

MODALITIES FOR EFFECTIVE ADMINISTRATION OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN THE FACE OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC IN ONDO STATE

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Abstract

The shock of the coronavirus disease known with code, COVID-19 pandemic on education has been unprecedented. It has set the clock back on the attainment of education goals as instrument for national development. The scale of the COVID-19 pandemic impact's on educational sector, ranging from students learning, wellbeing and day to day school administration in alarming. This truly is a global crisis which is preventing citizens in every country, including Nigeria, from fulfilling their right to quality, safe and inclusive education. This study was carried out to ascertain the modalities for effective administration of secondary school in the face of the covid-19 pandemic in Ondo state. Two research questions guided the study. The study adopted a descriptive survey research. A sample of 300 participants made up of 80 principals and 220 teachers was used for the study. The instrument used for data collection was a questionnaire. The research questions were answered using mean and standard deviations. The findings of the study revealed that the outbreak of the Covid-19 Pandemic poses serious challenges on secondary school administration in Ondo state, Nigeria, principals' level of preparedness against the Covid-19 Pandemic in the day to day administration of schools was reported low, among others. Based on the findings, the researchers recommended that Government should employ more competent teachers, erect more classrooms in order to maintain social distancing and minimize number of students per teacher, and make provision for safety materials for promotion of better hygiene culture. Also, that there should be encouragement of sustainable e-learning platform by creating e-libraries and adopting e-teaching softwares such as zoom, that can be use for holding meetings and delivering lectures with no or less physical contact in the schools.

Keywords: Education, Secondary School, Administration, Covid-19 Pandemic

Introduction

The outbreak of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) has been declared a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC) and the virus has now spread to many countries and territories. The Coronavirus disease known with code, COVID-19 pandemic is an infection which is as a result of a novel severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2). Infection for example, the novel severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) and the Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS) was known in 2002 and 2012 in that order were as a result of viruses analogous to SARS-CoV-2. Covid-19 was first discovered in Wuhan, China with general signs of dry cough, fever, tiredness, shortness of breath, headache and general body weakness owned to the incentive of supplementary pains in the body. According to African News (2020) therapeutic diagnosis and findings have revealed that people tainted with covid- 19 can be symptomatic or asymptomatic; the premature stages of the virus depending on each person immune system.

Nevertheless, SARS-CoV-2 has a higher range more than earlier information related to viruses and as a result the obscurity in the cure and management of COVID-19 (Zhong *et al.*, 2020). The spread of the coronavirus initially spared Nigeria, like many other African countries, with zero recorded case as of January 2020. This luck, however, did not last. By the 28th of February, Nigeria reported its first case; a Nigerian UK returnee. Nearly two months, 343 confirmed cases, 91 recoveries and 10 deaths Nigeria has a pressing cause for concern. The Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) has no doubt adversely affected the global economy. It has forced many businesses to temporarily shut down and governments across the world to place a restriction on movement while exempting providers of essential services who are to strictly observe social distancing rules while providing services as a way to contain the spread of the virus. The pandemic may have pushed the world into the deepest global recession in living memory which will have lasting effects on economies and public finances. No doubt, the Coronavirus pandemic has adversely affected all aspects of our lives including education sector.

Education is the veritable instrument for academic advancement, social mobilization, political survival and effective national development of any country. According to Federal Republic of Nigeria (2013), in order to realize the goals of education in Nigeria for sustainable development, government would take necessary measures to ensure that such education is learner-centered for maximum self- development and fulfillment at all level including secondary school. Secondary education is the education given in an institution of learning to prepare students for higher education (FRN, 2013). This implies that secondary education is the basic and fundamental education the child received in preparation for higher education which deserves effective administration. School administration may be seen as all activities on how to influence or engineer resources in order to achieve the objectives of teaching and learning in the school (Ajayi & Ayodele, 2012). It is the process of skillfully arranging the human and material resources and programme available for education and carefully using them for achieving educational objectives.

Unfortunately, the educational sector including secondary school is a part of the receiving end of the coronavirus disease known with code, COVID-19 pandemic. The scale of the COVID-19 pandemic impact's on educational sector, ranging from students learning, wellbeing and day to day school administration in alarming. This truly is a global crisis which is preventing citizens in every country, including Nigeria, from fulfilling their right to quality, safe and inclusive education. According to UNESCO, an estimated 1.725 billion learners have been affected as a result of school closures, representing about 99.9% of the world's student population as of April 13th, 2020. It has set the clock back on the attainment of education goals as instrument for national development. The coronavirus diseases known with code, COVID-19 pandemic has created the largest disruption of education systems in history, affecting nearly 1.6 billion learners in more than 190 countries and all continents including Nigeria by extension Ondo state which led to closure of schools. Closures of schools and other learning spaces have impacted 94 per cent of the world's students' population, up to 99 per cent in low and lower-middle income countries. The crisis is exacerbating pre-existing education disparities by reducing the opportunities for many of the most vulnerable children, youth, and adults – those living in poor or rural areas, girls, refugees,

persons with disabilities and forcibly displaced persons – to continue their learning. Learning losses also threaten to extend beyond this generation and erase decades of progress, deny youth’s educational access and retention. Some 23.8 million additional children and youth (from pre-primary to tertiary) may drop out or not have access to school next year due to the pandemic’s economic impact alone. No wonder, Mr Borhene Chakroun, Director of the Division of Policies and Lifelong Learning Systems at UNESCO, recalled that prolonged school closures have major implications for learning, assessments, credentials and school administration.

