

An assessment of students' knowledge of COVID 19 in university education in South-South Nigeria

Wordu, John Amaoge

Department of Educational Management, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria

Author Email: johnwordu117@gmail.com, Tel.: 07053033123



Author

Wordu, John Amaoge

Department of Educational Management, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria

Author Email:
johnwordu117@gmail.com,
Tel.: 07053033123

Abstract

The novel coronavirus disease that originated from Wuhan in China in December 2019 has pervaded every regions of the world. The virus is caused by a new and severe type of coronavirus known as severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-COV2). The virus has no universal accepted cure and a worldwide pandemic causing a high rate morbidity and death across the world. Therefore, the study assessed the students' knowledge of COVID 19 in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education. The study employed descriptive and survey design and four research questions were formulated to give the study a direction. A total of 176 respondents participated in the study representing 10% of the total number of students in the Faculty of Education in the school. The study revealed that students have a high knowledge of COVID-19, the mode of transmission, symptoms, and the various ways of curbing the virus. The study concluded that there are relatively high levels of awareness on the knowledge of COVID-19. The study therefore, recommended that among others that government at all levels should create more awareness on the cause of COVID-19.

Keywords: COVID 19, Students Perception, Virus

Introduction

The entire world was taken aback with the spread of one microscopic organism that found its source from a small town called Wuhan in China. In December, 2019 the people of China saw a cluster cases of pneumonia which was later to be called novel corona virus which is responsible for the illness known as the COVID 19. The virus is novel because it is different from the known classes of virus like the Middle East Respiratory Syndrome. (MERS –COV) which is responsible for the disease called Middle East Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus, or MERS–COV that was first identified in Saudi Arabia in 2012 (WHO, 2019).

In December 2019, another novel coronavirus emerged in the seafood market, where livestock animals are also

traded, in Wuhan State of Hubei Province in China. (Sahin, 2020). In the same vein Sahin et al (2020) acknowledged that many cases that were clustered in Wuhan were reported and searches for the sources have shown human seafood as the origin. And this raises the speculation that it must have been contacted from animals to human. From this small beginning the virus snowball like the whirled wind from the Asian countries to Europe and finally to Africa resulting into the death of million all over the world.

COVID 19 is a new virus that causes acute infection with respiratory symptoms with no universal accepted cure. COVID-19 is not airborne disease like the varicella that causes chickenpox and is usually spread through the air or by touching the rash. (Kandole, 2017) According to CDC update on May 22, 2020, the primary and the most important mode of transmission for COVIN-19 is through

close contact from person-to-person. The report added that a person can get the virus by touching surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose or possible their eyes.

The Centers for Disease, Control and Prevention has identified a wide range of symptoms of COVID-19 ranging from mild symptoms to severe illness. Others symptoms include chills, shortness of breath, cough, sore throat, headache, nausea, fatigue, diarrhea among others. In the same vein a study conducted by Michelen, Jones, and Stavropoulou (2020), identified other symptoms of COVID-19 to include anosmia and loss of appetite.

Since the advent of COVID-19, the World Health Organization has proposed various strategies that will help reduced the chances of being infected. Some of these methods are regularly and thoroughly washing of hands with soap and water or the use of alcoholic based hand sanitizer. Washing of hand and the application of hand sanitizer will help to kill the virus. Again since the virus can be transmitted through droplet from nose or mouth of infected person during speaking, sneezing or coughing, World Health Organization (WHO, 2020) recommended that individuals should maintain at least one meter distance between individuals. It is also important to avoid going to the crowded areas, because in the crowded area it is difficult to maintain a social distance of one meter. The World Health Organization recommended a good respiratory hygiene by covering your nose and mouth with your bent elbow or tissue when you cough or sneeze, and dispose immediately and wash your hands. It is also recommended that you stay at home and self-isolate if you notice any of the symptoms mentioned above and seek medical attention and strictly adhere to your local or national health authorities. (WHO 2020)

More worrisome was the severity of the virus and the virus was spreading very rapidly such that two weeks from the first cases diagnosed, one thousand patients tested positive. One week later the number of positive cases exceeded 4600, reaching over 30,000 patients and 2500 deaths as at 18th march 2020. (Spinelli & Pellino 2020). This made the World Health Organization in March 11, 2020 declared the novel coronavirus out break a global pandemic.

The virus took the entire world by surprise and unprepared. This led to various speculations about the sources, the effect and the solution to the virus. The blame and power game continued even to the less developed countries. The social media became an agent of mass dissemination and misinformation of facts and fiction about the virus. Gates foundation was "accused of a range of misdeeds, from scheming to profit off a virus to creating virus itself" (Kathryn, 2020).

