COVID-19 Crisis: Challenges of Online Learning in One University in Lesotho

David Teboli Makafane
Faculty of Education, National University of Lesotho
dtmakafane@gmail.com,

Julia Chere-Masopha
Faculty of Education, National University of Lesotho
juliachere@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

In 2020, COVID-19 crisis forced learning organisations, Lesotho universities included, to suspend their face-to-face teaching and migrate their learning activities online. This was a new way of learning to many students. The study reported in this paper investigated the challenges students in one Lesotho university were experiencing with online learning. Specifically, the study focused on the types of challenges the students were experiencing, (2) how the students dealt with these challenges and (3) the general implications. The study employed a qualitative approach in which telephone semi-structured interviews were used to collect data from 12 undergraduate students in the Faculty of Education. The findings of this study suggest that the challenges that were experienced by the students were mainly influenced by their personal attributes, pedagogical issues and how the university supported them. The study concludes that the conditions under which online learning was offered in this university were not conducive to enhance effective student participation online; the students were not receiving quality learning; and others were even excluded from learning by the existing digital conditions. The study recommends that the University should invest more in the digital infrastructure, processes and techniques that would enhance students' experiences with online learning. The University should also find ways of assisting students with access to digital devices and making internet easily accessible to these students.

Keywords: COVID-19, Learning access, Learning experiences, Learning Management system, Learning platform, Online learning challenges, Online teaching and learning.

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The study reported in this paper investigated the challenges of learning online that were experienced by the students in one university in Lesotho. Globally, 2020 education crisis came as a result of COVID-19 pandemic. Many learning institutions, universities included, were forced to suspend their face-to-face teaching and learning activities and opt for online learning. The university which was understudy decided to migrate most of teaching and learning courses to online learning management system (LMS). Before this, online learning was never officialised in this university. It was haphazard, rudimentary and practised in very few courses. Teaching and learning relied mostly on face-to-face mode of delivery. Deciding to migrate teaching and learning activities to online platforms was very drastic and should have imposed some challenges for teachers and students of this university. Thus, this study intended to establish the challenges encountered by learners when learning online; the strategies these learners used to solve some of the challenges; and the lessons learnt from the learners' experiences.

COVID-19 Crisis

COVID-19 crisis came as a result of corona virus which emerged in Wuhan in December 2019 (Keni, Alexander, Nayak, Mudgal & Nandakumar, 2020). According to the World Health Organization (WHO) 2020 records, by August 2020 the virus had spread to many countries around the world with the exception of only 10 countries that had not confirmed any case of COVID-19. Corona virus (CoV) is a large family of viruses known to cause illnesses ranging from common cold to acute respiratory tract infection (Koh & Cunningham, 2020). COVID-19 strand encompasses severe respiratory syndrome (SARS-COV) (Lu, Zhao, Li, Niu, Yang, Wu & Bi, 2020). Although how this virus ended up in human beings and making them their hosts is still being investigated, there are some authors like Lu, Barrett and Lu (2020) who believe that the contact of human being with camels, bats, mice, dogs and cats could have been responsible for the transmission. Other researchers, such as Schoeman and Fielding (2019) and Zheng (2020), associate this virus with 2018 fatal severe diarrhoea among pigs. COVID-19, which Rothan and Byrareddy (2020) labelled as the greatest threat to humankind, causes symptoms like fever, cough, diarrhoea and fatigue to humans. It is believed that since this virus was transmitted to human beings it has been spreading from human to human through body contact or coming in contact with objects on which this virus landed from humans. The rate at which the virus is spreading is unpreceded. By September 2020, this virus had infected around 25 million people and caused at least 900 thousand deaths (WHO, 2020). While many countries like Russia claimed to have developed a vaccine for this novel pandemic, the cure for this virus was yet to be tested and confirmed when this study was carried out.

