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PERCEIVED CORONA VIRUS (COVID-19) IMPACT ON EDUCATION OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN AWKA SOUTH LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated perceived corona virus (COVID-19) impact on education of secondary school students in Awka South Local Government Area. Two research questions guided the study. The study adopted descriptive survey research design. The population of the study was 1061 SS2 students, in the 19 public secondary schools in Awka South Local Government Area. The sample size was 150 respondents selected through simple random sampling technique. Questionnaire designed by the researchers was the instrument used for data collection. The instrument was validated by three experts in the Faculty of Education, all from Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. In addition, mean score was adopted for data analysis. Findings showed that the perceived educational impact of COVID 19 pandemic on secondary school students include: denying students increase in ability which is their primary point of being in school, lack of access to interact with technological resources, depression, anger, anxiety, low self-esteem, aggressive and mental disorder, inability to pay school fees on time, lack of fund for transportation to school, increased the rate of school dropout among students and child labour among some students and so on. Based on the finding of this study, the researcher concluded that COVID 19 pandemic has negative educational impact on secondary school students in Awka south Local Government Area. It was therefore recommended among others that Government should ensure effective fumigation and disinfection of schools in Nigeria periodically. Suggestions were also made for further studies.

Keywords: Secondary School, COVID 19, and Impact of COVID 19 on Education

Introduction

Education is a potent force that brings about change in the attitude, thought, behaviour, skills, values and interest of individuals. It is these changes in cognitive, psychomotor and affective orientation that are required for

overall development. These changes could be learnt formally in school and are very crucial to members of a society for growth and development. This is why Offor and Offiah (2021) defined education as a process through which the young people acquires knowledge and realize their potentialities and use them for self actualization, to be useful to themselves and others. This definition means that education is the process through which individuals are made functional members of their society.

Education connotes acquisition of something good and worthwhile. There are three main types of education, according to Igwe (2019) namely; informal, non-formal and formal education. Formal education usually takes place in the school and it is of three levels, namely: primary, secondary and tertiary or university education. Secondary school is the next step from primary school. Secondary school is generally the final stage of compulsory education and intermediate between primary and tertiary stage. Secondary school therefore gives the student a wider scope and perspective about education and what career choice to make in the future (Bhalla, 2014). In line with Bhalla (2014) assertion, Devan (2016), posits that secondary school students acquire detailed knowledge about intermediate courses, college option among others; they are basically being prepared for the long run. Unfortunately COVID-19 pandemic tends to deny these benefits to secondary school students.

Corona virus belongs to a large family of respiratory viruses that can cause illness in people and animals. Corona virus that circulates among animals can evolve and infect humans. In turn those infections can easily spread from person to person. An outbreak of the novel Corona virus was first reported in December 2019 when cases of viral pneumonia with unknown origin were confirmed in Wuhan, Hubei province, China. Because of its similarity to SARS-COV, the virus has been named Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Corona virus 2 (SARS-COV-2). This virus causes the disease referred to as COVID-19 (Corona virus disease 2019). SARS-COV 2 is suspected to have come from animals potentially bats (kraemer et al, 2020). Similarly, in Nigeria, the confirmed case was announced on the 27th February, 2020. The COVID-19 case was traced to an Italian citizen who works in Nigeria and returned from Milan, Italy to Lagos Nigeria. He was confirmed by the Virology Laboratory of Lagos State University Teaching Hospital, part of the laboratory network of the Nigerian Centre for Disease Control (NCDC). On the 9th of March 2020, a second case of the virus was reported in Ewekoro, Ogun State, Nigerian citizen who had contact with the Italian citizen. Since then, the situation has developed with more cases occurring, regardless of measures initiated by the Federal and State Government to combat the virus.