To some the virus is mere propaganda and 'doesn't actually exist but a ploy by the global elites to take away our freedom'. <https://allienceforscience.cornell>. Even more worrisome is the apprehension that the vaccine is a deliberate attempt by the Chinese Scientists and a bio warfare weapon. <https://allienceforscience.cornell>. Others

had related coronavirus with the 5G Network in Nigeria. It is against this backdrop that Nigeria Communication Commission decided to debunk the misleading materials with no prove evidence to link coronavirus with 5G technology. <https://ncc.gov.ng>.

Others see the virus as the elite disease since the early infected people are elites that travelled outside Nigeria. Nwaubani (2020) opined that many Nigeria gloat that COVID 19 is mainly targeting the country's elite, especially politicians ...heads of agencies, former ambassadors and their aids and relatives. While in Congo many believe that Covid-19 does not exist, it is a white man's disease or that figures are invented and the number of deaths increased with the intention of justifying the money being donated by great foreign power. (Varela, 2020).

It is in the same vein that Banjo (2020) orated that in Nigerians at the grassroots, where majority lives, think that coronavirus is a ruse or even a ploy by the government to steel more money. It is against the misinformation and misrepresentation of facts about coronavirus that the study is an assessment of the knowledge of students on COVID-19. The researcher is of the view that a firm grip of students on the knowledge, mode of transmission, and ways of curbing the virus will help the policy makers, government and the health practitioners in proving a lasting solution to the virus. Therefore, the significance of the study is anchored on the fact that understanding the students' knowledge about the virus will enhance better ways of curtaining it.

It is imperative to note that government at the national and international level had adopted certain proactive measures to curtail the disease from spreading to other regions or states. Some of the big nations shut their boundaries to tourists and even in some country there are strict stoppage of inter- state movement. In Nigeria, the president lockdown the federal capital, Lagos and Ogun states on Monday, 30th of March, 2020 for a period of two weeks. In his speech he recognized that it will cause hardship but quickly added that it is a sacrifice we all have to make in order to curtail the spread of COVID 19 and provide space, time and resources for aggressive and collective action. (Buhari, 2020).

In Rivers State, the Governor in a bid to contain the spread of COVID 19 also lockdown two local government areas in the State namely Obio/Akpor and Port Harcourt local governments. The state also closed the boundaries with other states to avoid state to state transmission. Other measures adopted by Rivers State government was the closure of state owned and private universities, all secondary and primary schools, all markets, motor parks, all hotels, cinemas and all public gathering both burial and weddings. The worship houses were not left out but with instruction of not more than fifty worshippers at a time in areas that were not total lockdown. Since on March 25, 2020 when Rivers State recorded the first index case, the government has set various committees to contain the spread of the virus with aggressive sensitization of the people on the ways to stay safe.

was established at 0.86. The research questions were answered using the mean and standard deviation.

Aim of the study

The aim of the study is to investigate the students' knowledge of COVID-19 in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Port Harcourt. In specific term the objectives are:

- i. To examine the students' knowledge of COVID-19
- ii. To determine the students' knowledge of mode of transmission of COVID-19
- iii. To examine the students' knowledge of symptoms of COVID-19
- iv. To determine the students' knowledge of the preventive measures of COVID-19

Research Questions

- i. What is the students' knowledge of COVID-19?
- ii. What is the students' knowledge of mode of transmission of COVID-19?
- iii. What is the students' knowledge of symptoms of COVID-19?
- iv. What is the knowledge of students on the preventing measures of COVID-19

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey design. The design is appropriate for the study because it enabled the researcher to collect information from the respondents on their knowledge, mode of transmission, symptoms, and ways of preventing the spread of COVID-19 without manipulating any of the variables. The target population of the study comprised all students in three departments in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Port Harcourt totaling 1758. (Faculty admission bulletin) The sample of the study consisted of 176 which is the 10% of the population.

The instrument for data collection is a self-designed questionnaire. The questionnaire is basically divided into two parts. Section A is to elicit information on the demographic data about the respondents. While section B is to elicit information about the students' knowledge, mode of transmission, symptoms and ways of curbing the spread of COVID 19. The instrument was administered through the course representatives using their departmental WhatsApp platform.

