



# OGUYA INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF CONTEMPORARY ISSUES

Kogi State College of Education (Technical) Kabba.



ISSN: 2795-3734

Volume 2, No 2, Mar. 2023

## BRINGING THE OUT-OF-SCHOOL CHILDREN BACK TO SCHOOL IN NIGERIA: TECHNOLOGY AS THE PANACEA

Aiyedun, Emmanuel Olugbenga PhD<sup>1</sup>; Oshadare, Ade Ariyo<sup>2</sup>; Jimoh, Ajibola Johnson<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Department of Fine and Applied Arts; <sup>2</sup> Department of General Education,

<sup>3</sup> Department of Computer Science,

Kogi State College of Education (Technical) Kabba

**E-mail:** emmanuel\_olugbenga@yahoo.com<sup>1</sup>; adeariyo241075@gmail.com<sup>2</sup>;

ajibolajojohnson9@gmail.com<sup>3</sup>

### Abstract

This study examined the use of technology as an instrument to bring back the out of school children back to school in Nigeria. It was a study which adopted mixed method approach that combines qualitative as well as quantitative research design. The sample for the study comprised of 537 out of school children in southwestern part of Nigeria (376 males, 161 females). A questionnaire titled “Out of School Children’s Questionnaire on the use of Technology” was used to explore the perceptions of OOSC on the use of technology, and how it can be used to reintegrate them back into school. The study finds that technology, particularly smartphones and mobile phones, play a crucial role in the daily lives of out-of-school children, with many participants engaging in information gathering and learning activities. However, the study also recognizes the limitations of technology with emphasis on the necessity towards providing a detailed approach that can address the complex problems that are experienced by out-of-school children, including poverty and lack of support. The study concludes that technology should be viewed as a valuable tool, but not a one-size-fits-all solution, for reintegrating out-of-school children.

**Keywords:** Out-Of-school Children, School, Nigeria, Technology, Panacea.

### 1. Introduction

Education acts as the fortress on which society is built and done appropriately. For any society to have too many children out of school, it will portend a bleak future for the progress, development, success, and ultimate happiness of that society. All efforts must be carried on to salvage that ailing situation. The contemporary world is thriving in almost all fields in the use of various technologies to improve and motivate its citizens towards her developmental goals. Technology is seen by many as one of the discoveries of mankind that is both shaping and reshaping different strata of the living standards of man. Hence it is being employed by the world at large towards achieving aims and objectives, and that with ease, in areas that would

otherwise have been deemed impossible. Education plays a critical role in developing essential skills especially in this 21 century. Education also prepares individual to work as add value in a skilled form to the society. Education could only become the foundation stone of a society like Nigeria, only if it succeeds in imparting necessary life skills in individuals. Therefore, it becomes necessary to adequately equip students with knowledge to meet the needs of ever-increasing youth population who require skills for gainful employment. Unfortunately, research has shown that many children are still out of school despite this declaration of basic education has free and compulsory officially and globally (Mojeed, 2022).

Ordinarily, millions of children around the world would love to be at school to learn at their own age. According to the UNESCO Institute of Statistics (UIS) (2018), there are about 262 million children that are out of school in the world that are described with the connotation of 'never enrolled in' or 'dropped out from' formal school system. It was noted that 64 million of these children are of primary school level, while 61 million of them are of the bracket of lower secondary school.

Regarding the situation in Nigeria, the National Population Commission (NPC), the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) and the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) in 2019 showed that the country currently has 10,193,918 out-of-school children. As of February 2019, the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) reported that 50.8 per cent of children, ages between 5 and 17 are involved in child labour.

The Southwest part of the country seems to do better than the national average but still, the rate of attendance has shown that 20 per cent of children in the bracket ages of between 6 to 11 years are out of school as identified by National Population Commission in 2018. The present situation in the country shows that the OOSC are involved in different activities that are fraudulent, illegal, and risky, such as drug and sex-related problems, violence, and gambling which are done via technology.

Technology that has been used for social vices can also be used to bring the out-of-school children back to school. This is because in recent times, just as with other professions, teaching has known a great development, especially through technology. Mostly affected in the profession is the pedagogical and technological aspect. These strategies are determined most importantly by the nature of the learners. The teaching technique being employed in contemporary learning in the classroom are not exactly new but are just enhancement using new technology. Based on the above background, the study intends to bring them out-of-school children back to school using technology as a medium by introducing some of the modern teaching strategies including visualization, behavioural management, and gamification to motivate, re-enrol and retain them in school.