Corona virus disease 2019 (COVID-19) can be defined as a sickness caused by Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Corona virus 2 (SARS-COV-2) which was found in Wuhan, China as a result of the outbreak of respiratory sickness. It can also be defined as a communicable respiratory disease caused by a novel strain of Corona virus that causes sickness in humans and animals. Corona virus can be zoonotic in nature

meaning that, they are transmitted between animals and people (Sintema, 2020). The initial transmission appeared to be from animal source. It has not been previously identified on humans but recently, there has been person to person transmission in countries. The virus causing COVID-19 can be transmitted in all areas including areas with hot or humid weather. It is not peculiar to any weather. The COVID-19 virus can spread through contact with certain bodily fluid. When person with Corona virus coughs or exhale, droplets land on objects and surfaces around the person. Other people catch the virus by touching those objects or surfaces where the droplet affected. Using same hands to touch their eyes, nose or mouth makes it easy to transmit the disease.

Symptoms of COVID-19 are: Fever, dry cough, sore throat, muscle pain, headache, loss of taste or smell, difficulty in breathing, running nose/catarrh, repeated shaking with chills, fatigue, blue lips or face, persistent pressure or pain in the chest and excessive drowsiness. Nigeria has recorded many confirmed cases of COVID-19 (Hopman, Allegranzi & Mehtar, 2020). Many people have died of COVID-19 in Nigeria. Consequently, Nigeria temporarily closed educational institutions in an attempt to contain the spread of COVID-19 which appears to hamper secondary school management.

COVID-19 has no doubt adversely affected the global education system worldwide, leading to the near total closure of secondary schools. Most governments around the world temporarily closed secondary schools in an attempt to contain the spread of COVID-19 (Zu et al, 2020). Learners are currently affected due to school closures in response to the pandemic. External examinations such as WAEC, NECO taken in May/June were postponed. When students are in school, they acquire one skill; these said skills have eluded them, because of closure of schools. School times can be fun which has been deprived by the pandemic, increase of child's ability which is the primary point of being in school has been denied. Virtual interactions are increasingly adopted to replace face to face engagements. UNESCO has supported the use of distance learning programme. The success of e-learning is hinged on the use of high technology that is virtually not available in some schools. More so, students from underserved low-income communities will be left out and unable to access learning during this period. There are a lot of students who do not have access to radio, television, smart phones, in addition to erratic power supply. Such students do not have access to interact, nor technological resources, a situation that is creating a gap in their academic life, as long as this pandemic continues (Wu et al, 2020). COVID-19 is facilitating the educational inequality in Nigeria because only students with access to digital learning resources will keep learning at their convenience at homes while majority of students without access to digital learning resources were left behind in many rural communities; one of such areas in Anambra state is Awka South Local Government Area .

In Awka South Local Government Area, the researcher observed that corona virus outbreak forced secondary school students to study from home. The realities of

receiving formal education from home could be very challenging to many educators, learners and parents in Nigeria because the accessibility, availability and use of technology for teaching and learning are not widespread. Many problems like: how to make transition to online and learning at-home, how to cater for those who rely on school for feeding and accommodation which could affect academic achievement of students. School closure during the pandemic increased the rate of child labour. In some home, girls are more likely to work inside the home while boys work outside. Child labour can affect school attendant and academic achievement of students now that school has re-opened. It is against this background the researcher intends to investigate perceived educational impact of corona virus (COVID-19) on secondary school students in Awka South Local Government Area.

Secondary school is a link between the primary and tertiary levels of education. It is the form of education children receive after primary education and before tertiary stage (Solomon, 2015). Differently stated, the secondary school is meant to prepare the beneficiaries towards useful living within the society and higher education for those willing and able to withstand it. Obiora (2013) viewed secondary school education as the education meant for children between 11 to 17 years old. Okenyi (2014) defined secondary school as a bridge between the primary and tertiary level of education which also functions as a means of living and fitting well into society for those who may not aspire for further education.

Secondary school is therefore the basic or raw material provider for the desired future manpower resources of a country. Jeng (2012) observed that secondary school is of great importance to a nation because it is a source of mid-level manpower production that is necessary to sustain and improve the economy. Secondary school is vital because those are the years before entering the bigger and serious part of education that leads to a career. It is extremely important to focus on these years. Students get into their teenage and are excited about so many things. Thus, secondary school system of education assumes the role of training and producing students for tertiary institutions and manpower for national development and world of work (Eluwe, 2017).

