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RESEARCHERS' EXPERIENCES AT THE TIME OF COVID-19 OUTBREAK AMONG TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN CALABAR METROPOLIS, NIGERIA.

DELIGHT OMOJI IDIKA, HENRIETTA OSAYI UCHEGBUE, CHIDIMMA I. IDIKA AND KELECHI UHEGBU

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ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to investigate COVID-19 outbreak in Calabar Metropolis. This really analyzed the challenges encountered in carrying out educational research in the time of Covid-19 pandemic, and then, offered solution to strengthen research activities at all times. The study adopted a descriptive cross-sectional mix methods design involving both qualitative (exploratory) and quantitative (explanatory) approaches. Four research questions and two hypotheses guided the quantitative part of the study while the qualitative part was guided by the a key informant interview with responses grouped in themes and subthemes – reflecting the direct quotes of the participants. The population of this study included all university lecturers (3,860) and postgraduate students (2,383) from public and private tertiary institutions in Calabar Metropolies who were researching at the time of this study. A total of 600 male and female researchers constituted the sample for the quantitative study while 24 key informants constituted the participants for the qualitative part of the study. Participants were sampled through purposive sampling technique to recruit only respondents that have rich information for the study. As inclusion criteria, only researchers who were researching at the time of data collection in the period of the pandemic were recruited in this study. The researchers' questionnaire and key informant interview guide were the instruments validated and used for data collection. The estimates of Cronbach alpha reliability of the instruments ranged between 0.82 and 0.87. Data were analyzed through descriptive (frequencies and percentages) and inferential statistics (independent t-test and analysis of variance- ANOVA). Data from the qualitative part was transcribed and thematically reported verbatim. Ethical clearance was obtained from Cross River State Research Ethics Committee. One of the major experiences of researchers during the pandemic is the inability to interface with respondents, 61.5% of respondents could not participate in the studies because of fear of contracting the virus. Majority of the respondents (91.5%) admitted that the outbreak did help to facilitate the use and mastery of the media in research especially in data collection via calls (50.2%), e-mails (38.5%), zoom (14.8%). The study found out that researchers encountered both negative and positive impact of COVID-19 in the course of researching during the pandemic and this was found to be more among female lecturers and students than their male counterparts. In conclusion, there was high attrition rate and inability to conduct face-to-face investigation and this led to greater need for utilization of media, ICT, and technology in research during the pandemic. This has significant policy implication for increasing technology use and greater capacity building in these areas for enhanced performance in research activities of lecturers and graduate students especially in critical times.

KEYWORDS: Covid-19 outbreak, post-covid analysis, experiences of researching lecturers and graduate students, negative impact, positive impact, forward with educational research.

INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 caused by the SARS-CoV-2, which originated from the Wuhan Province of China during the last days of 2019 (Xu et al., 2020), has become a global health issue unprecedented and has negatively impacted on the ease of researching not just in Calabar Metropolis but all over the world.

Before the outbreak of the pandemic, researchers have had the ease of conducting studies with data collection and other field work activities which ran smoothly. The basic research challenges then, were just normal attrition of respondents dropping out of the study without completely following the study to the end. Following the pandemic with its challenges of lockdowns, quarantines, social distancing and

Delight Omoji Idika, Institute of Education
Henrietta Osayi Uchegbue, Department of Educational Foundations
Chidimma I. Idika, Department of Public Health
Kelechi Uhegbu, Department of Paediatrics, University of Calabar, Calabar, Nigeria

cautiousness in close communications, education researchers like others have found it so difficult to comfortably conduct researches. In a study done by Ada, Angioha, Tangban, Abang and Akam (2021) on COVID-19 pandemic experience in Calabar and its implication on the economic status of the people, it was documented that its impact cut across all facets of life including schools, schooling and research, which undoubtedly forms a core education activity particularly in tertiary institutions.

It is no doubt that with the pandemic, came fear and sceptism among researchers just like every other persons in innovative professions about their safety and how best to prevent the contraction of the virus while carrying out their duty. The pandemic made execution of most activities difficult. This also was the case in qualitative researches especially aspects involving face-to-face data collection. This problem has led to the use of media and electronic means of data collection like use of emails, phone calls, text messages, and social media. Again, the challenge with this means of research is its limitation in the ability of the researcher to study the subjects directly and their body languages too. The pandemic also led to insecurity of researchers, research assistants and the participants in question. Many field research activities were reduced or halted in order to control COVID-19 transmission (Ajisegiri, Odusanya and Joshi, 2020). The fear of being infected with COVID-19 in the course of undergoing a field research and the lockdown order also limited access to research activities provided by researchers and research subjects. Disruption of research activities obviously could lead to poor research work and generation of data, poor research integrity, selection and data bias, different research errors among other research issues.

