

Chapter 1

Assessing South African University Adoption of Online Teaching During COVID 19

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to assess South African universities' adoption of online teaching and learning during COVID-19. The literature review and document analysis were used to analyze the data. The study found that the Department of Higher Education and Training worked with universities to develop a plan to implement online teaching and learning. Various stakeholders such as media and mobile companies supported the online teaching and learning through financial resources in the form of data subsidizing, media airtime, and campaign for the initiative.

INTRODUCTION

This study assessed South African universities' adoption of Online teaching and learning during COVID 19 pandemic. The Department of Higher Education and Training introduced Online teaching and learning because of the spread of COVID -19 affecting both students and academics. Teaching and learning programs were adjusted from face-to-face to online (Christiaan, Purwanto, and Wibowo 2020). Mukute, Francis, Burt, and De Souza (2020), Mnguni, and Mokiwa (2020) said that the spread of the COVID-19 disrupted face-to-face teaching which led universities to adopt online teaching and learning. Students stopped attending face-to-face classes.

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The Department of Higher Education and Training adopted a proactive approach to mitigate the impact of the pandemic and to prevent learning loss during the 2020/2021 academic year (Reimers 2020). Universities expected online strategies to transform their pedagogical practices as an integral part of the transition to online teaching and learning response to COVID 19.

BACKGROUND OF SOUTH AFRICAN UNIVERSITIES

The apartheid government under the National party came into power in 1948. The apartheid affected South African education by categorizing universities according to race and color. Universities were allocated resources based on race, color, and geographical location. Historically Advanced Institutions were more funded than Historically Black Institutions. This is alluded to by the statement issued by the Council of Higher Education (2015) stating that “universities were allocated resources according to their historical background”.

South African universities were grouped according to population group, geographical area. The English-Medium universities, included the University of Cape Town, the University of the Witwatersrand, Rhodes University, and the University of Natal (Known as the University of Kwazulu Natal). These universities were liberal and critical to the apartheid education policies such as the Bantu Education Act, 1953 and The Extension of University Education Act, Act 45 of 1959. This university category is established in urban and metropolitan areas. This category of the university is known as the Historically Advanced Institutions. When the COVID – 19 commenced, these universities were advance to provide online teaching and learning (Onwuegbuzie et al. 2020, p.243). Most students in this category access information communication technology. Students possess advanced cellphone and laptops.

Another category of the university was known as the White Afrikaans University. This category university included the University of Pretoria, the Rand Afrikaans University (known as the University of Johannesburg), and the University of Stellenbosch. This category of universities was also known as Historically Advantage Institutions. These universities were also based in urban and metropolitan areas. Most students attending these universities access information and communication technology. These universities support the apartheid policies. These universities were autonomous to provide education.

Another university category was established in the Bantustan state. The Bantustan was governments established by the apartheid as a self-governing state. Such states included Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda, and Ciskei (TBVC). The apartheid established universities in some of these states with the purpose to offer inferior

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