Similarly, the education disruption has had, and will continue to have, substantial effects beyond education but also school administration. Closures of educational institutions hamper the provision of essential services to children and communities, including access to nutritious food, affect the ability of many parents to work. Recent guidance from the United States Center for Disease Control (US-CDC) suggests that school closures do serve a purpose, in particular if COVID- 19 cases are school-based, to allow for decontamination and contact tracing. It also recognizes its importance as a tool to increase social distance. The reports note that a closure of 4 to 8 weeks might be required in case of substantial community spread. On the other hand, extended interrupted education that disengages students from the learning process has the potential cost of reversing gains in learning results set back in school administration. Before the pandemic, the world was already facing formidable challenges in fulfilling the promise of education as a basic human right, so the covid-19 worsen the situation and there is the need for the way out by adopting innovative administration such the use of ICT platforms, devices as alternative means of school administration.

However, the scale of the COVID-19 pandemic impact’s on educational sector, ranging from students learning, wellbeing and day to day school administration in alarming. This truly is a global crisis which is preventing citizens in every country, including Nigeria and Ondo state by extension, from fulfilling their right to quality, safe and inclusive education. Ordinarily, when issue such as the covid-19 occurs, school supposed to switch over to an alternative means of learning and administration, but is very unfortunate, no such alternatives in Nigeria education institutions. This study was carried out to ascertain modalities for effective

administration of secondary school in the face of the covid-19 pandemic in Ondo state.

Purpose of the Study

The general purpose of the study is to ascertain modalities for effective administration of secondary school in the face of the covid-19 pandemic in Ondo state. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. identify challenges covid-19 pandemic pose on secondary school administration in Ondo State;
2. ascertain ways for effectively administered secondary schools in the face of covid-19 pandemic in Ondo state.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study.

1. What are the challenges covid-19 pandemic pose on secondary school administration in Ondo State?
2. What are the ways secondary schools can be effectively administered in the face of covid-19 pandemic in Ondo state?

Methodology

The design of this study was descriptive survey design. According to Nworgu (2015), descriptive survey is a type of study which aims at collecting data, and describing in a systematic manner, the characteristic features or facts about a given population. The study was carried out in Ondo state. A sample of 300 participants made up of 80 principals and 220 teachers was drawn for the study through simple random technique. The instrument used for data collection was a questionnaire. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled: Modalities for Administering Secondary School in the Face of Covid-19 Pandemic Questionnaire (MASCQ). The instrument (MASCQ) was subjected to face validation by three experts, two in Educational Administration and Planning and one in Measurement and Evaluation, all from the faculty of education, University of Nigeria, Nsukka. Twenty five (20) copies of the questionnaire were trial tested on 6 principals and 14 teachers in Ekiti State, which is outside the area of this study. The Cronbach Alpha method was used to determine the internal consistency and

overall reliability coefficient of 0.93 was obtained. The direct delivery and retrieved method was used in the administration of the instrument. The data collected for the study was analyzed using mean and standard deviation for answering the research questions.

Results and Discussion of the Findings

Research Question One: What are the challenges covid-19 pandemic pose on secondary school administration in Ondo State?

The data for answering the above research question are presented on Table 1 below:

Table 1: Mean responses of principals and teachers on the challenges covid-19 pandemic pose on secondary school administration in Ondo State.

S/ N	ITEMS	Principals			Teachers		
		\bar{X}	SD	Rmk	\bar{X}	SD	Rmk
1	Interruption of the school calendar year	2.72	.86	A	2.56	.92	A
2	The outbreak of the covid-19 prevented meeting attendance in the school	2.65	1.38	A	3.11	1.29	A
3	Interruption of the school programmes	2.52	.62	A	2.55	.55	A
4	The outbreak of the covid-19 led to school closure	2.20	1.08	D	2.11	1.32	D
5	The outbreak of the covid-19 hampered quick decision making in the school	2.79	.59	A	2.89	.86	A

6	The outbreak of the covid-19 prevented communication feedback which is crucial in the implementation of the plans and programmes	2.25	.80	D	2.17	.63	D
7	Scarce financial resources for maintenance of existing disaster response structures and to ensure effective emergency response	2.78	.59	A	2.88	.86	A
8	Denied school authorities school-community partnership in school finance	2.65	1.38	A	3.11	1.29	A
9	lack of social protection mechanisms in the school due to the outbreak of the covid-19	2.52	.62	A	2.55	.55	A
Cluster mean		2.76	.06	A	2.88	.07	A

The above Table presents the mean opinions of principal and teachers on challenges covid-19 pandemic pose on secondary school administration in Ondo State. From the data presented on the table it is observable that the principal rated items 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 8 and 9 2.72, 2.62, 2.52, 2.79, 2.78 3.11 and 2.52 with overall mean of 2.76 while teachers rated the same items 2.56, 3.11, 2.55, 2.89, 2.88, 3.11 and 2.55 with overall mean of 2.88 respectively. This means that the principals and teachers share the same view on challenges covid-19 pandemic pose on secondary school administration. These are indications that majority of the items in this cluster are

challenges covid-19 pandemic pose on secondary school administration in Ondo State.

