



Effects of COVID-19 Outbreak on Students' Education in Secondary Schools in Ikungi District in Singida Region, Tanzania

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Abstract: The study investigated Effects of COVID-19 Outbreak on Students' Education in Secondary Schools in Ikungi district, Singida Region. The study objectives were to; assess the effects of COVID-19 outbreak on students' education in secondary schools and determine the intervening measures to the effects of COVID-19 outbreak on students' education in secondary schools in Singida Region. The study adopted descriptive survey design. The sample size of 5 school heads purposively sampled, 45 teachers and 80 students selected by simple and stratified random sampling techniques from private and public secondary schools were involved in the study. Questionnaire, interview guide and observation checklist were used for data collection. Research experts evaluated the instruments to determine content validity. Credibility of qualitative data was ascertained by involving multiple analysis. Dependability was established through detailed reporting of the research process. Reliability (QT at $r = 0.85$ and QS at $r = 0.85$) of the questionnaires were tested in pilot study and found using Cronbach alpha coefficient. Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics in the SPSS version 22 and results were presented in tables of frequencies and percentages. Qualitative data was analyzed alongside research questions. The study revealed that inadequate syllabus coverage, failure to cover topics in time and increase of studying hours after re-opening the school were the effects of COVID-19 outbreak on students' education in secondary schools. The study recommended academic programmes that can be accessed by students both in urban and rural areas during pandemics.

Keywords: Corona, Disease, Outbreak, Students and Education

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1. Introduction

The outbreak of Corona Virus Disease (COVID) at the end of the year 2019 affected all the sectors worldwide, including the education sector (Nafisah et al., 2021). The first case of COVID-19 was reported on the 9th of December, 2019 in Wuhan, China and continued to spread

around the world causing massive illnesses and deaths (Huangetal, 2020). In January 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) announced the outbreak of COVID-19 worldwide. Two months later, in March 2020, the disease was declared as a pandemic. COVID-19 threw its immense impact on all areas of life. It affected communication with each other, social life, rituals, and ways of worships and even way of dressing, with wearing

a face mask becoming a must and a necessary piece of attire (WHO, 2020). The field of education was no exception. Schools and universities found themselves compelled to adopt new ways of teaching, as students were unable to come to classes and share the space and place with other colleagues. Almost all educational institutions applied distant or virtual learning, that is, online learning as a substitute to face-to-face learning.

Up to August, 2020 the updated data indicated 21,836,828 COVID-19 cases around the world which included 773,196 deaths and 14,568,432 recovered (WHO, 2020). According to UNESCO (2020), COVID-19 pandemic has affected the provision and delivery of education in almost every country in the world. Moreover, Faustine (2019) points out that COVID-19 has affected both the economic and social sectors, including health and education. In the education sector, more than 90% of learners from elementary to university were affected across the world due to the pandemic. This is due to the closure of learning institutions mandated in different countries to render education services and loss of jobs on the side of parents (Masonbrink & Hurley, 2020; Putra et al., 2020; Tarkar, 2020; Singhal, 2020).

On 16 March, 2020, the Ministry of Health of Tanzania announced the first case of COVID-19 (Cao et al., 2020). The victim happened to be a female traveler aged 46 years who departed the country on 3 March, 2020 to Belgium and had visited Denmark and Sweden between the dates 5 and 13 March 2020. On the 15 March 2020, the lady flew back to Tanzania from Belgium and arrived at the Kilimanjaro International Airport (KIA) at 1600 hours using the Rwandan airplane (WHO, 2020). As of other countries, Tanzania had also prepared for the reception of travelers from abroad in terms of diagnostics and trained health care providers. Visitors were effectively screened for the symptoms of COVID-19 at the airport (Rose, 2020).

