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Impact of Covid-19 on Private Secondary School Teachers in Gabu-Yala Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study investigated the impact of COVID-19 on private secondary school teachers in Gabu-Yala Local Government Area, of Cross River State, Nigeria. The study raised and answered two research questions and two hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance. The study is descriptive survey. It provides the opinions of the respondents on the impact of covid-19 on private secondary school in Gabu-Yala Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria. The sample for this study consisted of 100 Teachers from 10 Private secondary schools which accounts for 10% of the total number of schools in the Local Government Area. Multistage sampling method was used to derive the sample based on school ownership. The data collected were analyzed using mean for the research questions and chi square to answer the hypotheses. Analysis of the research questions indicated that COVID-19 pandemic school closed down affect the

salaries of the private secondary school teachers, and that school proprietors/government have no special loan packages for the private secondary school teachers. Findings of the study showed that there is a significant relationship between COVID-19 pandemic schools closed down and the salaries of the private secondary school teachers ($\chi^2 = 69.85$; $p=0.000<0.05$). Similarly, there is a significant relationship between COVID-19 pandemic government special loans palliative and the private secondary school teachers in Gabu-Yala Local Government Area of Cross State ($\chi^2 = 61.43$; $p=0.000<0.05$). Based on the findings, it was concluded that Government should direct the Central Bank of Nigeria to design low-interest loans facilities for all the private schools' teachers especially those in secondary schools in Gabu-Yala Local Government Area of Cross River State and Nigeria at large.

Keywords: COVID-19, Private School Teachers, Teacher Welfare, COVID-19 Palliatives, Productivity

Introduction

The Covid-19 pandemic has disturbed the World's political, social, economic, religious, and financial structures. The Covid-19 was declared by the World Health Organization (WHO) on 30th January 2020 as a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC). On 27th February 2020, the Federal Ministry of Health announced the confirmation of the first case of Coronavirus disease in Lagos State, Nigeria. In the same communication, the Minister of Health announced that the Multi-sectorial Coronavirus Preparedness Group led by the Nigeria Center for Disease Control (NCDC) has immediately activated its National Emergency operations Center. Since then, in less than 2 months, Nigeria has reached more than 50 cases across the country.

On March 19th, 2020 a circular from the Federal Ministry of Education has granted approval for the closure of all schools for a period of one month (Nigeria Education in Emergencies Group, 2020) commencing from Monday 23rd March 2020 to prevent the spread of the Coronavirus (COVID19). Since the outbreak of COVID-19 in Nigeria and the declaration of the lock down the Nigerian economy has not remained the same. The COVID-19 has affected almost everything in Nigeria. The Financial sector, the manufacturing sector, the tourism sector, and the aviation industries shut down.

Covid-19 is an infectious virus disease that is caused by a strain of SARS-CoV-2 which is referred to as the – coronavirus or the – novel coronavirus. The virus belongs to a large family of viruses that cause respiratory infections which can range from the common cold to more serious diseases. It is transmitted from spread through droplets of saliva or discharge from the nose when an infected person coughs or sneezes in close contact with other people who then may breathe in the droplets or when the droplets from an infected person deposit on any material and people come in contact with such material immediately.

The impact of the COVID-19 on the Nigerian educational institutions is more felt by the private educational institutions in the country. In Nigeria, the private sector can participate in the ownership of all the forms of the educational system. Many faced disruptions in their teaching routines due to school closures and had to adapt to remote

teaching methods. This shift led to challenges such as navigating technology for online classes, maintaining student engagement, and balancing their own work and personal responsibilities. Some teachers experienced reduced income, furloughs, or job losses due to decreased enrollment and financial strain on schools. Overall, COVID-19 has brought about changes and uncertainties that have deeply affected the lives and careers of private secondary school teachers in Gabu-Yala Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria.