In Nigeria, students spend six years in Secondary School, which is 3 years of JSS (Junior Secondary School), and 3 years of SSS (Senior Secondary School). During the 3 years of Junior Secondary School education, students are to take subjects such as Mathematics, English, Social Studies, Home Economics, c or Fine arts and so on. Senior Secondary curriculum is based on 4 core subjects completed by 4 or 5 elective subjects (Nwankwo, 2016). In like manner, Odionyenfe (2019) posited that core subjects are: English; mathematics; Economics; Civic Education; Computer science; French; one or more electives out of Igbo language, Chemistry, Physics Biology, for science class; one or more electives out of English literature, Government, History, Geography, Agricultural science or a vocational subject which includes: Food and Nutrition, Catering amongst other 17 subjects. Studies on COVID 19 and academic achievement have been done in secondary schools by several researchers although not among Igbo language students. This study views

secondary school as the level of education that acts not only as a bridge between the primary and the tertiary levels of education but also as a backbone of the country's workforce.

Corona virus disease 2019 (COVID-19) can be defined as a sickness caused by Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Corona virus 2 (SARS-COV-2) which was found in Wuhan, China as a result of the outbreak of respiratory sickness (Offiah, 2020). The virus was first identified in Wuhan city, Hubei Province, China in December 2019 as a pneumonia of unknown origin. Later, the causative agent of COVID-19 is identified as a novel coronavirus, severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus-2 (SARS-CoV-2). COVID-19 outbreak spreads rapidly not only in China, but also worldwide, therefore, the World Health Organization (WHO) has announced it as pandemic on March 12, 2020. The total number of confirmed cases and mortalities were 6,515,796 and 387,298, respectively in 216 countries as of June 05, 2020. Several governmental measures have been taken to counteract the risk of disease spreading. These measures include travel restrictions, mandatory quarantines for travelers, social distancing, bans on public gatherings, schools and universities closure, business closures, self-isolation, asking people to work at home, curfews and lockdown. Authorities in several countries worldwide have declared either lockdown or curfew as a measure to break the fast spread of virus infection. These measures have a negative worldwide effect on the business, education, health, and tourism. COVID-19 pandemic has affected all levels of the education system. Educational institutions around the world (in 192 countries) have either temporarily closed or implemented localized closures affecting about 1.7 billion of student population worldwide. Many universities around the world either postponed or canceled all campus activities to minimize gatherings and hence decrease the transmission of virus. However, these measures lead to higher economical, medical, and social implications on both undergraduate and postgraduate communities. In the researcher's view, COVID can be defined as a communicable respiratory disease caused by a novel strain of Corona virus that causes sickness in humans and animals.

COVID-19 has no doubt adversely affected the global education system worldwide, leading to the near total closure of schools. Most governments around the world have temporarily closed educational institutions in an attempt to contain the spread of COVID-19 (Zu et al, 2020). Learners are currently affected due to school closures in response to the pandemic. External examinations taken in May/June are postponed. When students are in school, they acquire one skill; these said skills have eluded them, because of closure of schools. School times can be fun which has been deprived by the pandemic, increase of child's ability which is the primary point of being in school has been denied. Virtual interactions are increasingly adopted to replace face to face engagements. UNESCO has supported the use of distance learning programme. The success of e-learning is hinged on the use of high technology that is virtually not available in some schools. More so, students from underserved low-income communities will be left out and

unable to access learning during this period. There are a lot of students who do not have access to radio, television, smart phones, in addition to erratic power supply. Such students do not have access to interact, nor technological resources, a situation that is creating a gap in their academic life, as long as this pandemic continues (Wu et al, 2020). COVID-19 is facilitating the educational inequality in Nigeria because only those with access to digital learning resources will keep learning at their convenience at homes while the majority without access to digital learning resources are left behind. School closures impact not only students, teachers and families but have far reaching economic and societal consequences. School closures have negative impact on social and economic issues. It has consequences for skill growth. It has forced many businesses to temporarily shut-down and made the government across the world to place a restriction on movement. Many social vices are associated with youths not actively engaged in schooling. Students and youths who are not in school are more susceptible to social vices such as: rape, child labour, substance abuse, internet fraud, prostitution, kidnapping, early marriage and other forms. Criminal activities are some of the consequences of school closure.

