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PERCEIVED SOCIOLOGICAL IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON EDUCATION OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN AWKA SOUTH LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF ANAMBRA STATE

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated perceived sociological impact of COVID-19 on education of secondary school students in Awka South Local Government Area. One purpose corresponding to one research question 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 sociological impact of COVID 19 pandemic on secondary school students education 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 Examinations were postponed due to COVID 19 pandemic and it affected learning engagement, teachers were not very effective in teaching during COVID 19 pandemic 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: Covid-19, Education, Social Impact, and Secondary Education

Introduction

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.

Going to school is the best public policy tool available to develop skills and potentials, school time can be fun, and from an economic point of view the primary point of being in school is that it increases a child's ability to become a useful and acceptable member of the society. Even a relatively short time in school has a longer impact in the life of a child; a short period of missed school may have consequences for skill growth in future. This is why we cannot estimate how much the COVID-19 interruption will affect learning; it is only the visible effect we can see, the gradual decay of inbuilt abilities may not be easily noticed very precisely. We are now in a new world far different from the things we use to know. The school time tables and schedules have changes, and in fact at the resumption of the school after the lockdown, so many grounds needs to be covered in order for the educational system of Nigeria to be able to compete with the world's educational system. Facilities in schools are been underutilized during lockdown, some might have damaged as a result of not been used for a long period of time.

In detail account of UNESCO, about 35.9 million primary and secondary school learners are currently out-of-school as a result of the school closures. For primary schools, this number totals approximately 25.6 million students, of which about 87 percent (23.5 million) are students enrolled in public schools. The numbers are just as stark for secondary school learners. Of the roughly 10.3 million secondary school students who are out-of-school as a result of the closures, approximately 81 percent (8.4 million) of them are public school students. There is no assurance that all the learners who left the school will be back in school the pandemic lockdown; some may have change their lives' view seeing going to school as a waste of time, some may have died, some will change school, some may have join bad groups shifting their attention away from school. Etc. this is where the work of parents and guidance should come in to ensure the proper welfare of learners even while they stayed back home. Unfortunately learning within the homes are as well limited looking at the literacy level of some parents in Nigeria; not every parent could handle well the pedagogy aspect of parenthood and besides other commitments of parents are to be considered. The effect of this may not be easily noticed now; the future of a child in this category is naturally exposed to a serious academic crash if there are no proper interventions, because until the ban on movement is lifted and schools are reopened, majority of students will not be learning.

The sudden interruption of the education system in Nigeria as a result of the pandemic has led the government, parents, individuals, ministries of education at various levels and other concerned personnel to have shift in the plans and strategies to finance the education of their children and the education system at large. There is no doubt the school calendar is going to be extended, and while this is on, there is going to extra payments at various levels of the educational system. During the lockdown some parents were forced to procure laptops, android phones, television cables and other means of ICT, this is to ensure their wards move with the new innovative of the online classes at various levels designed for teachers to reach out to their students. Most of the developing private schools in Nigeria could not afford the payment of their staffs during the period of lockdown because students are not in school, some have not paid

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the school levies before the emergence of the pandemic leading to school proprietors not having access to inflow of income to welfare their staffs working in their respective schools, in fact there is fear of whether private some schools in Nigeria will be able to survive and keep existing after the pandemic lockdown. Even when there is a standing order that says no work no pay in Nigeria, during the lockdown the governments at some levels still ensured continuous payments of staff in schools, ministries of education knowing well that they are not working for their earnings during the lockdown.

There is no doubt that students in terminal classes in lower and higher levels of education system of Nigeria has been held on a spot; they were unable to graduate or even move to the next level in their academic pursuit this has led to the set a great back of the smooth running of educational sector of Nigeria and the world at large. What makes education beautiful and fulfilling is the progress in terms of moving to the next level, graduating and becoming a useful and acceptable member of the society after being exposed to the teaching-learning processes in the school. The careers of this year's university graduates may be severely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. They have experienced majorly teaching interruptions in the final part of their studies, interruptions in their assessments, and finally they are likely to graduate at the beginning of a major global recession, because there is no doubt there will be global recession in the economy of the world at large at the end of the pandemic lockdown. While there was boom in the economy of Nigeria in the past, some graduates still find it difficult to get their desired jobs in the labor market, now that there is every tendencies that the economy of the country could experience a drastic meltdown after the covid-19 pandemic, how will graduate get menial jobs talk less of their desired jobs.

Statement of the Problem

Normal interaction between peer groups, colleagues and meetings has been counseled due to COVID-19. 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. It denied some increase in ability which is the primary point of being in school. Many do not have access to interact with technological resources and it affected their academic life. Examinations were postponed due to COVID 19 pandemic and it affected their learning engagement and so on. Consequently, the researcher deemed it needful to investigate sociological impact of corona virus (COVID-19) on secondary school students in Awka South Local Government Area.

Research Question

One research question guided the study.

What is the sociological 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

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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). The instrument was divided into two parts: A and B. Part A of the questionnaire provides information on demographic data of the respondents while part B centered on the questionnaire items meant to answer the research questions posed for the study. Part B consisted of 21 items structured in the following order of strongly agree (SA)-4 points, Agree (A) -3 points, Disagree (D) -2 points and Strongly Disagree (SD) -4 point. 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 from Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka. In order to establish the reliability of the instrument, a test-retest method was used. The researchers 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: What is the sociological impact of corona virus (COVID-19) on secondary school students in Awka South Local Government Area?

Table: 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 my fellow students freely without face mask.	3.62	Agreed
3.	Examinations were postponed due to COVID 19 pandemic and it affected my learning engagement	3.13	Agreed
4.	No more cultural dance practices and choral activies in schools	3.28	Agreed
5.	I could not learn during COVID pandemic because I 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.

Discussion of Findings

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.

Conclusion

Based on the finding of this study, the researcher concluded that COVID 19 pandemic has sociologically negative 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. Government should provide suitable resources needed to harness distance learning centres, temporary shelters, isolation, quarantine and treatment centres, markets, among others.
2. Government should ensure effective fumigation and disinfection of schools in Nigeria.

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