On May, 21st2020, the President of Tanzania announced that universities and advanced level would reopen by June 1st 2020, while secondary and primary school did not reopen until 29th June, 2020, after three months of closure due to the outbreak of corona virus. It was until the pronouncement by president that Tanzania reopened primary and secondary schools, being the first country in East Africa to reopen schools (TIE, 2020). Therefore, the state of the emergence of COVID-19 phase two in 2021, February, was pronounced and the necessary precautions were observed. Teaching and learning process proceeded. However, it is important to evaluate the impact of this phenomenon on different aspects of education industry including students' education. In whatever case, the post-COVID-19 assessment remains a hot topic of research by academicians, practitioners and policy makers alike as one of the resilience strategies for recovery of the education sector elsewhere and in Tanzania as well. This has prompted a need to carry out a study in order to ascertain

how the pandemic affected the delivery and acquisition of education among students.

1.1 Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:

- i. What are the effects of COVID-19 outbreak on students' education in secondary schools in Ikungi district in Singida Region?
- ii. What are the intervening measures to the effects of COVID-19 outbreak on students' education in secondary schools in Singida Region?

2. Literature Review

The theoretical and empirical literature was reviewed with reference to research objectives. This study was grounded on the Social Impact Theory developed by Latene in the late 1990s (Hagger, 2015). The theory described social impact as a phenomenon in which people or organizations affect each other in social situations. According to the theory, the daily running and operations of one organization can affect the operation and running of another organization. Also the change of a social phenomenon can affect the running of an institution or organization. In this study, the eruption of COVID-19 at the end of the year 2019 was seen as a social phenomenon whose effects were evidenced in the provision of social services including education.

The social impact theory upholds that the greater the intensity of the change in one factor or organization, the greater the impact is likely to be observed in the second factor or organization (Lashayo & Johar, 2018). This implies that the greater the change the huge the impact would be on the other factor or organization. Relating the theory to the current study, the outbreak of COVID-19 resulted into the closing of all the learning institutions including secondary schools for at least three months (March, 2020 to July, 2020). During this time no learning was formally conducted in the schools and students had to go back to their home as a mechanism of containing the spread of the virus. As long as the schools were closed, there was likelihood that some students may have been affected. Therefore, the theory helped the researcher to find out the impact of COVID-19 to the provision of education.

2.1 Application of the Theory to the Current Study

This theory supports and promotes social learning as an important factor in forming one's own decisions since observing other people makes up a large part of our daily experiences. The point is that people should not commit to a career path, but act, perform, and learn. Based on the resulting experiences, our paths can be adapted and

changed. For instance, the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic changed our way of living by observing social distance, hand washing and wearing face mask. Therefore, the theory holds that the world, our work, and individually, are subject to constant change through learning and experience. Our path through work and life should also be able to change flexibly to address this. Therefore, the theory will help the researcher to determine the effects of COVID-19 pandemic on students' education in Ikungi district. The researcher therefore assessed the extent to which the outbreak of the disease affected the delivery of education to the students in community secondary schools in Ikungi district, Tanzania.

2.2 The Effects of COVID-19 Outbreak on Students' Education in Secondary Schools

According to Cabrera (2019), in order to restrain infections, different countries in the world launched emergency policy initiatives based on suspension of classes and the closure of education centers to continue with teaching activities at home through the use of information and communication technologies. A study conducted by Reimers (2020) showed a dismissal or limited learning opportunities among students in Brazil, Japan, USA and Russia, where students compromised learning at the expense of other home related activities during the lockdown period. One particular issue that the COVID-19 pandemic has shown is the need for increased international and global perspectives to analyze the various impacts of pandemics in the short medium and long term. Several higher education organizations and associations, including student associations, and other organizations involved in higher education are conducting surveys with specific focus on a region or on specific issues arising.

