

AN ANALYSIS OF IMPEDIMENTS TO EFFECTIVE COMPLIANCE WITH COVID-19 SAFETY MEASURES IN LECTURE HALLS IN NNAMDI AZIKIWE UNIVERSITY, AWKA, NIGERIA

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Abstract

As schools reopened in Nigeria, following the ease of national lockdown necessitated by the outbreak of COVID-19, the need to contain the spread of the virus in and around school communities became hotlisted. Nnamdi Azikiwe University (NAU), Awka, did not consider herself immune to attack by the dreaded pandemic, and so set up a response committee which came out with clearly spelt-out control measures to be complied with by both staff and students. However, it is one thing to come up with a resounding policy and another and more pivotal to enforce an unflinching compliance of the policy. Literature revealed a high level of noncompliance with the policy in lecture halls/theatres. It was equally the researchers' observation that this safety policy did not enjoy unalloyed compliance and therefore, they considered it necessary to find out the reasons for this noncompliance to put the university management and government at a vantage point to handle the fresh cases being reported and any eventual new wave of the pandemic. This study, therefore, sought to explore the factors which militated against total compliance with Covid-19 pandemic safety measures in Nigerian schools and specifically the universities, from the perspectives of the lecturers of NAU, Awka. The present study adopted the interpretive descriptive qualitative design to examine the factors. Interviews were employed in the data generation process. The population and sample was all the 21 lecturers in the Department of Educational Foundations who teach faculty-wide courses. Using thematic content analysis of the descriptions, the findings reviewed that, factors such as overcrowded lecture halls, insufficient funds, students' delusion of the non-existence of the disease and lack of interest, space limitations, dilapidated infrastructure, the limited public address system, dearth of office accommodations for lecturers, bad covid-19 safety compliant role modeling and lackadaisical attitude of lecturers were impediments to effective compliance with Covid-19 safety measures. These factors were categorized as school, lecturer and student-related factors.

Key words: Covid-19, safety measures, compliance and impediments

Introduction

There have been numerous well-researched publications that addressed this global menace called the COVID-19 pandemic. Examples of such research works are that of Bai *et al.* (2020), on the epidemiological history and clinical characteristics of 7 cases of COVID-

19, and the determination of the incubation period of COVID-19 in which Elias *et al* (2021) pooled estimate of the mean incubation period across 99 studies and arrived at 6.38 days, 95% CI (5.79; 6.97), etc. Some other authors published reviews of insights from behavioral and social sciences to give governments and policy-makers recommendations on how to fight the outbreak of COVID-19 from a behavioral point of view. For example, Lunn *et al* (2020) provided a narrative review on evidence from behavioral science, covering 5 issues: hand-washing, face touching, self-isolation, public-spirited behavior, and responses to crisis communication. Based on their review, their main finding was that the effectiveness of communication stands out as a crucial issue to generate desirable behavior. Furthermore, Van Baicker and Willer (2020) provided a review of insights from social and behavioral sciences on how to align human behavior with recommendations from healthcare experts and epidemiologists. They used evidence from a selection of research topics relevant to pandemics, such as social and cultural influences on behavior, moral decision-making, and leadership.

Regarding preventive measures of the spread of the virus, Omaka *et al.* (2020) noted that despite all COVID-19 scientifically-proven preventive measures in Nigeria which include hand washing, use of sanitizers, wearing of face masks, lockdown and social distancing, cases of the disease was still being reported. Such undermining factors include poor compliance attitude, selective lockdown, social media interference, misconceptions and myths, stigmatization, fear, inadequate health facilities, and distrust of the government. A community-based cross-sectional study in Oromia by Feyisa (2021), investigated factors limiting youths' practice of preventive measures toward the containment of COVID-19, using data from 384 youths, and found that the practice is militated against by several associated risk factors that include belief in the body's immunity to resist the disease, lack of paying attention to the disease, ignorance of evidence to the disease, ease of restriction of movements, lack of sensitization to actions in the community, and substance use. They further reiterated that while male youths were less likely to practice preventive measures than their female counterparts, older youth with higher education levels with higher incomes were more likely to practice preventive measures.