The results obtained from research question 1 revealed that covid-19 pandemic pose challenges to the administration of secondary schools in Ondo state. This findings is inline with Thelma (2020) who cited UNESCO, that about 359 million primary and secondary school learners are currently out-of school as a result of the school closures. According to Olaitan, Abdullahi, Tolorunju, Akinjo & Oluwafemi (2020), the covid-19 pandemic span into Nigeria society, at the very crucial moment, when schools at all level including secondary schools are in section where most schools are preparing for examination. The result corroborates Olaitan (2020), who reported that the COVID-19 pandemic has had far-reaching consequences on education systems all over the world, with Nigeria not being an exception. This has resulted in a nationwide lockdown by Governments, which is greatly impacting not only school closures but also physical/social distancing and change from normal routines of people.

Research Question Two: What are the ways secondary schools can be effectively administered in the face of covid-19 pandemic in Ondo state?

The data for answering the above research question are presented on Table 2 below:

Table2: Mean responses of principals and teachers on the ways secondary schools can be effectively administered in the face of covid-19 pandemic in Ondo state.

S/ N	ITEMS	Principals			Teachers		
		\bar{X}	SD	Rm	\bar{X}	SD	Rm
				k			k
10	Enhancing preparedness while keeping schools open	2.62	.68	A	2.60	1.44	A
11	Regular use of online/ e-learning strategies for meeting	3.44	.37	A	3.40	.68	A

12	Use of education resources to support the general response	2.55	1.16	A	2.68	.77	A
13	Communication campaigns and information sharing	2.72	.98	A	2.80	.61	A
14	Train teachers how to instruct and engage all students through distance learning tools.	2.30	1.37	D	2.11	1.36	D
15	Keep time and track of student engagement, possibly through WhatsApp groups or zoom	1.60	1.24	D	1.90	1.45	D
16	Engage in agreements with telecoms to eliminate cost of accessing resources for MoE sites.	2.33	1.37	D	2.12	1.36	D
17	Create support communities among teachers and students to cross-reference questions and solutions.	2.55	1.16	A	2.68	.77	A
18	Partnering with some private sector providers to provide content already developed is a useful option to explore.	3.44	.37	A	3.40	.68	A

Cluster mean	2.56	1.02	A	2.50	1.05	A
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From Table 2, the mean scores for items 10, 11, 12, 13, 17 and 18 exceeded 2.50 the critical mean scores. This indicated the items proved that modalities identified here are some of the ways secondary schools can be effectively administered in the face of covid-19 pandemic. These further proved from the cluster means 2.56(for principals) and 2.50 (for teachers) it means that the principals and teachers share the same view on how modalities identified here are viable ways secondary schools can be effectively administered in the face of covid-19 pandemic in Ondo State.

The results from research question 2 revealed that modalities identified here are viable ways secondary schools can be effectively administered in the face of covid-19 pandemic in Ondo State. This finding is consistent with the findings of Obiakor and Adeniran (2020) who enumerated the mitigating strategies that would be great aid in cushioning the effects of global pandemic in the educational institutions as follow distance learning through low cost technology, Selective, closing of schools, adoption of ICT platforms etc. It corroborates The African News (2020) who highlighted some strategies that would aid in cushioning the effect covid-19 pandemic in various secondary schools in many countries such as enhancing preparedness while keeping school open, using remote learning and education resources to enhance learning, improved education finance, tapping into global resources and establishment of electronic devises in all secondary Schools.

Recommendations

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

1. Government should employ more competent teachers, erect more classrooms in order to maintain social distancing and minimize number of students per teacher.

2. Government should make provision for safety materials for promotion of better hygiene culture in secondary school in the state.
3. There should be encouragement of sustainable e-learning platform by creating e-libraries and adopting e-teaching softwares such as zoom, that can be used for holding meetings and delivering lectures with no or less physical contact in the schools.
4. There is need for school-community partnership for effective school administration in the face of the covid-19 pandemic.

Conclusion

This study ascertains ascertain modalities for effective administration of secondary school in the face of the covid-19 pandemic in Ondo state. However, based on the findings, the study concludes that covid-19 pandemic pose challenges on secondary school administration in Ondo State. The findings of the study also concluded that modalities identify here are some of the ways secondary schools can be effectively administered in the face of covid-19 pandemic in Ondo state.

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