## **2. Methods**

Nigeria's strives to achieve universal basic education by 2030, especially with respect to goal four of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) might not be possible if the issue of OOSC is not addressed. However, most children of this era are digital natives, and they easily imbibe the use of technology for learning if they are motivated and engaged. This capacity for learning, which provides meaningful communication and discourse, is a quality of the human mind and

intelligence which abounds in young children of the 21st-century generation. This motivated the researcher to propose the study, which aims at seeking the use of technology as an instrument to bring the out of school children back to school in Nigeria.

### **The objective of the Study**

There are specific objectives that have been employed in this study which is to

- a. investigate the various activities that the children engage in with technology while out of school.
- b. find out the out of school children's perceptions of the use of technology to re-integrate them back to school.
- c. determine the out of school children's intention to use technology that will motivate them back to school.
- d. design programme that will facilitate the use of technology to motivate, re-enroll and retain OOSC back to school based on their perceptions.

### **Research Questions**

- a. What are the various activities that the children engage in with technology while out of school?
- b. How do the out-of-school children perceive the use of technology to re-integrate them back to school?
- c. Do out-of-school children have the intention to use technology that will motivate them back to school?
- d. What are the programmes that will facilitate the use of technology to motivate, re-enroll and retain OOSC back to school based on their perceptions?

### **Research Methodology**

The entire procedure used in conducting this study is as explained in turn based on the following sub-headings:

#### **Design of Research**

A mixed process with the use of qualitative and quantitative design was used in this study. The intention for this approach was that the quantitative data and results will provide an overview of the research problem, and more analysis, explicitly through the qualitative collection.

#### **Population**

The target population for the study comprised all 10,193,918 out-of-school children in Nigeria according to the Annual School Census of 2018/20-19, which was done by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC), and the National Population Commission (NPC). The southwest region of the country is the research area. The southwest comprises six states: Ogun, Ondo, Osun, Oyo, Ekiti and Lagos.

#### **Sample Size and Sampling Techniques**

Six states were purposively sampled for the study. Each of these states in the zone was stratified into local government areas. From each of the states, two local government areas were selected at random. From the twelve selected areas of the local governments, fifty OOSCs were selected

also at random to make a total of six hundred participants. Participants were randomly selected from rural and urban areas.

### **Data Collection and Analysis**

Researchers-designed questionnaire entitled “Out of School Children’s Questionnaire on the Use of Technology” was used to explore the perceptions of OOSC on the use of technology, and how it can be used to reintegrate them back into school. The instrument is divided into two parts. Part A consisted of 7 closed-ended questions asking about the demographic characteristics of the participants, the technologies available during out-of-school time, the frequency of use of these technologies, and the activities for which the technologies are used during out-of-school time. This section was in the form of a checklist where participants were asked to tick all that applied to them. The subdivision which is (Part B) had 13 questions that were open-ended, where participants were asked to respond freely to questions about their experiences of using technology while out of school and their perceptions of how these technologies could be used to reintegrate them back into school. The instrument was validated and piloted on 30 OOSC randomly selected from a local government not included in the study sample. The instrument was found to be reliable, with a Cronbach alpha value of 0.87. The researcher visits all designated areas with an official letter of introduction. The researcher also engages the services of interpreters where necessary, especially during administration in rural areas. The quantitative aspect of the data collected was analyzed using frequency and percentage, while narrative components were employed in analyzing the qualitative areas.

### **3. Findings and Discussions**

This study examined the use of technology as an instrument to bring the out of school children back to school in Nigeria. The results of the study on the various activities that out-of-school children engage in with technology provide valuable insights into the patterns of technology use among this group. The findings suggest that technology plays an essential role in the lives of out-of-school children, with the most used devices being smartphones, mobile phones, and television. This suggests that technology is becoming increasingly pervasive, and is being used to support communication, entertainment, and information gathering. This agrees with the outcome of Zhao et al. (2020) that reported online learning can be effective in improving academic performance among disadvantaged students. Similarly, Alkhateeb et al. (2020) support this view and expressed the vast importance of technology in bridging the educational gap between the rich and poor.