To ensure that the instrument measure what it tend to measure, the questionnaire were administered to another tertiary institution outside the area of the study and after two weeks intervals the same instrument were administered to the same group of students. The two sets of scores were correlated using and Pearson Product Moment Correlation coefficient and a reliability index (r)

Table 1: Respondents on the knowledge COVID-19

S/N		SA	A	D	SD	Mean	SD	Crit. Mean	Remark
1	COVID 19 is a ploy by the multi-national pharmaceutical company to sell vaccines to less advance countries.	4	5	77	90	1.56	.665	2.50	*
2	COVID 19 is a ploy by multi-national cable network to install their 5G cable.	—	—	64	112	1.36	.482		*
3	COVID 19 is caused by novel virus that originated in Wuhan, China.	44	60	24	48	2.57	1.139		**
4	COVID 19 is a biological weapon introduced by China to kill the Africans	—	24	56	120	1.32	.467		*
5	COVID 19 is the cause of the sins of the people	70	70	17	19	3.09	.961		**
6	COVID 19 is a ploy by the world leaders to install microchips to enhance a global economic	44	39	38	55	2.41	1.172		*

**agreed, *disagreed at 2.50 criterion mean

The table above showed the mean and standard deviation of respondents on the knowledge of COVID 19. The study indicated that students agreed that the COVID 19 is a novel virus that originated from Wuhan, in China and also that it is the sin of the people that caused the virus.

Table 2: Respondents' on the mode of transmission of COVID-19

S/N		SA	A	D	SD	Mean	SD	Crit Mean	Remark
7	COVID 19 is novel virus that is transmitted through sex	75	54	21	26	3.01	1.069	2.50	**
8	COVID 19 is transmitted through hugging and kissing	106	58	5	7	3.49	.741		**
9	COVID 19 is airborne, that is transmitted through air	77	44	29	28	2.98	1.095		**
10	COVID 19 is transmitted thru a droplet from a cough from the affected person	108	47	13	8	3.45	.820		**
11	COVID 19 is transmitted through droplets from a sneeze from affected person.	55	67	22	32	2.82	1.068		**
12	COVID 19 is transmitted when a person touch a contaminated objected and touch his/her respiratory organs namely the eyes, nose and mouth	71	74	19	13	3.15	.886		**
13	COVID 19 is transmitted in unhygienic environment	65	56	23	30	2.90	1.085		**
14	COVID19 can be transmitted through pet	88	57	9	12	3.31	.855		**

**agreed, *disagreed at 2.50 criterion mean

The above table showed the mean and standard deviation of respondents on mode of transmission. The study indicated that students agreed that all the items are factors that transmit COVID 19.

Table 3: Respondents on the symptoms of COVID-19

S/N		SA	A	D	SD	Mean	SD	Crit Mean	Remark
15	Cough	91	46	29	10	3.24	.926	2.50	**
16	Fever	102	60	8	6	3.47	.740		**
17	Shortness of breath	99	53	19	5	3.40	.793		**
18	Fatigue	71	63	9	33	2.98	1.100		**
19	Sore throat	84	34	17	41	2.91	1.288		**
20	Muscle pain	45	38	36	57	2.40	1.186		*

**agreed, *disagreed at 2.50 criterion mean

The table above showed the mean and standard deviation of respondents on the symptoms of COVID 19. The study

indicated that the students affirmed all the items as a symptom of COVID 19 except no 20 (muscle pain).

Table 4: Respondents on the mode of curbing the spread of COVID-19

S/N		SA	A	D	SD	Mean	SD	Crit Mean	Remark
21.	Closing. interstate movement	64	43	29	40	2.74	1.186	2.50	**
22.	Testing Nigerians citizens	90	24	38	24	3.02	1.131		**
23.	Isolation of victims, suspected cases and those that have travel outside the country.	118	38	15	5	3.53	.770		**
24.	Constant washing of hands	125	37	5	9	3.58	.782		**
25.	Adhering to social distancing/ physical distancing	130	32	6	8	3.61	.762		**
26.	Wearing of nose masks	125	37	7	7	3.59	.750		**
27.	Avoiding crowded environment	132	30	6	8	3.63	.761		**
28.	The use of hand sanitizers	130	38	4	4	3.67	.636		**
29.	Closing all public gatherings.	132	31	7	6	3.64	.719		**
30.	Avoid shaking hands.	133	33	4	6	3.66	.690		**

**agreed, *disagreed at 2.50 criterion mean

The table above showed the mean and standard deviation of respondents on the mode of curbing COVID-19. The study indicated that the students agreed that all the items are measures of curbing the spread of COVID-19.

Discussion of findings

Concerning on the knowledge of COVID-19, the finding of the study indicated that the majority of the respondents are aware and knowledgeable about COVID-19. The responds of the majority of people also indicated that it was the sin of the people that resulted to the epidemic. This position is in agreement with the study conducted by Olapegba, et al (2020) which suggest that government need to create more awareness, else the populace will only resort to prayer without adhering to protocols that will lead to the containment of the virus.

The study also revealed that a large proportion of the respondents agreed on the knowledge of the mode of transmission. The respondents agreed that the virus are transmitted through the droplets from affected person through coughing, sneezing and touching a contaminated object and touch the respiratory organs.

