

## **Effects of COVID-19 Schools Close Down on Academic Programme of Senior Secondary Schools in Abaji Area Council of Federal Capital Territory Abuja, Nigeria.**

by

**Ogunode Niyi Jacob**

Academic Planning Unit, Federal University Wukari, Nigeria

Email: [ogunodejacob@gmail.com](mailto:ogunodejacob@gmail.com)

### **Abstract**

A survey research design was adopted for this study. This research work was carried out in Abaji area council of FCT, Abuja, Nigeria. There are a total number of eight (8) secondary schools in the area of study. Out of the entire teacher population in the area council, (80) teachers were sampled because of the school close down problem. A structured questionnaire, titled the 'Effects of COVID-19 Schools Close Down on the Senior Secondary School Academic Programme Questionnaire' (ECSCDSSAPQ) was used for obtaining information for the study. Simple random techniques were used to select the sample size. The reliability of the instrument was determined through the test re-test method. Data collected were analyzed using simple percentage. Result collected revealed that 80 (100%) of the respondents strongly agreed that COVID-19 Schools close down would affect the academic programme of Senior Secondary Schools; 80 (100%) of the respondents strongly agreed that COVID-19 schools close down has led to suspension of internal and external examinations reduction in investment on education; 80 (100%) of the respondents strongly agreed that COVID-19 schools close down has led to suspension of teaching and learning in Schools; 80 (100%) of the respondents strongly agreed that COVID-19 schools close down has affected the academic calendar of senior secondary schools and 80 (100%) of the respondents strongly agreed that COVID-19 schools close down has led to the suspension of all extra-curriculum activities in Senior Secondary Schools. The paper recommends that the Minister of education should direct all Senior Secondary Schools administrators to come up with strategies to cover up the one month teaching and learning gap created as result of the COVID=19 schools closed down.

**Keywords:** Effects, COVID-19, Academic programme, Schools Close Down, Abuja, Nigeria.

### **Introduction:**

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), corona viruses are a family of viruses that cause illnesses ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases such as severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) and the Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS). These viruses were originally transmitted from animals to people. SARS, for instance, was transmitted from civet cats to humans while MERS moved to humans from a type of camel. Several known corona viruses are circulating in animals that have not yet infected humans. The

name corona virus comes from the Latin word corona, meaning crown or halo. Under an electron microscope, it looks like it is surrounded by a solar corona. The novel corona virus, identified by Chinese authorities on January 7 and since named SARS-CoV-2, is a new strain that had not been previously identified in humans. Little is known about it, although human-to-human transmission has been confirmed (Ajazeera, 2020).

Chinese health authorities are still trying to determine the origin of the virus, which they say likely, came from a seafood market in Wuhan, China where wildlife was also traded illegally. On February 7, Chinese researchers said the virus could have spread from an infected animal species to humans through illegally-trafficked pangolins, which are prized in Asia for food and medicine. Scientists have pointed to either bats or snakes as possible sources of the virus.

According to the WHO, signs of infection include fever, cough, and shortness of breath and breathing difficulties. In more severe cases, it can lead to pneumonia, multiple organ failure and even death. Current estimates of the incubation period - the time between infection and the onset of symptoms - range from one to 14 days. Most infected people show symptoms within five to six days. However, infected patients can also be asymptomatic, meaning they do not display any symptoms despite having the virus in their systems (Ajazeera, 2020).

The number of fatalities from the new corona virus has overwhelmingly surpassed the toll of the 2002-2003 SARS outbreaks, which also originated in China. SARS killed about 9 percent of those it infected - nearly 800 people worldwide and more than 300 in China alone. MERS, which did not spread as widely, was more deadly, killing one-third of those infected. As of April 4, more than 60,000 people worldwide have died of COVID-19, the highly infectious respiratory disease caused by the corona virus. The number of people who have tested positive for COVID-19 has exceeded 1 million, according to data compiled by Johns Hopkins University. While the new corona virus is more widespread than SARS in terms of case numbers, the mortality rate remains considerably lower at approximately 3.4 percent, according to the WHO.

