

Exploring the Coping Strategies to the Third Wave of the Covid-19 Pandemic in Chawama Compound of Lusaka District, Zambia

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Abstract

The study noted that participants were more inclined towards using local herbs for mitigating the impact of the third wave of COVID19. They also preferred using a religious approach such as praying and fasting rather than adhering to the WHO regulations. This called for education to ensure that people affected use an integrated approach in addressing the challenges of the pandemic rather showing preference for selected strategies. The study findings generally suggest that, people in peri-urban settings of developing countries were likely to adopt local methods than international ones in the fight against the COVID pandemic.

1. Background

The coronavirus (covid-19) has affected humanity all around the globe in so many ways. It has caused a lot of disturbances on the social-economic dimension of humanity. The activities that have been affected include social gatherings such as churches, weddings, bars, sport, schools, but to mention just a few. On the economic dimension, the covid-19 has led to the closure of many industries as well as income generating sources for people. For instance, CDC (2019) observed that a lot of foreign investors have been forced to stay in their countries and have closed their companies leaving countless numbers of people jobless. Schools, colleges as well as universities have also been closed so as to help reduce the spread of the pandemic. These plus many other issues indicate that truly, the covid-19 pandemic has had devastating effects on human livelihood.

According to WHO (1999; 2012; 2021) education can be used as a very important tool in instilling knowledge, changing values and attitudes and developing skills that can transform human communities in management of resources as well as dealing with a crisis. This entails that education is critical in promoting sustainable development and improving people's capacity to address environmental and developmental issues. Education builds on the already existing knowledge, values, skills, experiences and determination of human capacity needed to work on solving problems at individual, community as well as national level. The World Bank (1999) argued that education equips people with knowledge, skills and attitudes to deal with any crisis. This implies that adequate education can equip people with skills to come up with strategies of coping with any environmental issue or crisis that breaks out. For example, education can help people improve on their sanitation and hygiene standards, and this is essential when dealing with prevention of diseases from spreading. Furthermore, education prepares the minds of people ahead so that when a crisis breaks out they are able to come up with strategies, which will help them to mitigate the negative effects of the crisis and be able to lead a sustainable lifestyle. According to Clerk-ginsberg (2013), proper and sound education provide a platform on which communities begin to exercise the knowledge needed to improve their environment. For instance, political and social changes across the continent, including the media as well as NGOs, have fostered an increased awareness on covid-19 among the public.

The rate at which covid-19 is spreading and continues to affect humanity is devastating. This is so because it has led to economic and social disruptions. For instance, Ndhlema (2002) observed that the breakout of covid-19 has led to the closure of industries, churches and recreational facilities, loss of lives as well as loss of jobs. Schools, colleges and universities have also been forced to switch to online learning, which tends to be a challenge among learners and teachers. With the outbreak of the third wave of the pandemic in Zambia, it is clearly seen that people will face more severe challenges than they have. Chawama being one of the

densely populated areas of Lusaka, it is at a high risk of experiencing the devastating effects of the third wave of covid-19. This is because most people in this area are ignorant of the fact that covid-19 is real and so, they tend to neglect the preventive measures put in place by the government. This may lead to the quick and wide spread of the coronavirus. Some of the challenges that Chawama residents are likely to be faced with if the spread of the covid-19 pandemic is not prevented or minimized include increased numbers of deaths, loss of jobs leading to exacerbated poverty levels, as well as loss of socialization among others. This then calls for an immediate action to be taken. Therefore, new and sustainable strategies and ways of living that will help the residents of Chawama compound cope with the third wave of covid-19 have to be devised.

World Bank (2012) however, stressed that covid-19 can be defeated through transparent knowledge-sharing, tailored support on the ground, and steadfast solidarity. This means that education and unity are key in the fight against the covid-19 pandemic. It is therefore, for this reason that this study focused on investigating the coping strategies to the third wave of covid-19 among residents of Chawama compound. Slowing the rate at which covid-19 is spreading will help the people of Chawama compound mitigate the effects of the first and second wave, and this will enable them deal with the breakout of the third wave of covid-19 sustainably. The study was aimed at investigating the strategies adopted by the residents of Chawama compound to cope with the third wave of covid-19.

