
Impacts of Covid-19 on the Comorian Education System

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Abstract

The entire surveyed population declares that the world is facing an unprecedented health crisis. No common measure can combat what could be described as a war against an invisible. Vaccines are constantly being developed. In December 2019, in the city of Wuhan (China), the epidemic of coronavirus (Covid-19) appears. Nobody thought that this disease would last long and become a pandemic. Because of its speed of spread and contamination, on January 30, 2020, the World Health Organization declared it a health emergency of international concern and since March 11, it has been raised to the rank of a global pandemic. All sectors of activity are affected by the pandemic but the education system in general and Comorian in particular pay the highest price.

Keywords: Corona virus; education; Comoros; School closure; TV-training

INTRODUCTION

At the time when Africa was preparing to celebrate a new year 2020 opening towards a new decade of actions for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, humanity seems to know the end of the world since December 2019.

The Comoros, a small island country, is going through copy and paste measures and is experiencing successive school stoppages with no possibility of educating pupils and students using new technologies such as TV education, distance learning or e-learning among others. This health crisis violates the classical process of the Comorian educational system. The Covid 19 pandemic has taken everyone by surprise and has had unprecedented socio-economic, educational and financial repercussions in the short and medium term. The Union of Comoros was officially affected by this coronavirus pandemic on April 30, 2020, making it one of the last countries to be officially infected, along with Lesotho. However, the present study focuses on the impact of covid-19 on the educational system of the Union of Comoros in order to propose an effective response and guide public policy choices.

Several questions arise in order to properly analyze this situation:

- What is the socio-economic impact of private schools?
- How did the Ministry of Education deal with this situation?
- Do the economic and financial problems caused by Covid 19 influence the survival of the private institutes and the follow-up of their academic programs, or even their destiny?
- Do the frequent course stoppages due to the pandemic influence the annual results of students and pupils?

This work is the result of a preliminary study carried out in some private and public institutions and in some sites of the University of Comoros, in an analytical way. It aims at identifying the socio-economic after-effects recorded.

Thus, the framework of our study is based on a plan of three main parts : the economic impact of Covid-19 on private education in the Union of Comoros:

Then, the impact of Covid 19 on exam results. And finally, the socio-economic consequences of the coronavirus on the Comorian educational system as a whole.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Our survey was conducted in the three islands under the administration of the Comorian authority between 2020 and 2021. Our survey was financed by ourselves.

Our objective is to provide some clues to enable government authorities and international actors to react in time before an emergency situation turns into a crisis that could impact the Comorian education system.

Our study focuses on preventing the spread of the pandemic in Comorian schools. Specifically, our study aims to demonstrate the evolution of the disease and the behaviors to be adopted during the pandemic period.

Secondly, our survey will provide information on the barrier measures and attitudes adopted by each school environment.

Finally, our study will collect detailed data on the attitude of the population towards what some people call corona business.

Data collection tool

In the course of the survey, interviews were conducted using a pre-established questionnaire to subjects aged 16 to 60 years. It allows to identify all the constraints and assets in terms of copy-paste measures taken by the government. An individual survey of teachers, students and pupils was carried out. The questions asked vary according to age, gender, occupation, level of education and place of residence.

Sampling

Our sample focused on the three main islands of the Union of the Comoros, the first of which was Grand Comore with 53 interviewees, followed by Anjouan with 42 and Moheli with 21. All of the interviewees comprised our sample. We constituted 4 clusters according to their size, from the list established in the study area. All selected clusters were subject to an exhaustive enumeration of education stakeholders. More than half of the interviewees were teachers and students at the University of Comoros, and women were in the majority.

RESULTS

It is worth noting that 22/30 women and 28/42 men all aged between 49 and 60 years. In general, 15% of the young women and 23% of the young men declared that the Corona Virus is a dangerous disease invented by man to reduce the world population, especially in Africa.

A larger proportion of our sample has doubts about the existence of the disease in our country. The majority of the people in our study know all the possible transmission routes, but more than half do not trust vaccines.

It is admitted that the majority of the people surveyed are women (59%) and 41% are men. Most of the people in our study are pupils, students, parents of pupils and teachers. In our study area as a whole, Anjouan has the highest proportions of women and Greater Comoros has the highest proportions of men.

A. The economic impact of Covid 19 on the Comorian education system

The Covid 19 epidemic is at the center of scientific, economic, academic and literary concerns. If for the rationalists, it is the sign of the flaw of science where the ingenuity of man is limited, for others, it is a sign of metamorphosis of life. Certainly, with it, everything is undone and tends to be remade. The observation is bitter when the connectivity in terms of human sociability is exposed. This respiratory syndrome endangers all ways of life. All sectors are slowed down and it felt like a new world where the rules of life are unrecognizable to humans. It was planetary chaos. Research and activities came to a standstill: misery had taken over. The educational system was disrupted and no public policy or economic system seemed safer in the face of this Wuhan epidemic. The economy, health and education as a whole are all the more threatened.

