

Impacts Of COVID-19 On Undergraduate Students Learning, Examinations And Socio-economic Life.

Introduction

COVID-19 disrupted many sectors of the economy worldwide including the education sector particularly in Kenya.

The first case was confirmed on 12th March 2020 leading to sudden closure of all learning institutions country-wide on 15th March 2020. This forced most institutions to find a way of ensuring learning continued during the pandemic despite the economic challenges faced by students.

Research Objectives

- To investigate how undergraduate students' learning process was affected by COVID-19 pandemic.
- To show the impacts of COVID-19 on undergraduate students' examination.
- To investigate how students social-economic life was affected by the pandemic.

Research Methodology

A cross sectional study was carried out on February 5th and February 16th 2021 to collect data in accordance with the objectives of the study. The sample size anticipated was 1000 students from all the universities. However, only students from 28 universities participated in the study. The questionnaire was designed using Kobo Toolbox then distributed via Email and WhatsApp. Kobo Toolbox was preferred since it restricts respondents from attempting the questionnaire more than once.

Daily Covid-19 data was downloaded from data repository by the Center of Systems Science and Engineering CSSE) at John Hopkins University website.

Data cleaning and analysis was done in JMP.

Results And Discussion

Kenya has experienced two waves of COVID-19 infections¹. The second phase was worse than the first phase. Due to mounting pressure and disturbed lifestyles, the government made a decision to return to normalcy towards the end of the first wave. One of the decisions was to open the learning institutions. However, learning had already been affected and impact already being felt as shown in figure 1.

