

A Qualitative Approach To The Impact Of Covid-19 On The West Africa Educational System

Dr. Ramatu Ussif

University of Education, Winneba

School of Business

Department of Applied Finance and Policy Management

Winneba, Ghana

russif@uew.edu.gh/ramatussif@gmail.com

Abstract: *This research is on the impact of Novel COVID-19 on the West African Educational system. The Novel COVID-19 pandemic has affected the educational systems worldwide, which leads to near-total closures of schools, colleges, and universities worldwide. Governments across the world decided to close educational institutions temporary in an attempt to reduce the spread of the Virus. The educational system and schools in West Africa have changed over time and currently with the increasing cases of COVID-19 across the world. The introduction of the West African Examination Council (WAEC) which is made up of the English Speaking Countries in West Africa was a great one since its establishment in the 1980s but due to the Coronavirus in the year 2019/2020, the examination has to be written differently according to each countries arrangement in the year 2020. This is the first time in history since the establishment of this educational system that the exams were written separately. In this study, a qualitative interview was conducted with the teachers, students, and parents/guardian of the students in the secondary schools on their views and experiences during the COVID-19 Era. The researcher found out that, the COVID-19 has affected the performance of the students'. While some of the parents were saying their kids' performance is excellent, some said the student passed but the general performance is not encouraging. Others guardians also mentioned that their children failed woefully. According to some of the students we interviewed, that, though they passed the exams, they knew nothing. Some of the students also reveal that the exams papers were remarked because initially over 80 percent of them failed and after the remarking, the examination favoured some of them. The teachers also mentioned that the students were home and not studying. The books, assignments and pass questions given to them was not utilized and they concluded that the general performance of the 2020 WAEC student was poor. We recommend that governments of the various countries should work hard towards ending Coronavirus for schools to resume fully and students to learn effectively.*

Keywords— *Coronavirus, West African Educational System, WAEC, Qualitative Research*

Terminologies

GCE: General Certificate Examination

JAMB: Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board

JHS: Junior High School

NECO: National Examination Council Exam

SHS: Senior High School

UTME: Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination

WAEC: West Africa Examination Council

WAES: West African Educational System

WASSCE: West African Senior School Certificate Examination

1. Introduction

The educational system and schools in West Africa have changed drastically. This has been an important history in West Africa since its establishment. This article discusses the impact of COVID-19 on the West African educational System. West Africa which is also known as Western Africa or the West of Africa comprises Eighteen (18) different countries covering a total area of approximately 1,974,103 square miles (5,112,903 km²) with a total population of about 340,000,000 using 2013 estimate. Various beliefs and cultures inhabit this vast region with many differences but likewise with some general similarities with regards to such things as food, clothing, and music. We listed some facts about West Africa including information about the similarities and differences among the people in the region and the countries that are found there. Ussif, (2020), the Coronavirus has affected most of the examinations across the world especially developing and less developed countries where access to the internet facility is a serious challenge. In West Africa during the COVID-19 Era, most of the countries could not have classes. Lectures were cancelled and during the lockdown period, most students did not learn anything. The West Africa Examination Council, a non-profit making organization with its headquarters in Accra, Ghana was established in 1952 after the Government of Ghana which was then known

as Gold Coast, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and the Gambia enacted the WAEC ordinance in 1951. The main objectives of the council include:

- To conduct exams in the public interest of all the countries.
- To award certificates provided that the certificate did not represent lower standards of attainment than equivalent certificates of examining authorities in the United Kingdom.

The vision of the council is to be a world-class examining body adding value to the essential goals of its stakeholders while the mission is to remain Africans foremost examining body, providing qualitative and reliable educational assessment, encouraging academic and moral excellence and promoting sustainable human resource development and international co-operation. The core values of the council include excellence, integrity, professionalism, accountability, transparency, innovativeness, and teamwork.

Many countries in the world are suggesting various levels of containment to prevent the mass spread of coronavirus in the countries and West Africa was not an exception. With these uncertainties and fears, Schools, Colleges, and Universities are closing down and moving abruptly to online platforms and distant education. Online education was also a challenge in most African Countries because the internet is very expensive for the majority of the populace to afford (Ussif, 2020). This sudden change and unable to attend classes has led to this research on the impact of Coronavirus on educational systems in West Africa. The Coronaviruses are a family of diseases that ranges from the common cold to Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS). The most recent coronavirus was first detected in China a place called Wuhan, in December 2019.

