapted and being used in the remote teaching and learning context. It is not simply the case of applying a “one size fits all approach” which is what educators relatively unfamiliar with which the remote teaching and learning tend to do. Some of the challenges posed by remote teaching and learning platform are lack of motivation, inadequate skills of educators and learners, inadequate infrastructure, slow online group assessment, and difficulty in getting students to collaborate with each other.

*Lack of motivation:* It is noted that the needed encouragement required to make use of the tools available in remote teaching environment is lacking. Basto et al (2021) asserted that conventional education processes deal with physical interaction and communication of students in the classrooms. However, remote teaching and learning does not give room for this, and educators are left with difficulties of motivating postgraduate students to participate and stay attentive during the learning process. It also presents educators with difficulties of interacting and supervising students due to absence of face-to-face interaction.

*Inadequate relevant skills:* Another challenge faced by educators is inadequate relevant skills to carry out remote teaching and learning. Most educators and learners still do not possess the requisite technological skills needed to function effectively in this teaching and learning context. There are inadequate skills of viewing and downloading on electronic devices such as computers and laptops. Educators also face difficulties in adjusting to a teaching paradigm that demands their familiarity to the online education system (DeAlwis & David, 2020). As they have been confronted with the challenge of in-person learning is their students’ access to technology and ability to navigate that technology (Shank & Cotten, 2013). These barriers are referred to as the “digital divide,” and they are classified to be at two levels (access to technology and the ability to effectively navigate technology) of digital divide factors. The first level of digital divide comprises access to technology, while the second level refers to the ability to effectively navigate technology (Shank & Cotten, 2013). However, not all students understand how to use these devices, leading to challenges for both students and teachers (Blagg & Luetmer, 2020). In addition, the digital divide can also be applied to educators, with educators having varying levels of comfort with using technology and using technology specifically for teaching (Saad & Sankaran, 2020).

*Inadequate infrastructure:* In addition is the challenge of inadequate infrastructure needed to function in remote teaching and learning environment. The problem of infrastructure such as stable internet connection and devices affect the adoption rate on the integration of new technologies in remote teaching and learning. In some cases, facilities such as laptops, mobile phones and internet access have consistently pose challenges to both educators and learners in achieving remote teaching and
learning. It is increasingly apparent that, the ability for immediate feedback to be provided through the remote teaching and learning environment enhances the potential for assessment delivered and submitted in this way (Anderson, 2004). Problems of assessment such as technical issues, complexity, sequencing of activities and learning a new medium have also been identified as presenting obstacles to the incorporation of multimedia application and assessment in the remote teaching and learning environment.

**Solutions**

Some of the solutions to the barriers confronting the remote teaching deployment and usage are the promotion of synchronous communication, improved motivation, periodic training among others.

*Promotion of synchronous communication:* The possible ways of addressing the identified challenges by the management of Nigerian private universities include the promotion of synchronous communication that can facilitate real-time collaboration between educators and students. Other possible ways out is to give feedback for increased students’ motivation due to its huge impact on satisfaction and commitment to an online learning process.

*Improved motivation:* Due attention must be paid to both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation of educators to take proper actions or steps towards achieving the desired teaching and learning outcomes. Moreover, educators’ feedback could serve as a means of developing rapport between students and educators in remote teaching and learning processes.

*Periodic training:* The management of private university needs to place premium on periodic training and re-training of educators as a way of keeping them abreast of top-notch and emerging instructional tools/materials. There is also the need for improved infrastructure in terms of provision of adequate internet access and devices to educators and learners.

**Future research directions**

The deployment and challenges of remote teaching and learning in private universities discussed above has opened up some directions for future research. Future studies could be carried out in form of a comparative survey of the situation in both public and private universities so as to provide baseline data on adoption and use of remote teaching and learning in both categories of institutions. It will equally be interesting for future researchers to also investigate the impact of remote teaching and learning across higher education institutions including universities, polytechnics and colleges of education in Nigeria with a view to knowing the model of their deployment as well as the challenges faced in the institutions. These will provide a broad-based and holistic perspective which could catalyse policy shift in the tertiary institutions. In addition, one aspect that should not be overlooked in future studies is the discussion on the alternative model and guidelines to be adopted by higher educational institutions. Finally, the choice of which remote learning and teaching platform postgraduate students and lecturers prefer can also be investigated so as to engender the formulation of teaching and learning policies in the institutions.

**Conclusion**

Remote teaching and learning remains a veritable tool for enhanced postgraduate training in Nigerian private universities beyond COVID-19 era. The reflections presented throughout this paper have provided an overview for considering some
of the contexts around remote teaching and learning, the tools, benefits and how some of the (perceived) barriers to postgraduate students participation can be overcome. Through emphasising the importance of providing considerable and focused support for postgraduate students from a lecturer’s perspective, a number of insights have been developed. The reflections in this paper also emphasise the semblance of face-to-face interaction to remote teaching and learning, impacts, needed tools, challenges and possible way out. A number of opportunities to minimise student barriers to participation even with differing levels of facilitator technological confidence and competence was stressed. The importance of continued reflective academic practice to assure the best learning outcomes possible for all postgraduate students in the learning context is also emphasised by focusing on social relationship and community building in the online environment, rather than a dominant concern with the technological complexities of the online space.

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