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Article

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ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS OF PRIVATE SCHOOL TEACHERS IN GOMBE LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF GOMBE STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study assessed the impact of covid-19 pandemic on socio-economic status of private school teachers in Gombe Local Government Area of Gombe State, Nigeria. The sample size of 384 respondents was determined using purposive sampling procedure and the data obtained were analysed using multinomial logit regression technique. On the whole, the results revealed that age, other jobs engaged in, and palliatives received during lockdown have positively and significantly impacted on the socio-economic status of private school teachers in the study area. However, educational qualification is found to have positive but insignificant impact. Contrarily, marital status and family size were reported to impact the socio-economic status of private school teachers negatively and significantly in the period of covid-19 lockdown. Based on these findings, the study recommends the adoption savings culture and diversification of income sources by private school teachers as a key to reducing economic hardships in a period of uncertainties and difficulties. Also, private school proprietors should be compassionate to their teachers in life-challenging periods through institutionalizing teachers' welfare packages and establishing functional welfare committee.

Keywords: Covid-19, Pandemic, Socio-Economic Status, Private Schools, Teachers, Lockdown, Gombe.

Introduction

The outbreak of covid-19 pandemic has unequivocally resulted to distressing damages on people's social and economic conditions across the world. This is largely intensified by stiff measures, notably lockdown of all socio-economic activities, adopted by governments with a view to halt the spread of the virus. However, the consequences of these measures on social and economic welfare of people across different sectors and fields of endeavours have

underscored the importance of improved health status on individuals' productivity and economic development. This strongly supported Luft's (1978) analysis on the relationship between health and welfare that "while numerous people fall into poverty due to ill-health, certain number of individuals may be sick solely because of being poor". This assertion has demonstrated how covid-19 pandemic subjected many people to harsh economic conditions, while at the same time making few individuals and firms to experience economic gains from the disruptions caused by the pandemic. For instance, pharmaceutical companies were reported to benefit significantly from the covid-19 turmoil notably those producing antibiotics, vaccines, facemasks, sanitizers, and other essentials products (Modibbo, Inuwa and Sani, 2024).

On the contrary, certain sectors such as education, health, tourism, aviation, and consumer goods companies experienced huge setbacks due to supply chain disruptions resulting from travel bans and lockdown measures. Reference to education sector for example, virtually all strata of educational attainment were halted across the country with varying effects on students, parents, teachers and school management in both public and private schools. This has resulted to not only business discontinuity, unemployment and loss of income but also intense anxiety and depression which captured the psychological dimension of the effect. Consequently, researchers from diverse fields of study generated interest to investigate and analyse the impact of the pandemic on the socio-economic welfare of individuals and society. However, most of the studies were skewed toward how school closure affected the psychological disposition of learners (e.g. Chauke and Obadire, 2024; and Wang, et al., 2020) or centred on how lockdown measures affected teacher education and school administration in Nigeria (see Kalu-Ezema, 2024; Andaregie and Astatkie, 2021; Orji and Omoni, 2021, Zubair, 2020, etc).

Thus, debate on how covid-19 affected the wellbeing of private school teachers is largely overlooked. Only few community-based studies were advanced to assessed how the pandemic impacted on socio-economic conditions of private school teachers in different regions of Nigeria (e.g. Jacob, 2020 and Ifenna and Blessing, 2020). Above all, none of these studies examined how socio-economic characteristics of private school teachers influenced their living conditions during covid-19 crisis, which is the novelty of this study. In Gombe state, the far-reaching consequences of the lockdown measures on social and economic life of private sector employees had not been ascertained or at best received less attention. Hence, further studies to explore the extent to which the pandemic affected the socio-economic status of teachers in private schools cannot be overemphasized. This study therefore, takes the challenge in order to add to the existing literature by empirically assessing the impact of covid-19 pandemic on socio-economic status of private school teachers in Gombe Local Government Area (LGA).