2. Research methodology

In conducting this research, a case study design was used to provide in-depth information about the participants' perspectives of covid-19 and its effects on the socio-economic development in Zambia (Yin, 2003). A qualitative approach was used to capture participants' knowledge through interview participation and observation. A qualitative approach is a technique that involves non-numerical examination and interpretation of observations for the purpose of discovering underlying meanings and patterns of relationship (Blacky 2003; Chalawila & Muchanga, 2022). This design offered the researcher with an opportunity to use multiple sources of evidence, which upsurge the validity, and reliability of the findings. The complex nature of investigating the sustainability of the crisis coping strategies employed by a community called for the use of a case study which Ndhlema (2002) confirmed has an advantage over other research methodologies of explaining and describing complex issues. She further noted that the case study not only facilitates the finding of an in-depth analysis and logical explanations of contemporary events, but also helps in yielding qualitative data from one locality.

According to Kalenga (2009), target population refers to the total environment of interest to the one carrying out research. This is a group (usually of people) from whom we want to be able to draw conclusions or an entire group of persons or elements that have at least one thing in common. The target population for this research involved fifty (50) residents of Chawama compound. The research focused on Chawama market, Chawama and Chimwemwe primary and some selected households of Chawama compound to find out the knowledge they have regarding covid-19, its effects and the mitigation methods that were put place in order to cope with the third wave of the pandemic. This is because data collected from each of these areas was very important in determining the contribution of households, schools as well as the market in reducing or increasing the rate at which covid-19 is spreading and, also in generating sustainable strategies of coping with the pandemic.

Sampling Design and Technique

To successfully obtain a manageable population from the target population of one hundred and twenty (120) participants, a sampling approach was used which a procedure is concerned with the selection of a subset of elements from within a statistical population. In line with Webster (2015), there are two broad categories of sampling techniques engaged in this study. These are probability and non-probability. Probability sampling is an approach in which every element of the population has a greater and equal chance of being selected and its' probability can be accurately determined (Andale, 2015). This method produces unbiased estimates of the population totals by weighing sampled elements according to their probability of selection. Meanwhile, non-probability sampling method aims to be theoretically representative of the study population by maximizing the scope or range of variation of study. It is mainly applied to find out how a small group or representative group is doing for the purpose of illustration (Yin, 2003). A systematic sampling (Probability approach) was used to select thirty (30) marketeers while purposive sampling (Non-probability approach) was used to select another seventy (70) household members, and the remaining twenty

pupils/teachers from the two schools. A systematic sampling or sampling interval is a type of probability sampling where a researcher has a large number of participants to select from. Systematic sampling method was employed to arrive at the target sample and residents were selected randomly.

Data Collection tools

In achieving the aims and objectives of the research, the researcher collected primary data using specific qualitative methods that included semi structured interviews, observations, note taking and field photographing to collect primary data in Chawama compound. Primary data is important because it provided the researcher with first-hand information for the study. Interviews are written lists of questions on topics that need to be covered by interviewers, there were structured, unstructured or semi structured and involves direct contact between the researcher and the participants for acquiring answers posed by the formulator. It is neither strictly structured with standardized questions, nor entirely “nondirective,” but is focused on certain themes. In this case, semi-structured interviews were conducted among the groups to access ancillary information and data for the research and to give their perception on topics relevant for the study. This is because semi-structured interviews offer the advantage of eliciting more comprehensive data along with maintaining a fairly conversational and situational interview.

Qualitative observation involves watching and recording what people say and do. It is a more natural way of gathering data. According to Blacky (2003), observation is recognized as the most direct means of studying people when one is interested in their overt behavior. The data that was collected through observations consisted of detailed descriptions of people’s activities, behaviors, actions, and the full range of interpersonal interactions and organizational processes that are part of observable human experience. Observations proved to be very important in this research as they helped the researcher to understand the behavior of the residents of Chawama compound to identify any specific problems and what needed to be done concerning hygiene and crisis preparedness. The reason for using this method of data collection is that it provided hidden information that participants never wanted to review during interviews due to insecurities, lack of interest, or due to sensitivity of issues, therefore making it difficult to discuss, or otherwise. Observations enabled the researcher to gain insight into people’s understanding towards the interviews and reflect on how they reacted and behaved during the discussions.

