

Buea Students' Attitude Towards Hiv/Aids Pandemic: Managerial Imperatives For Sustainable Socio-Economic Development.

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Abstract: This study surveys students' attitude towards HIV/AIDS pandemic in Universities in Buea, South- West Region in Cameroon. Ex-post-facto design was used for the study. Using stratified random sampling technique, 300 subjects were drawn from student population in the two universities. Data collection was carried out using the researcher's constructed instrument called "Student Attitude Towards AIDS Pandemic Questionnaire" (SATAPQ). Three hypotheses guided the study. Data collected were analyzed using independent-test and population t-test statistical techniques. Results obtained revealed that there was no significant difference towards HIV/AIDS pandemic among gender, universities students' attitude towards HIV/AIDS screening test is significantly positive. It was therefore recommended that the universities in Buea, South- West Region and in other Regions in Cameroon in general should redesign their curriculum to emphasize sex and HIV/AIDS education for sustainable socio economic development.

Key words: Attitude; HIV/AIDS; pandemic; socio-economic and sustainable.

Introduction :

HIV/AIDS is a significant problem in Cameroon and the world over. It has affected the attitude of people throughout the whole world. This disease is more of pandemic depriving mankind from sustainable and socio-economic advancement. This study needs in-depth discussion. Therefore the key words are discussed hereunder:

Attitude: According to Hornby, (2010 p. 80) denotes the way people think and feel about a thing. That is, the way people behave towards a situation, shows how they think and feel. For example, AIDS is an acronym of Acquired Immune Disease Syndrome, caused by the virus known as the Human Immune-deficiency Virus (HIV). According to Kings (2000), It is transmitted through two modes: sexual intercourse (virginal oral and anal) and contact with infected blood, semen or cervical and virginal fluid.

HIV/AIDS: These are acronyms .HIV means Human Immune-deficiency Virus while AIDS means Acquired Immune Disease Syndrome. Ojedoun (2005) asserted that any infected person can transmit the infection to the sexual partner (man to woman or vice versa or man to man but not likely woman to woman). The presence of other sexually transmitted diseases increases the risk of HIV transmission. This disease is deadly and as at today, it has no cure. However, there seem to be preventive measures.

Pandemic: According to Hornby (2010 p. 1061) is a disease that spreads over the whole country or the whole world. Pandemic can be compared with endemic or epidemic .HIV/AIDS is a disease that seems to engulf the entire Cameroon and the world at large. This is because the more vulnerable group to this scourge in the groups of adolescents, Kalessanwo (2006) submitted that University students fall into the adolescence group

whose ages range between 15 and 24 years. Crom (1986) sees adolescence as times of worry and problems, the best of time and the worst of times. The best of times often results from friendship ties between boys and girls and it is often centered on sexual activities and exploration. This implies that the university students required awareness and knowledge of HIV/AIDS to be able check the spread of the virus/syndrome.

Socio- economic: Hornby (2010, p1414). This relates to societal status of people position in the society That is, economic strata. It implies that people are different by their socio –economic backgrounds. The disease seems to cripple people attitude hence its pandemic nature. People are concern more on the process on how to cure and stop the incessant spread of the disease.

Sustainable: hornby (2010), stated that sustainable is the desire of people to live free from harmless environment that is, living continually but the pandemic disease seem to abrogate or hinder man's socio -economic and sustainable co-existence.

Literature Review:

Attitude refers to an organized predisposition to think, feel, perceive and behave in certain manner towards some cognitive objectives. Brown (1983) observed that attitude is deducted from consistencies in the responses of persons to social situation having common goals. In other words, attitude is a means of ascertaining what one perceives and how one perceived it. Therefore change in the attitude of the students in Universities in Buea through awareness, having knowledge of HIV/AIDS scourge and stopping casual sex in an indispensable factor in HIV/AIDS pandemic. This may promote healthy life, greater productivity and socio –economic development.