Literature Review

Although much of the studies put forward to examine the impact of covid-19 pandemic on the socio-economic status of stakeholders in education sector focused on students and school management, some studies attempted to investigate how teachers' social and economic wellbeing were affected also. According to Sekiwu and Ocan (2022), compulsory lockdown of schools has forced private school proprietors to stop or cut down teachers' salaries on the pretext that schools had no enough funds. This has created a huge income-lag that undermined teachers' social and economic welfare. Empirically, Andaregie and Astatkie (2021) conducted a study on the impact of covid-19 on jobs at private schools and colleges in Northern Ethiopia using Heckman two-step regression model. The findings revealed that schools closure during covid-19 resulted to significant job and income losses among teachers in private schools and

colleges. Also, the results showed that age is one of the significant factors influencing school management's decision for teachers' retention or otherwise in Northern Ethiopian's private schools and colleges. In another study by Zaman and Idrees (2022), the impact of covid-19 on livelihood and social life of rural private school teachers in KPK village, Pakistan was examined and analysed on 117 private school teachers using descriptive statistical techniques. The overall results revealed that difficulties in meeting daily needs, reduction in spending on food and non-food necessities, decreased in saving, and psychological imbalance were the adverse effects felt by private school teachers following schools' closure in the study area.

Similarly, in Nigeria, Jacob (2020) examined the impact of Covid-19 on 180 private secondary school teachers in Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja. Based on simple descriptive statistical methods inform of tables and percentages, the results of the study revealed that in addition to not receiving salaries during the lockdown period, government failed to consider them when providing welfare packages in terms of loan and food palliatives. This may be due to lack of association among private school teachers which may hinder their access to these welfare packages provided by government, the study concluded. Also, Ifenna and Blessing (2020) have analysed the effects of covid-19 pandemic on 59 private school teachers in Ekwusigo Local Government Area of Anambra State. The sample size was randomly selected from 5 private schools and simple descriptive statistical techniques as well as ANOVA were used by the study to conduct the analysis. On the whole, the results revealed that private school teachers were affected adversely by the pandemic in terms of loss of job, stoppage in income, hunger, anxiety, depression, and frantically search for new sources of income to cater for their personal and family needs. However, the perception of these effects significantly varied among teachers in rural, sub-urban and urban areas. Also, it was revealed that private school teachers received little or no assistance from government over the period of the lockdown. The notable coping strategies adopted by these teachers involved initiating new business, borrowing, and seeking/receiving assistance from friends and family. Furthermore, Adewale and Potokri (2023) examined how teachers' attrition was influenced by covid-19 in private schools as well as school managements' response to teachers' welfare. The study analysed the data obtained from 11 private school teachers using QSR NVivo software version 1.7.1 and the results showed that poor salaries and lack of concern for teachers' welfare during covid-19 have significantly contributed to teachers' attrition in private schools.

Methodology

The study covers Gombe LGA with 177 total number of private schools (Gombe State Ministry of Education, 2024). The choice of Gombe LGA is premised on the fact that it has a relatively high concentration of private schools in the state. However, only private schools (and teachers) that were established (and employed) at least one year before the outbreak of the pandemic are considered.

The sample size of the study is determined using Cochran's (1977) formula for unknown population. On the assumption that at least 50% of teachers were affected by the pandemic with 5% (α) level of significance, the sample size is given as follows:

$$n = \frac{z^2 \times p \times (1-p)}{\alpha^2} \quad \text{where } z \text{ is the Z-table value (1.96); } \alpha \text{ is the desired level of precision; and } p \text{ is the fraction of the population that displays attribute. Therefore, the sample size is:}$$

$$n = \frac{1.96^2 \times 0.5 \times (1 - 0.5)}{(0.05)^2} = 384.16 \approx 384$$

Having determined the sample size, the study employed purposive sampling technique in administering well-structured questionnaires to 384 respondents and the data obtained are analysed using Multinomial Logit regression model expressed as follows:

$$ecs_i = \phi_0 + \phi_1 age_i + \phi_2 mst_i + \phi_3 fsz_i + \phi_4 eduq_i + \phi_5 nemp_i + \phi_6 ojob_i + \phi_7 pal_i + \varepsilon_i \quad (1)$$

Where:

ecs = economic status during Covid-19 lockdown;

age = age of the respondents;

mst = marital status;

fsz = Family size;

eduq = educational qualification;

nemp = nature of employment;

ojob = other jobs engaged in;

pal = palliatives received during lockdown; and

ε_i = error term.