In March 19th, 2020, a circular from the Federal Ministry of Education has gained approval for the closure of all schools for a period of 1month commencing from Monday 23rd March 2020 to prevent the spread of corona virus. As of 17th June 2020, schools have not been reopened due to the escalation of the COVID-19 pandemic in Nigeria. Untimely closure of schools was a positive response by the government to protect school going students from possible risks of contacting COVID-19 because school environments are places where hundreds of students meet and this makes them dangerous places where diseases can rapidly spread (Sintema, 2020). School closures due to corona virus (COVID-19) are affecting learners worldwide. By the end of March 2020, over 180 countries had closed down their schools, affecting 87.4% of learners (over 1.5million students). UNESCO (2020) supported the use of distance learning programme. The success of e-learning is hinged on the use of high technology that is virtually not available in some schools. More so, Igbo language students from underserved low-income communities were left out and unable to access learning during this period. There are some Igbo language students who do not have access to radio, television, smart phones, in addition to erratic power supply. Such students do not have access to internet, nor technological resources, a situation that is creating a gap in their academic life, as long as this pandemic continues (Ojo, 2020). COVID-19 is facilitating the educational inequality in Nigeria because only Igbo language students with access to digital learning resources will keep learning at their convenience at homes while majority of Igbo language students without access to digital learning resources were left behind. The procedures for preventing COVID 19 pandemic are as follows:

(a). Mandatory use of non-medical face mask: non-medical face mask are recommended as a simple barrier to help prevent respiratory droplets from traveling into the air and onto other people when the person wearing the non-medical face mask

coughs, sneezes, talks, or raises their voice. This is called source control. This recommendation is based on what we know about the role respiratory droplets play in the spread of the virus that causes COVID-19, paired with emerging evidence from clinical and laboratory studies that shows non-medical face mask reduce the spray of droplets when worn over the nose and mouth.

b. Mandatory provision of hand washing facilities and sanitizers and extensive temperature checks in all public spaces: Sustainable, safe water supply points, hand-washing stands and sanitation facilities including sanitizers and extensive temperature checks when implemented effectively prevents the spread of the virus that causes COVID-19. This is because provision of hand washing facilities and sanitizers and extensive temperature checks could positively influence hygiene practices in peoples' homes, among family members and in the wider community

c) Physical distancing/Social distancing: This is an effective strategy to reduce physical interaction between people towards limiting the spread of COVID-19. This means maintaining a distance of at least 2 metres i.e. 6 feet from others. There should be no contact greetings (avoid shaking of hands and hugs). Avoid people who are sick. Stay at home and avoid visits. Cover your cough with a tissue or cough into upper sleeve or elbow. Do not cough into your hands. Avoid any gathering where physical distancing is not practiced (Wang, Cheng, Yue, & McAleer, 2020).

d) Provision of hand washing facilities and washing of hands. Wash your hands with soap and running water for at least 20 seconds especially after going to the toilet, before eating after blowing your nose, and coughing or sneezing. If soap and running water are not readily available, use an alcohol based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. Always wash your hands with soap and running water. Avoid touching your mouth nose and ears in order not to transfer the disease to another person.

e) Prohibition of Interstate/International Flights Travel Ban: The federal government of Nigeria has insisted a ban on all international flights with effect from 23rd March 2020 except for emergency and essential flights for a period of time. Also the federal government has prohibited all interstate travel except for essential travels and free movement of goods and services (Offiah, 2020).

Prohibition of gathering of more than 20 Persons: The Presidential Task Force on COVID-19 has announced restricted opening of places of worship based on protocols of the state government and with strict guidelines on social distancing and other non pharmaceutical interventions. The federal government of Nigeria has initiated a presidential task force on COVID-19 to provide high level strategic national response to the disease in Nigeria. The Federal Ministry of Health has activated an NCDC led national COVID-19 Emergency Operation Centre (EOC) to coordinate the national public Health response. At state level, preparedness and response activities are being coordinated through public health EOCs in each state. The NCDC has launched a campaign termed #Take Responsibility. This is a call to all Nigerians and residents in the country to join forces and to be proactive in taking greater

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individual and collective responsibility in preventing and controlling the spread of COVID-19 in Nigeria (UNESCO, 2020).

