**Equitable Access to eLearning during Covid-19 Pandemic and beyond. A Comparative Analysis between Rural and Urban Schools in Zimbabwe**

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**Abstract:**

This paper was motivated by the increased digital disparity between rural and urban learners in Zimbabwe. It was further exacerbated by the advent of Covid-19 pandemic in 2020, which disenfranchised rural learners as schools had no other alternative, except adopting eLearning platforms. The study’s main objectives were to determine the preparedness of rural schools in adopting eLearning and conducting a comparative analysis between rural and urban schools on equitable access to eLearning during Covid-19 crisis. In that respect, the study pursued a mixed research methodology grounded on a pragmatist philosophical view. In line with that, an exploratory case study strategy became prime in gathering both qualitive and quantitative from 112 participants found in Goromonzi district schools of Zimbabwe. Ethnography was used to gather qualitative data between 2020 and 2021, whilst a survey contributed to quantitative data gathering. In that respect, findings from the study suggests that rural schools were largely disadvantaged by the adoption of eLearning during the Covid-19 pandemic period, as very few learners could attend online schools. More so, there was an increased educational inequality between rural and urban learners, mainly attributed to lack of ICT infrastructure and resources. Therefore, the study proposed an eLearning adoption strategy, which could be adopted by key stakeholders in the school education system during crisis periods.