



**STAKEHOLDERS' PERCEPTION ON COVID-19 PANDEMIC
MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES IN PUBLIC SENIOR SECONDARY
SCHOOLS IN NORTH- EASTERN NIGERIA: IMPLICATION FOR
CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN THE 21ST CENTURY**

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Abstract

This Study Assessed the Stakeholders' Perception on Covid-19 Pandemic Management Strategies in Public Senior Secondary Schools in North-East Geographical zone of Nigeria – Implication for Challenges and Opportunities in the 21st Century. The objectives of the study were to Assess stakeholders' perception on the level of creating awareness to contain the spread of covid-19 pandemic as well as the provision of non pharmaceutical facilities to contain the spread of covid-19 pandemic in the study area. A sample of 72 principals randomly selected was used for the study. Descriptive survey design was employed as design for the study where data collected was analyzed using simple percentage. The findings revealed that there was adequate awareness, but there are deficiencies in the provision of non pharmaceutical facilities to contain the spread of covid-19 pandemic in schools. Based on the findings, the study recommends among others to understand basic information about corona virus disease (COVID-19), including its symptoms, complications, how it is transmitted and how to prevent transmission. Also Government should endeavour to procure the needed non pharmaceutical supplies.

Keywords: Covid-19 pandemic, management, strategies.

Introduction

Proper and good education is very important component of human existence that works all through the life of people of any age group, cast, creed, religion and region. It is therefore a process of achieving knowledge whose main objective is the promotion of positive values, skills, beliefs, and moral habits.

In that regard the Federal Government of Nigerian (2014) in the National Policy on Education stated that every Nigerian child shall have a right to equal educational opportunities.

The menace of 2019 corona virus pandemic posed severe challenge for effective and efficient delivery of qualitative education in Nigerian and the world in general. The Federal Ministry of Education (FME) and partners, in consultation with the Presidential Task Force on COVID-19 (PTF-COVID-19) and the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) have developed these guidelines to support states in preparing for safe re-opening of schools. This is to mitigate the risk of COVID-19 infection in school settings amidst the surge in cases. Among the guide lines are: States should conduct risk assessments to guide decisions and interventions for reopening, States should also establish or re-establish a multi-sectoral school health programme that includes a trained school health team to ensure adherence to all protocols; monitor and report incidence of cases in schools. Schools should ensure that a triage point is identified and well-marked at the entrance where everyone gaining access to the school is screened for high temperature, requested to wear masks and perform hand hygiene. It should also ensure that classrooms are well ventilated with minimum of one meter sitting arrangement, there should be access to sufficient running water, soap and hand washing facilities. Staff at sick bay/designated holding room should be trained and provided with required PPE. All schools must also have a communication plan to regularly teach learners and staff on protocol and inform parents in the event of a COVID-19 confirmed case.

As the outbreak of COVID-19 is expanding exponentially, spreading beyond borders and spreading across continents, it has been classified as a “pandemic.” It created havoc among nations. This new viral infection has caused restlessness, confusion, and fear among people across the globe. The uniqueness of this infection is that it shows little or no symptoms in the beginning, and many do not even know they are infected. It does not induce any severe change or indication in the infected person so that he can seek medical attention at an early stage. By the time infected persons realize that they are infected, they might have spread the disease to a large number of people without their knowledge and any ulterior motives. Therefore, the first and foremost strategy to win the battle over COVID-19 in schools shall be stopping the spread of

disease effectively through awareness and provision of non pharmaceutical facilities among the students and staff.

North-East geopolitical zone is one of the six administrative divisions of Nigeria, consisting of Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Taraba and Yobe states. It occupies slightly less than one-third of Nigeria's total area and it is an area that was stormed by insecurity, insurgency as a result of Boko Haram Militia groups for over a decade.

Review of Related Literature

According to Markel and Lipman (2010) experiences from previous influenza pandemics, in particular the 2009–10 pandemic, have demonstrated that we cannot expect to contain geographically the next influenza pandemic in the location it emerges, nor can we expect to prevent international spread of infection for more than a short period. Vaccines are not expected to be available during the early stage of the next pandemic, and stockpiles of antiviral drugs will be limited, mostly reserved for treating more severe illnesses and for patients at higher risk for influenza complications. Therefore, non-pharmaceutical interventions (NPIs), such as social distancing, will be heavily relied on by health authorities to slow influenza transmission in the community, with 3 desired outcomes. The first outcome would be to delay the timing of the peak of infections to buy time for preparations in the healthcare system, the second to reduce the size of the epidemic peak so that the healthcare system is not overwhelmed, and the third to spread infections over a longer time period, enabling better management of those cases and the potential for vaccines to be used at least later in the epidemic to reduce impact.

