



Level of Awareness, Attitude and Coping Strategies Towards Covid-19 Among Secondary School Students in Minna Metropolis of Niger State, Nigeria

Hassan Usman^a, Kure I. Danjuma^b & Hussaini Usman^c

^aDepartment of Mathematics, Niger state College of Education, Minna, Nigeria

^bDepartment of Science Education, Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida University, Lapai, Nigeria

^cNiger State Teacher Professional Development Institute, Minna, Nigeria

Corresponding Author: babanibro73@gmail.com

Abstract

The study was carried out to determine the level of awareness, attitude and coping strategies towards COVID-19 among secondary students in Minna metropolis of Niger State, Nigeria. Three objectives with corresponding research questions guided the study. A cross-sectional survey research design was adopted for the study. A total of 168 secondary school students in Minna metropolis of Niger state form the sample for the study. The instrument used for the study was Researchers designed questionnaire that was divided into three sections; awareness, attitude and coping strategy. The questionnaire was validated by experts and Cronbach Alpha's value was computed to ascertain the internal consistency. The reliability coefficient of the questionnaire was obtained to be 0.86. The collected data were analysed using Mean and Standard deviation with a criterion mean of 2.5 as the basis for judgment. Findings revealed that students have positive attitude and awareness towards the COVID-19 pandemic. Hence, it was recommended among others that secondary school management should continue to enlighten students to sustain their attitude and awareness towards the COVID-19 pandemic.

Keywords: Attitude, Awareness, Secondary School Students, Coping Strategy, Covid-19,

Introduction

COVID-19, a deadly illness caused by a coronavirus was first reported in Wuhan, China at the end of 2019 (Ozdemir, 2020). To be precise, the World Health Organisation on the 30th of January 2020 (WHO) declared CoVID-19 as a “public health emergency of international concern”. Since then, it has spread to over 223 countries (Hou et al. 2020). To date, there are more than two hundred and twenty-three million positive COVID-19 cases recorded with at least over four million deaths globally (Tria, 2020; Yamin, 2020; Hansen et al 2021). That is to say that the disease has so far characterised by high mobility and mortality rate alongside other ailments. The clinical sign of the Covid-19 symptoms includes fatigue dry cough, malaise and breathing difficulty. The surge of Covid-19 invariably leads to the shutting down of public places, stoppage of public transportation, isolation and management of infected persons, all in an attempt to control the spread of covid19 (Amzat et al., 2020).

In Africa, Nigeria in specific was reluctant in adhering to control measures put in place. Quite a number of Nigerians interpreted the disease as a white man's illness that could never spread to their homes (Thompson et al., 2021). Without the intervention, of experts, Nigerians and indeed government underrated the emergence of COVID-19 in various cities and villages thus undermining the implementation of initial precautionary measures

which would have saved expenses while protecting the Nigerians from undue exposure to the virus.

in fact, with the first confirmed case of the pandemic of coronavirus in Lagos, Nigeria on February 27, 2020, and subsequent case in Ewekoro, Ogun State, other parts of the country comprising of the north-central Niger state in particular continued with normal social activities without observing skeletal protective measures originally listed or outlined by Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC, 2020). Indeed, the public view in Niger state was that COVID-19 is a disease of influential individuals. It is on this note that the number of cases of COVID-19 pandemic started increasing among the populace, mostly in the state capital.

Consequent to the increasing raise of covid-19 as a result of negligence on the part of the vast majority of the populace that the federal government started introducing public health protocols to control the spread of the virus, much of them related to social distancing, hand wash, and lockdown of the cities (Chick et al. 2020). However, the spread of misinformation and fictitious or untrue narratives regarding the COVID-19 and promotion of unscientific traditional treatment within Nigerian further threatened the implementation of preventive measures (Adebisi, et al. 2021; Banko 2020; Inobemhe, 2021). In addition, the Government inability to withstand the social distancing policy and ban on large gatherings including religious and cultural activities, funerals, weddings, and sports



undoubtedly create the accelerated spread of COVID-19 (Reuben et al. 2021). This accordingly, raised a variety of reactions among the population, causing anguish, and massive fear in addition to the psychological and emotional impact it has already created.

In the context of Nigeria's education, the COVID-19 crisis also came along with negative impacts. And to contain the impacts, educational institutions were temporarily closed down for months, indeed Classes were suspended due to lockdown. This closure has affected more than 1.2 billion learners worldwide (UNESCO 2020; Tria 2020). Hence, the Federal Ministry of Education was prompted to establish management approaches regarding pandemics which include social distancing, hand wash, and lockdown of cities to encourage positive health behaviour among students (Adebowale et al. 2021). It is based on all the above conditions that this study is aimed at assessing secondary school students' awareness, attitudes and personal coping strategies toward the COVID-19 pandemic in the Minna metropolis of Niger State Nigeria.