Scientists around the globe are racing to develop a vaccine but have warned it is not likely one will be available for mass distribution before 2021. There have been five global health emergencies since 2005 when the declaration was formalized: swine flu in 2009, polio in 2014, Ebola in 2014, Zika in 2016 and Ebola again in 2019 (Ajazeera, 2020).

As of April 4, more than 60,000 people worldwide have died of COVID-19, the highly infectious respiratory disease caused by the corona virus. The number of people who have tested positive for COVID-19 has exceeded 1 million, according to data compiled by Johns Hopkins University.

Countries around the world are scrambling to halt the spread of the corona virus pandemic. This outbreak of COVID-19 is a global health emergency, the WHO said on January 30, raising the alarm further on March 11 when it declared the crisis a pandemic.

Presently, COVID-19 has spread to about 200 Countries in the World including Nigeria. Countries across the World have in quick succession announced the closure of their schools and universities for a minimum of two weeks or one month in order to contain the spread of the COVID-19 virus which has been declared a global pandemic by the World Health Organization. But authorities in many of the countries acknowledge that closures could last much longer. The closures came thick and fast this week after the number of cases began to rise several weeks after countries in North East Asia including Japan, South Korea, Singapore and China – where the virus originated – closed their educational institutions in February and March. Educational

institutions have yet to reopen in any of the countries in the region, which includes Hong Kong and Taiwan.

In Nigeria, the Federal Ministry of Education has directed all educational institutions in Nigeria to shut down and allow students to go home as cases of reported COVID-19 increased to 13. The Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Education, Sonny Echono, told reporters on 19 March that the directive was part of the country's overall strategy to contain the spread of the virus. Nigeria joins the growing list of countries in Africa which have closed schools and universities.

Abaji area council is one of the six area council of Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, Nigeria. The area council is host to many educational institutions. Among the educational institutions are public Senior secondary schools and private senior secondary schools. Presently, many of the public and private senior secondary schools have been shut down in compliance with the federal government directives that all educational institutions should be shut down to contain the spread of COVID-19 virus. This paper is aim to investigate the effects of COVID-19 Schools Close down on the Senior Secondary School academic programme in Abaji area council of FCT, Nigeria.

## **Literature Review:**

### **Nigerian Senior Secondary Schools:**

Secondary Education is the education that children receive after primary education and before the tertiary education. Based on the 6-3-3-4 system of education, secondary education comprises six years duration, but given in two stages: a junior secondary school stage and a senior secondary school stage, each to run for three years duration.

The junior secondary school is both pre-vocational and academic. It is tuition free, universal and compulsory. Basic subjects that will enable students to acquire further knowledge and skills are taught. Students who complete junior secondary school are to be streamed into:

- i. the senior secondary school
- ii. the technical college
- iii. an out-of-school vocational training centre
- iv. an apprenticeship.

This is the second phase of secondary education is the senior secondary. It is comprehensive with a core-curriculum designed to broaden students' knowledge. This is the stage where students pick subjects of their choice and begin to prepare for their intended careers.

The broad goals of Secondary Education according to the National Policy on Education (2004) include the preparation of the individual for:

- i. Useful living within the society and
- ii. Higher education.

In specific terms, the objectives are to:

- i. provide all primary school leavers with the opportunity for education of a higher level, irrespective of sex, social status, religion or ethnic background;

- ii. Offer diversified curriculum to cater for the differences in talents, opportunities and future roles;
- iii. Provide trained manpower in the applied science, technology and commerce at sub-professional grades;
- iv. Develop and promote Nigerian languages, art and culture in the context of world cultural heritage;
- v. Inspire its students with a desire for self improvement and achievement of excellence;
- vi. Foster national unity with an emphasis on the common ties that unite us in our diversity;
- vii. Raise a generation of people who can think for themselves, respect the view and feelings of others, respect the dignity of labor, appreciate those values specified under our broad national goals and live as good citizens;
- viii. Provide technical knowledge and vocational skills necessary for agricultural, industrial, commercial and economic development.