In another study in Netherlands, using 568 participants, Kuiper *et al.* (2020) assessed how compliance with the Dutch approach to mitigate the COVID-19 virus have worked out in practice and what factors might affect whether Dutch people comply with the measures. The study overall results showed reported high compliance which suggested that the Dutch approach has to a large extent worked as hoped in practice. Repression did not play a significant role in compliance, while intrinsic (moral and social) motivations did produce better compliance. In a non-compliance research during COVID-19 pandemics in Zurich, Switzerland, Nivette *et al.* (2020) found out some areas of non-compliance that require additional attention from public health campaigns. They found high rate of non-compliance with certain hygiene and social distancing measures, including cleaning and disinfecting mobile phones or standing 1.5–2 m apart while non-compliance with certain other protective measures, such as avoiding groups, coughing or sneezing into one's elbow, and

washing one's hands regularly, was generally low. This confirms their earlier observation that adolescents and young adults were identified internationally as a group with potentially low compliance rates with public health measures aimed at curbing the spread of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). Their finding was in consonance with that of Ogbonda; Douglas; and Moore (2020) in their study of knowledge and compliance with standard precautions amongst healthcare workers in selected hospitals in Rivers State, Nigeria from their study which revealed HCW's noncompliance with SPs for various job categories; cleaners/porters (85.8%), followed by nurses (70.4%), attendants (66.7%), radiographers (64.5%), administrators(62.1%), technicians (61.3%), pharmacists (60.9%) and lastly doctors (60.2%).

In a study carried out in Nigeria which explored why the students in Nigerian schools and specifically the universities, from the perspectives of students of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka failed to comply with Covid-19 safety protocols, using 786 (352 females and 434 males) ages 16 – 20 years randomly which were selected through multistage sampling technique, the researchers – Nwiko, Eluemuno, Obedjemurho and Onah (2022), found that the interaction of factors such as school, lecturers and students-related hindered compliance of staff and students to the COVID-19 safety measures guiding the university. Prominent among the major individual factors which participants observed were responsible for failure of staff and students' compliance were lack of favourable physical environment, lecturer-burnout as a result of tedious workload under harsh working conditions which include absence of comfortable office accommodations for their lecturers as well as bad covid-19 safety compliant role modeling by some lecturers. The observation aligned with the observation of Stadler-Altman (2015) that the physical environment can influence the way teachers and students feel, think and behave. It also agreed with Madigan and Kim (2020) in their confirmation that teacher burnout is associated with worse academic achievement and lower quality student motivation. The findings of Wakoli (2018) also supported the fact that bad role-modeling by adults can impact negatively on adolescents' behavior. Albaqawi *et al.* (2020) in a quantitative, descriptive, and cross-sectional study in Saudi Arabia, using a convenience sample of 1,226 student nurses from seven universities on online survey on demographic characteristics, perceptions, knowledge, and preventive behavior of Saudi student nurses. Nearly all the students were aware of the outbreak (99.2%), and most of them received information on COVID-19 primarily from social media (71.0%). Over three-fourths of the students were confident that the government (89.1%) and Ministry of Health (MOH) (86.5%) were doing a good job responding to the COVID-19 outbreak in the country. The overall average score in the knowledge questionnaire was 9.85 (SD = 1.62, range = 0–12), which is equivalent to 82.1%. The majority of the students always performed most of the preventive behavior identified in the survey, except “washing hands with soap and water for at least 20 s after blowing my nose, coughing, or sneezing” (39.2%) and “daily cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched surfaces” (41.6%). Being female, being in the fourth year, and gaining good perceived knowledge were associated with high actual COVID-19 knowledge.

University, gender, age, academic level, and perceived COVID-19 knowledge were the associated factors.