The study conducted by Anderson (2020) found that children were infected with and affected by corona virus. In the United States, 93,605 students tested positive for COVID-19, and it was reported that 42% were Hispanic/Latino, 32% were non-Hispanic White, and 17% were non-Hispanic Black, emphasizing a disproportionate effect for children of color. Lodhi (2021) noted that COVID-19 infection itself is not the only issue that affected children's health during the pandemic. School-based health care and school-based meals were lost when virtual learning was adopted and children of lower socio-economic class were more severely affected by these losses. Although some districts were able to deliver school meals, school-based health care is a primary source of health care for many children and left some chronic conditions unchecked during the pandemic.

In a related study by Coe et al. (2020) in Cameroon, the introduction of remote, online and distance learning caused teachers being asked to deliver their lessons

through online platforms. However, the challenge experienced was that not all teachers and students own smart phones or computers, not all are knowledgeable in the use of online platforms. In addition, there is no access to the internet in remote areas, and, in general, broadband costs are very high, so not everyone can afford it.

The government of Tanzania and other stakeholders took steps in equipping schools with computers, supporting initiatives in installing virtual learning platforms, as well as supporting teachers with technological, pedagogical and content knowledge and skills for ICT integration (Mtebe & Raphael, 2017). Despite government's emphasis to higher learning institutions to effectively harness ICT applications in enhancing the learning environment, E-learning systems in general are still at infant stage in developing countries, including Tanzania (Mwakyusa and Mwalyagile 2016). This is due to technological challenges such as electricity connectivity to all secondary schools and unreliable internet services.

A study done by Goodman et al., (2021) indicated that most educational institutions around the world cancelled face to face instruction and moved to remote learning and teaching in March 2020 in an attempt to contain the spread of COVID-19. Parts of the (or the whole) formal education system did not re-open this academic year in some countries, whereas in others (parts of) the formal education system progressively re-opened.

2.3 The Intervening Measures to the Effects of COVID-19 Outbreak on Students' Education in Secondary Schools

Post-COVID-19 era has been marked by recovery and resilience strategies in education sector which has been dominated by Emergency Remote Teaching (or Emergency Remote Learning). This encompasses the idea that courses are offered through distance learning in response to a crisis, rather than having been planned or designed for the purpose of the normal distance education, and it refers to a abrupt transition from classroom-based teaching to distance education and/or virtual classrooms (UNICEF, 2020). Readiness in embracing Virtual Learning Education (VLE) systems through mobile platforms in higher education can be linked to willingness by students on the one hand, lecturers and institutional authorities on the other (Mwandosya et al., 2020).

UNESCO (2020), as part of advancing the Sustainable Development Goal of promoting wellbeing within schools, has developed strategic priorities, which are part of a comprehensive school health approach that encompasses policy and systems, skills-based health education, safe learning environments and links to health services. As examination of the available literature on well-being within African contexts shows, the

understanding of and interventions related to well-being within the school system remain adhoc, uncoordinated, sparse, and largely addressing perceived vulnerable groups, mostly outside of the school system. While many of these reports and studies provide critical starting points for understanding the contextual realities of school-age children within these contexts, efforts at enhancing their wellbeing remain inadvertently limited by the lack of both data and co-ordination of existing interventions.

Burns (2019) on focus on the most vulnerable pointed out that it is known that in many prolonged conflicts or crisis, majority who will be affected are children and young people who will be classified as vulnerable (Government of United Kingdom, 2020). For instance in Uganda, schools were closed for over two years and girls who were out of school were extremely occupied in house hold chores, boys from poor families and the children with disabilities could not access a fairly and equitably education. Therefore, there is need for a dedicated focus on protecting the most vulnerable and increase additional resources to support them (UK, 2020)

According Santally (2019), government and school owners should continue to motivate the teachers by paying them good salaries regarding the important work they under take before, during and after the pandemic. Teacher's motivation is essential factor for supporting them during and after crisis. Schools should continuously provide teachers with remote professional development opportunities to support schools recovery of the academic programmes. The government and the school owners are required to invest heavily on digital infrastructure in order to finance successfully education digital service platform to enable every student to use digital means to acquire education. This way, it reduced inequality and the gap could be reduced.