In Nigeria, after the closure of schools on 19 March 2020 by the federal government, both private education service providers and state governments introduced online learning platforms to facilitate students' learning. However, according to a report by The Education Partnership Centre (EPC) (2020), the lack of resources, teacher well-being and pedagogical support for teachers to deliver lessons online were crucial challenges to teachers' work during school closures in Nigeria. In an attempt to contain the spread of COVID-19, in the large majority of countries around the world educational institutions have decided to temporarily suspend in-person instruction and moved to an alternative method (remote learning or online model) of delivery. According to Dong, Hongru and Lauren (2020), a decision was made by UNESCO based on the indications of previous investigations for pandemic situations, and it was concluded that the closure of educational centers together with the implementation of measures such as the isolation of the sick or suspected ill in hospitals or residences, the ban on public gatherings, and the closure of roads and rail lines were effective measures to slow the advance of a pandemic. According to United Nations (2020), at the end of April 2020, educational institutions were shut down in 186 countries, affecting approximately 74% of total enrolled learners on the planet. In many countries, schools have been closed since the beginning of March 2020, while in others (e.g. most of China and South Korea) in-person classes had been already cancelled since January 2020.

Control measures taken are aimed at slowing the transmission of the virus. Slowing the spread of a pandemic reduces the number of active cases at a given time, and this is known as “flattening the pandemic curve”. This allows the health system some time to prepare and respond without being overwhelmed (World Health Organisation, 2020). Adherence to public health and social mitigation measures is therefore essential to the flattening of the pandemic curve.

Since the outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic in Nigeria, government has put in place several measures to prevent, mitigate, and respond to the spread of Covid-19 across the country. These include lockdowns, movement restrictions, social and physical distancing measures as well as public health measures. The education sector was severely affected due to total closure of schools across the country. School closures due to COVID-19 have left over a billion teacher jobless and students drop out of school. Espino-Díaz, Fernandez-Caminero, and Hernandez-Lloret, (2020) note that various governments are pursuing a variety of approaches to mitigate school closures. At the same time, all countries including Nigeria are undergoing the largest economic contractions of our lifetime, reducing public budgets and household incomes. School closures led to a jump in the number of dropouts,

joblessness and an erosion of learning. Bandiera, Niklas, Goldstein, Imran, and Smurra, (2019) laments that increased dropout rates are one important channel linking emergency school closures and other educational disruptions to losses in average lifetime educational attainment. This is problematic given that teachers are critical stakeholders in fulfilling educational reforms and goals such as the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG). Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all by (2030).

While teachers' work mainly includes teaching and implementing the national curriculum, the outbreak of the Corona Virus Disease (COVID-19) disrupted education systems globally, and more than a billion learners were affected as a result of the pandemic. Teachers were also affected by the pandemic, and within short notice, teachers were expected to take on new responsibilities in ensuring that students could continue learning during the lockdown periods of the COVID-19 pandemic particularly in Gabu-Yala Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Education is not only a fundamental human right but an enabling right with direct impact on the realization of all other human rights. When education systems collapse, the peace, prosperity and productive capacities expected of societies cannot be sustained. Unfortunately, the global education system has been subjected to an extraordinary twin shock partly occasioned by the novel Corona Virus re-christened COVID-19 pandemic and global economic hiccups. Schools were closed globally in a bid to fight the pandemic and there is a widespread global economic recession. Reopening of schools was subject to adherence of the curative measures set in place by the federal government and other bodies to prevent a reoccurrence which would certainly lead to another lockdown.

A survey to really determine if these measures put in place are being adhered to is needful as it will reveal amongst other things the ability of educational institutions to operate regardless of pandemic. There is however a dearth in the availability of studies to reveal the current situation of compliance with the Covid-19 protocols in Private Secondary School Teacher with regards to Cross River State, specifically in Gabu-Yala Local Government Area. This study therefore seeks to bridge the dearth by surveying the compliance with Covid-19 protocols in Private Secondary School Teacher in Gabu-Yala Local Government Area, of Cross River State, Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions were asked to guide the study:

- i. Does COVID-19 pandemic school closed down affect the salaries of the private secondary school teachers in Gabu-Yala Local Government Area of Cross River State?
- ii. Do government have special loan package for the private secondary school teachers in Gabu-Yala Local Government Area of Cross River State to reduce the effect of COVID-19?

Hypotheses

The following research hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance.

- i. There is no significant relationship between COVID-19 pandemic schools closed down and the salaries of the private secondary school teachers in Gabu-Yala Local Government Area of Cross River State.
- ii. There is no significant relationship between COVID-19 pandemic government special loans palliative and the private secondary school teachers in Gabu-Yala Local Government Area of Cross River State.

