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EDITORIAL NOTE

There has been a paradigm shift from traditional teaching methods to technology-based teaching and learning. The era in which teachers depended on printed teaching materials has shifted to an age of technology, where classrooms are not just brick and mortar, but integrated with virtual platforms. Research shows that technology can play an important role in education. The traditional chalk and board teaching method requires participants to be present in the classroom, where instruction is limited to textbooks and teacher notes, but the advent of technology has created new challenges. new avenues where teachers and learners can access a variety of online learning materials regardless of distance.

Thus, in a country like South Africa, where the majority of schools are located in rural areas, many rural students have less privileged access to quality education. Public schools do not always have the infrastructure and socioeconomic conditions that make them unattractive to the best teachers. The main impact of technology is that it can be used to improve access to information and improve academic standards in public schools where effective and efficient connectivity, hardware as well as electronic and confidential content. Teachers need training in how to use computer-based learning, which will allow them to

provide learners with unrestricted access to online materials regardless of distance.

On the other hand, the pandemic offers the government an opportunity to correct the irregularities and inequalities in the South African education system that public schools have fallen victim to over the years. There should be equal access and opportunities to education and educational institutions in the country. Therefore, it is necessary to maintain equity in program delivery and therefore all online learning programs should be made available to all learners. In order to achieve equity in the resumption of the curriculum during and after the Covid-19 era, it is imperative to incorporate the impact of the pandemic into teaching and learning until the goal of full resumption of education is achieved.

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SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON INDIVIDUAL HOUSEHOLDS IN AFRICA: THE GAMBIA EXPERIENCE

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Abstract

People and households are still under the trauma caused by Covid-19 which has devastated the socio-economic structure of households in The Gambia. The study objective is to assess the socio-economic impact of Covid-19 on individual families in the study area. The disruption of societal and individual activities through the restriction of movement of people and the effect of social distance measures on employment, Gender Based Violence (GBV), education, and health service negatively impacted homes. The study utilised a quantitative method and employed a cross sectional study design. A convenient and a snowball sampling technique were employed by this study. A non-restricted sample of working-class residents of the Greater Banjul Area was followed with an online questionnaire. There's a total of 114 respondents' respondent for this survey. Based on the objectives of the study, thematic areas were developed to understand the linkages between Covid-19 and satisfaction of life, household income and finance, societal issues, health, education, food, gender based violence, drinking alcohol and use of tobacco. Overall, the study revealed a positive

correlation on the impact COVID-19 and household income, health, education, food availability and consumption and gender-based violence. Even though the impact of Covid-19 was not immense in terms of human cost (mortality) in the Gambia compared to other countries, the study discloses that the consequences of the virus on societal issues and the economy of the country were profound. The social impacts of the pandemic have affected many families. These impacts are enormous on society and may last for a long time before society will recover and get back on its feet.

Key Words: **Household, Family, Socio-Economic, Impact, COVID-19**

1. INTRODUCTION

Since it was detected in Wuhan China in 2019, the Coronavirus (also called Covid-19) has directly or indirectly affected every living individual not minding where they live with more than twenty-two million and an increasing number of cases already registered in the world so far. It sparked fear and affects global economies, forcing many people and nations into a historic level of economic recession. Although not sparing the developed countries, developing countries such as the Gambia are expected to be much more affected, with the fragile state

of their economies. Social distancing, self-isolation and travel restrictions have led to a reduced workforce across all economic sectors and caused many jobs lost. Food consumption was drastically affected due to panic buying while production and demand for durable manufactured good decreasing globally (WHO 2020).This study is focused on the impact of the Covid19 on individuals and households in terms of lost jobs and income affecting the household's ability to afford a basic standard of living. Social activities were badly affected due to government restrictions of person's movement. By and large, individual businesses and livelihood were affected.

According to the Integrated Household Survey of 2015, almost half of the Gambia's 2million population (48.6%) are living below the poverty line, a large number of the population is still vulnerable to shocks and a crisis like COVID-19 will move most of the vulnerable populations back into poverty while increasing vulnerability for others. This study measured the impact of coronavirus pandemic on individual households in the Gambia in terms of lost jobs and income affecting the household's ability to afford a basic standard of living. Several developments have taken place since the first reported case in The Gambia which has significant implications on

the economy and society of the country. Firstly, the government suspended non-essential travels by government officials, including Ministers, Permanent Secretaries, Managing Directors and Directors of all Ministries, Departments and Agencies. A state of public emergency was declared throughout the country and all public gatherings were suspended. This includes international and local conferences, workshops and seminars to be hosted in The Gambia. Lumos (open markets) and Gamos (special Islamic gatherings) and Church gatherings were all suspended. Besides, all travellers from hotspot countries were isolated for 14 days upon arrival in The Gambia during the peak of the Pandemic. The border between The Gambia and Senegal was closed on Monday 23rd March 2020 but the closure did not affect essential services, such as the movement of security personnel, foodstuff, medical services, related items, and equipment between the two countries. The government of the Gambia had asked all non-essential workers to stay home as measures to contain the spread of Covid-19 continue. The government approved a GMD500 million Covid-19 Emergency Fund bail out to support families and small-scale businesses in the wake of the pandemic. The Government also produced a National COVID19 Response Plan with an indicative budget of

US$8.8 million to address the situation in the country. A Nationwide food aid packages were facilitated by the government to support the most vulnerable in the society and most families benefited.

Before the Covid-19 pandemic, most of the healthcare infrastructures in The Gambia were in the state of dilapidation.- The Ministry of Health had since formed a taskforce to help prevent the widespread of the virus and has been giving daily briefings to the general public via the television and radio and all social media outlets in the country. Various quarantine and isolation centres were created in some key border installations across the country. The Medical Research Council (MRC) facility at Fajara has been used as a treatment centre for coronavirus patients. However, due to lack and insufficient funding from donor agencies, most of the healthcare expenses are made from out-of-pocket expenditure compared to Europe where the national and regional authorities are responsible for the health policies and expenditure of citizens. Despite the quarantine and other measures adopted to stop the spread of COVID19 in the Gambia, the number of infected cases and deaths were high. This situation mounted unprecedented pressure on the public health system in many parts of the country. This pressured

the government of the Gambia to impose the wearing of face mask in public places mandatory with effect from 24th July 2020. A curfew was also imposed on its citizens restricting people's movements from 10 pm to 5 am. In addition, all shops selling non-essential products in the country were closed for 21 days. Market vendors and some essential service provisions in the country were only allowed to operate from 6 am to 2 pm from Mondays to Saturdays.

1.1   Problem Statement

The COVID-19 pandemic forced a systematic change on how people and businesses operate in the Gambia. The number of restrictions imposed including restrictions on travel to and from the Gambia limit or eliminate the tourism session of 2020 and 2021, setting free most people working in the tourism sector. It is worth noting that a good part of the vulnerable population in the Gambia, especially in the greater Banjul are employed in Tourism related activities, contributing about 22 per cent of the GDP to the Gambian economy. There are number of previous studies analysing the economic impact of global pandemics. A general equilibrium approach is the ideal framework for properly evaluating the economic

impacts of public health emergencies such as pandemic influenza and human coronavirus.