Studies have equally revealed that defining when a pandemic starts or ends is tricky such that no single person, government agency, or public health organization has the authority to declare that a pandemic has begun or ended (Charters & Heitman, 2021; Shmerling, 2022). Little wonder many people including the then president of the United States of America – Donald J. Trump, at the beginning of Covid-19 pandemic in Wuhan, China towards the end of the year 2019, thought and publicly referred to it as a Chinese Virus – an expression he was quoted to have used 20 times between March 16 and March 30 (Viala-Gaudefroy & Lindaman, 2020). Following the inability to mark the arrival of covid-19 as a pandemic, people and governments of many countries never envisaged it was going to snowball into a phenomenon of huge global concern. Unfortunately, it did, as the dangerous virus started spreading rapidly like wildfire, taking every people and nation by storm and killing people in droves around the world. On the 30th January 2020, World Health Organization (WHO) Director-General Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus while declaring the COVID-19 outbreak, a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC), confirmed its novelty. According to him, even though the case of coronavirus wouldn't be the first time WHO has responded to a pandemic, and probably won't be the last, Covid-19 is, unarguably, the most challenging crisis WHO had ever faced (WHO, 2020). This declaration became WHO's highest level of alarm to the world and a rallying cry to all countries to immediately take notice, and unite in a common cause of action. In about 3 months only, the virus had spread around the globe, compelling WHO to declare COVID-19, a global pandemic on March 11, 2020 (Wang *et al.*, 2020).

In the same vein, just as it is difficult to mark the arrival, the departure of a pandemic is equally complicated. Shmerling (2022) observed that to some people, once everyone starts behaving as though the problem is over; no more precautions, restrictions, or changes in behavior compared with the period of time before these started, they consider the pandemic over. Shmerling did not seem to totally agree with this as he argued that people might have stopped observing restrictions simply as a result of growing weariness and/or not finding value in such recommendations. This corroborated the finding of Pearl (2022) who observed that a growing number of Americans were removing their masks and acting in ways they would have deemed immoral and inappropriate just months before the period because they are sick of living under constant restrictions. The implication of this is that although it seems like a long time since the covid-19 pandemic began and now life appears "normal" like it did before the pandemic, with Covid-19 precautions barely seen in many places such as marketplaces, schools, worship centres and countries including Nigeria, the pandemic is yet to be over as many countries (developed and underdeveloped) continue to report cases of new Covid-related infections and deaths. Same way Robert H. Shmerling of Harvard Health Publishing reported in the article "Is the Covid-19 pandemic over, or not?" that thousands of new COVID-19 infections and hundreds of related deaths occur each day in the USA, the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) on the 16/1/2023

reported fresh cases in Nigeria across five states of Nigeria and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT). Dr Fatimah Saleh the Deputy Director, NCDC on Live at 98.3 FM on the 13th April, 2023 also reported fresher Covid-19 cases and deaths in Nigeria. Given the reports of cases of new Covid-19 infections and related deaths in Nigeria and world over, continued studies to gain adequate knowledge and be on red alert to be able to keep people's head above the murky water of the pandemic, would not be considered time-barred even as it looks like life is becoming normal. This is why the current researchers, having discovered through the literature overview that both here in Nigeria and indeed globally, the adolescents and youth who are the group that make up the university undergraduates did not completely comply, are interested in carrying out an investigation to find out why lecturers who needed to enforce the policy were not able to do so. Noting further that the adolescents always need to be guided to obey rules, the question remains, "What made the task of enforcing compliance of covid-19 safety protocols on students difficult in lecture halls/theatres? Further, the literature reviewed, showed no evidence of empirical work carried out to establish the factors that handicapped Nigerian lecturers from satisfactorily enforcing compliance with the control measures against the spread of COVID-19 on their students in Nigeria, and if at all, none has studied Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka in this regard. This study, therefore, sets out to close the gap.

The purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to explore the factors that impeded the enforcement of Covid-19 pandemic safety measures in Nigerian schools and specifically the universities, from the perspectives of lecturers of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka.

Research Questions

1. What students' related factors impeded against your students' strict compliance with the Covid-19 safety measures handed down by the university response committee?
2. How do you think that lecturers' of NAU, Awka contributed to the poor compliance with the recommended safety measures?
3. What school factors made compliance difficult in your lecture halls/theatres?