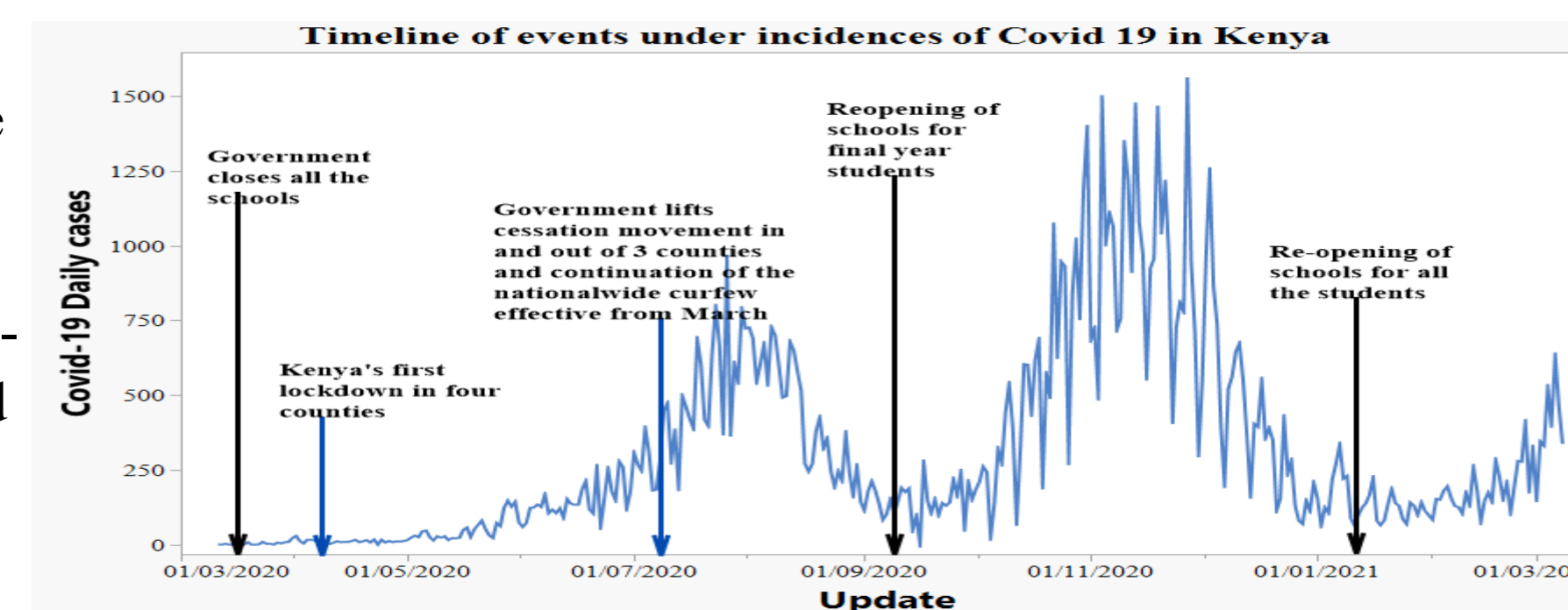


Figure 1: The timeline of events following the occurrences of COVID-19

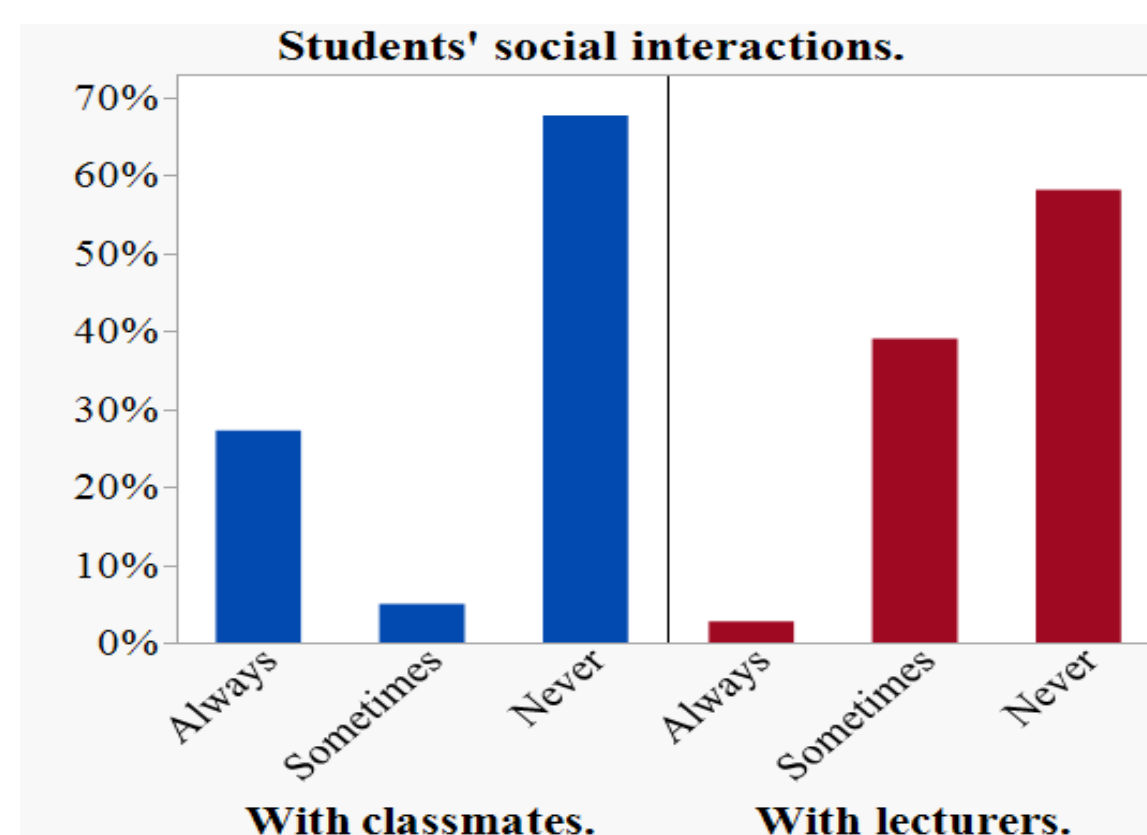


Figure 2: Interaction between students with their lecturers and fellow classmates.

With restrictions on maintaining social distance, a good number of universities resulted to utilizing on-line learning² this resulted to reduced interaction between their fellow classmates and the lecturers yet the semester closed midway as shown in figure 2.

In figure 3, many students were not ready for the online assessment thus most of them opted to do face to face examinations offered by their institutions when the learning institutions re-opened.

How exams were conducted.

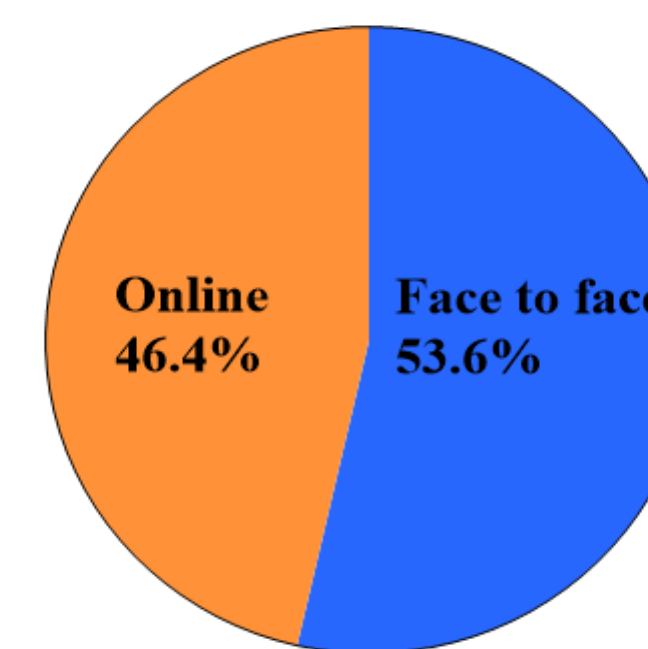


Figure 3: Proportion of students who did online and face to face exams.