Again, in relation to the knowledge of the symptoms of COVID-19, the study revealed that large proportion of the respondents agreed that cough, fever, shortness of breath, fatigue and sore throat are all symptoms of COVID -19. This is in consistent with the finding of Mayo Clinic, (2020), that the symptoms of COVID-19 include fever, cough, shortness of breath and sore throat. But it is necessary to mention that the list is not exhaustive because there are others symptoms not captured in the study.

Furthermore, regarding on the knowledge o the mode of containing the COVID-19, the study shown that a large number of respondents agreed on the mode of containing the virus namely the regular washing of hands and the use of alcohol based hand sanitizer, adopting social distancing, covering of nose and mouth with face mask, avoiding going to overcrowded places. The result is in consonant with the recommendations of World Health Organization (WHO, 2020).

Limitation of the study

The limitation of the study is hinges of the fact that the study deals on the selected department of year one students of Ignatius Ajuru University of Education and therefore makes it impossible to make generalization to the entire population of the university. In spite of the limitation, the study is significant because it is able to provide useful information on the knowledge of students on COVID-19. The knowledge acquired in the study will be a spring board in sensitizing the public about the virus and how to curb the spread.

Conclusion

Based on the finding of the study, the researcher concludes that the students are knowledgeable about COVID-19 and it existence in Nigeria. Also, there are high level of awareness on the mode, symptoms and ways of curbing the spread of the virus.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are proffered.

- There is need for creating more awareness about the cause of the virus. The virus is certainly not because of the sins of mankind. This is a dangerous believe that if not corrected will lead to total relegations of the protocols adopted by the World Health Organization in curbing the virus from spreading from one individual to another while depending on God to do the miracle.
- Also there is the need for proper education of the people that they must cover their nose and mouth with face mask not necessary the slogan of wearing face mask.

References

- Ball, P and Maxmen, A. (2020). The epic battle against coronavirus misinformation and conspiracy theories
- Buhari, M. (2020). Presidential address on the extension of COVID 19- pandemic lockdown at the state house Abuja on Monday, 13th April.
- Carlos, W. A., Dale, C. S., Pasnick, C. S. & Jamel, S. (2020). Public health, information Series. *American Thoracic Society*.
- CDC (2019). Symptoms of Coronavirus. <https://www.cdc.gov>
- CDC (2020). CAC updates COVID-19 transmission webpage to clarify <https://www.cdc.gov>
- Cucinotta, D. & Vanello, M. (2020). World Health Organization declares CONVID 19 a pandemic. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov>
- Joyce, K (2020). The long strange history of bill gates population control conspiracy theories
- Kandole A. (2017). Airborne diseases: types, preventions and symptoms. <https://www.medicalnewstoday.com>
- Michelen, M. Jones, N. Stavropoulou, C. (2020). In patient of COVID-19, what are the symptoms and clinical features of mild and moderate cases.
- Nigerian Communication Commission (2020). N.C.C. clears doubt over 5G, COVID-19 and security. [Hpts://ncc.gov.ng](https://ncc.gov.ng)
- Nwaubani, A. T. (2020). Coronavirus: why some Nigerians are gloating about COVID-19
- Ottu, I. F. A., Iorfa, S.K. (2020). A preliminary assessment of novel coronavirus (COVID 19) knowledge and perspective in Nigeria.
- Peretomode, V. (2014). Theories of management. Implications for educational administration. Delta state, university printing press.
- Pillion, G. and Spinelli, A. (2020). How COVID-19 outbreak is impacting colorectal Cancer patients in Italy: along shadow beyond infection.
- Sahin, A. R and Sutcu, K. (2019). Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Outbreak: A Review of the Current Literature. <https://www.who.int>
- Shereen, M. A. Ichan, S. Kazmi, A. Bashir, N. Siddique, R. (2020). COVID-19 infection Origin, transmission, and characteristics of human virus.
- Smith, J. (2020). How did coronavirus get its name? <https://www.fox7austin.com>

- Varela, S. C. (2020). In the Congo, some believe COVID-19 doesn't exist, that is a White man's disease. thediplomatinspain.com
- World Economic Forum (2020). How behavioral science can promote positive actions during COVID-19. <https://www.weforum.org>
- WHO (2019). Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus (MERS-COV) <https://www.who.int>
- WHO (2020). Coronavirus disease (COVID -19) advice for the public. <https://who.int>
- WHO. (2020). Coronavirus disease (convid-19) advice for the public. <https://www.who.int>
- WHO (2020). Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) outbreak. <https://experience.arcgis.com>
- Yang, J., Zheg, Y., Gou, X., Pu, K., Chen, Z., Gua, Q., Ji, R., Wang, H., Zhani, Y. (2020). Prevalence of comorbidities and its effects in COV-2: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *International Journal of Infectious Disease*. 94.