2. EMPIRICAL REVIEW

In Ghana, the first issue of concern from COVID-19 literature is that the virus is taking its highest toll on two factors: (1) the impact of the virus on economic activity and (2) the number of people living close to the global poverty line (Mahler et al., 2020b). Disturbingly, the outbreak of COVID-19 and the non-existence of a cure have several critical implications. First, the pandemic is a threat to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), as it is entrenching poverty thereby deteriorating standards of living in most sub-Saharan African countries, including Ghana. Before COVID-19, more than half of the extreme poor lived in sub-Saharan Africa and alarmingly, the number of poor people in the region increased by 9 million (World Bank, 2018). It was projected even in the absence of COVID-19 that, by 2030, nearly 9 out of 10 extreme poor would be in sub-Saharan Africa. Now with COVID-19, current estimates suggest that the world's progress in achieving zero poverty in this region by 2030 will be slog back by seven extra years

owing to COVID-19 (Mahler et al., 2020a). The present study examines how COVID-19 is posing a threat to some of the SDGs, particularly poverty and hunger in Ghana. The most recent estimates from the Ghana Living Standards Survey (GLSS 7) suggests that the battle to end poverty in all its forms everywhere in Ghana is far from over and in some regions, getting harder to achieve as the proportion of Ghana's poor remains unacceptably high (Ghana Statistical Service, 2018a, 2018b).

The second issue of concern from the literature is that COVID-19's impact on poor households is more likely to be heterogeneous across gender with male-headed household better positioned than their female counterparts in dealing with the shock. If this theory holds, then different gender-specific policies are required to tackle post- COVID-19 poverty. It is important to emphasise that poverty-gender heterogeneities have a long-standing history with women continuously being disfavoured (S. A. Grossbard-Shechtman & Neuman, 1988; Betti et al., 2020; Depew & Price, 2018; S. Grossbard-Shechtman & Neuman, 1998). Consequently, the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic has received growing concerns (Wenham et al., 2020) that the existing gender poverty gaps are likely to exacerbate given that labour markets and

family obligations often constrain females in competition against men on the economic front (Alon et al., 2020). Others Wenham et al., (2020) underscored that the differential effect of COVID-19 on women results from differences in employment status where most women are engaged in informal care within the household with the consequences of limiting their work and economic opportunities. Most importantly, previous studies suggest that significant differences exist in a household's COVID-19 mitigation or management behaviours and that the typical household does not manage COVID-19 efficiently. In other words, households tend to be short-sighted when making decisions regarding shocks and thus, may be ill-prepared for shocks like COVID-19. At the same time, individual households have been increasingly expected to take responsibility for their COVID-19 security.

Nigeria has been adversely affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. Accosting to a journal published in May 2020 suggested that the first major impact channel is the expected shortfall in federal budget revenue due primarily to the plunge in oil prices. Likewise, on the expenditure side, there are substantial unanticipated spending needs associated with COVID-19 in the form of increased health

costs, new stimulus packages for businesses, and increased social support for vulnerable households.

The second channel is the expected decline in private remittances into Nigeria as COVID-19 affects the well-being of Nigerian workers living abroad and remitting income back home. Nigeria is the largest recipient of foreign remittance incomes in Sub-Saharan Africa, and these comprise about 5% of Nigerian GDP (Nevin and Omosomi, 2019; World Bank, 2018, World Bank, 2019). The Economist (2020) reports that Nigeria relies on "major lockdown economies," such as Britain, France, Italy, Spain, and the United States of America, for 54% of remittance incomes. Remittances from these countries declined dramatically in early-2020; for example, some payment companies in Europe reported declines of 80–90% in remittance payments to Africa. This result demonstrated how individual households were affected due to the advent of the Covid19 Pandemic.

The third major impact channel includes the direct effects of policies adopted to mitigate the spread of the coronavirus, specifically the 5-week restrictions on movement and economic activity imposed by the federal government on the Abuja Federal Capital Territory, Lagos State, and Ogun State, as well as the extended lockdowns

in other states, such as Kano. These restrictions directly reduce economic output and household incomes for a large share of the residents who are unable to work and earn an income. Consumer demand is also curtailed directly through measures that prevent consumers from spending money on non-essential goods and services. Lockdown measures were not applicable to sectors considered "essential." The federal government issued exemptions for medical services provided by public and private hospitals and pharmacies, food retail in markets during restricted hours, supermarkets and grocery shops, and prepared foods for delivery. The policies allowed farms, food and drug manufacturers, and food distributors to continue their activities. Other services considered essential, and therefore exempt, included fuel stations, private security companies, and limited financial services to maintain cash availability and to allow for online transactions. The World Bank provides a longer-term perspective, predicting that remittance flows into Nigeria will decline by 25% this year due to COVID-19. This is at the upper-end of the 5–25% range decline anticipated by Kuhlcke and Bester (2020) based on an analysis of remittance flows during the past crises, although they warn that the high proportion of remittances coming

through informal channels makes it difficult to assess the true impact.

According to UNDP report (2020) on policy briefing in Nigeria, the implications of the economic impact of the pandemic could cultivate conditions for disgruntlement and social unrest. Pandemics have a bearing on the social fabric of society - stress initiated by economic losses often result in visible cracks where incidences of once socially unacceptable norms become more frequent. The report also suggests that health related pandemics have the potential to increase the risks of: domestic violence – with police reports in China showing that domestic violence tripled during the epidemic; violence against health workers due to serious stress levels that the pandemic places on patients; and abuse and exploitation of women and girls – especially care givers. Furthermore, frustrations resulting from economic loss could also play into existing regional fault lines within Nigeria.

In the United Kingdom, using de-identified transaction-level data called SaverLife, (Baker et al. 2020) studied how pending of households respond to an Epidemic. Households radically alter their typical spending across several major consumption categories as a number of cases rise while expenditure also sharply decreases with

alternation on spending on different goods (Baker et al. 2020). This is also associated with a high reduction in spending by high-income individuals as shown by on a paper studying COVID-19 and how stabilization policies affect household and individual Spending and Employment.

The evidence tends to emphasise that while household reallocates income to more pressing needs of the individuals such as food and other necessities, there is also a general decline income and consumption as cases rise and employment increase. Although the impact on the poor household is much more noticeable on poor households and individuals (Ardl et al. 2017; Kartseva and Kuznetsova 2020; Nicola et al. 2020; Sohrabi et al. 2020) other households (high-income household) are also grossly affected (Chetty et al. 2020) with income lost, reduction in employment income and a corresponding decline in expenditure and rationing. The reduction in consumption expenditure by all households greatly reduced the revenues of businesses that cater to high-income households and person (Chetty et al. 2020).

The Gambia is one of the smallest countries in the world, particularly in West Africa. According to the World Population Review (2019), The Gambia has an estimated

population of 2.3 million inhabitants. The Gambia in 2017, recorded the value of 0.460 human development index (UNDP 2018). This report positioned The Gambia in the lower category of human development. Poverty remains a challenge in The Gambia, predominantly in rural areas. The Gambia Demographic and Health Survey (GDHS) 2013, shows that rural communities are at the bottom place in the country's wealth index, educational attainment, advanced risk of food security, and raised fertility (GBoS, 2013). In The Gambia, the health care system continues to be one of the most sectors that the government focuses its attention on most with annual expenditure equivalent to 6% of the GDP compared to the Ministry of Finance & Economic Affairs and Ministry of Trade, Regional Integration, Industry, and Employment 4% and 2% respectively (MOFEA, 2020). However, this is not substantial enough, given the situation of the health care system in the Gambia. Current health conditions in The Gambia is a major attraction to multiple development partners such as World Bank, Global Fun, African development Bank as well as projects under health like primary health care. Furthermore, the country has six major hospitals of which two are in the capital city, two in the West Coast region, one in North Bank region, and one in the Central River Region.