Method

In this study, the researchers adopted a qualitative research of the interpretive description. This approach was targeted at contributing to an in-depth understanding of human experiences and behaviour, and the behavioural world of applied practice (Nwosu, Okoye & Onah, 2018; Collado-Boira, Ruiz-Palomino, Salas-Media, Folch-Ayora, Muriach & Baliño (2020)). This process also aims to improve the usefulness of findings by giving evidence for practical action. Interpretive description, an alternative to the conventional qualitative approaches, can help in this regard by providing a better understanding of complex experimental clinical/ practical phenomena (Thorne, 2008). As Nworgu (2015) also averred, a qualitative research design provides a philosophical framework for constructive research paradigm. Here, the researcher is an active participant in the investigation process that explores and provides deeper insights into real-world problems

and aimed at understanding how individuals interpret their world (Tenny, Brannan, Brannan *et al*, 2021). The approach helped the researchers to describe and interpret staff and students' experiences and challenges among other things.

The researchers considered the qualitative research approach suitable for the present study which addressed lecturers' incapability to enforce compliance with covid-19 safety protocols in the lecture halls/theatres. It helped the researchers to describe and interpret informants' opinions on the factors which mitigated total compliance of covid-19 measures in the lecture halls. All the lecturers in the Department of Educational Foundations who teach faculty-wide courses constituted the population and sample, 21. Before the researchers went to interview the respondents on why enforcing compliance with the safety measures in the lecture halls was difficult, they scrutinized the five covid-19 safety measures contained in the internal memo of 25 January 2021, approved and duly circulated to the staff and students of the university by the NAU Covid-19 Response Committee. The researchers found the paper a worthy document to work with, hence its inclusion as an instrument in structuring the interview. The five Covid-19 safety protocols as recommended and approved for urgent and strict compliance in the lecture halls/theatres by those concerned were:

- a. Compulsory use of a facemask
- b. Hand washing or Hand sanitization at the entrance
- c. Maintenance of physical distancing of not less than 2 metres
- d. Ensure good ventilation
- e. All meetings, lectures and examinations to be moderated according to Covid-19 recommendation.

The researchers used an open-ended interview strategy to obtain the data for the study. Open-ended was considered appropriate because it did not only encourage the participants to elaborate on their experiences but made inquiry flexible and carefully adapted to the problem at hand. The researchers adopted interpretive and descriptive analyses in their data analysis. This approach enabled the researchers to make inferences at a deeper understanding of views that were expressed by the respondents while remaining close to data (Nwosu, Okoye and Onah, 2018). Data were transcribed and examined thematically. The researchers read the transcripts over and over again and open coded, where they processed the information provided by the participants and identified relevant themes or categories that emerged as had been adopted by other researchers like Newman, 2017; Nwosu *et al* (2018); Nwikpo *et al* (2020). Then, the researchers took chunks of a statement or paragraph that fit together and developed relevant codes (Morris, 2014). The themes developed through open coding were used by the researchers to present and discuss the result. The results as presented in terms of themes that emerged were supported by quotations from interview transcriptions.

Results and Discussion

The results were presented in terms of themes that emerged from interview analyses with supporting quotations from interview transcripts. Discussions of themes were conducted in place. The themes identified were to address the research questions with specific themes emerging from the analysis of the transcripts.

School-Related Factors that Contributed to Non-compliance with Covid-19 Safety Protocols

The study participants mentioned space limitations defined as overcrowded lecture halls and fewness of lecturers' offices, dilapidated facilities and short supply of required funds to provide all necessary covid-19 preventive materials and limited public address system as the school factors that impede compliance with Covid-19 safety measures in the lecture halls.