The study also highlights the frequency of technology use among out-of-school children, with a vast majority (74.30%) using technology regularly, at least several times a week. This finding suggests that technology has become an integral part of the lives of out-of-school children and is likely to continue playing a crucial role in their day-to-day activities. Out-of-school children engage in a variety of activities with technology, with communication and entertainment being the most common. However, it is encouraging to note that many also engage in information-gathering and learning activities. This highlights the potential for technology to support education, particularly for out-of-school children who may not have access to traditional educational resources. Technology is perceived by a majority of the participants to support education, with smartphones and laptops being the most mentioned devices. This suggests that

there is a growing recognition of the potential of technology to support learning and education, particularly among younger generations.

Technology is viewed as a valuable tool for learning and information, however, concerns about its potential drawbacks and limitations were raised. It has several potential benefits such as remote learning opportunities and access to educational resources. Also, it is highly beneficial in terms of communication and social connection, particularly in the context of social distancing and quarantine measures. However, it has some potential limitations in supporting children who are out of school and the need for other forms of support to ensure out-of-school children's well-being and educational success.

Re-integrating out-of-school children back into formal education is quite promising with technology as several potential benefits of technology support re-integration efforts. But total reliance on technology can hinder context-specific approaches to reintegration. However, there is a need for a more comprehensive approach that considers the limitations of technology and the importance of other forms of support for children's well-being and educational success. In conclusion, technology can play a role in reintegrating out-of-school children, though not a one and final solution for all. A specific means is essential to address the complex challenges faced by out-of-school children. It is important to note that, technology might not address the root causes of children's disengagement from school, such as poverty and lack of support. This highlights the need for a comprehensive approach to addressing the barriers to education faced by out-of-school children, rather than relying solely on technology as a solution.

### **3.1 Findings**

Areas of quantitative data from this study were analyzed descriptively and presented in tables as follows:

A narrative analysis approach was also used to analyze and show the outcomes of the qualitative data. Before the analysis, the researcher identified missing and erroneous data as 63 questionnaires contained missing data. These questionnaires were removed from the analysis and the total number of questionnaires subjected to statistical analysis was 537.

Findings on demographic characteristics of those that participated in the First Table (1), which shows most participants were from rural areas (57.91%) compared to urban areas (42.09%). In terms of education, half of the participants (50.84%) completed secondary education, while 31.66% had higher education, and 17.50% had only primary education. Regarding gender, of most participants were male (70.02%), while 29.98% were female. Looking at the age groups, the highest proportion of participants fell within the 10-15 years' age range (37.99%), followed by 5-10 years (24.21%), 15-20 years (21.23%), and 21 years and above (16.57%)

**Table 1: Descriptive statistics of Participant's demographic characteristics**

Variables	Frequency	Percent (%)
<b>Residence Type</b>		
Urban	226	42.09
Rural	311	57.91
<b>Educational Level</b>		
Primary	94	17.50
Secondary	273	50.84
Higher	170	31.66
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	376	70.02
Female	161	29.98
<b>Age group</b>		
5 - 10 years	130	24.21
10 - 15 years	204	37.99
15 - 20 years	114	21.23
>= 21 years	89	16.57
<b>Total</b>	<b>537</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Research Question 1:** What are the various activities that the children engage in with technology while out of school?

To answer this question, participants' responses to the questionnaire items were analysed descriptively, and Table 2 shows the result of the analysis.

**Table 2: Activities children engage in with technology while out of school.**

S/N	Variables	Frequency	Percent (%)
1	<b>What types of technology do you use while out of school?</b>		
	Mobile Phones	94	17.50
	Smartphones	162	30.17
	Tablets	43	8.01
	Laptops	69	12.85
	Desktop Computers	39	7.26
	Television	76	14.15
	Radio	54	10.06

<b>2</b>	<b>How frequently do you use technology while out of school?</b>		
	Daily	187	34.82
	Several times a week	212	39.48
	Once a week	93	17.32
	Less than once a week	45	8.38
	Never	0	0.00
<b>3</b>	<b>How do you access technology while out of school?</b>		
	Through personal devices	302	56.24
	Through shared devices	150	27.93
	Through public access points (e.g., cybercafés, community centers)	85	15.83
<b>4</b>	<b>What activities do you use technology for while out of school?</b>		
	Entertainment (watching videos, playing games)	215	40.04
	Communication (social media, messaging)	240	44.69
	Information gathering (browsing websites, searching for information)	160	29.80
	Learning (online courses, educational apps)	142	26.44
	Others	85	15.83
<b>5</b>	<b>Do you believe that technology can be used to support education while out of school?</b>		
	Yes	299	55.68
	No	130	24.21
	Not Sure	108	20.11
<b>6</b>	<b>If yes, what types of technology do you think would be most useful for education while out of school?</b>		
	Mobile Phones	110	36.79
	Smartphones	220	73.58
	Tablets	101	33.78
	Laptops	120	40.13
	Desktop Computers	84	28.09
	Television	80	26.76
	Radio	73	24.41