1.1 History of Western Africa

Archaeological records show that human settlers began populating West Africa around 12,000 BC. Around 1,500 B.C. the West African people began using the iron to create tools that improved their ability to farm and laid the foundation for the first civilizations in that region. The oldest West African civilization was the Nok culture. This civilization first appeared around 1000 BC in modern-day Nigeria and lasted up until around 300 BC. After the Nok civilization was formed several other civilizations appeared in West Africa over the following centuries. These civilizations include the Ghana Empire, the Mali Empire, the Kingdom of Nri, the Ashanti Empire, and the Songhai Empire. Europeans started establishing settlements along the coast of West Africa starting in the mid-1400s; the African slave trade started soon after. Europeans would establish colonies in this region and control the region for centuries. More than half of the estimated ten million slaves captured in Africa and sent to America and Europe between the mid-1600s and the mid-1800s were from West Africa. After World War II West Africa experienced nationalist movements where the people fought for independence from the European countries that controlled them. In 1957 Ghana became the first sub-Saharan colony to gain independence, and by 1974 all of West Africa consisted of independent countries. The borders of the newly independent African countries were often established by using the colonial boundaries that had been established by Europeans. These boundaries often separated single ethnic groups into two or more states and would lead to political instability and war. After gaining independence many West African countries have experienced political instability and brutal conflicts including numerous civil wars. These conflicts include the Nigerian Civil War, First Liberian Civil War, Second Liberian Civil War, and the Ivorian Civil War.

1.2 Interesting Facts of West Africa

There are many interesting facts about West Africa and some include:

- The Atlantic Ocean forms both the western and southern borders of West Africa. The Sahara Desert is the regions northern border. The eastern border is not defined by any geographical feature and is not as precise as the other borders.
- The largest cities in West Africa include:
 - Lagos, Nigeria
 - Abidjan (Ivory Coast)
 - Accra (Ghana)
 - Abuja (Nigeria)
 - Kumasi (Ghana)
- Islam is the predominant West African religion. Over half of the population of West Africa are Muslims.
- The languages spoken in West Africa are mostly part of the Niger-Congo languages; which is one of the world's major language families.
- West Africa, unlike most of Southern, Southeast, and Central Africa, does not have a large population of Bantu-speaking peoples.
- The various cultures of West Africa have very similar cuisines that include foods such as fish, vegetables, fruit, and meat.

- The most common crops grown in West Africa are peanuts, coffee, rice, cotton, and cassava. Cacao, which is used in making cocoa and chocolate, is another common West African crop especially in Ghana which is the second-largest producer of this crop in the world.
- West Africa is a huge region and as expected the people there wear a wide variety of clothing; however there are some basic similarities. The wrapper or lappa a popular woman's garment is worn throughout West Africa. A popular garment worn by men throughout West Africa is a wide-sleeved robe called the grand boubou.
- The board game "Oware" is very popular in West Africa and is played throughout the region. The game is believed to have been invented hundreds of years ago by the Akan people that inhabited modern-day Ghana and the Ivory Coast.
- Nigeria, with a population of approximately 182,202,000 (2015 United Nations estimate), is the country with the largest population in West Africa. It has the largest population in all of Africa.
- Lake Volta, located in Ghana, is one of the largest artificially created lakes on earth. This West African lake was formed by the damming of the Volta River.

1.3 Research Gap

The increase in the number of COVID-19 cases in West African made the West African examination council suspend the WAEC Examination of April 2020 to further notice. This has a lot of consequences on the study, lives and plans of students in those countries. Both the teachers and parents have serious challenges they are facing as the students are now home with the majority of the students not studying. The virus disrupted the students since most of them not have access to the internet. The countries in West Africa lack stable internet and the internet is very expensive for the students and their parents to afford. The lack of effective and cheap internet has made it impossible for the teachers to organize online lessons for the students during the lockdown period.

1.4 Research Objectives

The main objective of this article is to measure the effects of Novel COVID-19 on the education and examination of Senior High School students in West Africa.

The specific objectives include:

- To examine the effects of COVID-19 on students studying at home
- To access the teacher-student relationship whilst staying at home
- To investigate the parent-student teaching and guidance during the lockdown period
- To discuss the causes and effects of COVID-19 on the 2020 WAEC students

1.5 Research Question

The main research question of this article is what are the effects of Novel Covid-19 on the education and examination of Senior High School students in West Africa?

