

Digital Teachers as In-locus Parentis of Pupils' Academic Performance during COVID-19 Lockdown at Sunshine Group of Schools, Ibadan, Oyo State

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Covid-19 unveils the necessity of digital teachers' in-locus parentis at Sunshine Group of Schools towards improving pupils' academic performance. This study aim to investigate the influence of digital teachers as in-locus parentis of pupils' academic performance during the COVID-19 lockdown at Sunshine Group of schools, Ibadan, Oyo State. A descriptive research design was used to collect data and elicit information from the respondents. A questionnaire titled Digital Teachers' (DT) questionnaire was created, and both face-to-face and content tests were carried out by a specialist in the field of education to assess the validity of the instrument. It was found that 40.9% of teachers at the Sunshine group of schools have upgraded their digital knowledge. WhatsApp application software is the most used by teachers during the lockdown with a percentage of 77.3%, followed by the use of Zoom application software with a percentage of 54.5%, and the least used application software has ties with Prezi, Kahoot, and Bloomwriter of 0.0%. This implies that there is a relationship between digital teachers and pupils' educational performance. It was recommended that the teaching staff at the Sunshine Group of schools should be digitally upgraded and equipped.

Keywords: *Digital teachers, pupils' academic performance*

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1. Introduction

The term performance simply means the outcome of an action. Oredein and Obadimeji (2022) defined performance as the achievement devoted to the achievement of an objective. This implies that, for any performance, there must be a desired objective. Teachers want pupils to improve their academic performance.

Williams (2018) defined academic performance as the performance of a person who is performing outside the four walls of the school. For example, learning is not only ideal cognitively, but it is also better in other fields of learning, such as the affective and psychomotor domains. This is also similar during the COVID-19, where public primary school pupils were seen having what is known as a school on the air via television and radio for teaching-learning activities to keep the pupils busy, unlike the private primary school competitors who had teaching-learning activities outside the school walls during the closure via application software such as Zoom and WhatsApp just to mention a few mostly at the Sunshine Group of schools, Ibadan, especially on two major subjects (oral and writing skills). The oral skill of speaking is mostly applicable to English language subject while the writing skill is mostly in handwriting as a subject. Although, both public and privately owned primary schools exist in Ibadan, Oyo State. Each educational institution also strives to achieve the goals of education as stated in the National Policy of Education through the help of the curriculum implementers, known as the teachers.

Teachers are seen as teachers of the curriculum. They not only influence the knowledge of their pupils but also serve as in-locus parentis. They are professionals who use their skills to impart knowledge to pupils. In 2022, Oredein and Obadimeji defined teachers as individuals who had experienced basic teaching. They play several roles in schools, among them mediators of learning, disciplinarians or controllers of learning behaviour, and in-locus parentis (Parent substitutes in the school). In our present world, some teachers are not just professionals but have upgraded to becoming digital teachers. A digital teacher is an individual who explores the use of technology for teaching-learning activities (Sanchez-Cruzado, Campion, & Sanchez-Compana, 2021). A digital teacher in this context is an individual in a teaching profession who uses digital tools and applications software to impact learning for the pupils towards improving pupils' academic performance. Among them are Prezi, VoiceThread, and BoomWriter (Pavlova, 2018). Prezi is a digital software that allows teachers to make presentations easily in the classroom. It works like PowerPoint but it is more effective than PowerPoint. Teachers can easily use such tools to engage each pupil and make pupils attentive in classroom settings. VoiceThread is a digital software that allows pupils to practice oral languages especially if such languages are not the child's native language. In this case, it engages both the digital teachers and the pupils such that pupils practice their speaking skills while building confidence and allowing teachers to access their work. In this situation, most parent might not have the understanding of such language and in the long run, the

teacher acts as an in-locus parentis to ensure that the pupil speaks and comprehend such language (Pavlova, 2018).