Senior Secondary Education lasts three years and covers grades 10 through 12. In 2010, Nigeria reportedly had a total 7,104 secondary schools with 4,448,981 pupils and a teacher to pupil ratio of about 32:1.

Reforms implemented in 2014 have led to a restructuring of the national curriculum. Students are currently required to study four compulsory “cross-cutting” core subjects, and to choose additional electives in four available areas of concentration. Compulsory subjects are: English language, mathematics, civic education, and one trade/entrepreneurship subject. The available concentration subjects are: Humanities, science and mathematics, technology, and business studies. The new curriculum has a stronger focus on vocational training than previous curricula, and is intended to increase employability of high school graduates in light of high youth unemployment in Nigeria.

In addition to public schools, there are a large number of private secondary schools, most of them expensive and located in urban centers. Many private schools include U.S. K-12.

International Baccalaureate or Cambridge International Examination curricula, allowing students to take international examinations like the International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGSCE) during their final year in high school.

### **School Programme:**

School Programme is programmes that the senior secondary schools engage to achieve the aims of establishing them. School Programme is also refers to all academic and non-academic activities that schools engages with the objective of actualizing their primary objectives. School programme include the academic programme and non-academic programme. Academic Programme of Senior Secondary Schools in Nigeria include; teaching and learning, examination programme and extra-curriculum programme. These programme are designed for the Schools to enable them achieve their objectives.

Senior Secondary Schools in Nigeria conducts three every academic year. The first term examination, the secondary term examination and the promotion examination. The graduating students at the senior level write different examination depending on the system of the schools. Student in conversional secondary schools. At the end of the 12th grade in May/June, students sit for the Senior School Certificate Examination (SSCE). They are examined in a minimum of

seven and a maximum of nine subjects, including mathematics and English, which are mandatory. Successful candidates are awarded the Senior Secondary Certificate (SSC), which lists all subjects successfully taken. Students can sit for a second SSC annual exam if interested or if they need to improve on poor results in the May/June exams.

SSC examinations are offered by two different examination boards: the West African Examination Council and the National Examination Council (NECO). The examination is open to students currently enrolled in the final year of secondary school, as well external private candidates (in the November/December session only). The SSCE grading scale is as follows for both WAEC and NECO administered examinations (WENR, 2017).

There are limited publications and papers on the effects of COVID-19 Schools close down on academic programme of senior secondary schools. The available ones include that of Wikipedia (2020) who submitted that the 2019–20 corona virus pandemic has affected educational systems worldwide, leading to the widespread closures of schools and universities. As of 3 April 2020, over 421 million learners were out of school due to school closures in response to COVID-19. According to UNESCO monitoring, over 200 countries have implemented nationwide closures, impacting about 98% of the world's student population. On 23 March 2020, Cambridge International Examinations (CIE) released a statement announcing the cancellation of Cambridge IGCSE, Cambridge O Level, Cambridge International AS & A Level, Cambridge AICE Diploma, and Cambridge Pre-U examinations for the May/June 2020 series across all countries. International Baccalaureate exams have also been cancelled. School closures impact not only students, teachers, and families, but have far-reaching economic and societal consequences.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) is tracking the impact of the pandemic on education. As of March 30, they estimate that 87 percent of the world's students—that is 1.5 billion learners—have been affected by school closures. The bulk of these students are enrolled in primary and secondary schools, but there are also millions of students affected at the pre-primary and tertiary education levels. More than 180 countries have shut school doors nationwide, while others have implemented localized school closures. UNESCO's figures refer to learners enrolled at pre-primary, primary, lower-secondary, and upper-secondary levels of education as well as at tertiary level. 1,379,344,914 students or 80 percent of the world's learners are now being kept out of educational institutions by country-wide closures. Another 284 million learners are being affected in some way by closures at a localized level, such as those seen in U.S. states like California and Virginia. 138 governments have now ordered country-wide closures of their schools and universities.