Similarly, the Gambia Demographic and Health Survey (GDHS) 2013 shows that The Gambia has a very serious public health care problem resulting from infectious and parasitic diseases (GBoS, 2013). Insufficient investment and lack of trained health personnel also remains an added obstacle. Most of the qualified doctors are those on technical assistance from countries such as Cuba. Currently, there are 145 Cuban doctors on assistance (Sine, Jeffrey, Patrick Pascal Saint-Firmin, 2019). Importantly, the government in its endeavour to better health care delivery has developed a national health policy 2012-2020. The health policy seeks to make quality health care reachable to all Gambians at all levels with adequately trained, skilled, and motivated personnel. Its implementation is expected to reduce morbidity and mortality concerning major diseases, promotion of healthy lifestyles, reduces health risk, and exposure to environment negative issues.

In Africa, where families are much valuable, with a high prevalence of poverty and other social vulnerabilities, the effect of the pandemic can be a lot more pronounced. The impact is magnified by a very poor beginning, with bad health systems, and limited preparedness for such situations. On Understanding its Economic Implications

of the coronavirus pandemic for Africa, Ataguba, 2020, shows that the COVID -19 will have both long term and short term effect on African economies which can impose a lasting impact on urban facilities and therefore households. Also, due to the significant costs associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, the COVID-19 will particularly affect less developed economies where health care systems are less developed and population density is high (Ataguba 2020; Kartseva and Kuznetsova 2020; Nicola et al. 2020; Renjen 2020; Sohrabi et al. 2020).

Given the nature of urban residents, global pandemics affecting global business activities are more likely to impact urban as compared to rural residents. (Bonaccorsi et al. 2020) shows that the coronavirus pandemic affects urban dwellers by restricting their movements, affecting their employability and income. This effect is not much pronounced in rural settlements where populations are less dense and employment is likely to be self, and primitive. Adverse economic events such as recession more often affect men more than women especially when it comes to employment. This could be because for those employed; men are also more likely to be engaged in highly vulnerable employment. What is clear is that the severity of COVID-19 on economy will be more evident

in the medium term after the suspension of lockdowns and commencement of economic activities. At aggregate level, precise export revenue losses, government expenditure deficit, unemployment levels will determine the severity of the pandemic on the African continent. Currently, the impact is perceptible in the tourism sector on account of cancelled international hotel bookings and fights. At a microlevel, restricted supply chains have disrupted access to inputs which has increased the cost of production, scarcity of essentials and a surge in prices. Business closures have resulted in job losses, low liquidity levels and compromised household consumption. The economic downturn will linger on in the medium term and will take government fiscal adjustments and reforms to curb the setbacks.

The current COVID-19 pandemic is still ongoing, and it is concerning that we still do not know how long it will last and what long-term effects it will have. Despite the successful development of vaccines, the medical capacity to completely treat this disease is still limited. Non-pharmaceutical interventions (NPIs), such as increasing handwashing, reducing physical contact, wearing masks in public places, maintaining social distance, quarantine, and isolation, are still the main strategies for handling this

pandemic (Van Bavel et al., 2020; Gössling et al., 2021). The social and economic consequences of the pandemic are devastating: almost half of the global workforce is at risk of losing their livelihoods, tens of millions are at risk of falling into extreme poverty, and millions of companies are facing existential threat (Alauddin et al., 2021). In addition to the pandemic itself, the economic impact of the crisis brings heavy psychological stress to individuals, causing mental health problems, and may trigger long-lasting behaviour changes. Other pandemic-related factors may also cause psychological distress, including mandatory use of face masks (Wang et al., 2020a), lockdowns (Le et al., 2020), lack of access to medical services (Hao et al., 2020; Tee et al., 2021), dissatisfaction with health information (Tee et al., 2021), perceived discrimination (Wang et al., 2021), and stress about returning to work (Tan et al., 2020).

Prior behavioural science research focuses on perceived threats, stress, and coping (Van Bavel et al., 2020). In the early stages of the pandemic, the physical health risks associated with the COVID19pandemic have received extensive attention from the academic community (Mehta et al., 2020; Odayar et al., 2020), and there is growing research attention on the risks of mental health associated

with the spread of the pandemic (Auerbach and Miller, 2020; Xiong et al., 2020; Wang et al., 2020a). The focal attention since the outbreak of the pandemic has been the psychological distress because of the pandemic itself (Jungmann and Witthoft, 2020) or the adverse economic impact of the pandemic (Bierman et al., 2021). However, it is still unclear how the pandemic control measures cause mental health problems through economic impact (Murakami et al., 2021). Many scholars believe that the measures taken during the pandemic may cause people to suffer more economic losses and fall into economic difficulties, thereby causing serious mental health problems (Timming et al., 2021), while some scholars believe that although the pandemic may cause huge economic losses, people's mental health status has not decreased (Murakami et al., 2021). Therefore, it is necessary to conduct a conceptual analysis of the economic impact of the pandemic and mental health by synthesizing the relevant findings in existing literature (Ali et al., 2021).

3. METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a cross sectional design to measure the impact of Covid19 on resident of the greater Banjul Area (GBA). This study focused on the greater Banjul area of the Gambia. This area includes Banjul and Kanifing and the urban part of the West Coast Regions of The Gambia. It encompasses the main urban centres of the Gambia, which is densely populated and highly commercial for most Gambians. Both primary and secondary data types were used. More importantly, secondary data from research results obtained from a review of literature on the impact of the Covid19 pandemic and other relation materials was obtained for this study. Primary data was collected from resident of greater Banjul area through filing the online questionnaire. Primary data helped to validate or invalidate results from the review of literature and opinions and expectation of the researcher(s). These data are also derived from obtaining key information specific to this area of the Gambia (The Greater Banjul Area). Information such as, demographic, social and economic characteristics, social and economic impact, and mitigation strategies during the Covid-19 pandemic were impact result of these data.

4. RESULTS FROM THE FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The study interviewed thematic 114 respondents in the greater Banjul area. An online Google form was filled in by participants of this study. Based on the objectives of the study, areas for analysis of study finding were developed. The thematic areas were developed to answer the study objectives. Among the 114 respondents of this study, 85 (74.1) were male and 29 (29.5%) were female. Most of the respondents were between the ages of 27 and 40 years (31 between 27 to 33 and 32 between 34 to 40 years); at least 50% of the respondents were between this ages cohort. The other largest group of respondents was between the ages of 40 to 46. Only 2 respondents were aged 60 and above. Respondents were asked about the number of people living in their households. The study found out that the average household size among the respondents of this study was 7. At least 50 of the respondents said that their household size was between 3 and 7 person per household. Respondents were asked about the attendance of school amongst their households' members. At least 92.1% said that a member of their household is currently attending school while only 7.9% of the respondent claimed that their household members are currently not attending school. Respondents were

asked to rate their satisfaction with life from a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 means not satisfied with live and 10 means very satisfied with life. The study found out that 16 of the respondents from the 114 said they are not satisfied with life while 12 from the 114 said they are happy with life. Overall, at least 50% of the respondents were not somehow happy with their life these days.