Another is BoomWriter. It is a digital application software used for collaborative writing. It is suitable for pupils who are not friendly in writing. It encourages pupils to write or make a story together. Digital teachers being in-locus parentis use this application software as a guide to encourage and motivate pupils to learn how to write even outside the school environs. From the above, digital teachers use digital application software to take the place and roles of parents ensuring that they impact lives positively (Pavlova, 2018). This can be further explained using the connectivism theory of learning.

In his connectivism theory of learning, Siemens (2005) explains that knowledge is the interconnected web of not only social but also digital interactions. It was based on the assumption that knowledge and learning are based on a diversity of opinions, that learning is the connection of specialised information sources, that learning may reside in non-human appliances, and that the ability to know more is more important than what is currently known. The federal government's decision to close schools prompted the teaching staff at the Sunshine Group of schools to consider how to carry out their legal responsibilities, protect, discipline, and impart knowledge to the pupils. By so doing, teachers becoming digital teachers explore other means through software applications to improve pupils' academic performance during the COVID-19 lockdown.

Today, parents are busy with various tasks, mainly from their workplaces, without enough time for their children. Most parents, therefore, have no choice but to entrust some of their responsibilities to teachers. In addition, the difficult situation of today's society makes them easily stressed without creating enough time for their children. Thus, teachers, and as models, with the help of digital application software, become life-changing, program implementers and have no choice but to become in-locus parentis. During the COVID-19 lockdown, most privately-owned institutions for instance, the Sunshine group of schools, Ibadan, used the limitation observed in the publicly-owned primary institution to impart knowledge to her learners thereby making a positive difference between the government-owned and the privately owned institutions.

2. Statement of the Problem

From the experience of private primary school teachers in Ibadan, Oyo State, during the closure of COVID-19, pupils were confined to playing themselves in the area, and even during the closure, the majority of teachers used WhatsApp and Zoom application software as the main software for teaching and learning activities, with fewer teachers brainstorming how to teach and help the pupils. This is not new in developed countries around the world, where research is underway on how to improve education outside the four walls of schools using digital applications such as Edmond, Zoom, and Google Meet among others. Studies on digital leadership and how lecturers managed teaching-learning activities during the COVID-19 lockdown have been conducted, to mention just

a few (Oredein & Obadimeji, 2022). But much work has not been done on digital teachers' in-locus parentis of the academic performance of private primary school pupils during the COVID-19 lockdown in Ibadan, Oyo State. Hence, this study will investigate the influence of digital teachers as in-locus parentis and pupils' academic performance during the COVID-19 lockdown at Sunshine Group of schools, Ibadan, Oyo State.

3. Aim and Objectives of the Study

This study aim to investigate the influence of digital teachers as in-locus parentis of pupils' academic performance during the COVID-19 lockdown at Sunshine Group of schools, Ibadan, Oyo State. The specific objectives are to;

- i. identify the extent of private primary school teachers' digitalization at the Sunshine Group of Schools during the COVID-19 lockdown; ii. identify the type of application software mostly used by private primary school teachers for teaching-learning processes during the COVID-19 lockdown at the Sunshine Group of Schools in Ibadan, Oyo State; and
- iii. examine the relationship of digital teachers as in-locus parentis of pupils' academic performance during the COVID-19 lockdown at the Sunshine Group of Schools in Ibadan, Oyo State.

3.1 Research Questions

1. What is the extent of private primary school teachers' digitalization at the Sunshine Group of Schools during the COVID-19 lockdown?
2. What is the type of application software mostly used by private primary school teachers for teaching-learning processes during the COVID-19 lockdown at the Sunshine Group of Schools in Ibadan, Oyo State?

3.2 Hypothesis

H₀₁; There will be no relationship of digital teachers as in-locus parentis towards pupils' academic performance during the COVID-19 lockdown at the Sunshine group of Schools Ibadan, Oyo State.

4. Methodology

This study seeks to use a descriptive research design aimed at collecting data and describing the characteristics of the influence of the independent variable on the dependent variable.

