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RESEARCH ARTICLE

EFFECT OF THE PROLONGED LOCKDOWN ON SCHOOLWORK PARTICIPATION IN THE POST COVID-19 ERA

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Abstract

The extended academic disruption occasioned by the deadly coronavirus epidemic undoubtedly created a lacuna in the global education landscape. Indeed, the situation propelled many students to unacademically-related activities for a more extended period. Thus, a growing insinuation seems to suggest that many students are struggling with academic activities in the post-Covid-19 classroom. Therefore, the purpose of the present study was to explore the correlation between the prolonged Covid-19 lockdown and schoolwork participation. One hundred and ninety-five secondary school students were randomly drawn from public and private secondary schools in Anambra State, Nigeria. The participant completed a self-report measure of the Schoolwork Engagement Inventory (Salmela-Aro & Upadaya, 2012). The result showed that prolonged Covid-19 lockdown positively correlated with schoolwork participation. Thus, it is concluded that the lengthy lockdown is a significant predictor of schoolwork participation. The research implications and conclusion are discussed.

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Introduction: -

Over the years, the educational landscape of Nigeria has experienced varying disruptions in its academic calendar, usually as a result of incessant strike action (Olusegun Ajayi, 2014). Perhaps, the recent pause in the education calendar following the global health challenge of Covid-19 was extraordinary. The World Health Organization had referred to the deadly coronavirus as a communicable disease with a high rate of contamination (Chaurasia & Pal, 2020). Perhaps, the virus was widely reported to have originated from the Republic of China and was considered a global health crisis (Dhall & Singh, 2020). The advent of the deadly disease disrupted the global movement for a period of time. Creating unprecedented socio-economic and public health challenges (Hancher-Rauch et al., 2021) and led to a universal lockdown. The diseases led to an unimaginable loss of human life and significantly impacted mental health (Mancini, 2020). Undoubtedly, the prolonged lockdown created a gap in global activities, with the education sector being among the most affected.

Statement from the Global Education Monitoring Report (2020) indicated that more than a billion students in over 188 countries of the world were reported to have been affected by the shutting of the education sector due to the epidemic. Accordingly, the pandemic disrupted academic activities in diverse ways, such as the graduation period (Daniel, 2020). Indeed, the student was among the worst affected by the pandemic. Numerous researchers have highlighted the challenges of the pandemic on the education systems (Adebisi et al., 2020; Almazova et al., 2020;

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Balakrishnan, 2020; Ifijeh & Yusuf, 2020; Leacock & Warrican, 2020; Oyediran et al., 2020; Stepanović, 2020). The widespread of the disease had triggered a measure that propelled discontinuity in education.

Accordingly, in compliance with the universally recommended lockdown, Nigeria's educational system was shutdown (Lawal et al., 2020; Oladipo et al., 2020). Indeed, online learning was substituted for conventional classroom studies. However, there was concern about students' readiness to embrace e-learning as an alternative (Nwagwu, 2020). More so, researchers (e.g., Adanikin et al., 2020; Ebelogu et al., 2021; Hassan et al., 2021; Igbokwe et al., 2020; Kola & Opeyemi, 2020; Philomina et al., 2020) had pointed out power instability, high internet subscription costs, inadequate internet access, among other factors as the challenges of adopting e-learning in Nigeria. Accordingly, Eze et al. (2020) noted that organizational and environmental-related factors likely influence e-learning as an alternative. Previous studies have underrated the use of e-learning in the Nigeria educational context (see., Aboderin, 2015; Adeyeye, 2019; Ajadi et al., 2008; Ali, 2014; Bugi, 2012; Folorunso et al., 2006; Kamba, 2009; Kuliya & Usman, 2021; Nwegbu et al., 2011; Odunayo & Izu, 2013). Nevertheless, many students were left out of online learning due to factors highlighted in the literature. Unfortunately, these disadvantaged students spent the entire lockdown period in activities other than education, which impacted their academic interest, motivation, memory, and overall schoolwork participation.

Schoolwork participation is operationalized as the overall period dedicated to academic-related activities, such as note-taking, completion of homework, participation in classes, general connectedness, peer collaborations, and extracurricular involvement (Appleton et al., 2006; Fredricks et al., 2004; Jimerson et al., 2003). These are implicated in anticipated outcomes (Hu et al., 2007). Schoolwork participation requires cognitive, affective, and behavioral responses to in-class and out-of-class activities (Gunuc, 2014). Undeniably, the lockdown period had affected students' engagement in schoolwork. A wide intimation suggests that most students in secondary schools in Anambra State exhibit an increased decline in schoolwork participation. Therefore, the present study is aimed to determine the correlation between the prolonged Covid-19 lockdown and schoolwork participation among secondary school students in Anambra State, Nigeria. Thus, it is hypothesized that the protracted Covid-19 lockdown would positively correlate with schoolwork participation among secondary school students in Anambra state.