The study found out that a good number of the respondents were satisfied with the financial situation of their households. However, 14 of the 114 respondents expressed dissatisfaction with their household financial situation. The personal relationship with other people including household members was assessed by the study. The study found out that majority of the respondents was satisfied with the personal relationship they have with other people or member of their families. On the respondents feeling of a depression, about 29.8% of the respondents said they somewhat felt depressed during the past days, 41.2% of the respondents said that the depression they felt was little and 28.1% said they have not been depressed during the past days. Not feeling nervousness, the respondents, majority of the respondents said they did not feel nervous. Majority of the respondent were happy during the past four weeks in 64.5%, while

28.1% said happiness was all the time. 5.6% of the respondents as little happiness during the period while 1.8% said none of the time felt lonely during the past 24 hours. However, a survey was carried out during the past 4 weeks to find out the level of loneliness amongst the respondents. 32.5% said had no time at all while 42.4% majority submits that they had little loneliness. 25.4% said some times. 1.7% minority were found to say that, they were lonely all the time.

The impact of Covid-19 on health condition of the respondents showed that 37.7 % majority said the Covid-19 affected their health while 25.4% said the Covid-19 affected their health marginally. Those extremely affected were 28.9% and 7.9% said the Covid19 did not at all affect their health. Respondent were asked whether they were concerned about the health of their relative or friend because of the Covid-19. Overwhelmingly, 91.2% of the respondents said they were concerned about the health of their relatives or friends. It was found out that only 8.8% of the respondents were not concerned about the health of their relatives or friends from Covid-19 pandemic. The impact of Covid-19 on maintaining social ties with friend and families was assessed among respondents in the study. As shown on the chart below,

about 90.3% of the respondents said Covid-19 has affected their ability to maintain social ties, although to a varying degree. Only 9.6% said the Covid-19 did not affect their ability to maintain social ties with family or friends. About 90.4% of the respondents said the Covid-19 has interrupted their education or their household members. Only 9.6% said the Covid19 did not affect their education of household members.

The findings shows that 83.4% of the respondents were impacted with stressed as a result of the house confinement due to Covid-19. The stressed as a result of the house confinement was reported in a varying degree, 27.2% were extremely stressed, 36% were somewhat stressed and 20.2% were much stressed. Only 16.7% said they were not impacted with stressed because of the house confinement due to the Covid-19. The study found out that at least 71.1% of the respondents claimed they were not affected with a domestic violence in their homes. However, a good number of the respondents said they were affected with domestic violence because of the Covid-19 measures. About 5.2% of the respondent said that violence was extreme during the Covid-19, 11.4% said they were very affected by domestic violence and the 12.3% said the violence was somewhat in their homes.

The study found that 92.1% of the respondents do not drink alcohol, 5.1% said that the Covid-19 did not change amount or frequency of drinking of alcohol and the 2.8% said drinking alcohol has decreased. The study found out that none of the respondents has increased in drinking of Alcohol. The impact of Covid-19 on the use of tobacco among respondents was measured in this study. Majority of the respondents (97.1%) do not use tobacco. From those that use tobacco, the study found out that majority said the Covid-19 did not change their tobacco use. However, only 2.9% of the respondents said that their tobacco use has increased.

The study found about 89.5% of the respondents said they are employed and currently engaged in work duties. About 5.6% are unemployed and 3.4% are employed, in receipt of employment income and not carrying out duties, while 1.5% is others. Only 13.2% of the respondents are currently working from. Of the 13.2% currently working from home, 86.8% said it is as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. 97.4% says no to the question if they normally work from home before introduction of Covid-19 restrictions in the Gambia. Respondents were asked to describe how Covid-19 impacted their households to meeting their financial obligations. From the responses,

about 67.5% of the respondents said that the Covid-19 has impacted their household's ability to meeting their financial obligation and 32.5% said Covid-19 has not impacted the ability of their household to meeting their financial obligation.

5. CONCLUSION

Even though the impact of Covid-19 was not devastating in terms of human cost (mortality) in the Gambia when compared to other countries, albeit, this study has found out that the consequences of the virus on societal issues and economy of the country was profound. The social impacts of the pandemic have affected many families. These impacts are enormous on the society and may last for a long time before society will recover and get back to its feet. In the literature, the pandemic has further increased vulnerability of African countries including the Gambia, where families are much valuable, with a high prevalence of poverty and other social vulnerabilities, the effect of the pandemic can be a lot more pronounced. The impact is magnified by a very poor beginning, with bad health systems, and limited preparedness for such situations. The social and economic wellbeing of the people was affected due to Covid-19. With this reality in mind, individual households and families are making to

recover in the Post-Covid-19 era. With small scale businesses springing up, hope is not lost at all. Deliberate governmental and non-governmental efforts in easing the stress will help a great deal.

6.   RECOMMENDATIONS

The study recommends that:

i.   The Government through the National Disaster Management Agency should provide immediate financial assistance to poor households

ii.   The government should support small and medium scale business enable to continue employing people to lessen the impact of Covid19 on the economy

iii. The government should strengthen the behavioural change communication on Gender Based Violence.

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THE INTEGRATION OF TECHNOLOGY INTO THE TEACHING AND LEARNING IN HIGHER EDUCATION : THE CASE OF A ZIMBABWEAN UNIVERSITY

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ABSTRACT

The integration of technology into the education system generally refers to technology based teaching and learning. It means teaching and learning that incorporates and utilizes new technologies. Traditional teaching and learning methods have faced challenges from the global coronavirus (covid-19) pandemic especially the emphasis on social distancing as a prevention measure. Technology integration in education means that teaching and learning can still take place even if educators and students are physically and socially distanced. The engagement of computers and the internet now pervades a majority of people's life departments. Educators and students now live in a technological world and as a result these same educators and students easily connect to the integration of technology into teaching and learning. This paper argues that there are many challenges associated with the integration of technology into teaching and learning in higher education. Despite these challenges the integration of technology into the education system has positive effects on students'

learning, expectations, outcomes, performance and experience.

Introduction

People the world over are living in environments which have embraced new technologies and practices. They are living in a constantly and rapidly evolving technological terrain. The technological trajectory indicates that currently technology is omnipresent. From the home, workplace to the school, technology has transformed people's lives. Costley(2014:18) notes that "We are an evolving technological society and in many ways have become dependent on its use". In Zimbabwean schools, mostly in urban areas school kids aged four to five years and attending ECD (A) are expected to bring tablets to school as part of the requirements, upon securing a place. This means that at these schools Information and Communication Technology mentoring begins at an early age. Recently, the Zimbabwe Schools Examination Council has introduced a digital platform where students can access their results after writing Ordinary and Advanced Level examinations. Traditionally, students used to travel to their examination centres in order to check their results.

The Zimbabwe Schools Examination Council has also introduced a platform where Grade 7 learners can apply online for form one places. Traditionally, the Grade 7 learners used to travel long distances to schools of their choices in order to apply and secure form one places. Furthermore, in most schools especially in urban areas in Zimbabwe, primary school holiday lessons are conducted online. Learners do not necessarily have to travel to venues to meet their teachers face to face in order to engage in holiday lessons. The learners only need digital devices like computers, tablets, smart phones and internet connectivity or data bundles in order to do holiday work/lessons.

In addition, university students in Zimbabwe used to travel long distances to their respective universities in order to access their results which were usually displayed on notice boards. Currently, students can access their results from anywhere using their student portals. They only need technology tools like computers, tablets or other mobile devices and internet connectivity.

Great Zimbabwe University is an institution of higher learning in the city of Masvingo, Zimbabwe. A cursory glance outside Great Zimbabwe University main Library, Hebert Chitepo Law school, School of Gender and

cultural studies, Robert Mugabe School of Heritage and Education and Mashava campus shows many community people who are not university staff or students accessing free university wi-fi.