World Bank (2019), a critical challenge of the response to the rapidly evolving crisis is providing up-to-date and evidence-based information to countries to support them in making the difficult decisions they face in addressing the COVID-19 pandemic.

Education technology can be a powerful tool to implement the expansion and accessibility of digital learning platforms, including radio, TV and Online learning resources (which is here to stay). There is need to use data to identify and help at-risk children, personalize learning, and improved service delivery (World Bank, 2020). UNESCO (2020) suggests the use of a blended learning approach in traditional classroom in order to manage the circumstances caused by the pandemic as a result of COVID-1. In a context in which schools have been closed almost in 185 countries have caused the governments to order the transition to the e-training of the students and teachers on the use of different technological tools, in order to adapt the different elements of the curriculum to the new context of a pandemic. Education sector is facing a change in paradigm in which online training through ICT has ceased to be optional in the teaching methodology but

has become a necessity in this time of pandemic in order to continue with students learning process (Naresh, 2020). The possibilities of technology and innovations will assist in making sure learning continues to be possible for many children who may be out of the school due to various reasons For instance, in Tanzania and other low income countries, TV and radio broadcasting can be cheaper for many children to access than use of mobile phones through WhatsApp, online applications and normal text messages. Distributing of materials like study guides and text books could also be an important remedial measure (Barattucci, 2019). However, digital learning, because of certain practical subjects needs a face to face tuition.

3. Methodology

The study adopted descriptive survey design. The design allowed the researcher to collect data on events of COVID-19 outbreak that had taken place (Creswell, 2012). Therefore, respondents were given time to describe their experience regarding the effects of COVID-19 outbreak on students' education. The target population of the study included 35 heads of schools, 564 teachers, and 12,425 from form four students. The sample size of 5 school heads, 45 teachers and 80students in private and public secondary schools were involved in the study. School heads were selected using purposive sampling technique while for teachers and students the researcher employed simple random and stratified random sampling techniques. Questionnaires, interview guide and observation checklist were used for data collection. The research experts evaluated the instruments to determine content validity. Credibility of qualitative data was ascertained by involving multiple analysis. Dependability was established through detailed reporting of the research process. Reliability of the questionnaires were tested in pilot study and Cronbach alpha coefficient was found to correlate for QT at $r = 0.85$ and QS at $r = 0.85$. Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics in the SPSS version 22 and results were presented in charts, tables of frequencies and percentages. Qualitative data was analyzed alongside research questions.

4. Results and Discussion

The findings were discussed with regard to research objectives.

4.1 The Findings on the Effects of COVID-19 Outbreak on Students' Education in Secondary Schools in Ikungi District in Singida Region

In identifying the effects of COVID-19 outbreak on students' education in secondary schools in Ikungi district

in Singida Region, 80 respondents were given questionnaires. The findings from respondents were summarized in Table 1.

Table 1: The Effects of COVID-19 Outbreak on Students' Education in Secondary Schools in Ikungi district in Singida Region (n=80)

Students' responses	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Closure of schools	34(42.5%)	40(50.0%)	1(1.25%)	2(2.5%)	3(3.75%)
Early pregnancies among girls students	26(32.5%)	44(55%)	3(3.75%)	5(6.25%)	2(2.5%)
Early marriage among girls students	33(41.2%)	27(33.7%)	10(12.5%)	5(6.25%)	5(6.25%)
Poor academic performance	36(45%)	24(30%)	7(8.75%)	3(3.75%)	10(12.5%)
Economic constrains	19(23.7%)	49(61.2%)	2(2.5%)	5(6.25%)	5(6.5%)
Lack of basic needs	31(38.7%)	38(47.5%)	1(1.25%)	7(8.75%)	3(3.75%)

Source: Field data (2022)