The findings presented in table 2 indicated that, in terms of technology use, the most used technologies by out-of-school children were smartphones (30.17%), mobile phones (17.50%), and television (14.15%). Tablets (8.01%), laptops (12.85%), and desktop computers (7.26%) were less commonly used, while radio (10.06%) was also used by a significant proportion. More so, out-of-school children tended to use technology frequently, with 74.30% (daily or several times a week) using technology regularly. Only

8.38% of the children used technology less than once a week. The table further revealed that more than half (56.24%) of the children accessed technology through their personal devices, while 27.93% used shared devices, and 15.83% used public access points like cybercafés or community.

The most common activities that out-of-school children engaged in using technology were communication (44.69%), entertainment (40.04%), information gathering (29.80%), and learning (26.44%). Other activities were also reported by 15.83% of the children. Such activities include listening to music, and creating online content (blogs and vlogs), among others. The majority (55.68%) of out-of-school children believed that technology could be used to support education, while 24.21% disagreed, and 20.11% were unsure. When asked about the most useful technology for education while out of school, smartphones (73.58%), laptops (40.13%), and mobile phones (36.79%) were the most mentioned, followed by tablets (33.78%), desktop computers (28.09%), television (26.76%), and radio (24.41%).

Overall, the findings suggest that out-of-school children frequently use technology for communication and entertainment, but many also engage in information-gathering and learning activities. Most of the children believed that technology could be used to support education, and smartphones and laptops were considered the most useful technologies for this purpose. These findings highlight the potential for technology to support out-of-school children's education.

**Research Question 2:** How do the out-of-school children perceive the use of technology to re-integrate them back to school?

To explore the children's perceptions of the use of technology to reintegrate them into school, 6 open-ended questions were presented to the participants using a narrative analysis approach. The participant's responses to each question were presented in groups as follows:

*Can you tell me about your experience with technology and how you think it can be used to support education?*

In response to the question about their experience with technology and how it can be used to support education, participants provided a range of responses that revealed both positive and negative experiences. Some participants talked about their positive experiences with technology, emphasizing its ability to provide easy access to information and learning resources. For example, one participant said, "I've used technology to learn new skills and find information that I wouldn't have access to otherwise. I think it's a great tool for education because it makes learning more accessible and interactive." Others talked about the negative aspects of technology, such as the potential for distraction and addiction. One participant said, "I think technology can be a double-edged sword when it comes to education. It's great for finding information and learning new things, but it's also really easy to get distracted by social media and other non-educational content." Some participants expressed about the effectiveness of technology for education, pointing out that it may not be accessible to everyone or may not



be as effective as traditional classroom-based learning. For example, one participant said, "I think technology can be useful for some people, but it's not a one-size-fits-all solution. Some people learn better in a classroom setting, and technology can't replace that."

Overall, the responses revealed a complex range of experiences and opinions about the role of technology in education. While some participants viewed technology as a valuable tool for learning and information gathering, others expressed concerns about its potential drawbacks and limitations.

*How do you think technology could help children who are currently out of school?*

When asked about their thought on how technology could help the currently out-of-school children, some participants highlighted the potential of technology to provide remote learning opportunities and access to educational resources. For example, one participant said, "Technology can help children who are out of school by providing them with access to online learning platforms and resources that they can use to continue their education from home." Others emphasized the importance of technology for communication and social connection, particularly in the context of social distancing and quarantine measures. One participant said, "Technology can help children who are out of school stay connected with their friends and classmates through video chats and messaging apps. It can also help them stay connected with their teachers and receive feedback on their learning." However, some participants also acknowledged the potential limitations of technology in supporting children who are out of school. For example, one participant said, "Technology can be a great tool, but it's not a substitute for in-person learning and social interaction. We need to find ways to supplement technology with other forms of support to ensure that children who are out of school aren't left behind."

Participants' responses in general highlighted the potential of technology to support children who are currently out of school, particularly in terms of providing remote learning opportunities and facilitating communication and social connection. However, they also revealed the need for a more comprehensive approach that considers the limitations of technology and the importance of other forms of support for children's well-being and educational success.