The criterion for testing COVID-19 is according to the national case definition. If anyone shows symptoms of COVID-19, that person must self isolate/or quarantine for 14days and call the state help line. The State Ministry of Health alongside with NCDC will arrange for a sample collection and communicate patients with the result.

Statement of the Problem

COVID-19 is facilitating the educational inequality in Nigeria because only students with access to digital learning resources will keep learning at their convenience at homes while majority of secondary school students without access to digital learning resources were left behind in many rural communities; one of such areas in Anambra state is Awka South Local Government Area. COVID 19 pandemic was a problem to the management of secondary schools because they cannot benefit from the various programmes that the school offers. The researcher observed that school closure during the pandemic increased the rate of child labour. In some home, girls are more likely to work inside the home while boys work outside. Child labour can affect school attendance and academic achievement of students now that school has re-opened. Consequently, the researcher deemed it needful to investigate perceived educational impact of corona virus (COVID-19) on secondary school students in Awka South Local Government Area.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study

1. What is the sociological impact of corona virus (COVID-19) on secondary school students in Awka South Local Government Area?
2. What is the psychological impact of corona virus (COVID-19) on secondary school students in Awka South Local Government Area?

Research Method

This study was conducted in Awka South Local Government Area, Anambra State, Nigeria. The population of the study comprises of 1061 senior secondary school 2 (SS 2) students in Awka South Local Government Area of Anambra State (Post Primary School Service Commission (PPSSC), 2021). The sample size was 150 respondents selected through multistage random sampling technique. First, simple random sampling technique was used to select 10 secondary schools out of the 19 secondary schools in Awka South Local Government Area. Simple random sampling was again used to select 12% of the students from each of the 10 selected schools because the population strength of each school differ, amounting to 150 students that constitute the sample size of the study. The study has one instrument for data collection. The instrument was a questionnaire titled "Perceived educational impact of corona virus pandemic on secondary school students Questionnaire" (PEICVPSSSQ). To ensure the validity of the instrument, the researcher submitted the instrument to two experts in Educational Management and Policy and one expert in Measurement and Evaluation in the Faculty of Education, all

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from Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka. In order to establish the reliability of the instrument, a test-retest method was used. The instruments were administered to 20 students in Awka North Local Government Area which is outside the area of study were used to determine the reliability of instrument. The researcher adopted direct delivery method (DDM) that is face to face method of administration for data collection. Data collected was analyzed using the arithmetic mean. Accordingly, items with mean rating of 2.50 and above were regarded as agreed whereas items with mean rating below 2.50 mean were regarded as disagreed.

Presentation of Results

Research Question 1: What is the sociological impact of corona virus (COVID-19) on secondary school students in Awka South Local Government Area?

Table 1: Mean rating of respondents on the sociological impact of corona virus (COVID-19) on secondary school students in Awka South Local Government Area

S/N	ITEMS	$\bar{x}$	Remark
1.	It denied me increase in ability which is my primary point of being in school.	3.44	Agreed
2.	I do not have access to interact with technological resources and it affected my academic life	3.62	Agreed
3.	Examinations were postponed due to COVID 19 pandemic and it affected my learning engagement	3.13	Agreed
4.	I forget the knowledge I acquired after COVID 19 pandemic	3.28	Agreed
5.	I could not learn during COVID pandemic because do not have access to interact, nor technological resources	3.68	Agreed
6.	I did not acquire needed skills during COVID 19 pandemic because schools were closed	3.64	Agreed
7.	I did not get suitable reading materials during COVID 19 pandemic because schools were closed	3.62	Agreed
8.	My teachers were not very effective in teaching during COVID 19 pandemic	3.66	Agreed
	Mean of Means	**3.51**	**Agreed**

In Table 1, all the items (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8) including the mean of means obtained mean rating above the criterion mean score of 2.50 indicated agreed to sociological impact of corona virus on secondary school students in Awka South Local Government Area.