Study results indicate that about 42.5% of the respondents strongly agreed that COVID-19 outbreak in the year 2019-2020 negatively affected students' education due to closure of schools whereby majority of students fail to progress with their studies while 50.0% of students agreed COVID-19 outbreak affected students' education, meaning that after the closure of schools according to the order by the government, majority of students were sent back to their homes. This finding is in agreement with the Social Impact Theory developed by Latene (Hagger, 2015). According to the theory, the change of a social phenomenon can affect the running of an institution or organization. In this study, the eruption of COVID-19 at the end of 2019 was seen as a social phenomenon whose effects were evidenced in the provision of social services, including education. However, 1.25% of the respondents were neutral followed by 2.5% of the respondents who disagreed that closure of schools had no negative effect on students' education and finally 3.75% of the respondents strongly disagreed about the point of school closure as result of COVID-19 outbreak.

During the onset of COVID-19 outbreak majority of girl students were victims of early pregnancies. From the findings, 32.5% of the respondents strongly agreed, while 55% agreed as well. The respondents reported that COVID-19 resulted in early pregnancies in the female students because they were just at home without better security and care from their parents. A study conducted by Reimers (2020) showed a dismissal or limited learning opportunities among students in Brazil, Japan, USA and Russia, where students compromised learning at the expense of other home related activities during the lockdown period. This resulted in misconduct and abuse of their free time as most students resorted to misuse of social media and other means of social platforms thus

early pregnancies were encountered. In this regard, 3.75% of the respondents withheld their views about early pregnancy as a result of COVID-19. Finally, 6.25% of the respondents disagreed at the same time 2.5% strongly disagreed concerning the point of early pregnancies due to COVID 19 outbreak.

COVID-19 effects led to multiple problems to the female students, including early marriage among girl students whereby 41.2% of the respondents strongly agreed followed by 33.7% of the respondents who agreed that majority of female students become wives of people because majority of their time, they were not in school for studies. Even though the evidence is not conclusive, research suggests that students with a migrant background, and those who are socio-economically disadvantaged, would be slower learners and vulnerable to external forces such as early marriage. Nevertheless, 12.5% of the respondents were neutral only 6.25% of the respondents disagreed with the point, followed by 6.25% of the respondents who strongly disagreed as well.

During the onset of COVID-19 in the year 2019, all of secondary schools within Tanzania were closed so as to protect both teachers and students from massive infection of the pandemic. Therefore, 45% of the respondents strongly agreed that majority of students were faced by poor academic performance because by the time they were at home, they did not get any chance for tuitions or engaging themselves in meaningful activities due to certain health restrictions such as avoiding crowding of people. Similarly, 30% of the respondents also were in agreement. The findings receive support from a study by Lindiner et al., (2020) that reported weakness in distance education in terms of their secondary students' inability to manage their time wisely and work independently hence

poor academic performance. Nonetheless, 8.75% of the respondents were neutral followed by other 3.75% of the respondents who disagreed, and finally 12.5% of the respondents strongly disagreed that poor academic achievement was as a result of COVID-19.

COVID-19 outbreak brought a lot of problems worldwide Tanzania included; meaning that majority of people suffered a lot of heavy economic losses, job loss and closures of business due to the consequences brought by the pandemic. In this regard, 23.7% of the respondents strongly agreed that COVID 19 outbreak worsen their economic constrains because of severe restrictions in and out of Tanzania. This point was also supported by 61.2% of the respondents. In support of this finding, Social Impact Theory developed by Latene in the late 1990s described social impact as a phenomenon in which people or organizations affect each other in social situations (Hagger, 2015). According to the theory, the daily running and operations of one organization can affect the operation and running of another organization. Also, the change of a social phenomenon can affect the running of an institution or organization. In this study, the eruption of COVID-19 at the end of the year 2019 affect the running of private and public institutions thereby causing job loss. For instance, tourism industry was negatively affected, hotels were closed and parents lost their job hence making their

children vulnerable economically at school. On the other hand 2.5% of the respondents were neutral on their response followed by 6.25% who disagreed and 6.5% who strongly disagreed.