According to the Institute of International Education, three-quarters of American colleges and universities have reported the negative impact of COVID-19 on recruitment this year. It is important to keep in mind those 370,000 students, or 33.7% of America's total international students, are from China. Decreased enrolment of Chinese students has already impacted the economies of Australia, New Zealand and Canada.

### **Objectives of the Study:**

This objective of this paper is to investigate the effects of COVID-19 Schools Close down on the Senior Secondary School academic programme in Abaji area council of FCT, Nigeria. Specifically, the sub-objectives includes:

- i. To find out if COVID-19 Schools close down has effects on the academic programme of Senior Secondary Schools



- ii. To find out the effects of COVID-19 Schools closed down on the academic programme of Senior Secondary Schools

### **Research Questions:**

The following research questions were formulated for this study;

- i. Would COVID-19 Schools close down affects the academic programme of Senior Secondary Schools?
- ii. What are the effects of COVID-19 Schools close down on the academic programme of Senior Secondary Schools?

### **Significance of the Study:**

This study will provide an insight into the effects of COVID-19 Schools close down on the Senior Secondary School academic programme. This study will help the administrators to ascertain the level of damages the schools close down has caused. Furthermore, the study will again be helpful for researchers, students and lecturers. Government official, policy makers and schools administrators will benefit from the recommendation of the study.

### **Limitations:**

This research work is aim to investigate the effects of COVID-19 Schools Close down on the Senior Secondary School academic programme in Abaji area council of FCT, Nigeria.

The study was limited to the public senior secondary schools in Abaji area council in FCT, Nigeria and teachers of the selected Senior Secondary Schools to a number of reasons which include banned on movement and financial constraint.

### **Methodology:**

A survey research design was adopted for this study. This research work was carried out in Abaji area council of FCT, Abuja, Nigeria. There are a total number of eight (8) secondary schools in the area of study. The total population of the study was 312 teachers in the public secondary schools in Abaji area council of FCT, Abuja. Out of the entire teacher population of teachers in the area council (80) teachers were sampled because this number is manageable. Simple random techniques were used to select the sample size. A structured questionnaire, titled the 'Effects of COVID-19 Schools Close Down on the Senior Secondary School Academic Programme Questionnaire' (ECSCDSSAPQ) was used in obtaining information for the study. It is an open item questionnaire and is made up of two sections 'A and B'. Section A explained the rating scale and instructions to the respondents on how to fill the questionnaire, while section B was organized in clusters based on the two research questions of the study. It contains 5 questionnaire items, and the response options with values assigned to them are: Strongly Agree (SA)...4; Agree (A)...3; Disagree (D)...2; Strongly Disagree (SD)...1. To ensure the face and content validity of the instrument, copies of the questionnaire were sent along with copies of the research questions and the purpose of the study to two experts in the Department of Educational Management and Policy, University of Abuja. They scrutinized the items in terms of clarity and adequacy in addressing the purposes and research questions. Their suggestions were used to produce the final draft of the questionnaire used in this study.

The reliability of the instrument was determined through the test re-test method. Ten (10) copies of the instrument were administered to ten teachers in a secondary school in Kuje area

council of FCT, Nigeria and after an interval of two weeks, the questionnaire was re-administered to the same teachers. The scores of the first and second administrations were correlated using Pearson Product moment Correlation Co-efficient statistic and the correlation co-efficient value stood at 0.67 which was considered high enough to confirm the instrument reliable. Copies of the questionnaire were then administered by the researchers through online medium. The researchers requested for the email address of the teachers in their various schools and they were informed of the study. They responded positively and they were all sampled for the study. E-questionnaire copy was sent to the various teachers through their email addresses and they replied the email back to the researcher's email. Data collected were analyzed using simple percentage.