Recall that this study is a case study of the Sunshine Group of schools, in Ibadan. She has various branches of schools (Sunshine De Gold & Sunshine Crystal College just to mention a few) which include both the nursery & primary section and the college section. Both Sunshine De Gold & Sunshine Crystal College were selected. The two branches situated at Southwest and Ido local government areas were purposefully selected based on the identified observation and proximity. Each has a teaching staff strength of eighteen (18) and nine (9) respectively, at the primary school

level, having a total population of twenty-seven (27) teaching staff (Sunshine Group of school, 2023). For this research, purposeful and total enumeration sampling techniques were used.

The instrument titled Digital Teachers' (DT) questionnaire was created, and both face-to-face and content tests were carried out by a specialist in the field of education to assess the validity of the instrument.

The items on the instrument were scaled to assess the reliability of the instrument. Using Cronbach alpha, the instrument has a reliability of 0.884

A quantitative research approach was used to elicit information from the respondents. The instrument titled 'Digital Teachers (DT) questionnaire' was administered physically and retrieved immediately from the private primary school teachers at the Sunshine Group of schools. This instrument comprises three sections. Section A consists of teachers' demographic data such as teachers' highest qualification obtained, gender, and years of experience among others. Section B comprises items that were used to give answers to the research questions raised while section C was used to answer the hypothesis poised.

Descriptive statistics like frequency, mean, standard deviation, and percentage were employed to measure sections A and B of the structured questionnaires. An inferential statistical tool known as Pearson Product Moment Correlation was employed to determine the significant relationship between the independent variable on the dependent variable at a 5% level of significance.

Ethical guidelines relating to data collection, analysis, and interpretation of research as specified by Lead City University were strictly adhered to with the view of enhancing the credibility, validity, and reliability of the study.

5. Results

Recall that a closed structured questionnaire was administered to the respondents. Twenty-seven (27) instruments were administered and twenty-two (22) instruments were retrieved. The analysis is based on the retrieved filled questionnaire.

5.1 Presentation of Demographic Data

Table 1: Showing gender, the highest qualification obtained, years of experience, the teaching class, mode of teaching before, during, and after the COVID-19 lockdown, and number of years spent in the establishment.

		Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	2	9.1

	Female	20	90.9
Highest Qualification Obtained	NCE	3	13.6
	BEd	14	63.6
	PGD	4	18.2
	MEd	0	0.0
	PhD	1	4.5
Years of Experience	0-10 yrs	13	59.1
	11-20yrs	8	36.4
	21-30yrs	1	4.5
Teaching Class	Pre-Nur 1	2	9.1
	Pre-Nur 2	3	13.6
	Nur 1	2	9.1
	Nur 2	4	18.2
	Basic 1	2	9.1
	Basic 2	2	9.1
	Basic 3	3	13.6
	Basic 4	1	4.5
	Basic 5	1	4.5
	Basic 3 & Basic 4	1	4.5
	Basic 2 & Basic 5	1	4.5
Mode of Teaching before the Lockdown	Physical	22	100.0
Mode of Teaching during the Lockdown	Physical	2	9.1
	Online	20	90.9
Mode of Teaching after the Lockdown	Physical Method only	6	27.3

	Both Online & Physical Methods	16	72.7
Numbers of Years Spent in the Establishment	0-2 yrs	3	13.6
	3-5 yrs	6	27.3
	6-8yrs	5	22.7
	Above 8 yrs	8	36.4
	Total	22	100.0

Source: *Field Survey, 2023*

Table 1 depicts the gender, the highest qualification obtained, and the years of experience of the respondents just to mention a few. It shows that the female gender has the highest percentage of 90.9% compared with the male gender with 9.1%. This implies that the female gender is more populated at the Sunshine Group of schools. This could be because the female gender cherishes education as a profession over others so as to give a balance in their homes and marriages.

The same table shows the highest qualification obtained. It depicts that the highest qualification obtained by the respondents is a Bachelor in Education (BEd) with a percentage of 63.6%, followed by the Postgraduate Diploma (PGD) with a percentage of 18.2% and the least is Master of Education (MEd), having the lowest percentage of 0.0%. This implies that most of the teachers at the Sunshine Group of schools have BEd as the highest qualification and none has a MEd.