In addition, Tanzania, specifically in Ikungi district, found in Singida region, the effect of COVID 19 was evidenced as secondary school students lacked their basic needs. This sub-item received approval from 38.7% of the respondents who strongly agreed followed by 47.5% of the respondents who agreed as well. On the contrary, the findings from the field result indicate that 1.25% of the respondents were neutral followed by 8.75% of the respondents who disagreed and 3.75% who strongly disagreed.

4.2 Intervening Measures to the Effects of COVID-19 Outbreak on Students' Education in Secondary Schools in Ikungi District in Singida Region

In identifying the remedial measures on the Effects of COVID-19 Outbreak on Students' Education in Secondary Schools in Ikungi district Singida region, the respondents gave their views as indicated in table 2.

Table 2: The Intervening Measures to the Effects of COVID-19 Outbreak on Students' Education in Secondary Schools in Ikungi District in Singida Region

Teachers' responses	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Adoption of virtual learning	20(44.4%)	17(37.7%)	3(6.6%)	2(4.4%)	3(6.6%)
Provision of enough computers in schools	25(55.5%)	15(33.3%)	1(2.2%)	2(4.4%)	2(4.4%)
Reliable electricity connectivity in secondary schools	16(35.5%)	24(53.3%)	2(4.4%)	1(2.2%)	2(4.4%)
Provision of internet services	15(33.3%)	20(44.4%)	5(11.1%)	3(6.6%)	2(4.4%)
Advocating for continue education after early pregnancies/delivery	19(42.2%)	20(44.4%)	2(4.4%)	1(2.2%)	3(6.6%)
Parental awareness through sensitization	18(40%)	16(35.5%)	2(4.4%)	5(11.1%)	4(8.8%)
Timely government financial support to schools	20(44.4%)	17(37.7%)	3(6.6%)	3(6.6%)	2(4.4%)
Need for economic activities that will support parents	14(31.1%)	26(57.7%)	1(2.2%)	3(6.6%)	1(2.2%)
Improved health care system	21(46.6%)	17(37.7%)	2(4.4%)	2(4.4%)	3(6.6%)
Sensitization of political class to give support to schools	15(33.3%)	17(37.7%)	5(11.1%)	3(6.6%)	5(11.1%)
Support from the parents	20(44.4%)	19(42.2%)	3(6.6%)	1(2.2%)	2(4.4%)

Source: Field data (2022)

Majority (82.1%) of respondents (teachers) were in agreement that as result of COVID-19 outbreak secondary education in Ikungi district Singida region become negatively affected therefore the mitigating measure of adopting virtual learning was seen to be positive step towards students' education. Only 6.6% of the respondents remained neutral while 4.4% disagreed followed by 6.6% who also strongly disagreed with the statement on adoption of virtual learning as an important intervening measure.

Additionally, 55.5% of the respondents revealed that provision of enough computers in schools could assist the students in their daily learning, therefore 33.3% of the respondents agreed whereby only 2.2% of the respondents remained neutral. Therefore 4.4% of the respondents disagreed while 4.4%. Respondents strongly disagreed. From the findings, 35.5% revealed that reliable electricity connectivity in secondary schools is one step for the improved academic achievement of students. In this regard, 53.3% of the respondents agreed while 4.4% of the respondents were undecided. Conversely, 2.2% of the

respondents disagreed followed by 4.4% who strongly disagreed to the statement.