*What are your thoughts on using technology to re-integrate out-of-school children back into formal education?*

Participants provided a variety of perspectives when asked about their thoughts on using technology to re-integrate out-of-school children back into formal education. Some participants expressed optimism about the potential of technology to support reintegration efforts, particularly in contexts where traditional schooling is not feasible or accessible. For example, one participant said, "I think technology can be a great way to provide educational opportunities for children who may not have access to schools or teachers. It can help bridge the gap and ensure that these children are still able to learn and develop their skills." Others expressed caution about relying too heavily on technology, pointing out that it may not be sufficient to

address the complex challenges facing out-of-school children. One participant said, "While technology can be useful, we need to remember that it's not a panacea for all the issues that out-of-school children face. We need to think about other ways to support these children, such as providing mentorship and community-based learning opportunities." Some participants highlighted the importance of context-specific approaches to reintegration, emphasizing the need to tailor interventions to the needs and resources of individual communities. For example, one participant said, "We need to think carefully about the local context and what types of technology and resources are available. It's not enough to just throw technology at the problem – we need to think about how it can be integrated into existing systems and support structures."

In general, the responses revealed a range of perspectives on the potential of technology to support re-integration efforts for out-of-school children. While some participants viewed technology as a valuable tool for expanding access to education, others emphasized the need for a more comprehensive approach that takes into account the complex challenges facing these children and the importance of context-specific interventions.

*What do you think are the potential benefits of using technology for this purpose?*

One commonly cited benefit was increased access to educational resources. Participants noted that technology can provide children with access to a wide range of educational materials and opportunities, regardless of their physical location or financial resources. One participant said, "Technology can be a great equalizer, allowing children from all backgrounds to access the same educational resources and opportunities." Another potential benefit mentioned by participants was increased engagement and motivation. Several participants made suggestions of the fact that technology could be employed for an interactive and engaging forum of learning that can assist in keeping children motivated and interested in their studies. One participant commented, "By using technology, we can create more dynamic and interactive learning experiences that can help to keep children engaged and motivated to learn. Participants also highlighted the potential for technology to support personalized learning. By using technology, educators can tailor learning experiences toward the needs of individual peculiarities and learning styles that each student may want to use in providing more effectiveness with a personalized forum of learning. One participant noted, "Technology can help us to create customized learning experiences that are tailored to the needs of each student. This can be a powerful tool for supporting learning and ensuring that no child is left behind." Finally, several participants mentioned the potential for technology to support the development of 21st-century skills. By using technology, children can develop important skills such as digital literacy, critical thinking, and problem-solving, which are increasingly important in today's global economy. One participant stated, "Technology can help to prepare children for the world of work by providing them with the skills and competencies they need to succeed in the 21st century." Overall, the responses highlight several potential benefits of using technology to support out-of-school children, including increased access to resources, increased engagement and motivation, personalized learning, and the development of 21st-century skills.

*Are there any concerns or potential drawbacks that you can think of with using technology to re-integrate children that are out of school back into formal education?*

Participants in the study identified some concerns and potential drawbacks associated with using technology to children that are out of school back into established forms of education. Findings showed that technology might not be able to fully replicate the in-person learning experience. Participants noted that face-to-face interaction between teachers and students is important for effective learning and that technology may not be able to fully replace this. One participant said, "Technology can be helpful, but it can't replace the benefits of face-to-face learning experiences. It's important to find a balance between the two." Another concern mentioned was that some children may not have access to the technology needed for online learning, which could further exacerbate inequalities in education. Participants noted that not all families can afford the necessary devices and internet connection for online learning, which could create misgivings between the ones that have access and the ones without it. One participant said, "We need to make sure that technology is not only accessible but also affordable for all children, regardless of their background." Participants also expressed concerns about the potential for technology to create further disengagement from formal education. Some participants suggested that relying too heavily on technology might lead to students disengaging from the learning process altogether. One participant commented, "We need to make sure that technology is not replacing the human connection between teachers and students. We don't want students to feel like they're just interacting with a machine instead of a real person." Finally, participants mentioned concerns about the potential for technology to be a distraction, both for students and teachers. Participants noted that technology can be a double-edged sword, providing helpful resources but also creating distractions that could impede learning. One participant stated, "We need to be careful that technology is not becoming a hindrance to learning. It's important to find the right balance and use technology in a way that enhances, rather than detracts from, the learning experience."