Aim and objectives

The aim of this study is to assess awareness, attitude and personal coping strategies of tertiary and secondary school students during the COVID-19 pandemic in Minna metropolis of Niger State Nigeria. Specifically, the research objectives are stated to find out:

1. Students' awareness towards COVID-19 pandemic in Minna metropolis of Niger State, Nigeria.
2. Students' attitude towards COVID-19 pandemic in Minna metropolis of Niger State, Nigeria.
3. Students' coping strategy of COVID-19 during the pandemic in Minna metropolis of Niger State, Nigeria.

Research Questions

The study provided answers to the following research questions:

1. Are students' aware of the existence of the COVID-19 pandemic in Minna metropolis of Niger State, Nigeria?
2. What is the attitude of students' towards the COVID-19 pandemic in Minna metropolis of Niger State, Nigeria?
3. What are the Coping strategies of students' towards COVID-19 during the pandemic in Minna metropolis of Niger State, Nigeria?

Methodology

A descriptive cross-sectional survey research design was adopted for the study; the design is considered suitable when an identified finding of a studied population is to describe (Patten & Newhart, 2017). The population of the study comprised of the entire secondary school students in Minna metropolis of Niger state, Nigeria. A total of one hundred and sixty eight 168 students selected across the schools form the sample for the study, using a convenience sample technique. The instrument used for the study was Researchers' designed questionnaire that was divided into three sections: awareness, attitude and coping strategy. The questionnaire was validated by experts and Cronbach Alpha's value was computed to ascertain the internal consistency. The reliability coefficient of the questionnaire was obtained to be 0.86. Mean and Standard deviation were used for data analysis. A criterion mean of 2.5 was the basis for judgment. Thus, in establishing the level of awareness, attitude and coping strategies towards COVID-19 among college students a calculated mean score of 2.5 and above was interpreted as a perceived positive attitude, awareness and coping strategies toward Covid-19 while mean score below 2.5 was regarded as there is no positive attitude, awareness and coping strategies toward Covid-19.

Results

In this section, Table 1-3 are presented with their interpretations tailored towards providing answers to the research questions raised.

Table 1: Mean and standard deviation of students' responses on awareness of COVID-19 pandemic.

	N	Mean	SD	Decision
1 The main symptom of COVI-19 are fever cough and body aches	168	1.92	1.19	Disagree
2 Currently there is no effective cure for COVID-19	168	3.75	0.61	Agree
3 Eating or touching animal would result in the infection by COVID-19 virus	168	1.84	0.99	Disagree
4 Person with COVID-19 cannot infect the virus to others if they do not have a fever	168	1.86	1.02	Disagree

5	The COVID-19 is airborne	168	2.17	1.14	Disagree
6	One can wear mask to prevent the infection by the COVID virus	168	3.41	1.05	Agree
7	It is not necessary for students to take measure to prevent infection by COVID virus	168	3.69	0.78	Agree
8	Individual should avoid going to crowded places and avoid taking public transportation to avoid COVID virus infection	168	3.44	0.91	Agree
9	Isolation and treatment of people who are infected with COVID-19 are effective ways to reduce the spread	168	3.57	0.69	Agree
Grand mean			2.85	0.93	

Table 1 shows the Mean and Standard Deviation response of students' awareness towards COVID-19 pandemic in Minna metropolis of Niger state, Nigeria. The table shows the calculated mean score of 1.92 with a standard deviation of 1.19 for item one, mean of 3.75 with Standard Deviation of 0.61 for item two, mean of 1.84 with Standard Deviation of 0.99 for item three, mean of 1.86 with standard deviation of 1.02 for item four, mean of 2.17 with standard deviation of 1.14 for item five,

mean of 3.41 with Standard Deviation of 1.05 for item six, mean of 3.69 with Standard Deviation of 0.78 for item seven, mean of 3.44 with standard deviation of 0.91 for item eight and mean of 3.57 with standard deviation of 0.69 for item nine. The table reveals further that, the grand mean score of responses to the 9 items is 2.85 which was greater than the decision mean score of 2.5 This implies that students in Minna metropolis of Niger State are aware of the existence of COVID19 pandemic

Table 2: Mean and standard deviation of students' response on attitude toward schooling during COVID-19 pandemic

Items	N	Mean	SD	
1	168	1.66	.57	Disagree
2	168	1.94	.61	Disagree
3	168	3.82	.44	Agree
4	168	3.74	.50	Agree
5	168	3.57	.79	Agree
6	168	3.47	.60	Agree
7	168	3.67	.75	Agree
8	168	3.66	.79	Agree
9	168	3.24	.64	Agree
10	168	3.25	.62	Agree
Grand mean		3.20	.63	Agree