Methodology

The design for this study is descriptive survey. It provides the opinions of the respondents on the impact of covid-19 on private secondary school in Gabu-Yala Local Government Area of Cross River State. Pila (2015) defines descriptive survey design as one that employs questionnaires among other instruments in collecting data and describing them in a systematic way to show what is obtainable in the field without manipulation of variables. The design is considered appropriate for this research because it enabled the researcher to identify the characteristics and opinions of the sampled population.

The sample for this study consisted of 100 Teachers from 10 Private secondary schools which accounts for 10% of the total number of schools in the Local Government Area. Multistage sampling method was used to derive the sample based on school ownership.

The instrument used for this study is a self-generated questionnaire titled “the impact of covid-19 on private secondary school teachers Questionnaire”. It consists of two sections A and B. Section A focuses on demographic information, section B consists of items to identify the Compliance level. The instrument will measure respondents using 4 point Likert typed scale.

The questionnaire was validated by experts from the Department of Science and Mathematics Education, Benue State University, Makurdi, Nigeria. The experts examined the instrument for face and content validity.

Permission was requested from the various school authorities so as to allow the researcher to distribute copies of the questionnaire in each school in the area of study. The instrument was collected on the spot after respondents filled it to ensure high return. The data collected will be analyzed using mean for the research questions and chi square to test the hypotheses.

Results

Research Question One

Does COVID-19 pandemic school closed down affect the salaries of the private secondary school teachers in Gabu-Yala Local Government Area of Cross River State?

Answer to this research question is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Mean of Responses on the effect of COVID-19 pandemic school closed down on the salaries of the private secondary school teachers in Gabu-Yala Local Government Area of Cross River State

S/N	ITEM	N	MEAN	DECISION
1.	Did you experience any changes in your salary due to the school closure caused by the COVID-19 pandemic?	100	3.81	Agreed
2.	If your salary was affected, did you receive any communication from your school regarding the reason for the changes?	100	3.65	Agreed
3.	Were any adjustment made to your salary structure to accommodate the challenges posed by the pandemic?	100	3.20	Agreed
4.	Did you receive any support or resources from your school or government to mitigate the financial impact of the pandemic-related changes?	100	3.10	Agreed
5.	Have you notice any disparities in how the pandemic's impact on salaries has affected different private secondary school teachers?	100	3.25	Agreed
Cluster Mean			3.40	Agreed

Table1 shows that the cluster means of items 1-5 were 3.40. This implies that respondents have strongly agreed because the mean is greater than the scaled mean of 2.5. It means that the respondents have agreed that COVID-19 pandemic school closed down affect the salaries of the private secondary school teachers in Gabu-Yala Local Government Area, of Cross River State.

Research Question Two

Do government have special loans package for private secondary school teachers in Gabu-Yala Local Government Area of Cross River State to reduce the effect of COVID-19?

Answer to this research question is presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Mean of Responses on the government special loan packages for private secondary school teachers in Gabu-Yala Local Government Area of Cross River State to reduce the effect of COVID-19

S/N	ITEM	N	M	DECISION
6.	Are you aware of any government initiated special loan packages designed specifically for private secondary school teachers during the COVID-19 pandemic?	100	2.91	Agreed
7.	Have you personally applied for or utilized any special loan packages offered by the government for private secondary school teachers?	100	3.00	Strongly Agreed
8.	Do you believe that the existing special loan packages	100	3.30	Strongly

	adequately support private secondary school teachers during the pandemic?				Agreed
9.	Have you observed any positive or negative impacts of the special loan packages on your colleagues or yourself?	100	3.70	Strongly Agreed	
10.	Are there any suggestions or improvements you would recommend for the current special loan packages?	100	3.55	Strongly Agreed	
Cluster Mean			3.29	Agreed	

Table 2 shows that the cluster means of items 6-11 were 3.29. This implies that respondents have strongly agreed because the mean is greater than the scaled mean of 2.5. It means that the respondents have agreed that government have no special loan packages for the private secondary school teachers in Gabu-Yala Local Government Area, of Cross River State.

Research Hypothesis One

There is no significant relationship between COVID-19 pandemic school closed down and the salaries of the private secondary school teachers in Gabu-Yala Local Government Area of Cross River State.

