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## **A Study on Level of Psychological Wellbeing of Adolescents During COVID-19 Impact in Area 25 Lilongwe**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The study titled level of psychological well-being of Adolescents during COVID-19 impact was conducted by the researcher in 2022. Descriptive research design was adopted for this study. Data was collected by means of one-to-one and also a social media WhatsApp group, using a questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. The study population was 250 and 41 participants were sampled using convenient sampling which was drawn from tertiary schools within Area 25 in Lilongwe.

The study data was analyzed using Statistical Packaging for Social Science, Correlations tests and T-Test were carried out to test the study hypothesis.

The study found that the level of psychological wellbeing of adolescents was altered due to COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, the study recommends to the Malawi Government to establish an adolescent grants and social welfare emergency package as part of its policies when addressing such crisis now and in the future. The study also recommends the establishment of the COVID-19 emergency crisis committees to come up with the standards operational procedures in addressing adolescent levels of psychological wellbeing.

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Covid19 is a pandemic affecting the world from different aspects starting from psychological progressing to social health and leaving the innocent traumatized and helpless. The illness is so acute leading to high mortality rate. It has affected about 12,750,275 people and 566,355 deaths around the world. Recent reports indicated that the disease was mostly affecting older adults due to their physiological changes that comes as a result of ageing and underlying conditions such as blood pressure, diabetes as well as HIV related illnesses. There is no proven cure for the disease as well as no vaccine for full human protection.

These vaccines have only been able to help in minimizing the spread, hospital admissions and deaths. In this world for a child to grow, get orientated and socialized into a well matured individual depends on the total support from the parents or guardians. Many adolescents worldwide and Malawi in particular have lost their parents. As much the simplest implication may be just the death but the child is highly dependent on the parent, from a multi-dimensional view the adolescent will also suffer or be deprived of psychological well-being as the parental support is altered such as education, standard of living etcetera. Therefore, this chapter covers the background of the study, statement problem, objectives, research questions, significance of the study as well as the study limitations.

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### **PROBLEM STATEMENT**

According to Gross and Munoz, 1995 psychological wellbeing is a core feature of a mental health and maybe defined as hedonic, eudemonic happiness and resilience which involves enjoyment, pleasure, personal meaning, fulfillment, ability to cope in any situation, emotion regulations and solving health problems.

Elements of psychological wellbeing includes a sense of balance in emotion, thoughts, social relationships and pursuits (Community Translation Science Team (CTST), 2016). Covid19 is not only one sided but also complex as it affects the wellness of people, mentally and psychologically. It was viewed primarily as a respiratory disease leading to viral pneumonia. Now its recognized as complex disorder affecting many body systems leading to impaired functionality. The economic status of families being disturbed affecting the adolescent education and wellbeing.

In Malawi young people (inclusive adolescents) make the largest and fastest growing proportion of the population. Population and housing census done in 2018 shows that 51% of the population is below 18 years. Yet the adolescents and the youth face many risks as they navigate their lives. Indeed, the pandemic has taken its toll. According to early findings from an International Survey of children and adult in 21 countries conducted by UNICEF and GALLUP which is previewed in the state of the World children 2021 states: a median of 1 in 5 young people aged 15-24 surveyed said that they often feel depressed or have little interest in doing things. Currently there are no government effective policies that consider these adolescents, as such the

affected adolescents are left with little or no help on emergency support thereby leaving them vulnerable. The researcher seeks to find out the link between covid19 pandemic and the psychological wellbeing of adolescents.

## SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Many studies that have been done on the impacts of covid19 regarding school dropouts, child labour and early marriages but little being known on the mental status of the affected adolescents. So far, few publications have been done on the psychological impacts of covid19 on adolescents from the social workers point of view. All these are key to miserable and stark situation that leads to mental disorders and vulnerability. Therefore, this study is important as it seeks to look deeper into and consider the level of psychological wellbeing of distressed adolescents.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### UNIVERSE & SAMPLING

The Universe of the study consists of 250 adolescents aged 15-19 years who attends tertiary education. The researcher will using convenient sampling technique in this study based on the convenient of adolescence in school. The study sample size will be identified from Lilongwe Teachers College where the researcher will reach 41 samples.