### Result Analysis:

#### Research Question 1: Would COVID-19 Schools close down affected the academic programme of Senior Secondary Schools?

**Table 1 Responses on if OVID-19 Schools closed down would affect the academic programme of Senior Secondary Schools**

S No	Items	Strongly Agree	Agree	%	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	%	Total
1	COVID-19 schools close Down would affect the academic programme of Senior Secondary Schools.	70	10	100	-	-	-	80

Result collected on table one item one reveals that 66 (92.5%) of the respondents strongly agreed that COVID-19 Schools close down would affect the academic programme of Senior Secondary Schools and 14(7.5%) of the respondents agreed COVID-19 Schools close down would affect the academic programme of Senior Secondary Schools. This means that the majorities of the respondents agreed that COVID-19 Schools close down would affect the academic programme of Senior Secondary Schools.

#### Research Question Two: What are the effects of COVID-19 Schools close down on the academic programme of Senior Secondary Schools?

**Table 2 Responses on effects of COVID-19 Schools Closed down on the academic programme of Senior Secondary Schools**

S No	The following are the effects of COVID-19 Schools close down on the academic programme of Senior Secondary Schools	Strongly Agree	Agree	%	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	%	Total
1	Suspension of internal and external examinations	61	19	100	-	-	-	80
2	Suspension of teaching and learning in Schools	72	8	100	-	-	-	80
3	Affects academic calendar	51	29	100	-	-	-	80
4	Suspension of all extra-curriculum activities in Schools	48	32	100	-	-	-	80

Result collected on table two item one reveals that 61 (88%) of the respondents strongly agreed that COVID-19 schools close down has led to suspension of internal and external examinations reduction in investment on education while 19(12%) of the respondents agreed. This implies that the majorities of the sampled respondent agreed that COVID-19 schools close down has led to suspension of internal and external examinations reduction in investment on education.

Result collected on table two item two reveals that 72 (90%) of the respondents strongly agreed that suspension of teaching and learning in Schools, 8 (10%) of the respondents agreed. This implies that the majorities of the sampled respondent agreed that suspension of teaching and learning in Schools

Result collected on table two item three reveals that 51 (63.75%) of the respondents strongly agreed that COVID-19 schools close down has affected the academic calendar of senior secondary schools, 29 (36.25%) of the respondents agreed. This implies that the majorities of the sampled respondent agreed that COVID-19 schools close down has affected the academic calendar of senior secondary schools.

Result collected on table two item four reveals that 48 (60%) of the respondents strongly agreed that COVID-19 schools close down has led to the Suspension of all extra-curriculum activities in Senior Secondary Schools, 32 (20%) of the respondents agreed. This implies that the majorities of the sampled respondent agreed that COVID-19 schools close down has led to the suspension of all extra-curriculum activities in Senior Secondary Schools.

### **Discussions of Result:**

#### **To find out if COVID-19 Schools close down has would affect the academic programme of Senior Secondary Schools:**

Result collected on table one item one reveals that 66 (92.5%) of the respondents strongly agreed that COVID-19 Schools close down would affect the academic programme of Senior Secondary Schools and 14(7.5%) of the respondents agreed COVID-19 Schools close down would affect the academic programme of Senior Secondary Schools. This means that the majorities of the respondents agreed that COVID-19 Schools close down would affect the academic programme of Senior Secondary Schools. This finding supported the discovered of Ade (2020) who found out that COVID-19 Schools close down has affected the academic programme of Senior Secondary Schools in Nigeria because major external examinations would be postponed. The global lockdown of education institutions is going to cause major (and likely unequal) interruption in students' learning; disruptions in internal assessments; and the cancellation of public assessments for qualifications or their replacement by an inferior alternative (Simon & Hans, 2020).

#### **To find out the effects of COVID-19 Schools close down on the academic programme of Senior Secondary Schools:**

Result collected on table two item one reveals that 61 (88%) of the respondents strongly agreed that COVID-19 schools close down has led to suspension of internal and external examinations reduction in investment on education while 19(12%) of the respondents agreed.