In the absence of the cure for COVID-19 infection, and for the fear of uncontrollable spread of this pandemic, governments resorted to measures that were believed were capable of curbing the spread. These included the lockdowns of varying levels that restricted human movement and which were backed up by social distancing (of at least one metre apart), wearing of nose masks, use of sanitizers, and constant hands-washing with soap and running water (WHO, 2020). The lockdown and social distancing strategies curtailed some of the social activities which were viewed as potential super spreaders of the virus. Thus, any activities that involved gathering of large crowds or groups such as in sports, religious events and educational activities that required physical school attendance were suspended in many countries.

Advised by WHO, and in line with many countries' responses to COVID-19 crises, even before any COVID-19 case was registered in Lesotho, the government imposed measures that restricted human movement and physical contact and that forced people to wear nose masks in public spaces. The military and the police forces were deployed to the streets and public places to enforce these strategies. People were also encouraged to wash hands regularly with soup and water; and to constantly sanitize their living and working spaces. As a result of human movement and gathering restrictions, businesses, schools, churches and any spaces that could violate the restrictions were closed. Thus, all schools, and other learning institutions in Lesotho were shut down (Ministry of Health, 2020).

Learning institutions run on tight schedules: by the end of a school year or a programme teachers are expected to have covered prescribed syllabi for various levels of education, and learners to have acquired knowledge and skills that prepare them for the next level of education or the completion of a programme. Thus, the total shut down of schools and other learning institutions for COVID-19 crises created another crisis for these institutions which

work by deadlines. With the view that it would be difficult to cover the lost time, many institutions made a decision to migrate teaching and learning to online platforms. This sudden shift from the physical classroom to virtual classroom raised a concern to others such as Li and Lalani (2020), wondering how this shift was going to impact the worldwide education market.

LITERATURE REVIEW: ONLINE LEARNING

Traditionally, teaching, learning and assessment (TLA) activities happen in a classroom or a physical learning space where teachers and learners have face-to-face interaction. However, digital technologies have brought an alternative mode of delivering TLA activities, online learning. They have made online learning possible, allowing a learner to be taught, learn and be assessed on online without compromising the quality of education.

There are multiple benefits of online learning: it motivates learners and boosts their self-esteem (Aboderin, 2015; Arasaratnam-Smith & Northcote, 2015; Li & Lalani, 2020); it enhances the effectiveness of teaching and learning and improves learner performance (Galván Casas, Catala, Carretero Hernández, Rodríguez-Jiménez, Fernández-Nieto, Rodríguez-Villa Lari García-Gavín, 2020); and it is capable of reaching students from afar and remote places, enabling them to participate effectively through various online tools such as chatrooms, video meeting, voting, and document sharing (Li & Lalani 2020). Because it is flexible and self-paced, it enhances students' access to learning and allows them to manage their own learning time. It has positive influence on learners' self-motivation that enhances their quality of participation in learning. It prepares learners for a knowledge-based society and "lifelong" learning opportunity by equipping them with strong digital and technical skills that are required by future

labour markets. It promotes learners' leadership and communication skills through virtual communication and collaboration; and it exposes learners to a broader global perspective that facilitates their abilities to think critically about their responsibilities in their education and everyday life (Appana 2008, Dumford & Miller 2018, Miller, 2019).

Many factors can influence students' participation in online learning (Gulatee, Brown & Combes 2008, Montgomerie, Edwards & Thorn, 2016). These factors could be related to an organisation that provides online learning, a learner or a teacher. Factors that relate to the organisation and that can influence learner's participation in online learning include: (1) availability and quality of infrastructure and resources of the organisation, and learners' access to the institutional infrastructure and resources; (2) institutional provision of technical support to a learner; and (3) the preparation of a teacher and a learner for institutional cultural change by enforcing relevant discipline (Chere-Masopha 2011, Gulatee, Brown & Combes 2008, Montgomerie, Edwards & Thorn 2016). Learner-related factors are associated with students only, individually or collectively. They include student's: knowledge and skill, motivation, socio-economic and cultural background, and learning styles. Other factors are teacher-related and they could be personal or professional or both. They comprise teacher's: digital knowledge and skill, access to technology infrastructures and resources, attitude or motivation, peer support and personal discipline. All these factors can influence how both a learner and a teacher participate online (Wang, Mayer, Zhou & Lin, 2020). For example, where both a teacher and a learner do not have any barriers just outlined, learner's participation is likely to be meaningful and effective. Where a learner, a teacher or both are experiencing some challenges, learner's participation

could be affected negatively. Table1 summarises how learner-related factors and teacher-related factors interplay and affect learner participation on online learning.