### DATA AND SOURCES OF DATA

The researcher will use a self-prepared semi-structured questionnaire and face to face interview. This will help look at the qualitative and quantitative aspect of the study purpose (Teddlie, 2014). It will collect the demographics information of children. And the researcher used Ryff's Psychological well-being scales (1981) it contains 18 items. The Psychological Well-Being Scales, created by Ryff and Singer, were

**Table 1: Distribution of the respondents by their Gender**

S. No	Gender	Frequency(n=41)	Percentage
1.	Male	27	65.9
2.	Female	14	34.1
	Total	41	100.0

Mean=18.5 SD=.856

The above Table 1 depicts the gender of the respondents. More than half of the respondents (66%) of the respondents are male, more than one fourth (34.1%) of the of the respondents are female

**Table 2: Distribution of the respondents by their Age**

S. No	Age	Frequency(n=41)	Percentage
1.	15- 17 Years	12	29.3
2.	18 - 19 Years	29	70.7
3.	20 Years	0	0
	Total	41	100.0

Mean=42.91 SD=10.90

The above table 2 describe the age of the respondents for the study. More than one (29.3%) of the respondents belong to the age group between 15- 17 years, the majority (70.7%) of the respondents belong to the age group between 18 - 19 years.

**Table 3: Distribution of the respondents by fear of one getting infected with Covid19**

S. No	Response	Frequency(n=41)	Percentage
1.	Strongly Disagree	1	2.4
2.	Agree	20	48.8
3.	Strongly Agree	20	48.8
	Total	41	100.0

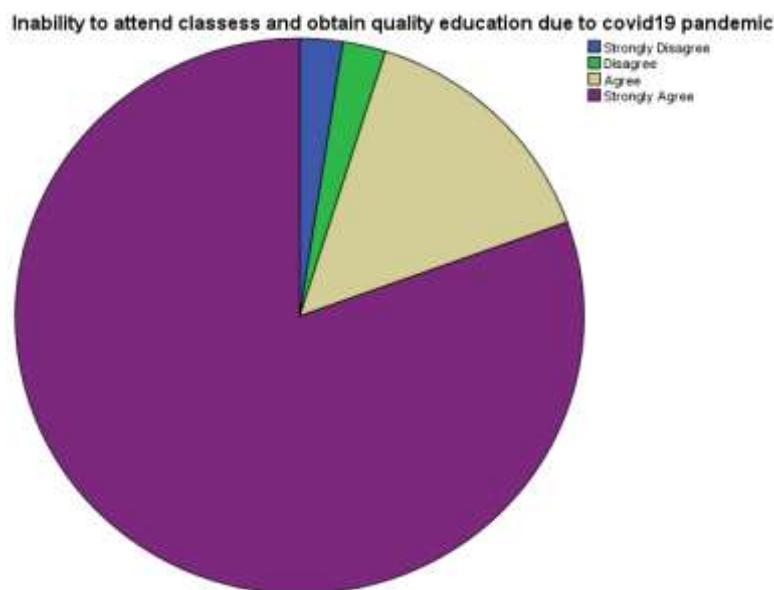
From the Table 3, majority (48.8%) of the respondents agreed and strongly agree with item of one's fear about getting infected with covid-19, only very few (2.4%) of the respondents strongly disagree with the statement.

**Table 5: Distribution of the respondents by their Feeling of loneliness due to Covid - 19**

S. No	Responses	Frequency(n=41)	Percentage
1	Strongly Disagree	8	19.5%
2	Disagree	3	7.3%
3	Don't Know	2	4.9%
4	Agree	22	53.7%
5	Strongly Agree	6	14.6%
	Total	41	100.0

From the Table 5, more than half (53.7%) of the respondents agreed, a few (19.5%), (14.6%) strongly disagreed and strongly agreed with item on feeling of loneliness due to covid-19 respectively, while a very few (7.3%), (4.9%) disagreed and did not know on the statement respectively.

**Figure 4: Distribution of the respondents on inability to attend classes and obtain quality education due to covid19 pandemic**



From the Figure 4 vast majority (80.5%) of the respondents strongly agreed and few (14.6%) also agreed with item on inability to attend classes and obtain quality education due to covid-19 pandemic, only very few (2.1%) strongly disagreed, disagreed on the statement

## CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study it has been found that the level of psychological wellbeing of adolescents was altered during COVID-19 pandemic since they undergone through difficult experience like frustration, fear and a feeling of loneliness. They faced a lot of restrictions whereby they could not have time to take up their activities, to have enough period for the classes (schools closed) and function performance decreased as compared to before the COVID-19 pandemic. The measures which were put in place to control the spread of the disease also contributed to lack of comfortability and emotional feelings in the lives of the adolescents. However, adolescents tried to adjusted into different coping skills to suit with the situation, like devoting their time in prayers and watching televisions. Furthermore, it is found that adolescents lack some knowledge about COVID-19 pandemic.

As such there is a need to look deep into already existing strategies that addresses the pandemic, to investigate what led into suspension of COVID-19 funds in Malawi and to find out whether involvement of roving social workers can have an impact on counselling in psychosocial wellbeing, as areas of further research.

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