The specific Research Question includes:

- What are the effects of COVID-19 on students studying at home
- What is the teacher-student relationship whilst staying at home
- Is there parent-student teaching and guidance during the lockdown period
- What are the causes and effects of COVID-19 on the 2020 WAEC students

2. Literature Review

2.1 History of West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE)

The West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) is a type of standardized test in West Africa. Students who pass the exam receive a certificate confirming their graduation from secondary education. It is administered by the West African Examinations Council (WAEC). It is only offered to candidates residing in Anglophone West African countries. The academic school-leaving qualification awarded upon successful completion of the exams is the West African Senior School Certificate. The West African Senior School Certificate Examination tests four core subjects: English, Mathematics, Integrated Science, Social Studies, and other three (3) or four (4) elective subjects depending on the area of study and specialization. The electives for science students differs from that of General Arts students, Accounting students, Home Economics Students, Technical students and Visual Arts Student.

2.2 The Examinations

There are two different types of examination:

- West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) May/June is the Senior School Certificate Examination (SSCE) for school candidates. It is taken by final year students in senior secondary schools. They wear their respective school uniforms. This examination is offered during the summer (April to May), and the results are available by August.

- West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) Nov/Dec, also known as General Certificate Examination (GCE) or WAEC GCE, is a private examination and uniforms are not required but biometric registration is compulsory as in the former. This examination is only offered during autumn and it is usually taken by secondary school leavers who want to correct deficiencies in their results. The results are available by December.

Note

The coming of the Novel Covid-19 has affected all the above times and arrangements and the examinations all have to be observed at different times and dates and based on each countries Coronavirus situations. The timing of the examinations has also affected the University calendar of those countries because some managed to do classes online while waiting for the Senior High School students to finish their exams and apply to the University to be enrolled.

Under the new West Africa Examination Council (WAEC) marking and grading scheme, the letters A to F are used to indicate how good a result is. Below are the explanations: to get an A in West Africa Examination Council, English/Mathematics, for example, you need to score above 80 percent in the Exam. 80 percent means you can get 80 questions correctly out of the 100 questions.

2.3 The West Africa Examination Council Grading System

Grades	Definition	Interpretation	Equivalent
A1	Excellent	80% - 100%	1
B2	Very good	75% - 79%	2
B3	Good	70% - 74%	3
C4	Credit	60%- 69%	4
C5	Credit	55% - 59%	5
C6	Credit	50% - 54%	6
D7	Pass	45% - 49%	7
E8	Pass	40% - 44%	8
F9	Fail	0% - 39%	9

2.4 The Official Guidelines for University Admission

Candidates are advised that they will be required to satisfy not only the university's general entrance requirements but also the requirements of the particular faculty which they wish to enter and that these requirements vary considerably. Particulars of entrance requirements and exemption regulations may be obtained from the universities or professional bodies concerned.



Nigeria


In Nigerian senior secondary school, students can take either the West African Senior School Certificate Examination WASSCE or the National Examination Council (NECO) exam. Students who choose to study in Nigerian universities are required to sit the Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination (UTME), an entrance examination administered by the state-owned Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB).

2.5 A Common Anglophone Curriculum under the West African Examinations Council

Established in 1952, the West African Examinations Council, known commonly as WAEC, is a regional examination body headquartered in Accra, Ghana that conducts standardized school-level examinations in the five Anglophone countries of West Africa: The Gambia, Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria and Sierra Leone.

WEST AFRICAN EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL




- 1 Gambia
- 2 Ghana
- 3 Liberia
- 4 Nigeria
- 5 Sierra Leone

GRADING

WAS-WASSCE GRADE CONVERSIONS

Grade	Description	Grade Equivalencies
1	Excellent	A
2	Very Good	A
3-6	Credit	B
7	Pass	B
8	Pass	C
9	Fail	F

NUMBER OF WEST AFRICAN STUDENTS IN THE UNITED STATES, 2013-14



WEST AFRICAN EXAMINATION COUNCIL EXAMS

Country	National Primary School Certificate	National Postprimary Certificate	Third-Party Certificate	Junior Examination School Certificate	WASS/WASSCE	General Certificate of Education Certificate
Gambia		*		*	*	
Ghana			*		*	*
Liberia	*			*	*	
Nigeria				*	*	*
Sierra Leone	*			*	*	

UNIVERSITY ADMISSIONS

Students must earn credit passes (C or better) in two subjects, including English and mathematics, to be considered for university entry. Results for all WAEC exams dating back to 1990 can be verified quickly and reliably through the WAEC Direct website, the Council's online result checking system.