It also shows that 0-10 years of experience has the highest percentage of 59.1%, followed by 11- 20 years of experience with a percentage of 36.4% and the least is 31-40 years of experience, having a percentage of 0.0%. The most occurring teaching class is Nursery Two, having the highest percentage of 18.2% and the least has a tie with the Basic Two to Basic Five classes, with a percentage of 4.5% each. It also affirms that the mode of teaching before the lockdown is physical with a percentage of 100%. In addition to the findings, it reveals that the highest mode of teaching during the COVID-19 lockdown was Online and both the online and the physical methods were the mode of teaching activities used after the lockdown with the highest percentage of 72.7% and the least online only, with a 0.0%. It also indicates that the number of years spent in the establishment is above 8 years, having the highest percentage of 36.4%, followed by 3-5years with a percentage of 27.3% and the least year spent in the establishment is 0-2yrs, having a percentage of 13.6%.

5.2 Presentation of Research Questions

5.1.1 Research Question 1: What is the extent of primary school teachers' digitalization at the Sunshine Group of Schools during the COVID-19 lockdown?

Table 2 reveals the extent of primary school teachers' digitalization and the most application software used by digital teachers.

Items(I)	Not at all	Little Ext	Somewhat Ext	To a Great Ext	Mean	Std. Deviation
	Feq (%)	Feq (%)	Feq (%)	Feq (%)		
have upgraded my knowledge digitally	0(0.0)	1(4.5)	12(54.5)	9(40.9)	3.36	.581
can assess my pupils' classwork activity online	2(9.1)	2(9.1)	12(54.5)	6(27.3)	3.00	.873
use application software for classroom presentations online	2(9.1)	4(18.2)	9(40.9)	7(31.8)	2.95	.950
use application software to teach oral skills online	3(13.6)	5(22.7)	9(40.9)	5(22.7)	2.73	.985

help learners to improve their writing skills online	2(9.1)	3(13.6)	14(63.6)	3(13.6)	2.82	.795
instruct pupils on how to use some specific application software online	4(18.2)	10(45.5)	6(27.3)	2(9.1)	2.27	.883
give feedback on each pupil's classwork activities online	4(18.2)	4(18.2)	8(36.4)	6(27.3)	2.73	1.077
monitor pupils' handwriting digitally	5(22.7)	4(18.2)	6(27.3)	7(31.8)	2.68	1.171
I use						
Whatsapp	2(9.1)	0(0.0)	3(13.6)	17(77.3)	3.59	.908
Socrative	13(59.1)	5(22.7)	3(13.6)	1(4.5)	1.64	.902
Zoom	3(13.6)	1(4.5)	6(27.3)	12(54.5)	3.23	1.066

Prezi	21(95.5)	1(4.5)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	1.05	213
Kahoot	19(86.4)	3(13.6)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	1.14	.351
Voicethread	17(77.3)	0.0	3(13.6)	2(9.1)	1.55	1.057
Google Classroom	10(45.5)	1(4.5)	5(22.7)	6(27.3)	2.32	1.323
Bloomwriter	19(86.4)	2(9.1)	1(4.5)	0(0)	1.18	.501
Edmond	19(86.4)	2(9.1)	0(0)	1(4.5)	1.23	.685
Quiz	8(36.4)	2(9.1)	3(13.6)	9(40.9)	2.59	1.368
Google meet	13(59.1)	0.0	4(18.2)	5(22.7)	2.05	1.327
Skype	14(63.6)	1(4.5)	2(9.1)	5(22.7)	1.91	1.306
Weighted Mean					2.30	

Source:Field Survey, 2023

Table 2 reveals the extent of private primary school teachers' digitalization and the most application software used by digital teachers. It has a weighted mean of 2.30 against the Likert mean of 2.50. This implies that the Likert mean is greater than the weighted mean and has negative implications on the teachers which could likely affect pupils' academic performance at Sunshine Groups of Schools, Ibadan, Oyo State. With a weighted mean of 2.30, it depicts that to a great extent, private primary school teachers at Sunshine Groups of schools, Ibadan, have upgraded their knowledge digitally with a percentage of 40.9%. This could be of necessity to impart knowledge during the COVID-19 lockdown, followed with a tie by the use of application software for classroom presentations online and monitors pupils' handwriting digitally, having a percentage of 31.8% and the least is to instruct pupils on how to use some specific application software online with a percentage of 9.1%.