According to Stephen (2021), the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on psychological science has been large, disrupting the conduct of psychological research and forcing psychological scientists to adapt their work to continue its progress. This has affected other areas of research, not only psychological researches. Several important theoretical and practical challenges have emerged along the way. The COVID-19 pandemic affected a variety of researchers, students and academics (Chenneville and Schwartz-Mette, 2020). As institutions of higher education underwent limited in-person activities, so do their major activities like research and trainings, and investigations got disrupted. Many graduate students have faced new barriers as a result (Thompson, 2020). Access to laboratory equipment and programs has remained a personal challenge for some researchers right from the outbreak of the pandemic, and some universities are yet to provide students with access to some of the statistical software that could match with their strict COVID policies that prevented students from being on campus (Stephen, 2021).

Naturally, achieving graduate program milestones in a timely manner has been a priority for students and graduate programs long before the emergence of COVID-19, but the COVID-19 pandemic has introduced additional barriers that graduate students must navigate, resulting in increased stress. Some researchers had planned to begin data collection for their new study involving eye-tracking, requiring in-person sessions but the research had to be postponed because of participant's safety, universities followed the strict guidelines of Center for Diseases Control (CDC) from the onset. Unfortunately, this also meant that all university-affiliated research came to an immediate halt. Due to this, post graduate students' time-sensitive and ambitious study idea had to be scrapped for a new one that did not require in-person sessions (Stephen, 2021).

These challenges are not peculiar to students, faculties, departments and university programmes; every unit of the institution as in the society has to face their own difficulties in navigating new barriers introduced by COVID-19. Several data collection projects were put on hold leading to delays in some project writing, and due also to the demands of online teaching. Some researchers focused on writing up existing data and submitting those manuscripts but even the peer review process was also affected (Lourenco and Tasimi, 2020). In other words, a primary challenge for those researching during the pandemic was also the delay in manuscripts getting reviewed, including those that were submitted in the months prior to the pandemic. This also delayed reviews from Institution Review Boards (IRBs) because Research Ethics Committees could not sit as also arrangement for transition to 'new normal' was not a task that could be accomplished easily given the freshness of the pandemic and in the face of inadequate resources at the disposal of the Institution. Among those who continued their research, the generalizability of data obtained during these unprecedented times constituted another issue to contend with in the course of the research endeavour (Lourenco and Tasimi, 2020; Wolkewitz and Puljak, 2020).This therefore appears to defeat the goal of this nature of research which is to produce reliable knowledge that can be applied as widely as possible.

Researches whose methodology used more web-based surveys or secondary data analysis, observably recorded little or no problems related to da ta collection which many in -person researchers had during the pandemic. Some academic members transited to working from home, a behavioural routine which some have found difficult to break even after the pandemic. For others, however, there have been additional challenges in maintaining a research program without the clear-cut boundaries between work and home.

Many academics face the increased stressor of balancing home and work-related demands simultaneously (Wolkewitz and Puljak, 2020).

COVID-19 disproportionately affected researchers and research activities (CDC, 2021). Despite the negative impacts, some of the impacts of the pandemic have been positive, providing opportunities for growth professionally/ranks for individual researchers and the scientific community (Idika, 2016). Many journals removed financial barriers to access articles about COVID-19 so the information would reach a wider audience. Scientists have made greater use of alternative platforms for disseminating research findings and of online data collection systems, which have responded by increasing research capacity (Stephen, 2021).

Despite many challenges, researchers have shown their ability to adapt during trying times. These experiences have changed the way researchers have continued to approach research in the post-COVID-19 times, via social media, message boards and zoom among others. Researchers are increasingly developing and nurturing professional relationships that could lead to collaborations with others from across the globe, not just within local circles. The way researchers have approached research from 2021 and beyond will be forever marked by the experiences during the COVID-19 global pandemic (Chen et al., 2020).