Data Analysis

According to Shoed (2014), data analysis is where research findings or results are clearly shown and gaps for further research are pointed out and, Muchanga (2020) asserts that, analysis option are dependent on the nature of data collected. In this study, a constant comparative method of data analysis was used to concurrently analyze the data in order to develop concepts, by continuously comparing specific mordents in the data; the researcher improved these concepts, identified their properties, explored their relationships to one another and integrated them into a coherent explanatory mode. Therefore, the primary data review was analyzed by asking participants questions, cross checking the answers being given using different ways of questioning and follow up questions in order to understand and verify some inconsistencies with observations in the field. To do so, the researcher prepared simple questions to understand and get straight to the point questions in order to acquire answers that corresponded with questions asked. These interviews were conducted in different localities of the compound to get diverse opinions from residents that enabled the researcher to make a clear and comprehensive data analysis in relation to the study objectives.

1. Research Findings

Demographic Characteristics of Participants.

The study involved fifty (50) participants whose demographic data was collected based on age group, gender distribution, marital status, household size and occupation. The majority of the participants were between the ages of 25 to 35 years as shown in figure 1a below. It shows age distribution of participants the majority were between 25-35 years (about 33 participants) and the minority fell between 47-58 years (2 participants). Figure 1b shows the gender distribution of the participants the majority were females (about 29 participants) and the minority were males (about 21 participants) out of 50 participants.

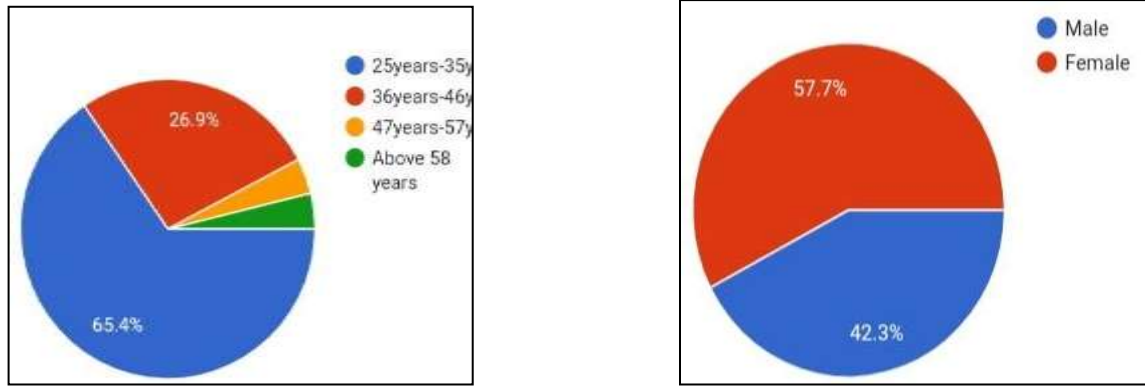


Figure 1 (a) Participant distribution by age and (b) by gender

Figure 2 shows the distribution of participants by household size. The majority fell between 3-6 people per household and the minority fell between 7-9 people.

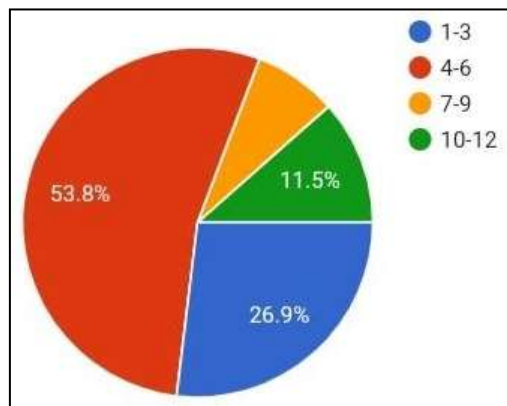


Figure 2: distribution of participants by household size

Strategies of coping with the third wave of covid-19

The majority (32/50) of participants used traditional steaming as a way of curbing covid-19 while the minority representing 7 participants applied the WHO strategies (Table 1).