The Council develops, administers and grades the regional West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) in all five countries, in addition to national examinations in select countries at lower grade levels. It also conducts examinations for third-party international examination boards and professional licensing bodies. The WASSCE is standardized across all WAEC member countries and is offered after completion of the three-year Senior Secondary School (SSS) curriculum. It is also used in most countries as the university admissions examination and to screen students for other non-university institutions of higher learning.

Country-by-Country Overviews of WAEC Examinations and Curricula

West African Examination Council Exams						
COUNTRY	NATIONAL PRIMARY SCHOOL	NATIONAL ASSESMENT TEST	BASIC EDUCATION CERTIFICATE	JUNIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL CERTIFICATE	WASSCE/SSCE	GENERAL/ ADVANCED BUSINESS CERTIFICATE
Gambia		*		*	*	
Ghana			*		*	*
Liberia	*			*	*	
Nigeria					*	
Sierra Leone	*		*		*	

The above was developed as an alternative to UK assessment systems. Four of the five WAEC countries are former British colonies and have education systems modelled on the UK seed system. Therefore, before the introduction of its examinations, WAEC operated the GCE O and A-level examinations. The Senior Secondary School system was introduced to replace the GCE curriculum and it was first adopted in Nigeria in 1989, followed by Ghana in 1993, The Gambia in 1998, Sierra Leone in 2000 and Liberia in 2011. The last publicly administered O- and A-levels in the region were offered in 1999. As a result, we are seeing fewer and fewer GCE credentials come into the WES offices for evaluation. However, some private secondary schools in the region still offer UK-modeled examinations through Cambridge International Examinations. The Liberian education system has its roots in the U.S. system of education, but joined WAEC in 1974 and partially adopted the Anglophone West African system. However, due to its protracted civil war, Liberia did not introduce the regional WASSCE examinations and curriculum until very recently. Similarly, in Sierra Leone, the introduction of the WASSCE was delayed until 2000 by its years of civil war. A common educational structure across all WAEC member countries, participation rates stubbornly low. All the five countries follow a very similar educational structure that will be familiar to educators in the United States. It consists of nine years of free and compulsory basic education (six years primary, three years junior secondary), followed by three years of upper secondary school (6+3+3).

Despite the introduction of free and compulsory basic education across the region, gross enrollment and completion rates remain relatively low, while progression rates to secondary school are even lower. However, these metrics have been improving in recent years. According to data from the World Bank, in both Liberia and Sierra Leone, gross enrollment ratios (GER) are currently above 100 percent (102 & 131 respectively), with those missing out on schooling due to civil war now returning. Ghana too enjoys good primary school access with a GER of 100 percent. However, in Gambia and Nigeria, it is significantly lower at 85 percent. A high GER generally indicates a high degree of participation, whether the students belong to the official age group or not. With regards to primary completion rates, the picture is quite different. In Ghana, an impressive 98 percent of primary school students (as a percentage of the sixth grade age group, regardless of actual student age) completed sixth grade in 2012; however, the rate was much lower in Nigeria (76%), Sierra Leone (72%), The Gambia (70%), and Liberia (65%). Given the poor primary completion rates, it is not surprising that gross enrollment rates at the lower secondary level are significantly lower than at the primary level: Gambia 57 percent in 2010; Ghana 61 percent in 2013; Liberia 45 percent in 2011; Nigeria 44 percent in 2010; and Sierra Leone 62 percent in 2010. Across the region, only about one-third of students completing nine years of basic education go forward to senior secondary school, and only about one-third of senior secondary school graduates continue to higher education. Again, these rates are improving but still sit well below global averages.

2.6 The West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE)

The unified WASSCE exam, which is the current school-leaving examination conducted across all five member countries, was initially launched in The Gambia in 1998 and was then adopted in Nigeria (1999), Sierra Leone (2000), Ghana (2006) and Liberia (2011). The examination is administered twice a year in May/June and in November/December. It combines school-based continuous assessment with external WAEC assessment on a ratio of 30:70. The examination itself is comprised of up to nine individual subject examinations. The standard of the examination is the same as the Senior School Certificate Examination (SSCE) which until 1999 was run in Nigeria and the Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination (SSSCE) taken in Ghana until 2006.