The impact of the pandemic on education was significant. Almost immediately after the outbreak of the plague, students vacated centers of education. This was observed in almost all the institutions worldwide (Nigeria inclusive).

United Nation (2020) in a policy brief: education during COVID-19 and beyond maintained that when students are in class there is need to rearrange desks and common seating spas to maximize the space between participants, turn desks to face in the same direction (rather than facing each other) to reduce transmission cause from virus containing droplets (E.g. from talking , coughing, sneezing).The study also indicated that wearing face covering is not a substitute

for frequent hand washing, avoiding touching the face and practicing social distancing which are best tools to help prevent the spread of illness.

Nigeria Federal Ministry of Education (2020) stipulated that for schools to be reopened in Nigeria, safety and hygiene guidelines must be adhered which shall include disinfection and fumigation of facilities, including hostel accommodation, particular attention should be given to those used as temporary isolation and to treatment centers and for other purposes during the pandemic, ensure school COVID-19 referral system, including protocols and procedures to take if learners, teachers, administrators and other education personnel become unwell while in school, developing detailed protocols, provide facilities and measures for maintenance of two meters self-distancing, complying with NCDC guidelines develop detailed protocols and provide facilities to establish and maintain prescribed hygiene standards and practices including hand washing, access to adequate gender segregated toilet facilities, cross-ventilation of classrooms and hostel accommodation, use of face masks, proper food preparation and handling as well as disposal of wastes.

Statement of the Problem

The crisis caused by the COVID-19 virus has far-reaching effects on nearly all social and economic spheres of life the world over. The crises became so heightened that all social and economic activities were brought to standstill. Businesses were closed, movements were restricted, all social gatherings were prohibited and cities and countries were totally locked down thereby forcing the closure of schools for a very long period of time.

The effect of the school closure was felt much in the developing countries where technological breakthrough that gives room for virtual classroom was not much in place. Our schools in Nigeria generally and specifically the North eastern zone of the country where the region was already experiencing unrest and insurgency was much more affected.

The total closure stormed the region much that it affects the psychology and sociological existence of the citizenry. It affected teachers, students, administrators, parents and all the stakeholders in education in a way that some parents cannot afford to send their wards to school and some of the schools have no economic strength to continue with their academic programmes.

The trauma was so unhealthy that both the parents, students and teachers are asking whether the normalcy will ever be restored; whether the schools will ever have the capacity to contain the pandemic (management strategies) and allow schooling to continue. These and many more are the multiple questions that is still lingering in the minds of educational stake holders in the North eastern region of Nigeria.

It is against this backdrop this study determined the Stakeholders' Perception on Covid-19 Pandemic Management Strategies in Public Senior Secondary Schools in North- East Geographical Zone of Nigeria: Implication for Challenges and Opportunities in the 21st Century with the specific intent of ascertaining the perceived level of awareness and provision of non pharmaceutical facilities to contain the spread of covid-19 pandemic.

Purpose of the Study

The objectives of this study were to determine assessment of Stakeholders' Perception on Covid-19 Pandemic Management Strategies in Public Senior Secondary Schools in North- East Geographical Zone of Nigeria: Implication for Challenges and Opportunities in the 21st Century. The study specifically investigates the following:

- To assess stakeholders' perception on the level of creating awareness to contain the spread of covid-19 pandemic in Public Senior Secondary Schools in North- East, Nigeria.
- To assess stakeholders' perception on the provision of non pharmaceutical facilities to contain the spread of covid-19 pandemic in Public Senior Secondary Schools in North- East, Nigeria.

Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:

- ✓ What are the stakeholders' perceptions on the level of creating awareness to contain the spread of covid-19 pandemic in Public Senior Secondary Schools in North- East, Nigeria?
- ✓ What are the stakeholders' perception on the provision of non pharmaceutical facilities to contain the spread of covid-19 pandemic in Public Senior Secondary Schools in North- East, Nigeria?

Significance of the Study

The significant of this document is to serves as a guide for further research. And also to determine the level awareness and control of COVID-19 in schools.

Methodology

The targeted population for this study comprised of Public Senior Secondary Schools using a sample of 72 principals randomly selected from three States among the six States in North- East, Nigeria. Descriptive survey design was employed as design for the study. Data was obtained through the use of 5-point likert type scale questionnaire designed by the researchers. The instrument has 20 items, items 1-10 were questions on creating awareness while 11-20 addressed provision of non pharmaceutical facilities, which was validated by professionals in the field of Education Administration and planning. The reliability index of the instrument stood at 0.75 using chronbach alpha. The data collected were collated and analyzed using simple percentages.

Data Analysis and Results

Research Questions 1: What are the stakeholders' perceptions on the level of creating awareness to contain the spread of covid-19 pandemic in Public Senior Secondary Schools in North- East, Nigeria?