Table 1 How teacher-learner related factors influence the success of online learning

Factors	meaningful and successful learner participation	Poor learner participation
Knowledge and skill	Teacher and learner have relevant knowledge and skills	A teacher, or a learner, or both have limited knowledge and skills;
Institutional support	A teacher and a learner have access to the technological infrastructure and related resources	A teacher, or a learner, or both have limited access to the technological infrastructure and related resources;
Attitudes or Motivation	A teacher and a learner have intrinsic and extrinsic motivation or positive attitude towards online learning	A teacher, or a learner, or both do not have intrinsic or extrinsic motivation or positive attitude towards online learning;
Support	A teacher and a learner have support geared towards online learning	A teacher, or a learner or both do not have any support geared towards online learning;
Personal discipline	A teacher and a learner are disciplined in terms of time and effort geared towards online learning	A teacher, or a learner or both not disciplined in terms of time and effort geared towards online learning;

Even though teachers' and students' challenges appear to be alike and linked, their influencing factors may differ. In relation to knowledge and skills, teachers require knowledge and skills that are advance and that enable them to design and implement online learning that assists students to participate successfully. Teachers' knowledge and skills should also enable them to design lessons that are interactive and that are likely to sustain students' motivation. On the other hand, students need knowledge and skills that make their access to learning and completion of all course requirements easy.

Learning online can pose several challenges to the students. These challenges can result from students' personal attributes, institutional technical support provided to the learner, and pedagogically related matters (Jokiaho, May, Specht & Stoyanov, 2018; Kumar, 2015; Wotto & Belanger, 2018). Personal attributes that can act as barriers to learner's participation in online learning could be technological knowledge and skill, self-discipline and self-motivation and attitude, learning style, and cultural and socio-economic background (Ippakayala & El-Ocla 2017, Shahmoradi, Changizi, Mehraeen, Bashiri, Jannat & Hosseini 2018, Kumar 2015, Manzoor & Ramzan 2020, Vaughn & Mac-Vicar, 2004).

Pedagogical challenges that can be experienced by learners can result from the failure of online teachers to explain and demonstrate some of the learning concepts or design learning in such a way that a learner has real classroom experience (Lu, Barrett & Lu, 2020). This situation can sometimes be a result of teacher's limited knowledge and skill or teaching subjects which are not compatible with online learning (Boaler 2016, Khirwadkar, Khan, Mgombelo, Ratkovic & Forbes 2020, Lu et al., 2020).

The availability and access to digital infrastructure and resources that are

provided by an organisation to support online learning can also influence learner's participation. For instance, the quality of internet connection (including the bandwidth) cause access disparity that disadvantages or favours different groups or individual learners (Kamer 2015, Kumar Basak et al. 2018).

PROBLEM STATEMENT

When Lesotho government imposed schools' lockdown as one of the responses to COVID-19 crisis, some learning institutions, including some universities, opted for online learning. Before this crisis, plans to migrate courses online were not mentioned anywhere in the planning documents such as the latest Strategic Plan document (2015-2020) of the university which was the focus of this study. According to this document (which was the most current when this study was carried out) the plan of this university was to offer programmes using a dual mode of learning, which were residential and open and distance (ODL). In the strategic plan document, under *Strategic Goal 2,* the university had outlined that it aimed at being: *'A university of choice [that provides] high quality educational experience and relevant scholarship'.* a list of planned targets which included to: (1) improve information and communication technology (ICT) infrastructure, (2) increase ICT resources; and (3) train teachers and learners to the use its own locally developed learning management system (LMS).