The description and measurement of the above variables are presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Variables Description and Measurement

Variable	Description	Measurement
Dependent variable		
Socio-economic status during Covid-19 lockdown	Salary received by respondents during lockdown	1 = received in full 2 = partially received 3 = not received
Independent variables		
Age	21-30; 31-40 ...; 61 and above	Ordinal scale
Marital status	Single; married; separated/divorce; widowed	Ordinal scale
Family size	1-4; 5-9; 10 & above	Ordinal scale
Educational qualification	SSCE; NCE/ND; Degree; Higher degree	Ordinal scale
Nature of employment	Permanent; Part-time; Casual; Volunteer	Ordinal scale
Other jobs engaged in	Yes or No	Binary: Yes = 1; No = 0
Palliatives received during lockdown	Yes or No	Binary: Yes = 1; No = 0

Empirical Results

This section reports the analysis of the surveyed data for 384 respondents using both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. The demographic characteristics of the respondents are presented in Table 2. The age categories revealed that 238 respondents fall within the age of 31-40 years of age representing 61.98 percent of the total sample. However, only 4 respondents were within the age of 51-60 and 60 and above which respectively stood at 1.04 percent. In relation to respondents' gender, 240 standing for 62.50 percent are male while 144 are female, representing 37.50 percent. For indicator of marital status, majority of the respondents, 227 representing 59.11 percent of the sample size, were single followed by 146

respondents, 38.02 percent who are married. However, those who are separated/divorced and widowed were reported to be 8 and 3 respondents which stood at 2.08 and 0.78 percent respectively.

In terms of family size of the respondents, 194 respondents revealed to have a family size of 1-4 representing 50.52 percent of the sample size. This is followed by 123 and 67 respondents standing for 32.03 and 17.45 percent who have a family size of 5-9 and 10 and above respectively. With respect to respondents' educational qualification, majority of them possessed either NCE/ND or degree. In specific term, 201 respondents were NCE/ND holders representing 52.34 percent and 136 respondents standing for 35.42 percent possessed degree certificates. In addition, 35 respondents (9.11 percent) and 12 respondents (3.13 percent) have SSCE and higher degree certificates respectively. Finally, the nature of employment is also analysed and the statistics revealed that majority of the respondents were employed on either part-time or casual basis. For instance, 133 respondents representing 34.64 percent were employed on part-time basis, whereas 79 respondents which stood at 20.57 percent were casually employed. While 141 respondents standing for 36.72 percent were permanently employed, 31 respondents which represents 8.07 percent of the sample size were volunteering.

Table 2. Demographic characteristics of the respondents

Demographic characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Age		
21-30	115	29.95
31-40	238	61.98
41-50	23	5.99
51-60	4	1.04
61 and above	4	1.04
Gender		
Male	240	62.50
Female	144	37.50
Marital status		
Single	227	59.11
Married	146	38.02
Separated/Divorced	8	2.08
Widowed	3	0.78
Family size		
1-4	194	50.52
5-9	123	32.03
10 and above	67	17.45
Educational qualification		
SSCE	35	9.11
NCE/ND	201	52.34
Degree	136	35.42
Higher degree	12	3.13
Nature of employment		
Permanent	141	36.72
Part-time	133	34.64
Casual	79	20.57
Volunteer	31	8.07

Source: Authors' computation

Having analysed the demographic features of the respondents, the estimation of multinomial logit regression is conducted. However, for robustness check, multinomial probit model is also computed and both results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Regression results