2.7 University Admissions & Examination Grading

University admission in member countries is based in part or whole on performance in the WASSCE. Broadly speaking, students are required to score grade 6 or better (defined as ‘credit’) in five subjects, including English language and mathematics or a science subject, to be considered for university entry. Some countries, Nigeria most notably, also require a separate centralized university entrance examination, with eligibility based on WASSCE performance. Individual universities in member countries may also administer separate entrance examinations. WAEC changed its grading system in 1996-7. Under the old system, students were eligible for the school certificate if they obtained minimum passing grades of 50 percent in each subject offered in the WAEC National Examination and a minimum of 70 percent in each school grade. The combined grades of both the school and National Examination of each subject had to be 60 percent. The current grading system is based on a nine-point system, with 1 through 8 being passing grades and 9 a failing grade. As noted above, students need to score 6 or better in individual subjects to be considered for university admissions. Grading is typically very stringent with few As and Bs awarded.

2.8 The Official language for all WAEC Curricula and Examinations in English.

The WASSCE Grading Scale	
GRADE	DESCRIPTOR
A1	Excellent
B2	Very Good
B3	Good
C4	Credit
C5	Credit
C6	Credit
D7	Pass
E8	Pass
F9	Fall

Results for all WAEC exams dating back to the 1990 academic year can be verified quickly and reliably through the West African Examinations Council’s online results checking system, known as WAEC Direct. Each country has a regional result checking website:

- Gambia (results back to 1993)
- Ghana (1990)
- Liberia (2014)
- Nigeria (1991)
- Sierra Leone (1993).

Students should provide the credential evaluator with a PIN that they can purchase for the equivalent of roughly \$3 (available at post offices, banks or WAEC regional offices), which can then be used to retrieve a printable copy of their WAEC results.

At WES we use the following grading equivalencies for WASSCE subject examinations:

WES-WASSCE Grade Conversions		
GRADE	DESCRIPTION	GRADE EQUIVALENCIES
1	Excellent	A
2	Very Good	A
3-6	Credit	B
7	Pass	B
8	Pass	C
9	Fail	F

Nigeria and Ghana dominate West African enrollments in the U.S. In the United States, there were close to 11,500 students from the WAEC region studying at the tertiary level last year, about half of whom were undergraduates. Nigerian students account for over two-thirds of all Anglophone West African students in the U.S. Ghana is the other major sender, while the other three countries sent just 500 students combined in 2013/14.

Anglophone West African Enrollments in the United States by Level, 2012-2014										
COUNTRY	UNDERGRAD		GRAD		NON-DEGREE		OPT		TOTAL	
	2012/13	2013/14	2012/13	2013/14	2012/13	2013/14	2012/13	2013/14	2012/13	2013/14
Gambia	274	247	29	27	3	2	22	24	328	300
Ghana	1,190	1,219	1,290	1,307	39	48	344	340	2,863	2,914
Liberia	97	88	60	66	8	0	7	7	172	161
Nigeria	3,707	4,038	2,551	2,771	105	115	953	997	7,316	7,921
Sierra Leone	66	86	40	50	1	4	16	6	123	146
Total	5,334	5,678	3,970	4,221	156	169	1,342	1,340	10,802	11,442

3. Methodology

The research methodology for this study is purely qualitative. The study looked at the effect of COVID-19 on West African Educational Systems. Three different sets of interview guides were designed. The first set was an interview guide to the students, the second was to the teachers and the last set of interview guides was to the parent/guardian of the students. Twenty (20) of the pupil were interviewed and in all making sixty (60) respondents. The majority of the interviews were done in Ghana and followed by Nigeria. The analysis was done taking into consideration the research questions of the study. The interviewees' responses were recorded, coded, and analyzed using thematic analysis.

4. Data Analysis

4.1 Responses to Research Question One (1)

What are the effects of COVID-19 on the Examination of SHS Students in West Africa?

COVID-19 affects the SHS graduate student across West Africa.

Ama an SHS student in Ghana mentioned that the COVID has a serious effect on her. According to her, she was a boarding student and was studying very well by going to class in the morning, when close from classes in the afternoon, she goes for

lunch and after rest for an hour and go back to the class to study and revise what she was thought for the day. Ama said, I only return to my dormitory when it is time for supper and I go to the dining hall. After my supper, I wash down and prepare for preps again which is from 7 pm to 10 pm. But I came home during this lockdown I could not study anything. All my hope is shattered and I lost concentration. I feel like I cannot continue my education again due to COVID-19 cases increment.