Under a list of achievements, this document indicated that 'volumes of teachers and learners' were using the university LMS (p. 24). The document further indicates that a helpdesk that is intended to assist teachers and learners with ICT related issues had been established in the university centre that deals with teaching and learning.

In support of the decision to migrate courses online because of COVID-19

Crisis, the university mobilized for more resources from their stakeholders that would support students' access to online learning. The most significant one was for this university to enter into a special arrangement with the internet providers (Vodacom and Econet) in Lesotho to zero-rate identified online educational websites and learning platforms which were considered key for teaching and learning in this University. The locally made university LMS was one of these platforms. Another successful effort was for this university, along with other universities in the country, to lobby and convince the government to support students' online learning. As a result, the Ministry of Education provided 550 Maluti as a top-up to a normal student stipend. Generally, the university efforts were directed at minimising the potential online challenges that students could experience.

However, and despite these efforts, it was not long after the university management announced its decision to migrate teaching and learning online that there was an outcry from both teachers and the students. This outcry even resulted in students boycotting classes, and demanding the management to reverse its decision and to instruct that teaching and learning to be delivered face-to-face as before. Both teachers and learners were very vocal about not wanting to teach or learn online using the university learning management system. There was an obvious standoff between the management and the teachers and the students about online learning. Each group had its own argument about how online learning in this university, particularly that was delivered through the university LMS, was affecting the quality of teaching and learning. The management argued that the LMS was working pretty well and it was capable of delivering effective teaching and learning. The teachers complained that the platform had many weaknesses and does not enable them to teach effectively. Students indicated that

they were not happy with the way they were participating in their learning since teaching and learning migrated online. However, students did not come upfront to outline the challenges they were experiencing with online learning. Knowing and documenting the experiences that the students had with online learning and associated challenges could perhaps assist this university to put more effort in support students to have better experiences with online learning. This is because, even though the university made the decision to migrate courses online because of COVID-19, these decisions were long overdue because online learning has now become the mode of choice for curriculum decision. As indicated in the literature, online learning promises ample benefits, some of which may be solutions to long standing educational problems. Thus, this study explored the students' experiences with online learning, challenges they were encountering and how they were dealing with these challenges.

METHODOLOGY

The qualitative research approach and methods that were used in this this study were influenced by a constructivist paradigm. According to this paradigm, people's view of the world is often influenced by their experiences (Creswell 2017, Kroeze 2012). Individuals give meaning to these experiences and use the meanings they assigned to their experiences to interpret life or a phenomenon (Creswell 2017, Kroeze 2012). For example, the standoff about online learning among the three groups, the university management, teachers and students, indicated that these three groups had contracting views about online learning. Using qualitative research approach can vividly bring out these different views and indicate how they had been shaped by their experiences.

Qualitative methods, particularly interviews and focus group discussions, enable people who are participating in a study to express their views and beliefs about their reality. These methods make it possible for a researcher to see and feel the world through the eyes of the researcher (O'Donoghue 2007). Again, this approach allows a researcher to study things in their natural settings, and make sense of the meaning the participants attach to their experiences (Creswell 2017, van Zyl 2014). Thus, using qualitative methods for this study was appropriate because the study was investigating the experiences of learners while still engaged in online learning. The in-depth investigation that is provided by these methods has enabled this study to capture data that include many aspects that are usually embedded in individuals' experiences. Some of this data is often overlooked by other methods. These aspects are often captured through the use of rich words and pictures that are able to capture vivid images of the events, feelings and emotions which would otherwise be lost if other methods are used. The approach also provides an opportunity for a researcher and the readers of this paper an opportunity to negotiate the meaning of online in the university investigated as assigned by the participants in this study. The detailed description of text-based data in which the participants explain their experiences in their own words make this negotiation possible (O'Donoghue 2007).