According to Ojedokun (2005), young people between 15-24 years make up a large segment of

the country's population. He asserted that reforms programmes of Cameroon will be futile if 45% of the population is wiped away by HIV/AIDS Pandemic. In this context, Buea and Douala may experience between 20% and 25% rise in HIV/AIDS injection rates due to the number of Higher Institutions. Effiong (1998) Examined the attitude of 200 secondary schools on HIV/AIDS issues in Calabar in Nigeria, a neighboring country to Cameroon The researcher found out that 71.43% of the respondents aged 10-15 years had negative attitude towards various campaigns on the disease while 28.57% of them had positive attitude towards HIV/AIDs. Among the age bracket of 16-20 years, 76.43% had negative attitude towards HIV/AIDS epidemic.

Okonofua (2006) reported that only 63% of the respondents in University of Benin know the signs and symptoms of HIV/AIDS while 37% remain in ignorance. This state of affairs is a pointer that all is not well with our Universities in Cameroon, hence the countries share a common boundary. This implies that educational development and socio-economic development are closely interrelated. It behooves that the health of and balance of a nation's socio-economic factors depend to a great extent on the kind of and quality of education provided for its citizenry (Okonbor, 2002). Therefore the output of the Universities in Buea will be primarily responsible for the socio-economic development of the Region. This may be true as a greater number of the aged 15-24 are probably living with HIV/AIDS. The behavior patterns of the people with reference to the Virus/Syndrome are critical for the sustenance of socio-economic development.

In the words of Nwachukwo (2007) he stated that gender can influence students' attitude towards HIV/AIDS pandemic. Many adolescents in sub-Saharan Africa. Are sexually experienced including single women and men. He noted that most young men engage in sexual activity outside

of marriage. According to Isangdigi (1994) male participation is much higher than the female. He further identified the propelling factors behind adolescent sexual involvement as adolescence modernity, peer group influence, parental attitude, care and control of social and moral decadence. These factors are crucial for developing effective attitude intervention programmes for socio-economic development of South –West Region in particular and Cameroon in general.

HIV/AIDS education is an important factor for combating HIV/AIDS pandemic .Every nation needs to develop or improve the policies and capacities for controlling the infection and caring for the sick (Smith 2001). Understanding them and learning how best to reduce the personal and social impact of this disease constitute a major challenge to education and AIDS education which is interrelated. Kallings (2000) opined that it is important to incorporate AIDS information and to teach about the biological, social and emotional aspects by adapting them to the age of children. Thus, HIV/AIDS infection and other sexually transmitted diseases could be taught in schools, colleges and universities. Students who benefit from such education implement this even after schooling at the work places. This implies that the young and physically active people who have left their families, the work place is a central point in the daily life. Therefore AIDS information as applicable at work place by the products of Universities in South-West Region play a crucial role in influencing behavior and contribute to sustaining the socio-economic development in the Region.

Misconceptions about the transmission of diseases are common and diverse. Public response to the health of the adolescents is poor. Adolescents have limited knowledge about HIV/AIDS because the society remains indifferent to release information to them on sex related issues. According to Ojedokun (2006), the reasons for

poor HIV/AIDS screening test include social policies which reflects intolerance and discrimination against access to health information, norms, societies expectations and peer influence which eventually increases their health risks, such students are afraid of carrying out HIV/AIDS screening test since HIV/AIDS kills quickly, anonymously but surely. Therefore, there should be no need for the screening which fear may cause them to die before time and be stigmatized. Thus, exercising care in HIV/AIDS epidemic is critical.

The method of care includes periodic tests and care between hospital and home over the course of the illness. Kings (2000) findings showed that AIDS has two major signs and at least one minor sign when making diagnosis in adolescent through HIV testing. Such signs include: major-weight loss; chronic diarrhea and prolonged fever, Minor persistent cough, generalized itching, skin rash, fungal infections of mouth and throat, generalized enlarged iymph nodes. However, such patients are exposed of clinical management and direct physical care to PLHA and their families aimed at AIDS prevention. AIDS control and behavioural change programme of the study.