Table 1: Percentages of Principals responses on the level of creating awareness to contain the spread of covid-19 pandemic in Public Senior Secondary Schools in North- East Nigeria.

ITEMS	SA		A		U		SD		D	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
Staff/Students are advised to wear face masks	49	68.1	18	25	5	6.9	0	0	0	0
Staff/Students are advised to observe physical distance	31	43.1	29	40.3	1	1.4	4	5.6	7	9.7

Staff/Students are advised to wash their hands regularly	41	56.9	29	40.3	2	2.8	0	0	0	0
Staff/Students are advised to report to school authority if they have respiratory problems	36	50.0	22	30.6	11	15.3	3	4.2	0	0
Staff/Students are advised to report any covid 19 symptom	45	62.5	24	33.3	3	4.2	0	0	0	0
Staff/Students are advised to decongest in their school activities	14	19.4	45	62.5	13	18.1	0	0	0	0
Staff/Students are advised to use alcohol based hand sanitizers frequently	21	29.2	27	37.5	16	22.2	3	4.2	5	6.9
Posters are placed in strategic location in the school premises to educate students on how to contain covid 19	33	45.8	27	37.5	9	12.5	3	4.2	0	0
Staff/Students are advised to maintain personal hygiene	50	69.4	15	20.8	7	9.7	0	0	0	0
Staff/Students are advised to keep their environment clean	53	73.6	19	26.4	0	0	0	0	0	0

Source (Field studies,2021)

The result of table 1 showed the frequencies and percentages on the level of creating awareness to contain the spread of covid-19 pandemic in Public Senior Secondary Schools in North- East Nigeria. The table revealed that 68.1% of

principals strongly agreed that staff/students were advised to wear face masks, while 25% agreed, 6.9% undecided. The second item indicated that 43.1% of the principals strongly agreed that Staff/Students are advised to observe physical distance, also 40.3% agreed, 1.4% undecided, 5.6% strongly disagreed while 9.7% disagreed to it. The third item depicted that 56.9% of the principals strongly agreed that staff/students were advised to wash their hands regularly, 40.3% agreed and 2.8% undecided to that opinion. With regard to the fourth item 50.0% of principals strongly agreed that staff/students were advised to report to school authority if they have respiratory problems, 30.6% agreed to it, 15.3% undecided while 4.2% strongly disagreed. Item number five showed that 62.5% of the principals strongly agreed that staff/students are advised to report any covid 19 symptom while 33.3% agreed, 4.2% undecided to it. Sixth item showed that 19.4% of the principals strongly agreed that staff/students are advised to decongest in their school activities, 62.5% agreed and 18.1% undecided. Item number seven showed that 29.2% strongly agreed that staff/students are advised to use alcohol based hand sanitizers frequently, 37.5% agreed to it while 22.2% undecided, 4.2% strongly disagreed while 6.9% disagreed. The eight item showed that 45.8% strongly agreed that Posters are placed in strategic location in the school premises to educate students on how to contain covid 19, 37.5% agreed, 12.5% undecided and 4.2% strongly disagreed to it. Item nine revealed that 69.4% of principals strongly agreed that staff/students are advised to maintain personal hygiene, 20.8% agreed while 9.7% undecided with the view. The last item showed that 73.6% strongly agreed that staff/students are advised to keep their environment clean and 26.4% agreed.

Research Questions 2: What is the stakeholders' perception on the provision of non pharmaceutical facilities to contain the spread of covid-19 pandemic in Public Senior Secondary Schools in North- East Nigeria.

Table 2: Percentages of Principals responses on the provision of non pharmaceutical facilities to contain the spread of covid-19 pandemic in Public Senior Secondary Schools in North- East Nigeria.

ITEMS	SA		A		U		SD		D	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
There is enough water supply for hand washing	13	18.1	11	15.3	9	12.5	22	30.6	17	23.6

Disinfectants are provided	11	15.3	10	13.9	8	11.1	27	37.5	16	22.2
Soap/detergents are provided	20	27.8	29	40.3	10	13.9	6	8.3	7	9.7
Face mask are provided	12	16.7	6	8.3	13	18.1	23	31.9	18	25.0
Hand sanitizers are provided	25	34.7	25	34.7	0	0	13	18.1	9	12.5
Thermometers are provided	28	38.9	21	29.2	0	0	14	19.4	9	12.5
There is an isolation center in the school	24	33.3	22	30.6	5	6.9	13	18.1	8	11.1
Health care facilitators are provided	12	16.7	8	11.1	6	8.3	27	37.5	19	26.4
Ambulance buses are provided	0	0	0	0	6	8.3	40	55.6	26	36.1
Toiletries are provided	0	0	0	0	17	23.6	35	48.6	20	27.8

Source (Field studies, 2021)