Population and Participants' Selection

The population of this study was undergraduate students in the Faculty of Education. Even though there was a directive from the university management that all teaching and learning activities be migrated online, some lecturers argued for their courses to continue to be delivered through face-to-face mode. Other lecturers opted to use one or a combination of face-to-face delivery modes and online resources such as *internet-based emails, WhatsApp, Google apps, Zoom* and the university learning management system. This study recruited students who were only engaged

in *the* university LMS. This was because this platform was endorsed for undergraduate teaching and learning by the University and it was zero-rated. Further, unlike other online platforms, teachers and students were given basic training on how to use this platform. Investigating students who were using only one platform would ensure uniformity and less differences in the experiences and challenges the students would have been exposed to. The study chose to engage students from *Teaching and Instructional Design* Course. There were about 122 students who were enrolled in this course. The lecturers of this course had migrated their teaching and learning activities on the university learning management system as directed by the management.

During recruitment, students' attributes such as geographical locations of their home residences, and willingness to participate were taken into account. The recruitment intended to be inclusive of students from rural areas where electricity and internet infrastructures were elementary and unstable, and peri-urban and urban areas where these infrastructures offered better services.

That the study was carried out during the national lockdown and human restriction because of COVID-19 crisis, a wide choice of selection of participants was restricted. Even though the purpose of the study was explained to these students, many of them were suspicious of this study because they were boycotting online classes. They feared that the data gathered would to be used against them. As a result, many refused to participate. Others who initially agreed to participate, just before the study took off, also dropped out for the same fear. Instead of 20 students which were initially targeted, only 12 students voluntarily decided to participate.

Methods of Data Collection and Analysis

Initially the study intended to use a focus group discussion as a method of data collection. However, because COVID-19 rules and regulations that were imposed by Lesotho government that prohibited gatherings and restricted human movements (Ministry of Health, 2020) telephone semi-structured interview was chosen as an alternative method. These interviews, which were between 15 to 20 minutes, were recorded using a mobile phone. Data collected was transcribed, coded and analysed using a thematic analysis approach recommended by Vaismoradi, Jones, Turunen and Snelgrove (2016). The model has four phases which are initialization, construction, rectification and finalization. The results that were generated from this analysis are presented and supported with extracts from the participants' responses.

In relation to ethical considerations, such procedures: as informing the potential participants about the study; seeking the participants' concern to participate; keeping participants' anonymity; and presenting the results in such a way that nothing is traced back to any participant, were taken into consideration.

RESULTS PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study revealed that learners faced various challenges that resulted from personal-related factors, pedagogical factors and institutional factors.

Personal related factors

Literature indicate that the personal attributes of a learner can act as barriers to online participation be technological knowledge and skill, self-discipline and self-motivation and attitude, learning style, and cultural and socio-economic background (Ippakayala & El-Ocla 2017, Shahmoradi et al. 2018, Kumar 2015,

Manzoor & Ramzan 2020, Vaughn & Mac-Vicar, 2004). This study has also made the same findings as those in the literature.

Learners' limited knowledge and skill, motivation and attitude

The participants in this study indicated that their one of their major challenges for online learning is the limited knowledge they have. From their point of view, the knowledge they have does not allow them to navigate the learning management systems and carry their learning tasks effectively. For example, this is how one of the participant puts it:

> *Although I have done computer literacy course while I was doing first year, what I was taught then was not applicable now because the technology was not advanced like now where we have to use things like Thuto and other learning platforms such as zoom, Google Classroom. So this has posed a huge challenge for me, to the extent that I almost withdrawn from the school.*

In addition to this limited knowledge, self-motivation and attitude also appear to be in the way of participants' effective online learning participation. The motivation and attitude appear to be influenced partly by their limited knowledge and skills, access to personal digital devices and personal space. With regard to knowledge, in the participant quotation in page 10, the participant indicates that the knowledge and skill related struggle she had with online learning sometimes made her want to quit her studies.