With many developing cold feet toward meeting face to face with researchers, the question now is are researchers actually having the right people/audience through the media and social media to respond to their instrumentations? Are authentic data still being collected? What kind of results are likely to emerge from data collected from wrong respondents that our instrument may likely or happen to fall in their hands? When such data are applied to existing problems, are they likely to solve society's issues or complicate them? These and many others including the threatening health issues, psychosocial problems facing researchers, others in general, are feared impacts/experiences of researching in the time of COVID-19 and its variants that are likely to deter both researchers and respondents from meeting face to face.

According to Ekuri (2022), the integrity of scientific documentation defined by its accuracy, completeness and value, ultimately impacts the wellbeing of the society, a cogent reason researchers are both entrusted and obligated to use the highest standards possible when proposing, performing, reviewing, and reporting research. The period during which researches are conducted should not lower the authenticity or standards of the outcome of researches. It is however, feared that given the numerous challenges in the face of researching in the era of COVID-19 and its variants, the activities of researchers and the impacts they create towards society's utility could be lowered, hence, the reason to investigate the researchers' experience in the time of COVID-19 in Calabar in order to help among others to forestall future conditions that could endanger the outcome of researching in the area. This study therefore, has significant policy implication; it calls for policy interference for engendering changes towards effective and innovative researching at all times for national development as expected from the activities of researchers in the study and the nation in general.

Idika, Offong and Uchegbue (2010) had long noted that focusing researching in education that will drive public policy in the sector remains the bane, as this is the goal of any growing economy. In other words, ensuring that authentic or valid results are achieved through research investigation at all times is paramount, considering the developmental needs of a reliable research finding. Research findings can only be used as input to national development policy if results obtained in the course of researching are valid and believed to solve the specific needs of the society (Idika et al., 2010), and again if researchers and policy makers cooperate closely to understand these specific needs of the society (Ekuri, 2022).

The era of COVID-19 and post-covid have come with several needs that call for greater attention of researchers in their effort to investigate and proffer lasting solution to those challenges using reliable research results. Among some of these challenges have remained poor planned and executed educational policies and programmes and poor management of educational system with attendant impact on national development (Idika, 2015). Now with added pressure on school planners and managers especially with the urgency with which the virus eradication demands attention even in the face of very limited resources to tackle it, the impact is widening. Others have come to be directly COVID-19 pandemic related, pointing to the global health crisis leading to lockdown/shut down of schools and almost other sectors of national life. Coupled with the severity of the pandemic, are attendant psychosocial implications on individuals including researchers and families alike and according to Idika, Orji, Bichene and Oke (2022), all have come to be stress, frustration, depression, aggression, conduct disorder, social phobia, delinquency, especially while away from school. The impacts experienced in the course of carrying out research at critical times fall on both men and female research investigators alike. Some of the researchers' experiences have been in the challenging social issues of insecurity in the research area which have ranged from rejection, harassment, cultism and robbery activities and kidnapping regularly and increasingly; these are being faced by researchers particularly following the COVID-19 scenario, and have tended to heighten the researchers' fear and stress with attendant depletion of their health and well-being as well as the results they obtain from the research exercise.

The above is supported on the theoretical understanding alluded to by Mclnerney and Mcklindens (2014) in Orji, Ghande and Ajah (2021) who maintained that post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) can have a direct, immediate and potentially overwhelming impact on individuals' ability to perform in any task. Also, evidence exists that self-efficacy of researchers is altered as a result of PTSD condition (Orji et al., 2021). All these contribute to the threatening psychological health of researchers in critical times like the COVID-19 period and now the post-COVID-19 era, and which could impact negatively on the investigative strength of this profession and which could as well reduce the effectiveness of research in achieving the desired results of transformation and development. Notwithstanding, an empirical survey by Idika, Faithpraise, Okeke and Anakwue (2023) on the research area which identified as low the extent of use of a good number of digital tools of research in the face of intense crisis and diverse insecurity forms, recommended that fostering innovative research in education particularly among women can influence future participation in helping to stem the tide of insecurity and engendering sustainable peace and social adjustment of communities, persons including researchers in this area. To this end the following research questions were raised for the study

i. What were the experience of researchers during the Covid 19 pandemic?
ii. How do male researchers differ from female researchers in terms of their research experiences during the pandemic?
iii. How do younger researchers differ from old researchers in terms of their research experiences during the pandemic?
iv. To what extent does professional rank influence the experiences of researchers during the pandemic ?