The study also revealed that 33.3% of the respondents strongly agreed that there is need for the provision of internet services within secondary schools so as to uplift students' academic achievement post COVID-19. In addition, 44.4% of the respondents agreed as well while 11.1% of the respondents remained neutral. On the contrary, 6.6% of the respondents disagreed followed by 4.4% of the respondents who strongly disagreed as well. According to Owusu-Forrdjour et al., (2020) in Ghana, almost all students were not satisfied with online teaching and learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. Most of the students had problem with internet and technological facilities. In addition, the respondents believed that most of the internet bundles were very expensive and they had financial problems buying internet bundles. Furthermore, the internet from the mobile companies was not stable and could not sustain effective online teaching and learning during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The study revealed that 42.2% of teachers indicated that advocating for continue education after early pregnancies/delivery was seen to be a solution towards those female students who became negatively affected during secondary schools closure as a result of COVID-19 outbreak. Similarly, 44.4% of the respondents agreed while only 13.2% of the respondents held contrary opinion. In support of the current finding, studies conducted in Nigeria revealed that girl child education was negatively affected by COVID-19 outbreak whereby many school-girls died due to failed abortion and many of them dropped from schools due to early pregnancy during the lockdown period (Aruna, 2022; Musa et al., 2021).

About 40% of the respondents strongly agreed that parental awareness through sensitization was a tool for maximum academic support to the students. In this regard, 35.5% of the respondents also agreed. The results indicated that 24.3% of the respondents disagreed with the statement. At an international level, there has been a widespread emphasis on the effective use of ICT in the process of teaching and learning activities in order to meet a demand of education so as to mitigate the shortage of resource persons and the outbreak of pandemics (UNICEF, 2020). The report indicates that parents' support is a vital ingredient in this respect.

The findings also shows that 44.4% of the respondents indicated that timely government financial support to the secondary schools found in Ikungi district is vital so as to boost academic achievement of students regardless of COVID-19 effects. The results also indicated that 37.7% of the respondents agreed while 17.6% of the respondents held contrary opinion. According to Mtebe and Raphael (2017) in a study conducted in Mwanza, Tanzania, the government should increase budget allocation to the ministry of education science and technology for increased capitation grants to schools. This will enable secondary schools to purchase vital ICT equipment.

On the other hand, the responses from open ended questions in the questionnaires identified other effects of COVID-19 outbreak on students' education in secondary schools in Ikungi district in Singida Region as follows; failure to cover topics on time, psychological effects on students such as anxiety, trauma and distress due economic hard times and unfair treatment (sexual harassment) by the society. Similarly, indiscipline cases among fellow students and financial challenges as result of COVID-19 outbreak were reported. Moreover, teachers mentioned academic decline due to COVID-19 outbreak and students' arrogance to their parents.

Regarding the challenges the students faced on their education in secondary schools due to COVID-19 outbreak in Ikungi district, students mentioned absenteeism from home and from school after opening, lack of moral support from teachers and parents, loss of interest in education, lack of support from the government

and lack of guidance and counseling from parents. Besides, teachers identified isolation among students due to keep distance containment measure and incomplete syllabus.

Concerning the possible intervening measures to the effects of COVID-19 outbreak on students' education in secondary schools in Singida Region, teachers identified enhancing safety emergency academic programmes that can be accessed by students both in urban and rural areas, government financial support through emergency budget and implementation of learning recovery programmes and intrinsic motivation from students.

Ingathering qualitative data from school heads (SH) during the interviews in five secondary schools within Ikungi district Singida region, the first question was; what were the effects of COVID-19 outbreak on students' education in secondary schools in Ikungi district in Singida Region?

According to the response from SH1;

Poor academic achievement, lack of syllabus coverage and delay in completion of studies were key effects of COVID-19 outbreak on students' education in secondary schools (Personal interview, 27th April, 2022).

This finding was similarly to that of quantitative data where respondents went further and identified early marriage among girl students and economic constrains to both parents and students as effects of COVID-19 outbreak.

While giving response to the same question, another interviewee put forth the following;

The effects of COVID-19 outbreak on students' education in secondary schools include; delay in completion of studies, low academic achievement, poor upbringing and inadequate syllabus coverage (Personal interview, 27th April, 2022).

The views of SH2 were supported in empirical literature review by Putri & Sutrisno (2022) in a study conducted in Bangladesh. The study reported that, early marriage rose by 13% during COVID-19 pandemic following the long-term closure of schools in the country. Findings from these study show that education for female students was negatively affected as some of them did not return to school after the pandemic due to early marriage and pregnancies.