Space limitations

Many of the lecturers interviewed, barefacedly reported dearth of spacious lecture halls as the major catalyst for the noncompliance. While lamenting the absence of lecture halls that are spacious enough to contain a large crowd of students during lectures and examinations, participant 13 asked, "How can such halls which lacked the capacity to accommodate students during the pre-covid-19 era allow for compliance with covid-19 safety measures, particularly with physical distancing and good ventilation protocols?" Another female participant had earlier stated that a law made without creating the logistics that enable compliance, is dead on arrival. She wondered what magic would be expected of her to perform to enforce compliance of physical distancing when the lecture hall could not accommodate a quarter of the student population per lecture period. The participants, who teach Education faculty-wide courses either at Regular, CEP or Sandwich programmes, lamented having encountered one or two class management/control issues in the line of the discharge of their duties. They put the number of students who were regular in lectures to be approximately between 250-400 with the exclusion of carryover students. This factor worried the researchers more than any other, considering the very important place physical distancing occupies in curbing the spread of the covid-19 which is a contagion. The researchers' sentiment agrees with WHO (2020) which observed that COVID-19 is caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus, which spreads between people, mainly when an infected person is in close contact with another person. Again, the lecture halls are not just sizeable but lack adequate ventilation as described by a male respondent when he pointed out that lack of ventilation was one reason why students would not keep wearing their face masks. As he puts it, "The students found it difficult to keep wearing facemasks in lecture halls due to inadequate ventilation. The lecture halls are not sizeable."

Fewness of offices for lecturers

Lack of office accommodation for lecturers was one of the school-related impedances to the enforcement of covid-19 safety measures mentioned by the participants of the study. Some of the participants who reported not having a place to call their office said that they

were sometimes forced to stay under the mango trees to do their duties as lecturers. One of them, a female quipped, “Whoever expected us to give our best, carrying out our duties from under the mango tree was not being sincere.” Such duties include, among others, preparation of their lecture note, marking of students’ scripts, attending to project supervision. According to them, under such condition, they did not find any motivation to add enforcement of Covid-19 safety compliance by their students to the repertoire of their duties, stating that most times they entered the lecture halls so fatigued to be able to enforce compliance. Four male lecturers and three female lecturers, out of the 21 participants also reported that they had turned their personal cars into office accommodation for lack of provision of any by the university authorities. It was shocking to discover that some of them had been carrying students’ examination scripts and assignment books in the trunk of their cars since the day such examinations were written. The researchers asked to find out why the participants didn’t consider dropping the materials either in the general departmental office or any of their colleagues’ office, reminding them how a huge risk it is, going about with such sensitive materials in their cars. To this, every one of them acknowledged how risky it was, but reiterated how resolute they are in taking the risk. One of the male participants concluded by reminding the researchers that only a healthy and happy man do remember when it is time to make his wife pregnant. He asked, “If I am a healthy happy man, do I wait to be reminded that it is time to make my wife pregnant?” This finding was as embarrassing as it was unfortunate to the researchers, realizing the effect teacher burnout could have on the students’ academic achievement and general wellbeing. The study of Madigan & Kim (2020) confirmed that teacher burnout is associated with worse academic achievement and lower quality student motivation.

Dilapidated infrastructures

Another school-related factor the study participants identified as one factor which posed a challenge to the enforcement of Covid-19 safety measures in the university’s lecture halls was overused and dilapidated facilities. Many of them expressed serious worry that installations and equipment in the few available lecture halls are in bad shape. For example, students’ seats, doors, windows, fans, air conditions, whiteboards etc in many lecture halls were in disrepair, making such lecture halls dysfunctional. Participant 15 threw a pertinent question back at the researchers, “if the halls in good shape could not take in all the students in a spaced-out manner to comply with physical distancing protocol and ensure good ventilation, won’t these faulty ones create a worse scenario?” This question is thought-provoking and begs for an answer from the stakeholders in university education. The participants were unanimous in their opinion that for compliance with covid-19 measures and indeed pedagogical activities to record the expected success, the environment must be stimulating, and therefore called on university-facility maintainers and planning architects to be aware of the importance of lecture halls and the entire school environment for the students’ everyday school life and consequently work to improve them. Steele cited in Stadler-Altman (2021) mentioned that the physical environment can influence the way teachers and students feel, think and behave.