This implies that the majorities of the sampled respondent agreed that COVID-19 schools close down has led to suspension of internal and external examinations reduction in investment



on education. This means that the majorities of the respondents agreed that COVID-19 Schools close down has effects on the academic programme of Senior Secondary Schools. This finding is in agreement of the submission of Simon & Hans, (2020) who observed that the closure of schools, colleges and universities not only interrupts the teaching for students around the world; the closure also coincides with a key assessment period and many exams have been postponed or cancelled. Internal assessments are perhaps thought to be less important and many have been simply cancelled. But their point is to give information about the child's progress for families and teachers. The loss of this information delays the recognition of both high potential and learning difficulties and can have harmful long-term consequences for the child.

Result collected on table two item two reveals that 72 (90%) of the respondents strongly agreed that COVID-19 schools close down has led to suspension of teaching and learning in Schools, 8 (10%) of the respondents agreed. This implies that the majorities of the sampled respondent agreed that COVID-19 schools close down has led to suspension of teaching and learning in Schools. Missing classes as a result of COVID-19 schools down is not the best for the students. COVID-19 interruption will affect students learning. According to Carlsson et al. (2015), who considers a situation in which young men in Sweden have differing number of days to prepare for important tests, these differences are conditionally random allowing the authors to estimate a causal effect of schooling on skills. The authors show that even just ten days of extra schooling significantly raises scores on tests of the use of knowledge ('crystallized intelligence') by 1% of a standard deviation. As an extremely rough measure of the impact of the current school closures, if we were to simply extrapolate those numbers, twelve weeks less schooling (i.e. 60 school days) implies a loss of 6% of a standard deviation, which is non-trivial. They do not find a significant impact on problem-solving skills (an example of 'fluid intelligence').

Result collected on table two item three reveals that 51 (63.75%) of the respondents strongly agreed that COVID-19 schools close down has affected the academic calendar of senior secondary schools, 29 (36.25%) of the respondents agreed. This implies that the majorities of the sampled respondent agreed that COVID-19 schools close down has affected the academic calendar of senior secondary schools. This result collected supported the view of Ade (2020) who concluded that Senior Secondary Schools in Nigeria will suffer more because their entire academic calendar will be affected due to COVID-2019 pandemic school close down.

Result collected on table two item four reveals that 48 (60%) of the respondents strongly agreed that COVID-19 schools close down has led to the suspension of all extra-curriculum activities in Senior Secondary Schools, 32 (20%) of the respondents agreed. This implies that the majorities of the sampled respondent agreed that COVID-19 schools close down has led to the suspension of all extra-curriculum activities in Senior Secondary Schools. This finding confirms the submission of Ade (2020) who observed that as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and schools close down many Senior Secondary Schools have suspended their excursion plans to visit their organization for practical knowledge of what the students have been taught in their classes.

### **Conclusion and Recommendation:**

The objectives of the study were to:

- i. To find out if COVID-19 Schools Close Down has effects on the academic programme of Senior Secondary Schools
- ii. To find out the effects of COVID-19 Schools closed down on the academic programme of Senior Secondary Schools.

Result collected and analyzed revealed that:

= 80 (100%) of the respondents strongly agreed that COVID-19 Schools close down would affect the academic programme of Senior Secondary Schools;

= 80 (100%) of the respondents strongly agreed that COVID-19 schools close down has led to suspension of internal and external examinations reduction in investment on education;

= 80 (100%) of the respondents strongly agreed that COVID-19 schools close down has led to suspension of teaching and learning in Schools;

= 80 (100%) of the respondents strongly agreed that COVID-19 schools close down has affected the academic calendar of senior secondary schools and

= 80 (100%) of the respondents strongly agreed that COVID-19 schools close down has led to the suspension of all extra-curriculum activities in Senior Secondary Schools,

Based on the findings, the researchers hereby recommends that:

= The Minister of education should direct all Senior Secondary Schools administrators to come up with strategies to cover up the one month teaching and learning gap created as result of the COVID=19 schools closed down

= The Schools administrators should ensure teachers develop strategies to cover all their scheme of work for the term before going for internal examinations

= The government should provide all infrastructural facilities that will support online education in all the senior secondary schools in Federal Capital Territory, Abuja and in Abaji in particular to prevent any eventuality of future close down of schools because of pandemic.

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