5.2.2 Research Question 2: What is/are the application software mostly used by private primary school teachers for teaching-learning processes during the COVID-19 lockdown at the Sunshine Group of Schools in Ibadan, Oyo State?

The same table 2 depicts the application software mostly used by private primary school teachers for teaching-learning processes during the COVID-19 lockdown at the Sunshine Group of Schools, Ibadan, Oyo State. It reveals that WhatsApp application software is mostly used by the teachers at the Sunshine group of schools for teaching-learning activities during the COVID-19 lockdown in Ibadan, Oyo State, having the highest percentage of 77.3%, followed by the use of Zoom application software with the percentage of 54.5% and the least used application software has ties with the Prezi, Kahoot and Bloomwriter of 0.0%. This implies that during the COVID-19 lockdown, most of the teachers at the Sunshine Group of schools were familiar with WhatsApp application software and none of them is aware of some other application software such as Prezi, Kahoot, and Bloomwriter just to mention a few which could also aid teaching-learning activities.

5.2.3 Presentation of Hypothesis

Ho1; There will be no significant relationship of digital teachers as in-locus parentis of pupils' academic performance during the COVID-19 lockdown at the Sunshine group of Schools Ibadan, Oyo State.

Table 3 shows the significant relationship of digital teachers as in-locus parentis of pupils' academic performance during the COVID-19 lockdown at the Sunshine Group of Schools in Ibadan, Oyo State.

		Correlations	
		Pupils Academic	Digital Teachers
Teachers Performance			
Digital Teachers			
Pupils Academic Performance			
		1	.635**
		.635**	1

Where "r" is the correlation coefficient=0.635

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Table 3 above depicts the relationship of digital teachers as in-locus parentis of pupils' academic performance during the COVID-19 lockdown at the Sunshine Group of Schools Ibadan, Oyo State. It shows that there exists a relationship between the independent variable on the dependent variable

at $r' = 0.635$. This implies that a relationship exists between digital teachers as in-locus parentis of pupils' academic performance during the COVID-19 lockdown at the Sunshine Group of schools.

5. Discussion of Findings

The discussion of findings is based on the twenty-two instruments (22) retrieved and on the content of the study.

Table 1 displays the respondents' gender demographic data, which includes the gender, highest qualification obtained, years of experience, methods used for teaching-learning activities, and teaching classes, among other things. According to the table, the female gender has the highest percentage of 90.9%, followed by the male gender with 9.1%. This implies that the Sunshine Group of schools has a higher female population. This could be because the female gender values teaching as a profession and fills the role of mothers (caring for every pupil in their care). Aside from that, the female gender may prefer teaching to other vocations to maintain balance in their homes and marriages. The highest qualification is shown in the same table. It shows that the respondents' highest qualification is a Bachelor in Education (BEd) with a percentage of 63.6%, followed by a Postgraduate Diploma (PGD) with a percentage of 18.2%, and the lowest is a Master of Education (MEd) with a percentage of 0.0%. This means that the majority of teachers at the Sunshine Group of schools have a BEd as their highest qualification obtained, while none have an MEd. This implies that the Sunshine Group of schools' teaching staff has methodological knowledge in imparting knowledge to their pupils. As a result, the majority of her teaching staff are educators. Hence, the teaching staff at the Sunshine Group of schools are known as teachers. This is in line with Oredein and Obadimeji (2022), who defined teachers as individuals who have basic experience in teaching.