Cultural and socio-economic background

Access to personal digital resources and learning spaces also appear to negatively affected how learners in this study participated. Many of them (9) indicated that because of their socio-economic background, they do not have access to personal digital resources and dedicated learning spaces. cultural and socio-economic background. They indicated that for ICT needs, they usually relied on the University digital resources. They explained that since the University had declared the migration of courses on line, the students were told to go home and the University Campus was locked down for students. As a result, students who did not own digital resources were left stranded and as a result, struggled to participate online. This is how one of these participants put it: *"I took two weeks without getting in touch with my lecturers because I had to source laptop since I have always relied on University computers"*. Dedicated learning spaces that would motivate an online learner (Dhawan 2020) emerged as one of the challenges that affected learner's participation on online learning. The participants indicated that learning from home was difficult for them because of the number of people in their household. They are not able to have dedicated space to learn as spaces are shared with other members of the household. This is how one participant put it:

> *I am staying with my parents and my siblings, two sisters and two brothers, so I share a sleeping room with my brothers. This where I also normally do my studies. It has not been easy for me because my mother can pop in in the middle of my lessons and assign me house chores like to fetch maize at the fields.*

In addition, to the problem of shared spaces in the household, this participant also indicate that he is also not able have dedicated time for reading. While at home these participants are expected to take part in the household chores. This has been also reported by Kwatubana and Ebrahim (2020) who pointed out that some social responsibilities of some learners in Southern African schools negatively affects how they learn.

Learning Styles

The participants learning habits appeared also to have influence on the participant motivation and attitude to learn online. The view of these students (5) was that they are used to learning in groups and consulting other students for support when they are on campus. According to them, that online learning had isolated them from their counterparts they were not as motivated to learn as when they learn through face-to-face mode. One of these students explained,

> *When we have face-to-face classes, we do not only have discussions during classes but even between classes. We have discussion groups in which we discuss theories, models or concepts. For other students, lecture-based learning is not enough. Many of us benefit significantly from discussions and we remain motivated to learn.*

According to these students, active engagement in discussions, peer support among themselves motivate them to learn. This has been supported by Gravett (2018) and Cusimano, Ting, Kwong, Van, Melle, MacDonald and Cline (2019) who observed that sometimes students also learn from their seniors who act more like mentors. These seniors are regarded as near-peer strongest as they are eager to share their knowledge with those less knowledgeable in their field of study. For example, one student in this study explained this by saying, "*I do not have vibe to study because these concepts are difficult when I work alone at home, since I do not have any senior student to consult*". From the participants in this study were of the view that whoever made the decisions to migrate teaching and learning online had not deeply thought about these extended benefits of face-to face mode of learning.

Pedagogical related challenges

Learners in this study were also experiencing pedagogical challenges. They explained that how their teachers presented learning material online was not giving them any classroom experience. Their explanation was that many teachers had turned the University LMS as a platform for 'dumping' unexplained lecture notes and assignments. This has been observed by many scholars that one of the factors that can deter online learners is when teachers fail to explain and demonstrate difficult learning concepts and processes online (Boaler 2016, Khirwadkar, Khan, Mgombelo, Ratkovic & Forbes 2020; Lu et al. 2020).

Institutional support

According to the participants (9), the technical support from the university they had been receiving for online learning, such as being trained how to use the LMS had been of very little help for effective participation. This was because, as they explained, the training did not provide opportunities for hands-on practice. They were not able to acquire necessary skills from this training and, as a result, when they were away from other learners, or people who could assist them, they struggled to remember what they had been taught. When asked about other forms of support such as CTL helpdesk. Many students appeared to be ignorant of the existence of this facility. Students (2) who appeared to have some knowledge about this facility, their view was that helpdesk role was only to hold formal trainings for students and lecturers or assist technical stuff like resetting passwords. These students were not aware that they could consult the helpdesk for individual assistance. The rest of the participants did not know about this facility. Generally, the findings of this study also established that all the students did not think that the university was doing enough to support online learning, particularly by making digital infrastructure and resources available and accessible to ensure that no student was disadvantaged.