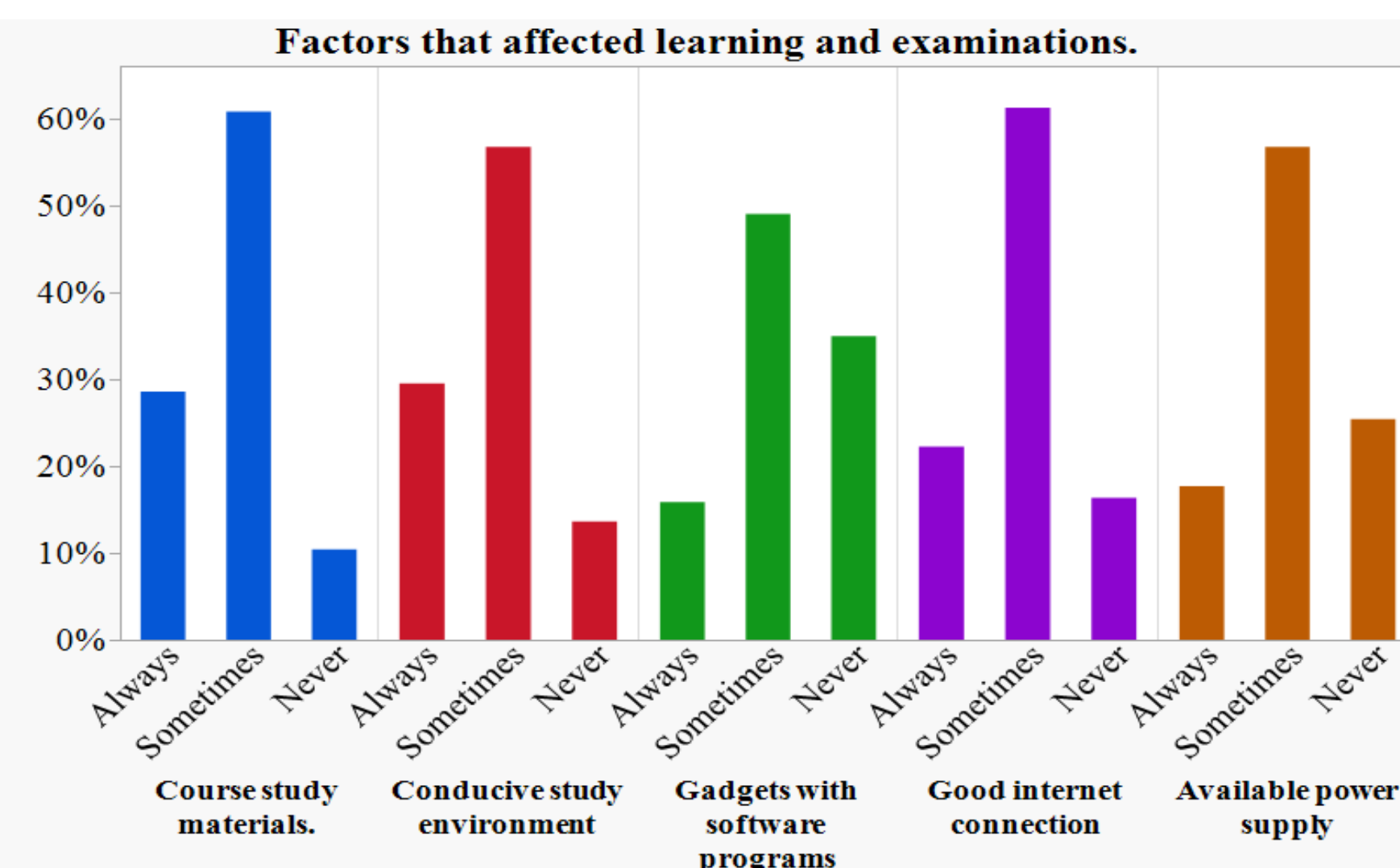


Figure 4: How frequent students accessed learning and examinations requirements during the pandemic.

Most of the students resided in remote areas of the country. The learning mode and environment adapted by most of the universities in Kenya during the COVID-19 break required a reliable power supply, good internet connection, study materials and a conducive study environment yet only about 50% of the students had access.

The gadgets used for access were also unattainable for most students with 35% never having either a computer or smartphone due to financial constraints².

All the students are required to complete their school fees before sitting for any examination. However, due to the economic hardships witnessed during the pandemic more than 60% struggled to pay their school fees for the semester².

Conclusion

As discussed, COVID-19 had many negative impacts on the lives of undergraduate students as it disrupted their normal learning process. Some students, who had part time jobs that enabled them to support themselves financially initially, lost them due to the pandemic many which resulted to tough financial constraints among the students as many couldn't cater for their needs.

However, it had positive impacts too. Before the pandemic most of the students were used to face to face learning and examinations as well but during the pandemic many got to experience a different learning environment (e-learning) from the comfort of their homes and also learned at their own pace. E-learning also helped reduce the time and costs incurred while shifting from one place to another.

References

1. Dong, E., Du, H., Gardner L. (2020). Retrieved March 9, 2021 from [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/laninf/article/PIIS1473-3099\(20\)30120-1/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/laninf/article/PIIS1473-3099(20)30120-1/fulltext)
2. Questionnaire: <https://ee.kobotoolbox.org/As6t6FzD>