Table 2 shows the Mean and Standard Deviation response of students' attitude toward schooling during of COVID-19 pandemic in Minna metropolis of Niger state, Nigeria. The table shows the calculated mean score of 1.66 with standard deviation of .57 for item one, mean of 1.94 with standard deviation of .61 for item two, mean of 3.82 with Standard Deviation of .44 for item three, mean of 3.74 with Standard Deviation of .50 for item four, mean of 3.57 with standard deviation of .79 for item five, mean of 3.47 with Standard Deviation of .60 for

item six, mean of 3.67 with Standard Deviation of .75 for item seven, mean of 3.66 with standard deviation of .79 for item eight, mean of 3.24 with standard deviation of .64 for item nine and mean of 3.25 with standard deviation of .62. The table reveals further that, the grand mean score of responses to the 10 items is 3.20 which was greater than the decision mean score of 2.5 This implies that students in Minna metropolis of Niger State have positive attitude toward COVID19 pandemic



Table 3: Mean and standard deviation of students’ response to coping strategy towards COVID-19 pandemic

S/N	Items	N	Mean	SD	Decision
1	Follow strict personal protective measures (e.g., mask, handwashing,	168	3.82	.44	Agree
2	Read about COVID-19, its prevention and mechanism of transmission	168	3.89	.30	Agree
3	Avoid going out in public places to minimize exposure from COVID-19	168	3.80	.45	Agree
4	Do relaxation activities, for example, involved in meditation, sports, exercise, music, etc.	168	3.67	.52	Agree
5	Praying, worshiping and Bible study	168	3.69	.69	Agree
6	Chat with family and friends to relieve stress and obtain support	168	3.77	.47	Agree
7	Use social media and social networks such as Facebook, Twitter, Tiktok, Youtube, etc.	168	3.85	.35	Agree
8	Play online games and computer games	168	3.70	.50	Agree
9	Talk and motivate myself to face the COVID-19 outbreak with a positive attitude	168	3.82	.39	Agree
10	Get help from family physicians or other doctors to reduce my stress and get reassurance	168	3.89	.34	Agree
11	Vent emotions by crying, screaming,	168	3.75	.58	Agree
	Grand mean	168	3.79	.46	Agree

Table 3 shows the Mean and standard deviation response of students’ response to coping strategy to COVID-19 pandemic in Minna metropolis of Niger state, Nigeria. The table shows the calculated mean score of 3.82 with standard deviation of .44 for item one, mean of 3.89 with Standard Deviation of .30 for item two, mean of 3.80 with Standard Deviation of .45 for item three, mean of 3.67 with standard deviation of .52 for item four, mean of 3.69 with standard deviation of .69 for item five, mean of 3.77 with Standard Deviation of .47 for item six, mean of 3.85 with standard deviation of .35 for item seven, mean of 3.70 with Standard Deviation of .50 for item eight, mean of 3.82 with standard deviation of .39 for item nine, mean of 3.89 with standard deviation of .34 for item ten and mean of 3.75 with standard deviation of .58 for item eleven .The table reveals further that, the grand mean score of responses to the 11 items is 3.79 which was greater than the decision mean score of 2.5 This implies that students in Minna metropolis of Niger State adhere strictly to coping strategy toward COVID19 pandemic

Discussion

The emergence of COVID-19 from the city of Wuhan, China and its speedy worldwide spread across over 223 countries and territories has become one of the leading pandemics in current times with a number of demoralizing and considerable public

health challenges (Younis, Longsheng, Zulfiqar et al. 2020; Park &Ahn, 2022). Nigeria being the 7th most populated country in the world and of course most populous African nation, her population could unquestionably be linked with a higher risk of increased morbidity and mortality due to COVID-19. With the strategy adopted by NCDC and Nigerian government to curb COVID-19, the adherence of the citizenry depends largely on their level of awareness and attitude concerning the pandemic (Reuben, Danladi, Saleh, &Ejembi 2021). Nonchalant attitudes and adherence to false and traditional beliefs by the public often arise due to insufficient awareness, which thus affects the level of preparedness and the proper implementation of infection, prevention and control measures nationwide. Collating information on students’ level of awareness, attitude and coping strategy is essential for the promotion of most important preventive approaches that could emanate from insufficient awareness from students. The finding of this study is however in consonant with the study of Azlan, Hamza, Sern, Ayub & mohammed 2020) aimed in determining the Malaysian public’s knowledge, attitudes, and practices regarding COVID-19. Findings revealed that majority of participants were optimistic about the successful control of COVID-19. On the other hand, the study carried out by (Adebisi, et al. 2021) in assessing the impact of the COVID19 pandemic on access to

healthcare in low and middle-income countries (LMICs), as well as plausible strategies that can be implemented to ensure that healthcare delivery was in contrary to this study. To be able to mitigate the devastating effect of the COVID19 pandemic on the already fragile health systems in LMICs, proactive measures were taken to ensure access to health care during the course of the pandemic.

Conclusion

This research work provides a complete assessment of the student level of awareness, attitude and coping strategy towards COVID-19 in Minna metropolis of Niger state, Nigeria. The findings suggest that students who participated in this research have a significant level of awareness on COVID-19 with a positive attitude and appreciable coping strategy in line with the necessary infection, preventive and control measures drawn out by the government, which are necessary for reducing the spread of COVID-19.

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