HIV/AIDS is currently the greatest health hazard in South –West Region and Cameroon because it is fast spreading among both the youths and adults. The most vulnerable group to this scourge is the group of adolescents of which the university's students are part of it. HIV/AIDS pandemic is a phenomenon of great concern to individuals, government and non-government agencies (NGOs). Recently, South-West seem to attain the status of being the state in Cameroon with the highest prevalence rate of HIV/AIDS infection. Therefore, various attempts by various interest groups and stakeholders to check the spread of the virus/syndrome. The attitude of students towards the on-going HIV/AIDS pandemic largely influence or determine their

behavior pattern or life styles with reference to the virus/syndrome. This means that proper assessment of the students' attitude to the HIV/AIDS pandemic will provide a favourable input to the various stakeholders in designing more effective strategies to combat this dangerous diseases. Thus, avoid a greater proportion which supposes to sustain socio-economic development of the population from being destroyed. In spite of these glaring short-comings, what is the student's attitude towards HIV/AIDS pandemic in Universities in South- West Region? This constitutes the main thrust of this study.

Research Questions:

The following research questions were posed to guide the study.

1. Is there any difference in gender among university students' attitude towards HIV/AIDS?
2. Does university students' attitude towards HIV/AIDS education positive?
3. Does university students' attitude towards HIV/AIDS screening test positive?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study:

1. There is no significant difference in gender among university students' attitude towards HIV/AIDS.
2. The university students' attitude towards HIV/AIDS education is not significantly positive.
3. The university students' attitude towards HIV/AIDS screening test is not significantly positive.

Methodology

Ex-post-facto design was adopted for this study because the variables are already existing hence

they cannot be manipulated (Isangedihi, Joshua, Asim and Ekuri, 2001). The students used as sample population had common characteristic(s). The characteristics included- age; sex/gender and student in the State and Private university.

Study Area

Buea is the capital of South-West Region in Cameroon is the study area and seat of the universities(i.e. State and private). Data were collected from 300 respondents based on 150 per gender and from each university, using a questionnaire designed as Student Attitude Towards AIDS/Pandemic Questionnaire (SATAPQ). The questionnaire consisted of sections A and B. Section A consisted of six demographic variables and section B had eight items based on a 4-point likert scale measured university students' attitude towards HIV/AIDS pandemic.

Validity and Reliability of the Instrument

The instruments were face-validated by experts in measurement and evaluation while a trial test gave reliability coefficient estimate of 0.79 and 0.88 for the instrument. These figures indicated that the instruments were reliable for use in achieving the research objectives.

Data Collection procedure

The researcher obtained permission from the authorities of the two universities within the study area at different times and administered the questionnaire to the respondents. The questionnaires were retrieved on the spot to avoid attrition.

Data analysis

The data generated were analyzed using independent t-test and population t-test (test of one sample mean) at 0.05 level of significance. The data collected were analyzed item by item as

it concerned the three variables on: Buea Universities Students' Attitude towards HIV/AIDS Pandemic: Managerial Imperatives for sustainable socio-economic development.

Result

Table 1
Independent t- test analysis of Gender differences among university students towards HIV/AIDS

Variable	N	X	SD	T
Male	150	19.89	3.05	0.800*
Female	150	19.57	3.84	

*p>0.05; = 298 critical t-value=1.968

The result in this table revealed that there is no significant difference in gender among university students' attitude towards HIV/AIDS pandemic (t=0.800,p>.05). Thus, the null hypothesis was retained at 0.05 level of significance and 298 degree of freedom.

Further observation of the result revealed that male university students had a higher mean value in their attitude towards HIV/AIDS pandemic than their female counterparts. This implies that male students had a better attitude towards HIV/AIDS pandemic than the females.

Table 2
Population (t-test of one sample mean) of university students' attitude towards HIV/AIDS education (n = 300)

Variable	Expected mean (x)	Observed mean (x)	SD	t
University students attitude towards HIV/AIDS education	15.00	19.16	2.73	26.000

*p.> 0.5; df. = 299, critical value t value = 1.968

The result presented in this table indicated that university students' attitude to HIV/AIDS education is significantly positive (t = 26.000, p<.05). Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected at 0.05 level of significance and 299 degree of freedom.