Research Question 2: What is the psychological impact of corona virus (COVID-19) on secondary school students in Awka South Local Government Area?

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Table 2: Mean rating of respondents on the psychological impact of corona virus (COVID-19) on secondary school students in Awka South Local Government Area

S/N	ITEMS	$\bar{X}$	Remark
9.	It leads to depression	3.72	Agreed
10.	It leads to anger	3.46	Agreed
11.	It leads to state of anxiety	3.84	Agreed
12.	It leads to low self-esteem	3.86	Agreed
13.	It can lead one to being aggressive	3.69	Agreed
14.	It leads to mental disorder	3.88	Agreed
	Mean of Means	**3.76**	Agreed

Data contained in Table 2 indicated that the respondents agreed to all the items (9, 10, 11, 12, 13 and 14). This is because all the items including the mean of means obtained above the criterion of mean score of 2.50 indicating that all the items are psychological impact of corona virus on secondary school students in Awka South Local Government Area.

Discussion of Results

Findings of the study revealed the sociological impact of COVID 19 pandemic on secondary school students include: denying students increase in ability to read and understand which is their primary point of being in school, lack of access to interact with technological resources and it affected academic life of students, postponed examinations due to COVID 19 pandemic

and which affected their learning engagement, inability to learn during COVID pandemic because some learners do not have access to interact, nor technological resources among others. Offor and Offiah (2021) posited that COVID-19 has no doubt adversely affected the global education system worldwide, leading to the near total closure of schools. Most governments around the world have temporarily closed educational institutions in an attempt to contain the spread of COVID-19. Similarly, Zu (2020) reported that learners are currently affected due to school closures in response to the pandemic. External examinations taken in May/June are postponed. When students are in school, they acquire one skill; these said skills have eluded them, because of closure of schools. School times can be fun which has been deprived by the pandemic, increase of child's ability which is the primary point of being in school has been denied.

In addition, psychological impact of COVID 19 pandemic on secondary school students include: depression, anger, anxiety, low self-esteem, aggressive and mental disorder. This report is in agreement with the findings of Onunkwo (2021), who posited that COVID 19 pandemic caused depression, anger and anxiety among students all over the world. Offor and Offiah (2021) also noted that COVID-19 has increased school dropout and caused anger among students in Anambra State.

Finally, findings of the study revealed the economic impact of COVID 19 pandemic on secondary school students which include: inability to pay school fees on time, lack of fund for transportation to school, some students face larger learning losses, reduces the pocket money of students from parents, increased the rate of school dropout among students and child labour among some students. This result agrees with the findings of Offor and Offiah (2021) that COVID-19 is facilitating the educational inequality in Nigeria because only those with access to digital learning resources will keep learning at their convenience at homes while the majority of students without access to digital learning resources are left behind. School closures impact not only students, teachers and families but have far reaching economic and societal consequences. It has consequences for skill growth. It has forced many businesses to temporarily shut-down and made the government across the world to place a restriction on movement. Many social vices are associated with youths not actively engaged in schooling. Students and youths who are not in school are more susceptible to social vices such as: child labour, internet fraud and prostitution (Francis, 2019).

Conclusion

Based on the finding of this study, the researcher concluded that COVID 19 pandemic has negative educational impact on secondary school students in Awka south Local Government Area.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. It is imperative that safe distancing between staff/ teachers and students within the school be maintained. In other words, schools must implement safe distancing measures that minimize and isolate risks. As such, they may offer some alternative learning models such as Outdoor learning and safe distancing between learners and teachers.
2. Government should ensure effective implementation of safety and hygiene measures outlined for reducing the spread of the virus that causes COVID 19 among teachers and students carefully. They include: provision of hand washing facilities and sanitizers, extensive temperature checks, mandatory use of non-medical face mask among others.
3. Government should ensure that schools alternate attendance days per week, with learners at the secondary level (or equivalent) and above having fewer in-person classes.

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