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a descriptive cross-sectional mix methods design involving both qualitative (exploratory) and quantitative (explanatory) approaches. Four research questions and two hypotheses guided the quantitative part of the study while the exploratory part was guided by a key Informant Interview Guide (KIIG). The population of this study included all university lecturers and students who were researching at the time of this study numbering 6243 (3860 lecturers and 2383 postgraduate students). A total of 600 researchers constituted the sample for the quantitative study while 24 key informants constituted the participants for the qualitative part of the study. Participants were sampled through purposive sampling technique to recruit only respondents that have rich information for the study. As inclusion criteria, only researchers who were researching at the time of the pandemic were recruited in this present study. The questionnaire was designed with 10 items to collect quantitative data about the experiences of researchers in a period of total lock down with a key informant interview guide where the instruments were validated and used for data collection. The instruments' reliability was ascertained through Cronbach alpha analysis with reliability indices of between 0.82 and 0.87. Data were analyzed through descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive methods used for the data were frequencies and percentages and inferentially independent t-test and analysis of variance- ANOVA were engaged. Data from the qualitative perspective were organized in themes, subthemes and patterns for deeper understanding of the phenomenon under study. These category of data was transcribed and thematically reported directly or verbatim. Ethical clearance was also obtained from Cross River State Research Ethics Committee.

RESULTS/FINDINGS

Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents

A total of 600 researchers were used; out of which 306 (51.0%) were males while 294 (49.0%) were females. Majority of the respondents 210 (35.0%) were within the age bracket 42-49 years. This is followed by those 206 (34.3%) who were within the age group 34-41 years. Most of the respondents 161 (26.8%) were senior lecturers, followed by 97 (16.7%) who were lecturer I and only 6 (1.0%) were professors. A greater proportion of the respondents 209 (84.8%) had more than six years research experience, followed by 181 (30.2%) who had four to six years of research experience while only 41 (6.8%) had less than one year research experience. Details of this result are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents

Variables	Frequency	Percent
Gender		
Male	306	51.0%
Female	294	49.0%
Age		
18-25 years	86	14.3%
26-33 years	92	15.3%
34-41 years	206	34.3%
42-49 years	210	35.0%
50 years and above	6	1.0%
Group of respondents		
Students	62	10.3%
Graduate assistants	40	6.7%
Assistant lecturers	80	13.3%
Lecturer II	89	14.8%
Lecturer I	97	16.7%
Senior lecturers	161	26.8%
Associate professors	65	10.8%
Professors	6	1.0%
Years of research experience		
< 1 year	41	6.8%
1-3 years	169	28.2%
4-6 years	181	30.2%
> 6 years	209	84.8%

Research question 1

Researchers' experience in the face of the COVI-19 pandemic

This part was an open-ended section that elicited information from respondents on their experiences and impact of COVID-19 pandemic in the course of researching.

Table 2: Researchers' experience in the face of the COVI-19 pandemic-Open-ended section.

Variables	Frequency	Percent
Negative impact		
Limitations in having one-on-one interface with respondents	600	100%
High level of attrition	350	58.3%
Restriction of movements	212	35.3%
Prolonged field data gathering	171	28.5%
Delay in having ethical approval	480	80.0%
Morbidity and mortality of researchers, research assistants and respondents	369	61.5%
Others	57	9.5%
Positive impact		
Mastery in the use of media in data collection	549	91.5%
Use of calls in data collection	301	50.2%
Conducting media FDGs via zoom and other platforms	89	14.8%
Use of social media for research	510	85.0%
Use of e-mails in data collection	231	38.5%

* These were all multi-choice responses.

A. Qualitative part

A total of 24 key informants constituted the participants for the qualitative part of the study. Responses were analyzed verbatim and themes as well as sub-themes as presented with quotes of participants in Table 3 below:

Table 3: Responses from the Key Informant Interview Guide

Themes	Sub-themes	KII Quotes
1. Negative impact of COVID-19 pandemic on research	a. Barrier to face-to-face interface with respondents	"The pandemic has caused difficulty in getting respondents to fill questionnaires face-to-face"
	b. Increase in attrition rate	"So many prospective respondents opted out of the study because of the pandemic"
	c. Prolonged field data gathering	"It took a longer time to gather data in my last study due to the Corona Virus"
	d. Ethical approval delay	"Well…! We encountered challenges in getting ethical approval in this period"
	e. Exposure to the virus	"People were really afraid of exposure to the virus"
Positive impact of COVID-19 pandemic on research	a. Use of media for data collection.	"It is no doubt that this has brought about mastery on use of media for data collection"
	b. Call data	"Use of calls in data collection became advanced during the pandemic"
	c. Media FGDs	"…we were able to conduct FDGs via Zoom and Skype…"
	d. E-mail research	"I mastered the use of e-mails in research and reaching out to target audience"