Limited Public Address System (PAS)

The participants also adduced that lack of adequate functional public address system (PAS) was a School-related factor that impeded the successful implementation of covid-19 safety measures in the lecture halls. Expecting a lecturer to deliver his/her lecture in his natural volume of voice, to the clarity of hearing of all the teeming population of students who offer the courses under reference, would be a task quite impossible to carry out. This challenge had always led serious-minded students to scamper to the front seats within the hearing range, thereby clustering in a way that negated the covid-19 safety consciousness. The participants stated that, though this practice had been in existence in the pre-covid-19 period, nevertheless, it became critical that PAS would have been provided so lecturers' voices could be amplified to reach the students who were distanced in compliance to the measures. In the words of participant 10, "a student staying distanced; wasting the lecture periods and he/she violating the covid-19 physical distance and being part of the lecture was a choice between the devil and the deep blue sea." On why these students could not keep away entirely from the lecture instead of violating the protocols, some participating lecturers thought it could have to do with marking of attendance during lectures. A female participant responded that even though she knew the implication of allowing her students to cluster in seats very close to her, she felt helpless to disperse them because that would be denying them the right to benefit from her lecture which, by the way, their parents paid for. A female participant shared her personal experience during one of her lectures, where her students practically asked her to remove her nose-mask so they could hear her clearly. She was told by her students, "Doc., remove the mask so we can see your lips to get the correct pronunciation." She had to oblige her students because her essence of being in the lecture hall in the first place was to teach them. According to her, she felt relieved when she removed it because she was already suffocating for lack of ventilation.

Insufficient Funds to provide all necessary covid-19 preventive measures

The study participants identified shortage of funds as one of the school-related impediments to the compliance of the covid-19 preventive measures. They responded that the needed materials such as buckets, water, soap for the intermittent hand washing and the hand sanitizer to provide the much desired sanitized result, which need to be stationed at various points for students and staff use, were not always made available. Even when they got provided, they came in number that was too small to go round the student population. Again, some of these lecturers made case for the students' inability to provide the materials for their own personal use, pointing lack of sufficient fund as an issue too. One male participant said that students who beg to eat cannot be coerced to purchase the materials, therefore, he got helpless and allowed them into his lecture hall without subjecting them to the mandatory hand washing.

Lecturer-Related Factors Impeding Non-compliance

Three lecturer factors were identified by the participants as impedances to unflinching compliance to the Covid-19 preventive measures in the university lecture halls and theatres.

They were: bad covid-19 safety compliant role modeling, lackadaisical attitude of lecturers and denial of the reality of Covid-19 as a killer disease.

Bad covid-19 safety compliant role modeling

To the question on how the lecturers themselves role-played the covid-19 compliant life they expected to see in their students, knowing that what learners see teachers do, influence them more than what they hear from them. It was evident in their responses that the lecturers themselves were not compliant with covid-19 safety measures. Many do not do their own hand-washing before entering the lecture halls, some did not put on their facemasks neither were careful not to pick their nostrils nor touch their eyes with their fingers. The implication of this finding is that the students saw no reason why they must comply when their lecturers were not compliant. This finding can be explained using the social learning theory of Bandura. Adolescents commit into memory any action they observe from their significant adults who they consider models and reproduce such behaviours when similar occasions demand (Bandura, 1977). This played out in the case of noncompliance with covid-19 preventive measures by the students. Adolescents observe the behaviours of their social models and behave in similar fashion. This was supported by the findings of Wakoli (2018) that advertisements, novels, and movies are some of the factors that influence drinking and smoking among students. It is reasonable for lecturers to note that as they are watching how their students comply to rules and policies both for their own safety and for the safety of others, their students are watching them too.

Lackadaisical attitude of some Lecturers

The students mentioned that many lecturers showed no interest in making sure that the Covid-19 preventive protocols were observed in the lecture halls. Respondent 5 captured the extent to which lack of commitment on the part of the lecturers had encouraged noncompliance in the lecture halls: “Hmm....certain lecturers never made themselves part of the struggle to curb the spread of this virus at all. They just didn’t fail in their academic responsibility; anytime they had lecture, they went in and delivered their lecture and off they went; whether students observed the protocols or not, they never cared.” Another participant concluded, “No student bothered about observing any protocol when such lecturers were in the lecture halls. A female lecturer said that she only bothered when she had the strength but not when she had exhausted herself under hard condition. To this response, though she did not mention the hard condition, the researchers thought that not having an office to herself would have been responsible for her behaviour.