Further examination of this result showed that the observed mean was higher than the expected mean value of 15.00. Statistical comparison of the observed mean and expected mean using population t-test (test of one sample mean) gave a positive t-value of 26.000.

Hypothesis

The university students' attitude towards HIV/AIDS screening test is not significantly positive. The only variable university students' attitude towards HIV/AIDS screening test. Data obtained were statistically analyzed using population t-test of one sample mean. The result is displayed in table 3

Table 3

Population t-rest (test of one sample mean) of university students' attitude towards HIV/AIDS screening test.

Variables	Expected mean (x)	Observed mean (x)	SD	t
University students' attitude towards HIV/AIDS	15.00	17.61	4.75	9.667*

*p> .05; df. = 298 critical t-value = 1.968.

Result in this table disclosed that university students' attitude towards HIV/AIDS screening test is positive (t= 9.667, p<0.05). Thus, the null

hypothesis was rejected at 0.05 level of significance and 299 degree of freedom.

Further observation of this result revealed that the observed mean is higher than the expected mean value of 15.00. Statistical comparison of the observed mean value and expected mean value using Population t-test of one sample mean gave a significant outcome (positive t-value).

Discussion of the result

The outcome of the analysis of hypothesis one discusses that there is no significant difference in gender among university students' attitude towards HIV/AIDS pandemic. This position made it possible to uphold the null hypothesis and discard the alternative hypothesis.

This result suggests that the students' attitude towards HIV/AIDS pandemic is negative. That is the male and female students as adolescents have low deposition in terms of control of lifestyles and behaviors for male and female students, towards HIV/AIDS pandemic are not encouraging

This finding is consistent with the outcome of Nwachukwu (2007), Effiong [1998], USAIDS (2000) in Cameroon, Guinea and South Africa. In these various studies, the researcher found no significant difference in gender toward the campaign against the diseases among the adolescents.

The uniqueness of the finding of this study derives from the fact that most youths are unstable in their behavior attitude and thinking as adolescent. Again, this period for adolescents is a time of struggle for independent from parental control and also a time for increased urge for sexual activities due to hormonal influence. Therefore, the Buea students' need adequate supervision by adult especially concerning HIV/AIDS pandemic.

Furthermore, the result revealed that the male university students' had a higher mean value in their attitude towards HIV/AIDS pandemic than their female counterparts. This means that by comparison the male had a better attitude towards HIV/AIDS pandemic than females. This articulation is in consonance with the finding of Isangedigi (1994) that male participation is higher than the female participation in sexual activities. Therefore, there is a high tendency for the males to be more vulnerable to HIV/AIDS pandemic than females. This may be because in Africa, male adolescents are more disposed in approaching their female adolescents for sexual activity. However, awareness and knowledge by the university students that denial of existence of the disease or complacency has been identified as dangerous attitude fueling the spread of HIV/AIDS, both sexes are likely to exercise control over the spread of the diseases. By so doing, the disengage themselves in high-risk behavior such as unprotected sex (Lengley 2002).

Result in table 2 revealed that university students attitude to HIV/AIDS education is significantly positive. The result made possible to discard the null hypothesis and in its place uphold the alternative hypothesis.

This finding indicated that the university students 'attitude towards HIV/AIDS education is highly impressive. That means that the Maroua university students are favorably disposed to HIV/AIDS education and they place much value to it. This explains the high attendance rating in the university clinics to ensure their healthy reproductive care in which one of the items in the instrument addressed this issue.