When the views of SH3 regarding the effects of COVID-19 outbreak on students' education in secondary schools was sought by the researcher, the respondent opined that;

I noticed parental problems in child care. Most parents did not care to make follow up on their children's where about. They were left roaming in the village and

giving little attention to their studies. Similarly, back in school, there was shortage of time in completion of topics which affected students psychologically (Personal interview, 27th April, 2022).

These views were also echoed by SH4 who added that generally most secondary school student exhibited immoral behavior during COVID-19 outbreak. These findings positively resonates with studies conducted in Nigeria that revealed girl child education was negatively affected by COVID-19 outbreak whereby many school-girls died due to failed abortion and many of them dropped from schools due to early pregnancy during the lockdown period (Aruna, 2022; Musa et al., 2021).

On the second question; what challenges did the students face on their education in secondary schools due to COVID-19 outbreak in Ikungi district? According to the SH1;

The increase of studying hours after re-opening the school made teachers to arrive early in school and depart very late causing insecurity threat to both teachers and day scholars. Majority of students faced psychological stress because of COVID-19 effects faced by the students, also there was a delay in completing topics after spending three months at their homes and there was an increase of mortality rate due abortions (Personal interview, 27th April, 2022).

In addition, as observed by SH2 majority of male parents are alcoholic and they rarely found time to make follow up on students' academic performance even during the online studies after school closure. Economic problems among parents and students also accelerated poor performance in student's education as most parents could not afford basic for their students. Financial problem faced by parents resulted in lack of home learning materials by the students during closure.

Finally, on the third question; what are the intervening measures to the effects of COVID-19 outbreak on students' education in secondary schools in Singida Region?

In this regard, SH1 reported that;

The government should ensure that all secondary schools have safety material such as presence of sanitizers and running water for better teaching and learning environment (hygiene) (Personal interview, 28th April, 2022).

Similarly, the school head SH2 respondent that;

The parents of students in Ikungi ward should also buy sanitizers to their children so as to build a safe learning

environment for the students (Personal interview, 28th April, 2022).

Similarly, on the intervening measures to the effects of COVID-19 outbreak on students' education in secondary schools, SH4 and SH5 added that;

The government should ensure that all secondary schools are not closed again but sensitization on how to deal with COVID-19 should be provided to create awareness. Majority of low income parents should engage in small business to get financial income necessary in giving support to their students' education (Personal interview, 28th April, 2022).

4.3 The Findings from the Observation Checklist

The researcher requested from the school heads the details concerning number of early pregnancies among female students. The researcher found that three female students were found to be pregnant. Moreover, the researcher made an observation towards the academic performance of the students after the opening the school during post COVID-19. There was a slight decrease in performance, particularly for the female students who were found to be pregnant.

On economic constraints on the part of parents and students, the researcher noticed new admissions in school records and on further inquiry the researcher was informed they were transferred from private school because their parents lost their jobs hence could not afford the cost of private secondary education. Consequently, the researcher noticed minimal elements of parents' support to school management and students.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

Based on the findings, the study concluded that the government should ensure that all secondary schools are not closed again but education system should adopt alternative teaching approaches that can be accessed by students, both in urban and rural areas such as virtual learning to mitigate on the effects of pandemics. Similarly, majority of low income parents should engage in small business to get money to support their students' education.

5.2 Recommendations

Following the findings and conclusions of this study the researcher made the following recommendations:

- i. Teachers in all public secondary schools and private secondary schools should improve teaching methodologies in case of outbreaks such as COVID-19 in order to mitigate the effects of such pandemics.
- ii. Teachers and parents as education stakeholders should be very closer to the students and give them the necessary guidance and counseling in the wake of pandemics.
- iii. The government should provide financial support through emergency budget that will enhance the implementation of learning recovery programmes in secondary schools.

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