The above examples corroborate the view that this is a digital era where the daily use of technology in various departments of people's lives is prevailing. Furthermore, the Covid-19 pandemic posed serious challenges to the educational sector as face to face lectures were banned. This resulted in a paradigm shift from the traditional teaching methods to the online teaching which has remained popular even in the post Covid-19 era.

The coronavirus (covid-19) pandemic in Zimbabwe is part of the worldwide pandemic of coronavirus disease 2019 (covid-19) caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2. The coronavirus was confirmed to have reached Zimbabwe in March 2020. Some prevention measures introduced by the Zimbabwean Government include closure of Zimbabwe's borders to all non-essential travel, except for returning residents and cargo, closure of bars, night clubs, cinemas, swimming pools and sporting activities, restriction of all public gatherings to not more than fifty people and the closure of schools and universities. The engagement of online teaching platforms

due to Covid-19 restrictions and the general rise in the usage of new technologies in people's lives including teaching and learning has exhorted the current researcher to investigate the integration of technology into the educational system at Great Zimbabwe University. The main focus is on the impact of such integration on teaching and learning highlighting the challenges and advantages.

TECHNOLOGY INTEGRATION IN THE ZIMBABWEAN CONTEXT: THE BLENDED LEARNING

At Great Zimbabwe University, a combination of online learning and face to face method which is referred to as blended learning is engaged. Potential Great Zimbabwe University students access information that they need about the university before they even register, that is through online. They do not need to travel to the university. They only need the university website which is www.gzu.ac.zw, a digital device and internet connectivity. Through the university website, potential students have access to information about the historical background of Great Zimbabwe University, legislation and statutes, mission and vision of the university, university council members, principal officers, the

university prayer, university logo and the university contact details. Potential students also have access to information about the various centres, schools and degree programmes. They know about the vision, mission, core values and brief staff biography at each school and centre.

Through the university website, new students are taught how to create their own accounts by entering their registration numbers, passwords and signing in. With this student portal created, students can make payments and register online. It is also through this student portal that students are able to access their examination timetables and results from anywhere.

Through the 'student life' section of the Great Zimbabwe University website, students have access to information about the dean of students, catering services on campus, student residence, sports and recreation at the university, student health, counseling and advisory, HIV and AIDS, life skills, chaplaincy and ecumenical from anywhere without necessarily meeting the dean of students.

The Great Zimbabwe University library which is central to the integration of technology in teaching and learning has 'Towards a virtual library' and 'From the brick

concept to the click concept' as its pedestal. It offers various online services to students and staff.

The library has online databases, institutional repository, Online Public Access Catalogue (OPA), past examination papers database, full text access to the world's most digital collections both on campus(on site) and off campus (remotely). The Great Zimbabwe University e-library also provides information to students who are themselves researchers and staff about crucial information regarding academic publishing. There are accredited and predatory journals.

Accredited journals are recognized research output which meet specified criteria and therefore score high in terms of discipline, reputation, peer review quality and high quality publishing standard(G.Z.U website). It is therefore recommended that researchers and academics publish with accredited journals in order to receive recognition for an article one has written. The Great Zimbabwe University provides links to International Indeces of accredited journals.

Predatory Open Access publishing is an exploitative open access publishing business model that involves charging publication fees to an author without providing the

editorial and publishing services associated with legitimate journals, Open access or not (G.Z.U website). It is therefore recommended that researchers, scientists and academics avoid these predatory publishers and predatory OA journals. The Great Zimbabwe University library provides a list of predatory publishers and journals. Great Zimbabwe University students and staff do not need face to face interaction with librarians in order to have such critical information. They only need a digital device, internet connectivity and the Great Zimbabwe University website.

The integration of technology into teaching and learning at Great Zimbabwe University during the Covid-19 era and in the post Covid-19 era is critical in this digital world. Some scholars like Onay et.al(2015) have envisaged an increase in online courses offered in many universities:

> Many universities all around the world tend to offer online courses to students and this trend is likely to grow. This new form of education is very different from the traditional university systems, hence it requires careful planning and consideration.

However, at Great Zimbabwe University it is blended learning. In this post Covid-19 era, face to face lectures

are conducted. Conventional students (full time) and block students (part time) travel to Masvingo for face to face lectures and also write their examinations from their respective campuses since the adoption of the multi-campus system. With the cohort system, lecturers travel to Bulawayo cohort or Harare cohort for face to face lectures.

The university has made great strides in availing technological resources for the integration of technology into teaching and learning. The university has established computer laboratories with internet access at its various campuses. It has also increased the number of technical staff to assist students and staff. Through its teaching and learning centre, various workshops and training programmes are conducted to impart students and lecturers with the latest developments in the technological world. This is because people are now living in a constantly and rapidly evolving technological world.

The Google Classroom was introduced at Great Zimbabwe University as an online learning platform. Google Classroom is a free web-based learning management platform that allows anyone to create and manage classes online provided that they have a Google

account. Kumar and Bervell cited in Makumbe and Mutsikiwa (2021).

Upon the introduction of the Google Classroom, the Great Zimbabwe University Teaching and Learning Centre conducted workshops to appraise its stakeholders with the new learning platform. This is because technology is continuously and rapidly evolving. It is an ongoing process and demands continual learning (Rathore et.al 2016). Lecturers at Great Zimbabwe University use that platform to upload tasks, module outlines, assignment questions and tutorial questions. Students use the Google Classroom platform to upload assignments and any other material requested by the lecturer/tutor.

Students and lecturers create WhatsApp platform groups specific to their common modules/courses. In those groups they discuss tutorial questions and communicate issues relevant to that module/course. Lecturers and their Deans also create their WhatsApp groups in their respective schools and centres. In those groups, they share information on conference call for papers, information on new developments in the university (They used to meet face to face to discuss them in a School Board Meeting) and any other issues regarding Great Zimbabwe University teaching and learning. Departments under

various schools also have their WhatsApp groups where they discuss issues to do with their departments which may not be relevant to everyone in a School WhatsApp group. Subject areas under various departments also have their WhatsApp groups where they discuss issues regarding their subject areas which may not be relevant to everyone in the department. Students and lecturers also use emails for the same purposes.

These online learning platforms provide instant accessibility to information. Communication and transfer of knowledge is faster and convenient since these students and lecturers can communicate and exchange information anytime whether it is weekend or not and anywhere from the student residence, homes, lecture rooms or even when travelling. This is why Onay (2015) posits that:

> There has been an increasing interest in virtual education since 90's after the advent of the internet. In addition to technical improvements, there has been a dramatic increase in the number of people who are seeking a university degree as well as seeking skill enhancements and lifelong learning due to more competitive work environments and demands for a customized and anytime-anywhere learning.

CHALLENGES

While the integration of technology into the teaching and learning at schools and universities is a critical factor in a digital world, there are challenges faced in the application and use of online learning technologies. These challenges vary from a developed to a developing world, from one region to another, from one country to another and within a country from one university to another.