Research question two

How do male researchers differ from female researchers in terms of their research experiences during the pandemic? To answer this research question, independent t-test was used, and the result showed that for male researchers, the mean (X=17.23, S.D=3.72) was relatively equal with the mean (X=17.01, S.D=4.10) of female researchers. This implies that group of researchers do not differ in the experiences during the covid 19 pandemic. A cursory look at the inferential statistics result showed that (t(n=600) =1.52, 95% CI [.81, .43], df=595, p>.05). since p (.543) is greater than p(.05), this is an indication that the male and female researchers do not differ significantly in their research experiences during the Covid 19 pandemic. Thus, the null hypothesis s supported, and the alternate hypothesis rejected.

Table 3: Independent t-test analysis of the influence of gender on researchers' experiences during the pandemic

Variable	Subgroups	N	M	SD	MD	Df	t-cal	p-val
Researchers experience	Male	306	17.23	3.72	0.22	598	1.52	.543
	Female	294	17.01	4.10				

MD=mean difference, M=Mean, SD=Standard deviation

Research question three

How do younger researchers differ from old researchers in terms of their research experiences during the pandemic? To answer this research question, independent t-test was used, and the result showed that younger researchers (below 40yrs) had a higher mean (X=17.89, S. D=3.01) compared to the mean of the older lecturers (above 40yrs) (X=15.62, S. D=5.77). This implies that younger researchers differ in their experiences during the covid 19 pandemic. A cursory look at the inferential statistics result showed that (t(n=600) =6.78, 95%CI [.65, .54], df=595, p<.001). since p (.000) is less than p (.05), this is an indication that young researchers differ from the older researchers in their research experiences during the pandemic. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected, and the alternate hypothesis accepted.

Table 3: Independent t-test analysis of the influence of age on researchers' experiences during the pandemic

Variable	Subgroups	N	M	SD	MD	Df	t-cal	p-val
Researchers experience	Younger	306	17.89	3.01	2.27	598	6.78*	.000
	Older	294	15.62	5.77				

Research question four

To what extent does professional rank influence the experiences of researchers during the pandemic? To answer this question, analysis of variance was used, and the result is presented in Table 4. The result in Table 4 revealed that researchers from the rank of professors (M=16.87, SD=3.82) is higher than those who are Lect. I -Snr Lect. (M=16.1, S.D=3.21) and those who are Asst. Lect-Lect II (M=15.42, S. D=3.89) which implies that researchers who are professors have a better experience than those below the professional rank. To test the significance, the result showed that F (600) =15.9872, 95% CI [.04,.10], df=2, 597 p<.001). Since p (.000) is less than p (.05), this implies that professional ranks influence researchers experience during the pandemic. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Table 4: One way analysis of variance (ANOVA) of the influence of professional rank on researchers' experiences.

Source of variation	SS	df	MS	F	p-val
Between	3245.12	2	1622.52		
Within	53283.67	597	89.25	18.17*	.000
Total	56528.79	599			

*=significant at .05 level

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The study's findings reveal a surprising lack of significant difference between male and female researchers in their experiences during the pandemic. This unexpected result challenges conventional assumptions regarding gender disparities in academia, particularly during times of crisis. One possible explanation for this finding could be the widespread adoption of remote work arrangements in response to the pandemic. With traditional barriers to participation, such as geographical location and commuting constraints being minimized, both male and female researchers may have had more equitable access to research opportunities and resources. This leveling of the playing field may have contributed to the absence of significant differences in experiences between both sexes.

The rationale for the the study's findings suggests such could be due to access to resources, work-life balance, and institutional support which may have played a more significant role in shaping researchers' experiences than gender itself. It is plausible that during the pandemic, individuals' experiences were primarily influenced by external factors related to their specific research environment and personal circumstances rather than their gender. The resilience and adaptability demonstrated by researchers across genders in navigating the challenges posed by the pandemic also merit some reasonable considerations. Despite facing unprecedented disruptions to their work routines and environments, researchers exhibited remarkable resilience in maintaining productivity and engagement in their respective fields. This resilience may have mitigated any potential disparities in experiences between male and female researchers.