*In your opinion, what would be the most effective way to use technology to support education for out-of-school children and encourage their re-enrollment?*

From the responses received, there are several suggestions on how to use technology effectively to support education for out-of-school children and encourage their re-enrollment. Participants' responses were grouped into four themes as follows:

- i. **Personalized learning:** Several participants made suggestions for technology to be employed towards the personalization of learning experiences of individuals so as to provide for peculiar needs with learning techniques of children that are out of school. This could be employed towards achieving adaptive learning technologies which could be adjusted in difficult tasks based on the student's performance or by providing access to a range of learning resources that cater for different interests and abilities.
- ii. **Blended learning:** Participants also suggested that a blended learning approach, which

combines online and offline learning activities, could be an effective way to support education for out-of-school children. For example, technology could be used to deliver online lectures or provide access to educational resources, while offline activities such as group discussions, practical exercises, or peer learning could be used to reinforce the learning experience.

- iii. Collaboration and community building: Many participants emphasized the importance of fostering a sense of community and collaboration among out-of-school children to encourage their engagement with the learning process. The technology could be used to facilitate communication and collaboration among students, teachers, and parents, and to create online forums or communities where students can share their experiences, exchange ideas, and support each other.
- iv. Teacher training and support: Finally, several participants highlighted the importance of providing training and support for teachers to effectively use technology in the classroom. This could involve providing professional development opportunities, creating online resources and communities of practice, and ensuring that teachers have access to the necessary technology and infrastructure to support their teaching.

It can be deduced from the above findings that the most effective way to use technology to support education for out-of-school children and encourage their re-enrollment is to provide a personalized, blended learning experience that fosters collaboration and community building, and to provide adequate training and support for teachers to effectively use technology in the classroom.

**Research Question 3:** Do out-of-school children have the intention to use technology that will motivate them back to school?

In examining the intention of out-of-school children to use technology that will motivate them back to school, open-ended questions were presented to the participants as follows:

*How do you feel about the idea of using technology to support your education and encourage you to return to school?*

From the responses received, there were different perspectives on the use of technology to support education and encourage out-of-school children to return to school. Some of the common themes that emerged include:

*Accessibility:* Many participants expressed support for the use of technology to support their education, particularly in terms of making education more accessible. They believe that technology can help to overcome barriers to education such as distance, cost, and time constraints.

*Flexibility:* Several participants also highlighted the importance of flexibility in education and believe that technology can provide more opportunities for flexible learning. They mentioned

that with technology, learning can happen at any time and place, which are particularly helpful to individuals having commitments, family, work, and other tasks.

*Concerns about effectiveness:* While many participants supported the use of technology, some expressed concerns about the effectiveness of technology in supporting education. They mentioned that technology should be used as a supplement to traditional methods of learning rather than a replacement. They also emphasized the need for teachers to be trained in the use of technology to ensure that it is used effectively.

*Need for support and guidance:* Finally, many participants highlighted the need for support and guidance in using technology to support their education. They believe that teachers and students should be trained and supported for effectiveness in the use of technology and towards addressing any other issues or challenges that may arise.

*Do you have any intention to use technology that will motivate you back to school?*

Findings showed that participants expressed excitement about the potential for technology to help them catch up on missed education and eventually re-enter formal schooling. They stated that they had heard about educational apps and online courses that could help them learn at their own pace and fill in any knowledge gaps. They believed that using technology in this way would help them feel more confident in their abilities and motivate them to take the necessary steps to return to school.

More so, findings showed that some participants expressed some hesitation about relying on technology to support their education. They stated that they preferred traditional methods of learning and were concerned that using technology too much might not be as effective for them. However, they also acknowledged that technology could be useful in certain situations, such as providing access to educational resources that may not be available in their local area. Another group of participants were about the potential of technology to motivate them to return to school. They stated that their lack of motivation to attend school was not related to technology, but rather to personal and societal factors such as poverty and lack of support. They believed that while technology could be helpful in supporting their education, it would not necessarily address the root causes of their disengagement from school.

### **3.2 Discussions**

This study examined the use of technology as an instrument to bring the out of school children back to school in Nigeria. The results of the study on the various activities that out-of-school children engage in with technology provide valuable insights into the patterns of technology use among this group. The findings suggest that technology plays an essential role in the lives of out-of-school children, with the most commonly used devices being smartphones, mobile phones, and television. This suggests that technology is becoming increasingly pervasive, and is being used to support communication, entertainment, and information gathering. This agrees with the outcome of Zhao et al. (2020) that reported online learning can be effective in improving academic performance among disadvantaged students. Similarly, Alkhateeb et al.