Financial challenges are an impediment in the paradigm shift from traditional methods of information dissemination to online learning technologies at Great Zimbabwe University. While the university has established computer laboratories, the computers are not enough to meet the demand. Some of the computers in the laboratories are malfunctioning and need proper maintenance. Some lecturers do not have personal computers or laptops. An attempt to provide lecturing staff with laptops did not materialize. Lecturers without laptops have to share with students those computers in the laboratories. Some students do not have personal computers and smart phones and so they rely on computer laboratories. Insufficient access to technological resources sometimes demotivates the educators and the students thus becomes a barrier in engaging online

teaching and learning platforms. Grabe and Grabe cited in Rathore and Sonawat(2005) underscore the centrality of technological resources:

> Effective integration of technology is achieved when students are able to select technology tools to help them obtain information in a timely manner, analyse and synthesise the information and present it professionally. The technology should become an integral part of how the classroom functions –as accessible as all other classroom tools.

While many scholars/studies have contended that the use of online learning technologies allows the educators and students to learn anytime and anywhere, the high cost of the internet and data bundles means that this is not always the case. Some lecturers and students do not afford the high internet costs and so cannot engage anywhere anytime as they rely on internet services provided by the university at its various campuses.

Poor internet connectivity means that lectures and presentations are disrupted continuously thus demotivating the educators and the students. It is also important to note that some students and lecturers are reluctant to embrace change. Not all lecturers or students

attend workshops organized by the teaching and learning centre to appraise them with latest technology developments. Some students simply concentrate on examinable modules/courses and rely on friends for information posted on online learning platforms. Some students do not have time to learn new technologies especially with the inception of the modularization system of teaching and learning in the first semester of 2023. According to the system, semester modules are no longer taught for the entire duration of the semester but are rather taught and examined in about six weeks of every semester.

Load shedding is another impediment to integration of technology into the teaching and learning at Great Zimbabwe University. Some scholars argue that one of the advantages of online teaching is that there is no time and space limitation. However, load shedding at Great Zimbabwe University has shown that this is not always the case. In order to curb the challenges posed by power cuts, the university has installed generators at its campuses. In most areas generators are switched on at 0900 hrs and switched off at 1200hrs. They are later switched on at 1400hrs and switched off at 1600hrs. The

implication is that, only when the generator is on that online learning can take place.

BENEFITS

Despite these challenges one can argue that technology integration into teaching and learning has positively affected students' academic achievements at Great Zimbabwe University. Rathore and Sonawat (2005):

> Technology lends itself as the multidimensional tool that assists the process of learning. Properly used, technology will help students acquire the skills they need to survive in a complex, highly technological knowledge-based based economy. Use of technology can help to improve and enhance the acquisition of knowledge and skills, and learning with and about technology is essential for students to gain the competencies to function well in a 21st century society and workforce.

Transfer of information/knowledge is faster and convenient when using online learning platforms. Lecturers easily distribute various tasks and assignments to students. The students quickly upload assignments and any tasks assigned to them without arranging for a face to

face interaction/meeting with the lecturers. This is enhanced by the ease of use of most online platforms:

> Google Classroom is user-friendly. Once logged onto the system, the steps to use the systems are laid out hence students find such a platform easy to use. The uploading of assignments and writing emails to instructors are easy to follow because the steps to carry out such activities are indicated on the platform.

Furthermore, the integration of technology into education makes collaborative research very convenient. Through online platforms, students can be engaged in collaborative discussions without face to face interactions. Students thus share information/knowledge quickly and conveniently. Such collaborative research is not limited to students at Great Zimbabwe University only but also extends to students and researchers from other universities in Zimbabwe, in the region and globally.

Moreover, technological tools allow lecturers and students to access newest information/knowledge from recent publications. The students are able to research on their own without relying on their lecturers. In that regard, they become active learners. By using technology in their learning the students can be active learners. They will be

aware of what information they need, why they need it and how they can get that information. (Suryani 2010). They can explore information available in the internet, find information that they need, copy it and further research. In addition Suryani argues that 'ICT can also provide a way for dynamic learning. By using the internet, our learning is not limited to the school hours, demographically where we are and who our teachers are'.

CONCLUSION

The general trend in many universities around the world is that there is a shift from traditional teaching and learning methods to online learning. Great Zimbabwe University has not abandoned the traditional methods but it has blended them with online learning. The internet is the primary learning medium. Technology assists the learning process. There are challenges associated with the integration of technology into the teaching and learning process. Despite the challenges, this paper has argued that technology has a positive effect on student learning expectations and outcomes.

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UNHU/UBUNTU VALUES IN UNIVERSITY EDUCATION DURING COVID PERIOD: THE CASE OF A STATE UNIVERSITY IN ZIMBABWE.

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Abstract

This study investigates Ubuntu virtues, which were apparently violated during the COVID -19 period at a state university in Zimbabwe. Specific Unhu/Ubuntu values and virtues were often compromised or even not observed at university during the COVID-19 period. Unhu philosophy calls for equality through sharing in society and the education sector is no exception when it comes to sharing but with the coming of the COVID-19 pandemic, Unhu virtues were compromised, thereby

violating the principles of social justice which are the hallmark of Ubuntu philosophy in teacher education in universities. The study is informed by the Afrocentric theory and its methodological approach involves interviews with students and lecturers. On the basis of these interviews conducted with students and lecturers, the author argues that the COVID-19 period exposed those students who came from poor families as they could not raise the money to buy the necessary gadgets to enable them to learn using the Online platform. Findings of the study show that equality and moral uprightness, which are at the core of Ubuntu philosophy, were compromised during the COVID-19 period at Great the university under study. The paper also discovered that COVID-19 affected the education sector in various ways as it brought in a lot of changes in the learning process. The study, thus, underscores that Ubuntu, which is central to African culture, was put to test by the coming of the COVID-19 virus and its major virtues were greatly compromised or to some extent ignored.

Key Words: unhu/ubuntu, COVID-19, social justice, teacher education, Africa.

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

The advent of Covid-19 made university education switch from the old normal to the new normal where both teaching and learning, including university operations were done virtually. This switch to the new norm had its

on effects and the compromisation of unhu/ Ubuntu was one of it. Chitumba (2013) said that the government of Zimbabwe after attaining independence embarked on reviewing its curriculum. In 1999 it instituted the Presidential Commission of enquiry into Education and Training, the Nziramasanga commission of 1999 that recommended refocusing of education on Ubuntu, Sciences, mathematics, technology and life skills. Manungo (2013) says that there is great significance of rooting university education on values and principles of Ubuntu philosophy considering the fact that university affect directly and indirectly the quality and direction of society. Beets and Louw in Viriri (2017) spoke on Unhu/Ubuntu in South African education transformation and assessment and they saw it fit that Unhu/ Ubuntu principles to become part of education of learners and for all South African teachers to adhere to those as they are the key players in the transformation of their education. They believe that Humanness and caring capture the spirit in which assessment should be conducted. To them humanness towards and caring unconditionally for the learner constitutes the foundation for effective teaching and learning. Learners experience assessment as positive only when they are sure that the teacher who guides the learning process is a humane and caring person. During

the Cocid-19 period the bond between lecturers and their students was severely affected and this was a violation of the Unhu/ Ubuntu philosophy which believes in people working together and seeing each other face to face. Marumo and Chakale in Ojakorutu (2018) argues that since Unhu/UBUNTU is communalistic in character it therefore means that it calls for equality among all persons in society. This taken further means that if it calls for equality in society it can be used as a vehicle to promote unity and eradicate undividualistic tendencies which were experienced during the Covid period. Because of its caring for all people, it means that all people are the same irrespective of their social background, therefore people should be treated the same. It calls for eradication of stigmatisation that might affect some students in their pursuit of their tertiary education. Chibaya et al (2022) sum up the idea when they say that in their opinion, Higher education represent the most effective approach for reaching an entire nation and affecting the skills, knowledge and attitudes of its people. In a real sense as university education goes, so goes the nation' The learning from home situation as was advocated by the Covid protocos had its challenges and one of them was the compromisation of Unhu/Ubuntu ethos. In Zimbabwe just like the rest of countries in Africa, one of the worst