1- Problem

This work is part of a study on the impact of Covid 19 on the Comorian educational system. Private schools are more affected. This is why it is

necessary to analyse the economic impact caused by the coronavirus on private schools and the inadequacy of the Comorian State's contribution to the effects of the pandemic.

To this end, during our investigation, we examined the after-effects that the period of Covid 19 left in the Comorian educational system, the reason for which we ask ourselves as follows:

- What economic impact did the private institutions suffer?
- How did the Comorian educational system cope with this scourge?
- Do the frequent course stoppages recorded in recent years influence their follow-up of academic programs and their fate?

2.1 General Hypothesis

The educational system as an educational and social entity would reduce the impacts of Covid 19 if a teacher TV device or the use of tools like Google Class room, cahot or assisted distance learning are put in place.

Private schools could face this pandemic if the State subsidizes certain expenses such as the payment of rents and the acquisition of masks and gel among others.

Public educational institutions could face the spread of the disease if the State is really involved in assisting school principals by providing them with masks, gels and temperature measurement devices.

Overall objective

The central objective of this study is to denounce the poor response of the Comorian State to the Covid 19 on the Comorian educational system in order to raise awareness among all actors in the field of education.

Specific objectives

In carrying out this work, we have also set ourselves other specific objectives, which are as follows

- To evaluate the pedagogical, socio-economic and financial consequences of Covid on the Comorian educational system.
- To show the fragility of the educational sector in the face of a crisis such as the pandemic.
- Define appropriate responses to improve and prevent such a crisis and emergency situation.

Relevance of the topic:

Thus, dealing with the economic impact of Covid-19 on education in the Union of the Comoros, offers for us a number of interests.

The main concern of this study is to show that the response is a strategic and mandatory lever that can mitigate the surprising shock of Covid-19. It should be remembered that it is important to describe or

determine the various difficulties arising from the pandemic in order to improve the response and effectively organize the government's orientations and policy choices in the field of education.

For this, measuring and planning in terms of strategy would be the best way to boost the sector. There is therefore a correlation between the performance of the institution and its future. It is believed that these after-effects will have an impact on the future of the education system unless public policies in this area are planned.

The choice of this study is explained by various reasons:

On the scientific level, as a teacher in a young university, this study is of great interest because it reconciles the scientific theories learned at the University of Antananarivo and the professional experience acquired to constitute a problematic for my future work.

At this level, we can say that the choice of this subject on the economic impact of Covid-19 on the educational system in the Union of the Comoros could consequently contribute to the establishment of a monitoring-evaluation device for future projects on the promotion of a national education capable of facing the hazards of the health crisis in this sector, a lever for development.

This scientific study touches on crisis and emergency management, strategic management, leadership, economics... The application of these different principles in management will allow to apprehend a certain conception of analysis and planning to public and private schools and universities in order to improve its efficiency. Certainly, we have chosen to study this topic to meet the educational requirements. Through this study we have better understood the fragility of the educational sector in the face of the pandemic. The latter, showed us that globalization or globalization has a meaning only in works and world relations but in the face of the Corona virus, the appropriate term is "Sauve qui peut".

Then, we opted to work on this subject because of its financial and educational aspects. Thus, to measure the economic impact that the educational sector undergoes is primordial. Many private schools and universities were on the verge of bankruptcy. The public practiced the policy of good impression (PBI). This study could help to diagnose and analyze the potential effects of the pandemic and identify the exact impact on the education system during the Covid-9 period.

Choice of theme

The fragility of the educational, health, economic and financial system of developing countries such as Comoros, the coronavirus pandemic has left real unimaginable stakes. Faced with this pandemic, the Union of Comoros was

quick to act by adopting in terms of response to the coronavirus, the general containment, curfews and especially the closure of schools. However, no measures to replace classroom teaching have been taken. This time, the copy and paste actions taken by the government did not work. Several attempts at TV teaching and/or digitization of secondary and university education have not been successful. In the course of this study, we have noticed that much remains to be done in the face of this invisible monster.

The context of confinement, closures of schools and places of worship, curfews, technical layoffs, among others, without accompanying measures, leave the population unprepared. This was a difficult period for the Union of the Comoros. This exceptional situation required to underline the unprecedented image of the Coronavirus in a country not only poor but also weak of its educational system. On the one hand, the commitment of the parents, until the supervision of the teachers and on the other hand the duty of the State. No one seems to be playing his role in this period.

As a result, in order to achieve their assigned missions, private schools are struggling to get up. Public schools pretend to function. The Ministry of Education had no control over the response to the pandemic, even though the authorities were talking about a situation that was "under control".

This health crisis, which could be described as a war against an invisible person due to its speed of spread, its magnitude in terms of infected people, its deadly character and its socio-economic consequences, is a real concern for private institutions which in the daily national, there is no subsidy from the Comorian state.