4.2 Responses to Research Question Two (2)

What are the effects of COVID-19 on students studying at home?

Aish in Nigeria narrated that, I am a graduate and I go to school every day and come back home. After school. I have my special timetable for my studies. During my study time, my parent do not interact with me until I am done and I make sure I go through all that I was thought for the day and revision of all the weekly classes was done on weekend. Since this COVID started, my plans all faded. Because we do not go to school, I don't even know how to organize myself to study and I think the sickness will not end for us to continue our education.

4.3 Responses to Research Question Three (3)

What is the relationship between the teacher and student whilst staying at home?

The mother of one of the students called "Maame" narrated that, since the COVID started, there is no teacher-student relationship here in Ghana. Due to the lockdown, everyone is home and there is no visit. Neither the teachers call the students nor do the students call the teachers. No assignment is given and no communication. The internet system in the country is very bad for the learning of the students. I thought there should be a way that the teachers can communicate to teach our children online so that they do not miss any lesson because their final Examination time is due.

4.4 Responses to Research Question Four (4)

What is the relationship between students and their parents whilst staying and learning at home?

Madam V narrated that, she always monitor her children and make sure they study whilst they were at home. I drafted a timetable for them myself and I give them assignment and mark by myself. I tried to teach kids based on the WAEC syllabus and I mark their scripts according to the WAEC marking Scheme she narrated. This according to her builds a good relationship between her and her children and that made them do very well in both school exams and the West African Examinations Council.

Mr Sam explained that my children though they were SHS graduates about to write their WASSCE, they still do not like studying. They also discuss COVID-19 and not their book or when they are going back to school. I always cautioned them to study and I had to get them, teacher, at home to be teaching them. I bought them all the necessary books but they are not learning on their own until when I get them a private teacher. I have a good relationship with them if I do not tell them to go and study. Learning is what they dislike to hear about and what distracts our relationship.

4.5 Responses to Research Question Five (5)

What are the causes, and effects, of COVID-19 on the 2020 WAEC students/candidates?

During the interviews, a lot of causes and effects of Coronavirus were mentioned in all the countries. In Ghana, a student called Felix mentioned that the virus has caused more harm than good to the students because Schools were locked down and there was no teaching whilst we are home. Madam Vero narrated that, sitting at home is a challenge, the children not learning is a challenge and also to use the internet for an online program is a challenge. She said students should be taught ICT and internet usage in schools to help in this situation. That, government and teachers should not wait until pandemics come before shifting to the online system. There should be a blend of the two thus a hybrid system of teaching in all institutions.

5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

- The Coronavirus has a negative consequence on all educational systems in West Africa.
- All the countries: Gambia, Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria, and Sierra Leone have their experiences so far as the coronavirus pandemic is concerned.
- In Ghana, the examination was written in August 2020 instead of the usual scheduled time of April 2020 and a lot of issues were surrounding it. Some of the candidates got the coronavirus and others died. A lot of sicknesses and most of the parents came to the schools to take their children home.
- All the countries had to reschedule their examinations differently according to the time they think is favourable for both the teachers and the students.
- All COVID-19 protocols were observed before, during and after the examination
- As part of the effort to reduce the spread of COVID-19, both public and private schools, colleges, and universities, as well as offices, are closing down so that the people can remain home and prevent the further spread of the virus.
- In countries, like Ghana and Nigeria where testing and quarantine measures were taken as they discovered their first cases, the spread was able to level out. The measures that were taken to reduce the rate of the infections include no public gathering, social distancing, size limits on some events, reducing the number of staff who goes to work and quarantine.
- As school and colleges staff learn how to convert their lessons to online platforms, both the students and staff are trying to learn how to deal with remote learning and communication.

- School admissions are being delayed across the countries. Some states have opted to cancel or delay uniform testing, while others are thinking of extending the school year due to delays and many missed days of school.

6. Recommendation

The researchers wish the online classes will be effective to engage the SHS students because when they are home they don't study. Senior High School students who are preparing to write their WASSCE are home since the locked down and not studying.

The students and their parents wish the government will do normal classes on online platforms for the students to be engaged. This will include the use of online tools and instruments, such as group video programs, that allow teachers and students to meet and conduct classes over the internet.