According to the table, 0-10 years of experience has the highest percentage of 59.1%, followed by 11-20 years of experience with a percentage of 36.4%, and 31-40 years of experience has the lowest percentage of 0.0%. The most common teaching class is Nursery Two, with a percentage of 18.2%, and the least common is a tie between the Basic Two and Basic Five classes, with a percentage of 4.5% each. This implies that there are more pupils in Nursery Two, resulting in more arms in the same class and, invariably, more teaching staff in Nursery Two. It also confirms that the online method was used for teaching-learning activities during the COVID-19 lockdown with the highest percentage of 90.1% and that the mode of teaching before the lockdown was physical with a percentage of 100%. This is consistent with Williams' (2018) definition of academic performance as a person who performs outside of the four walls of the school. During school closures due to the spread of the virus, and to control the spread of the virus, a majority of pupils were seen playing on the streets and in the surrounding neighbourhoods. Teachers must think outside the box to engage pupils and impart meaningful learning. This allows teachers to explore the use of effective application software such as Zoom and WhatsApp, to name a few, for teaching-learning activities during school closures, which births the use of virtual teaching-learning methods.

Table 2 provides answers to the research questions. It reveals the extent of digitalization among the Sunshine Group of school-teachers, as well as the most application software used by digital teachers. It shows that 40.9% of teachers at the Sunshine Group of schools in Ibadan have upgraded their digital knowledge. This could be the requirement to impart knowledge during the COVID-19 lockdown, followed by a tie on the use of application software for classroom presentations online and digitally monitoring learners' handwriting, with a percentage of 31.8%, and the least is to instruct learners on how to use some specific application software online, with a percentage of 9.1%. This encourages teachers to develop digitally, transforming them into digital teachers. According to Sanchez-Cruzado et al. (2021), a digital teacher is someone who investigates the use of technology in teaching-learning activities. However, it could be seen that the teaching staff at the Sunshine Group of schools are digitalized to a great extent. At 40.9%, the extent of each teaching staff' digitalization is not encouraging. This could be because most teaching staff are unaware of other application software that could help with teaching-learning activities, such as Bloomwriter and Socrative among others.

Nonetheless, Sanchez-Cruzado et al. (2021) identify the ability to explore the use of technology for teaching-learning activities. For any teaching-learning activities, digital teachers should look into the use of other application software. During the COVID-19 lockdown, the application software most commonly used by teaching staff at the Sunshine Group of schools for teaching-learning processes is depicted in Table 2. It reveals that teachers at the Sunshine group of schools used WhatsApp application software the most for teaching-learning activities during the COVID-19 lockdown in Ibadan, Oyo State, with a percentage of 77.3%, followed by the use of Zoom application software with a percentage of 54.5%, and the least used application software has ties with Prezi, Kahoot, and Bloomwriter with a percentage of 0.0%. This implies that, during the COVID-19 lockdown, the majority of teachers at the Sunshine group of schools were familiar with the WhatsApp application software and were unaware of other application software such as Prezi, Kahoot, and Bloomwriter, to name a few, which could also aid teaching-learning activities (Pavlova, 2018). Prezi is one of the application software that a digital teacher could use for effective teachinglearning processes. Prezi is a digital software that enables teachers to easily create presentations in the classroom. It functions similarly to PowerPoint, but it is more effective. Teachers can easily use such tools to engage each pupil and keep them attentive in the classroom. VoiceThread is a digital software that allows pupils to practise oral languages, especially if they are not the pupil's native language. In this case, it engages both digital teachers and pupils, allowing pupils to practise their speaking skills while also building confidence and allowing teachers access to their work. Most parents may not understand such language in this situation, and in the long run, the teacher acts as inlocus parentis to ensure that the pupils speak and comprehend such language (Pavlova, 2018).

BoomWriter is another option. It is a software application used for collaborative writing. It is appropriate for learners who are not comfortable with writing. It encourages pupils to cooperate in writing or creating a story. As in-locus parentis, digital teachers use this application software as a guide to encourage and motivate pupils to write even when they are not in school. According to Pavlova (2018), digital teachers use digital application software to take the place and roles of parents, ensuring that they have a positive impact on their learners.