Refusal to Accept that Covid-19 Truly Exists

A respondent mentioned that despite the level of education and exposure of lecturers in NAU, Awka, many still refused to accept that covid-19 was real. A male participant, who incidentally is a member of the committee set up by the university to monitor compliance with covid-19, had this to say “....many lecturers including professors believe covid-19 was another kind of sham brought by the whites to introduce us to inconveniencing lifestyles that were foreign to our culture.” To such category of lecturers, as the participant

puts it, “not giving a fellow Igbo a hug or a handshake is tantamount to denying us our right to expression of love and oneness.” They frowned at fist bumping as approved way of greeting, describing it as “boxing’ a beloved one. As much bizarre as this opinion may sound, it is not held only by the staff with low and average educational level, but by many Professors too. What this implies is that lecturers in this group did not believe that covid-19 existed hence the excuses.

Student-Related Factors that Impeded Compliance with covid-19 Safety Measures

The two factors identified by the participants as student-related were students’ delusion of non-existence of the disease and penchant for disregard of school rules as it is characteristic with the adolescents.

Students’ delusion on non-existence of Covid-19

One main student-related factor that militated against enforcement and compliance of the covid-19 preventive measures in the lecture halls of the university was some students’ persistence in delusion that Covid-19 is a sham. Respondent 21 reported a discussion he had with few of his students which warranted his belief that many students did not believe that this pandemic disease was real. He quoted one of them as saying, “But, sir, why have I not seen or heard of anybody I knew who died of Covid-19? Why am I just hearing or reading about it from the media.” This finding was collaborated by Ogunbode (2020) who averred that although health workers had come in contact with victims of COVID-19 in the line of duty, yet they still doubted the existence of the virus. Following the above, one could believe that getting the students in this group to cooperate with the school authority in complying totally with Covid-19 safety was an uphill task.

Another important student-related factor was students’ penchant to disregard rules made by the school authority particularly when their opinions were not sought over matters that concern them. This is characteristic of adolescents destabilizing learning processes within school settings. It is a well-known fact that adolescents are not passive recipients of whatever the school or even their home present to them. Adolescents often revolt against all imposed truth and authority because to them, life is idealistic (Nwikpo & Ebenebe, 2014). A male participant reminded the researchers about the identity of these students on who the compliance was expected to be enforced, and he said, “those students were adolescents with their usual characteristic of quest for independence. They want to be independent and desire no interference in their life by parents, teachers and/or school authority.” The participant rhetorically asked, “Were they made part of the body that made the rules?” He said that if the students were made part of that response committee, the work of compliance would have been easy, stressing that it is always easier to use adolescents to make their peers to accept to obey rules. Participant 11 who was a coordinator of one of the crowd-pulling courses related this influence to peer culture. This finding is in agreement with Hanımoğlu (2018) who averred that aberrant behavior may lead to problems with conformity to societal values.

Conclusion

The study examined the impediments to effective compliance with Covid-19 Safety measures in the lecture halls and theatres. Before the researchers went digging into factors that hindered compliance, they first established that the participants had knowledge of the measures under study. Their interaction with the participants on the issue yielded convincing result. The participants know the measures by their fingertips, and can read them out off-the-cuff.

Following the above, the researchers settled with the main purpose of the study. From the responses of the sampled lecturers, it was found out that the factors bothered on space limitations, dilapidated infrastructure, finitude of public address system, lecturer burnout as a result of fewness of office accommodations for lecturers, bad covid-19 safety compliant role modeling by some lecturers among others. The facts that emerged from the interview afforded the researchers thorough understanding of factors which impede the proper enforcement of compliance with covid-19 safety measures in the lecture halls by Nigerian lecturers. The researchers gained the knowledge that students were not solely to be blamed for the noncompliant manner many handled the university's policy on prevention of spread of covid-19. Equally, the researchers gained the knowledge that the lecturers, though found to be failing in certain aspects of their own duty to enforce compliance, yet should not be utterly blamed. There were a lot that laid on the hands of every stakeholder in the education system to keep our Nigerian schools especially the universities safe from the menace of covid-19 virus.

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