Table 1: Strategies used by Participants to cope with third wave of COVID-19

Strategy	Frequency	Percentage
Traditional steaming using lemon, garlic and ginger	32	64
WHO strategies/measures (vaccines)	7	14
Religious beliefs (prayers)	11	22
Total	50	100

Source: Field data, (2021).

Effectiveness of the strategies used by participants in coping with covid-19 third wave

Table 2 shows the effectiveness of the various strategies in coping with covid-19 according to participants of Chawama compound. Majority of participants regarded traditional methods and religious practices such as prayer to be more effective than the use of WHO prescribed methods.

Table 2: effectiveness of the various strategies in coping with covid-19

Strategy	Is it effective?		Total
	Yes	No	
Traditional steaming	15	5	20
WHO strategies/measures	3	15	18
Religious beliefs (prayers)	9	3	12
Total			50

4. Discussion of findings

The study noted that, majority of the participants considered traditional steaming an effective strategy for curbing the third wave of covid-19 pandemic, while the minority view the WHO measures as a sustainable and effective strategy of dealing with the pandemic. Only a few people applied and adhered to the covid-19 guidelines that were implemented by the WHO through the Ministry of Health. The WHO guidelines include the use of alcohol based handy sanitizers, regular washing of hands, observation of social distance, avoiding of crowded place as well as masking up. The findings also show that at least a good number of participants preferred using the church as way of protecting themselves from the pandemic and so they tended to go for regular prayers. Muchanga *et al.* (2020) however noted that, such an approach where people gathered either for prayers or academic activities were potential background for the spread of the disease. A good number of people that prefer using prayers a strategy in coping with covid-19 were women and some men of God they referred to as papas. A large number of people used traditional ways as they view covid-19 as just a common flu which could just be dealt with using common remedies. Majority of participants did not believe in the WHO strategy of coping with Covid-19 because it had too many restrictions that could affect their income generation. It also entailed that most people in the study area were not fully aware of what to do in or order to cope with the pandemic other than prayers and use of herbs. This then means that the WHO strategies to control the outbreak through screening, containment (or suppression), and mitigation were underlooked as evidenced by higher preference for herbs and prayers. Therefore, there is a need to look at a strategy in which education can be used as a key component to sensitize the residents about COVID-19, and also to generate strategies that could be effective in fighting against the pandemic and at the same time making the lives of the people sustainable.

The majority of Chawama residents did not feel that adherence to the WHO and the national health policy was effective and sustainable because it would mean staying away from their source of income as they mainly depended on selling in the market. This then means that they would rather continue using the traditional ways and continue with business as usual culture. The majority of the residents are poor and struggling at the edge of subsistence levels of consumption. This is because of low incomes. Sources of income for households vary and include formal, informal employment and majority of them are involved in petty trading in basic commodities, which are repackaged in smaller quantities that can be affordable for the residents. The majority of residents have attained basic level of education which then contributes to high vulnerability of the area to health risks, crime, gender-based violence and poverty. Majority of the participants had mixed beliefs about COVID-19 and so they felt that the WHO measures could not work appropriately. However, residents realized that they themselves were key in the fight against covid-19 and that the WHO measures are sustainable in coping with the third wave of the pandemic. This was evidenced by the setting up of hand washing spots at each entrance of the market, shops/supermarkets and schools. Most people were also seen masking up whenever they are getting on buses, posters depicting the WHO covid-19 prevention measures were put in shops, markets and schools to remind people that they needed to do their part in order to make the fight against covid-19 successful. Overall, the finding partly points to the need for environmental and health education that would bring about desired behavioral and social change for adaptation to not only COVID-19, but also other public health challenges related to the environment (Namafe & Muchanga, 2017).

5. Conclusion

Therefore, from the findings discussed above, it can be concluded that insufficient knowledge and high poverty levels is linked to formulation of poor strategies of coping with crisis. This in turn increases the area's vulnerability to crises because people will neglect or the guidelines or preventive measures in order to

sustain their families. The effects of neglecting guidelines may have negative effects on the people and this is evident in Chawama when it comes to the strategies they are using to cope with the third wave of covid-19.

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