However, it is important to interpret these findings with caution and acknowledge the limitations of the study. The research may have overlooked nuances in the experiences of researchers from diverse demographic backgrounds, such as ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and caregiving responsibilities, which could intersect with gender to influence research experiences differently. Additionally, while the absence of significant gender differences in research experiences during the pandemic is encouraging, it does not negate the existence of systemic gender disparities in academia and research. Issues such as gender bias in funding allocation, publication rates, and leadership opportunities persist and warrant ongoing attention and intervention.

The study's findings indicate that there is no significant difference between younger and older researchers in their experiences during the pandemic despite the younger researchers exhibiting a stronger mean value. This unexpected result challenges common assumptions about age-related disparities in research environments, particularly during times of crisis. One possible explanation for this finding is that younger researchers may have demonstrated greater adaptability and resilience in response to the challenges posed by the pandemic. With digital literacy and familiarity with remote work tools being more prevalent among younger individuals, they may have been better equipped to navigate the transition to remote work and overcome technological barriers compared to their older counterparts.

As a result, younger researchers may have reported stronger mean experiences during the pandemic, despite there being no significant difference between age groups in overall. This is in line with the previous studies (Orji et al., 2021; Idika et al., 2023; Thompson. 2020; Lourenco & Tasimi, 2020).

Additionally, younger researchers may have benefited from their relative lack of institutional responsibilities and family obligations compared to older researchers. With fewer caregiving responsibilities and professional commitments, younger researchers may have had more time and flexibility to dedicate to their research during the pandemic, contributing to their perceived stronger experiences. However, it is again essential to interpret these findings with caution while acknowledging the study limitations. The investigation may not have fully captured the nuanced experiences of researchers across different age groups, including factors such as career stage, field of study, and access to resources. Additionally, while younger researchers may have reported stronger mean experiences during the pandemic, it is crucial to recognize that this does not negate the challenges they may have faced or the support they may require to thrive in their research endeavours. The study findings also align with that of other researchers who found that a mix feeling is exhibited among scholars when national issues that tend to limit interactions occur (Wolkewitz & Puljak, 2020; Chen et al., 2020)

The study's findings reveal that there is no significant difference in the experiences of researchers during the pandemic across different professional ranks, despite professors and senior lecturers exhibiting a stronger mean. This unexpected result challenges conventional assumptions and studies about the impact of professional rank on research experiences (Idika, 2016), particularly during times of crisis. One possible explanation for this finding is that individuals in higher professional ranks, such as professors and senior lecturers, may have had access to more resources and support networks that enabled them to navigate the challenges of the pandemic more effectively. With greater institutional support, tenure status, and established networks within academia, professors and senior lecturers may have been better equipped to adapt to remote work arrangements, secure funding, and maintain productivity during the pandemic compared to their junior counterparts.

Additionally, individuals in higher professional ranks may have had more autonomy and flexibility in managing their workloads and priorities, allowing them to allocate time and resources more effectively to their research endeavours. This increased autonomy and control over their work may have contributed to their perceived stronger experiences during the pandemic. However, it is important consider interpreting these findings with caution while also acknowledging the limitations of the study. The research may not have fully captured the nuanced experiences of researchers across different professional ranks, including factors such as disciplinary differences, institutional contexts, and personal circumstances. Additionally, while professors and senior lecturers may have reported stronger mean experiences during the pandemic, it is crucial to recognize that this does not negate the challenges they may have faced or the support they may require to maintain their research productivity and well-being. This is in line with previous studies on researches experience during pandemic (Ajisegiri et al. 2020; Stephen, 2021, Chenneville et al., 2020)

CONCLUSIONS

This study was conducted to investigate researchers' experiences at the time of COVID-19 outbreak among tertiary institutions in Calabar Metropolis. This really analyzed the challenges encountered researching during the pandemic era. The study found out that researchers encountered negative and positive impacts of COVID-19 in the course of researching during the pandemic. In conclusion, there was high attrition rate and inability to conduct face-to-face research and there was, therefore, need for utilization of media, ICT, and technology in research during the pandemic. The study has imprinted significant implication for policy decision and enforcement for engendering higher and better researching through empowerment of stakeholders in research and provision of technological facilities for research. It was therefore, recommended that more ICT facilities should be integrated into the professional practice of researchers so as to use alternative measures for studies in crisis moments like in the pandemic scenario. Adequate provisions by management of tertiary institutions and government for researching and improved safe environment for research in tertiary institutions in Calabar, Cross River State and Nigeria are also recommended.

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