affected sectors by Covid -19 was education with schools, colleges and universities having to shut down at different times. Omodan and Ige(2021) observed that schools, colleges and universities faced challenges that threatened to stall the education progress made in the recent decades due to the pandemic as it became difficult for learners to attend school and for government to fund them. Zimbabwe's higher education was severly hit since all institutions of higher learning went under phased lockdowns from March 2020. Ubuntu is defined by Letseka (2011) as a form of human engagement that allows for critical thinking, no-domination and the optimal development of human relationships. Chemhuru and Makuvaza (2014) say, Ubuntu is a concrete manifestation of the interconnectedness of human beings; it is the embodiment of South African culture and lifestyle. Unhu/Ubuntu is a capacity in Southern African culture that expresses compassion, reciprocity, dignity, harmony and humanity in the interests of building and maintaining a community with justice and mutual caring. Shutte(2001) Ubuntu lies at the heart of the African way of life and impacts on every aspect of people's well being. The Covid period in Zimbabwe witnessed many changes in the way university operations were run and some of these changes saw the violation of Unhu values in these

tertiary institutions. In universities just like in other institutions of learning outcomes are influenced bu Unhu personality values such as caring, forgiveness, sharing, equality, sympathy, empathy, compassion, respect, tolerance, humanness and harmony for others. Lefa (2015) observes that the school culture gives the school its unique identity. Culture therefore represents the schools way of life and the way things are done. Msengana (2006) reveals that many studies have shown a great link between school culture and its effectiveness, school development, academic achievement and learner discipline. Letseka (2011) says that the school culture influences how people do things in the school and the same can be said about universities. The issue of discipline is one such aspects of Unhu which is topical in universities.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This research will be guided by the Afrocentric theory which calls for Africans to go back to their roots culture wise of which Unhu/Ubuntu happens to be at the core of this African culture. The Presidential Commission of Inguiry into Education and Training of 1999 had the recommendation that the Zimbabwean education be refocused using Ubuntu philosophy among other

recommendations. Afrocentricity deals with consciousness of a people who have been separated from the core of their heritage through slavery, historic untruths and political, educational and economic oppression. The Shona have been separated from their culture through acculturation. The Afrocentric theory seeks to recapture, through historical and cultural awareness, a full understanding of how Africans should view the world and this can be best achieved by observing Unhu / Ubuntu philosophy. The profounder of this theory, Molefi K. Asante suggests that African Americans should disencumber themselves from the Eurocentric point of view and adopt instead a way of thinking that gives primacy to the cultural traits that are African. Asante (1980) notes, a black person without Afrocentricism operates in a negative manner; his manner is contradictory to himself and is destructive to his personal and collective growth and development. Chief amongst these cultural traits is the ubuntu philosophy which forms the basis of the Shona culture. The Ubuntu theory optimises the indigenous setting of an African organisation. Tutu (2004:25) says that Unhu/Ubuntu philosophy believes that a person is a person because of others. None of us comes into the world fully formed. We would not know how to think, or walk, or speak, or behave as human

beings unless we learned it from other human beings. We need other human beings in order to be human. Ramose (1999) observes that ubuntu ethics are concerned with unity, oneness and solidarity and traits were compromised during the Covid-19 period at Great Zimbabwe university. The distinctive nature of ubuntu is that the philosophical facets are meant to mould an individual who can fit and interact peacefully with others in society. The Ubuntu philosophy is not just an abstract concept because it permeates every aspect of African life. It is expressed in various ways and it is collectivist in its very nature. Ramose (2002) observes that within the Ubuntu philosophy, the importance and value of the human being is pivotal. The practices of Ubuntu philosophy with regard to humanity, care, sharing, teamwork spirit, compassion, dignity and forgiveness enable society to survive peacefully. Phori and Nkoane (2019) regard the English term 'personhood' as similar to Ubuntu. The Ubuntu philosophy forms the basis of the Shona culture. It is the argument of this research study that the Ubuntu philosophy is very important in shaping the character of students at university. The Zimbabwean university system is founded on the philosophies of British thought (as epitomized by the Ox-bridge education tradition), to Africanise this institution, there is need to make Unhu/

Ubuntu the African moral theory .Unhu/ Ubuntu philosophy contributes to the disruption and decolonization of hegemonic meanings, provides an opportunity for renewal and transformation in our desire for egalitarian human dignity. With the coming of Covid -19 all this was compromised.

METHODOLOGY

The study employed a qualitative approach. The qualitative approach provides a better understanding of the research problem (Creswell 2013). The qualitative research design is appropriate for this research which looks critically at personal names in as far as they enshrine Unhu ethics among the Shona of Buhera. The research is ethnographic in nature and is committed to the naturalistic perspective as it focuses on understanding of the research phenomena in situ and interprets phenomena in terms of the meanings that people bring to them. A total of 50 personal names were collected and then a purposive sampling technique was adopted in the selection of 10 participants for the study. Interviews about the meaning and motive behind the name were carried out with the parents of the name-bearers and the name-bearers of the 10 names used for this study. The strengths of purposive sampling afforded the researcher room to judge particular

people as suitable for the provision of the required information (Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2013). The study sample consisted of 6 students and 2 lecturers, at Great Zimbabwe university. Face-to-face interviews were conducted with the participants. Since participants were above the age of 18 years, the researcher sought their consent by making them fill in consent forms or verbal consent. The participants were assured that the study was purely for academic purposes. This qualitative research on Unhu/ Ubuntu tenets during Covid-19 period seeks to answer to processes, meanings and questions that stress on how social experiences are created and given meaning. Questions to be answered by this research study are:

1. What are the virtues of Unhu that are accepted at Great Zimbabwe university i?

2. What was the impact of Covid-19 on Unhu at Great Zimbabwe University.?

3To what extent did the Covid 19 period affected Unhu virtues?

4. What can be done to correct Unhu virtues affected during Covid 19 period?

5 Which measures were implemented by Great Zimbabwe University to ensure students and staff maintain Unhu virtues?

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Participants were university students and lecturers.

Findings in this study revealed that Unhu values were violated or even ignored during the Covid period at Great Zimbabwe University. The introduction of online learning strategy as a way to avoid contact as was required by the Covid regulations meant that every student was supposed to have his or her on gudgets, that included a laptop or a smart phone to enable him or her to join the On line plat forms. Interviews carried with a number of participants who include students and lecturers bears testimony of the violation of Unhu/Ubuntu values. The following were responses from the participants:

Participant 1 when asked about the effect of Covid-19 on Unhu/Ubuntu has this to say, " They are asking me to join Online classes but i do not have the data and the gudgets to do so because my parents only gave me this simple phone which cannot enable me to join on-line platforms.