Method:-

The study adopted a correlational design. The study population included secondary school students in the Anambra State of Nigeria. In collaboration with the school teachers, secondary school students comprising males and females from both junior and senior classes were randomly drawn from public and private secondary schools in Onitsha and Awka metropolis. The students were briefed on the research purpose and were urged to participate in the study. A total of 212 consented to partake in the study and were, thus, handed the study questionnaires. The questionnaires were filled and retrieved on the spot. However, out of the 212 questionnaires distributed, 17 copies were supplied incorrectly and were discarded. Therefore, only the adequately filled questionnaires (195) were subjected to statistical analysis.

Measures:-

Schoolwork participation was measured using the Schoolwork Engagement Inventory originally developed by Salmela-Aro and Upadaya (2012) and validated for use in the Nigeria context by Enwereuzor et al. (2016).

Result:-

Hypothesis testing

It is assumed in the present study that the prolonged Covid-19 lockdown would positively correlate with schoolwork participation among secondary school students in Anambra State. A simple linear regression analysis was conducted to test this association. The investigation revealed that the prolonged lockdown statistically correlated with schoolwork participation at $F(1, 193), 60.035, P < .000$, which means that the study's assumption that the Covid-19 stay at home is associated with the decline in schoolwork participation was supported.

Table 1:- The table shows the simple linear regression analysis conducted to examine the relationship between the prolonged lockdown and schoolwork participation.

| | 95% CI for B | | | SEB | β | R^2 | t | Sig |
|----------|--------------|------|------|-----|---------|-------|-------|------|
| | B | LL | UL | | | | | |
| Constant | 2.35 | 2.09 | 2.62 | .14 | | | 17.59 | .000 |
| SP | -.48 | -.60 | -.40 | .06 | -.477 | .612 | -7.83 | .000 |

Note. SP= Schoolwork Participation; B = Unstandardized regression coefficient; CI = Confident Interval; LL = Lower Limit; UL = Upper Limit; SEB = Standardized error of the coefficient; β = Standardized coefficient; R^2 = Coefficient of determination. *P<.000.

Discussion:-

The purpose of the present study was to investigate the prolonged Covid-19 lockdown as a factor that contributes to the variation in students' schoolwork participation in the post-pandemic classroom. The data from a sample of secondary school students in Anambra State, Nigeria, was analyzed using a simple linear regression model. The result revealed a statistically positive interaction between the prolonged Covid-19 lockdown and schoolwork participation. Thus, the result affirmed the research hypothesis, which presumed a positive correlation between the variables, and corroborated Clopton (2020), who noted that the global pandemic is triggering relapse in many children who suddenly ask for help with tasks they have previously done by themselves. Thus, indicating that most learners could be besieged with learning loss and coping challenges. Accordingly, the result supports the findings of previous studies that established a positive interaction between prolonged academic break and decline in academic commitment (Kuhfeld et al., 2020; Sevilla Vallejo & Ceballos Marón, 2020), including reading performance (Alexander et al., 2016; Brooke, 2016; Donovan, 2010; Gilbert Baker, 2018; Kent et al., 2011; Nicholson & Tiru, 2019; Pindiprolu & Marks, 2020; Slates et al., 2012; Turner & Tse, 2014; von Hippel, 2019).

The study's finding entails that the prolonged lockdown could have negatively affected students' interest, motivation, and attitudes to school activities. Similarly, previous results have correlated schoolwork participation with motivation, vigor, and dedication to classwork (Salmela-Aro et al., 2009; Salmela-Aro & Upadaya, 2012; Schaufeli et al., 2002). Thus, motivation denotes the drive characterized by a high energy level and zeal towards learning. On the other hand, vigor represents the willingness to devote oneself to studies, including mental flexibility. Accordingly, dedication is demonstrated in a favorable cognitive attitude towards studying in general, including interest in academic work and encouragement, passion, and the ability to confront academic challenges (Salmela-Aro & Upadyaya, 2014). Relatedly, research has implicated schoolwork engagement in educational achievement (Chang, 2012; Deci & Ryan, 2000; Dogan, 2015; Lee, 2014; Skinner & Pitzer, 2012; Valle et al., 2016; Wonglorsaichon et al., 2014). Nevertheless, Enwereuzor et al. (2016) pointed out that disrupting schoolwork participation undermines students' achievement. Additionally, the prolonged Covid-19 lockdown allowed most disadvantaged students to engage in the e-learning module the opportunity to participate in activities dissimilar to academics for a more extended period. Thus, it is difficult for many students to readjust to their academics after a long absence from school.

The implication of the study

The current study has revealed the prolonged lockdown as a contributory factor in schoolwork participation, which have implication in the students' academic performance. The result provides valuable data to counselors, teachers, parents, and the education stakeholders in the post-Covid-19 policies and strategies. However, specific challenges limit the study's generalization. For example, the sample size and methodology prevent overly generalizing the finding. Nevertheless, it is recommended that educators and policymakers prepare for many students who have noticeably relapsed educationally owing to the extended lockdown.

Conclusion:-

This study was conducted to ascertain the correlation between the prolonged Covid-19 lockdown and schoolwork participation. The result showed a positive correlation between the lockdown and schoolwork participation. Thus, it is concluded that the extended stay at home occasioned by the deadly coronavirus is a positive determinant of the variation in schoolwork participation among the secondary school students in Anambra state. Significantly, the study

contributes to the literature by revealing that prolonged lockdown correlates with schoolwork participation in the post-Covid-19 era.

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