Table 2 above revealed that 18.1% of principals strongly agreed that there is enough water supply for hand washing in schools, 15.3% agreed, 12.5% undecided while 30.6% strongly disagreed, 23.6% disagreed. 15.3 strongly agreed that disinfectants are provided, 13.9% agreed, 11.1% undecided, 37.5% strongly disagreed while 22.2% disagreed. The third item revealed that 27.8% of principals strongly agreed that soap/detergents are provided, 40.3% agreed, 13.9% undecided, 8.3% strongly disagreed while 9.7% disagreed. Fourth item showed that 16.7% strongly agreed that face mask are provided, 8.3% agreed, 18.1% undecided while 31.9% strongly disagreed and 25.0% disagreed. Item number five showed 34.7% of principals strongly agreed that hand sanitizers are provided in school, 34.7% agreed, 18.1% strongly disagreed while 12.5% disagreed. Sixth item revealed that 38.9% strongly agreed that thermometers were provided, 29.2% agreed, 19.4% strongly disagreed while 12.5% disagreed. Seventh on the list showed that 33.3% strongly agreed there is an isolation center in the schools, 30.6% agreed while 6.9% were undecided, 18.1% strongly disagreed, 11.1% disagreed. Item eight indicated that 16.7% of principal strongly agreed that health care facilitators were provided, 11.1% disagreed, 8.3% were undecided and 37.5% strongly disagreed, 26.4% disagreed to it. The second to the last item revealed that 8.3% undecided that ambulance buses were provided in the schools, 55.6% strongly disagreed while 36.1% disagreed. The

last item revealed that 23.6% of the respondent undecided that toiletries are provided, 48.6% strongly disagreed while 27.8% disagreed to it.

Discussion

Table 1 and 2 revealed the view of respondents on Covid-19 Pandemic Management Strategies in Public Senior Secondary Schools in North- East Geographical Zone of Nigeria: Implication for Challenges and Opportunities in the 21st Century. According to this study it is agreed that staff/students are advised to do the following: Wear face masks as part of a comprehensive strategy of measures to suppress transmission and save lives, to observe physical distance by keeping a distance of at least 1m from each other as well as avoiding spending time in crowded places or in groups, to wash their hands regularly because it remains one of our best defenses against the virus, report any covid 19 symptom to school authority, in this case local health authority should be contacted and follow their instructions. The sick person should be isolated in a room, alone, or at least 1 metre away from others. Staff/students are advised to decongest in their school activities it makes the school safer, resilient and sustainable, use alcohol based hand sanitizers frequently it helps to deter the spread of virus, germs and illness-causing bacteria, particularly in busy environments like schools. Also to maintain personal hygiene, as well as keep their environment clean, this could save staff and students from contracting infections also prevent them from spreading germs and viruses. Posters were placed in strategic location in the school premises to educate staff and students on how to contain covid-19, it helps them stay informed and have accurate information.

The research revealed that there is no enough water supply for hand washing, having water helps in hygiene to avoid exposure to countless diseases. Disinfectants are not always available, disinfectants can help contain and prevent the spread of harmful viruses. Soap/detergents are provided which eliminates germs including viruses that may be on your hands, hands can transfer the virus to your eyes, nose or mouth. From there, the virus can enter your body and infect you. This research revealed that face mask are not provided in the schools, the act of speaking generates oral fluid droplets that vary widely in size, from clearly visible to invisibly small aerosols. The louder someone

speaks the more droplets and aerosols are produced. Regardless of their size, they all can harbor infectious virus particles and spread viral diseases. Hand sanitizers are partially provided to staff/students in public senior secondary schools in North- East Nigeria, alcohol-based hand sanitizers can quickly reduce the number of microbes on hands. It shows that thermometers are provided which allow quick, accurate temperature checks when used in accordance with manufacturer's instructions. In most of the schools an isolation center is available, schools are required to have designated isolation areas for any staff or students with symptoms of Covid-19. In addition, staff are required to undergo Covid-19 induction training for that. Special Health care facilitators and ambulance buses are not provided in schools to help in case of any emergency, as well as toiletries which are personal care items use for hygiene.

Conclusion

As the global threat of COVID-19 continues to emerge, it is critical to improve the awareness on issues related to COVID-19 in schools as well as having adequate supply of non pharmaceutical facilities in order to meet its elimination goals.

Recommendations

1. The staff and students should be aware of basic information about corona virus disease (COVID-19), including its symptoms, complications, how it is transmitted and how to prevent transmission. They should also alert the principal if anyone is ill and any suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19 within the school must be reported to Nigeria Center for Disease control unit to support case management and contact tracing. Principals should promote information sharing by coordinating and following guidelines from the national health and education authorities. Share known information with staff and students, providing updated information on the disease situation, including prevention and control efforts at school.
2. Government should endeavour to procure the needed non pharmaceutical facilities supplies.

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