Students coping mechanisms

The students were asked how they were copying with the situations they had just described. All of them indicated that they were not copying at all, that is why they were boycotting their studies. They indicated that students who did not have digital knowledge and skill, personal devices and or access to the internet, relied on their friends or willing counterparts to assist them with downloading (learning materials such as notes and or prescribed resources from the internet and teacher feedback) or uploading (assignments). Otherwise they use internet cafes for this purpose. They further indicated that because the cafes are costly and that it is not every day they could seek help from their colleagues, they rely for some aspects of learning such as reading or listening to the recorded lectures they use their mobile phones. These participants indicated that even though the university campus was closed and they had been told to go home, many of them had not gone home. They had sought for temporary accommodation in the villages surrounding the campus. The reason being that they had an opportunity to 'snatch' the university internet from the other side of the fence. This is how one of them put it:

> *During the day, don't you see many student standing or sitting along the university fence, it is because we are accessing internet. We actually learnt this from people who stay in the villages surrounding the campus. So nobody goes home. We are all here as if the University is still open.*

Generally, the findings of this study confirm those that were established by other studies before this about online learning. These studies observed that different types of factors, personal, pedagogical or institutional, for example, have a great influence on how students participate online (Ippakayala & El-Ocla 2017, Kumar 2015, Kumar Basak et al. 2018, Manzoor & Ramzan 2020, Shahmoradi et al. 2018, Vaughn & Mac-Vicar, 2004). Where these factors had been taken into account they can make online learning effective and provide enjoyable learner experiences. However, where planning failed to recognise the importance of these factors, as has been the case with the university which was studied, online learning could be ineffective and create a chaotic teaching and learning environments. The findings of this study contradicts Dhawan's observation (2020:7) that online learning has emerged as "a victor ludorum amidst this chaos" because in this study it appears to have caused havoc in some universities. Perhaps, Dhawan's observation was based on the universities which thoroughly planned and successfully implemented online learning.

Thus, unlike others who viewed online learning as a panacea for education ills as it has been viewed as a solution to address the COVID-19 crisis (Dhawan 2020), it should rather be viewed as an alternative way of delivering teaching and learning. A strategy that needs through planning and resources for its effectiveness to deliver quality education. Hasty and haphazard decision to migrate courses online, should be seen an ingredient for chaos that is likely to damage the quality teaching and learning.

CONCLUSION

This study investigated the challenges of online learning that were experienced by students in one university. The study was carried out after the management of this university instructed teaching and learning activities to be migrated online. This was a drastic decision by the university whose teaching and learning activities had been mostly face-to-face. In this study, 12 undergraduate students from Faculty of Education were interviewed on the challenges they were encountering with online learning. The

challenges that were experienced by these students were influenced by factors which three categories which are personal-related, pedagogical and institutional. This study concludes that when the university embarked on online learning it had not thought deeply about how these factors would affect teaching and learning. As such, if they were considered during decision making it was in a very casual manner. Instead of solving teaching and learning issue during COVID-19 Crises, online learning has created chaos in teaching and learning and frustration for students to learn. However, Todorova and Bjorn-Andersen (2011) see these disastrous online learning as an opportunity for the universities to learn through their experiences and prepare better for the environmental disasters to come beyond COVID-19 pandemic. Dhawan's (2020) advises these learning institutions to have a high level of preparedness for online learning so that they can easily adapt during the future disasters and crises.

This study recommends that all learning institutions should think deeply about and plan thoroughly about online learning before making decision to use this mode of learning. First, they should not see online learning as something which can provide a quick fix for education crisis with very little planning. They should view planning for online learning more demanding than planning for face-to-face teaching. When thinking of online learning, all curriculum aspects that include the following should be considered: human aspect (teacher, learner and the support they will need), learning spaces (their availability and appropriateness for learning), and learning materials and strategies. Above all, in their planning, the institutions should view online learning as a strategy used to enhance teaching and learning and to achieve national educational goals, not as a quick fix for educational crisis. In this way, online learning can effectively serve as a panacea in the time of crisis (Dhawn 2020).

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