I really need to continue with my studies just like other students and for me to raise the money to meet my academic needs I have no option than to fall in love with sugar daddies who while in return give me money". Social inequalities affected our teaching, some students are from rural areas where internet connectivity is a problem. The coming of on-line learning meant the less privileged students were exposed and this was a violation of Unhu/Ubuntu values. Matsilele (2021) noted that in Zimbabwe the government did not revise the budget and did not make any intervention to ensure students can study online. With the Covid-19 period students were supposed to study from home and movement was limited and this meant those students without the necessary resources to access on-line classroom were left behind. Chibaya et al say Online learning entrenched inequalities among students, especially students living with disabilities who were left behind because commonly most Online platforms are not designed with disabled students in mind; the visually impaired may not be able to cope with online demands (Strivastava 2018).Jentleson (2018) saus that Ubuntu is best characterized as an African version of humanizing stressing interconnectedness of all people in society. Marumo and Chakale in Ojakorutu (2019) say Unhu/Ubuntu promotes unity, communalism and

communal usage of resource whereby each see each other as a friend, neighbor, and compatriot but the Covid -19 period violated what Unhu /Ubuntu philosophy entails as it emphasized that students should not mix nor share gudgets.

Participant 2 said, "Covid -19 has come to destroy the spirit of sharing ideas which was common among students during discussions." These sentiments were shared by a number of participants during the interview sessions. Omodan and Ige (2021) say online learning leads to social isolation as lack of classroom interaction with classmates might not be good for the overall cognitive developments of students. Under normal circumstances students should learn with, and from, each other for them to know true diversity which may exist amongst themselves in terms of physical, cognitive, sensory and emotional differences. In this way, artificial notions of normalcy that usually save to diminish and devalue students when they learn on their on can be avoided. As microcosms of society, lecture rooms save to reflect, exemplify and engage with actual diversity. What was obtaining during Covid-19 period was the opposite of Unhu/Ubuntu tenets. Jentlesson (2018) says Ubuntu is best characterized as an African version of humanizing stressing interconnectedness of all

people in society. The philosophy of Unhu/Ubuntu can be interpreted as a statute of conduct in social life which describes a human being as 'being-with-others and prescribes what 'being-with-other' entails. The fact that during Covid period students were detached from the their counterparts at the campus meant that the tenets of Unhu/ Ubuntu were violated .

Participant 3 said., "Covid -19 period has promoted students to cheat when writing assignments. I only discovered later that a number of students were jublicating the same assignments". When the participants asked the concerned students they said that they had no data to access sources hence they had no option but to cheat through dubbing an assignment of a fellow student who managed to access the relevant sources. Unhu/Ubuntu mainstream in tertiary education ensures and guarantees teamwork, unity and hard work among other important values. Genuine education fosters Unhu/ Ubuntu values. Chitumba in Matsilele 2021 proposes use of Unhu/Ubuntu philosophy as the bedrock upon which university education in Zimbabwe can be based but given what transpired during the Covid-19 period Unhu/Ubuntu values were compromised. By mainstreaming unhu/Ubuntu at universities even during critical periods

like the Covid-19 , the result could have been a truly humane community, a community of interconnected beings who respect and care about the welfare of one another and that could have seen all students progressing well with their studies.

Participant 4 said, " Covid -19 has meant affected me because I used to go to the university authorities to ask for a payment plan then they would allow me to attend my lectures but with this Online classes set up only those who are paid up are allowed to join lectures." This meant that students from poor families were disadvantaged yet Unhu/ Ubuntu philosophy calls for equal treatment of individuals in society. The fact that students who were not paid up in terms of their fees could not join online classes affected the concerned students emotionally. Their self –esteem was severely affected and this is contrary to what Unhu/Ubuntu philosophy calls for.

 Given the social background of some of the students at the institution, that requirement was far above their rich as most of them had simple phones which could not go on internet. Matsilele (2021) observed that issues related to data affordability, poor connectivity, lack of devices affected many students. Cross and Adam in Matsilele (2021) say that this Covod period brought with it

challenges such as the adoption of technologies like WhatApp, Google classrooms and Zoom. They observed that this technological intervention into education came with challenges such as internet accessibility and access to a working computer, something that is still not readily available to students from disadvantaged backgrounds. Only students from well-to-do families managed to buy these gudgets and as a result managed to join the On line class. By this move , Unhu virtues that include equality and equity in education were compromised thereby disadvantaging students from poor families.

Some students resorted to prostitution as a way to raise money to buy data and gudgets needed for Online learning. By doing so the philosophy of Unhu /Ubuntu was violates. The absence of Unhu/Ubuntu during Covid -19 period manifested itself in the behavior of students who demonstrated a lack of moral focus, respect for other people, intolerant and corrupt. A lot of people expressed distress about the moral decadence that was exhibited by students during the Covid period.It was pointed out that there was dearth of role models among the students during the Covid period. Manungo in Matsilele (2021) noted that by introducing Unhu as one of the key pillars of university curriculum, the university was aiming to produce morally

upright students, whose values are at par with the African community. He goes on to say that the African epistemology and metaphysics are rational and so the African university should produce a product who values interconnectedness and interdependence. Samkange and Samkange (1980:34) in Chemhuru and Makuvaza (2014) wrote Hunhuism or Ubuntuism is a philosophy that sets a premium on human relations.Relatedness , according to Uhu philosophy is central to Unhu. Thus, the philosophy of hunhu is best captured in the aphorism, *kunzi munhu vanhu or umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu* translated, "a person is a person through other persons". (Shutte, 1993:46). In an education grounded in hunhu/Ubuntu, treating others as humans becomes concretised through the principles of Unhu philosophy. Thus, education based on Unhu would emphasize' warmth, empathy, understanding, the ability to communicate, interaction, participation, sharing, reciprocation, harmony, coorperation' (Prinsloo, 1998:42)The education informed by the philosophy of Unhu/Ubuntu gives primacy to the social basis of human life in all learning activities.

Chabaya et al (2022) says that since time immemorial, pandemics have affected the formal informal sectors of any given society including schools, and institutions of

higher education' Matsilele (2021) noted that most Zimbabwean institutions of higher learning adopted WhatsApp and Google Classroom models of teaching and learning during the Coronavirus-induced lockdowns. However, majority of students could not effectively participate in the learning process for reasons that included lack of finances and resources, as well as general resistance to changes among some of the students and lecturers. Omodan and Ige (2021) say that the concept of Ubuntu along its principles, can be used a productive style that could put into use to instill organization unity, progress, collaboratives, compassionateness and humanity among people. The ethics of Ubuntu require that those who are stronger and better off protect and provide for the weak and vulnerable in society. Thus, students from less to do families were supposed to be helped by those from well to do families or from the government but this did not happen during this period in question.

CONCLUSION

The findings showed the Covid-19 had adverse effect on Unhu /Ubuntu at Great University. Although changes in culture often occur slowly and sometimes even unintentionally, there are certain instances in history where certain events, episodes or happenings accelerate

cultural change like the Covid -19 period. The Covid-19 pandemic will pass as one of such occasions. The notion that Unhu/Ubuntu is very important in the university operation during an emergency period such as the Covid-19 is very true because of various aspects discussed in this essay. Unhu/Ubuntu principles promote communal way of doing things and given the social backgrounds of many university students at Great Zimbabwe it has been found that may students were greatly affected during Covid period due to the methods of teaching adopted. Upholding the ethos of Unhu will go a long way in molding students who will be relevant to the Zimbabwean society. Besides helping Zimbabwean people to gain their identity and self-esteem, a meaningful education informed by Unhu/Ubuntu philosophy may see its graduates being better citizens, employment creators and morally upright leaders who shun corruption. There are plenty positive spinoffs when one is a recipient of relevant and meaningful education that is grounded in one's values. This chapter observed that various Unhu/Ubuntu virtues were compromised or violated during the Covid-19 period. It is recommended that the government must be ever ready for such emergencies if they are to occur in the near future.

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