Table 3: Independent Chi-square test analysis for COVID-19 pandemic school closed down and the salary of the private secondary school teachers in Makurdi Local Government Area of Benue State

Responses	Observed Frequency	Expected Frequency	DF	Chi-square Value (X^2)	Alpha Level	P-Value	Decision
Yes	58.0	25.0	3	69.85	0.05	0.000	significant
No	26.6	25.0					
Sure	13.0	25.0					
Not Sure	2.4	25.0					
Total	100						

Table 3 reveals that $X^2 = 69.85$; $p=0.000 < 0.05$. This shows that the probability value is less than 0.05. It therefore implies that there is a significant relationship between COVID-19 pandemic school closed down and the salary of the private secondary school teachers in Makurdi Local Government Area of Benue State. The null hypothesis is therefore rejected.

Research Hypothesis Two

There is no significant relationship between COVID-19 pandemic government special loans palliative and the private secondary school teachers in Gabu-Yala Local Government Area of Cross River State.

Table 4: Independent Chi-square test analysis for COVID-19 pandemic government special loans palliative and the private secondary school teachers in Makurdi Local Government Area of Benue State

Responses	Observed Frequency	Expected Frequency	DF	Chi-square Value (X^2)	Alpha Level	P-Value	Decision
Yes	42.6	25.0	3	61.43	0.05	0.000	significant
No	46.0	25.0					
Sure	9.4	25.0					
Not Sure	2.0	25.0					
Total	100						

Table 4 reveals that $X^2 = 61.43$; $p=0.000 < 0.05$. This shows that the probability value is less than 0.05. It therefore implies that there is a significant relationship between COVID-19 pandemic government special loan palliatives and the private secondary school teachers in Makurdi Local Government Area of Benue State. The null hypothesis is therefore rejected.

Discussion

Findings reveal that there is a significant relationship between COVID-19 pandemic school closed down and the salaries of the private secondary school teachers in Gabu-Yala Local Government Area of Cross River State. This findings confirm with Ogunode (2020) who investigated the impact of COVID-19 on a private secondary school in FCT, Abuja, Nigeria. The result collected, analyzed and computed led to the conclusion that majorities of private secondary schools teachers in FCT have not been receiving salaries since the closed down of all educational institutions in Abuja.

Concerning government special loans package for private secondary school teachers in Gabu-Yala Local Government Area of Cross River State to reduce the effect of COVID-19, there exist a significant relationship between COVID-19 pandemic government special loans palliative and the private secondary school teachers in Gabu-Yala Local Government Area of Cross River State. This finding is not at odd to that of Ogunode (2020) who investigated the impact of COVID-19 on a private secondary school in FCT, Abuja, Nigeria. The study reveals that government did not capture private secondary school teachers in their special loan package for different professional bodies working in F.C.T. Similar scenario played out in Gabu-Yala Local Government Area of Cross River State, where provisions were never made for private school teachers' welfare during the pandemic.

On the other hand Dada and Amosu (2021) evaluated the covid-19 prevention and control protocol compliance among pupils in Ikenne Local Government Area, of Ogun state. The findings revealed that the schools faced some of these challenges that hinder the effective implementation of the prevention protocol such as inadequate supply of hand washing soap and water, inadequate supply of hand sanitizers, inadequate classroom, inadequate enforcement of social distance and inadequate cleaning and

disinfectant for cleaning of surface objects. Findings concluded that the schools complied with Federal Ministry of Education guidelines on schools and learning facilities reopening after COVID-19 closures in Ogun state, Nigeria to a great extent.

Conclusion

From the findings of the study, there is no significant relationship between COVID-19 pandemic school closed down and the salaries of the private secondary school teachers, and there is no significant relationship between COVID-19 pandemic government special loans palliative and the private secondary school teachers in Gabu-Yala Local Government Area of Cross River State.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

- i. The government should direct the Central Bank of Nigeria to design low-interest loans facilities for all the private school teachers especially those in secondary schools in Gabu-Yala Local Government Area of Cross River State.
- ii. The government should direct the Central Bank of Nigeria to design low-interest loans facilities for all the private school owners especially those in secondary schools in Gabu-Yala Local Government Area of Cross River State and Nigeria at large to enable them to have access to funds and pay salaries of their staff;
- iii. The government should next include all private schools teachers among professionals to benefit from foodstuff palliatives across the federation.
- iv. The private school teachers should form a strong union that will be standing for them and negotiating for them with the various organizations of government or international institutions.
- v. Private school teachers should try and invest in the personal business as a source of another income apart from their monthly salaries

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