Variable	Multinomial Logit	Multinomial Probit
Age	.4215854* (.249)	.3168126* (.186)
Marital status	-1.330461*** (.424)	-.9244426*** (.293)
Family size	-1.727018*** (.308)	-1.266944*** (.211)
Educational qualification	.0306349 (.286)	.0258935 (.201)
Nature of employment	-1.385005*** (.271)	-.8923779*** (.165)
Other jobs engaged in	1.28608* (.414)	.866809*** (.296)
Palliative received during lockdown	.8080951** (.390)	.5444285** (.283)
Constant	4.348342*** (1.192)	3.095516*** (.827)
Pseudo R2	0.1719	-
Observations	384	384

Source: Authors' computation**Note:** ***, **, and * denotes level of significance at 1%, 5%, and 10% respectively.

Table 3 presents the results of multinomial logit and multinomial probit regressions. However, the interpretation and analysis are conducted based on the results of multinomial logit. Beginning with age, the results showed that it has impacted positively on the economic status of private school teachers during Covid-19 lockdown. This is to be expected because increase in age translates to higher experience and therefore higher chances of being retained in work place. It also supported the findings of Andaregie and Astatkie (2021) that age is one of the significant factors influencing school management's decision for teachers' retention or otherwise in Northern Ethiopian's private schools and colleges. On the contrary, the results revealed that marital status and family size have negative impact on economic status indicating that those who are married and have high family size or dependents among the private school teachers are more likely to experience decline in their economic status.

Going further, educational qualification is reported to have positive but insignificant impact on economic status. However, the nature of employment has negative and significant impact suggesting that teachers who were engaged on either part-time, casual or volunteer basis stood a chance of being disengaged during Covid-19 lockdown thereby worsening their economic and social vulnerabilities due to loss of livelihood sources. This conformed with the works of Andaregie and Astatkie (2021) who found that schools closure during covid-19 resulted to significant job and income losses among teachers in private schools and colleges in Northern Ethiopia; and Adewale and Potokri (2023) whose findings showed that poor salaries and lack of concern for teachers' welfare during covid-19 have significantly contributed to teachers' attrition in private schools. The coefficient of other jobs engaged in, is found to be positive and statistically significant. This conforms with the a priori expectation that engaging in other income-generating ventures will offer more opportunities for getting higher income and diverse skills which in turn, improves carrier prospect and financial safety net of private school teachers. This corroborated with the argument of Ifenna and Blessing (2020) that engaging in other businesses offers support to private school teachers during lockdown measures in Ekwusigo Local Government Area of Anambra State. On the palliatives received during lockdown, the

outcome showed that it has positive and significant impact economic status of private school teachers. This suggests that the higher the supports accorded to teachers during pandemic, the more likely it is to reduce their economic hardship. This is to be expected because palliatives provide both financial and material support that can reduce the strain caused by decrease in salary, job losses, and high cost of living. This contradicted the findings of Ifenna and Blessing (2020) who found that private school teachers in Ekwusigo Local Government Area of Anambra State received little assistance with no significance on their economic status.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study therefore, assessed the impact of covid-19 pandemic on socio-economic status of private school teachers taking Gombe metropolis as a case study. The sample size of 384 respondents was determined using purposive sampling procedure and the data obtained were analysed using multinomial logit regression technique. On the whole, the results revealed that age, other jobs engaged in, and palliatives received during lockdown have positively and significantly impacted on the socio-economic status of private school teachers. However, educational qualification is found to have positive but insignificant impact. Contrarily, marital status and family size were reported to impact the socio-economic status of private school teachers negatively and significantly in the period of covid-19 lockdown. Based on these findings, the study offered the following recommendations:

- i. Private school teachers should adopt savings culture and diversification of income sources as a key to reducing economic hardships in a period of uncertainties and difficulties.
- ii. Also, association of private school teachers should be formed by teachers in private schools to ease access to welfare packages provided by government and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs).
- iii. Also, private school proprietors should be compassionate to their teachers in life challenging periods. This can be achieved through institutionalization of teachers' welfare packages and establishing strong welfare committee to make it function efficiently.

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