Also, another method that can be adopted by SHS students is to continuing studying and learning effectively through distance education, which will use online programs that replaces instructors/teachers with educational materials that students can use to study on their own. An example of such distance learning would be online classes or videos which students will use at their own time, as opposed to meeting the teacher live with the teacher and other students.

We recommend that there should be free online programs for all SHS and JHS Student across Africa as done in countries such as China, Turkey, German, the USA, and many more.

In light of the pandemic, and the interruption of normal education, many online educational platforms have been advertising-free educational tools for students around the world who are stuck at home. We recommend that Governments should take advantage of this and get the students enrolled in these programs.

7. REFERENCES

Coert Loock; Vanessa Scherman (20 November 2019). Educational Assessment in a Time of Reform: Standards and Standard Setting for Excellence in Education. Taylor & Francis. p. 27. ISBN 978-0-429-68547-7.

"Guidelines for university entrance". West African Examination Council, Nigeria portal – via waecnigeria.org.

Karen Wells (8 November 2019). Teen Lives around the World: A Global Encyclopedia [2 volumes]. ABC-CLIO. p. 330. ISBN 978-1-4408-5245-9.

https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/inpatient-obstetric-healthcare-guidance.html?deliveryName=FCP_3_USCDC_1052%20DM22033

Coronavirus. (2020). https://www.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus#tab=tab_3 Coronavirus (COVID-19). (2020). <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html>

Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) advice for the public: When and how to use masks. (n.d.). <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public/when-and-how-to-use-masks>.

Coronavirus (COVID-19): What people with asthma need to know. (2020). <https://community.aafa.org/blog/coronavirus-2019-ncov-flu-what-people-with-asthma-need-to-know>

Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. (2020). <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>.

Coronavirus resource centre. (2020). <https://coronavirus.jhu.edu/map.html>

Q&A on coronaviruses (COVID-19). (2020). <https://www.who.int/news-room/q-a-detail/q-a-coronaviruses>

Qiao, J. (2020). What are the risks of COVID-19 infection in pregnant women? <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0140673620303652?via%3Dihub>

Ussif, R. (2020) "Role of Coronavirus in changing the world thinking and perceptions. International Journal of Academic and Applied Research. ISSN: 2643-9603 Vol. 4 Issue 10, October - 2020, Pages: 125-133

Ussif, R. (2020) "Impact of Novel COVID-19 on Sustainable Development Goals. International Journal of Academic Health and Medical Research. ISSN: 2643-9824 Vol. 4 Issue 10.

Van Doremalen, N., et al. (2020). Aerosol and surface stability of SARS-CoV-2 as compared with SARS-CoV-1 [Letter]. https://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMc2004973?query=featured_home

What to do if you are sick. (2020). <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/steps-when-sick.html>

"End It, Don't Mend It - Our Falling Education Standards." Africa News Service 15 Dec. 2011. Opposing Viewpoints In Context. Web. 19 July. 2013

"Sub-Saharan Africa Strengthens Advocacy for Quality Education." Africa News Service 10 June 2011. Opposing Viewpoints In Context. Web. 19 July. 2013.

Watkins, Kevin. "Basic education for all Africans". Retrieved 11 March 2011. (<https://www.un.org/ecosocdev/geninfo/afrec/subjindex/134edu.htm>)

"War Hurting Learning in Continent" Retrieved 27 April 2011. (<http://www.lexisnexis.com/hottopics/Inacademic/>)

"She's the First" 27 April 2011 (<http://www.dw-world.de/dw/article/0,,5277312,00.html>)

APPENDIX

ANNEX A LIST OF COUNTRIES IN WEST AFRICA

Countries	Countries	Countries
Benin	Guinea	Nigeria
Burkina Faso	Guinea-Bissau	Saint Helena
Cape Verde	Liberia	Senegal
Cote d'Ivoire (Ivory Coast)	Mali	Sierra Leone
The Gambia	Mauritania	Sao Tome and Principe
Ghana	Niger	Togo

Source: Authors Research, 2021.

ANNEX B LIST OF ENGLISH SPEAKING COUNTRIES IN WEST AFRICA

Country 1	The Gambia
Country 2	Ghana
Country 3	Liberia
Country 4	Nigeria
Country 5	Sierra Leone

Source: Authors Research, 2021.