(2020) support this view and expressed the vast importance of technology in bridging the educational gap between the rich and poor.

The study also highlights the frequency of technology use among out-of-school children, with a vast majority (74.30%) using technology regularly, at least several times a week. This finding suggests that technology has become an integral part of the lives of out-of-school children and is likely to continue playing a crucial role in their day-to-day activities. Out-of-school children engage in a variety of activities with technology, with communication and entertainment being the most common. However, it is encouraging to note that many also engage in information-gathering and learning activities. This highlights the potential for technology to support education, particularly for out-of-school children who may not have access to traditional educational resources. Technology is perceived by the majority of the participants to support education, with smartphones and laptops being the most mentioned devices. This suggests that there is a growing recognition of the potential of technology to support learning and education, particularly among younger generations.

Technology is viewed as a valuable tool for learning and information, however, concerns about its potential drawbacks and limitations were raised. It has several potential benefits such as remote learning opportunities and access to educational resources. Also, it is highly beneficial in terms of communication and social connection, particularly in the context of social distancing and quarantine measures. However, it has some potential limitations in supporting children who are out of school and the need for other forms of support to ensure out-of-school children's well-being and educational success.

Re-integrating out-of-school children back into formal education is quite promising with technology as several potential benefits of technology support re-integration efforts. But total reliance on technology can hinder context-specific approaches to reintegration. However, there is a need for a more comprehensive approach that considers the limitations of technology and the importance of other forms of support for children's well-being and educational success. In conclusion, technology can play a role in reintegrating out-of-school children, though not a one and final solution for all. A specific means is essential to address the complex challenges faced by out-of-school children. It is important to note that, technology might not address the root causes of children's disengagement from school, such as poverty and lack of support. This highlights the need for a comprehensive approach to addressing the barriers to education faced by out-of-school children, rather than relying solely on technology as a solution.

#### **4. Conclusion**

In conclusion, this study sheds light on the potential of technology to support the reintegration of out-of-school children in Nigeria. Findings in this study indicate that technology, particularly smartphones and mobile phones, are pervasive and has an important place in the daily lives of out-of-school children. It is encouraging to note that many participants engage in information-gathering and learning activities, highlighting the potential for technology to support education. There are however limitations in the use of technology with a need towards a comprehensive approach that considers the complex challenges faced by out-of-school children. Technology should be seen as a valuable tool, but not a one-size-fits-all solution to

the problem of out-of-school children. Addressing the root causes of disengagement from school, such as poverty and lack of support, is crucial to ensure the educational success and well-being of out-of-school children.

## 5. Acknowledgement

I wish to express gratitude to TETFUND for granting Kogi State College of Education (Technical) Kabba the opportunity for authors to have an avenue for free Journal Publications. It is a privilege indeed.

## References

- Basic Education Commission (**UBEC**), National Population Commission (**NPC**), National Bureau of Statistics (**NBS**) and other stakeholders. Aril 18, 2019 — Nigerian Tribune <https://tribuneonlineng.com/out-of-school-children-now-10-1m-minister/>
- Khalid Al Khatib, Michael Völske, Shahbaz Syed, Nikolay Kolyada, and Benno Stein. 2020. Exploiting Personal Characteristics of Debaters for Predicting Persuasiveness. In *Proceedings of the 58th Annual Meeting of the Association for Computational Linguistics*, pages 7067–7072, Online. Association for Computational Linguistics.
- Mojeed, A (2022, September 1) Nigeria now has 20 million out-of-school children – UNESCO. <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/551804-breaking-nigeria-now-has-20-million-out-of-school-children-unesco.html>
- National Bureau of Statistics (NBS). (2019). Child Labour Statistics
- National Population Commission (NPC) [Nigeria] and ICF. (2019). Nigeria Demographic and Health survey.
- UNESCO (2018). Out-Of-School Children and Youth, UNESCO UIS <https://uis.unesco.org/en/topic/out-school-children-and-youth>.
- Zhao, Y., Emler, T. E., Snethen, A., & Yin, D. (2019). *An education crisis is a terrible thing to waste: H radical changes can spark student excitement and success*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.