These findings might be explained from the perspective of the relevance of HIV/AIDS education in changing HIV/AIDS calamity to long range advantage. This could be through the use of international co-operation media, national

advisory experts committee in AIDS, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), training courses, workshops and seminars. These factors contribute and will continue to play crucial roles in combating HIV/AIDS pandemic. Kallings (2000) position buttressed these findings. He averred that an extra and unprecedented global mobilization of resources towards education of this deadly virus/syndrome was experience in 1987, in direct support of less Developed countries (LDCs) of the world to the tune of 34.5 million US dollars. This implies that there was consciousness that HIV/AIDS pandemic could be prevented through informed and responsible behavior. HIV/AIDS education can therefore be useful both in the universities and at work place since HIV/AIDS pandemic can affect people in their intellectually, economically and biologically productive years (Smith 2001).

The result of the hypothesis three indicated that university students' attitude towards HIV/AIDS screening test is positive. Also the observed mean is higher than the expected mean value. Thus, paving the way for rejection of the null hypothesis and retaining the alternative one. This finding points at the fact that Buea University students are willing to carry out periodic HIV/AIDS test. Where the students cultivate the habit of regular periodic HIV/AIDS screening test, there is a tendency that he/she will have a positive attitude towards health care and controlling of HIV/AIDS epidemic. This ensure confidence and preventive behavioral control for qualitative family the (kings 2000)

The results are not surprising since most youths of the universities have the awareness and knowledge, the Cameroonian youth can eradicate fear of stigmatization and death which could cause them to Evert periodic screening test. Therefore, this act can aid in controlling the students in addition to parental control within this age range

of increase sexual activities in the university campuses.

More so, periodic screening test encourage people to gain assistance from the health bodies and benefits from pre and post test counseling from medical and school health educators. This enables people living with HIV/AIDS (PLHA) to make informed choices and feelings towards healthy reproductive and family life (Langtey 2002). The gain of such students with history of high risk behavior are said to be immeasurable. The government invested so much on prevention and control of this deadly disease. Therefore, the tendency those students who exhibit a positive attitude towards the epidemic stand to take advantage of these benefits accruing from such huge clinical investment and be effective in their studies and productive in their work places after graduation.

Conclusion:

On the strength of the finding of this study, it was therefore concluded that students' attitude towards HIV/AIDS pandemic show that; the students' attitude among the male and female is negative; the students' attitude towards HIV/AIDS education and students' attitude towards periodic HIV/AIDS screening test are significantly positive. Therefore, there is unstable attitude among the male and female students though these students high desire towards AIDS education and AIDS periodic screening test for healthy and productive life.

Managerial imperative for sustainable socio-economic development.

1. The management of university in Maroua Buea should ensure that their curricula are restructured to emphasis HIV/AIDS education. This will enable students to satisfy the need for healthy and productive quality life and avoid a greater proportion for

the youth population from being wiped out because of the deadly disease.

2. The management of university in Maroua Buea should establish forum of male and female students whereby the National Advising experts on AIDS and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) will consistently educate and disseminate AIDS information among them. Here, the use of condom for sexual intercourse should be stressed because naturally, abstinence might not help the situation considering the university campuses lifestyle on ground. This will necessitate sound and institute the right of students not being infringed upon legally. A situation in which the specific skills acquired by students after graduation cannot be utilized in the economic due to ill-health caused by the virus/syndrome tantamount to economic waste to the state and the nation at large.
3. The management of university Buea as a matter of fact should set in motion modalities to encourage periodic and consistent screening test among students and members of staff of the university. Here, stigmatization should be discouraged and people living with HIV/AIDS (PLHA) should be wholly accepted by both young and old in the university communities. This will improve the social and the spiritual life of the HIV/AIDS patients and thus promote the right attitude towards socio-economic development. Such modalities are likely to record higher adoption in a closely knit social group to enhance client's behavior modification for greater productivity.
4. The government should provide adequate funds to be efficiently invested against HIV/AIDS pandemic, protection and control issues. This will enable the students to live long by protecting their right through effective distribution of HIV/AIDS control

materials, medical personnel and school health education counseling. Counseling is the most important determinant attitude towards help seeking (Friedlander 1982). The knowledge of HIV/AIDS to the students enhances the possibility of the counselors to solve their personal and social problems. Addressing the students' problems occasioned by the death of this virus/syndrome will enable them to exercise their necessary skills effectively for.

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