Therefore, the observation is simple, the financial survival and the quality of education of private institutions, requires a strategic management in terms of response. It is therefore a central issue that is reformulated on the study of the pedagogical and economic impact of the coronavirus on education in the Union of Comoros.

That is to say that the results of the research on the economic impact of Covid-19 on the image of private schools is passed under absolute silence. It is necessary to remember that the drastic measures of containment disrupted the process of the school system in three aspects: the administrative and financial management, the school curriculum and the elasticity of the school year.

The impact of the coronavirus in the private sector of education is based on three types of factors: the fragility of its economy, financing and the success of children in correlation with their schooling. The analysis in deciphering the effects of the coronavirus on education appear today as the *sine qua non* of this study.

Thus, the debate on the economic impact on education takes on a particular meaning. The economic, financial and success effect that the

coronavirus leaves interested the professionals of the sector. That is why its study in terms of problematic, is inscribed from then on being a subject to discuss.

However, the pandemic has caused an unprecedented economic impact in the educational system. It quickly became apparent that this crisis would upset the established order. In order to meet the conditions of physical distance advocated by the authorities, it was necessary to close the places of worship, training and education in order to find urgent alternative solutions to ensure the continuity of learning. It is towards a confinement of the population, and it follows measures of social distancing. This will lead, of course, to a vulnerability of the active population in the formal economy. It follows the establishment of alternative learning systems such as online courses, broadcasting courses on TV, Radio, Whatsapp, online or offline platforms that require financial resources more or less important. It is therefore, an increase in inequalities between the pupils and students of private schools and those of public schools.

Economic impact on the school sector

Naturally, the Covid-19 pandemic has direct effects on the fundamentals of the economy. That is to say, the economic issue of the education system unfolded three factors related to our object of study:

Economic impact

The closing of the schools had a crucial internal impact. Being educational entities but also economic in character, the schools being enterprises of formal economic activities assigned to the mission of educating and teaching the republican values and others have had repercussions. The isolation or confinement measures have had a negative impact on the turnover of nearly 100% of private institutions operating in the education sector¹. Their turnover will be negatively impacted. For some projects, bids have been postponed. Unlike other sectors, the sector of information technology and communication (ICT) has seen its volume of activity increased during the first quarter of 2020 as reported by virtually all private operators in the sector, both telecommunications operators and Internet connection providers.

The year 2020 will leave in the memories of most pupils and students the indelible memory of a childhood and schooling upset; it will also have noticed the life of teachers, forced to adapt quickly, to redouble their creativity and to assume new responsibilities. The contractual teachers at the University of the Comoros find themselves with long months without pay.

¹ According to the final report of the coordination of private schools in note privé - 2020

These unusual educational arrangements extend for months and can have a considerable negative impact on teachers' skills, economic prospects and major pedagogical issues.

It should be noted that a very great ambivalence is manifested in the fact that despite the deterioration of education, the results of national examinations in the period of pandemic have increased considerably, especially in Anjouan.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This work deals in a general way with the contribution that can be made by a general analysis of the situation and reinforced by our observations throughout the territory. At the end of this study, there are often shortcomings given the time and poor means at our disposal. But the research requires in the concern of the complementary performance and the scientific methodology. Thus, it is with a view to reinforcing the quality of education and the skills related to educational management in terms of management that we are going to try to make analyses related to observation and suggestions.

SECTION I - ANALYSIS

1: The strong points:

Among the strong points that can be retained in this analysis is the availability of teachers, students and administrative staff, to resume classes whenever the state requires it.

2. Weaknesses:

We retain in relation to this crisis a weakness of operational and strategic management in the face of the health crisis. In terms of appropriate responses, we note the lack of a pedagogical system that is in line with its workforce, such as a website and distance learning courses, among others. We can note the insufficiency of the State's contribution in terms of masks, gels and others. Finally, the lack of an educational policy in an emergency situation, which is demonstrated by decisions that are often copied and pasted in this period.

3. Ambivalence

Despite this anarchic management of the pandemic, the national exams have recorded a higher success rate, especially in Anjouan, where the number of students admitted to the 2020 baccalaureate is much higher than in the Comoros and Moheli combined.

4. Constraints

The constraints can be classified as the difficulties observed, the categorical absence of the state, a lack of a crisis management policy and emergency situations. Then, the information disorder that does not illustrate the image of the national education. And then, the unavailability of the scientific commission to answer the questions of the population.

CONCLUSION

To sum up, at this stage which sanctions the end of our study whose reflections concern the impact of the corona virus on education in the Union of the Comoros, consists in both describing and analyzing its internal effects in terms of repercussions.

According to the analysis of the economic effects of the corona virus on education, especially on private institutions, the education system has suffered an unprecedented shock. The response strategies put into practice to eradicate this crisis have been shaken to the point that its economic health is weakened and will have repercussions in the future in view of the difficulties experienced. In this way, we started from the hypothesis according to which, the coronavirus weakens the educational sector, both private and public, and destabilizes the internal solidarity actions. Faced with this threat causing failures and losses.

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