The influence of digital teachers as in-locus parentis of pupils' academic performance during the COVID-19 lockdown at the Sunshine group of schools in Ibadan, Oyo State, is depicted in Table 3 above. It demonstrates that at $r = 0.635$, there is a relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable. This implies that there is a relationship between digital teachers and pupils' academic performance during the COVID-19 lockdown at the Sunshine Group of schools in Ibadan. A higher correlation coefficient would have resulted in a better relationship between the independent and dependent variables. This also reflects the degree to which the Sunshine Group of schools were digitalized during the COVID-19 lockdown. Although the teaching staff at the Sunshine Group of schools may be familiar with and use WhatsApp, Zoom, Googlemeet, and Google Classroom, to name a few for teaching-learning activities, the said application software may not be effective in improving pupils' academic performance as in-locus parentis on all subjects, particularly oral skills and written skills (handwriting), during the COVID-19 lockdown. Other relevant and applicable application software for various subjects include Prezi (for presentations), Voicethread (for teaching oral skills), and Bloomwriter (for handwriting), among others (Pavlova, 2018). Prezi is a digital software that allows teachers to easily create presentations in the classroom. It functions similarly to PowerPoint, but it is more effective. Teachers can easily use such tools to engage all pupils and keep them attentive in the classroom. VoiceThread is a digital software that allows students to practise oral languages, particularly if the pupil's native language is not one of them. In this case, it engages both digital teachers and students, allowing the pupil to practise their speaking skills while also building confidence and allowing teachers to have access to their work. Most parents may not understand such language in this situation, and in the long run, the digital teacher acts as an in-locus parentis to ensure that the pupil speaks and comprehends such language.

BoomWriter is another option. It is suitable for pupils who are not friendly in writing. It encourages pupils to collaborate on writing or creating a story. As in-locus parentis, digital teachers use this application software as a guide to encourage and motivate pupils to learn to write even when they are not in school. As previously stated, digital teachers use digital application software to take the place and roles of parents, thereby positively impacting lives during the COVID-19 lockdown. During the COVID-19 lockdown, the teaching staff at the Sunshine group of schools in Ibadan assumed some legal responsibility (In-loco parentis) for imparting knowledge and protecting the pupils from abuse and harm, ensuring the pupil's safety, disciplining the pupil(s), investing in the pupil's education, identifying the pupil's interests, and spending quality time with pupils

(particularly slow learners). All of the aforementioned tasks were completed virtually using various application software.

6. Conclusion

Digital teachers as in-locus parentis of pupils' academic performance during the COVID-19 lockdown at the Sunshine group of schools, Ibadan, Oyo State has brought about drastic changes in the school system. The present school system has a slightly significant improvement in pupils' academic performance via the use of various applicable and relevant application software across all subjects especially at the Sunshine Group of schools, thereby upgrading teachers into becoming digital teachers and carrying out their functions digitally. Among them is the legal responsibility of pupils. Although from the research carried out, the correlational coefficient of 0.635 could be good but is not sufficient for improving pupils' academic performance in all subjects which also has a reflection on the extent of primary school teachers' digitalization at the Sunshine Group of Schools during the COVID-19 lockdown. The extent of digitalization among the primary school teachers at the Sunshine group of schools, Ibadan, is low. This could be based on the fact that most of her teaching staff were not aware of other applicable and relevant application software for effective teaching-learning across all subjects such as Prezi and Bloomwriter just to mention a few and in discharging their legal responsibilities to their pupils towards pupils' academic performance.

7. Recommendations

Based on the study's findings, the following recommendations are made:

- i. the Sunshine group of school management should offer her teaching staff training on the use of various and relevant application software to facilitate effective teaching-learning activities.
- ii. the teaching staff at the Sunshine group of schools should be digitally upgraded and equipped.
- iii. the teacher is regarded as the in-locus parentis of her pupils. In other words, the school administration should encourage a blended teaching method (a combination of physical and online methods) so that its teaching staff can carry out their legal responsibilities to each pupil. As a result of becoming digital teachers as in-locus parentis, the teaching staff will be able to improve students' academic performance at school.
- iv. other privately owned and government educational institutions should also replicate the aforementioned recommendations in their various educational institutions towards improving pupils' academic performance.

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